

'Compromise is never an option'

Republican candidates for next governor promise Pendleton crowd victory and conservative reform in Salem

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — There wasn't much daylight between the eight candidates on stage at a Tuesday, March 24, Umatilla County Republican Party gubernatorial forum at the Pendleton Convention Center.

The candidates generally agreed they were going to reverse the policies of Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, the state should move to a school choice model, the Second Amendment needed to be protected and all government mandates needed to be repealed.

The candidates didn't get much time to expound on their thoughts. The size of the field — West Linn political consultant Bridget Barton, Hillsboro retiree Reed Christensen, Tigard entrepreneur Nick Hess, Baker City Mayor Kerry McQuisten, Bend marketing consultant Brandon Merritt, White City massage therapist Amber Richardson, Redmond contractor Bill Sizemore and former Alsea School District Superintendent Marc Thielman — had only 30 seconds each to answer most questions.

But all candidates still got a shot at making their case to a good-sized audience in Pendleton. The candidates were mostly polite with one another but occasionally took shots at some of the candidates who weren't in Pendleton, which included many of the field's top fundraisers

— former state House Minority Leader Christine Drazan, of Canby, Salem oncologist and 2016 Republican nominee Bud Pierce, Sandy Mayor Stan Pulliam and former state representative and Oregon Republican Party Chair Bob Tiernan, of Lake Oswego.

Oregon hasn't elected a Republican governor since 1982, but each candidate explained how they would be the one to reverse the trend.

Barton stressed to the audience both her experience advocating for rural Oregon and her status as an "outsider." She told the audience that she would work hard in Salem to advance their priorities.

"I'm here to tell you that I would stand in front of a train for you," she said.

As governor, Barton said she would immediately replace the state's deputy superintendent of public instruction, who leads the Oregon Department of Education.

Christensen said the most important issue was to end Oregon's vote-by-mail system in favor of a one-day, in-person election so the state could get "election integrity."

He also highlighted his participation in the attempted insurrection in Washington, D.C., in 2021. Christensen faces federal charges for assaulting Capitol police.

"I was arrested by the FBI," he said. "I'm currently in the system. I care."

In almost all of his



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Oregon Republican gubernatorial candidate Nick Hess and seven other contenders express their views during a forum Thursday, March 24, 2022, at the Pendleton Convention Center.

answers, Hess said he would work to make Oregon government more transparent and listen to residents instead of lobbyists.

Like former Gov. Vic Atiyeh, Hess said he was a Republican from the Portland metro area, which would give him an advantage in trying to break the GOP's losing streak in gubernatorial elections.

"I know it sucks to think about a Portland person, but a Portland person is how we get somebody who's conservative elected," he said.

McQuisten used her opening remarks to remind the audience she helped pass a Baker City resolution that criticized Brown and her COVID-19 restrictions.

"I wrote a resolution

you may have heard of that told Kate Brown to pound sand," she said.

McQuisten said moderates such as Pierce and Knute Buehler couldn't win the general election, but she, as a "staunch conservative," could.

Nonaffiliated voters recently surpassed Democrats as the largest group of voters in the state, and Merritt said Republicans needed to win those voters if they were going to win general elections and govern effectively.

He also criticized Drazan for allowing a gun control bill to pass so Republicans could get a seat at the table for redistricting only for Democrats to gerrymander anyway.

"Compromise is never an option," he said.

Richardson said she was intentionally running her campaign frugally, adding she had only spent \$3,000 on her campaign.

She also compared herself to former President Donald Trump, saying she was unpredictable and was able to successfully evade the state's attempts to censor her.

"The state doesn't know what I'm going to do next," she said. "Every time I try to do something, they never know what to expect."

Sizemore owns a painting business, but he might be best known for passing multiple ballot measures that limited property taxes in the

1990s. He also ran for governor in 1996, but lost to Gov. John Kitzhaber in a landslide.

Sizemore leaned on his experience passing ballot measures and fighting with public employee unions, skills he thought would help him reform Salem.

Thielman touted his time as a "man of action" in Alsea, where he and the school board passed a resolution making face masks optional before the state lifted its own mandate.

He said the state should require schools to teach gun safety courses in fifth, eighth and 10th grade. As governor, he also would have the state arrest Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt.

CTUIR sees parallels between their own history and Ukraine

Tribes characterize Russian invasion as 'ongoing genocide'

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

MISSION — In 1856, B. F. Shaw, a colonel with the Washington Territory Volunteer Infantry, led his soldiers into the Grande Ronde Valley and murdered dozens of Cayuse who lived in a village near present-day Summerville.

In 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine, leading to the death of more than 900 civilians, as of Sunday, March 20, according to NPR.

