

BALLOTS:

October 27 is last day recommended to mail

Continued from page 1

Gary Ross; Elizabeth Fisher; incumbent Andrea Blum; Susan Cobb; and Jennifer Letz. *The Nugget* profiles each of the candidates in this issue, starting on page 8.

Sheriff Shane Nelson is running for reelection, challenged by Bend Police Officer Scott Schailer. A story on that race will appear in next week's *Nugget*.

Deschutes County commission candidates Phil Henderson and Phil Chang were profiled in the October 7 edition of *The Nugget*.

In addition, local voters will decide on whether to allow additional marijuana-growing operations in unincorporated areas of the county, and vote on bonds to renovate, upgrade, construct and equip library facilities.

The last day recommended to mail ballots to the County Clerk is October 27. Election Day is November 3, and all ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted. Postmarks do not count. There is a secure ballot drop at Sisters City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Ave.

Candidate has background in sustainability

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Jennifer Letz is no stranger to issues of importance to Central Oregon in general, and specifically to Sisters. Her work as a sustainability specialist with the U.S. Forest Service has heightened her interest in and knowledge of creatively managing growth while enhancing sustainability.

Letz believes that running for public office is a good way to give back to the community where she lives. She said she would bring to City Council a wide variety of skill sets, including experience in sustainability, urban planning, and water management. She also understands the government vernacular.

One of Letz's areas of expertise is photovoltaic design and installation (solar energy). Earlier in her career she served as a backcountry park ranger in the Grand Canyon and as a wildland firefighter for the National Park Service.

She moved to Bend with her family in 1983, graduating from Bend High School. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Film

and Media Studies from Willamette University and her Master of Arts in Sustainable Management from Prescott College.

Letz and her husband and now 6-year-old son moved from Bend to Sisters a year-and-a-half ago. She watched as Bend experienced the rapid growth of short-term rentals and the impact they had on the city. She is glad to see that Sisters has taken steps to regulate STRs.

With her background in wildland firefighting, Letz believes Sisters must be aggressive in its wildfire preparedness efforts. She warned, that with climate change creating stressed vegetation, wind from the wrong direction could easily put Sisters in the path of a wildfire. She would like to see a community-wide effort to educate everyone on wildfire preparedness and mitigation efforts. She knows there may need to be some changes to the Development Code regarding fire-wise building requirements. Given the role tourism plays in the economy of Sisters, she would like to find a way to educate tourists about fire safety as well.

Letz indicated she is a

good listener who "likes to gather a variety of viewpoints but also knows when it's time to make a decision." She has prior governmental experience serving on the Street Maintenance Funding Commission for the City of Bend and on the Planning Commission for the City of Prineville.

She acknowledges, "There is little to do to stop growth but there is a lot we can do to mitigate for it."

A goal for her would be "to maintain the small-town character and charm" of Sisters. A part of that would be to work on transportation management, including increasing pedestrian and bicycle routes for residents and tourists.

"No one likes change, but we can steer our growth while planning for the future," Letz said. She sees zoning as one tool to be used for that purpose.

She believes her travel within the U.S., as well as Western Europe and Nepal, have allowed her to see how other areas have creatively handled growth and development. Her hope is to see Sisters become even more, and remain, an accessible, comfortable place to live and visit.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Letz would like to add her relative youth to the Council and represent the interests and perspectives of young families.

For fun, Letz enjoys outdoor activities such as mountain and road biking, cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing.

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