

Continued from A4

**Branegan Dixon**

**Age:** 43  
**Neighborhood of residence:** NW Redmond  
**Time in Redmond:** 34 years  
**Political experience:** None  
**Work experience:** Entrepreneur  
**Education:** Associate's degree in Business Administration  
**Family:** Wife and two sons

**Why did you choose to run for a council seat?**

I chose to run for the betterment of our community. I grew up here and have built a family and a business here. I have seen Redmond change over the years — some good and others not so desirable. I want to be a part of devising a plan for our homeless population, continue to support mental health wellness, look to the future with infrastructure design, affordable housing and supporting small business and our youth. I love our small town lifestyle and I believe that many that move here do so for that very reason.

We have a tight knit community with strong core values, and I want to be a part in sustaining those values for as long as possible. I plan to focus on issues that we have and not manifest national problems that do not exist in Redmond. I love our little town and I want to love it when it is a big city.

**What in your background gives you the skills to succeed in this position?**

My experience in volunteerism and as a business owner give me the skills needed to succeed in this position. As a member of the Rotary Club of Redmond and many other nonprofit organizations, I understand what it takes to spend the time with the community for specific issues and how to set individual goals. It is imperative for anyone on the city council to have some volunteer experience.

As a business owner that bought a failing business and made it profitable, I understand the commitment and dedication it takes to be successful. I have assessed situations and protocols that were failing and made the proper adjustment and used

the resources that I had to become successful. This is the same concept in running a city.

Cities are set up as businesses and with my experience bringing one out from underwater, I will use the same tactics and mindset in this position.

**What is the city of Redmond doing well and what does it need to improve?**

Redmond does an excellent job in welcoming all citizens to our wonderful city. We also have a great community that comes together for each other and our core values that I have seen on many occasions.

One instance is when COVID hit, I closed my doors for a period of time and didn't charge members for a service that they were unable to use. I had many members reach out and ask me to continue charging them because they wanted me to make it through.

Redmond can improve in the approach we are taking for our homeless community and to protect those that are out on the streets as well as the surrounding residential and business community. We need to stop saying "Sorry, our hands are tied. Good luck."

**How will you measure the success of the council during your term?**

I will measure the success of the council by watching each member take accountability for their actions. We are in the "pass the buck" era. We will need to make our decisions wisely and stand firm on them. And if we mess up, acknowledge the mistake, find a better solution and fix it.

We can not continue to blame others for bad decisions that we make — it just makes us look weak and unreliable. I will speak to and listen to the community. I will be sure to have an "open door" policy and stay connected with our people. Most people are not shy to express their opinions if we are not being efficient and productive.

I will also measure the success of the council by seeing if we are meeting our goals. I believe that is a great way to measure the success of anything in life. What is the issue? What are our best options, and what are the goals of those options? Set the goal, meet it and then on to tackle the next issue.

# Family homes destroyed by arson

BY NICK ROSENBERGER  
Redmond Spokesman

It was still dark on Thursday, Oct. 20, when Irv Willard was jerked out of bed by a police officer. The night air was cold outside his trailer, but flames were already engulfing two homes nearby, which had belonged to his parents.

The fire obliterated the homes, located off Harvest Avenue. The baby blue paint of one gradually turned black as the ceiling collapsed inward. The other home burned until all that was left was its foundation, gnarled metal, a bathtub, kitchen sink and the frame of a shattered glass door.

"Mom and dad worked hard all their life to have that," Willard said. "And boom."

Fire investigators confirmed Oct. 20 that the cause of the house fire was arson. No one was in either home at the time, according to investigators, and there are no reported injuries.

"My brother said he was going to burn it down," Irv Willard told the *Redmond Spokesman* a few days later. "I didn't believe him."

Sometime after 4 a.m. on Thursday morning, one of Willard's neighbors saw the flames while leaving for work.

"It seemed like it was taking them forever to get here," said Lina-Mae Steward, one of Willard's neighbors. "But it really wasn't."



Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman  
**Irv Willard points to where he believes the fire that destroyed his parents' home started on Oct. 20 outside Redmond.**

According to information provided by Redmond Fire & Rescue, fire crews were dispatched about 4:30 a.m. to the blaze. They found two structures on fire and flames in nearby brush and junipers. The flames ate through the buildings and torched the telephone post and electrical box between the two homes. By the time the cop woke Willard up in his trailer, he said everything was already on fire.

Willard had one word for how he felt when he saw the flames: "Sad."

Crews stopped the fire from spreading through the brush and trees and contained the structure fire to just the two homes: a singlewide and a doublewide. Willard's truck and trailer, along with his brother's tan RV with a red stripe down its side, were spared from the inferno.

Crews remained on the scene throughout the day on Thursday extinguishing hot spots.

"This was a home at one time," Willard said. "Completely gone, right down to the foundation."

Willard, a former landscaper who lived in Prineville for 16 years, said he moved back to his parent's property after his mom, Ramona, asked him to help take care of her and one of his brothers who was disabled. His dad died, his mom passed away earlier this year and then his brother died April 1.

Irv said once he cleans up the property, he'll sell the land and move somewhere else, possibly to Missouri where he has some friends.

"I got to clean all this up and I'm getting out of here," he said.

■ Reporter: ttrainor@redmondspokesman.com

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