

READER

Arts, entertainment, bluster and some news

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**DON'T
FORGET
TO VOTE
MAY 18**

**IT'S BEEN A DRY
NORTH IDAHO
SPRING SO FAR,
BUT SEVERAL
FACTORS
DETERMINE THE
TRAJECTORY
OF WILDFIRE
SEASON**

West Bonner School District again seeking \$6.8 million supplemental levy

By Reader Staff

The West Bonner County School District is asking voters on the Tuesday, May 18 ballot to approve a two-year, \$6,865,158 supplemental levy, intended to pay for “maintaining and operating the schools of the district for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2023.”

According to the ballot language, the levy would amount to \$3,432,579 each year, costing taxpayers \$146.95 per \$100,000 of taxable assessed value.

An identical levy from WBCSD — which includes Priest River schools — went down to defeat in the March 9 election. Voters rejected the measure with 943, or 53.46%, votes against to 821, or 46.54%, votes in favor.

The district relies on levy funds for about 25% of its budget. Failure to replace the levy means the district will not be able to count on \$3.4 million in funding each year for two years.

District officials stated that the oper-

ations and maintenance levy had helped pay for teaching materials and supplies, curriculum and staff development, special education and advanced placement programs, technology and library updates, and continuing and enhancing extracurricular activities such as music, performing arts and athletics. Levy dollars also went to help provide all-day Kindergarten.

The maintenance portion of the levy would have been earmarked for facility heating system updates, roof repairs, crosswalk lighting and gym siding repairs at Priest River Elementary. As well as that, administrators plan to dedicate a portion of the levy funding to maintaining safe transportation and continuing to support the district’s school resource officer.

WBCSD currently operates with the aid of a \$6 million replacement levy, approved by 52% of voters in 2019. That levy will expire at the end of the 2020-’21 school year.

District administrators have stressed

that the cost of the supplemental levy on the May 18 ballot represents no change from the 2019-2021 levy, stating, “This is not a new tax. This levy is a renewal of a tax currently being paid to fund instructional and support programs for West Bonner County School District.”

West Bonner County relies heavily on levy dollars, accounting for 25% of its revenue. The state provides 69%, while other sources account for 4% and local sources provide 2% of funding.

For more information, visit sd83.org/levy_facts.

Early voting at the Elections Office (1500 Hwy 2 Ste 124 in Sandpoint) is set to end Friday, May 14, with hours Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Polls on May 18 will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., though with some changes of location. According to Bonner County Elections:

- The Beach Precinct will now be co-located with Washington at the First Lutheran Church at 526 Olive Ave. in

Sandpoint;

- East Priest River and West Priest River will now be co-located at the Priest River Event Center at 5399 US Highway 2 in Priest River;
- Clark Fork and Lakeview will now be voting at the Clark Fork-Hope Area Senior Center at 1001 Cedar St. in Clark Fork.

The Beach Precinct polling place change is expected to last at least through the end of the year, as renovations at Sandpoint City Hall have required the City Council to host its meetings at the Sandpoint Community Hall, which has served as the traditional polling place for residents in the precinct.

For more information on polling places and times, to see sample ballots or for any other questions about the May 18 election, contact the Bonner County Elections Office at 208-255-3631 or email elections@bonnercountyid.gov.

SAGLE COMP PLAN SUB-AREA PRESENTATION TO BONNER COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING

Sagle Comprehensive Plan Sub-area Committee will present their sub-area plan to the Planning & Zoning Commission, property owners, and residents of the area on **May 26, 2021 at 6 p.m.** in the 1st Floor Conference Room of the Bonner County Administration Building, 1500 Hwy. 2, Sandpoint, ID, 83864, via Zoom, and YouTube Live Stream. The Zoom and YouTube links are available on our website.

In 2018 the Planning & Zoning Commission formed a committee consisting of residents and property owners in the Sagle area. The purpose of the appointed committee was to assist in the creation of a Comprehensive Plan for the area. The group began meeting, once a month, on August 8, 2018. In March of this year the committee finalized their draft plan. To view the final draft of the Plan, please visit our website:

<https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/sagle-sub-area-comp-plan>

OPINION

May 18 election is a ‘crossroad’ moment, vote accordingly

By Diana Dawson
Reader Contributor

Bonner County is at a crossroad. Every citizen who cares about our community and our quality of life should plan to vote Tuesday, May 18 in our local non-partisan elections. The outcome will determine board positions for the hospital district, the library, and Northern Lights. In addition your vote will determine funding for West Bonner County Schools.

Idaho was built on rugged individualism and independent thinking. We came here to be free, to love the land and the water, to hunt, to fish and to enjoy the great outdoors — and to be ourselves. As we grew, we became good neighbors regardless of political or religious leanings. With civility, compromise and good old-fashioned communication — talking to each other — we built schools, a hospital, a wonderful library, businesses and utilities. We built a community that works.

In the recent decade, however, the

dark forces of anger, extremism and anti-community sentiments have infiltrated our public square. Subtle at first, it has been growing. With the pandemic it blossomed into full force. The mantra of the extreme fringe is always, “my” freedom has been violated and “I” am losing my constitutional rights. Now the new grievance is the mask mandate. Whether “to-mask-or-not-to-mask” is a ridiculous campaign issue. For sure, there are many opinions about masks deserving of a forum. But it is not a valid reason to qualify a candidate for public service.

In the election before us we have dramatic choices. Some candidates are qualified, experienced and focused on policies that support the organization they seek to serve; policies that offer solutions; and policies that demonstrate a commitment to our community.

Other candidates know little about the role they are seeking and campaign on single issues — masks or so-called constitutional rights. They diminish and denigrate public servants who have

helped build our community and our organizations.

This attitude is harmful. Freedom and our constitutional rights belong to all of us. However, a little inconvenience doesn’t mean we have lost our freedom or constitutional rights.

If you want to sustain the strength of our community, please cast your vote for:

Jeanine Asche and Amy Flint, library board; Dr. Tom Lawrence and Helen Parsons, Pend Oreille Hospital District; and Dave Pemberton for Northern Lights. If you are in the West Bonner School District, please support much-needed school funding.

We are coming through a difficult time. We need leaders who will continue to act on behalf of all of us. Tough times require tough decisions. Qualified leaders will make the “right” decisions as well as protect our freedom and constitutional rights. The future of our community is at stake. Please vote May 18.

Info at: bonnercountyid.gov/elections.