



June 30, 2020

To Communities for Coul

I grew up in Bandon and have lived here all of my life, having worked as a reporter/editor for the local newspaper, before I retired 16 years ago and ran for the office of mayor of the City of Bandon, a position I have the honor of still holding today.

Bandon's economic history

While I was growing up, in the '60s, '70s and '80s, the lumber industry was a big part of the economy as was commercial fishing. Both the lumber and commercial fishing industries were in decline by the 80's, particularly the lumber industry which saw most of the local mills close, resulting in this area deciding to develop tourism as its main economic base in the late '80s and '90s, When Bandon Dunes Golf Resort opened in May 1999, it fitted perfectly into Bandon's economic plan.

Bandon Dunes has played a large part in putting Bandon on the map and has a great appeal to golfers across the US and worldwide with many thousands of golfers visiting annually.

Although much of our wealth comes from retirees, most of whom have retired and moved here from California, there are more young people remaining in Bandon now that they can find employment at Bandon Dunes; before the Resort was built, most had to leave to find family-wage jobs.

It's hard to quantify the economic impact as there have been no official studies but the biggest impact has been in the number of jobs that it provides for Bandon residents and those living throughout Coos County. The Resort is Bandon's largest employer and the second largest employer in Coos County. There are an estimated 500 employees, and more than 400 caddies during the summer months, who live here if they can find housing and who shop locally.

Environment

Although there were concerns expressed about the siting of such a large development along the bluff, the land was basically covered in Irish Gorse, which is an invasive plant brought to Bandon by George Bennett from his native Ireland in 1873 and introduced to this area as a landscaping plant. It has spread to the point where it is the number one noxious weed in this area and thousands of acres are covered with it today. It played a major role in the spread of a slash fire that started east of Bandon and destroyed most of the community in September of 1936.

Mike Keiser rid the land of gorse and developed his Resort. He mentioned one day that one of the reasons no one else wanted the land was because of the massive expense of clearing the gorse, which I believe ran to about \$2,000 an acre.

The net proceeds from Keiser's Bandon Preserve eco-course provide the funding source for the Wild Rivers Coast Alliance (<https://wildriverscoastalliance.com>), whose mission is to "fund community projects committed to the 'triple bottom line' - conservation, community and economy"

Summary

I am sure that the people in East Sutherland in Scotland will definitely appreciate the value of a Mike Keiser backed golf course development at Coul Links. Concerns that people have now will disappear once the course is developed. He does everything first class and in a very environmentally friendly way. Mike Keiser is good for the economy; and good for the environment.

In addition to thousands of dollars worth of scholarships provided by Mike and Lindy Keiser through the Oregon Community Foundation, students also have the ability to earn a full-ride Chick Evans Caddie Scholarship by working as caddies at Bandon Dunes. The Keisers have been extremely generous to the city, school district, hospital, museum, etc.

Bandon Dunes Golf Resort has put Bandon, Oregon on the map, and there is no telling how many people will eventually locate here because of their positive experiences at one of the Resort's five golf courses.

I have only the utmost respect for Mr. Keiser and his family. He is a superb person and I cannot say enough positive things about my long association with him. I can say, without reservation, that any community that has the privilege of being associated with Mike Keiser should jump at the opportunity.

In summary, I would say that Bandon Dunes is a dream come true for all of us.

Mary Schamehorn

Mayor
City of Bandon