

ELECTION '16 | STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 32

Oregon voters should lengthen Boone's Oregon House tenure



Deborah Boone

The race for the District 32 seat in the Oregon House of Representatives pits incumbent Democrat Deborah Boone against Republican challenger Bruce Bobek. Boone is in her sixth term of office and seeks a seventh, while it's Bobek's first time running for state office.

Both candidates have a deep desire to help others and make Clatsop County a better place to live, but Boone's lengthy tenure, experience and record of accomplishments make her our choice to fill the seat. We hope that in the event of Boone's re-election, Bobek will remain active in the area's civic and political affairs, he has much to offer.

Bobek is an impressive challenger. He is president of the medical staff at Columbia Memorial Hospital, but will be retiring at the end of the year after spending 50 years in health care as a physician and internist. He has previously served as a Warrenton city commissioner, and stresses the state's

need for compassionate, nonpolarizing leadership.

Bobek sees education as a priority issue with a reduced amount spent on administration and more on students and teaching. He also believes the state's transportation shortcomings are aggravated even more by too much bureaucracy in the Department of Transportation.

Bobek's long experience in health care, no doubt, would be an obvious asset in the Legislature.

But Boone's accomplishments and record of legislative leadership, support and sponsorship of projects in the state House benefiting this area are even more impressive.

She has a background in the construction industry and in oceanography, and she has been a strong backer of emergency preparedness for the region. Boone served as the legislative lead on the Oregon Resilience Plan, which outlines ways to reduce risks and improve recovery in the event of a

Cascadia earthquake and tsunami.

She has been a forceful voice in support of Oregon's veterans and she has served on the House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee, the Energy and Environment Committee and on the Ways and Means human services subcommittee.

On a statewide basis, she is a vocal supporter of educational improvement efforts, public safety, children's welfare, senior services and, importantly, of simplifying state government and how residents interact with it.

She sees the great need for Oregon to improve its infrastructure and to tame the beast of the Public Employees Retirement System without breaking the contractual promise to its current beneficiaries. She also wants the state to start more long-term strategic planning rather than just planning for the short term of legislative bienniums.

Locally, Boone helped procure funding for sea-floor mapping that has

provided tsunami modeling, fisheries research and updated navigational charts, and she assisted with the NOAA Fisheries relocation to Oregon. And while Boone has been a strong Democratic voice in the House in representing Clatsop County interests, she hasn't shied away from that commitment when those same interests may conflict with party platforms and policies.

The region's voters should reward Boone for that legislative leadership and commitment by returning her to Salem for the seventh term she seeks.

ELECTION '16 | GEARHART MAYORAL RACE

Gearhart should tap Brown for mayor

The race to become mayor of Gearhart provides voters with two excellent candidates, Matt Brown and Bob Shortman, who each want to help the city sort through its recent divisiveness.

We think Brown has a slightly better chance of making that happen and he gains our endorsement. Shortman, though, has a number of good suggestions about consensus building. City leaders should take heed of that goal no matter who becomes mayor.

Brown, a professional golfer and general manager at the Highlands Golf Club, and Shortman, a semi-retired general contractor, are vying to replace Mayor Dianne Widdop, who is not seeking re-election. Widdop defeated Shortman for mayor in 2012 by only five votes.

Both Brown, 41, and Shortman, 63, have prior volunteer city service. Brown served on the city's Planning Commission for six years including as president. He has a thorough background on the city's comprehensive plan and says the city should adhere to it. Shortman is a former chairman of the Gearhart budget committee and continues to serve on the finance panel. He has a strong background as a business owner with financial matters, and wants to make sure city projects come in on time, on budget.

Shortman is also the current chairman of Clatsop County Republicans, but is leaving that volunteer position next month when his term expires. Importantly, the mayor's job is nonpartisan and is not a factor in the race or our endorsement decision.

Both candidates agree the city needs improved emergency preparedness

and infrastructure.

