

Most unopposed candidates are incumbents

No competitive races in five cities

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

In many of the Grant County elections this year, the race is not competitive, and elected or appointed officials are running for re-election.

In Canyon City, three incumbents

filed for three four-year term positions: Jim Johnston, Don Mooney and Francis Kocis. Kocis was appointed to the council. Mayor Steve Fischer's four-year term has not expired, and he is not up for election.

The election in Dayville has one candidate for each position. Emma-leigh Larson, running for council position No. 2, a four-year term, is the only candidate who is not an incumbent. Ilah Bennett, who is running for a two-year term as mayor,

was appointed mayor after Peter Bogardus resigned in June. Incumbent Councilor Valli Hettinga is running for position No. 4, and Joseph M. Letosky, incumbent by appointment, is running for position No. 3.

The three candidates for the three four-year council positions in Seneca are incumbents Lilly Foster, Barbara Northington and Sue Holliday. The mayor is chosen by the council. Brad Smith is the current mayor of Seneca.

The little city of Granite has two candidates this year. Incumbent Ronald R. Simonis is running unopposed for the two-year mayor position, and incumbent Todd E. Lounsbury is running for one of the two four-year councilor positions.

In Monument, the mayor is a four-year term and not up for election. Sahara Hyder is the mayor of Monument. No candidates filed for the three four-year council positions.

Two incumbents are running for

four-year positions on the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District board: Joanne Keerins for zone No. 1 and Roger O. Ediger for at-large No. 2.

Two incumbents are running for four-year positions on the Monument Soil and Water Conservation District board: James Bahrenburg for zone No. 1 and Brian Campbell for zone No. 3. Andrew Watkins is running for the at-large No. 2 seat on the board.

Competitive race for Prairie City Council

One incumbent and four challengers vie for three seats

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Prairie City has a competitive race for the city council this year, with five candidates vying for three seats with four-year terms.

Incumbent Les Church and challengers Chantal DesJardin, Scott Officer, Chase McClung and Tisha Packard are running for the three positions.

Les Church

Les Church is the only incumbent. He was appointed and has been re-elected twice. He grew up in the Bend and Redmond area and moved to Grant County in 1989.

Church said he left high school early to go to college, and he had a real estate license by the time he was 18 years old. He's been a building contractor since he moved to Grant County.

Church sees his role on the council as a vital one. He said he helps guide decision making and makes sure all the councilors are on the same page. He said he's become used to that role and said he has contributed to the smooth function of the council.

As a builder, Church said he's familiar with the city's infrastructure. He said he's seen much of it and even worked on some of it. The issues facing Prairie City are not new, he said — replace pesky old parts with new ones and stay ahead of the game.

He said he was excited about



Tisha Packard



Chase McClung



Scott Officer



Les Church

the Fainman Springs project that could address the city's water shortages. Ensuring a good water supply and smart financing for the project are top priorities for him, Church said.

Scott Officer

Scott Officer grew up in Grant County and is a fifth generation Eastern Oregonian. He graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in natural resource management and works in timber management for the Malheur National Forest.

Officer said he's reached a point in his life where he feels a need to contribute to his community. He said he doesn't want to just sit on the sidelines, but he has no agenda and likes to look at issues from both sides.

This would not be his first elected position if he wins. Officer served on the student council in high school and on the student council at OSU's College of Agricultural Science.

Chase McClung

Chase McClung grew up in Eastern Oregon and moved to Prairie City, where he graduated from high school. He studied forestry for a year in college and worked four years as a wildland firefighter. He now drives for United Parcel Service.

McClung said he decided to run after hearing a lot of people complain instead of being part of the solution. He wants to see the local economy grow and new homes built to address the

local housing shortage. Some roads need fixing, he noted, but he wasn't sure if the city budget would accommodate that work. He also wanted to see the water shortage addressed.

This would be his first elected position, McClung said. He didn't plan on an organized campaign with signs but would rely on word of mouth.

Tisha Packard

Tisha Packard has lived in Prairie City about 24 years. She took legal secretarial training at ITT Technical Institute and has worked as a special education assistant at Prairie City School for the past 15 years.

Packard said she decided to run because she wants to help her community and be more active. She said she has no specific ideas to promote, but the recent water shortage motivated her interest in running.

Packard said she hasn't regularly attended Prairie City council meetings, but she has served as a union president for the classified employees union at Prairie City School. She's also on the support staff for the Prairie City Fire Department and is an emergency medical responder for Blue Mountain Hospital District.

Chantal DesJardin

Chantal DesJardin, who grew up in Grant County and is a secretary/cashier at John Day City Hall, declined to be interviewed.

Mt. Vernon sees competitive council race

Two incumbents and one challenger for two seats

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Three candidates are running for two four-year at-large positions in the Mt. Vernon City Council.

Incumbents Jan Lowry and Mitchel Wilson and newcomer Bryan Montague are running for the two seats. Incumbent Kenny Delano is running unopposed for another two-year term as mayor.

Jan Lowry

Lowry has been on the council for more than four years. She won election to the council after being appointed. She also has served as the city's assistant city recorder for 17 1/2 years.

Lowry said she worked "at everything" after graduating from high school — as a waitress, driving trucks and tending bar. She's lived in Grant County since 1971 and has numerous children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to keep her busy.

After many years working for the city, Lowry said she knows the "ins

and outs" of Mt. Vernon and believes she can be an asset to the city. She said she's cautious but not afraid to speak out and say no.

Bryan Montague

Montague was born and raised in Mt. Vernon. After graduating from Grant Union, he attended job-related seminars and trade schools. He now owns and manages Frontier Equipment in Mt. Vernon.

As a long-time resident, Montague said he believes in Mt. Vernon and wants to help make it a better place. He said he's motivated by a sense of community spirit.

This would be his first elected position. Montague noted that he has no agenda and cares about the community. He said he attends Mt. Vernon City Council meetings regularly, and his wife serves on the city's budget committee.

Mitchel Wilson

Wilson was appointed to the council and has served about three years. He grew up in the John Day area and took welding and fabrication classes at Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario.

After seven years in



Kenny Delano



Bryan Montague



Jan Lowry

the welding industry in Prineville, he moved back to Mt. Vernon where his wife's family owns a ranch and opened up his own welding and fabricating business. He served on the board of the swim team at Gleason Pool in John Day for two years.

As a younger city council member, he hoped to bring fresh ideas. The experience has been good, he said, with several city projects under development and his service as council president for the past year.

Small cities like Mt. Vernon have limited funds, Wilson noted, and city leaders must be crafty in finding ways to get things done. He said he'd like to see the city grow, with new homes and buildings to increase the tax base.

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Love, Mom**

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