

Two competitive races on ballot in Long Creek

Two incumbents and three challengers vie for positions

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Long Creek will see two competitive races for four-year terms on the city council. Incumbent Don Porter is running unopposed for another two-year term as mayor.

There are three candidates for position No. 3: Leslie Barnett, Alvin Hunt and Lou Sprinstead. Two candidates are running for position No. 4: Dan Morrow and Denise Porter.

Leslie Barnett

Leslie Barnett moved to Long Creek about 15 years ago. She, her husband and her daughter own and operate the Long Creek Lodge. Barnett retired from the telecommunications industry after 30 years.



Leslie Barnett

Northern Grant County is uniquely beautiful with wonderful natural resources, Barnett said. The state is growing, and in years to come, people from the bigger cities will be looking more and more for the opportunity to live in a rural place, she said. The Long Creek area has a lot of potential with some creative thinking, she said.

As a councilor, Barnett said, she would work with other councilors and the mayor as a team to solve local issues. She said she wants to offer a fresh perspective, keeping in mind her conservative constitutional values and her concern for a healthy, safe and welcoming community.

Alvin Hunt

Hunt, the incumbent, has served three terms on the council. A Vietnam War veteran, Hunt raised his family in Long Creek and said he intends to stay in the community.



Alvin Hunt

Hunt worked at Blue Mountain Forest Products for 26 years as a millwright and as a mill supervisor for the last 12 years. He also worked on a ranch in the Long Creek area.

As a councilor, Hunt said he oversaw the transfer station and worked to keep Long Creek utility rates affordable. He also supports the annual EMS appreciation dinner, which he said is a great event to bring the

community together.

Hunt said he believes that being involved now to keep the nation and Long Creek strong is the right thing to do. He's proud of his community and wants Long Creek to be a good place to live.

Lou Sprinstead

Sprinstead moved to Long Creek from Oregon City, where he was born and raised, about 13 years ago. He's a veteran and retired from the telephone communications business after 35 years.



Lou Sprinstead

This would be his first elected position if he wins. Springstead said he attends Long Creek council meetings in the winter and helps out in community activities when he can.

Sprinstead said he has no particular issues in mind but wants to make a difference by serving as a councilor. He wants to bring plain common sense to city governance. His campaign strategy is simple — he says everyone in town knows him.

Denise Porter

Porter has been elected twice and served two terms in the Long Creek City Council. She moved to the city about 27 years ago after getting a degree in education with a specialty in reading from Western Oregon State College. She's been teaching kindergarten through third grade and preschool and advising high school leadership at Long Creek School since she moved to the community.



Denise Porter

Porter has been a nationally certified firefighter instructor since 2008 and is the training officer for the Long Creek Fire Department. She has co-chaired the committee that organizes the annual EMS appreciation dinner for five years.

Porter said she loves being involved with, working for and serving her community. She works to keep utility costs low and has been involved in the restructuring of the 911 dispatch service in Grant County.

Among the special improvements Porter has worked on is an ongoing effort to slow down traffic as it passes through Long Creek. A new crosswalk has been installed across Highway 395 and flashing warning lights are coming, she said.

Dan Morrow

Morrow did not respond to a request by the Eagle for an interview or photo.

Walden, McLeod-Skinner take on the issues

By Phil Wright
EO Media Group

Republican Greg Walden seeks an 11th term as the U.S. representative for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District. But he said this election is different.

He is feeling heat from some constituents. He has paid for billboards. And Democrat challenger Jamie McLeod-Skinner said she has now raised more than \$1 million. Still no threat to the \$3.2 million in Walden's account, but a good showing for a Democrat in this district.

A look around Pendleton shows plenty of McLeod-Skinner yard signs and none for Walden. Still, his visit Friday to town drew all of four protesters outside the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, while about a dozen local public and health officials crowded into a conference room to meet with the man.

Walden and McLeod-Skinner this week talked about key issues in the race.

How they see the district

"We've got systems that are broken," McLeod-Skinner said, with 50 percent of district residents at or near the poverty line.

She took that figure from the United Way's "ALICE Report" for "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed," which qualifies the threshold as the average income a household needs to afford basic necessities (housing, child care, food and the like). The ALICE Threshold includes poverty-level households.

U.S. Census data shows 13.8 percent of the district's population had income below the poverty line, while the median household income



Jamie McLeod-Skinner

is \$51,813 and the mean household income is \$68,305.

Walden said he does not see 50 percent poverty in the district, but pockets lack economic recovery and growth while others are booming.

Economic development

Walden said rural broadband is essential to the district's prosperity. T-Mobile has an "aggressive plan" to build the next generation of wireless communication throughout Eastern Oregon, he said, and other companies are likely to follow. Walden said public safety, education, health care and business all will benefit.

"This is really important to make sure we're not left behind," he said.

McLeod-Skinner, too, said growth hinges on broadband. She also touched on the need for a compact between states so Oregon could take more water from the Columbia River for growth. And she said the Port of Morrow could be just the place for a regional recycling hub.

Tariffs

Retaliatory tariffs on American agricultural exports are jeopardizing communities, McLeod-Skinner said, and the \$4.7 billion bailout to make up for losses is not the answer.

"Farmers don't want to borrow money from China," she said, "they want to sell wheat to China."