At the heart of Gearhart's divisiveness, which both candidates acknowledge, is the issue of short-term vacation rentals. The tranquil residential community recently passed its first ever short-term rentals regulations after a long process. And while the city's comprehensive plan provides language against vacation rentals in residential areas, the city compromised by grandfathering existing rentals that meet specific conditions, but also enacted regulations that include density limitations and parking requirements.

A segment of residents believe the regulations are too strict and that they weren't properly heard before the city enacted the ordinance. As a result there have been threatened lawsuits and a ballot initiative is already under way for a future election.

Shortman believes that aftermath could have been avoided if there had been more openness, transparency and efforts to be inclusive. There needs to be consensus, he says, and if he is elected he wants to be remembered as the mayor who brought "friendliness back to Gearhart."

We think Brown has a slightly better future vision and chance of success. His record includes helping resolve conflicts and of fostering better communication between the Planning Commission, city staff and city councilors. Most importantly, he says the city needs to improve communication with residents and suggests better use of the internet and social media.

Brown's vision for Gearhart is to "get back to calm waters," and voters should allow him to try and accomplish that goal.



Matt Brown

ELECTION '16 | ASTORIA CITY COUNCIL

Jones' experience merits Astoria seat

In the race for the Ward 4 seat on the Astoria City Council, both candidates have the enthusiasm to serve and the desire to make Astoria a better place to live.

Vying for the seat are two political newcomers: Bruce Jones, a retired U.S. Coast Guard commander with an impressive record of career achievements; and Cory Pederson, a symphony conductor and music teacher who has achieved success by working with people, getting all perspectives and focusing on common goals. Importantly, neither candidate is running to fix a specific problem with an agenda going into office. Both would want their tenure on the council marked by simply doing the job with daily excellence.

While both candidates would be a good fit, Jones stands out for his leadership, experience and vision, and he merits our endorsement.

Although Pederson, 37, doesn't have a resume quite as full as Jones, he has a solid record of success in his profession, of taking a symphony on the brink of disbanding and developing it into a thriving organization. He is president of the Jewell Educational Association union, and he sits on the boards of the Astoria Music Festival, Columbia River Symphony and North Oregon Coast Symphony.

However, we feel Jones, 56, is a stronger candidate for the position, and should he win, we hope Pederson will become more involved in city affairs.

Jones spent 30 years in the Coast Guard and faced making what amounts to life-and-death decisions. He displays the

judgment, integrity and leadership that would make him a true asset to a council that is clearly in transition.

Jones has a master's degree in public administration, and he served his final years in the Coast Guard as commander of the Columbia River sector. He is active on several nonprofit boards, including the Columbia River Maritime Museum, Friends of the Astoria Column and Friends of the Astoria Armory. He previously was on the United Way of Clatsop County board.

One of his top priorities is day-to-day budget management with future foresight, especially on matters of infrastructure so the city isn't surprised down the road by its past decisions. He also believes the city needs to have better relationships with its neighbors, as well as working closer with the county and the Port of Astoria to solve common problems throughout the region.

Jones understands the changing face of Astoria and the delicate balance of preserving the past and pushing for the future. His experience includes being the former chief of strategic analysis for the Coast Guard in Washington, D.C., and he would like to see the city develop a strategic plan and establish a five-year vision that takes into account the diversity of the economy between its working-class roots and its upscale tourism transition. His experience in disaster response and working with all responding agencies would be invaluable.

Jones' well-rounded and deep qualifications make him the right person at the right time for the position and voters should respond by electing him to office.



Bruce Jones

ELECTION '16 | LOCAL BOND ISSUES

Seaside's school bond issue should be approved

A \$99.7 million bond initiative that would help relocate three public schools in the Seaside School District out of the tsunami zone dominates local ballot initiatives.

In another Seaside initiative, and Astoria as well, voters will decide whether to impose a 3 percent local tax on retail marijuana sales. Pot is also on the ballot in Cannon Beach, where voters are being asked to decide whether the city should ban the sale of recreational marijuana and also whether it should be taxed if the prohibition doesn't pass.

