

COOS COUNTY WINS by Jim Bice

Coos County Commissioner Kevin Stufflebean has survived a recall effort by a ten point margin. With a disappointing voter turnout of only 49%, less than half the eligible voters deemed this issue important enough to cast a ballot.

The campaign against Stufflebean was rife with unsubstantiated allegations, misinformation and outright lies by the proponents of the recall and incompetent reporting by much of the local media. It is no wonder that many voters were confused enough that they decided not to participate.

The supporters of this effort have warned that they'll be watching Stufflebean very closely in the future. That is what all of us should be doing all the time. When the founding fathers of this nation wrote the Constitution, they included a provision, the First Amendment, to allow the press the freedom to report to the people on the activities of government. Many of these founders had

a deep seated distrust and dislike of the press but understood that the people have a right to know since they are the actual owners of this country and its government. It's sad that much of the media has allowed itself to become little more than lackeys for special interests and has disregarded its responsibility not only to report on the activities of government but to understand those actions. Much of the reporting, both before and after the election, reflect the fact that many of the reporters and media involved demonstrated a gross negligence in their pursuit of facts.

This recall effort was a multi-faceted effort by a group of malcontents and populists to take over county government. Leading this charge was former County Roadmaster Larry Van Elsburg chirping about public safety. In fact, though, Van Elsburg and his followers have just cost us approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000

- equal to a deputy sheriff's pay and benefits for a year.

Commissioner Bob Main, in Board of Commissioner meetings, parroted Van Elsburg's concerns for public safety in an effort to revisit the decision to lay off 22 County Road Department employees without considering the financial ramifications. In 2007, when he was County Assessor, Main locked his door when the commissioners tried to eliminate a vacant position in his office. This caused the Department of Revenue to come to Coquille to threaten withholding a minimum of \$533,000 plus unspecified state tobacco and liquor revenue if the county didn't add back the proposed cuts in the Assessor's office. The result, had Main been successful, would have been more cuts in the Sheriff's department.

Had the county not built up reserves, Coos County would already be sunk. It will be in the future if something's not done. The only proposal on the line that could provide us with consistent and dependable long term revenue is the Coquille Tribe/Coos County proposal for the Coos Bay Wagon Road lands. This proposal would allow the tribe to harvest timber and share 50% of the proceeds with the county. Commissioner Bob Main is opposed to that, for reasons only he could fabricate. He thinks he can sue the federal government to allow the county to

tax the Wagon Road lands. Anyone capable of reading can understand that there are at least two separate laws that prohibit this action. As it is, with the current timber payments reauthorization from the federal government going down each year, Main is wasting time holding to his imaginary notion that the Wagon Road lands are a pot of money and we just needed him to identify it and go collect it.

Considering the participants, the recall was also an attempt to put the public employees union in charge of management. Think about it, the hourly people managing the business, and the taxpayers footing the bill! Former union thug Shawn Jennings ran the campaign. She is not a county employee or even a current union member. Regardless of their denials, it was the road department union and AFSCME, along with

Jody McAffree and her C.A.V.E. people who drove the recall effort. They want a populist government without regard for established laws and procedures to pursue whatever agenda THEY think is best for the county rather than sound fiscal management.

Kevin Stufflebean didn't win this election, the people of Coos County won! They prevented the destruction of a fiscal plan that has served to keep our county solvent while many other counties in Oregon are bankrupt. We elect people to manage our money and other assets for the best interests of ALL the people, not just a handful of populists and agenda-driven special interests who would have YOU foot the bill for their convoluted vision of how government should be conducted itself. They would have destroyed rule of law and a fiscal plan that has worked!

Spring Concert On May 14

The Bay Area Concert Band is offering a Spring Concert on Thursday, May 14 at the North Bend Presbyterian Church. The 7:30 PM concert will be under the direction of Mr. Mark Allen.

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