

Record High Voter Turnout, Election Results

by Alisha Wilson

Despite the huge partisan shift in Washington, the Republicans in Deschutes County remain in power after setting a record high 70 percent voter turnout, a much higher percentage than surrounding counties.

Republican Greg Walden, a strong advocate for farmers and ranchers, won the 2nd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives with a hefty 66 percent vote over Democrat Carol Voisin. In the State House, Republican Gene Whisnant beat out Democrat Bill A. Smith with 59 percent for the 53rd District seat; Republican Chuck Burley earned the 54th District seat with 55 percent over Democrat Phil Philiben; Republican John H. Dallum just barely slid into the 59th District seat with 51 percent over Jim Gilberton and uncontested Republican George Gilman took the 55th District seat.

Oregonians re-elected Democrat Governor Ted Kulongoski by a narrow margin of 51 percent in a tightly contested race, with election results wavering by the hour, producing a real nail biter. The Governor said Wednesday that he plans to push an agenda that includes a two-year proposed record breaking \$6 billion to be spent on public schools as well as increased taxes on smokers and corporations.

In the County Commissioner's race, Republican Dennis R. Luke beat Democrat John William Boyle by a hefty 61 percent for Position 1 while Republican Tammy Baney took Position 3 over Democrat Mara Stein with 58 percent of the vote. Virginia L. Linder won Judge of the Supreme Court, Position 6 with 52 percent vote over Jack Roberts while Ellen F. Rosenblum ran uncontested for Judge of the Court of Appeals Position 9. Other uncontested candidates taking office are Nancy Blankenship for County Clerk, Martin F. Wynne for County Treasurer, Marc E. Thalacker for Director 1, Zone 1, Leigh Kuhn for Director, Zone 2, Cheryl Howard for Director, Zone 4, Patricia A. Moore for Director, Zone 5 and John Stewart for Director, At Large 2.

Alan Unger ran uncontested for the Mayor of Redmond and will serve with city Councilors George Endicott, Robert Jay Patrick and Joseph Centenni. Bill Merrill, Lon Kellstrom and Sharlene Weed have won election to the Sisters City Council, unseating Mayor M. David Elliott. Winning election for City Council of La Pine are Kitty Shields, Stuart Martinez, Jesse Daggett, Luana Damerval and Ann D. Thomas.

Bend Mayor Bill Friedman held onto his Position 6 seat in the Bend City Council with 54 percent of the vote after a heated campaign against businessman Clint Chick who accepted \$20,000 from political action committees tied to Central Oregon Builders' Association of which he is Director. Chick criticized the Mayor's business, Cascade Bookkeeping, Inc. and partnership with fellow councilor, Linda Johnson, calling it a conflict of interest during a campaign fraught with negative campaign tactics. Mark Capell won the Bend City Council Position 5 seat, beating out Derek Stevens by 68 percent in another heated battle fought on moral ground. Chris Tefler ran uncontested to retain her Bend City Council Position 7 seat.

Oregonians voted for ten measures in Tuesday's election, with only three passing. Voters passed Measure

39 by 67 percent, which will restrict the use of Eminent Domain, the power of the state to expropriate private property without the owner's consent to devote it to public uses. Measure 40 was rejected by 56 percent, a measure that would have restricted eligibility to the Oregon Supreme Court based on geographic origin. Oregon voters rejected to allow a federal tax credit on Oregon taxes by voting no on Measure 41 by 63 percent, strongly opposed by school officials concerned with the fiscal impact on school funding. Measure 42 was also rejected, a plan to ban the use of credit reports in determining insurance premiums by 65 percent. Controversial Measure 43 was rejected with a 55 percent vote, which if passed would have required parental notification for abortions for girls age 15 to 17. Measure 44 passed by a whopping 78 percent, extending a discount prescription drug program to all Oregon citizens. Current Oregon law was upheld with the rejection of Measure 45 by 59 percent, a measure that would have required term limits for state representatives and state senators. Voters said no to Measure 46 with a 60 percent vote, that would have allowed laws regulating election contributions, expenditures adopted by initiative or three-fourths of both legislative houses. Though Measure 47 passed with a 53 percent vote, a measure to revise campaign finance laws to limit or prohibit campaign contributions for state and local elections, it became null and void due to the failure of Measure 46. Wholeheartedly rejected by voters by 71 percent was hotly contested Measure 48, which if passed would have created a state spending cap indexed according to population growth and inflation, another measure that would have had a strong fiscal impact on school funding, highly opposed by school officials.

Displeased voters, unhappy with the proposed Home Rule Charter for Deschutes County said no to too many changes in county government. The charter proposed five, part-time, non-partisan, policy-making commissioners, which would have given voters only one choice out of the five commissioners, instead of the current three choices now in place. Voters were also concerned with territory issues and cost, raising eyebrows among many opponents.

Both the Countywide Law Enforcement District (64 percent) and Rural Law Enforcement District were passed, which will fund a sheriff's law enforcement district to provide countywide and rural sheriff services, with the Rural Sheriff's District just squeaking by with a 51 percent vote. Both proposals confounded voters, some who thought they would pay both districts, not just the rural one. Some voters believed they would be double-taxed, unlike the city residents. Now the Sheriff can begin work on a work-release center that has temporarily housed the Bethlehem Inn Homeless Shelter as well as jail expansion that will put a stop to the premature release of inmates.

The proposal to form a city of La Pine was finally passed by 54 percent of voters, after several unsuccessful attempts in decades past. With the city limits drawn around the downtown core, La Pine is now a city at last. Once again, voters were confused, thinking their taxes would rise, even if they live outside of the core area where La Pine will be formed, pointing out a need for more education about the new incorporation.

The La Pine Park and Recreation proposal to help preserve programs, add programs, improve and develop new public facilities was turned down by 69 percent, but the Bend-La Pine Schools' \$119 million bond measure was passed by 60 percent, a plan for additional classrooms and buildings in Bend, La Pine and Mountain View High Schools, Three Rivers School, Kingston School and Pine Ridge Elementary.

Voters chose to reject the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District by 52 percent, but approved the Crooked

Ranch Rural Fire Protection District by 62 percent and the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District by a hearty 70 percent.

The Ponderosa Pines East Road District passed with 54 percent saying yes to a five-year local option tax, but rejected the Cascade View Estates Road District by 52 percent, saying no to a five year local option tax for Deschutes and Fremont Roads.

Voters said yes to the Four Rivers Vector (Mosquito) Control District, passing the proposal with 59 percent of the voters wanting a permit issued to Four Rivers Vector Control District for treatment of mosquitoes on national forest lands near Sunriver, Oregon. The proposed action is to modify the terms and conditions of the Special Use permit to expand the treatment area to 11 river miles and include the use of a small helicopter to apply pesticide granules.

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