

Republican incumbents Owens, Findley win reelection

Grant County’s state legislators thank community for turnout

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

State Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, and state Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, are headed back to Salem.

Grant County’s state legislators gave thanks to supporters after their victories on election night.

Findley said he is glad the race is over and looks forward to getting back to the legislative work.

“I am honored and humbled to be their state senator,” Findley said. “I tried myself in having interactions and constituents feedback, and we’re going to continue our virtual town halls. I want to get feedback from people.”

Findley said Carina Miller, the democratic nominee, deserves a lot of respect for the campaign she ran, which he said avoided discouraging comments.

“In this day and age, a lot of people go dirty early, and she did not do that, and she’s earned my respect,” Findley said.

He said Miller represented



Lynn Findley, R-Vale

a large amount of Central Oregonians in the election and he looks forward to working with her in the future.

Findley said he receives hundreds of emails a week from constituents wondering when life will return to normal, when kids will return to school and when restrictions will be lifted. He said these are tough



Mark Owens, R-Crane

things to answer because of the unique situation the COVID-19 pandemic created.

“We need to ensure more than anything that our voices are heard in Eastern Oregon and the people making these decisions in the governor’s office and Oregon Health Authority hear our voices and don’t treat us all the same,” Findley said.

Owens said he was overwhelmed and is grateful for the amount of support he received on election day. He said he looks forward to continuing to protect the customs and culture of Eastern Oregon.

“Thank you to the com-

munity, and thank you for the turnout,” Owens said. “It’s just amazing the amount of people that took the opportunity to vote, and I want to thank them for voting.”

Voter turnout in Grant County was 84.1% with 4,636 ballots received as of Tuesday, according to Grant County Clerk Brenda Percy.

Owens thanked Beth Spell, the democratic nominee, for running and giving people a choice. He said he looks forward to reaching out to her to work on policy together in the future.

Owens said he believes one of the underused assets of

a district representative is the ability to engage with agencies at any time a constituent has an issue, whether it be state or federal. He wants people to know they can reach out to him for help.

“Contact me, contact my office — our job is to support you and give the answer that you’re looking for and find a path forward,” Owens said. “I’ve been fortunate enough to help out several hundred people in the last eight months, but I honestly don’t believe a lot of people understand we’re just an email or phone call away, and we’re here to help and serve you.”

Democrats keep supermajorities in Oregon Legislature

By Peter Wong
Oregon Capital Bureau

Democrats held onto their supermajorities in both houses of the Oregon Legislature.

Returns had Democrats with a net loss of one seat in the House and no change in the Senate.

The 60% threshold — 36 seats in the House and 18 in the Senate — enables the party to approve revenue-raising measures without relying on Republican support.

The current lineup is 38 to 22 in the House and 18 to 12 in the Senate.

In the Senate, Republican Dick Anderson of Lincoln City was leading Democrat Melissa Cribbins of Coos Bay, by 2,093 votes of more than 75,000 cast, for the District 5 seat being vacated by a Democrat on the south and central coast.

Two-term Republican Tim

Knopp of Bend, who trailed in initial returns, went up by 1,500 votes over Democrat Eileen Kiely of Sunriver with more than 94,000 votes cast.

But Democratic challenger Deb Patterson leads appointed Republican Denyc Boles in Salem by 387 votes as of Monday. Patterson is making a second run for the seat she lost in 2018 to Republican incumbent Jackie Winters, who died in 2019.

In the House, Republicans were leading for two open seats being vacated by Democrats on the south and north coasts.

But Republican Rep. Cheri Helt, who was elected two years ago, was trailing Democrat Jason Kropf in a Bend district where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans. Helt conceded defeat Tuesday night.

Democratic Rep. Brad Witt of Clatskanie was leading his

Republican opponent by 518 votes of 41,000 cast. Witt was seeking a ninth term.

All 60 House seats and 16 of the 30 Senate seats were up in Tuesday’s election. One Senate seat is for the two years remaining in Jackie Winters’ term.

Democrats had hoped to swing two extra seats in each chamber to ensure that lawmakers could do business.

No party has exceeded 40 seats in the House since the early 1950s. Both parties reached 20 in the Senate, Democrats most recently in 1991 and Republicans in 1997, but each only for a single two-year cycle.

Minority Republicans walked out three times in 2019 and once in 2020 to block votes on bills they opposed. Democrats got Republicans to return in 2019 only after they jettisoned some of their priorities

and declared they lacked the simple majorities to pass climate-change legislation.

