

Politics

Continued from A1

“Kurt Schrader (OR-05) and Henry Cuellar (TX-28) are now trailing progressive opponents in their May 17 primary and May 24 runoff, respectively,” wrote Dave Wasserman, the Cook Report’s analyst of House races.

“Their ousters could not only decimate Democrats’ centrist ranks but enhance GOP takeover chances in their single-digit Biden seats.”

The Cook Political Report noted that both Republican and Democratic incumbents were running up against a sour national mood unfriendly to officeholders of both parties.

“Across the spectrum, voters are restless,” Wasserman wrote. “On the right, moderate GOP House incumbents are contending with an angry former president who wants to purify the party of people who have crossed him. Democratic primary voters are furious over the possible end of Roe v. Wade. And voters of all stripes are anxious about everything from the cost of gas and groceries to infant formula shortages and instability abroad.”

Johnson ramps up for governor’s race on Nov. 8

While 15 Democrats and 19 Republicans push through to the end of their party’s races for governor, a candidate planning to skip the primary is gearing up a major petition drive to make the November ballot.

Former Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, needs to gather 24,000 valid signatures by the end of August to submit to the Secretary of State. If verified, she would run for governor as a nonaffiliated candidate on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Johnson, a Democrat whose father was a prominent Republican legislator and mayor of Redmond, is staking out the ground between the two parties.

Her website now includes digital petitions that can be used by voters to assist the drive to get her qualified for the ballot.

The website also has a gift shop. Johnson is known for wearing large glasses — which are used prominently in her campaign materials. A portion of her website now sells T-shirts, coffee mugs, iPhone cases, and other items festooned with the big eyewear symbol.

While Democrat and Republican candidates are expected to exhaust their campaign funds to ensure victory on Tuesday, Johnson will start the general election with the biggest war chest: \$5.8 million.

The major party candidates can expect additional support once they become their parties’ nominees and national funds flow into their coffers. Johnson will go it alone — but is getting help from Nike founder Phil Knight, who has contributed \$1.75 million to her campaign so far.

Kristof backs ouster of Yamhill commissioner

The political action committee of former New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has remained relatively quiet since the Oregon Supreme Court ruled Feb. 17 that he didn’t meet the Oregon residency requirement to run for governor in the Democratic primary.

The Nick for Oregon PAC has paid off campaign bills, but still has over \$1 million sitting in its account.

In his first large financial foray back into Oregon politics, Kristof late last month gave \$10,000 to progressive Doris Towery’s bid for Yamhill County Commissioner against conservative incumbent Mary Starrett. Kristof lives on a farm in Yamhill County, where he grew up before embarking on an international journalism career.

Blurred ballots in Clackamas will be fixed by hand

Secretary of State Shemia Fagan issued a statement Thursday backtracking on a quip made during Wednesday’s news conference on how ballots with blurred bar codes issued in Clackamas County would be fixed by machine duplication.

“No one is in there filling in bubbles by hand,” Fagan said.

Fagan spokesman Ben Morris said Thursday that in fact, one Democrat and one Republican will together create the duplicate ballots by hand, marking votes with a pen.

“Clackamas is doing it manually,” he said. “When they receive a ballot that won’t scan, the voters’ intent will be transferred by hand to a new ballot.”

One person will read the ballot, while the other marks the corrected blank spot on the duplicate. They will then switch roles and proofread the ballot.

“The original ballot will be retained and indexed to match it to the corresponding new ballot,” Morris said. “The new ballot will be put back into the counting machines to be tallied.”

■ gwarnar@eomediagroup.com

Snow

Continued from A1

“You might look at the numbers and think that they are great, but the snowpack numbers peak on April 1,” said Gorman. “If we are just maintaining the snowpack and receiving (precipitation), our percentage will go up as time goes on.”

Gorman explains that in a typical year, warm temperatures cause rapid snowmelt by mid-May, which lowers snowpack. So any small storms that drop a little snow can cause the snowpack percentage to skyrocket well above normal for this time of year. Even cold temperatures that prevent melting will cause the percentages to rise compared to what is average for this time of year.

