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Officials optimistic about first mail-in vote

by DAN DILLON

State Elections Director Ray Phelps is predicting that Clackamas County voters could turn out in record numbers for the Aug. 9 special election—without leaving their homes.

The special election will mark the county's first attempt at mail-in balloting and his optimism is borne out by previous elections conducted through the mails.

"We believe you're going to have a significant turnout," he told county school administrators Tuesday in Oregon City. "At no time have we experienced less than 55 percent in any of the nine elections so far."

"Generally, at levy elections we've experienced about 70 percent."

That should come as good news to school officials who have seen voters trickle into the polls and narrowly

defeat money requests.

In the last Clackamas County special election, only 17 percent of the county's registered voters cast a ballot, said County Clerk Juanita Orr.

Locally, Sandy High School Superintendent Roberta Hutton is excited about the possibility of the Aug. 9 election and its effect on the SUHS \$2,025,318 A ballot and \$604,421 B ballot.

"Fifteen to 20 percent of registered voter turnout is about standard and that's really sad."

"Summer is a time when people aren't thinking about schools and government services in general," she said. "I'm really excited about (the mail-in election). At least we'll know everyone got a prod to participate."

At Welches, Superintendent Dan Barker feels the impact of the mail-in

vote is yet to be determined. Voters in that district will decide a \$125,881 levy request.

Sandy Elementary District voters will have their third look at the district's \$1,980,914 levy.

Registered voters will receive their ballot packages in the mail July 23 or 25, according to Phelps. Included will be a punch ballot card, a secret envelope and a return envelope. Voters not registered by July 21 won't get a ballot in the mail and will have to travel to Oregon City to register and vote and the County Clerk's office.

Phelps said the returns should start pouring into county headquarters almost immediately. "In the most part," he said, "the largest amount of ballots will be received in the week after mailing."

While results will be tabulated as they are received, Orr's office will

release no returns until after 8 p.m. election day. By 9 p.m. the results should be announced and everyone can go home, a far cry from the traditional all-night waits for most rural election results.

Voters who don't put a stamp on their return envelope or don't sign their election return will have some difficulty.

No stamp means the ballot won't be delivered to county headquarters. Phelps believes the 20-cent stamp is much cheaper than the average cost of getting to the polling place.

No signature will mean a telephone call from the County Clerk's office and a trip to Oregon City to sign the return if the voter wants his ballot counted.

Phony signatures will be the top priority of Orr and her staff. The County Clerk and an assistant, Ben Marberry, plan to attend a special

signature school that should train them to spot signatures that aren't those registered on the poll books.

Phelps advised voters to have their return ballots in the mail by the Friday prior to the Tuesday election to insure it makes its way to county headquarters.

The post office does an extraordinary job of delivering all ballots received before the 8 p.m. poll closure, he said. "We get darn few ballots after election day."

Both Phelps and Orr believe the mail-in ballots will save money.

"I believe it will hold the cost or reduce it," Phelps said, noting that Multnomah County saved \$16,000 on its try at mail-in elections earlier.

Orr is looking to reduced postage costs. "We will save quite a bit on our postage because instead of 20 cents, it will be about 9.9," she said.

For Sandy Superintendent Hutton

the value isn't necessarily in monetary terms alone. "The value is that we'll get so much more participation," she said.

The mail-in program began when Secretary of State Norma Paulus noted a rising number of absentee ballots cast in successive elections. The process has been used since November 1981 and current legislation authorizing the mail-ins sunsets in August 1985.

"No one has done it as extensively as Mrs. Paulus has," Phelps said. "We're by far way ahead."

While the elections director predicts better turnouts, he doesn't necessarily predict better results for school districts. He said data has pointed both ways in the success and failure rate, but it boils down to one thing.

"If you've got a turkey, it ain't gonna fly," he said.

Local students buck national testing trend

by DAN DILLON

A recent report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education suggested that the quality of education in America is slipping and steps should be taken to shore up the erosion before further deterioration cripples the education system.

Parents of local elementary school students should be a bit relieved to know that local administrators have heard that message loud and clear and are already in the process of a "back-to-basics" plan of education. And the results are paying off with the district's continuous curriculum.

Sandy Elementary Superintendent Clark Lund is happy with recent results earned by district students in the nationally standardized California Achievement Test.

"Every grade in the district scored average or above," he pointed out. "In most cases, it was above. All our class appear to be in good shape."

The good news locally, he said, can be tied to the curriculums laid out by the district which have outlined educational programs through the eight years of education the district provides.

And, after trying the "new math" of the 1960s and transitional grammar, the district has gone back to basics and is enjoying the result.

"We have made that move," Lund said. "We're already swinging back toward the higher scores."

While the district scored well, "math is good, but we need to make some improvements in the application of mathematical concepts," he said.

Cedar Ridge School Principal Randi Leuthold agrees. "That is something the state feels, and on the national level needs."

Another weakness is in spelling which is puzzling because the district got exceptional marks on reading, Lund agrees.

"There should be some correlations between good-reader, good-speller. That correlation is not there."

Those shortfalls are what the testing is for—allowing the district to zero in on specific skills that students need emphasized in their education, Lund said.

In areas without the standardized tests, Leuthold said, "we go by our own check-offs so we know what they don't know."