The majority party in each chamber usually prevails in choosing the presiding officer (House speaker and Senate president) who controls the flow of legislation by appointing committee members and leaders, and assigning bills to committees. In 2021, lawmakers also will have the tasks of drawing new legislative and congressional district lines based on the 2020 Census.

Democrats have held majorities in both chambers for the past eight years.

Pass was elected a Josephine County commissioner.

Leading for those seats were Democratic Rep. Chris Gorsek of Troutdale, Republican Dick Anderson of Lincoln City, Democrat Kate Lieber of Portland and Republican Art Robinson of Cave Junction.

In addition, an appointee will succeed Democratic state Sen. Shemia Fagan of Portland, who was elected secretary of state. Her Republican opponent, state Sen. Kim Thatcher of Keizer, will retain her seat because she ran mid-term.

“I feel confident that after the dust settles and we are able to do the final vote tally, we will have a strong story to tell about holding people accountable when they walk off the job,” Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner of Lake Oswego said, “and on making sure the values of education, public health, sensible gun safety and the future of our planet are issues that deserve debate and a progressive bold vision in the Oregon Legislature.”

Of three highly contested

Senate seats in this election, the average raised by each of the major-party nominees averaged \$1 million as of Oct. 28. Only one of the six candidates was well below that average.

Oregon House

The House will have at least 11 new faces in addition to Kropf, who unseated Helt, the only incumbent from either party to lose Tuesday.

Departing Democrats are Jeff Barker of Aloha, Margaret Doherty of Tigard, Chris Gorsek of Troutdale (who won his bid for the Senate), Alissa Keny-Guyer of Portland, Akasha Lawrence Spence of Portland, Caddy McKeown of Coos Bay, Tiffany Mitchell of Astoria and Carla Piluso of Gresham.

Democrat Mitch Greenlick of Portland, who also was not seeking re-election, died May 15. The winner of the May 19 primary, Maxine Dexter of Portland, was appointed to his seat and won a full term Tuesday.

Departing Republicans are Greg Barreto of Cove, Sherrie Sprenger of Scio (who was elected a Linn County commissioner), and Carl Wilson of Grants Pass.

Republicans were leading for McKeown’s and Mitchell’s seats. House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner, D-Portland, acknowledged they were “tough races.”

“But we have reaffirmed our progressive majorities” in both chambers, Smith Warner said. “It sends a clear message about the kind of world we want to rebuild.”

Of eight highly contested House seats — excluding the special circumstances in House District 47 — the average raised by each of the major-party candidates was \$500,000. The per-candidate amounts vary widely, from \$122,000 to almost \$1 million.

In four of the eight races, the candidates raised \$1 million or more — up to \$1.8 million.

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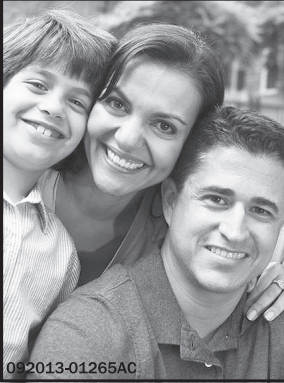
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EARLY DEADLINE: November 13th 4pm for the November 18th issue

The Eagle newsroom will be working Nov. 16-17, but the Eagle office will be closed except for appointments, direct all circulation and advertising inquiries to 541-963-3161. Payments and other account questions can be taken care of by calling 1-800-781-3214 for subscribers or 1-800-882-6789 for advertisers. The office will be open as usual Wednesday, Nov. 18.

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RECYCLING AWARENESS WEEK

Grant County has designated November 8th - 15th as “Recycling Awareness Week.” It’s a good time for all of us to start making the most of new opportunities to recycle. Recycling bins for tin cans, newspaper, magazines, and cardboard are located at Clark’s Transfer station, 26431 Luce Creek Road, John Day OR. Routine recycling makes a real difference and contributes to towards waste prevention. “Recycling” redirects many discards away from disposal and back into commerce, which allows materials to be transformed for use as new products. “Waste prevention” is about not making waste in the first place as we change what makes the real difference.

Some important questions for each of us to ask are – Is the item really needed or can money be spent more productively? Can the item be borrowed or rented rather than bought new? Is the item made to last, or can it be repaired if it breaks? Is it recyclable? Does it have excessive packaging? If people practice making sustainable purchases, we could save a tremendous amount of resources and help prevent products form being discarded. We all can make it a daily practice to recycle, reuse, and compost. Grant County promotes recycling and waste reduction within the Grant watershed as required by OAR 340-090-0030 and 340-090-0040. For more information, Contact Grant County at 541-575-0059

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