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The race is on, November elections set

By GREG SKINNER
News Reporter

With the new style primary election complete, the count is in. Though the primary settled little or nothing regarding the County races in the coming general election, the state and federal elections are now set.

Christine Gregoire will face Dino Rossi to be the next Governor of Washington. Patty Murray will go up against George Nethercutt for her seat in the Senate and Sandy Matheson will face Congressman Doc Hastings for his.

By Tuesday night 2,897 voters in Klickitat County made the choice to

get out and vote, the number could grow slightly as absentee ballots work their way in from afar.

Those who voted represent only 25 percent of the registered voters in Klickitat County. Absentee voters had a slightly stronger showing with nearly 29 percent of 4,783 absentee ballots returned by Tuesday night.

Diana Housden, Klickitat County Auditor, said that no trouble surfaced with the new primary system in this election. "The next hurdle is logic testing," said Housden.

Chris Connolly, Democratic central chair for Klickitat County, asked the Auditor's office to hand-count three small precincts and

match them against machine counts to further verify a successful voting process.

Housden said that all election results remain unofficial until Sept. 24, the date of official verification.

Election results show that 1,251 Democrats, 1,384 Republicans and 48 Libertarians cast ballots. One overseas military person's ballot made the Auditor's office by the closing of the polls Tuesday night. Absentee ballots will continue to be counted until Sept. 23, said Housden.

If the November election were based entirely on Klickitat County partisan politics with no crossover vote allowed, like the primary,

Rossi would be Governor, Nethercutt would be moving to the other Washington, and Hastings, Struck and Thayer would continue to run Klickitat County.

Within each party Klickitat County voters followed suit with the rest of the state. Local Democrats chose Matheson over her nearest competitor, Richard Wright, by a huge margin; Matheson took 74 percent of the vote, Wright 13 percent. Gregoire blew the doors off of Ron Sims in her bid for the Democratic nomination to be governor.

Local Republicans pushed Nethercutt over his closest Republican competitor by over 70

percent in a race that had six vying for a chance to face Murray in November. Klickitat County Republicans overwhelmingly supported Rossi for Governor.

Returns as of 10:24 p.m., Sept. 14, 2004:

Patty Murray (D), 245,295 votes, 92 percent.

George Nethercutt (R), 148,708 votes, 82 percent.

Sandy Matheson (D), 8,477 votes, 60 percent.

Doc Hastings (R), 23,168 votes, 100 percent.

Christine Gregoire (D), 187,340 votes, 71 percent.

Dino Rossi (R), 139,095 votes, 78 percent.

Absentee ballots arrive late to voters

By GREG SKINNER
News Reporter

Last week, voters throughout the county wondered where their absentee ballots were. The Auditor's office had announced in July that the brand new Montana style primary ballots would be in the mailboxes of 4,018 voters by Aug. 25.

On Sept. 7, only three working days before primary election day, absentee voters in Wishram had still not received their mail-in ballots. Goldendale and Lyle got theirs only the day before.

State law requires that absentee ballots be in voters' hands 20 days prior to any election. The ballots' late arrival has been blamed on the printer, or the Auditor, but no one blamed Washington state. The Secretary of State's office said there was no real enforcement measure regarding the deadline, but if it happened again they might look into it.

"We've always been on time before," said Diana Housden, Klickitat County Auditor.

State certification teams were still working in the hinterland, verifying ballot machines across the state on Sept. 8. The team got to Klickitat County on Aug. 9. Ballots could not be sent to the printer until the county's newly acquired machines passed a verification test.

As a result, ballots were mailed out late to every absentee voter in the county. State inspections on the new electronic voting machines held up ballot approval until Aug. 9. Housden said the final design went to the printer on Aug. 11. The Klickitat County Auditor's office received the printing back on Aug. 30, six days after the ballots were promised to voters. Housden

said the printing was complicated with all the scoring and numbering required.

Housden, who hand delivered ballots to Bickleton, said she would call the post office and track down Wishram's missing ballots.

The ballot delay came at a time when the Klickitat County commissioners have given a go-ahead to the Auditor's office allowing her to initiate a referendum in each precinct asking voters if they would like to switch entirely to a vote-by-mail system. Ten precincts already have vote-by-mail.

