

Betsy Johnson visits John Day

Campaign event with free beer and freewheeling talk from the unaffiliated gubernatorial candidate

By **TONY CHIOTTI**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — “Come on in. We’re just shooting the bull and having a beer,” said Betsy Johnson, the unaffiliated candidate for governor, as she welcomed a new arrival to the “Beers with Betsy” event at the Grant County Regional Airport on Tuesday, Oct. 25.

The event was part of an ambitious two-day tour by airplane that would take Johnson to 10 stops around Oregon, and in doing so tick off the last boxes of her pledge to visit all 36 counties as part of her campaign. On Tuesday, after starting out in Scappoose, she’d already visited Independence, Newport, Gold Beach and Madras before touching down in John Day. As the event kicked off, her team was watching the weather, “making a game time call on Joseph,” the first stop on Wednesday’s leg.

“This is an incredible airport!” Johnson exclaimed, perched in front of the terminal’s grand fireplace as she held court and threw back complimentary nuts. The beer was free, the talk was loose and the language was salty. Forget the old line about watching sausage being made; here, the freewheeling conversation ranged from the inner workings of the Legislature to the mechanics of “breaking down a beef.”

“I ain’t going anywhere,” Johnson said in response to an early question about her intentions as Election Day draws near. “I don’t believe the polls. It ain’t over till the fat lady sings, and I haven’t even tuned up yet.”



Tony Chiotti/Blue Mountain Eagle

Unaffiliated gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson visits with voters during a campaign stop at the Grant County Regional Airport on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022, as part of a two-day, 10-stop tour of Oregon.

She seemed to relish her role as gadfly and flinch at the idea that her candidacy could lead to a victory for Republican Christine Drazan by taking votes away from Democrat Tina Kotek. She explained that she was proud to bring a credible third party choice to Oregonians and emphasized her potential to bring divided sides together.

“The farther south and the farther east you go, the angrier people are,” Johnson said. She noted that eight counties are saying they want to cleave from Oregon and join Idaho as evidence of just how deep the divisions go. “I’ve never seen us so divided politically.”

She said that as governor she wouldn’t sign any major bill or budget without evidence of bipartisan support: “Not to give veto to the minority, but you ought to be able to bring a couple of the other party along.”

She touched on such topics as wolf predation, economic development and the need for the state to be seen as more business-friendly. When asked about her take on the lottery, she was quick to answer: “I’ve never won, and I’m pissed!” She went on to lay out her plans for a detailed audit of where lottery spending goes and to lament Oregon’s addiction to “booze, cannabis and

the lottery.”

One moment that stood out among the familiar campaign talking points came when Johnson was asked about an article that mentioned some land in Central Oregon from which the headwaters of the Metolious River emerge. Johnson’s family owned the land before donating it to the U.S. Forest service. (Johnson was born in Bend and raised in Redmond.)

She mentioned that nobody knows the origin of that water. At that point an audience member explained that the source was in fact the meadows near Black Butte Ranch and that the water then flows straight underneath Black Butte, which arose after the river was established. Johnson was visibly astonished to learn this and seemed genuinely appreciative for the new information, saying, “Here I had to fly all the way over to John Day to find out!”

At one point her pilot flagged her attention from the back of the room with news. “What’s the go/no-go decision on Joseph?” Johnson asked.

“I was just gonna grab a beer,” the pilot said.

“We’re staying all night!” Johnson said. “Cool. Have a beer!”

Meet the fourth woman in the race

By **JUSTIN DAVIS**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Constitution Party gubernatorial candidate Donice Smith would like to remind you all that there are more than three women vying for the office of Oregon governor in the Nov. 8 election.

Smith stopped by John Day on Thursday, Oct. 26, to discuss her platform and views with Grant County residents.

The Constitution Party stands for “life, liberty and limited government,” according to Smith. “We believe in God, family and country. I think it is important for people to know that the platform of the Constitution Party is very similar, if not almost identical, to the Republican Party,” she said in an interview.

Smith said the first thing she would do if elected Oregon’s next governor is to review all of the mandates and executive orders issued by Kate Brown’s administration. “Many of them were unconstitutional under Oregon’s Constitution and also under the U.S. Constitution, and I want us to review those with a group of experts and find out which of those executive orders we need to toss out the window,” Smith said.

The second thing she said she would do is gather all the sheriffs from across the state and make sure that they have an oath of office filed. “Every sheriff and every judge has to do an oath of office within the first 30 days of taking their office or position,” Smith added.

Smith said she wants Oregon sheriffs to understand that, as far as she’s concerned, they are basically the law of their county. “They’re even higher in many ways than your judges are. Many sheriffs don’t understand that, they don’t realize that or they don’t want to accept it,” Smith said.

One of the causes Smith is most passionate about is making sure that residents of rural Oregon have a voice as to the direc-

tion of their state. “We want to get back to where Oregonians have a say in their own life and they get to sit at the table, not just the people who are in Portland, Salem, Eugene and Medford,” she said.

