

# 2006 Candidates' Forum- Morrow County Commissioner, Morrow County DA and Circuit Court Judge

Ballots will be mailed out April 28 for the May 16 election. Included in the election are races for Morrow County Commissioner, Position 2 (a partisan race with two Republican candidates filed), Morrow County District Attorney (nonpartisan) and Judge of the Circuit Court, 6<sup>th</sup> District, Position 5 (a newly added position).

Candidates in each category were asked the same questions.

Running for County Commissioner, Position 2 are Loyal Burns, Jr., and Ken Grieb.

**Loyal R. Burns, Jr.**, 57, lives in Ione with his wife, Betty. They have two grown children and three grandchildren. They came to Morrow County in 1995.

Burns graduated from Corvallis High School and has taken the required classes for electrical licensing. He is self-employed and owns L.R. Burns Electric. He has been an electrical contractor/supervisor for over 25 years. He also served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War from 1966-1971.

Burns has been president of the Ione Community Agri-Business Organization (ICABO) for the past five years. He has been the Chairman or co-chairman of the Ione 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration for the past



Loyal Burns

six years. He is also a member of the Ione Community School Foundation, the Ione Booster Club and is a Past member of the Oregon State Electrical Apprenticeship Board. He was also a school board budget committee member.

He has been of a member of the Columbia Basin Co-Op Board of Directors since 2000 and currently serves as the vice-president.

**Why would a voter select you over your opponent?** I feel that I am the most qualified candidate for this position. I have experience in business management, budgets, employee issues and public communication. I have worked on various development and construction projects for both myself and others. I can communicate effectively with a wide variety of people. I am civic minded, energetic, enthusiastic, motivated and results oriented. I am a "people person."

**If elected what is the biggest challenge facing you?** My biggest challenge will be channeling my experience and enthusiasm and becoming a team player with my fellow commissioners for the betterment of Morrow County. This is a challenge I feel I will be able to accomplish in a short period of time. I am a team player, I have experience and I am enthusiastic.

**What is your stand on the activity tax proposed for the**

speedway? I support the speedway project and activity tax proposed for the speedway. After a hard look at the proposed project, it is clear to me that the economic development this project brings to Morrow County is in the best interest for the communities and the taxpayers. It needs to move forward and succeed and the first step is to support the effort. The second step is to pass the activity tax that will fund roads to and from the speedway and freeway improvements to mitigate traffic concerns. It will provide for the development of infrastructures, which include water, waste disposal, electric and communications for the speedway and surrounding businesses in the district. No cost - No risk to the taxpayers of Morrow County.

**What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing Morrow County at this time?** The most important issues facing Morrow County are family wage rate jobs, affordable housing and secure safe schools to educate our children. I believe parents are looking for jobs to support their families, with a life style that provides adequate housing, in neighborhoods that offer good education for their children to become young adults and hopefully live and thrive in Morrow County.

**What area do you feel county government could most improve?** It has been my observation for some time that the commissioners have not done well at communicating to the taxpayers of Morrow

County. I believe they have done a good job managing the various departments with the monies at hand, but need to be more open to the public on issues and problems that they deal with on a day to day basis. As county commissioner, I would hope to have the freedom to discuss with the public, their opinions and concerns for the people of Morrow County. It is also important that our commissioners work and communicate as a team, for the good of all. I am committed to being a team player.

**Ken A. Grieb**, 45, lives in Lexington with his wife Carri and their three children, Paige, 9, Logan, 7, and Claire, 5. He came to Morrow County in 1967 and graduated from Heppner High School. He participated in the agri-business program at Linn-Benton Community College.



Ken Grieb

He is self-employed as a wheat farmer. For the past 20 years he has been the managing general partner of Grieb Land Company.

Grieb has served on Morrow County OSU Extension Advisory Committee, Morrow County School District Ag Science Advisory Committee and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce in Irrigon, Boardman and Heppner. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the North Morrow Vector Control District and the Heppner High School Advisory Committee. He also currently serves as a volunteer reader in the Heppner Elementary SMART program and as vice-chairman of the Oregon Wheat Foundation.

