

Walden, McLeod-Skinner take on the issues

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Republican Greg Walden seeks an 11th term as the U.S. representative for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District. But he said this election is different.

He is feeling heat from some constituents. He has paid for billboards. And Democrat challenger Jamie McLeod-Skinner said she has now raised more than \$1 million. Still no threat to the \$3.2 million in Walden's account, but a good showing for a Democrat in this district.

A look around Pendleton shows plenty of McLeod-Skinner yard signs and none for Walden. Still, his visit Friday to town drew all of four protesters outside the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, while about a dozen local public and health officials crowded into a conference room to meet with the man.

Walden and McLeod-Skinner this week talked about key issues in the race.

How they see the district

"We've got systems that are broken," McLeod-Skinner said, with 50 percent of district residents at or near the poverty line.

She took that figure from the United Way's "ALICE Report" for "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed," which qualifies the threshold as the average income a household needs to afford basic necessities (housing, child care, food and the like). The ALICE Threshold includes poverty-level households.

U.S. Census data shows 13.8 percent of the district's population had income below the poverty line, while the median household income is \$51,813 and the mean household income is \$68,305.

Walden said he does not see 50 percent poverty in the district, but pockets lack economic recovery and growth while others are booming.

Economic development

Walden said rural broadband is essential



Walden

to the district's prosperity. T-Mobile has an "aggressive plan" to build the next generation of wireless communication throughout Eastern Oregon, he said, and other companies are likely to follow. Walden said public safety, education, health care and business all will benefit.

"This is really important to make sure we're not left behind," he said.

McLeod-Skinner, too, said growth hinges on broadband. She also touched on the need for a compact between states so Oregon could take more water from the Columbia River for growth. And she said the Port of Morrow could be just the place for a regional recycling hub.

Tariffs

Retaliatory tariffs on American agricultural exports are jeopardizing communities, McLeod-Skinner said, and the \$4.7 billion bailout to make up for losses is not the answer.

"Farmers don't want to borrow money from China," she said, "they want to sell wheat to China."

Walden agreed, but he said the wheat farmers he talked to are going to take the "Trump bump" at 14 cents per bushel, and the tar-



McLeod-Skinner

iffs are enduring for now. He contended the administration's use of tariffs is resulting in better deals with Canada and Mexico, with China as the big goal.

According to the Pew Research Center, the U.S. tariffs in 2016 across all products was 1.6 percent. Mexico's was 4.4 percent and China's was 3.5 percent.

Health care

McLeod-Skinner advocated for doctors, nurses and other professionals and tradespeople to serve in rural Oregon in exchange for the cost of their education.

"When I think about health care, I think about big picture ideas," she said.

That includes the consolidation of services and industry, she said, so patients could obtain health insurance through the government or a public-private partnership.

And she wants to allow for the negotiation with pharmaceutical companies to keep drug prices down.

Walden rolled through Eastern Oregon on Friday to talk about his bill that helps local communities fight the opioid crisis.

"This will save lives," he said.

And he defended his vote to end the Afford-

able Care Act.

"Nobody gets kicked off as long as you're on Medicaid," he said.

Connecting to the people

McLeod-Skinner, her supporters and Walden critics have hammered the conservative politician for his lack of public town halls this election. McLeod-Skinner said that's part of the job.

"No. 1 — show up," she said.

Walden contended he has no problem with that and has had multiple meetings on his seven trips this year to Umatilla County alone.

"I'm talking to people all over the district," he said.

But he does have a problem when people berate and even threaten his staff, he said, that's become a regular occurrence at his office in Bend. He said there's is more to the job than holding town halls, and in the past 12 months he handled 129,500 correspondences through a variety of means.

"So I'm deeply engaged in all of this," Walden asserted.

Nov. 6, election night

McLeod-Skinner said if she wins, she is heading to Burns on Nov. 7 to attend a public meeting. She said she is committed to maintaining connections with the people of the district.

Walden said he remains dedicated to working for the district and the often quiet work of passing bipartisan legislation. He said 92 percent of his 129 bills have had the support of 10 or more Democrats. The bill to fight opioid addiction passed with a wide bipartisan margin.

Political forecasting websites show the House is likely to flip from Republican control to Democrat, but Oregon's 2nd Congressional District remains a Republican lock. Fivethirtyeight.com estimates McLeod-Skinner taking almost 35 percent of the vote and Walden winning with about 61 percent.

That would be a drop of about 11 points for Walden since the 2016 election.

PENDLETON

Eighth Street Bridge cost climbs to an estimated \$8.6 million

East Oregonian

The budget keeps rising for the Eighth Street Bridge project, meaning the city of Pendleton's local match is also going up.

The Pendleton City Council will consider raising its local match by \$78,836, which will go toward a proj-

ect budget that's risen to \$8.6 million.

This is not the first time the Eighth Street Bridge project has seen its cost balloon.

In September 2017, the council agreed to an amendment that upped the total cost of the project from \$7.4 million to \$7.7 million. Since the state assumes 89.73 per-

cent of the project's cost, the city is responsible for covering the rest, which rose to \$793,357 under the new cost.