Smith wants to relay to Oregon voters that she won’t take a paycheck if elected to the office of governor. “It has been put in writing,” she said. “When I get home I’ll put it in writing again and have it notarized and publicized.”

Smith said the funds that would make up her pay as governor will be donated to various nonprofits across Oregon. “(That money) needs to go back to Oregonians,” Smith said.

The challenges in running a third party campaign are numerous, according to Smith. “It has been very, very difficult. This party was started over 22 years ago and people came forward by the thousands and registered to vote Constitution Party,” Smith said.

Smith said that over the course of time, those people failed to build the base of the Constitution Party within their own counties. “In order try to grow the Constitution Party, people need to know we’re out there,” she said.

Another difficulty, according to Smith, is the reluctance of the leading candidates and the news media to acknowledge that she is also running for governor of Oregon. “We hear Fox News and New York City saying Oregon is on the map for a historic race between three women running for governor. No folks, there are four women. I’m the fourth woman,” Smith added.

“What is happening is that Tina Kotek, Betsy Johnson and Christine Drazan do not want me to be out there. ... There is an association of all the newspapers in Oregon. They’ve all banded together and said, ‘Mrs. Smith isn’t bringing in the millions of dollars from Pfizer, Moderna or Phil Knight, so therefore, because she doesn’t have a million dollars or more in her PAC, we aren’t going to give her a voice,’” Smith said.

WHAT’S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, NOV. 3
Community Action Team
• 6 p.m., Dayville Community Hall, Highway 26 in Dayville

The Grant County Community Action Team will meet in Dayville. Agenda topics will include the childcare committee and the housing needs analysis program. If a Wi-Fi connection is available, the meeting will be accessible online and by phone. To join the meeting online via Zoom, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4414141847>. To join by phone, dial 1-253-215-8782 and use meeting ID 4414141847# and participant ID #.

SUNDAY, NOV. 6
Trap and skeet shooting
• 9:30 a.m. at the Seneca Range, one mile west of Highway 395 on Shirttail Creek Road, Seneca

The Grant County Shooting Sports Club will open its skeet and trap ranges for practice shooting. The cost is \$6 for 25 clay targets or \$20 per 100 targets. The range will stay open as long as there are

shooters. For more information, call 541-620-2516.

TUESDAY, NOV. 8
Blood drive
• 1-6 p.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 944 E. Main St., John Day

To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org and enter the sponsor code JOHN-DAYCOMMUNITY. Due to Oregon Health Authority regulations, masks must be worn.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9
Blood drive
• 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 944 E. Main St., John Day

To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org and enter the sponsor code JOHN-DAYCOMMUNITY. Due to Oregon Health Authority regulations, masks must be worn.

SATURDAY, NOV. 12
Mt. Vernon Christmas Bazaar
• 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mt. Vernon Grange Hall, 59491

Highway 26, Mt. Vernon Mt. Vernon Grange No. 659 will host a Christmas bazaar in the Grange Hall. Tables are available at a cost of \$20, with proceeds to benefit the Grange. To reserve a table, call Shannon Winegar at 541-620-0493, Frances Preston at 907-723-7613 or Leslie Traylor at 651-620-4032.

Deck the Halls gala
• 6 p.m., Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day

This first annual fundraiser for the Painted Sky Center for the Arts will feature a roast beef dinner, festive cocktails, a children’s performance and auctions of artwork, desserts and holiday decor. Dress is black tie optional. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$45 per couple and are available at Painted Sky, Earthly Home Natural Market and the Grant County Chamber of Commerce. They can also be purchased online at <https://tinyurl.com/5dvw43s8>.

SATURDAY, DEC. 10
Ugly Sweater Christmas Bazaar
• Monument Senior

Center, 269 Main St., Monument

Wear an ugly sweater to be entered into a drawing. Tables are available at

a cost of \$15. To reserve a table, call Jeanne Strange at 541-934-2001.

Do you have a community event you’d like to

publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.



DID YOU KNOW:

In 2010 the Oregon governor’s race was decided by **22,238 votes**.


The election that could have changed the course of Oregon’s history was decided by just **1.5%** of the vote.

This year, Oregonians have that opportunity again, but **we need YOU**, rural Oregon, to be the change.

VOTE!

Learn more about OFB at www.oregonfb.org






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RON LUNDBOM

JOHN DAY MAYOR

“I love John Day; it is my home. I want to continue to be your mayor.”

- Committed to sensible growth and continued progress
- #1 priority is the wastewater treatment facility completion
- Continue to work with the county on policing options that make sense for John Day
- Experienced—running 2 businesses
- Experienced—elected 2 terms councilor and 2 terms mayor
- Leadership, Experience, Integrity, Accountability
- Leadership and experience do matter
- The council and I have positioned John Day to be the model of success for years to come
- I support family values and traditions
- Stability, sensibility and success



Paid for by Ron Lundbom