Walden agreed, but he said the wheat farmers he talked to are going to take the "Trump bump" at 14 cents per bushel,



Rep. Greg Walden

and the tariffs are enduring for now. He contended the administration's use of tariffs is resulting in better deals with Canada and Mexico, with China as the big goal.

According to the Pew Research Center, the U.S. tariffs in 2016 across all products was 1.6 percent. Mexico's was 4.4 percent and China's was 3.5 percent.

Health care

McLeod-Skinner advocated for doctors, nurses and other professionals and tradespeople to serve in rural Oregon in exchange for the cost of their education.

"When I think about health care, I think about big picture ideas," she said.

That includes the consolidation of services and industry, she said, so patients could obtain health insurance through the government or a public-private partnership. And she wants to allow for the negotiation with pharmaceutical companies to keep drug prices down.

Walden rolled through Eastern Oregon on Friday to talk about his bill that helps local communities fight the opioid crisis.

"This will save lives," he said.

And he defended his vote to end the Affordable Care Act.

"Nobody gets kicked off as long as you're on Medicaid," he said.

Connecting to the people

McLeod-Skinner, her supporters and Walden critics have hammered the conservative politician for his lack of public town halls this elec-

tion. McLeod-Skinner said that's part of the job.

"No. 1 — show up," she said.

Walden contended he has no problem with that and has had multiple meetings on his seven trips this year to Umatilla County alone.

"I'm talking to people all over the district," he said.

But he does have a problem when people berate and even threaten his staff, he said, that's become a regular occurrence at his office in Bend. He said there's is more to the job than holding town halls, and in the past 12 months he handled 129,500 correspondences through a variety of means.

"So I'm deeply engaged in all of this," Walden asserted.

Nov. 6, election night

McLeod-Skinner said if she wins, she is heading to Burns on Nov. 7 to attend a public meeting. She said she is committed to maintaining connections with the people of the district.

Walden said he remains dedicated to working for the district and the often quiet work of passing bipartisan legislation. He said 92 percent of his 129 bills have had the support of 10 or more Democrats. The bill to fight opioid addiction passed with a wide bipartisan margin.

Political forecasting websites show the House is likely to flip from Republican control to Democrat, but Oregon's 2nd Congressional District remains a Republican lock. Fivethirtyeight.com estimates McLeod-Skinner taking almost 35 percent of the vote and Walden winning with about 61 percent.

That would be a drop of about 11 points for Walden since the 2016 election.

Hicks among six candidates for Prairie City Council

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Editor's note: Last week's article mentioned five candidates, but Eddy Hicks was not included. Please accept our apology. Hicks' information is included with the online version of the article that contains all six candidates.

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

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

Eddy Hicks

Eddy Hicks grew up in Prairie City. His father, Dean Hicks, was a volunteer firefighter for 27 years and served as fire chief. This meant Eddy could enroll as a junior firefighter as young as 12, he told the Eagle. He's been a volunteer firefighter in Prairie City



Eddy Hicks

for 15 years, including six years as captain, he said.

Hicks was elected president of the FFA chapter at Prairie City High School, where he participated in parliamentary policy debate and learned how to run meetings.

After graduating, he worked on Forest Service riparian fencing projects, followed by three years at the Malheur Lumber Co. mill and then a season for a ranch near Kimberly. In October 2014,

he bought a logging truck and started contracting with Iron Triangle. He said he's on his third truck now.

Hicks said he's long wanted to serve on the city council. He sees a need for younger councilors that recognize the needs of children like his own, and he wants to make a difference in town. When people come up to him and ask for something, he wants to do what he can to make it happen, Hicks said.

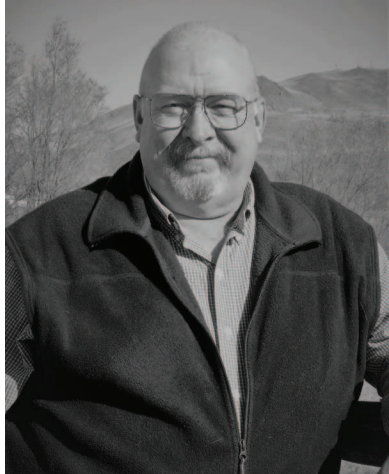
The biggest issue facing Prairie City is addressing water shortages that have hampered the city for as long as he can remember, Hicks said. He

also recalled attending a council meeting where plans for an Iron Triangle chipping plant were discussed. Hicks said he was disappointed when people with "environmental" views expressed concerns over logging trucks coming into town and possible noise from the chipping equipment.

Hicks said he wants to see positive change in the community. People have been divided for so long, which is almost always going to happen, but the city needs to take pieces from each side and put them together to make something that works, he said.

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www.lynnfindley.com



Paid for by Lynn Findley for State Representative, Bob Kemble Treasurer

Please join us! 13th & Final Meet & Greet!

Canyon City Community Center

Tuesday, October 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

Reception to follow. Open to the Public.

Why We Live Here:

- Small Town Values
- Our Generous & Caring Community
- Outdoor Living, Beautiful Landscapes

What We Want:

- Living Wage Jobs
- Economic Security
- To Preserve Grant County's Unique Culture
- Experienced leadership for everyone in Grant County.

We Need a Leader Who:

- Will communicate and listen to our concerns.
- Is experienced in budgeting, conservative and fiscally responsible.
- Is ready to work for Grant County.
- Will take the responsibility of being our county commissioner seriously, and give the position the time, attention and respect that it deserves.



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for Grant County Commissioner

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