

# Observing Vancouver

## I-5 Bridge Tolls Debated

### Divides mayoral candidates

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A primary election for Mayor of Vancouver on Tuesday, Aug. 18 might have implications for Portland and a proposed new I-5 bridge.

Mayor Royce Pollard faces a serious challenge from Tim Leavitt, a Vancouver City Council member and environmental engineer, over a controversial stance the mayor has taken on tolls to help pay a share of the \$4.2 billion project and serve as a brake to expanding traffic on the bridge.

Pollard has joined Portland Mayor Sam Adams and most other state and regional governments in supporting tolls.

The issue has been the principle wedge defining the

mayoral race, according to Vancouver City Council Member Larry Smith.

Currently there has been talk of charging drivers crossing the bridge up to \$8 during peak rush hours.

Leavitt, who opposes toll-



Royce Pollard Tim Leavitt

ing, has drawn an increasing amount of support.

According to campaign finance records, Leavitt is running a serious campaign. The latest figures show he has collected \$51,424 in donations for the campaign and spent \$42,425. Pollard has

raked in \$50,429 in contributions and spent \$34,895.

The final details of the massive public works bridge project are still being hashed out, but whoever ends up assuming the reigns of power in Vancouver will have significant clout on the issue.

If funding doesn't trickle in and a source of revenue doesn't appear soon Pollard worries that the project will be delayed for years.

Leavitt did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Also running is a third candidate, Charles Stemper who has raised little money and wants to preserve Vancouver's status as a "bedroom community." Only the top two candidates in the primary election will advance to the general election in November.

## Congressman Avoids Face Time

### Opts for telephone 'town hall'

The potential of having a town hall forum collapse into violence has prompted Congressman Brian Baird, D-Vancouver, to completely forgo having such a meeting, instead opting for a "telephone town hall."

Across the country members of Congress have been holding town hall forums during their August recess to engage their constituents on health



Brian Baird

care reform. Such meetings have become increasingly explosive, with health care opponents disrupting them and in at least one case, a fist fight broke out.

Baird told the Columbian newspaper that opponents of health care reform who disrupt town hall forums were using tactics akin to those of the Nazis, and was concerned something similar would happen if he held a public forum.

Telephone town halls allow constituents to listen in and ask their member of congress questions if they are selected.

Neighboring Congressman Earl Blumenauer, D-Portland, also has no face-to-face town halls scheduled, according to spokesperson Erin Allweiss, who wouldn't directly address whether or not the decision was rooted in concerns over potential disruptions.

"He wants to engage his constituents more, and get a better diversity of questions," said Allweiss.

## Transit to Fair

Vancouver's mass transit bus system is providing special shuttle service to the Clark

County Fair in Ridgefield through Sunday, Aug. 16.

The special service begins after 12:30 p.m. with the last bus departing the fairgrounds at 11

p.m. each evening. The round-trip cost is \$2 per person or \$4 for groups up to six. Free for age six and under. TriMet tickets and passes also accepted.

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