

At the Pheasant, a candidate meets supporters

BY ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

The Eastern Oregon Economic Summit brought some of the state's biggest political figures to Hermiston. One of those individuals, gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson, visited supporters at The Pheasant Blue Collar Bar & Grill in Hermiston on Friday morning, June 17.

"Eastern Oregon is not, for me, just a stop on a political campaign," she said.

Johnson, who is running for governor as an unaffiliated candidate, said she comes to the region regularly. She added she has advocated for, and produced for, the area a great deal.

Johnson, who was a member of the Oregon House of Representatives from 2001 to 2005 and the Oregon Senate from 2005 to 2021, credited herself for promoting Eastern Oregon business.

"Hill Meat (Co.) now has bacon available in the Portland metro market because I flew the director of the Department of Ag and the grocery industry out and advocated for them to have shelf space," she said.

She added she has promoted air service, including drones, in Pendleton. Johnson further boasted of her work to support a partnership between Blue Mountain Community College and the Pendleton Round-Up, which trained veterinary assistants and technicians.

According to Johnson, she has brought other legislators to the area to promote the work of

the Port of Morrow and other activity in Eastern Oregon.

She added she has stood with Eastern Oregon legislators on their interests.

"I have had a real relationship with Eastern Oregon," she said.

Having flown into town, she applauded recent improvements to the Hermiston Municipal Airport, calling it "one of the most beautiful" fixed-base operators.

"And It's nice to come out onto the ramp, and they know who we are. We bought some gas to help out the airport," she said.

She said she likes to consider herself "a regular out here."

Furthermore, she said, "The town looks fabulous." She called it "clean," "attractive" and "welcoming."

"There seems to be a sense of possibility here," Johnson said.

"The town looks fabulous. ... There seems to be a sense of possibility here."

— Betsy Johnson, candidate for Oregon governor, about Hermiston

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

When asked whether she knew Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann, she replied emphatically that she did.

"Hell yes, I know your mayor," she said.

She called him "a great American," and she told, what she called, a "silly, little story."

Johnson has made her large eyeglasses a symbol of her gubernatorial campaign. The frames, however, "are damned-near impossible to find."

According to Johnson, she spoke with the mayor, businesspeople, the school superintendent and other people a



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Betsy Johnson, gubernatorial candidate, holds up frames Friday, June 17, 2022, she said she has had for around 40 years. She said David Drotzmann, Hermiston's mayor and an optometrist, gifted her with identical frames recently. Johnson was at The Pheasant Blue Collar Bar & Grill to meet supporters.

month ago. During the conversation, she said, she mentioned her troubles finding eyeglass frames to the mayor. Soon after their talk, Drotzmann, an optometrist, sent her frames from some "secret stash someplace," she said.

"I now have extras made up, and I have one of them made into sunglasses," she said. "He couldn't have given me anything that I would have welcomed more, because they are impossible to find!"

She said she was "over the moon."

GOALS AS GOVERNOR AND GETTING ON THE BALLOT

Continuing her talk, she said she wants to make more local contacts, especially if elected governor, so she could further help the area and the entire state.

Oregon's business interests, she said, need help. She stated they need to be protected from excessive tax-

ation and regulation.

"I'm talking to too many Oregonians who are saying, 'We can't stay here. Permitting is too difficult,'" she said.

Johnson added the state needs to promote business, keeping the momentum of successes.

Johnson was at The Pheasant in part to add signatures to put her name on the November ballot.

She said she has until mid-August to obtain roughly

25,000 signatures.

"We will get many more than that," she said.

A representative from Johnson's campaign stated it collected more than 100 signatures in visits to Hermiston and Pendleton. Meanwhile, many more signatures from other Oregonians were inundating Johnson's office.

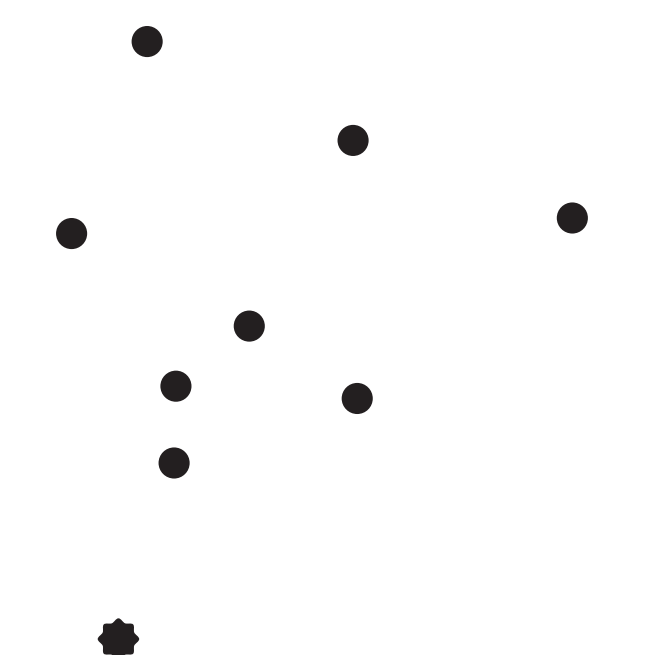
"We know we're over 5,000. We're not sure how close we are to 10,000," the campaign representative said.

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