

# UMATILLA COUNTY COMMISSIONER RACE Bailor challenges Elfering

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Back in 2012, Bill Elfering of Hermiston was set on finding someone to run for Umatilla County commissioner. But each person he asked, he said, did not want the job.

Then someone told him he should run.

He did, against two other candidates seeking the commissioner position No. 3, and won with almost 67 percent of the vote. With four years under his belt, he said he wants voters to send him back for another term.

This time out, he has just one opponent — Thomas Bailor of Pendleton. Bailor was one of six candidates vying for the county commissioner No. 1 seat in the May 2013 special election and finished fifth with 6 percent of the vote.

Elfering comes from a career in the insurance field, and he said his focus is on the county doing the most with its resources. He is the county's director of economic development and in charge of a \$300,000 budget for that purpose. The county used to spend that money on all kinds of items, such as a banners for the state fair or helping chambers of commerce. That

changed under Elfering. "It should be used instead as an investment, the creation of jobs," he said.

That's one reason he said the county poured those funds and others — more than \$2 million so far — into the Eastern Oregon Event and Trade Center in Hermiston. The county will get a new home for the annual fair out the deal, he said, in a venue worth about \$14 million. Elfering called that a good return on the investment.

Elfering and fellow commissioners Larry Givens and George Murdock cut administrative positions in the county government, most noticeably in their office. The board also implemented professional development for county employees and allowed and encouraged county department heads to speak to the media and public about happenings in county government.

Elfering voted for those innovations, but he couldn't point to any he came up with.

Bailor worked as an archaeologist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation from 1998 until 2010 when he quit to finish a masters degree in organization and leadership at Gonzaga University, Spokane. He also teaches the Chinese martial art

of Tai Chi. He said the county lacks a strategic economic plan and is not doing enough to invest in the future, a word he uses often.

The county would rather pay attention to whiskey, wine and beer, Bailor said, instead of the billion-dollar industry of remote-controlled aerial vehicles. He said the lack of air traffic at the airport in Pendleton means it is ripe for experimental aircraft.

"Yeah, I think the county commissioners are a little asleep at the wheel on the impact of where the drones are going on the planet," he said. But that is what comes, he said, when only retired people seek election.

"They're not hungry," he said. "... We need a vision for 2050."

Bailor, however, is not doing much to articulate that vision to voters who already know Elfering.

Three years ago Bailor had little election strategy other than using Facebook and speaking at candidate forums. Nothing shows that has changed, and without putting in a lot of work and a fair amount of money to build name recognition in just a few weeks, his chances are low of toppling Elfering from the position he has grown comfortable in.

## PENDLETON



## Hazardous household waste disposed



Hundreds of locals brought in their hazardous household waste to the collection event Saturday in Pendleton. State contractor Clean Harbors sent a crew of 29 to handle the waste. Thomas King, Clean Harbors district manager in Kent, Washington, estimated the waste would hit 50,000 pounds. About 20 percent can be recycled, he said, such as latex paint, and the rest goes into incinerators, including some for fuel in cement manufacturing.

Staff photos by Phil Wright

## HERMISTON

## No charges in April 13 shooting

Case forwarded to DA's office

By JENNIFER COLTON  
East Oregonian

A Hermiston man was shot just after midnight on Wednesday, but no charges have been filed.

At 12:24 a.m. on Wednesday, April 13, Hermiston police received a report on an intoxicated man "causing a scene" on Sater Court in Hermiston. The intoxicated man, a 24-year-old from Hermiston who did not live in the area, was involved in an altercation with a couple who were visiting a relative.

The intoxicated man made threats against the couple, and a 31-year-old Hermiston man fired a warning shot from a small caliber handgun, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston. The intoxicated man kept moving forward and threatening the couple, and the man fired multiple shots, one of which struck the intoxi-

cated man in the torso. The intoxicated man was treated at Good Shepherd Medical Center for non-threatening wounds.

Monday, Hermiston police sent the report on the shooting to the Umatilla County District Attorney's office. Hermiston police have not filed any charges.

"Based on statements from everyone involved, we believe we have a clear understanding of what transpired, and, as a result, we are not issuing any charges at this time," Edmiston said Monday.

The case was forwarded to the District Attorney's office for further review, and Edmiston said it has "serious components" of self-defense.

District Attorney Dan Primus said Monday the office has not reviewed the case but will make a determination on any charges once all information is reviewed.

Because no charges have been filed and the case is under investigation, no names have been released. The Sater Court shooting

"We're confident that this was an accidental discharge of a weapon he had in his pocket."

— Jason Edmiston,  
Hermiston Police Chief

was the second shooting last week to yield no criminal charges. A 46-year-old Hermiston man was hospitalized Monday for an accidental, self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Hermiston police responded to Good Shepherd Medical Center at 12:37 p.m. Monday for a report of a patient with an accidental, self-inflicted gunshot wound to his leg.

"We're confident that this was an accidental discharge of a weapon he had in his pocket," Edmiston said, adding no charges have been filed.

Contact Jennifer Colton at jcolton@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534



Youth baseball players stride Saturday to their season openers in Adams during the town's annual celebration.

## Adams Day serves slice of American pie

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

The Adams Day parade is short but ripe with Americana.

There's the local fire engines, the line of Model A Fords, Grand Marshal Jennifer Davison riding in a Chevrolet Corvette. And then the very reason for the day — troops of youth baseball and softball players strolling down Main Street toward their season openers.

Around 350 people live in the bucolic bedroom community tucked next to farm land just west of Highway 11 between Pendleton and Athena. But the population swells one Saturday each April as Adams rolls out the welcome for Little League.

Saturday's weather was about as good as it could get in early spring. More than a dozen vendors in and around the city park offered homemade goods from beef rubs to decorative gourds.

Fundraising also is big part of Adams Day. The Adams Ladies Club offers cinnamon rolls and biscuits and gravy for breakfast until 10 a.m., when it became time for handmade pie. Sue Peterson of Pendleton raved about the strawberry.

Club president Becky Holmes, wife of Adam's Mayor Dane Holmes, said selling the eats allows the small but hearty club to help support community events, such as taco night in the park or wreaths for local graves.

The Adams Public Library got in on the act with its book sale. Once again, the proceeds go to community events, such as movies in the park. And the local Lions Club holds a membership drive. Its president, Bruce Busbee, and his wife, Adams native Betty Jane Busbee, also serve on the city council.

That's sort of part of Adams. Holmes said the town has a core of community members who volunteer



Toni Elder gives a new look to Aileen Christiansen on Saturday in downtown Adams during the small town's annual celebration.

to help in so many ways.

And though you can't see Adams from the highway, she said, the town is worth the few minutes drive to see and get to know.

Artist-at-large Toni Elder has lived in Adams close to 35 years. She provided face decorating Saturday for children and adults. She said Adams is the still the kind of place where the locals might not know the name of

the roads, but they know just where their neighbors live and who they are.

She raised her children here, she said, and there is just no better place she would rather live.

Well, she said, unless she could live on the beach at Maui.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

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