

Givens, Murdock running again for county board

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Larry Givens and George Murdock will each seek another term as Umatilla County commissioner.

The county elections office confirmed Murdock filed his Position 1 candidacy paperwork Tuesday morning to run in the May primary. Givens was on the road Tuesday morning to John Day for an Eastern Oregon Counties Association meeting on Blue Mountain forest management and said he "definitely will be running again" for Position 2 and plans to file this week.

Commissioners serve four-year terms. Givens is seeking a fourth consecutive term. Murdock won the 2013 special election and is seeking a second full term. Commissioner Bill Elfering won a second term in 2016.

Givens said he wants to remain a voice for the county on pressing natural resource issues, from forest



Givens



Murdock

He is the immediate past president of the Association of Oregon Counties and serves on multiple association committees and is active in the National Association of Counties. He also is a policy board member

and wolf management to wind farms to irrigation. The last, he said, is key to the county's economic development.

"If you're not at the table, you go hungry," he said. "I still truly believe that. And sometimes if you're not at the table, you're the dinner."

of the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Murdock said his focus remains on the county's financial management and stability. He is the commissioner responsible for the county budget and said he works closely with the chief financial officer and department heads to keep the county on a "financially prudent" path.

The federal nor state government are providing reliable funding to pay for county programs and services, he said, and special levies and bonds are non-starters. The answer to maintaining programs and services is in growing the tax base, he said.

"We have taken steps to help make Umatilla County attractive to economic development," he said, including data centers and wind farms. He said the investments increase the county's assessed value and create new jobs.

Murdock serves as the vice-chair on the National Association of Counties' education subcommittee,

chairs the Oregon Courthouse Facilities Task Force and serves on local boards and committees, including chairing the Wildhorse Foundation and the Pendleton Enhancement Project.

The two commissioners also discussed the county's involvement with the Eastern Oregon Event and Trade Center in Hermiston. The county and city of Hermiston are partners in EOTEC, which in August hosted the county fair and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo for the first time. Murdock and Givens praised the success of the fair at its new home, which is already in need of a major fix.

Birds are pulling out insulation from the center's large barns, as the *East Oregonian* reported Sept. 29.

Netting to protect that insulation costs about \$200,000, and EOTEC does not have any money to make the fix.

Givens serves on the EOTEC Authority Board and said if it asked the county to help pay to address the problem, the county might pull

from its fair fund.

County CFO Robert Pahl said about \$129,000 is in the fund, which usually carries over to the next year.

Murdock said he has "limited excitement" for major rehab work on a brand new building. He said the conversation needs to focus on EOTEC's long-term oversight and management.

Givens said EOTEC needs taxpayer support for a while, but how much longer remains the question.

"We're approaching that time," he said.

The event center needs to support itself, he said, and, like Murdock, stressed the need for management, either with a director and staff or contracting a management team. Givens said the second option seems to deliver more bang for the buck.

The candidacy filing period began Sept. 7 and closes March 6. Candidates for nonpartisan positions need to fill out a form and submit a \$50 filing fee.

MISSION

Tribes plan new education facility

Nixyaawii school has reached capacity

East Oregonian

Hot on the heels of the ongoing construction of a new building for Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center and the announcement that Wildhorse Resort & Casino will expand, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is in the midst of plans to open a new education facility.

In a Tuesday press release, BBT Architects of Bend announced that it would provide planning, design, and construction administration services to the CTUIR for a new building in Mission.

The facility will house the tribes' early learning and Head Start programs, Nixyaawii Community School and its adult education and CTUIR language programs.

The project will also include improvements to the July Grounds, the area where Yellowhawk, Nixyaawii and the Longhouse are all currently located.

CTUIR spokesman Chuck Sams did not return a request for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Nixyaawii Principal Ryan Heinrich said it's not a done deal yet — the CTUIR Board of Trustees will vote on the facility's construction in November — but a new building for Nixyaawii would offer concrete advantages.

Nixyaawii's September student population was 75 — an increase of more than 20 students from the year before.

"We had quite an influx of freshman this year," he said.

Nixyaawii welcomed 29 freshman to its school this year, forcing the school to set a student enrollment cap to avoid straining the building's facilities and making two of its part-time staff into full-time employees.

Heinrich said he asked some of the freshman why they decided to attend Nixyaawii. Answers varied from student to student, ranging from sports, to family to a desire to stay in the community.

Regardless of the reason, Nixyaawii has instituted a waiting list for new students.

At this point in the plans, Heinrich said the new facility would create more space for the school. While Nixyaawii's largest classroom is 700 square feet with some of its classrooms as small as 300 square feet. Heinrich said the new building would have a more standard 900 square-foot size.

Additional amenities include a connected gym, labs, and a designated eating area. Heinrich said students currently have to walk to the nearby recreation center to eat a lunch that's been transported from Pendleton High School.

Hood River stonemason joins fray of seven Dems to challenge Rep. Walden

BY ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Michael Byrne's pitch to become the next representative for Oregon's second district begins with a cliché before evolving into a biography.

"I'm not a politician," he said in an interview with the *East Oregonian* Tuesday. "I'm a college dropout. I'm a stonemason."

The 65-year-old Hood River resident was making a swing through Eastern Oregon between masonry jobs, motivated to campaign for Democratic nominee for the seat because of his "righteous grandparent's anger" over the presidency of Donald Trump, congressional Republicans and Rep. Greg Walden, the second district's nine-term Republican incumbent.

"I got pissed off," Byrne said. "Being pissed off is a terrible way to live."

Byrne said he's running as a Democrat because Walden is a Republican and he supports ideas like personal responsibility.

