

Appeal Tribune

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Fire board resign after heated meetings

County commissioners appoints new members for Idanha-Detroit

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

After a slate of contentious meetings, all five board members – and the fire chief and the acting fire chief – of the Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District have resigned since the beginning of the year.

As of Feb. 25, all that was left in the department were dozens of volunteer

firefighters and one part-time employee. And this on top of the district losing its Detroit fire hall in the 2020 Labor Day wildfires.

Without any board members, which are volunteer positions, state law requires county commissioners to appoint a new slate. So the Marion County Board of Commissioners was forced into a situation it has never faced: choosing, all at once, the new leaders of a rural fire protection district.

It all started when the part-time fire chief pleaded guilty to assaulting his wife.

Turnover in small staff

The Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District covers seven square miles in Marion and Linn counties, including the cities of Detroit and Idanha. It has two paid part-time employees, including the chief. Most of its services are performed by volunteers. It has a budget of \$295,778 for the current fiscal year.

The district came to the forefront during the wildfires of September 2020 when most of Detroit was wiped out. No

one died in the city and the district's firefighters were credited with saving dozens of lives.

The district's fire station in Detroit and a fire engine were destroyed in the fire. Its remaining station, which was built in the 1950s, is in Idanha.

It has been seeking money to build a new station.

Will Ewing, the district's fire chief since 2018, resigned Jan. 5, about two months after pleading guilty in November 2021 to assaulting his wife by choking her for 15 seconds.

Ewing's sentence was deferred on

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Wet relief

Rain dampens recent pollen count in Mid-Valley

Louis Krauss
Register-Guard | USA TODAY NETWORK

The abnormal snow and rain showers this April have improved air quality by reducing pollen counts measured in the Mid-Valley, but it could be an indicator of allergy season coming back in full force once the region dries out.

Early spring tends to bring an elevated tree pollen count as opposed to grass pollen, and on April 8 Oregon Allergy Associates measured a "very high" tree pollen count of 1,254, more than double the 500 required to reach the highest category. But the rains over the past few weeks have tamped things down. The National Weather Service listed Salem on Tuesday in the moderate category with high tree pollen but moderate grass pollen and no ragweed pollen.

Registered nurse Judy Moran, who works for Oregon Allergy Associates, said the counts typically reflect the weather activity over the past 24 hours of when it was measured.

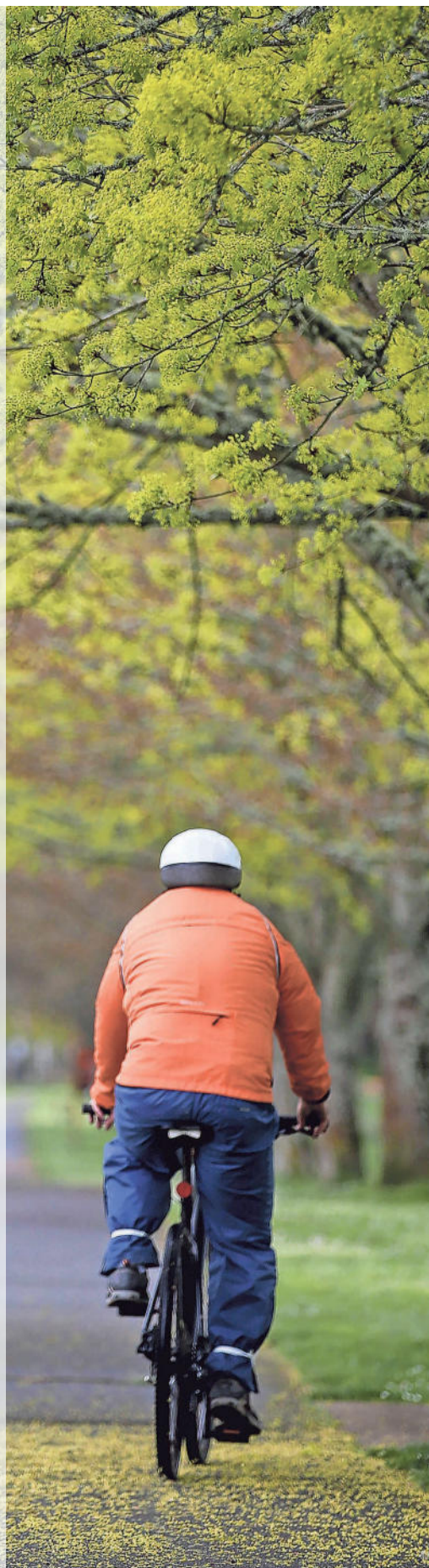
"If it was a really nice or hot day, and someone is seeing the count, presuming that I did the count that next day and published it, then it could be weather like this outside and they're going, 'Oh, I can't go outside today because the count was sky high.' Well, weather conditions are totally different, so their exposure is probably going to be less outside."