In Warrenton, voters will weigh in on a charter amendment that would require double-majority voter approval before the city can transfer or dispose of assets valued at more than \$100,000.

Seaside schools bond

Voters shouldn't hesitate to say "Yes" to this initiative, which would move Gearhart Elementary, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School to new, safe facilities on high ground out of the danger zone. Gearhart Elementary would move to become an annex of Seaside Heights Elementary, while Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School would move to a new campus close by.

Seaside School District Superintendent-emeritus Doug Dougherty has worked diligently on the project, which U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden has termed "a life or death"

matter for the children's safety.

The three schools were each built with an expected lifespan of 45 to 50 years. Each has been used beyond that span. "The schools are currently unsafe, they are deteriorating and they're very inefficient," Dougherty says.

A 2013 district bond issue asked for \$128.8 million to fund a new campus and would have required \$2.16 per thousand dollars of assessed value for property owners. That measure failed.

The new bond was scaled down and equates to about \$1.35 per thousand, a 37.5 percent reduction in cost from the previous bond.

The bond is not filled with "wish-list" items. As school board Chairman Steve Phillips says, it provides for "what we honestly have to have, not just as a safety factor for our children, but to replace deteriorating buildings that are starting to cost the district money that we don't have."

We agree, and voters should say "Yes" to it.

Pot initiatives

Voters should approve the proposed 3 percent marijuana taxes in Astoria and Seaside, as well as Cannon Beach if voters there do not ban recreational pot sales in the city. The tax, which would bring the retail tax to 20 percent in January, is an option all cities can pursue under state law. Elected officials and local pot retailers

have supported the tax.

Residents of all Oregon cities have the right to decide whether marijuana sales are compatible with the character of their communities, and we are not taking a position on whether Cannon Beach should or should not adopt a ban, but voters there should approve the 3 percent tax in the event that a prohibition fails.

It's also important to know what a ban does and does not do. Adults can legally possess and use marijuana, and banning sales doesn't change that. Adults who wish to purchase pot need only drive to a community that permits sales, and they are free to use it as the law allows.

Warrenton charter amendment

Voters should say "No" to a charter amendment that would require double-majority voter approval before the city transfers or disposes of assets valued at over \$100,000. Backers of the amendment have opposed the city's potential transfer of Tansy Point to Warrenton Fiber. City officials have said, however, that the amendment could also apply to other assets. The commission tweaked election law this year to make it harder to pass such restrictions.

Approving this amendment requiring voters to approve asset sales and transfers by a double majority ties the hands of those who we elect to do that job. It should be defeated.

Other races and unopposed positions

There are three other contested races on the ballot, a seat on the Warrenton City Commission and one each on the Seaside and Cannon Beach city councils. The Daily Astorian chose to limit endorsements in cities outside of Astoria to mayoral positions. A factor in that decision was endorsements in two of three of those races had to be withheld because of professional relationships with candidates that could present the appearance of conflicts of interest.

In Warrenton, the City Commission Position 1 is between incumbent Pam Ackley and challenger Ryan Lampi. In Cannon Beach, three are vying for a councilor-at-large position. They are Herb Florer, Brandon Ogilvie and Nancy McCarthy. In Seaside, Don Johnson and Tom Horning are vying for the Ward 3 council seat.

Unopposed candidates across the region are:

- Clatsop County Sheriff: Tom Bergin.
- Astoria City Council, Ward 2: Thomas Brownson.
- Gearhart City Council, Position 2: Sue Lorain.
- Gearhart City Council, Position 4: Daniel Jesse.
- Seaside City Council, Ward 4: Seth Morrissey.
- Seaside City Council, At Large: Randall Frank.
- Warrenton City Commission, Position 2: Henry Balensifer.
- Warrenton City Commission, Position 3: Thomas Dyer.