

## Candidates Discuss Issues at Two Forums *continued from front page*

attributes but stated that the best attribute in Columbia County are the people that live here. "That's the disadvantage of the commute is those people are not here to be part of little league or the Chamber or contribute to a town hall because they are driving," said Preheim. "The research center in Scappoose - Senator Betsy Johnson brought that here and I think that was something that should have been done by the County. We have to recruit people and not just wait for people to show up," said Preheim.

Magruder agreed that citizens and volunteers are a strength. She also mentioned recreation opportunities as well as the County Economic Development team and the potential to have them work with established businesses. She cited a lack of vocational training in schools as an issue that concerns her.

### Economic Development

When asked specifically what they would do to grow the economy and create living wage jobs, Preheim suggested that municipalities and the county should buy and hire locally and support local business whenever possible. "The County is one of the biggest employers and biggest consumers and they need to buy local," said Preheim. "I would work very hard to pass a 'buy local preference'

ordinance." He suggested loans to small businesses as a way to encourage economic vitality through small micro businesses and stated that he believes the Columbia County Economic Development team is part of the problem, calling some of their decisions "petty politics." "We need to pick industries that are compatible with our lifestyle. We can pick and choose and we can say no to industries that are based on old technologies that are going to fail and then we're left holding the bag," said Preheim.

Yarbor stated that the Port of St. Helens controls most of the valuable industrial lands in the county and are therefore the lead in bringing in development. He suggested the Port won't sell any land, but only lease it, and this is a detriment to economic growth, and that the County Commissioners should encourage this to change. He suggested creating a

county-wide ordinance that would allow property owners to build "mother-in-law suites" or apartments to help families care for older relatives.

Hyde noted that the Economic

**"We've not had transparency with either the county or the Port of St. Helens and the losses they've had there. If we're going to develop Port Westward we have to be smart about it and not stick our money in failed fossil fuel industries. Yes, it has failed. But with the proper development it could be a great place for us," said Preheim.**

Development team has become a very successful entity and called the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation District in Scappoose "transformational" for the county. He stated that retention and expansion of existing businesses should be the number one priority before recruitment of new industry. "I hear all this about how the county is in bad shape and I don't agree," and proceeded to name numerous successful

companies currently doing business and expanding here, including Rightline, Tevan Bros., Global, PGE, USG, Pacific Stainless, Conrad, Northwest Natural, Photo Solutions, and Foss Maritime.

Tardif suggested that all the communities in Columbia County should be working in collaboration to develop an economic plan for the future, and noted that if the county is seeing so much industrial growth, why have we had a 20% loss of jobs in the 20 years Hyde has been in office. Tardif suggested the agricultural base as a great resource and a focus and also suggested incentivizing timber production to create more mill jobs. He stated that he would analyze the tax base and look at, "...how we've structured it and how we're using it to make sure that all communities are benefitting and receiving their fair share of funds." He suggested the use of Urban Renewal Districts in other areas of the county as a way to spread the investment around to benefit more communities and citizens and suggested more collaboration and efficiency between county departments to bridge gaps and build partnerships.

Magruder stated that the Economic Development team is successful and suggested trying to attract high value industry to Port Westward and other Port properties. She also proposed that the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation District might present an opportunity for the development of forest products that could put Columbia County at the fore-

front of some new industries. She also noted that access to water needs to be considered when looking at new development.

Mayo said creating opportunities for higher education for our youth should be a priority and upgrading internet access to provide opportunities to telecommute should be something the county works on. "We need to steer people to better paying jobs, not just what is going to be left if we're not careful with our industrial friends," said Mayo. He also expressed concern about rail transport and storage safety and suggested the county be more diligent in researching safety measures that would be in place before approving rail transport through the county.

Conn said rail is an important part of the county infrastructure and transportation system but noted that safety is a concern. Conn noted that with large business and industry there can be jobs but also a lot of risk. "Most of the jobs are often at the front end - construction jobs that will eventually go away. I think we need to put more effort into supporting our small and medium sized businesses," said Conn. She pointed to niche farming as a compatible industry that could receive more emphasis and support from the county, listing herb farms, organic vegetable farms, nurseries and small beef and dairy farms as proven successful opportunities.

### Port Westward

When asked about Port Westward and whether it has been good for Columbia County or a drain on our resources the candidates again had differing views.

Magruder stated that development at Port Westward is essential to the economic base of the county. "I think we need to wisely develop it and look for the best industries to bring good, clean industry, jobs, employment, and tax revenue. If we ignore Port Westward we would be remiss in our obligation to our citizens" said Magruder. "We have to make use of these facilities that we have." She also suggested that the region would be good for agricultural development.

Preheim stated that Port Westward has been a drain on county resources because of bad decisions by county leaders. "We've not had transparency with either the county or the Port of St. Helens and the losses they've had there.

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## What's Happening at the Vernonia Library

### Upcoming Events

#### Veggies in Vernonia: Warm Weather Vegetables in a Cool Place and Common Problems

Tuesday, May 17, 6:30 – 8 pm  
Presentation by Chip Publ, OSU Extension Faculty and Master Gardener

#### Beyond the Scoreboard: Sports in Our Lives and Communities

Tuesday, May 24, 6:30 – 8 pm  
Free conversation with Andrew Guest, sponsored by Oregon Humanities and hosted by the Friends of the Vernonia Library. Andrew Guest is an associate professor at the University of Portland and has a background as a coach and an athlete.

#### After School Activity: Scratch Art

Thursday, May 19, 4 – 5pm  
For children K – 5 and parents. Make a scratch art bookmark, photo frame, or stickers. Materials and snack provided.

#### Movie Nights

Thursday, May 26, 6 pm (Families)  
Relax and enjoy a movie and free popcorn. Call or visit the library for movie title.

### Ongoing Programs

#### Homeschool Library Time

Wednesday, May 11, 1 – 2 pm  
Opportunity for homeschoolers and homeschool parents in the area to come together. "How to Use the Library" tour at this meeting.

#### Stamp Club

May 12  
Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every

month, 4:30 pm

Come by for some stamp collecting, learning, and trading. Open to all ages.

#### Writer's Group

May 19  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month, 6 – 7:30 pm  
Opportunity for writers with all levels of experience to get together, write, and get feedback.

#### Book Discussion Group

May 30  
Last Monday of every month, 5:30 pm  
Selection for May: *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* by Deborah Moggach

### Storytimes

#### Baby and Toddler Time

Mondays, 10:30 – 11:15 am  
Songs, rhymes, books, toys, and bubbles! For ages 0 – 3. Older siblings welcome.

#### Preschool Storytime

Fridays, 10:30 – 11:15 am  
Stories and a craft/activity for children up to age 5.

#### Library Closures

Monday, May 30 for the Memorial Day Holiday

### Library Hours & Contact

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 – 5

Tuesday, Thursday: 1 – 7

Saturday: 10 – 4

Closed Sundays

Phone: (503) 429-1818

E-mail: [library@vernonia-or.gov](mailto:library@vernonia-or.gov)

# MAGRUDER

## For Columbia County

# COMMISSIONER

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Paid for by The Campaign to Elect Margaret Magruder