Precipitation is the more important number to watch as it more accurately indicates how Central Oregon is faring against the drought, said Gorman. Precipitation for the water year is 96% of normal, up from 81% of normal six weeks ago but still below average.

“We haven’t recovered this year. We are still below average,” said Gorman.

Central Oregon reservoirs will need two or three consecutive years of above-average precipitation and snowpack for a recovery to occur,



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Recent precipitation has boosted snowpack levels, but not enough to fend off drought. Shown here is Central Oregon Irrigation District’s outtake on the Deschutes River in southwest Bend on Thursday.

said Gorman.

“If the reservoirs drain down to a minimum this year, they won’t fill next year no matter what. I can tell you that,” he said.

Deschutes National Forest spokesperson Jean Nelson-Dean added that dry conditions still exist at lower elevations and fire danger remains a threat as the region heads toward summer. The La Niña weather pattern is expected to create dry conditions from June through August, she said.

“These dry conditions along with anticipated windier conditions and persistent

drought will keep Central Oregon at a higher risk for wildfires than normal,” said Nelson-Dean. “Ongoing drought will really elevate these conditions in July and August.”

A bright spot can be found at Mt. Bachelor ski area, which is expected to remain open for skiing through May 29, said company spokesperson Dustin Fletcher. Historically, Mt. Bachelor has been able to stay open as late as the July 4 weekend.

A roundup of the area’s reservoirs shows water levels that remain at historic lows.

Wickiup Reservoir, which started the irrigation season at 55% of capacity, has since fallen to 48% of capacity.

Wickiup’s draining rate is slower compared to a year ago due to decreased water allotments for farmers in Jefferson County. Water managers are taking unprecedented steps that curtail the delivery of water this year in order to make water available until the end of the irrigation season. Cooler temperatures and recent precipitation also allow dam managers to slow the release of water from Wickiup.

Library

Continued from A1

“It’s that much more money not going toward building,” Dunkelberg said, referring to whatever amount of money that would be spent on buying new land.

Dunkelberg said the library board hasn’t discussed whether it will sell the original land to help pay for new land. The library bought the

The central library, which originally was proposed as a 100,000-square-foot building, was a key component promised in a \$195 million bond that voters passed in 2020.

original property for \$1.35 million in August 2020.

“We’ve seen land is very scarce, and at some point we may need it for something,” he said.

If the original site isn’t used, the library won’t be able to use bond funds to

reimburse itself for buying that property, and will have to move that money into a reserve account, Dunkelberg said.

It is unclear how much more the library will have to spend on a new piece of property. New land could

potentially cost more but provide more amenities that the library wouldn’t have to build, which could bring down project costs, Dunkelberg said. On the original site, the library would have had to contribute to other infrastruc-

ture costs, like roads and a roundabout.

But what is known for sure is that land will likely cost much more now than it did two years ago.

“It will be more,” Dunkelberg said. “We got the land up north at \$2 a square foot. I have not seen anything that comes anywhere close to \$2 a square foot right now.”

■ Reporter: 541-633-2160, bvissier@bendbulletin.com

At Wickiup dam, the release of water on Tuesday was just 837 cubic feet per second compared to 1,134 cfs on the same date a year ago.

Other reservoirs at critically low levels include Crescent Lake (11%), Prineville Reservoir (31%), and Ochoco Reservoir (21%).

Larry O’Neill, associate professor at Oregon State University’s College of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences, said the forecast for the next two weeks is for cool and wet conditions to potentially continue.

“After that though, signals are on the horizon for an anomalously warm and dry pattern to set up, which may take us into summer,” said O’Neill.

O’Neill said a possible impact of continued La Niña conditions is the tendency for a weaker southwest monsoon, which may give Central and Southeastern Oregon less summer thunderstorm activity, particularly in late July and August.

“This may be a mixed blessing with less lightning but also less summer rainfall,” said O’Neill. “This has been the case the last two summers and could be something to look out for this summer as well.”