According to a staff report, the Oregon Department of Transportation needed to raise the price tag to \$8.6 million because of inflationary costs and updated requirements related

to the Americans with Disabilities Act. That means the city is now on the hook for \$883,594.

The council will also consider paying the Murraysmith design firm \$113,039 to design roads and a drainage system for a Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range Industrial Park.

The council agreed to pay Murraysmith \$597,211 in September to design utility extensions to the industrial park, although the city doesn't have the money to build the park, which would be constructed north of the airport terminal.

The city does have the money to buy a new air han-

gar, and it's seeking council approval to make the purchase.

The estate of Robert Hart will sell the hangar, located at 5301 N.W. A Ave., to the city of Pendleton for \$30,000 if the purchase is approved. The hangar is expected to be filled by a customer at the UAS range.

BRIEFLY

Public invited to give input on search for new BMCC president

Blue Mountain Community College is looking for input on its search for a new president.

The college is hosting a community forum Oct. 18 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in Morrow Hall, room 100, on BMCC's Pendleton campus to learn what the public is looking for in a new leader for BMCC. Students and other community members can also join the forum remotely from the college's Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, Boardman and Baker City campuses.

Current president Cam Preus is leaving at the end of the month to become the executive director of the Oregon Community College Association in Salem. The college's board of education has hired executive search firm Gold Hill Associates — which recruited Preus for the job during BMCC's last search — to assist in finding a new president. The community forum Thursday will help them put together a "presidential profile" of skills and attributes to look for in a candidate.

The public is also invited to a farewell celebration for Preus on Oct. 30 from 5-7 p.m. at the Student Union of Pioneer Hall on the Pendleton campus.

Dr. Connie Green, retired president of Tillamook Bay Community College, will serve as BMCC's interim president until Preus's replacement is hired. The BMCC board hopes to have a new president in place by next July.

HermNaz celebrates Pastor Appreciation Month

HERMISTON — In recognition of Pastor Appreciation Month, Hermiston Church of the Nazarene is celebrating Pastor Eric Fritz, his wife Sharon, and their children Gabrielle, Graydon,

Gideon and Geric.

A work party at the Fritz Farm is planned Saturday, beginning at 8:30 a.m. People are invited to help winterize the property, including cleaning flower beds and some outdoor painting. Also, dessert will be served Sunday at 7 p.m. in the church's ministry center, 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. The HermNaz board encourages people to come out and enjoy a time of fellowship. In addition, cards, gift cards or notes of thanks/encouragement can be left in the church's card basket.

For more information or to sign-up for the work party, contact 541-567-3677 or hermistonnaz@gmail.com.

<p>WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO 10/12 - 14 Cineplex Show Times \$5 Classic Movie 10/17 • 12pm The Night of the Hunter</p>	<p>WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO 10/15 - 16 Cineplex Show Times \$5 Classic Movie 10/17 • 12pm The Night of the Hunter</p>
<p>FIRST MAN (PG13) 12:50* 3:50* 6:50 9:50</p>	<p>FIRST MAN (PG13) 3:50* 6:50 9:50</p>
<p>GOOSEBUMPS 2: HAUNTED HALLOWEEN (PG) 12:30* 2:40* 5:00 7:10 9:30</p>	<p>GOOSEBUMPS 2: HAUNTED HALLOWEEN (PG) 5:00 7:10 9:30</p>
<p>VENOM (PG13) 11:50* 4:50 7:20 ED 2:20* 10:00</p>	<p>VENOM (PG13) 4:50 7:20 ED 10:00</p>
<p>A STAR IS BORN (R) 12:40* 3:40* 6:40 9:40</p>	<p>A STAR IS BORN (R) 3:40* 6:40 9:40</p>
<p>SMALLFOOT (PG) 12:20* 2:30* 4:40 7:00 9:20</p>	<p>SMALLFOOT (PG) 4:40 7:00 9:20</p>
<p>* Matinee Pricing wildhorseresort.com • 541-966-1850 Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216</p>	<p>* Matinee Pricing wildhorseresort.com • 541-966-1850 Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216</p>

Pendleton Friends of the Library

Thank You!

To the many volunteers for making the PFOL Book Sale a HUGE success!

Pendleton Convention Center Staff—set up/take down/and extra help when needed
 City of Pendleton—Glenn Graham and Mary Finney—forklift/ pallet jack/ use of parking lot
 Gordon's Electric—putting up our banner
 IMESD and WalMart—book transport
 Hodgen Distributing—use of pallets/ book transport
 PHS Cross Country and BMCC Men's Basketball teams—distribution of boxes of books
 Safeway—shopping carts
 Aaron's—bottles of water
 Liquor Store—many empty boxes
 East Oregonian—newspaper ads
 Reader Boards—at various businesses

Special thanks to Chair Deidre Byrd for keeping us on track.
 Also the PFOL Board and our MANY volunteers for unpacking books, keeping the sale running, and clean-up.
 Thank you to all who donated or sorted books throughout the year.

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