

SPOKESMAN Opinion

GUEST COLUMN

Vote for change in tight race for commissioner

BY OLIVER TATOM

I'm Oliver Tatom, a registered nurse and paramedic. For the past two years I've supported front-line caregivers as a primary care clinic manager in Bend and La Pine. I grew up in rural Deschutes County, and my childhood home was one of 19 destroyed in the 1996 Skeleton Fire. My wife, Amy, and I returned home to raise our family here. I'm deeply invested in the health and safety of our region, and that's why I'm running to be your next Deschutes County Commissioner.



Tatom

I know the election noise is deafening, but I feel the need to speak out so that voters can see the real differences in the choice for Deschutes County Commissioner. I also feel an increasing urgency right now, because our local elections are being greatly influenced by national politics and big money.

Not only are issues being raised by the Supreme Court and the Congress, but money is flooding into this campaign from huge conservative donors that seem to be trying to buy the election. The *Bend Bulletin* recently reported that my opponent, Tony DeBone, has received over \$40,000 from PACs funded by real estate development groups. It's no wonder that he refuses to take meaningful steps to address the housing crisis. Instead he advocates for the kind of sprawl that will make his funders a lot of money, and then he blames the state's land use system for his own inaction.

At the national level the Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade is a clear example of how national politics leak into our system. It shines a light on the important work of the providers at our county's safety net Reproductive Health clinic, where women can seek family planning services regardless of their ability to pay. Commissioner DeBone brags about his endorsement by anti-abortion groups, and he voted to deny health insurance coverage for county employees and their families seeking abortion care as required by state law.

I understand the stresses our first responders and frontline healthcare workers have endured these past few years — and continue to endure today — because I've walked in their shoes. COVID-19 is no longer threatening to overwhelm our hospitals, but public health remains more important than ever. Our local hospitals, nursing facilities, and EMS agencies are under enormous financial strain and face dire staffing shortages, underscoring the urgent need for investments in prevention. That means we need to lean into programs like Healthy Schools, the innovative partnership between Deschutes County Public Health and Bend-La Pine Schools to prevent substance use, teen pregnancy, and suicide. I hope to expand that program to Redmond and Sisters. DeBone has voted against Healthy Schools three years in a row.

My service on the Deschutes Rural Fire District #2 Board of Directors and the Deschutes County Project Wildfire Steering Committee has given me additional insight into the challenges facing our community, like the rising wildfire risk — worse today than when I lost my own home 26 years ago. Deschutes County's Natural Resources Department is a crucial partner in fire prevention efforts, but the department recently lost its entire staff. In today's economic environment, we have to support the people doing the work and fight to retain them.

From drought to homelessness, issues that didn't used to impact quality of life in Central Oregon have become major challenges over the many years DeBone has been in office. If we want better outcomes we have to do things differently. We have to overcome the influence of national politics and big money to elect leaders with vision and a willingness to take action. But that depends on you.

So, talk to your friends and neighbors and encourage them to vote in every race, all the way down the ballot, including both county commissioner seats. This election is going to be incredibly close and it may very well be your vote that decides the future of Deschutes County. Make it count!

■ Oliver Tatom is a candidate for Deschutes County Commissioner.

