



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Candidates running for Clatsop County commissioner take their seats.

County: Candidates vie for three seats

Continued from Page 1A

“That will have the largest impact on us, on our quality of life — locally, of course — than any other factor,” he said.

Wev declined to narrow her priorities, saying that doing so is not “good government.” She opted instead to explain her government experience in other areas and as a land use consultant.

She brought up the likelihood that a jail bond will have to compete with two school bond measures on the November ballot — one in Astoria and another in Warrenton — as an example of how local governments can better coordinate.

In District 1, Mark Kujala — owner of Skipanon Brand Seafood and a former Warrenton mayor — George McCartin — a retired attorney and regular presence at public meetings — and Andy Davis — a medical data analyst — are vying for the seat being vacated by Scott Lee, the board’s chairman. While each candidate listed some specific points of interest, they all agreed on one area in need of change: the commission’s functionality.

McCartin pointed to infighting on the commission as the No. 1 area he would want to address.

“My priority would be to get the commission itself, through solidarity

COMING THURSDAY
Congressional candidates talked policy at forum.

and dialogue, get them together to stop any antagonism,” he said.

Kujala stressed job creation throughout the forum, mentioning his support for policies such as allowing enterprise zones as incentives for development.

“I would think that jobs and affordable housing are probably the most pressing issues for the county,” he said. “But I also agree with George and think stability is important to having a board or commission.”

Davis touted his professional experience as an indicator of his ability to parse through complex decisions. He has mentioned education as a priority since he announced his candidacy, specifically his opposition to a county study examining the feasibility of privately funded preschool. Along with the two other candidates, though, he pressed the need for the commission to work better together.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson is facing challenger Susana Gladwin — a Jewell farmer — in the race for the District 5 seat. Both discussed housing, economic development and emergency preparedness — three topics Thompson has often highlighted

at commission meetings, as well. The most specific proposals from each candidate came in a discussion about preparedness for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

Thompson said it is critical to train residents in disaster preparation, build up supplies and establish relationships with other at-risk counties. She mentioned her attendance at statewide conferences, which has drawn criticism from other commissioners due to her travel expenses, as useful in this context.

“We have friends all over the state to help us,” Thompson said.

Gladwin said she was isolated for four days on her Jewell farm in 1996 due to flooding on the Nehalem River. She said Seaside needs bicycle evacuation drills, bridges and more truck routes out of cities.

“We plan constantly about how as a community we will survive because we know we’ll be isolated after a bad earthquake and the bridges are down,” she said.

Both Thompson and Gladwin largely avoided addressing a question about the upcoming bond measure that would relocate and expand the county jail at a cost of more than \$20 million. Most of the other candidates supported the need for a new jail with the exception of McCartin, who questioned whether such an expense is justified.

House: Five candidates hope to replace Boone

Continued from Page 1A

“I served this area, and the people who remember me know it’s not what you do in Salem,” Josi said. “It’s what you do when you’re in the district.”

Orr, a local lawyer, called himself the true progressive candidate of the race, noting his experience leading the North Coast Land Conservancy, working at recycling company Trails End Recovery, running a local legal practice for 24 years and serving as a municipal judge in Gearhart for more than 20 years.

“I know firsthand the issues that face the people who live here and work here,” Orr said. “I know how laws affect people.”

Mitchell, a case management coordinator for the state Department of Human Services, moved to Oregon from Utah in 2015 and jumped into the race after local college adviser Melissa Ousley dropped out.

An activist with progressive group Indivisible North Coast Oregon, Mitchell has cast herself as a candidate for the working class. “I’m going to be that voice that will fight for all of you in Salem,” she said.

Vineeta Lower, an educator with the Oregon Virtual Academy, is the sole Republican candidate after the withdrawal of Banks contractor Gene Stout. She touted her education experience and said the state needs to focus more on developing trades programs and internships to increase student engagement.

Brian Halvorsen, a community organizer who founded North Coast Progressives last year, has filed as an Independent and focused his campaign on economic fairness, environmental justice and campaign finance reform.

Asked how they would address school safety, the three Democratic candidates and Halvorsen focused on stricter gun laws and improved mental health services. While a ban of assault-style weapons would be

unlikely to pass constitutional muster because of operational similarities with a hunting rifle, Orr said, he supports intensive yearly mental health screenings for students. As a former teacher, Lower said, schools need to focus on bullying.

All candidates except for Lower supported reworking the tax system to provide more revenue for services. Mitchell, Orr and Halvorsen specifically supported raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations. Lower said the focus should be on trimming government waste.

All candidates voiced support for a national popular vote for president except for Lower, who seemed unsure, and all supported some form of campaign finance reform. Halvorsen said the state should move toward a similar model of partial public financing found in Portland, where municipal candidates starting next year can agree to limit private fundraising in exchange for a public match.

Each candidate was given a chance to voice a top priority.

“If we don’t have housing for the people who want to work in our communities, we’re going to grind this economy down to a halt,” Josi said.

Orr focused on raising taxes on the wealthy rather than the middle class to stabilize funding. “Until we do this, we will accomplish nothing,” he said.

Mitchell, recounting how her parents’ insurance was able to pay for treatment of her brain tumor as a child, focused on the need for affordable health care. “No one should have to worry about their own finances when they’re sick,” she said. “They should be focused on getting better.”

Lower decried the condition of Northwest Oregon’s highways, calling for more infrastructure investments.

Halvorsen called for economic fairness. “We need to level the playing field between the rich and the working class,” he said.

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