

EAST OREGON

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LOCAL ELECTION COVERAGE



Morrow County schools measure tanks

Helix, M-F voters back measures for rec facilities

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Ballot measures to fund recreational facilities in Helix and Milton-Freewater passed in the primary election Tuesday, May 17. But a Morrow County general obligation bond to fund educational infrastructure projects failed.

Voters in Morrow County rejected Measure 25-87 to fund a slew of school improvements 1,305-798 votes, or 68.1% to 38%, according to preliminary results from the Oregon Secretary of State's election website.

Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the district is disappointed about the outcome.

"We worked very hard to inform our communities about the bond and how it could improve our facilities, but we acknowledge that this is a challenging time to pass a bond," he said. We continue to be committed to student success in all our schools."

Dirksen said he appreciates all of the district staff who worked on the bond information campaign and the efforts of the county-wide political action committee to support the measure.

The bond would have funded projects in Boardman, Heppner and Irrigon, at all of the district's eight schools and the district office.

The bond would have raised \$138 million, and the school district would have received a matching grant from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program of \$4 million. A total of \$142 million would have been available for projects.

Dirksen, who is retiring June 30, said he did not know when the district would consider going out for another bond.

"The stars didn't line up this time," he said. "There

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UMATILLA COUNTY



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Umatilla County commissioner candidate Susan Bower, left, and Hannah Mabbot check early primary results Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at a gathering at the Backfire Station in Pendleton. Bower has a narrow lead over Cindy Timmons, and the two are heading to a runoff in November.

Heading to runoffs

None seeking commissioner seats have won majorities

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Both races for seats on the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners right now are heading to a November run-off.

A little more than 100 votes separate Susan Bower of Pendleton and Cindy Timmons of Milton-Freewater in the race for Position 1, with Bower in the lead 3,120-3,013, or 27.8% of the total for Bower to 26.8% for Timmons.

All election results are preliminary and from the Oregon Secretary of State's elections tracker.

Incumbent John Shafer is running for reelection to Position 2 on the

county board. He won 5,278 votes, outdistancing HollyJo Beers who received 3,110 and Rick Pullen who garnered 2,632 votes. While Shafer received thousands of votes more than either challenger, he came away with 47.7% of the vote, not crossing that 50% plus 1 total he would need to run unopposed on the ballot in the general election. That puts him and Beers in the runoff for the general election.

Bower said she considers this an exciting time for Umatilla County. While she, Timmons nor Beers made any point about their gender during the run-up to the primary, three women now are running for the county board. Bower said she already has heard from women in their 20s and 30s who said these results encourage them to

consider seeking office in Umatilla County.

Moreover, Bower said she is looking forward to continuing the campaign.

"I think it's going to be a wonderful race," she said. "Cindy and I both are very professional, we're both community-minded. I think the public is going to like this race."

Rather than campaign about attacking other candidates, Bower said, she is committed to continuing that focus on community.

"The target will remain the same," she said. "It's all about community, and all about the entire county and the cities within it."

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HERMISTON

Old and new

Two challengers lead the day in Hermiston City Council races

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council is more or less decided for the coming year.

Though vote totals will change as ballot counting continues from the Tuesday, May 17, primary, leading candidates expressed confidence and spoke of their feelings about their campaigns and their priorities moving forward.

All election results are preliminary and from the Oregon Secretary of State's elections tracker.

Ward 1 (northwest Hermiston)

Soon after the polls had closed at 8 p.m., challenger Jackie Linton led incumbent Lori Davis. That margin maintained throughout the night and into the next day. The morning of May 18, Linton had 834 votes to Davis' 747 (52.6% to 47.1%).

This is the closest race for Hermiston City Council, and Linton expressed gratitude to Councilor Davis, whom Linton said she would contact soon.

"I feel awesome. I'm very excited about it," she said about the contest that put her against a three-term council member. "I'm happy that the race was respectful. It was about the issues we believe in; we were happy for each other for running."

A substitute teacher and active community member, she said she wants to focus on housing, homelessness and police.

"The police department is short four officers, and that's probably going to be my number one thing, trying to figure out, with the other city councilors, where to get the money to hire those four officers," she said.

She stated that she is concerned about the focus on internet connectivity improvement, which

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Oregon election results rundown

Oregon Capital Bureau and East Oregonian

Drazen leads Republican governor primary

Former House Republican Leader Christine Drazen of Canby leads the 19 Republicans seeking the party's nomination for governor.

Drazen has 23.3% of the vote as of 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 18, with Bob Tiernan in second with 18.3% and Stan Pulliam in third with 9.9%. Kerry McQuis-

ten of Baker City was in fifth with 8.7%

Tiernan late in the afternoon May 18 conceded the race and wished Drazen good luck in the campaign.

Kotek wins Democrat governor primary

Former Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek dominated the 15-candidate field for the Democratic nomination for governor and likely faces Drazen in the November election.

Kotek racked up large totals in her base in Portland. Treasurer Tobias Read

of Beaverton conceded late May 17.

Kotek was leading with 56% as of 2 p.m. May 18, Read 32%, with Patrick Starnes, the 2018 Independent Party nominee who ran as a Democrat this time, with 2%, and others trailing as of early May 18.

Stephenson on top for race for Oregon State Labor Commissioner

Portland labor lawyer Christina Stephenson had a large edge over her six rivals in the race for

the nonpartisan position of commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries

But with 47% of the vote, she's falling short of the 50% required to skip a run-off in November.

If current trends hold, she would face former Rep. Cheri Helt, R-Bend, who has 19% of the vote, in the general election.

Yamhill County Commissioner Casey Kulla was third with just more than 14%.

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State braces for a challenging fire season

By KATY NESBITT
For EO Media Group

SALEM — Despite a long winter and cold and wet spring, Oregon fire authorities are preparing for a challenging season.

During a press conference on Monday, May 16, Gov. Kate Brown highlighted the state's challenges — despite the state's rainfall the past two months, there are many places experiencing a "mega" drought, with worse conditions expected to continue.

Early indications, Brown said, are that southern Oregon and the east side of the Cascades along with the



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin, File

A firefighter in 2018 uses a drip torch to set fire to a section of underbrush during a prescribed burn near Camp Sherman in Jefferson County.

Columbia Gorge are especially vulnerable this year.

To alleviate some of the stress of extended drought and increasingly large wildfires, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 762 in 2019, adding funding for additional personnel and equipment, like air tankers and helicopters.

Brown claimed Oregon has one of the best response systems in the country, but the new funding will help keep resources from being maxed out when fire season arrives. The governor also stressed prevention to curb the outbreak of wildfires.

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