Lund called the continuous curriculum "one of the biggest changes and one of the things of greatest impact."

Looking at the CAT results, he concluded, "I think we're seeing the result of that mapping our curriculum."



Members of the Royal Rosarians help Mountain Festival princess Sydney Lawson plant a rose commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Portland Rose Festival. From left to right in back, members of the Mountain Festival

looking on are Sue Simonson, Margo Dempster, Ann Marie Amstad and queen Marge Hoffman.

Photo by Dan Dillon

Kiwanis hosts fly-in feed this Sunday

Airplanes from eastern Oregon to the coast will have their sights set on a Sandy airport this Sunday, July 17, as the Sandy Kiwanis Club hosts its 26th annual Fly-In Breakfast at Rich's Airport.

The annual fund-raiser will be held at the airport, three miles northeast of Sandy on Oral Hull Road, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Along with the traditional breakfast fare of pancakes, ham and eggs, the club has lined up a number of extra attractions.

Airplane rides will again be offered to the public for a fee. The hangar where the breakfast will be served will also house live musical entertainment.

A display of antique airplanes will be on the grounds and the skies will be filled with parachutists executing some jumps.

Money raised by the breakfast supports Sandy youth projects and the Cripple Children's Camp on Mont Hood.

"One hundred percent of it goes into community projects," said chairman Roger Atkins, "in the form of financial aid to the needy or support of youth."

"Our primary objective is to help youth and needy in the community."

Cost of the breakfast will be \$3.50 for adults and \$2 for children.

Bags packed, hotshot crew awaits fire call

by HANK EMRICH
Post Correspondent

Dual identities don't only belong to superheroes, just ask most members of the Zigzag Hotshots.

For five months each year—June through October—the Hotshots are a highly-respected, quick-response firefighting team, tackling forest fires throughout the western United States.

During the rest of the year, all but the two permanent members of the 20-person crew have occupations varying from ski-instructor to rancher.

Paul Glisan, the group's foreman and one of the permanent U.S. Forest Service employees, even has his own "dual identity." He pursues a doctor's degree in mathematics during off hours and vacations.

In their role as firefighters, the Hotshots live literally with suitcase in hand. The crew is required to be "on call" 24 hours a day and never more than two hours traveling distance from either the Portland or Redmond airport, the usual points of departure when they head out to fight a fire.

Although smokejumpers are generally thought of as fighting fires where access is difficult, it is more generally a hotshot crew called to the scene. There are eight such crews located in Oregon, Washington, and California and whether they are transported by helicopter or walk in, they are almost always on the critical parts of a fire line.

Critical decision making often falls to the Hotshots, and that is part of the lure of the job, according to Glisan.

"I like the challenge of trying to figure a fire out," he says.

Safety is Glisan's biggest concern and safety procedures have been strengthened greatly since the inception of Hotshot teams.

"If the situation is dangerous to life, we will move the line back," said Glisan. "We'd lose a billion acres to save a life if we had to."

Although Glisan has never lost a crew member in the 17 years he's been with Hotshots, the job is not without its risks. In Southern California where sparse vegetation means swiftly moving fires, the greatest danger is being overrun by fire. In the Northwest, the greatest danger is from snags and falling trees and from rocks falling when the fire is burning near cliffs.

Eleven people were lost in one crew in Southern California when overrun by a fire after a sudden wind change.

"You can never get to relaxed, you've got to always be thinking of doing the job safely," said Glisan.

Jeff Hunt falls snags during the fires and says he is always keeping "one eye on the fire and one eye on the tree."

"We get pressed for time but never hurry the job," said Hunt.

Hunt and others have to decide whether a tree should be taken down, whether it can be done safely, and which direction the tree should fall.

"The last thing you want to do is add fuel to the fire," said Hunt.

The dangers of the job do not deter applicants. Glisan said there are 62 qualified applicants on the waiting list and turnover is only one-third that of other Forest Service jobs.

There are five women among the Zigzag Hotshots and Glisan has "absolutely no problems" with women working in the traditionally



Jeff Hunt of the Hotshots clears burned timber as part of the mop-up process after a fire.

Photo by Hank Emrich

male field.

Any negative comments concerning female firefighters could get hotshot Glisan into "hot water." His wife, Kimberly, was the first woman to join a hotshot team in this region. She worked as a hotshot from 1976-1980 while pursuing a degree in forestry. She now works in management for the forest service, specializing in fire control.

"It is just something you can't get out of your blood," says Glisan, who hopes to use his mathematics

education in calculating and predicting rates at which fire will spread when he leaves the Hotshots.

Eileen Branton, who waited two years on her application to the Hotshots, says it is "the best job in the world. Branton has worked with the forest service for seven years, mostly in brush disposal and fire suppression.

"The hot line is pure action and that's what we're in it for," said Branton. "Mopping up is the housework for firefighters, and we

spend a lot of time doing that too."

The "mopping up" referred to by Branton is the time the Hotshots spend after the fire is under control dousing hotspots and embers.

Branton said the job isn't easy, sometimes the water hoses have to be stretched out over a mile from water supply to the fire, "stuck back in a corner of the world."

Glisan said all members are highly motivated and extremely efficient. "The crew members are what pull it all together," said Glisan.

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