

Cost per vote in race? A cup of coffee

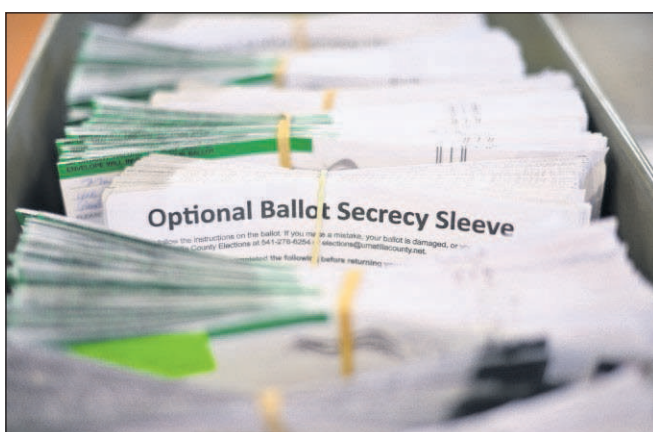
Commissioner hopefuls spent about \$2 per vote in May primary

By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

The five candidates running in the primary for Umatilla County commissioner seats spent about as much per vote cast as a cup of coffee.

Tom Bailor, Rick Pullen and incumbent George Murdock ran for Position 1 and received a total of 11,469 votes, according to unofficial elections results, while John Shafer and incumbent Larry Givens received 11,555 votes combined in the Position 2 race. The five spent about \$46,700 on their campaigns and received a total of 23,024 votes.

That pencils out to a tick more than \$2 per vote across the board, with more than three times as much spent in the two-way race as in the



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Ballots await counting in Umatilla County. Campaign spending reports show some interesting numbers.

other.

Bailor, Murdock, Givens and Shafer spent \$45,399.80 collectively on their campaigns, according to ORESTAR, the Oregon Secretary of State's public website for campaign finance activity. Pullen said he spent about \$1,300.

Oregon election law requires political committees to maintain records of all contributions and expenditures, but committees only file those transactions with ORESTAR if they expect to

receive or spend more than \$3,500 for a calendar year.

"It all comes down to budgeting," Pullen said. "We said we were going to stay under that threshold, and I think we did pretty well with that."

Pullen won 3,506 votes at a cost of about 37 cents each. Bailor's 2,735 votes cost about 61 cents each. And Murdock's 5,228 votes cost 96 cents apiece.

Givens spent \$16,881 and won 5,484 votes, so \$3.08 per vote. Shafer, the mayor

of Athena, spent \$21,827 and won 6,071 votes, just shy of \$3.60 per vote.

Shafer won, and Murdock and Pullen will face-off in the November general election.

Spending in the race for the open circuit court seat of the 6th Judicial District encompassing Umatilla and Morrow counties mirrored the toe-to-toe between Shafer and Givens.

Michael Breiling received 4,907 votes and spent \$20,685. That's \$4.22 per vote.

Robert "Rob" Collins defeated Breiling, receiving 7,593 votes. He spent \$16,130, so \$2.12 per vote.

The campaigns for commissioner and judge spent \$11,827 with local newspapers for print and online advertising (The *East Oregonian* took in more than \$6,500), and more than \$11,930 for signs, buttons and the like. But they pumped almost \$20,500 into local radio stations.

Breiling alone accounted for nearly \$11,000 in broadcast advertising.

Expenditures in ORESTAR, however, do not account for where all campaign money goes. Charles Danforth of Milton-Freewater gave \$8,262 in-kind for radio ads to Shafer's campaign. Likewise, Heidi Van Kirk gave \$2,549 in-kind for online ads, signs and more to help the campaign of Breiling, her husband. Those are campaign contributions, not expenses, but the goal is the same: get votes.

Debra Royal, chief of staff for Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, said the candidates input all their own financial information into ORESTAR, so any mistakes are theirs. Committees now have seven days to report expenses, she added, and late expenses could be coming in.

The local cost per vote is about in line with the races for Oregon's gubernatorial nominations.

Gov. Kate Brown won the Democratic nomination with 315,907 votes. Her expenditures were \$699,082, so \$2.21 per vote.

Republican Greg Woolbridge came in third in the primary with 60,524 votes. He reported expenditures of \$285,679. That's \$4.72 per vote. Second place finisher Sam Carpenter received 87,938 votes and spent \$331,395 for \$3.77 per vote.

Knute Buehler won the Republic nomination with 139,872 votes, and getting those cost him more than \$2.6 million.

That's \$18.90 per vote.

Independent party candidates Patrick Starnes and Skye Allen are on the other end of the cost spectrum. Starnes finished with 5,842 votes while spending \$3,675 for 63 cents a vote. Allen lost with 2,333 votes but spent just \$219.40, so 9 cents per vote. But Starnes didn't quite secure the nomination — there were 12,311 write-in votes on the ticket.

Morrow County Commissioner Don Russell found the best value in his re-election win. He reported miscellaneous cash expenditures of \$95 and received 1,219 votes.

Less than 8 cents each.

Cook Security Group hiring for new Hermiston office

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

A security company that combats everything from trespassing to ATM fraud is looking for new technicians and new clients after opening an office in Hermiston.

Cook Security Group, headquartered in the Portland area, celebrated the opening of its Northeast Oregon office Wednesday, located at 1150 W. Hartley Ave., Suite E in Hermiston. The company provides an array of security measures such as high-tech video surveillance systems, bank

vaults, access controls and alarms.

Ian Schuchardt, general manager, said the company used to specialize mostly in protecting financial institutions but has been expanding into hospitals, schools, private companies, government institutions and data centers.

Cook Security Group has developed the Suspicious Activity Notification system, for example, known as the SAN Solution, to combat ATM fraud such as skimming and jackpotting.

"Whenever there are

new solutions from vendors, (criminals) seem to have a way to work around it," Schuchardt said. "The SAN Solution covers a lot."

One of the most popular ways criminals use ATMs for theft is a technique known as skimming. The thieves hide a device on an unattended ATM machine or gas station pump that reads a person's credit/debit card information at the same time as the machine, then stores that information for the thieves to use themselves or sell on the black market. In 2016 dozens of Hermiston resi-

dents reported falling victim to a skimming scheme.

Another newer method is jackpotting, in which criminals install malware on the ATM and tell it to "test" the dispenser by dispensing cash over and over again.

"They can clear out an ATM in less than an hour," Schuchardt said.

The security company can install a system on the ATM that combats fraud in a number of ways, such as cameras that sense when someone has been standing in front of an ATM for an unusual amount of time,

allowing Cook Security or the financial institution to shut down the machine remotely or notify police after reviewing the video.

Craig Cook, vice president of operations, said the Cook Security Group has invested a lot in development of new technology and creative solutions in order to keep up with the constant stream of new methods criminals use. The company also provides technology such as door access controls and surveillance for "high-security environments where you want to regulate where

everybody goes."

Glen Valiquette, an installation technician who was based in the Tri-Cities before Cook opened the Hermiston office, said the local office will allow the company to serve more businesses and government institutions in what has been a growing market.

"We finally got to the point where we needed an office, needed a base of operations here rather than our truck," he said.

For more information about Cook Security Group, visit www.cooksecuritygroup.com.

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