

ELECTION

PORT OF THE DALLES - POSITION #3

John Willer

1) Why did you decide to run for a position on the Port of The Dalles board?

I want to put my knowledge and experience as a business owner for 20+ years in the Gorge to use by faithfully continuing the mission of the Port, which is "...to support the creation, retention, expansion and recruitment of businesses and jobs that will enhance the economy of the District."



John Willer

2) What is your background/profession, and where do you live?

I am an Ophthalmologist by trade, however I have a wide variety of experiences. I served on the Board of Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue District (MCFR), Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (and the Board), Budget Committees for MCFR and the Port, Civil Service Commission for MCFR, and Rules Advisory Committee for the Board of Advanced Estheticians. I have volunteered as a Paramedic (Ohio), Reserve Deputy in Hood River, and have participated in numerous international surgical missions. I have lived in the Gorge for 20+ years, the last 16 years in The Dalles.

3) What will your top priorities be if voters select you to serve on the board?

My top priority is to maintain the Port's legacy of operating in a fiscally responsible manner and to be a worthy successor to Mike Courtney, who endorses me as his replacement as he retires from 24 years of service to the Port.

4) What changes do you think the district needs to make?

Overall the Port of The Dalles is running in a very efficient manner. The only change I think the District needs to make is to look outside of The Dalles "Metro" area for opportunities.

Marcus Swift

1) Why did you decide to run for a position on the Port of The Dalles board?

I love our community and I am always looking for new ways to give back. The Port of The Dalles and our entire community are at a crossroads. We have real challenges, but also incredible opportunities for economic growth and job creation. But it's going to take bold ideas and new leadership. My skills and experiences starting and growing a small business in The Dalles, creating and passing good public policy, and working on complex land use issues are a perfect fit to help lead The Port forward into the next phase.

2) What is your background/profession, and where do you live?

I am a proud resident of The Dalles. I invested my life savings to start a successful small business in Wasco County because I love the community and its people. I am an attorney who works with local families, seniors, and small businesses to solve complex problems and find innovative solutions. In 2020 alone, I provided over \$25,000 in free or low-cost legal services to local residents. I also volunteer in the community as a member of the Wasco County Planning Commission and as Vice President of the Mid-Columbia Bar Association.

3) What will your top priorities be if voters select you to serve on the board?

I will work to support and expand local small businesses, attract new, good-paying jobs to our area, and revitalize downtown The Dalles. I will do it with a focus on fiscal responsibility, collaboration, and strategic vision. I want to explore how the Port can attract more jobs in value-added agriculture, be creative about flexible manufacturing spaces and create a culture of entrepreneurship. I also want to explore the viability of The Port selling smaller parcels of land to businesses who may wish to relocate to the waterfront but can't afford and/or don't need a full acre.

4) What changes do you think the district needs to make?

The Port leadership and staff do an outstanding job. However, I would like to see more transparency and accessibility from the Port Commission. As a director, I will provide regular updates to taxpayers, so they see the value of the Port and can engage in the conversation. I also think it becoming a necessity for the Port and every other local government agency to be more involved in conversations around the cost of living and housing availability in our community.

PORT OF HOOD RIVER - POSITION #3

Mike Fox

1) Why did you decide to run for a position on the [name of board]?

It is generally recognized that our bridge needs to be replaced. It is old, narrow and many deem it unsafe. Replacement efforts have been too slow and fragmented. This needs to change immediately to make sure a new bridge is in place before the old one is shut down.

Bridge tolls are currently augmenting revenues from other sources to develop and maintain Port properties. Once bridge tolls are unavailable (highly likely with a new bridge), impacts will occur. We need to develop a transition plan to address these new realities.

2) What is your background/profession, and where do you live?

I believe my background prepares me well to help. With an Engineering Degree and 45 year career with a major engineering / construction company, I was responsible for major elements of project execution / control for mega projects worldwide. These projects included Airports, Roads / Bridges, Sea Ports etc. I am familiar with all types of contracting mechanisms. I am now retired and live in Parkdale. My family has lived in the Hood River valley continuously since the 1890's.

My background uniquely prepares me to deal with the two major challenges facing the Port Commission.

3) What will your top priorities be if voters select you to serve on the board?

Expediting replacement of the bridge. To do this help from communities on both sides of the bridge will be required. We need to raise approximately \$350 to \$450 million, which will be extremely difficult. We are in competition with other larger communities in trying to replace aging infrastructure. There is a glimmer of hope with the massive Infrastructure Bill being discussed in Washington DC. But we must act quickly!

Preparing, then transitioning other Port operations away from bridge toll revenues is also a priority. We have a few years to implement this change, however we must start now!

4) What changes do you think the district needs to make?

The Port Administration as well as the Port Board of Commissioners have served the community well through the years. However, a much more focused effort is needed to find a way of replacing the bridge on an expedited basis. Tolls collected through the years were not set aside to fund a new bridge. They were used for existing bridge maintenance and Port property development including other Port properties such as the Airport. This reliance on bridge tolls must be eliminated in a carefully controlled manner. Use of future bridge tolls as collateral on property development activities must also be eliminated.

Visit mikefoxhoodriver.com for more information.



Mike Fox

Lach Litwer

1) Why did you decide to run for a position on the Port of Hood River board?

I am running because I want to ensure that kids like mine, growing up in Hood River County, have meaningful local career opportunities when they grow up.

The Port is responsible for the infrastructure that our local agricultural, technology, and recreation industries depend on today, and for fostering the industries of tomorrow. There are significant challenges; our bridge is old, port-owned buildings need updating, and housing is too expensive for much our workforce to afford.

As a parent, a veteran, and a small business owner, I am prepared and motivated to navigate these challenges as a Port Commissioner if elected.



Lach Litwer

2) What is your background/profession, and where do you live?

We live in Hood River, between the Heights, Westside and downtown. Our five year old is in kindergarten at May Street Elementary.

Before returning to Oregon to raise our kids, I oversaw infrastructure project policy at the Department of Defense. These projects leveraged federal funding as well as public-private-partnership dollars. This experience managing and building federal, state, and private partnerships uniquely qualifies me to help address bridge replacement and other challenges the port must navigate.

I now co-own two small local businesses, one building workforce housing in rural Oregon communities, the other is a small utility developing rural broadband infrastructure.

3) What will your top priorities be if voters select you to serve on the board?

A. My first priority is the strength and safety of the Hood River bridge. The downgrade of our bridge's capacity should alarm everyone. It connects us to our markets, business partners, and neighbors. We cannot allow it to degrade.

B. I will advocate for attainable workforce housing. Hood River teachers, agricultural workers, and small business employees are being priced out. If our workforce can't afford living here, our economy will never reach its full potential.

C. The port's waterfront spaces could serve both recreational and business needs better. As a Commissioner, I'll ensure both are enhanced in future development plans.

4) What changes do you think the district needs to make?

A. We must commit to a viable bridge replacement plan within 24 months. Whether public or private funding is used, we must act swiftly to ensure our bridge serves our economy and community safely and effectively.

B. Funding the new bridge will mean toll revenue, currently half of the port's budget, will no longer be available for economic development programs. To close the budget gap, the Port has to exercise greater fiscal discipline and grow revenue by developing its vacant land and better managing existing real estate assets. For more information about me and my priorities for the port, visit www.votelitwer.com

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GORGE LITERACY VOLUNTEER TRAINING
May 19th, 4-6:30pm
May 21st, 9-11:30am
The location will be online via Zoom

Gorge Literacy exists to provide free basic literacy instruction and support to adults in the CGCC service area enabling them to reach their goals and realize their potential in their family, work and community lives.

Training will delve into the organization's mission, adult learning, tutor expectations, general learner profiles and potential tutoring opportunities. No tutoring experience is necessary.

Please RSVP with
Matt Fitzpatrick
at 541-506-6042 or email: mfitzpatrick@cgcc.edu
Columbia Gorge Community College
is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

JACOB BERTRAM
The Dalles, Oregon

Jacob, or Jake, lives in The Dalles, Oregon and is an avid gamer, photographer, and amateur chef. A 2019 graduate of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University, Jacob is a major fan of the Cougs. While away from the screen, Jacob enjoys hanging out with his girlfriend, Laura, and their two cats, taking care of his herbs he planted this spring and looking for the nearest source of water to take a swim. Jacob covers most everything for our Washington readers, including city and county news. He also helps update our digital platforms for Columbia Gorge News.

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