Centuries and continents separate these two events, but for the leaders of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the parallels are apparent.

On March 14, the CTUIR announced its board of



Anna King/Northwest Public Broadcasting, File

Bobbie Conner, director of the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute near Pendleton, in a statement drew comparisons between tribal history and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

trustees approved a \$5,000 donation to Doctors Without Borders to aid in the burgeoning humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine. But the announcement also included more pointed language condemning Putin and Russia for the invasion and the "ongoing genocide of the Ukrainian people" before drawing comparisons between the current war and

its own history.

"Today, millions of Ukrainians are (being) forcibly removed, killed, or are fleeing their homelands. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse experienced similar assaults on our people, our land and our sovereign rights in the 1850s," the press release states. Our homelands were invaded

and many of our people killed during that time. The CTUIR ultimately ceded 6.4 million acres of our lands and resources to the United States in the Treaty of 1855, and some of these lands were illegally entered by non-Indian settlers prior to the ratification of the Treaty by the United States Congress in 1859."

In an interview, Bobbie Conner, a tribal historian and the director of the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, said the treaty was supposed to protect the tribes from encroachment and violence from settlers, but that's not what happened in 1856.

That year, Shaw attacked the encampment killing approximately 60 people — men, women, children and elders — in the process. The infantry then proceeded to destroy their homes and confiscate their horses. While contemporary accounts described it as a battle and lionized Shaw and his army, Conner said

"massacre" was the more appropriate term.

"These unprovoked attacks on peaceful, coexisting people are exactly in my mind a parallel of what is happening now," she said. "Only the armaments and the methods and the wholesale slaughter or annihilation of people is much more exponentially damaging."

Conner further explained how violence from Western settlers and the U.S. government inflicted against American Indians are often mislabeled "cultural conflicts," but were more about power and land.

"Rarely did anybody who pointed a gun at us and gave us an ultimatum or fired at us before giving an ultimatum have any comprehension of our culture," she said. "You would have to know something to have a conflict with our culture. It is, historically, extremely likely that they knew nothing of our culture, but deemed that their superiority not only in power,

but with divine intervention and military force, that they had the right to do what they did. It's a question that applies today. What right does Putin have to conduct his actions? Justifications matter not because it is genocidal."

Conner said she thinks Americans understand the stakes of Ukraine's sovereignty. She recalled how she recently spoke with another tribal employee who could trace her lineage to Kherson, the Ukrainian region that was recently claimed by the Russians. She hopes the lesson people take away from Ukraine and the history of the CTUIR is a better understanding of the human condition.

"There's an artificial construct, that many of us are of a different race," she said. "There is only one race: the human race. I do not have the right to do to my neighbor what is happening there. Nor do my neighbors have the right to do it to me."

More than \$1.5 million in federal funds headed to Oregon

East Oregonian

WASHINGTON — Oregon's U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden on Tuesday, March 22, announced more than \$1.5 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency funds is headed to Oregon to help fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation acquisition of five properties in the floodplain.

"I saw firsthand how the flood in February 2020 was devastating to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and other residents in Umatilla County," Merkley said in a press release. "I am pleased that CTUIR will now have the funding needed to safely remove structures that were damaged beyond repair by the raging floodwaters. This cleanup is an important step in the tribe's remark-

able efforts to restore floodplains and protect water quality. I look forward to continuing to work with Oregon's sovereign tribal nations to ensure they have the resources their communities need to thrive."

"The impact of the February 2020 floods in Eastern Oregon was painfully clear in the faces of the community I met with at the Red Cross shelter and the emergency operations center," Wyden said in

the release. "The destruction landed especially hard on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. And I'm glad to have teamed up with tribal officials to secure these federal emergency funds for this cleanup and property acquisitions that are essential steps in the road to economic recovery."

The grant comes to a total of \$1,524,951.53 to help fund the acquisition of every structure on five

properties in the floodplain as well as the required assessments, studies and environmental historic preservation review necessary to demolish and/or restore the properties in the floodplain.

"This will help Umatilla Indian Reservation residents recover from the February 2020 flood of the Umatilla River that was so devastating to so many homes and so much property," said Kat Brigham, chair of the Board

of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. We are

extremely grateful to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for their support."

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Union County Business Grants Available

The 2022 Union County Business Assistance Grant Program is currently accepting applications from small businesses financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible applicants may receive up to \$10,000.

Applications, eligibility requirements, and additional information is available on the Union County website at www.union-county.org or by calling 541-963-1001. Completed and signed applications packets must be received via email at bizgrant@union-county.org or hand delivered to 1106 K Avenue by 12:00 noon on Friday, April 1, 2022.

This grant program is being made available due to federal funding received from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund.