

GOP

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proceedings and argued that the ballot violated rules the party adopted in October.

The rules called for the party to vote for their top 10 choices for at-large delegates. The 10 candidates who received the most votes would win seats on the delegation, while those who ranked 11th to 20th in number of votes would win posts as alternates.

Instead, Republican Party Chairman Bill Currier instructed party members to vote for 10 delegates and 10 alternates, and he rejected the challenge of the ballot.

A party member then requested a vote on whether to uphold or reject Currier's decision. Currier held a standing vote in which a majority rejected his decision and clarified that the body would be voting only for their top 10 choices. The top 10 choices would become delegates; the second top 10 vote getters would serve as alternates.

Yamhill County Precinct Committeeman Jim Bunn, a former U.S. representative for Oregon, said the ballot failed to follow the rules adopted in October and also gave the grassroots unity slate an advantage.

"The rules were very clear, and they didn't accommodate a slate," Bunn said. "I am not going to judge people's motives, but the ballot would have given an advantage to the slate."

If the slate had just 51 percent of the vote, it could have selected both the 10 delegates

and all 10 alternates, he said.

"There are people who are not running on slates, and with a slate and that kind of ballot, you can lock down all of the voices on the delegation," Bunn said. "I don't know if the slate has 51 percent of the body, but one group shouldn't get together and control the whole delegation."

Republican National Committeeman Solomon Yue Jr. said party leaders faced a dilemma when they determined the ballot instructions because some candidates had filed only as alternates. A vote for the top 10 choices for delegate would have effectively forced those candidates out of the running for alternate, because party members would only be casting votes for delegates.

"In a democratic society, candidates have a right to stand for election, and voters have the right to vote for the candidates they want," Yue said. "If you ask the body only to vote for 10 and the other 10 get elected by default, I think that's a problem, but I have respect for the body's decision, if that is what they want."

Yue said he disagrees the ballot to vote for 10 delegates and 10 alternates gave the unity slate an advantage. The body may vote for whichever mix of candidates they choose, he said.

"The slate is a group of people who decided to get together because we have something in common so let's run together," Yue said.

The grassroots unity slate was running on the premise that they would unify the

party. All of the candidates had to sign a pledge to refrain from changing the "main elements of the Republican Party Platform." That includes the party's principles of pro-life, traditional marriage, the right to bear arms, free enterprise, smaller government reforms and lower taxes.

Yue said the slate's dual endorsements by the Cruz and Trump campaigns were unique.

"Oregon has the only grassroots slate endorsed by the Trump and Cruz campaign," Yue said. "In other states, they are still fighting each other. In Oregon, we are already working together."

In the end, nine of the 10 at-large delegates elected were from the unity slate.

More than 800 people attended Saturday's convention. Out of those, 654 were precinct committeepersons who were responsible for voting for the party's delegates and alternates.

The party was scheduled to select a total of 28 delegates to represent the state at the national convention July 18-21 in Cleveland. Eighteen of the delegates are pledged to Trump; five each are pledged to Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

Out of the 28, three are chosen from each of Oregon's five congressional districts. Another 10 are elected to fill at-large positions, and three so-called "automatic delegates" serve by virtue of their positions as state chairman, national committeeman and national committeewoman.

The event marked the first time in at least 30 years that the Oregon Republican Party has held a consolidated statewide convention.

During the last presidential election in 2012, the party held five different conventions, one for each of the state's congressional districts. Oregon was the only state in the nation that year without a centralized caucus to select delegates to the national convention.

QUEST

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responding to what is going on around you." The agency considers distracted driving an epidemic in Oregon.

From 2010-14 in Oregon, according to the department, distracted driving resulted in 16,987 crashes with 14,186 injuries and 58 fatalities.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

An ambulance awaits as "amputee patient" James Mabe is wheeled away by ambulance driver Krystin McClung, left, and EMT Lee Teague.

DRILL

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Kohfield, who is Blue Mountain Hospital's EMS and Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program director, said the training was excellent overall, and a good learning experience.

"The local participation of all agencies was very important, and it was a huge success with everyone who was present," she said.

BMH Chief Clinical Officer Karen White was incident commander.

Joining in the test of resources were BMH paramedics and EMTs, John Day Police Department, Oregon State Police, John Day Volunteer Fire Department, Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Forestry.

Fire Marshal Dave Fields was also on hand for the incident.

Kohfield said the training helps identify weak areas.

Some communication failures happened, and she said this is the No. 1 issue nationwide.

"Emergency services overall did an excellent job on scene," she said.

John Day Fire Chief Ron Smith also called the event a success.



Ambulance driver Errol McPheeters assists a "patient" during Thursday's disaster drill.



John Day volunteer firefighters extinguish a "vehicle fire" at the disaster drill site on Highway 26 east of John Day.

"Probably the biggest thing to come out of it was law enforcement, EMS and fire were working all together," he said.

He added it was a good learning tool for the firefighters.

"Anytime you deal with 20 patients in a mass casualty, or

even 10 or fewer with critical injuries, that team has to work together flawlessly," he said. "I was impressed, and I hope we can continue to work together. My firefighters got to play some roles on the EMS side that they don't normally get to participate in."

Drivers reported to be using a cellphone at the time of the crash caused 1,419 of those wrecks with 1,175 injuries and 15 fatalities. Drivers 16 to 18 account for 131 crashes in that subset, which resulted in 120 injuries but no deaths.

Convictions in Oregon for distracted driving during the same period totaled 88,626. The transportation department contends there should be more, but the distracted driving law, Oregon Revised Statute 811.507, does not take into account how people are using modern technology while driving.

The law prohibits drivers from communicating on a

hand-held device while driving, but the law says nothing about using a smartphone to listen to music, for example, or as a navigation system or to check social media. The Oregon Court of Appeals on Aug. 19, 2015, ruled a state trooper did not have probable cause to pull over a driver after seeing her look down at a mobile device in her hand because he never saw her "put the device up to her ear, move her lips as if she were talking, or push any buttons." The appeals court found the state law applies only to "use of a mobile communication device for the purpose of voice or text communication."

Merely looking down at a mobile device, according to

the appeals court, does not violate the law. Offenders in court then, according to ODOT, can claim they used the phone as a music device and avoid legal consequences.

The new speed limit on Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon and on some other state roads is 70 mph. Cars at that speed cover almost 103 feet in one second. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute in 2009 found drivers who text take their eyes off the road 4.6-seconds over a 6-second interval.

Shannon was in Pendleton about two weeks ago to help the Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon State Police make public service ads on the dangers of distracted driving. Alexys's story is central to the campaign. Turner said those ads could start airing in the next week or so.

Shannon said since her daughter died, she has stopped messing with her phone when she drives, and she sees it everywhere she goes. She said she gets on relatives, friends and co-workers who do it.

"Just pull over if it's that important," she said. A few seconds of distraction can change your whole world, she said, and her daughters were her world.

"... My world kind of crashed," Shannon said. "I have only half a world."

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Jane Meador Nagler
Author of "By the River"
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