

Keller wins second term as Eugene mayor

Mayor Gus Keller will spend another four years in Eugene's top office, after defeating former City Council member Catherine Lauris by 8,076 votes.

Keller, who said Tuesday night he did not expect to pass Lauris by such a wide margin — 25 percent — will begin his second term as mayor Jan. 1.

"I think people looked at what I'd been trying to accomplish in the last three-and-a-half years," said Keller, general manager and president of John Warren sports centers in Eugene. "I'm looking forward to four more years of serving the citizens of Eugene."

The incumbent based his re-election campaign on his record of support for economic diversification — specifically, Spectra Physics' move to the area and the development of the city's convention bureau — and his success in getting voter approval for the Performing Arts and Cultural Center. He also pointed to his backing of City Council conservation, transportation and planning policies.

Keller said in an interview before the election that he decided to run because "there are some things I still would like to see done."

He mentioned further efforts to move

the city's economy away from its dependence on the timber industry and an intergovernmental committee to facilitate cooperation between the two cities and the county, issues which Lauris also said needed attention.

In the interview, the mayor said he thinks Eugene will have to think about making his office and the City Council full-time, paid positions to accommodate the volume of work city government demands.

Keller seemed almost as pleased by Eugene's tax-base victory at the polls as he was with his own, and with reason — the city's request for a new financial base was one of few that passed locally.

The returning mayor said he ran a "hard race" against Lauris because "we've always had a lot of respect for Mrs. Lauris" and her Eugene supporters.

A former 12-year City Council veteran who also has served on the Lane Community College board for the past decade, Lauris campaigned as a pro-social service and neighborhood- and arts-supporting candidate who would make city government more accessible to Eugeneans. She emphasized her record for fiscal responsibility in both positions.



Gus Keller

Emerald photo

Smith, Wooten squeeze into council posts

Brian Obie and Mark Lindberg easily outdistanced their opponents to capture their Eugene City Council seats, but Betty Smith and Cynthia Wooten won their councilor seats by narrow victory margins.

Betty Smith, running to retain her Ward 2 councilor position, narrowly defeated Sharon Posner with 46 percent, or 2,133 votes, to Posner's 45 percent, or 2,091 votes.

"I'm pleased with my victory," Smith said.

Smith added that she was pleased Eugene voters approved the city tax base — even if it was by a narrow margin.

"I think the effort the council and the budget committee made was very important," she said. "No one wants to vote for higher taxes, but the tax proposal we made showed we're trying to keep the line drawn."

Smith said she is committed to maintaining a vital downtown area and a strong business community. The city should be active in attracting clean, light industry and should consider ways to boost the current industry in the city, she added.

Lindberg easily won the Ward 3 councilor position with 55 percent of the vote, or 2,179 votes, to Jennings' 27 percent, or 1,066 votes.

Lindberg, an associate professor of community development, said his victory is a vote of confidence for the democratic process. He ran a "people politics" campaign that addressed "real city issues," not a media campaign with an impersonal approach, Lindberg said — an obvious swipe at Jennings' use of ads in the campaign.

Lindberg said he plans to spend a lot of time learning about city government in preparation for his councilor position.

Lindberg said his priorities include making the council responsible for neighborhoods and building self-supporting coalitions in the residential areas.

He added that he'd like to see the city's neighborhoods become less dependent upon outside sources of funding and concentrate on developing private-sector sources of revenue. He also said he will

encourage neighborhood groups to work with the city in designing their future growth.

Wooten narrowly defeated John Perry to capture the Ward 7 councilor seat. Wooten grabbed 51 percent of the vote, or 1,790 votes, to Perry's 38 percent, or 1,328 votes.

Wooten said she'll begin doing her "homework" on city issues in preparation for the position. She added that she's looking forward to working with senior citizen and neighborhood groups and putting together alternative programs for the council early next year.

Wooten said the "issues of the '80s" include finding new sources of revenues for city services and "lessening the abyss between government and the people."

Wooten added that she'll encourage people to become more involved with neighborhood and senior citizen groups. "We need to move together. If I had to move by myself, there'd be no difference."

Wooten, a staff assistant for Congressman Jim Weaver since 1976, said the city's budget and

housing problems will be her main concerns as a councilor.

Wooten said she favors stimulating the housing industry to build low- and moderate-income housing through issuing bonds. She also favors a comprehensive economic plan that includes cultural development as well as diversity in industrial planning.

Obie, who was running to retain his Ward 8 seat, nabbed 70 percent of the vote, or 3,857 votes, to Bill Groesz's 19 percent, or 1,038 votes.

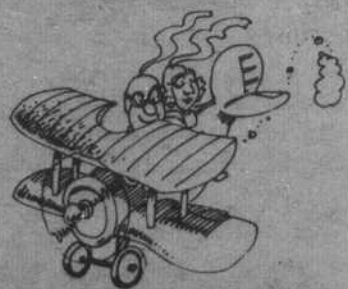
"I love it. How's that for a quote?" Obie said after early election results clearly showed his victory.

Obie said he agreed with the passage of the city's tax base. "The passage of the measures makes my job as city councilor a lot easier."

Obie, president of Obie Communications Corporation, favors more growth and investment in the downtown core area, better cooperation with Lane County government, and a voluntary weatherization program.

Obie said his business background allows him to be effective in working with members of the business community, adding that his value as a councilor is his ability to get people to work together.

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