He also serves on the Morrow County Planning Commission, the Morrow County Grain Growers Board of Directors and as Vice Chairman of the Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District Board. He was the Morrow County Wheat League President in 1999 and 2000 and served on the Oregon Wheat League Executive Board from 2001-2004. He served that organization as its State President in 2003. He was on the National Association of Wheat Growers Board in 2003-2004 and was elected by 45 board members to represent them on the budget committee in 2003-2004.

In his work with the Oregon Wheat Growers League, he gained extensive experience dealing with policy issues, budgets, and decision-making. He has lobbied state and federal agencies and policy makers and testified at state and

federal hearings related to agriculture. The Morrow County Commissioners just recently appointed him to the Morrow County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Committee.

**Why would a voter select you over your opponent?** I have been involved in every community in Morrow County in one way or another and have built relationships in those communities that would give me an excellent opportunity to help this county grow and prosper. I have served the entire county in my work with the Soil and Water Conservation District and with the Morrow County Planning Commission. While representing the Oregon Wheat Growers, I learned how to deal with politicians and agencies that Morrow County has to deal with every day. I built relationships with those agencies and individuals and that would serve our county well.

**If elected, what is the biggest challenge facing you?** We need our county to be strong financially in order to provide a high level of services. To do this we must plan strategically to ensure that public dollars are utilized to their fullest. We must continue to grow our tax base by finding and recruiting businesses and industries that are compatible to our area. We should continue to diversify industry in our county, which would bring in more family wage jobs. Securing our share of the Umatilla Army Depot when incineration is complete would provide significant economic development opportunities.

**What is your stand on the activity tax proposed for the speedway?** I am in favor of the proposed user fee. That is what it really is - a User Fee. If you use the facilities, you would then be subject to the fee. I believe it is a fair and equitable way to help fund the infrastructure cost at the speedway.

**What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing Morrow County at this time?** Economic Development is high on my list. The County Court must continue to work with the Port of Morrow and all of the volunteer economic development organizations within our county to promote our area to others. We need to expand our economic base by recruiting industries and businesses that will contribute positively to our county. Morrow County consistently ranks in the top 10 statewide in total agricultural sales. Therefore, we must also continue to be a leader in Agri-Business. I believe that Morrow County can successfully merge our agricultural base with new industry for the enrichment of our citizens.

**What area do you**

**feel county government could most improve?** At this time, I do not see any specific area where I believe it can most improve. County government does many good things. As with any organization, I'm sure there is room for improvement. If elected, I will see first-hand exactly how and why decisions are made for our county. I believe that once I am involved at that level I will have a better understanding of exactly where improvements are needed. As your County Commissioner, I will take my past leadership experiences and use them to make a positive difference for the citizens of Morrow County.

Running for District Attorney are Elizabeth Ballard, John Ballard and Valerie Doherty. Doherty did not respond to the forum.

**Elizabeth Ballard**, 39, of Hermiston, has one daughter, Sarah, who is 15. Ballard graduated

from Fairfield High School and received her associates of arts and bachelor



Elizabeth Ballard of science degree from Missouri Western State College and received doctor of juris prudence from University of Oregon.

Ballard has served as Morrow County Deputy District Attorney for three and a half years.

She has attended the First United Methodist Church of Hermiston for several years, she is a member of the PEO and have participated in various OWLS (Oregon Women Lawyers) events. She is a past president of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology.

Because she currently serves as Morrow County Deputy District Attorney, she is familiar with how the district attorney's office operates. Furthermore, she has spent years developing goodwill and positive rapport with agencies the district attorney's office interacts with regularly. She also has a public service background working with troubled youth prior to attending law school.

**Why would a voter select you over your opponent?** I'm a prosecutor and both of my opponents are defense attorneys. I've dedicated my skills and energy to convicting criminals and supporting victims. I believe my work history demonstrates my sincerity and motivation. Likewise, my opponents' actions demonstrate their motivations and criminal defense orientations.

...continued on page 4

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