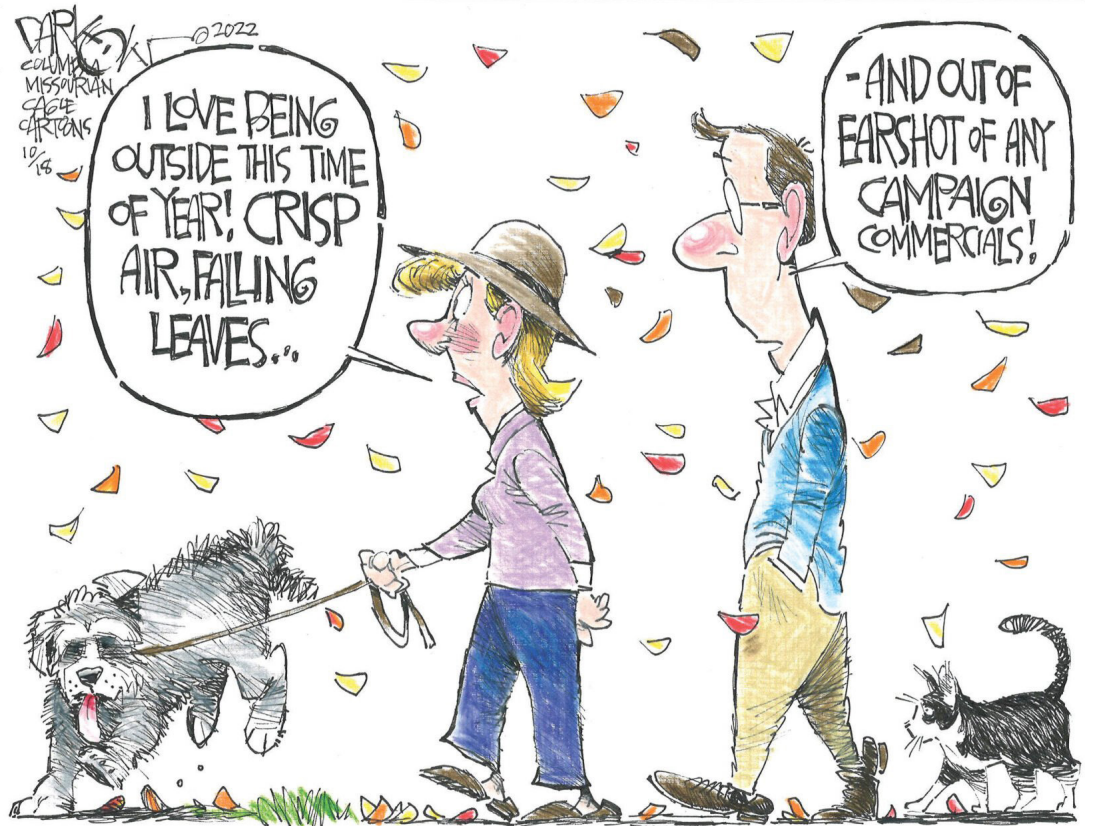
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How to submit:

- Email is preferred: news@redmondspokesman.com
- Or mail to: 361 SW Sixth Street, Redmond OR 97756



YOUR VIEWS

Current mayor says Schimmoller best for the job

I have been asked many times why I endorsed Ben Schimmoller for Redmond mayor. Ben is young, smart, dedicated and experienced. He is Redmond's future. He has the contacts the mayor needs to help Redmond progress.

Ben is focused on where Redmond is headed. He talks about the projects we need to support the growth we are experiencing. He discusses the methods we need to attract living wage businesses to Redmond while supporting those who are currently here. His opponents are both legacies of the past — one a mayor from decades ago, and the other serving on council for many, many years.

If you look at my tenure, you find that I discovered being mayor cannot be focused completely on local issues and decision making. The mayor must make contacts and "friends" with legislators and decision makers at the higher levels of government. The old saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know" is true, and the higher you go in government, the truer that statement becomes. Add to that, elected officials like to interface with other

elected officials. Ben knows all of those officials. Look at who endorsed him.

One of Ben's opponents stated that he will send staff to make the contacts. It won't work. His other opponent says that it's what you know; contacts don't mean so much. Also, not true.

Ben has what it takes to be mayor.
George Endicott
Mayor, Redmond

Voters should choose their leaders wisely

There is only a few more weeks before we decide who will be the new leaders in Deschutes County and Redmond.

I would like to encourage everyone to vote, but most of all vote for leaders who you believe have the qualifications to do the job. Before voting, consider what kind of leadership you want and what that would look like. Components of leadership include trustworthiness, character and competence. These attributes are all equally important for leaders to possess.

Leaders also have to be visionaries to implement progressive change and have the ability to achieve goals. Leaders must be competent. Com-

petence requires one to work diligently. It requires mental acuity to solve difficult problems facing our county and cities. They must be champion team builders who know the value and importance of clear, honest and accurate communication.

