

House candidates hoping to represent much of Redmond face off in forum

BY GERRY O'BRIEN
CO Media Group

There were similarities and marked differences between the candidates at the first public forum Tuesday for Oregon House District 53.

Hosted by the Greater Bend Rotary Club, Republican newcomer Michael Sipe and Democratic contender Emerson Levy squared off over the usual thorny issues facing Oregon voters. (Sipe is a member of the club).

Topics ranged from public safety, housing, abortion rights and voting rights to sales tax, universal health care and drug enforcement.

The district is currently represented by Rep. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, who announced in November he wasn't running for a third term. Prior to redistricting, the district surrounded Bend as a sort of doughnut and included Sunriver. Now it has moved further north and includes portions of Bend, Sisters, Tumalo and half of Redmond. The newly drawn district has also gone from a Republican tilt to leaning Democratic.

Sipe, 67, is a former Army Ranger captain who works in business mergers and acquisitions and is a consultant



Submitted photos
Democrat Emerson Levy, left, and Republican Michael Sipe. The two are running for state House District 53.

for CEOs. What motivated him to run was the desire to curb taxes on small business, law-and-order issues and the need to restore balance of power at the state level.

"We have three women and one guy" running the state, he said. "Gov. Kate Brown, House Speaker Tina Kotek, former state Sen. Betsy Johnson and Senate President Peter Courtney." Kotek is the Democratic nominee for governor, and Johnson is seeking to get on the ballot as an unaffiliated candidate for governor.

Public safety, inflation, education and

a common-sense approach to legislating are some of his priorities, he told the gathering of about 60 people Tuesday.

Emerson, 37, is a renewable energy attorney, vice-chair of the Deschutes Democratic Party and a volunteer on Oregon's Task Force for School Safety.

"School safety is my number one priority. Keeping our children safe from harm is important to me," she said. Levy worked with state Rep. Courtney Neron on a school safety bill modeled on Alysia's Law, which was developed by a family of a Parkland, Florida, shooting victim. It is designed to improve response times in school emergencies.

"I am optimistic about our government, that the best days are ahead of us," she said. She added that she believes that government does work for the better good. As an example, she noted, "As someone whose mother suffered from mental illness when I was young, I was able to use a federal Pell grant to go to college and then graduate law school."

Both agreed that climate change is real, but with varying degrees. Emerson emphasized the need to move toward renewable energy while Sipe said, "We need to be deliberate about how we

proceed. There are always unintended consequences when it comes to climate change. I don't believe that in Central Oregon, the diesel farm tractors in the field are causing climate change."

On abortion rights, Sipe said that the issue is pretty well settled in Oregon.

The right to access abortions has been codified in Oregon law since 2017. "I'm pro-life, pro-woman, pro-child," Sipe said. He suggested more should be done to help the foster care and child adoption systems. "I don't think abortions should be taxpayer funded."

Emerson responded simply with, "I trust women to make their own choices"

On allowing noncitizens the right to vote, which Multnomah County is considering in a county charter proposal, Emerson admitted she was not well versed on the issue, but coming from a family of Jewish immigrants, she hoped the country could move away from an "us versus them" attitude.

Sipe said that immigration is a federal issue. He prefers that immigrants learn what it means to be a citizen as the path to citizenship and being allowed to vote. When asked of a public figure they

most admired, Emerson responded, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for his fortitude and Sipe responded Ben Carson, former secretary of Housing and Urban Development, for the way he articulates his faith and knowledge of science.

On a proposed sales tax for Oregon, Levy said that any such tax is regressive, hurting the lowest income earners the most. Sipe also opposes a sales tax and called for eliminating the Corporate Activities Tax, which mostly hurts small businesses with seven to 10 employees, he said.

Both do not believe that there should be a universal health care plan for Oregonians.

"There are too many self-insured plans in Oregon to be covered by a federal law," Levy said.

"I'm a capitalist, not a socialist, and I think a centralized health care plan by the state would be a disaster," Sipe said.

Both also agreed that Measure 110, the law that eased punishments for drug possession in exchange for better drug treatment, has failed to work in Oregon.

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Area home sales swell to a 2-month supply

Spokesman staff

The median marketing time for a single-family home in Redmond increased from less than a week to 10 days in July, double what it was in May when it took five days to sell a home, according to the monthly real estate report.

What's more, about two months worth of homes are on the market now, according to the monthly Beacon Report, which is produced by the Beacon Appraisal Group in Redmond. Still supply remains low, indicating that there's ample demand for the inventory available, according to the report.

The Beacon Report uses the median sales price, which is the midpoint value of all transactions in a month.

In Redmond, the median price of a single family home dipped slightly to \$505,000 in July, compared to \$530,000 in June, according to the report. The bulk of the sales in Redmond in July were conventional mortgages, compared to 16



In this Feb. 18, 2021, file photo, a new home is for sale in Madison, Georgia.

were all cash sales.

The median sales price of a Sisters single family home was \$623,000, compared to \$690,000 in June, according to the report.

In July the median sales price of a single family home in Bend was \$762,000, about the same as it was in April, according to the report. About 50 of the sales in Bend were cash buyers and

115 were conventional loans, according to the report.

In Sunriver the median sales price of a single family home was \$975,000, down \$90,000 from June, according to the monthly report.

And in La Pine, the median sales price of a single family home was \$470,000 in July, compared to \$460,000 in June.

West Nile virus detected in two more groups of Eastern Oregon mosquitoes

Virus confirmed in tests from Baker County insects

BY JAYSON JACOBY
EO Media Group

West Nile virus, which was recently detected for the first time in 2022 in mosquitoes in Baker County, has been confirmed in two more batches of mosquitoes.

The two latest positive tests, like the first, were in mosquitoes trapped in the Keating Valley about 15 miles east of Baker City, according to the Baker Valley Vector Control District.

That 200,000-acre area includes most of Baker, Keating and Bowen valleys.

The first batch of infected mosquitoes was trapped on July 28, and test results from a lab at Oregon State University were done on Aug. 4.

The two more recent cases were in mosquitoes from a different, but nearby, trap, said Matt Hutchinson, who manages the vector control district. Those mosquitoes were trapped on Aug. 5, and the test results arrived late on Tuesday, Aug. 9.

There have been no confirmed cases of the virus in other animals. Mosquitoes can transmit the virus to people, horses and other animals.

West Nile virus has been detected in mosquitoes in Baker County in all but two years (2018 and 2020) over the past decade.



Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus to humans.

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Puzzle Solutions

Guess Who? Answer: Chris Hemsworth

WORD SCRAMBLE Answer: Ball

SUDOKU

3	6	4	7	2	5	9	8	1
8	1	2	6	3	9	4	5	7
7	9	5	4	8	1	2	3	6
9	4	8	3	5	7	6	1	2
5	7	6	1	4	2	3	9	8
2	3	1	8	9	6	5	7	4
4	2	7	9	1	3	8	6	5
1	8	3	5	6	4	7	2	9
6	5	9	2	7	8	1	4	3

WORD SEARCH

CRYPTO FUN

Answers: A. tee B. clubs C. course D. handicap