

# Thompson challenges Nearman for HD 23

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The race for Oregon House District 23 is a rematch between incumbent Republican Rep. Mike Nearman and the man he unseated in a primary election two years ago, Independent Jim Thompson.

In May 2014, Nearman defeated Thompson in the Republican primary and won the seat in November in a race against Democrat Wanda Davis.

He is seeking his second term in the Oregon House of Representatives.

Thompson would like to regain the seat he held from 2008 to 2014.

Nearman did not respond to a request for an interview for this story, nor did he return the questionnaire sent to both candidates in this race.

A lifelong Republican, Thompson said running as an Independent does not change his views or stands on any issue. He said he considers himself a “moderate Republican.”

He said he was encouraged to run by constituents in the district.

“Initially I wasn’t planning on it, but we were contacted by a number of local businessmen and ag people that didn’t feel that Mr. Nearman was doing what he said he was going to be doing,” he said. “I said OK, we will try it one more time.”

Thompson said he thinks the top issues in the upcoming legislative session will be economic development, education and health care.

He said there were some successes in the state’s at-

## House District 23

**Who:** Jim Thompson, Independence, of Dallas

**Age:** 69

**Current employment:** Prescription Drug low Cost Task Force/ Retired

**Education:** Taft High School, Bachelor of Science from Western Oregon University

**Previous government experience:** Monmouth City Council (1980-85), Polk County Fire District No. 1 (1985-1994), State Representative (2004, 2008-2014)

**Campaign phone:** 971-259-3049

**Campaign website:** www.jimforhouse.com

**Why are you running for office?** This is one way I can serve my community and utilize skills I developed over the years in corporate management. I especially enjoy serving constituents and helping them solve problems.

I have many years’ experience in health care policy and management that are useful in pursuing solutions to current issues.

**What is the biggest single issue facing the U.S., the state of Oregon, and, more specifically, Polk County? How would you address it if elected?**

There is no single issue.

We need to address our sagging high school graduation rates; upgrade our transportation infrastructure to support economic development; and provide better health care at lower cost for more people.

We need economic development to create jobs and a plan to encourage increased tourism to support our growing wine industry and communities.

We need to pull the Legislature back toward the center and focus on moving the state forward instead of political in-fighting and division.

Most of our local and regional problems are symptoms of a lack of planning and unified vision at the state level.

tempt at health care reform, noting the achievements of “coordinated care organizations.”

“The CCOs we set up are doing, in most cases, a won-

## Anything else you wish to note about the position you are seeking?

I have been a Republican for most of my life. However, I have always been able to work with others who I disagree with to work toward a common goal. The partisan bickering and name calling needs to stop. Oregon needs representation in Salem, that is willing to come together to solve the issues Oregon is facing. Within the legislature, I am well respected among both Republicans and Democrats for my ability to work together on issue we need to address.

**Who:** Mike Nearman  
**Current employment:** State Representative; software engineer

**Previous government experience:** State Representative; Central School District Budget committee

**Campaign website:** http://www.nearman4oregon.org/

*Of note: Last week we emailed Nearman our election questionnaire and a request for an interview to his campaign email address. We didn’t receive a response.*

*We also made a call Friday to Polk County Republican Party Chairman Alan Minton who said he would ask, but doubted Nearman would respond to our requests.*

*A subsequent call inviting Nearman to return the questionnaire and answer questions about the race was not returned by press time. To find out more about Nearman’s campaign and his stances on issues facing our state and District 23, see his campaign website: http://www.nearman4oregon.org/.*

*His legislative website is https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/nearman.*

*Nearman and Thompson also will appear at a debate on Oct. 2 at 6 p.m. at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center in Rickreall.*



Thompson



Nearman

## Voters will decide on 3 percent sales tax

Would apply to recreational pot

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — The cities of Monmouth and Independence have both put a measure on the November ballot regarding recreational marijuana sales tax.

If voters approve, a 3 percent sales tax will be collected by the state on recreational marijuana sales and go to the cities’ respective general funds, which are used to pay for law enforcement.

“The voters have to say yes,” Monmouth City Manager Scott McClure said. “This isn’t one where the council, on its own, could pass an ordinance putting in a new tax. As per state law, it has to go to the people.”

So far, there are two shops where someone can purchase recreational marijuana in Independence.

Both started as medical dispensaries, and both began selling recreational pot when the Oregon Liquor Control Commission allowed it on Oct. 1, 2015.

Right now, a 25 percent sales tax on recreational marijuana is collected. By the end of the year, the OLCC will have separate licenses for medical and recreational cannabis. State sales taxes on recreational pot will go to 17 percent.

If voters approve the additional tax, it would be on top of the 17 percent.

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his opinion.

“They are booming, but I don’t think anybody would look at Polk County and say, wow, they’re booming,” he said. “We’ve got opportunities. We have property available. Workforce development is an issue, but we can bring in workforce.”

In education, Thompson said the state needs improved graduation rates, which are currently toward the bottom of the list nationally.

He said the approach thus far has been backward.

“We get hung up on how we would like it to be, but we don’t get hung up on where we are right now. That’s the starting point,” he said.

He said investing more money won’t achieve the same results as first diagnosing the problems facing schools.

He noted those could vary by community.

He said one of the most important perspectives he would like to take to the House is a sense of cooperation.

“We are at a time that we need to do some bold things,” he said. “There has to be bipartisan consensus to make it happen.”

derful job of getting the people covered that we set out to cover,” he said.

He would like to see more economic development investment in the transporta-

tion system and rural Oregon.

Places like Beaverton and Hillsboro have been the target of much of the investment, Thompson said.

That needs to change, in

## Woman dies after rollover crash on Highway 22, milepost 14

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — On Saturday at about 10 p.m., Oregon State Police troopers and emergency personnel responded to the report of single-vehicle crash on Highway 22 near milepost 14, just west of the Highway 99W interchange, according to a report by OSP. Preliminary investigation re-

vealed a 2001 Volkswagen Jetta was traveling westbound on Highway 22 near milepost 14 when it drifted into the center median, rolled over and came to rest on its passenger side on the south side of the highway.

The driver, a 49-year-old woman from Keizer, was pronounced deceased at the

scene. Her name will be released pending her family being notified, the OSP report stated.

OSP was assisted by the Polk County Sheriff’s Office, Dallas Police Department, Polk County Fire and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

This is an ongoing investigation.

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