

Jefferson sheriff loses backing

By GARRETT ANDREWS
The Bulletin

With 13 days until the 2022 primary election, two prominent Jefferson County officials — the district attorney and a former sheriff — have come out strongly against incumbent Sheriff Marc Heckathorn, saying he's taken steps to make children less safe.

In July, Heckathorn, a 23-year veteran of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, was appointed sheriff by a vote of the County Commission. At the time, he had the backing of former Sheriff Jim Adkins, who'd tapped his undersheriff to be his successor.

Heckathorn, 46, is now running to keep that seat, facing two challengers in the May 17 primary election. One of them, Deputy Jason Pollock, head of the sheriff office's deputy union, is highly critical of Heckathorn's leadership, saying he lacks empathy and doesn't have support of his rank-and-file officers. The other, Reserve Deputy Rick Dupont, was encouraged to run by Heckathorn so there would be three candidates in the race, Heckathorn has said.

Under Oregon election law, with three candidates in the race, the next sheriff can possibly be determined in this month's primary instead of the November general election, should any candidate receive more than 50% of the vote. Heckathorn's gamble could have backfired, though, if a recent endorsement is an indicator.

On Wednesday, District Attorney Steve Leriche and Adkins issued a joint statement endorsing Pollock and rebuking Heckathorn.

"Acting Sheriff Heckathorn's prior service to this county is commendable, but his actions as Acting Sheriff and during this campaign have been the opposite," the statement reads.

In the statement, Adkins and Leriche describe several recent episodes involving Heckathorn, including Dupont's dummy campaign, calling the reserve deputy "a buddy who doesn't even want the job." They say Heckathorn has taken to blaming "prior sheriffs" for any problems at the office, while claiming credit for any success.

"That is not accurate," the statement reads. "Given these serious concerns about Acting Sheriff Heckathorn's communication, integrity, and judgment, we cannot support his candidacy."



Leriche



Heckathorn



Pollock

vided to The Bulletin through a public records request.

In a March 23 email, Leriche asked Kearney who in Jefferson County had been receiving task force notifications of investigations of child pornography and other internet crimes against children in Jefferson County.

Officials have said around this time, the arrest of Duane Ross Hollenbeak Jr. triggered a multiagency review of child abuse cases in Jefferson County.

"As the District Attorney, these types of cases are of the utmost importance to me," Leriche wrote to Kearney. Kearney responded that there were two investigators from Jefferson County listed in the task force database, both members of the Madras Police Department.

"Until late last year Jefferson County SO had one detective in our database but for unknown reasons the JCSO is no longer accepting the cyber-tips we send to them," Kearney wrote. Leriche responded asking for clarification, referring to the Madras Police Department by its initials: "Normally, MPD works cases within the city limits. Who is working the rest of Jefferson County ICAC cases?"

Kearney responded that the state has had to "lean on" Oregon State Police to investigate tips in unincorporated Jefferson County.

"I do not know why JCSO is no longer working cyber-tips. I placed a call

to the sheriff to discuss this matter but never heard back from him," Kearney wrote. "I have had other police agencies in the state tell me they couldn't work the cyber-tips we send to them but they always reach out to me to discuss this issue."

Hearing this from Kearney did not sit well with Leriche, the district attorney told The Bulletin.

"I thought to myself, What the hell are we doing? Our first and central obligation should be to protect kids," Leriche said. "Any law enforcement professional who takes their job seriously has to put kids first."

It's the first time the district attorney, who took office in 1998, has publicly supported a candidate for sheriff, though he noted many elections do not feature competitive challenges.

Reached for comment, Heckathorn defended his record, saying the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office recently partnered with the task force in the arrest of a Crooked River Ranch man. He provided emails showing a sergeant on his staff had been in contact with Oregon State Police about sheriff's investigators receiving task force training. He said he and that sergeant met with a local OSP commander in February to discuss cases.