A Wishram voter and retired serviceman, insulted that he had no ballot by last Wednesday said, "I didn't serve my country for 20 years to be treated like this."

For the 67 absentee voters in Wishram, the other voting option was to go to the registered polling place and vote like everyone else.

The ballots left the Auditor's office on Sept. 3, bound for Portland and bulk mail, eight days after they were promised.

"I know that it has happened before," said Carolyn Berger of the Washington Secretary of State's Office.

Berger was talking about a King County ballot held up in a lawsuit before an election. RCW29A.40.070 allows for ballots held up tangled in litigation, as in the King County case. In the case of Klickitat County, the ballots were originally held up waiting for state inspection and again when the county tried to send the final ballot to Optimist printers in The Dalles.

Jerri Atkins, Klickitat County Auditor's office, said that the software creating the file of the ballot for the printer was at fault.



The grapes are coming in

By GREG SKINNER
News Reporter

It may be the only harvest in Washington State where the buyer decides exactly when to pull the crop. A few wine makers have made the call and the grape harvest is underway.

During the Labor Day weekend, Rob Andrews, owner of Andrews Horse Heaven Ranch, started pulling "berries" off the vine.

In the next few weeks, vineyards in Klickitat County will deliver 35 percent of all the wine grapes produced in Washington.

At 7 a.m. last Saturday, Andrews started his crew hand-picking for a contract client. The Merlot grapes were bound for the cellar at \$50 dollars per bottle under the Chateau St. Michelle/North Star label in Walla Walla.

The winemaker from North



Photos by Greg Skinner

Merlot grapes harvested by hand at Andrews' Horse Haven Vineyard.

Star visited the Alderdale Road vineyard, once a World War II aerial target range, two times the previous week looking for a balance between the flavors and the sugars. The vintner took samples back to

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Small wind projects on the rise

By SAM LOWRY
News Reporter

The wind blowing through Klickitat County has stirred up interest, not only from big energy companies interested in multi-megawatt turbine farms but from wind-power promoters who prefer to think small.

One Washington group, which started work in Klickitat County to encourage use of wind for self-sufficient economic development, now finds itself partnering with an international organization and the local PUD to help defray energy costs for low-income households, using the wind's largesse.

Ed Kennel was in town the week before last, helping to hoist an elegant-looking yellow-and-white 10-kilowatt wind generator into place atop a 120-foot tower on the Caldwell-Davis farm, owned by Gwen and Fred Bassetti near Luna Butte east of Goldendale.

Kennel, owner of Clean Energy Products in Seattle



Photo by Sam Lowry

Ed Kennel (WHITE HAT), and Jonathan Lewis (RIGHT), ready a 10-kilowatt turbine for action at the Caldwell-Davis Farm.

and also a Klickitat County landowner, has been installing wind generators of various sorts and sizes locally for over 20 years.

"I'm on the mechanical side of things, where the rubber meets the road," Kennel said. He mentions local ranchers he has helped introduce to

wind; the list includes some prominent names.

In fact, the last wind tower Kennel installed, in 2003, is visible from the Bassettis' place; it is on Kennel's own land near the summit of Luna Butte.

Placement of these two 10-kilowatt turbines was con-

ceived as part of the "Our Wind Co-op" (OWC) project launched in 2002 by the Seattle-based organization Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development - "Northwest SEED" for short. The project's goal was to pave the way for more farmers, ranchers and other rural landowners to take advantage of the wind, there for the taking.

"Ten kilowatts is roughly what a farm uses," said Jonathan Lewis, whose Seraphim Electric company based near Goldendale served as electrical contractor for both the Bassetti and Kennel installations.

By installing a total of 10 turbines in rural Washington, Montana and Oregon, SEED hoped to show what state-of-the-art generators could do for farms.

"In the right locations, small wind is a viable option for the homes and farms of Klickitat County," in Lewis' opinion. He sang the praises of the yellow-and-white

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GMS students ingest laboratory chemical

By SAM LOWRY
News Reporter

Three Goldendale Middle School students reportedly ingested a chemical used in laboratory experiments after being persuaded by one or more high school students.

According to Richard Tilton, on Monday his son Michael, 13, and two other middle schoolers were given crystals of copper sulfite or sulfate, which they ingested after being told the crystals were something else.

