

County commissioner candidate arrested

BY ALEX CASTLE
STAFF WRITER



Dorran

Dan Dorran said Friday, Oct. 2, that he is staying in the race for Umatilla County commissioner after he was arrested on accusations of driving under the influence of intoxicants in Umatilla on Saturday, Sept. 26.

Dorran, 65, gave a statement to the *East Oregonian* about the arrest on Oct. 2 but declined to answer further questions.

"I'm definitely in the race," he said. "The amount of support has been incredible."

Dorran said his actions after a golf outing were "foolish." "I take full responsibility for my decision to get behind the wheel of a vehicle after consuming alcohol," he said. "It's been a hard awakening for me and it's something I'm addressing with my family."

According to the Facebook page of Big River Golf Course in Umatilla, Dorran was a participant in the Sherrell Chevrolet Farm

City Open held at the course on Sept. 26.

"I can express nothing but remorse and the promise that I'll work hard to make amends and rebuild trust. I also deeply regret the potential distraction this may cause from the important issues confronting our community," he said in a statement.

Local law enforcement is being tight-lipped about the details surrounding Dorran's arrest.

The *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* first reported the arrest on Oct. 1. According to the report, Dorran was involved in a two-vehicle collision near the intersection of Highway 730 and 395, or "Buck's Corner," in Umatilla at 4:57 p.m. on Sept. 26. No injuries were reported.

The report quoted Sgt. Bill Wright with Umatilla police, who said Dorran was cited and released after officers determined during their investigation that he was driving while impaired.

When Umatilla Police Chief Darla Huxel was contacted by phone, she said she wasn't responding to inquiries because she wasn't working Oct. 2 and referred requests for information to an on-duty Umatilla police officer.

Sgt. Natalia Tovey with Umatilla police said she didn't have additional details, such as how police determined Dorran was impaired, and directed further questions to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said he was aware of Dorran's arrest but his office had yet to receive the case files from Umatilla police.

"When we receive that, we'll review it in due course just as we would in any other matter and follow

through with the appropriate steps at that time," the district attorney said.

Tovey said those files should be sent to Primus on Monday, Oct. 5.

Dorran, a Hermiston resident who's spent time on the county fair board and other local committees, finished first with roughly 34% of the votes in May's primary that featured five candidates for county commissioner.

On Nov. 3, voters can choose between Dorran and Three Percenter HollyJo Beers of Milton-Freewater, who finished second with roughly 24% of the primary vote.

Reopen schools rally



Jade McDowell/Hermiston Herald

Almost 20 people stood along Elm Avenue in Hermiston with signs promoting the reopening of local schools on Monday, Oct. 5, 2020, with slogans, such as "Classrooms not chatrooms" and "Give us a choice." According to Oregon Department of Education rules, most schools cannot open until the county they are in has fewer than 10 new confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people for three weeks in a row, or about eight cases a week for Umatilla County. Umatilla County reported 116 confirmed cases for Sept. 26-Oct. 2.

Free help available for Medicare open enrollment

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Medicare open enrollment starts Oct. 15, and Good Shepherd Health Care System is offering area residents free help in finding the right plan.

Jessica Reker, director of education for Good Shepherd, said the hospital won't be able to offer its usual Medicare events because of COVID-19, but people can sign up for one-on-one appointments in person, over the phone or via video chat through Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance.

Trained counselors can help people sign up for Medicare for the first time or check to see if they would benefit from any changes to the coverage they have.

The open enrollment period, which runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, is the only time of the year people can make changes to their coverage. Darla Irwin, senior services coordinator for Good Shepherd, said every year

new plans come on the market, coverage and pricing for existing plans changes, and patients often have changes in their medications that might be better covered under a different plan.

This year, for example, the federal government is rolling out changes to Medicare to offer more affordable options for people on insulin. And Eastern Oregon residents will have a new Medicare Advantage option through Summit Health, which was recently formed by several hospitals in the region.

"This is a good time to check what's new," Irwin said. "I know a couple of the new plans available this year are a little cheaper."

To get help figuring out what coverage works best for them, patients can call the hospital's education department at 541-667-3509 to schedule an appointment.

"If someone does not want to come into the office, they can do it virtually or by phone," Reker said. "We will mail them

everything they need."

For their appointment, patients should have their Medicare card and a list of their current medications with them. If they have letters from the Social Security office or Department of Human Services regarding their coverage, those are helpful as well. It will also save time if they have already created a login for www.medicare.gov and have their password and user name ready, but counselors can assist with that if needed.

Reker said they expect a rush of appointment-making near the end of the open enrollment period, and recommended that people make their appointment soon to avoid a backlog.

For people who wish to sign up for Medicare on their own or want to be better prepared for their appointment with a counselor, a "Medicare 101" video is available on the Good Shepherd Health Care System YouTube page at youtube.com/watch?v=giwh0C-zlsc.

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