As a voice for Deschutes County and Redmond, we need leaders who are willing to listen for understanding, knowledgeable of issues, and prepared to brainstorm and find resolutions. Leaders should have a proven record of leadership and the ability to overcome adversity.

This is a mark of high professional wisdom and courage and it converts adversity into positive improvement for our county and communities.

These qualifications would be the most important as we enter into 2023. I encourage you to listen to the debates, consider the qualifications of the candidates, and above all watch with open eyes and an open mind to measure the worth of all the candidates who are asking for your vote to be your leader. Be wise and confident when you cast your vote on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Let's keep Redmond on track for prosperity.

Clifford Evelyn
Redmond City Councilor

GUEST COLUMN

Re-elect Adair for commissioner

BY DR. DAVID M. COUTIN

Oregonians, like the rest of the country, are highly skeptical and cynical about the political process. Watergate, Irangate, 33,000 deleted Clinton emails and foundation fundraising, Russiagate, January 6th, the FBI and Hunter Biden, and legislators achieving millionaire status while supposedly serving the people, have led most of us to be highly distrustful of the political process and our institutions. I get it! That doesn't mean we should abandon politics, but we should demand more accountability from our candidates and public officials.

The mantra of the '60s was that if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. It starts with choosing candidates with integrity, honesty, compassion, experience, and action. Such is the case of the most qualified incumbent that I have known in 25 years of political activity, Patti Adair who is re-running for Deschutes County commissioner. I have known Patti for the past five years. She entered the office like a whirlwind investigating the issues of homelessness, suicide prevention, addiction, mental illness, public health, land use, and county budget. She networked and sought comprehensive details on each of these issues. She listened and asked incisive questions. As a consequence, she racked up an extensive list of accomplishments. She held property tax increases under

6 cents per thousand for the past three years. She helped secure a decade long goal of two additional circuit court judges in 2021 by launching a telephone/email campaign. She brought about safety updates at Harper Bridge in 2019. She managed the opening of the Deschutes County Veterans' office an additional day of the week. She advocated for Habitat for Humanity and added a bus route from La Pine to Sunriver. She helped move the Terrebonne sewer system forward. She helped open the stabilization center for the acute mentally ill. She has been working to use state facilities in Central Oregon to offer inpatient mental health and addiction services. She's looking to house the homeless in county facilities where they can have access to transportation and comprehensive services and learn ways to re-integrate into society. She sits on the Central Oregon Health Council and is looking at ways to improve the backlog of 8,000 surgeries by coordinating between St. Charles and the community outpatient surgery centers.

In a recent Rotary debate in Redmond, Commissioner Adair's opponent Morgan Schmidt actually faulted the commissioner for failing to raise property taxes by \$2 million dollars and then gave an analogy of a homeowner failing to improve upon the value of his property. Someone appropriately pointed out that Morgan wasn't spending her own money, that she was spending taxpayers' money.

She then responded that some of that money was hers. Schmidt just doesn't get it! She is spending other peoples' money, folks on a fixed income during the worst inflation in 40 years on her "pet projects." Schmidt is confused about raising money for a charitable church project and spending hard earned taxpayer dollars on ever increasing public projects. She further went on to say that she didn't have to have a CPA background because the county employs many CPAs. She fails to recognize the incredible value that Adair brings to the position by effectively managing a multimillion budget and saving taxpayers millions of dollars of their funds. Ms. Schmidt has never met a dollar that she would not gladly spend. Citizens should be concerned about Ms. Schmidt's activist association with Central Oregon Peacekeepers and her need for a bullhorn and gas mask. She was active in preventing police action against people convicted of harassment and assault. (The Source Aug. 14, 2020).

Commissioner Adair has a demonstrated history listening to her constituents and advocating for them. She has been extremely accessible and responsive to their needs. I hope you will join me and many others in recognizing that she represents Central Oregon common sense values and Vote Patti Adair for county commissioner!

■ Dr. David M. Coutin is a retired immunologist who lives in Bend.