Different sources say the students were told the substance was either candy, Kool-Aid, or a form of crystal methamphetamine, a drug.

Tilton said that his son became ill and visited the Klickitat Valley Hospital emergency room, but was doing fine on Tuesday.

Tilton said he understood that one of the high school boys got the chemical from a sibling who brought it home

from a high school class for use in a crystal-growing experiment.

Tilton said he believed that the high school students' act was one of malice.

Goldendale School Superintendent Marie Phillips, contacted by The Sentinel, said the district could not comment but would do so on Friday.

Police Chief Dave Hill said he was in the process of gathering statements from those involved.

"The older kids are saying it was a 'joke' and that they told the younger ones it was crystal meth, Hill said.

Goldendale Police have sent a vial with some of the substance to a crime lab.

Dr. William Robertson, head of the Washington State Poison Control Center, said that copper sulfite and copper sulfate are not deadly substances, but can cause illness and were once used as an emetic to induce vomiting.

Enrollment down, WASL up

By GREG SKINNER
News Reporter

The Goldendale School District's student enrollment dropped by 66.82 students over the summer. Noting it as a measure of the community, Marie Phillips, Goldendale school district superintendent said, "It seems like it's due to lack of employment."

Phillips said the district anticipated the loss of several students and based the budget on 1080 students entering classrooms this fall; 1073 showed up for class.

A few more full-time enrolled students (FTE) may go this winter. According to Phillips, parents who lost jobs at Goldendale Aluminum finish up retraining in January. More could be lost in May as parents look elsewhere for employment. The departure of temporary workers may create a further decline.

To satisfy the budget, two teacher positions were cut, and one teacher who retired was not replaced.

\$315,090 in funding was lost because of the decline, as each student represents about \$4500 to the school district in state funds. Special education students draw \$1200 more to cover needs. The .82 represents a part time student.

WASL

Goldendale's last dip in scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning came from an act of civil disobedience as 25 students in the class of 2005 boycotted the statewide test during the 2002-2003 school year. Those sophomores did so to protest standardized testing, and because they could.

Scores dropped and fewer than 30 percent of tenth graders met state standards in math and fewer than 40 percent met the standards in reading. Other areas suffered in the lowest scoring year for 10th grade WASL since 1998.

Phillips said anyone not taking the test registered a zero in the books and drove the perception of performance down. With more students taking the test last year, scores, reported this fall, shot up in reading, writing and math.

The WASL is "one measure" of a student's overall intelligence, said Phillips. She said that when the test was first discussed educators were assured scores would not be used against them. "It didn't turn out that way," said Phillips. "People don't accept it as one measure."

Phillips said the testing

surely doesn't hurt.

WASL brings some advantages by forcing teachers who might otherwise spend too much time in a favorite area to broaden their lesson plans. Phillips said that 10 years of WASL has led to teachers working together to develop a more well-rounded curriculum. "There is more working together on the student as a whole," said Phillips.

Teaching to the WASL requires teachers to teach their students to think things out because the WASL "is not multiple guess," said Phillips.

The class of 2008 is the first required to pass the 10th grade WASL. That is fine with Phillips because she thinks the WASL teaches critical thinking skills. "We can't teach as if all the kids were the same."

Phillips said that the WASL, unlike the Iowa Basics Test parents saw in their day, actually allows for more than one answer in certain circumstances.

Scores in the fourth- and seventh-grade sections of the test improved across the spectrum. Seventh-grade reading scores shot up over 20 percent. Fourth grade reading scores showed the Goldendale School District to be among the highest in the state, according to Phillips.

Medicaid recipients will need Oregon benefit for TD veterans' home

Facility will still welcome WA vets

The Oregon Veteran's Home (OVH) in The Dalles opened its doors to Washington residents starting Sept. 1 (see The Sentinel, Sept. 2).

However, according to OVH executive officer John Hutchinson, Washington residents who plan to use Medicaid to supplement payments made to the facility with veterans' benefits may have to go through an extra hoop or two.

The facility can only accept Oregon Medicaid, Hutchinson explained.

"If a Washington resident moves in, they have to apply for Oregon Medicaid. If they are eligible for Washington Medicaid, they should be eligible for Oregon Medicaid," he said.

