

There's a new sheriff in town; Blanton appointed by unanimous vote

by Cheryl McDermott

By unanimous vote with almost no discussion, the Deschutes Board of County Commissioners yesterday appointed Undersheriff Larry Blanton to serve the remainder of retiring Sheriff Les Stiles' term, which runs through December 31, 2008.

The only remaining obstacle to the appointment is a technicality that requires Blanton first be certified by Deschutes County Clerk Nancy Blankenship.

Larry Blanton, appointed by unanimous vote, will serve the remainder of retiring Sheriff Les Stiles' term through the end of 2008.

Sheriff Stiles submitted a one-page letter of resignation on February 16, to become effective April 15, 2007. In his resignation, Stiles indicated he had submitted a letter of temporary appointment to Sheriff for Undersheriff Blanton. He also recommended that the Board officially appoint Blanton to finish his term as Sheriff. "He is clearly the most qualified person in Deschutes County to be appointed to this position," Stiles wrote.

In a phone call to Blanton following the vote, Commission Mike Daly, who made the motion for appointment, said "If anybody in this world deserves to be sheriff of Deschutes County, it's you, Larry."

Blanton has been married to his wife Linda for 30 years. They have two children, Chad, 24, and Shawn, 21. Chad is a fireman and paramedic with the City of Portland, and Shawn is a student enrolled at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) who also is employed with Hooker Creek Equipment Company.

Blanton attended Western Oregon State College, Clackamas Community College, Chemecata Community College, and COCC.

He began his law enforcement career in 1976 as a reserve officer with the Bend Police Department. In 1978, Blanton joined Deschutes County as a reserve officer, and in 1980 he became a full-time deputy with the Wasco County Sheriff's Office. Later, in 1982, he served as a sergeant with the Molalla Police Department, and in 1985 he signed on as a deputy with the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office.

Throughout his stint with Deschutes County, Blanton has moved up through the ranks “ patrol deputy to patrol sergeant, then detective sergeant, patrol lieutenant, Undersheriff “ and now, effective April 15, Sheriff.

Undersheriff Blanton has continued his law enforcement education throughout his career. He holds a DPSST (Department of Public Safety Standards and Training) executive certificate, and has attended the DPSST Oregon Executive Development Institute and the Mark Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. Blanton was also a graduate of session # 212 at the National FBI Academy at Quantico, Virginia in 2003.

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