Still, air quality agencies are recommending Oregonians take steps to protect themselves from allergies and respiratory problems.

While this week's rain creates a short-term reprieve from pollen in the air, it could also be a

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A bicyclist rides over fallen petals at Minto Brown Island Park. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL



5th district races heat up as Kurt Schrader tries for 8th term

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

This election is different for Kurt Schrader, and he knows that.

Running for re-election to Congress in the redrawn 5th Congressional District, the moderate Democrat from Canby has more name recognition than his opponent in the May 17 Democratic primary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner – as well as all of the Republicans combined – as he seeks his eighth term.

Even the local Democrat parties are choosing his progressive opponent against him in the primary. The Democratic parties of Clackamas, Marion, Linn and Deschutes counties have endorsed McLeod-Skinner above Schrader. They had to change their rules to endorse her. Typically the county parties don't endorse a candidate.

Schrader isn't worried about that.

"The parties generally, or at least the county party folks, represent the more left-wing activist points of view," Schrader said. "I don't think that at the end of the day they're in lock step with mainstream Democrats, who I think want someone that is effective and can get the job done and represent them. Those folks are more ideologically motivated. I want to represent the people."

McLeod-Skinner takes those endorsements a different way.

"It was really a powerful statement, I think, to have the county Democrats essentially say to a sitting member of Congress, 'You're not getting the job done,'" she said. "And he tried to dismiss me when I first jumped in as running to the left of him."

"And yes, technically I'm running to the left of him, but

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No favorite among 5 Republicans

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A medical business owner, a financial analyst, a retired orthopedic surgeon, a contractor and a tennis coach are vying for the Republican nomination for the Fifth Congressional district in the May 17 primary election.

But the large field of contenders – Jimmy Crumpacker, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, John Di Paola, Madison Oatman and Laurel Roses – are mostly unknown to voters in the Willamette Valley.

Only one has been voted into public office previously, Chavez-DeRemer, but all have a background in some form of business.

Jim Moore, a professor of politics at Pacific University, said there is no favorite among the five.

"No, because they're all unknowns," he said. "They have little bases or they have no bases."

The district has been redrawn to combine areas from Stayton, Mill City and Detroit with Linn County, Southwest Portland and Central Oregon cities like Bend, Redmond and Sisters.

These are the contenders vying for the nomination:

Jimmy Crumpacker

Crumpacker's professional background is in finance. Born and raised outside Portland to a family with ties to Oregon dating back to 1845, he went to high school in New Hampshire before going to college at Georgetown.

After working as an intern for Sen. Gordon Smith while in college, he went into finance, working on Wall Street for American International Group.

Crumpacker moved back to Oregon 10 years ago and continued to work in finance. Because the stock markets closed early afternoon Oregon time each day, he had time

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Upheaval at beloved restaurant

Capi Lynn
Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

For nearly 30 years, Marlene Blanchard poured her heart and soul into Court Street Dairy Lunch, Salem's oldest restaurant. She started working there as a prep cook in 1994, just a few months after the founding family sold the business to a pair of employees. Three years later, she bought out one of the partners. Blanchard became the sole owner in 2006. She nurtured the old-fashioned diner, a fixture of downtown since 1929 and a go-to spot for generations. It was not just an institution for the community but a nest egg for her retirement. In 2019, as the restaurant celebrated its 90th birthday, Blanchard announced she was ready to sell. It's been a hardship ever since.

She survived a failed sale that year, then the COVID-19 pandemic, and then she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

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Court Street Dairy Lunch, established in 1929, is Salem's oldest restaurant. It is located at 347 Court St. NE in downtown. CAPI LYNN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

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