The catch, which Hutchinson considers minor, is that a person can only apply for Oregon Medicaid on the first of the month.

The Washington Department of Social and Health Services, which administers Medicaid in this state, may need to put a person into another nursing home for a short time until they can get the Oregon benefit, Hutchinson said.

Frampton leaves county planning department

Brian Frampton, associate planner for the Klickitat County Planning Department, has left to take a job with the Chelan County planning department in north-central Washington. His last day was Thursday.

Reflecting on his four years here - he started as an assistant planner in 2000 - Frampton said he saw his role as that of public servant, politically neutral, helping both those making land use applications or those opposing them.

"I am the guide," Frampton said. "I have seen good and bad projects."

According to Frampton, "The nice thing about



BRIAN FRAMPTON

Klickitat County processes is that even though they can be cumbersome and time con-

suming, Joe Public can go through them."

In the future, Frampton noted, applicants are likely to need more technical assistance with institution of the county's new critical lands ordinance.

During his time in Goldendale, Frampton said he has been active in volleyball, Jaycees, bowling, hiking, and bird hunting.

Planning Director Curt Dreyer praised Frampton's "excellent service" to county residents during his tenure with the department.

Dreyer said that a job announcement to hire a new planner will be released in a few weeks.

WIND POWER

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Bergey Exel unit, manufactured in Norman, Okla.

"It's the same as the old water pumping system," the sort of windmill that once dotted the west, Lewis said. An offset center causes the turbine to tilt itself away from wind over 36 mph. "Thirty-two is optimum, but there's no maximum. It'll run as long as the tower stays standing."

SEED's "Our Wind Co-op" project also had a second goal: to field-test arrangements with local power companies such as the Klickitat Public Utility District (KPUD), which are responsible for administering "net metering" laws.

These laws require utilities to deduct from turbine owners' energy bills the value of power they put back into the "grid," and to carry

surplus power balances forward for a year.

SEED was able to offer landowners another unique incentive, being the only organization in the Northwest authorized to purchase "green tags" from small wind producers. These direct payments, incentives to renewable-energy producers, usually go to big wind farms. "That starts making these machines cost effective," Kennell said.

Even so, finding demonstration sites has proven to be a slow process, according to Heather Rhoads-Weaver, SEED's director of community partnerships.

SEED just learned on Friday that it had won a USDA grant, which Rhoads-Weaver hopes will permit the project's expansion to "20 pro-

ducer-members, generating 500 kilowatts or more."

It was while getting to work on the two Klickitat County projects that SEED approached KPUD about the potential use of net-metered power for low-income families, Rhoads-Weaver said.

The PUD's general manager, Tom Svendsen, and power manager Allen Barkley were in an expansive mood, she recounted.

"Tom and Allen said, how about we work together on a larger project?"

The result was a five-party memorandum of agreement signed this July between KPUD, SEED, its affiliated OWC, and the Klickitat-Skamania Development Council (KSDC) which administers KPUD's "Warm Heart" low-income energy program.

The fifth signatory was an organization called "A W.I.S.H.," short for A World Institute for a Sustainable Humanity. The group has legitimate reasons to call itself a World Institute; based in Bellingham, it is also incorporated in Germany, Uruguay, India, Greece and Bolivia.

Director Michael Karp calls A W.I.S.H.'s idea "community wind," just one of the organization's many projects, designed to foster local energy self-sufficiency in the face of mounting energy costs.

"We are working on renewable energy [sources] to reduce 'rate shock'," Karp said. "There is excitement nationally."

If a USDA grant comes through and matching donations and/or loans can be found, the five partners intend to build three 100-kilowatt

turbines on land belonging to KPUD atop the Goodnoe Hills. Rhoads-Weaver said she expects to hear about the grant within a week or two.

OWC's contribution to Operation Warm Heart could eventually amount to over \$55,000 per year.

"Low income people are forced to choose between paying their electric bill and buying food, medicine or meeting other basic necessities," the grant application stated. "This project would nearly double the number of households assisted."

According to Barkley, KPUD not only offered the land but helped prepare the grant application.

Svendsen calls his utility's stance toward the two projects "very supportive... We try to promote wind power any way we can in Klickitat County."

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