

Buell seeks re-election to commission post

Dan Hammes/St. Maries Gazette-Record

Issues change but the single biggest challenge facing Benewah County Commissioners that remains is the problem of meeting county needs while keeping taxes equitable.

Jack Buell, who is seeking re-election to the county board, believes he has done a good job maintaining that balance.

"With so much of the county exempt from property taxes it is always difficult to provide service without constantly hiking taxes. I think we've done a good job with our budget and if I'm re-elected I intend to continue to stretch county dollars as far as possible," Mr. Buell said.

Mr. Buell said he is always conscious of taxpayers when building the county budget every year. First elected in 1974, Mr. Buell is the longest serving county commissioner in the state of Idaho. He is seeking re-election because he enjoys the job and believes he does it well.

He is being challenged by Rachael Johnson, who is running as a write-in candidate.

"Roads are always the big issue facing the county. All of the commissioners understand that but our tax base will not fund major improvements. We have had some success with grants and have worked with local property owners through local improvement districts and will continue to do that."

Issues the county commission has resolved in recent years include the solid waste transfer site and issues involving the floodplain. Mr. Buell said the transfer station is a good example of the county being good stewards with tax money.

"We were required to build the transfer station to comply with regulators. The cost came in at \$2 million which is less than other counties of similar sizes spent on their facilities. It does the job but we managed to keep the cost down," Mr. Buell said.

Mr. Buell said dealing with state and federal agencies are a big part of the job as county commissioner. He said the experience he brings to the office benefits the county. In addition, his relationship with state and federal officials, many whom he has known for years, also pays dividends for county taxpayers.

"We have a lot of history with people in various agencies and have established trust with them. That goes a long way these days," he said.

Mr. Buell said he did not hesitate when deciding to seek re-election.

"My health is good, I enjoy the job and I think I do it well. I will appreciate all the support I can get."