Wednesday afternoon, the sheriff issued a statement calling the letter "stunning and disappointing," from men he considered personal friends and mentors.

"Their information was incomplete and inaccurate," he said. "I frankly expected both of them to have explored all of the evidence before they weighed in with this last minute effort to discredit me."

Heckathorn has bristled at Pollock "going negative" in Facebook posts.

"Please don't get bogged down trying to defend me when false narratives are presented by my opponent," he wrote last month. "This is his signature move 'going negative.' There are reasons for everything and people that want to know facts will come to me directly. I appreciate those who want to come to my aid but it only brings more notoriety to half truths and false hoods. As I said before, take the high road and we'll get through this just fine."

And though Adkins has put his support behind him, Pollock has said the sheriff's office has suffered from "gross mismanagement" for years. Adkins did not return a call seeking comment.

Candidate questions Voters' Pamphlet rules

By ANDREW CUTLER
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A Republican candidate for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District was left out of the Voters' Pamphlet, and she says it's because the Secretary of State's Office didn't clarify candidates' options for being included in the guide.

Katherine Gallant, who lists her residence as Ukiah, said she wasn't aware until after the release of the guide that candidates had to either pay to be included in the Voters' Pamphlet or collect and submit 300 signatures.

"I found out after the fact," she said.

Ben Morris, communications director for Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, said the details are laid out for candidates in manuals and guides on the Secretary of State's Office website.

"In terms of disclosure this is all very clearly stated in the campaign manual that we provide to candidates listed on our website," he said. "It has all the information the candidate would need to go right through the various steps."

Morris said a State Voters' Pamphlet Manual, also available on the Secretary of State's Office website, includes information for candidates on how to submit a statement and photo for the Voters' Pamphlet.

"We send a letter to every candidate that mentions the Voters' Pamphlet and how to go about filing, including the deadlines and the requirements to gather signature or pay a fee," he said.

At the end of the day, Morris said, it is the candidate's responsibility for knowing the necessary steps in running for public office.

"If you're running for public office, it's your responsibility to understand all the rules, campaign finance laws, campaign rules," he said. "Candidates are expected to read those manuals and understand those rules."

Gallant, who according to the Secretary of State's Office website filed to run for office on Feb. 23 and lists her occupation as political commentator and writer, also took issue with the price for being listed



Gallant

in the Voters' Pamphlet — \$2,500 for a congressional candidate.

"That's complete extortion because it discriminates against those that might want

to run, but could never afford that kind of money," she said. "I personally could. But there are a lot of people, candidates out there, probably good, hardworking honest people, that would never be able to afford the \$2,500."

Not all candidates pay \$2,500 to be included in the pamphlet. Prices are tiered based on the office being sought. For example, a candidate for president or vice president will pay \$3,500, while a candidate for county commissioner will pay \$600. The fees and signatures required for the Voters' Pamphlet are laid out in state statute ORS 251.095.

"They are going to claim anything and everything to skirt their way out of this instead of just owning it," Gallant said. "That makes me believe they do have something to hide. I would understand if it were just a simple mistake but I have deeply sacrificed to make this happen."

Gallant, along with Mark Cavener, is challenging incumbent U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, for the Republican nomination for the 2nd Congressional District in the May primary. Adam Prine and Joe Yetter are vying for the Democratic bid.

The vast 2nd Congressional District is the largest in Oregon, covering roughly two-thirds of the state in rural Eastern and Central Oregon. It is the seventh largest district in the nation. The population of the area is 648,280, according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

"I know that going after (the secretary of state) will guarantee my demise on the 17th. But, you know, their deception is the major reason I'm running," Gallant said. "Along with my fellow Oregonians, we're tired of the corruption and I'm not afraid to call them out. How do Oregonians expect me to fight the big boys in Washington if I can't fight the puppies here in Oregon? Win or lose, at this point, doesn't matter, it's the integrity of our government I'm after."



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