

COMPLETE LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS

Incumbents remain on John Day council

Grant County posts 74.5 percent voter turnout rate

Blue Mountain Eagle

With a 74.5 percent turnout rate, 3,916 ballots were received in Grant County in last week's election, according to unofficial election results.

For three seats on the John Day City Council, the three incumbents were re-elected. Shannon Adair received 471 votes, Paul Smith received 431 and Gregg Haberly received 372. Former mayor, councilor and commissioner Chris Labhart received 363.

For three Prairie City Council seats, Scott Officer received 314, Chase McClung received 227 and Tisha Packard received 203, followed by Chantal DesJardin with



Shannon Adair

198, Les Church with 180 and Eddy Hicks with 146.

In a close race for two seats on the Mt. Vernon City Council, Bryan Montague received 137, Mitchel Wilson received 126 and Jan Lowry received 123.

In the race for Long Creek City Council Position 4, Denise Porter received 55 votes over Dan Morrow with 42. For Position 3, Alvin Hunt received 47 over Lou Springstead with 31 and Leslie Barnett with 19.

In Monument, where no candidates registered for



Paul C. Smith

three city council seats, Jabe Philip Merricks won the race for Position 4 with nine write-in votes, and Sherry Carpenter won the race for Position 5 with 14 write-in votes.

Stephanie Gilbert and Rusty Baughman each received four write-in votes for Position 6. County Clerk Brenda Percy said it will be up to the Monument City Council to decide how to settle the tie vote.

Republican Cliff Bentz secured 38,965 votes over Democratic challenger Solea Ka-



Gregg Haberly

bakov, who received 15,091, in the race for state senator for district 30.

Republican Lynn Findley received 18,079 votes to be elected as state representative for the 60th district.

For state governor, Democrat Kate Brown won re-election, defeating Republican challenger Knute Buehler. Brown received 910,435 votes over challenger Knute Buehler with 796,883.

For U.S. representative, incumbent Rep. Greg Walden won re-election over Democratic challenger Jamie Mc-

Leod-Skinner, 203,565 to 141,036

In uncontested Grant County races:

- Brenda Percy was elected county clerk with 2,938 votes.

- For three seats on the Canyon City Council, Don Mooney received 228, Jim Johnston received 212 and Francis Kocis received 201.

- Ilah Bennett was elected mayor of Dayville with 62 votes.

- Emmaleigh Larson was elected to Dayville City Council Position 2 with 61 votes.

- Joseph Michael Letosky was elected to Dayville City Council Position 3 with 57 votes.

- Valli Hettinga was elected to Dayville City Council Position 4 with 66 votes.

- Todd Lounsbury was elected to one at-large seat on the Granite City Council with six votes. Two write-in votes were received for another open seat.

- In the race for Granite mayor, Ronald Ray Simonis received five votes. Write-in candidates received four votes.

- Ron Lundbom was re-elected as John Day mayor with 491 votes.

- Don Porter received 68 votes in the Long Creek mayor race.

- Kenny Delano was re-elected Mt. Vernon mayor with 197 votes.

- Sue Holliday and Barbara Northington each received 68 votes, and Lilly Foster received 65 votes, for three seats on the Seneca City Council.

- Roger Ediger and Joanne Keerins were elected in separate races for positions on the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District board.

- Andrew Watkins, James Bahrenburg and Brian Campbell were elected in separate races for the Monument Soil and Water Conservation District board.

Small town mayors looking ahead

Volunteers filling a vital function

By Richard Hanners

Blue Mountain Eagle

Several mayors of Grant County's small cities didn't have to face a competitive election this year. These voluntary citizens perform an important function that's sometimes hard to fill in small, rural communities.

As one mayor said, his salary tripled this year — it's still zero.

Long Creek

Long Creek Mayor Don Porter ran unopposed this year. He was first elected in a 2005 special election. His family has old roots in the community — there's a Porter Road in the area, he said.

Porter returned to Long Creek in 1984. His wife, Denise, is a schoolteacher and city councilor, and both serve on the volunteer fire department.

Long Creek was on the fast track to becoming a ghost town when he moved there in 1984, Porter said. The motel and his online natural supplements sales business were the only businesses in town, he said.

Today, Long Creek has two convenience stores with groceries, an automotive repair shop with a qualified mechanic and "one and a half" restaurants — a cafe that serves sit-down meals year-round and a seasonal "chuckwagon," he said.

New people were moving into town, and houses were being remodeled, he said.

The city's infrastructure is sound, Porter noted. The 40-year-old sewer plant was built for 800 people — the city has 100 hookups but could serve 300. The public water system hasn't seen a major leak, with costs ranging from \$5,000-7,000, since 2013.

Long Creek has a good relationship with the Grant County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police. Problems with speeders on High-

way 395 have been reduced, thanks to a radar-controlled speed control sign, but the city needs another on the county road near the school, Porter said.

The No. 1 priority for Long Creek is to improve internet access, Porter said. His wife is now on the Grant County Digital Network Coalition board and committed to doing what she can to bring broadband speeds to the community, he said.

Mt. Vernon

Kenny Delano ran unopposed and won re-election to a second two-year term as mayor of Mt. Vernon.

A "Navy brat" who grew up on both coasts, Delano moved to Grant County in 1981, where both his parents grew up. He's been working in the surveying business since 1983.

