

Meet the Candidates : Vernonia Mayor, City Council, and Columbia County Sheriff *continued from page 9*

levy we shouldn't have to do that." Gibson says keeping the jail fully staffed is one way to make sure deputies are on the road and patrolling. He agreed we don't pay enough and have become a training department for other agencies. He said a corrections reserve program should be a must for small counties.

Pixley said dual certified deputies is a good idea, but said deputies covering jail shifts are working overtime shifts, not missing road patrol shifts. He suggested that if a levy failed or Marshal prisoners went away the jail would have to reevaluate services. He suggested charging county communities to house prisoners, which he knows would be unpopular, or create a matrix that would only hold the most egregious offenders and release the rest. He said the Sheriff's Office should look for grants to fund more patrol deputies. Pixley agreed a reserve program would help. He disagreed that Columbia County is losing officers to other agencies. "We rely on hometown people that want to make a difference in their community, for the people they grew up with, and for their families and friends. That's why they stay - it's not for the money, it's for the quality of life they are giving back to their community. And it's working."

Candidates were asked their position on Measure 5-270, the Columbia County Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance, which would make it illegal for Columbia County to limit in any way the rights granted under the U.S. and Oregon Constitutions, and then

asked from the audience how they would handle a theoretical ban on Assault Rifles (ARs). All three said they support the Second Amendment, and all agreed law abiding citizens should not be restricted.

Pixley said he did not support Measure 5-270, stating he thought it was flawed as written. Pixley said he would band together with the Oregon Sheriff's Association to fight any AR ban. "We're not going to spend our resources and our time rounding up firearms from law abiding citizens. It's not going to happen. We have bigger things to worry about."

Brown said he supported the "spirit and intent," of Measure 5-270. Brown raised concerns that if the Measure passes it would hamper the Sheriff's Office's ability to investigate crimes involving firearms. Brown said he is a life member of the NRA and said he disagrees with all the laws that Salem has recently passed concerning gun control. "None of them make any sense. They do nothing to solve crime." He did say he would like to see mandatory minimum sentences for people convicted of crimes involving firearms. He also added that he would refuse to take part in any kind of firearms confiscation program or ban on ARs.

Gibson said he did not support raising the age from 18 to 21 to purchase a firearm. Gibson said he would work with the State Sheriff's Association to fight any kind of ban on ARs. When asked about how they would determine

the constitutionality for federal and state firearms related laws, all three said they would defer to their county legal council, the courts, the county District Attorney, and judges for that. "It's not the Sheriff's job to interpret the Constitution," said Gibson. Gibson changed topics to Sanctuary States and said that he believes Oregon should not be giving sanctuary to people who are violating the law.

When asked about improving the County Search and Rescue (S&R) program, all three agreed that S&R was an important asset for the Sheriff's Office, which needed some effort on the part of the new Sheriff to rebuild. Brown said he would talk to each current member and figure out why participation is dropping and what needs to be fixed. "They're extremely vital in this community." He said he would coordinate with other surrounding counties for comparison on operations. He said it was good that the Posse has been brought back and needs to involve youths. "All our volunteer programs, like explores, reserves, the Posse, and Search and Rescue are vital and super important, but they've shrunk in numbers and we need to figure out the reason why and get those programs restored."

Gibson called S&R, "...one of the critical components of the Sheriff's Office and has been for decades." He said he would, not just talk to current members, but also talk to old members who had been "pushed out," and also encourage more recruitment. He said other similar groups in the region could be an

important resource to reach out to.

Pixley agreed bringing back the Posse was important. He thinks S&R is a good way to involve younger people in law enforcement, build relationships with youth, and create a cadet program.

When asked about safety in public places, like schools and the County Courthouse, all agreed that the Courthouse entrance needs a major remodel to ensure security, but were unsure where the funding would come from. Pixley said he has had conversations with County Commissioner Alex Tardiff on the issue and has some good ideas about Courthouse security. He said the County Emergency Operations Center is working with schools and local police on response protocols.

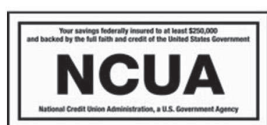
Gibson said school security is often up to the School Districts to implement. He said Sheriff's deputies need to be doing training and actual drills in the buildings they might need to respond to. He said the courthouse is, "...probably one of the least secure courthouses in the state of Oregon."

Brown said School Resource Officers are important for school security, but have a cost. He offered a plan for reorganizing the current courthouse layout that could provide better security.

Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Look for our next issue on November 1.



Whether you're looking for a place to keep your money safe
a loan to get a car, truck, boat, or even a home
or need any financial help or advice
the Wauna Credit Union Vernonia Branch is here to help



All deposits up to \$250,000 are insured by the National Credit Union Administration, and backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.



Adventist Health—Vernonia
Now Open Sunday!

Your community health clinic is now open
Sunday 10 am to 4 pm. Walk-in appointments
welcome. We're here for you.

For an appointment:
(503) 429-1953

Adventist Health
Medical Group

1005 Cougar Street
Vernonia OR 97064
adventisthealth.org/trmc

A member of the TRMC RHC/Clinic Network