

Morgan eyes house seat 3

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

After serving one term, Josephine County Commissioner Lily Morgan is running to become an Oregon State Representative for District 3.

"In serving on the county commission, and before that, the Grants Pass City Council, I learned that no matter how well we manage our affairs, we are often at the mercy of state policy - and that policy is often driven by the needs of the Portland metro area, not rural Oregon."

A "perfect example" is how the Cap and Trade bill is strongly supported in Portland, yet Morgan said "the greatest impacts would be to our natural resource industries and rural Oregon. It would kill what's left of our timber economy and we can't let that happen."

Morgan has "spent a significant amount of time building relationships across the state" and says "running for state representative is the best way to be the voice for our rural needs."

Of all four candidates, she notes she's the only one to have previously held public office. "I think I'll be the most effective. I've been on the hot seat and held accountable for decisions. I know how to work with other leaders who may not agree about how to balance budgets and find solutions to complex problems, such as restoring service at the sheriff's office. I've testified on policies, bills and financing and I've advocated for what's best for Josephine County in Salem and Washington, D.C."

For years, Morgan has advocated for bringing broadband service to the entire county. "The current health crisis has shown why rural citizens need high-speed

internet and I'll continue to advocate for this at the state level," she said. "Reliable high speed internet for all IV residents would allow equal access to remote school, jobs, business opportunities and information."

Morgan was involved in helping seed the Youth Pathways Partnership career development program which began at Illinois Valley High School and has spread countywide. "This model of youth internships can be expanded statewide, helping encourage all lines of work preparedness."

She also plans to "continue advocating" for new jobs region-wide, and wants to see "access to the I.V. Airport industrial park continue until shovel-ready, as it can be a vital source of jobs in the Valley."

SEE MORGAN ON A-6

Binker asks for write-in

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Michelle Binker, a local voice, runs for state representative.

While her name may not appear on the ballot for District 3 state representative, the Illinois Valley's Michelle Binker is running a spirited write-in campaign.

"I'll need your help," Binker said. "Recently registered as a Republican, to win the party's nomination so I can run in November, I must secure your 'write-in' vote this May. Voters must both write my name in and fill in the bubble next to my name."

"I'm a 24-year Illinois Valley resident with a diverse work history that includes six years with our state representative's office. I've worked with our elected officials at all levels." She also has many more years' experience in the private sector.

As chief of staff for Rep. Carl Wilson, who also served as house republican leader, Binker has received top-shelf training for the job she seeks now. She's also a legislative assistant for Wilson, who's retiring at the end of his current term and is endorsing Binker to replace him.

"Michelle understands the needs and priorities of our community," Wilson said. "Moreover, with her experience in Salem, she knows and understands the in-and-outs of

the state legislature, and is prepared to hit the ground running."

"My goals for the state rep's office include continuing to build on public accessibility and leverage it to support home-grown innovation. Beyond the partisan atmosphere of legislative policy tussles, the role of the office is to represent the people vis-à-vis state government agencies and commissions to resolve local issues."

And with longtime ties in the Valley, Binker's already been involved in finding solutions for many local issues, like when the state wanted to pull the plug on Illinois River Forks State Park - she plunged into the effort to keep it open.

"In 2012 we learned that Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) intended to decommission Forks State Park. Since I'd worked on State Rep. Wally Hicks' re-election campaign in 2010 and 2012, I reached out to his office on behalf of the community effort to change the Parks Board's decision. With his help we convened meetings with OPRD, Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO) and the BLM to craft an agreement to keep the park open. I publicized these efforts and produced a video of community testimony that made its way before the Parks Commission."

SEE BINKER ON A-9

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