■ Reporter: 541-617-7818, mkohn@bendbulletin.com



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press file

A land use ruling requires revisions to a wildlife mitigation plan for a Crook County solar facility expansion.

Solar

Continued from A1

NewSun Energy said it welcomes LUBA’s order because the ruling has confirmed the mitigation plan is “appropriate and acceptable in form, size, scale, substance and type,” as well as in its definition of habitat, Stephens said.

For example, the plan can now move forward with “more tightly defined limits” on where mitigation occurs as well as “specific deed restriction language” that will shield the habitat mitigation site from future development, he said.

The company believes the plan already includes these elements and has exceeded the requirements of state wildlife officials, Stephens said. “Regardless, NewSun looks forward to continuing to invest in good faith in rural Oregon communities, including performing mitigation as required by law.”

Crook County will have to reconsider its authorization of the solar facility’s expansion based on the ruling’s criteria and standards, most likely based on additional evidence from the project’s developer, according to LUBA.

Last year, LUBA blocked the expansion project, but the Oregon Court of Appeals said it incorrectly construed state land use law. The appeals court faulted LUBA for requiring the county to fully meet wildlife criteria that’s meant for larger solar projects.

LUBA has now issued a new ruling based on instructions from the appellate court but has still found that the wildlife mitigation plan needs to be improved.

The developer’s plan to enhance an acre

of wildlife habitat for every acre affected by the project, plus a “buffer” of additional acreage, is sufficient to conclude “there will be no net loss of habitat quantity,” LUBA said.

However, the plan “lacks the specificity and definiteness” required by state law, since it proposes two options without providing enough details about the location of replacement habitat, effectively preventing third parties from evaluating the quality of mitigation measures, the ruling said.

Likewise, the so-called “V2 Plan” contains treatment options that are “too vague” to be evaluated for reliability and durability, “especially in the absence of defined performance measures,” the ruling said.

“In conclusion, the V2 Plan is not substantial evidence in the record as to the quality of mitigation, the reliability or durability of mitigation, and lacks a schedule of performance measures required to be included in a mitigation plan,” LUBA said. “Accordingly, the V2 Plan is not evidence a reasonable person would rely on to conclude that the development action meets the no net loss standard.”

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which had objected to the project’s wildlife plan, can “absolutely” make the solar facility’s expansion work under the ruling’s requirements, said Greg Jackle, district biologist for the agency.

The new LUBA ruling is similar to the previous order and will assure a “very positive outcome for wildlife habitat,” Jackle said. “This opinion will assure that wildlife impacts from the project will be offset, protected and enhanced on a specific wildlife mitigation site.”

OBITUARY



Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Arbow Johnson

June 8, 1954 - May 3, 2022

Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Arbow Johnson, 67, passed away surrounded by family on Tuesday, May 3, 2022. She passed away due to a blood clot in her lungs. Betty was born June 8, 1954, to James & Rosemary (Cashman) Arbow in Bend, where she grew up. She attended St. Francis of Assisi, Bend High School (’72), and college at COCC where she met the love of her life, Richard Johnson. They wed on March 18, 1978, and traveled throughout the West Coast before settling in Oregon City, where they lived for the remainder of Betty’s life. Betty worked successfully in many roles over the years, primarily centered around her love of children, learning, and books. She loved supporting children and organizing to get things done, both in her work and with her family, which almost always included books and crafts for kids.

She is survived by her husband, Rich Johnson, and three children: Daniel Johnson (Danielle), Abby Miles (Mason), and Elissa Johnson (Justin); her siblings: Rosemarie Davis, Susanne Cox, Timothy Arbow, Anthony Arbow, Miriam Chapman, James Arbow; and her 5 grandchildren: Jocelyn (21), Alexis (18), Calvin (6), Bodie (4), Quintin (1w).

Service will be held on Friday, May 20, funeral at 11:00 am, at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Oregon City, Rev. Maxy D’Costa will officiate.