But his political platform is also stacked with liberal positions like a transition away from fossil fuels and Medicare for all.

One of seven candidates seeking the

Democratic nomination, Byrne said there is "little daylight" between himself and the other candidates when it comes to the issues.

Byrne said he even encouraged the candidacies of Chris Van Dyke, a Bend communications consultant and a former Marion County district attorney, and Rachael Scodris-Salerno, a dogsled racer from Bend, only to see former decline to enter the race and the latter drop out.

Besides Byrne, the other candidates in the race are Eric Burnette; Jim Crary, a retired attorney and oil company executive from Ashland and the 2016 Democratic nominee; Jamie McLeod-Skinner, a former Phoenix, Oregon, city manager; Steven Reynolds; Timothy White; and Ross Wordhouse, a Bend businessman.

A Democrat hasn't won District 2, which spans nearly 70,000 square miles across two-thirds of the state, since 1981.

Although Walden has amassed more than \$2.2 million in his campaign account and Byrne has only raised \$1,000, Byrne thinks he can win the nomination and beat Walden.

If he did win, Byrne said he would serve for only a few terms before ceding the seat to someone younger.



Byrne

PENDLETON

Oregon Children's Theatre brings bilingual production

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A bilingual production that's based on the true story of Mexican-American author and educator Tomás Rivera will be staged in Pendleton.

Presented by the Oregon Children's Theatre touring production team, "Tomás & the Library Lady" is relevant and timely with social issues regarding immigration and worker rights. Rivera's family were migrant workers who fled war in Mexico to live in the United States.

The free performance is Saturday at 2 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St. In addition, while the team is in the region, several school performances are planned in Hermiston.

The production is recommended for ages 5 and up, with the prime audience age range of 6-12 for the story. However, Ava Goodling, Oregon Children's Theatre's marketing associate, said teens and adults will enjoy it as well. She said younger children may have some difficulty with comprehending the story, but the production should appeal to them with its songs and a puppet.

Using both English and Spanish in the production, Goodling said, really gives the audience a glimpse into the inside world of Tomás and his family. For people that aren't bilingual, they won't have any difficulty following the storyline, she said.

"The cast does an incredible job of telling the story not only with their words, but with songs and body movement," Goodling said. "There's a lot of translation back and forth ... so audiences will probably learn some new words too."

Tomás is just a regular boy who loves to tell stories and play with his little brother, but he comes from a migrant family who is adjusting to a new life in the United States. He has a reoccurring



Photo contributed by Pat Moran

The Library Lady helps Tomás learn how to read during a scene from the Oregon Children's Theatre touring production of "Tomás & the Library Lady." The bi-lingual show is based on a true story of Mexican-American author and educator Tomás Rivera. A free performance is Saturday at Pendleton Center for the Arts.

nightmare about his teacher, who won't let him speak Spanish in school, and the anxiety he feels with this language barrier.

"I think many kids will relate back to a time when they didn't understand something and how unsettling that feels," Goodling said. "When Tomás meets the Library Lady, she shows him how it can be fun to learn English. This ultimately helps him overcome his fear of his teacher and allows him to realize that being bilingual is a strength."

Based in Portland, the Oregon Children's Theatre is excited about bringing this particular touring production to Eastern Oregon. One of the organization's goals is to reach rural communities with high Spanish populations who

might not have regular access to theater, Goodling said.

"Through this project, OCT hopes to break down geographic, financial and language barriers that block many children and families from access to professional performing arts. We want all young Oregonians to experience the power of great theater," added Ross McKeen, OCT's managing director.

For more information about the local performance, call the arts center at 541-278-9201. For more about the Oregon Children's Theatre, visit www.oct.org.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

BRIEFLY

Dad's Cake Bake celebrates 60

HERMISTON — A 60-year tradition will be celebrated as the Dad's Cake Bake cooks things up at West Park Elementary School in Hermiston.

With a theme of "Let the Adventure Begin," the event is Monday, Oct. 9 from 6-8 p.m. at the school, 555 S.W. Seventh St., Hermiston. There is no admission charge. The event also features a performance by kindergarten students.

The annual tradition started in 1957 as a fundraiser for sidewalks to be placed in front of the school, said organizer Mary Gorham, a second grade teacher at the school. West Park families will be baking, buying and creating special desserts for the community, she said. Gorham encourages people to come out and buy a cake or two and support the event.

For more information, contact Gorham at mary.gorham@hermiston.k12.or.us or 541-667-6800.

Pendleton woman added to cemetery commission

PENDLETON — A Pendletonian was one of three people appointed to the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries, according to a Tuesday press release from the Oregon Parks and

Recreation Department.

The appointee, Sarah Silbernagel, is an archaeologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Pendleton, covering nine Eastern Oregon counties. Silbernagel is the only member of the seven-person commission from Eastern Oregon.

"Her love for historic cemeteries and the preservation of the past has been instilled since childhood," the press release states.

BJ and guest DJ serve up Cajun, Zydeco music

MILTON-FREEWATER — Cajun and Zydeco music of southwestern Louisiana is featured during the upcoming Oldies Night in Milton-Freewater.

BJ the DJ welcomes guest DJ Dalena Norton, who will co-host the event. A McLoughlin High School graduate, Norton now lives in John Day. A former employee of the Milton-Freewater Public Library, she also has previous radio broadcasting experience and suggested a Zydeco music theme, said Bob Jones.

Oldies Night is Saturday at 7 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 816 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. The Frogs will offer snacks. And, don't forget your dancin' shoes.

For more information, contact Jones at dubuquer@charter.net or 541-938-7028.

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