Delano played an important role in transitioning the county's 911 dispatch system from the city of John Day to the Intergovernmental Council. He said he initially got involved as the representative for Mt. Vernon, but as he spoke up at meetings, he found himself appointed chairman of the IGC board.

Mt. Vernon will see some infrastructure projects next year, Delano said. The city received a grant to upgrade the sewer system, including new equipment at the treatment plant, preventing groundwater infiltration in the collection system and extending a main from Highway 26 near Beech Creek north to the Rimrock Lane area.

The city has begun talks with Business Oregon to find funding to update the master plan for the city's water system. City crews have begun work preparing the city park for new playground equipment that has already been delivered. Using volunteer help, the playground should be ready for children by next spring.

Using its small-city allotment from the Oregon Department of Transportation, the city finished some paving

work on Highlan Terrace. The allotment may double next fiscal year, Delano said.

Good news for Mt. Vernon residents is that the new owners of the trailer court sold by the county following tax foreclosure are making vital improvements to the water system. The city will help install the upgraded system to a city main, with the new owner covering the costs, Delano said.

Some of the burned motel also has been demolished and removed, he added.

Dayville

Ilah Bennett ran unopposed for mayor of Dayville after being appointed in June. She said she showed up at a city council meeting in June knowing full well that Peter Bogardus was stepping down as mayor and moving out of town, but she was surprised at how quickly the councilors nominated and appointed her as the city's mayor.

Bennett grew up in Canyon City and moved to Dayville in 2004. She's been at the post office for 14 years, three years as postmaster.

Bennett comes to the office with no agenda and an interest only in serving her community. She said she wants to keep Dayville going.

Today that means restoring the Community Hall building on Highway 26. Bennett said the facility is usable but needs to be modernized and upgraded. The building needs to be brought up to code, and water and heating problems need to be addressed, she said.

The city is already working on a Community Development Block Grant application to fund the work, Bennett said.

The hall sees a lot of use, from potlucks and Fourth of July dances to Halloween events for the school and a winter festival bazaar.

Plans also are in the

works to upgrade the Dayville School, Bennett said. Students range from preschool to 12th grade, and the school now offers day care for teachers, she said.

Seneca

Brad Smith said he became mayor of Seneca the same way he became a city councilor in recent years — he was appointed to replace people who had left. He also won election to the council one time by a write-in campaign he hadn't orchestrated.

That's the way it goes in rural Oregon cities, Smith said. All told, he's been on the council for about two decades, but he started out running for the position and winning elections.

Smith grew up in Seneca and, after a few years of college in Bend, went to work at a large ranch near Seneca where he had worked as a young boy. He said he's been at the ranch for more than 30 years. Smith's son Brandon is a city councilor for John Day.

Seneca is a small town with the same problems found anywhere else, Smith said. But the city will see a major upgrade next year — a new sewer plant across the Silvies River from the present plant and new water and sewer mains run throughout the city.

Smith credits former City Manager Josh Walker for getting the huge project underway and for keeping an eye on it now as the city's project manager.

Walker also grew up in Seneca and returned to the city after time in the Air Force, Smith said.

The goal is to get as much infrastructure work completed at one time as possible, with the city's alleys torn up one block at a time. The city is also looking for a grant to pay for a new fire hall, Smith said.

Hamsher re-elected in write-in campaign

Mayor hopes to ensure projects are completed

By Richard Hanners

Blue Mountain Eagle



Jim Hamsher

Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher won re-election as a write-in candidate with overwhelming numbers.

Hamsher received 218 votes in his write-in campaign, according to unofficial election results, while Frances Preston received 108, Carole Garrison received 87 and write-in candidate Taci Philbrook received 59.

He said he wanted to stay in office to ensure that important infrastructure projects are completed. He said the results showed he still had clout in town.

The water project was on many voters' minds after two summers of shortages. Plans call for running pipes and power to city wells at Fainman Springs to boost the municipal water supply.

The city declared a water emergency Aug. 6 after the level in the city's million-gallon water reservoir dropped to 1.5 feet over the Aug. 4-5 weekend. Water tenders hauled water from John Day to Prairie City to keep up with demand.

Recognizing the emergency, the state agreed to provide Prairie City up to \$1.5 million for the project, with one-third as a grant and the rest as a 30-year loan at 1.7 percent interest. Hamsher said Scott Fairley at Business Oregon told him the water project was moving

along at a fast pace, despite a 950-page application.

Prairie City will also see major improvements to its sewer system, including new booster pumps at the treatment plant, about 1,500 feet of new forced mains along Highway 26 and new collector mains in parts of the city. The funding and construction bids have already been approved, he said.

A new U.S. Cellular tower on city land will provide the city with additional revenue, Hamsher said. Attorneys are finalizing the contracts, which he expected to have signed by the end of November, he said.

Fencing to be installed on the north and south ends of the city park will protect children, Hamsher said. Installing 15 winter-proof water hook-ups and higher amperage services at the Depot RV Park could significantly increase revenue there, he said.

There are signs of growth in Prairie City — new businesses and three new homes underway. But completing the water and sewer projects is essential to growing the community, Hamsher said. It's hard to grow a city if it can't meet basic needs, he said.

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Mendy Sharpe FNP

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