

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

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## GOODBYE, GLEASON



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

A Tidewater Construction crew begins demolishing Gleason Pool in John Day on Monday, May 23, 2022.

## John day's aging pool falls to wrecking ball

By JUSTIN DAVIS  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Gleason Pool is gone, and it's still not clear whether it will be replaced.

Demolition on the site began on Monday, May 23, and was completed on Friday, May 27. The work to demolish Gleason Pool was done by Tidewater Construction.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department purchased the pool property and the neighboring Gleason Park from the city for a planned expansion of the Kam Wah Chung Heritage Site.

The vote on a \$4 million bond measure to fund the construction of a new pool, meanwhile, is still undecided. The May 17 election remained a tie for two days before the no votes overtook the yes votes, eking out a narrow 6-vote lead. But with 16 ballots being challenged by the county clerk, the final outcome — and the fate of a new pool — remains in question (see related story, Page A1).

Also now in question is what will happen to the \$2 million grant the city

of John Day received to go toward the cost of a new pool.

City Manager Nick Green reiterated that the old pool — which opened in 1958 — was past its serviceable life and that is the reason the facility was torn down.

"John Day is not going to operate a pool that old," he said. "There isn't grant funding to rehab a pool that old; it's a stupid waste of money. You're on borrowed time as it is. You just tear it out and move on. That's why there aren't more pools at that age in communities. They weren't designed to last indefinitely."



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

Sparks fly as a worker cuts down a metal lightpost during the demolition of Gleason Pool on Monday, May 23, 2022.

new pool in the event the bond fails. "At this stage, we're just waiting on the outcome of the pool bond vote," he said.

On the other hand, he added, the city has 36 months from the date the agreement was signed to use the grant funds to construct a new pool.

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## Bond measure for pool in limbo

By JUSTIN DAVIS  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Sixteen unopened ballots are holding up certification of the pool bond vote.

The ballots are being challenged by County Clerk Brenda Percy due to signatures on the ballot envelopes not matching signatures found on voter registration cards.

All 16 of the challenged ballots are from within the pool tax district and would be enough to swing the vote on Measure 12-80, which is currently failing by a six-vote margin. This leaves Percy unable to certify the results of the pool bond vote until the challenged ballots are resolved.

Percy said signature challenges are routine in every election and that the signatures are merely being challenged and aren't "suspicious." Every voter with a ballot being challenged will get a letter from Percy with instructions on how to correct the issue. If the signature issue isn't corrected, the ballots will remain unopened.

The last day to correct challenge issues is Tuesday, June 7. The official and final vote count will come Wednesday, June 8. The count as of Tuesday, May 24, was 798 votes against the bond measure and 792 votes in favor.

Voters were asked to weigh in on a \$4 million pool bond in the May 17 election. If approved, the bond would add 70 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to property tax bills inside the John Day/Canyon City Parks & Recreation District.

The passage of the bond would allow the

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## Palmer looks back on U.S. Senate run

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Sam Palmer's campaign for the U.S. Senate ended last month and now he is taking a breather to see what comes next.

The first-term Grant County commissioner, one of seven candidates who made a bid for the Republican nomination in the May 17 primary, finished third in the race with 42,172 votes, or just over 12.19% of the overall tally, in his first run for statewide office.

Joe Rae Perkins, the Republican candidate in the 2020 U.S. Senate general election against Sen. Jeff Merkley, got the GOP nod with 114,341 votes, or just over 33%, while Darin Harbick, owner of Harbick's Country Inn and Harbick's Country Store in the McKenzie River Valley, earned 106,277 votes, or 30.72% of the tally, according to the Oregon Secretary of State's Office website.

Palmer sought the GOP nomination to challenge for the Senate seat currently held by Democrat Ron Wyden, who won 413,703 votes, or nearly 89%, in his party's primary. Wyden has held the seat since 1996.

Palmer told the Eagle in a Thursday, May 26, phone interview that what inspired him to jump in the race to unseat Wyden was the Democratic senator's bill that would give "wild and scenic" status to an additional 4,700 miles of rivers and streams around the state.

Palmer said Wyden did not confer with elected officials in rural areas about the impact of the proposed legislation on their communities when his staff was designating miles of streams and tributaries to be included in the River Democracy Act of 2021.

"I just felt that I could bring a voice from Eastern Oregon (to the U.S. Senate) that has not been brought forth about what's happening to our public lands, our future and our way of life that is being assaulted," Palmer said.

Palmer, who works as a registered nurse in addition to his duties as a county commissioner, said he drove to campaign events all over the state.

He said the sheer vastness of Oregon was one of his biggest takeaways.

"I've driven roads that I've never driven before to get to places that I've only heard of," Palmer said. "(Oregon) is just a ginormous state. I'm just in awe."

Another thing that surprised Palmer was how fed up people were with the government and their elected leaders.

After campaigning at gun shows and other get-togethers in communities that included Pendleton, Hillsboro, Salem, Albany and the Portland metro area, Palmer said people in those locales are "fighting mad."

Going into the race, Palmer said he thought Grant County was "hardcore" when it came to frustration with the government. After his campaign, however, he said other regions put Grant County "to shame" in that respect.

"I attended a lot of gun shows and a lot of these people said if America keeps going the way it's going, we're going to end up in a shooting war. In a civil war," Palmer said.

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## Oregon voters back female candidates

By PETER WONG  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon voters are poised to elect a woman to succeed another woman as governor — a rarity in the United States — as a result of the May 17 primary.

Voters also put women in position to win four of Oregon's six seats in the U.S. House, including the newly created 6th District that winds from Portland suburbs into the mid-Willamette Valley. One of those races could pit a Democratic woman against a Republican woman, although the vote count is incomplete in the Democratic primary for the 5th District seat.

Oregon has just one woman in its current congressional delegation.

Voters also could add to the record number of women, now 40, in the Oregon Legislature.

A national expert says that, unlike 1992 and 2018, she does not foresee this election as "the year of the woman" on a national level. That label has popped up from time to time as the nation sees spikes in women running for, and winning, office.

"However, you have a unique situation in Oregon," said Kelly Dittmar, director of research at the Center for American Women and Politics, part of the



From left, Christine Drazen, Tina Kotek and Betsy Johnson

Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. "You have more potential for success by women, particularly in the congressional contests, so you have a different situation than has been seen in recent years."

Oregon's pending gubernatorial race — with Democrat Tina Kotek of Portland, Republican Christine Drazen of Canby and unaffiliated Betsy Johnson of Scappoose — would be only the fifth time in U.S. history that women have gone head to head for governor. According to the center, the others were Nebraska in 1986, Hawaii in 2002, and New Mexico

and Oklahoma in 2010.

The center does not track third-party candidates, so Oregon may be a first with a trio of women candidates.

Whoever wins will succeed Kate Brown, a Democrat who is barred by term limits from running again. All three candidates have been in the Legislature: Johnson for 21 years, Kotek for 15 years and Drazen for three years, plus two years as chief of staff to the House speaker.

Oregon will be the third state where a woman will succeed another woman as governor, following Arizona in 2009 and New Mexico in 2019.

Meanwhile, voters nominated Democrat Andrea Salinas of Lake Oswego, a state representative, for the new 6th District, and Democrat Val Hoyle of Springfield, the state labor commissioner and a former representative, for the 4th District seat being vacated by Democrat Peter DeFazio of Springfield after 36 years. Incumbent Democrat Suzanne Bonamici of Beaverton was renominated for a sixth full term in the 1st District.

Salinas will face Mike Erickson, a Lake Oswego businessman and a two-time GOP nominee in the

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