

Giddings beats McMillan in 7th District contest

Joel Mills/Lewiston Tribune

A former fighter pilot took down Rep. Shannon McMillan in Tuesday's primary election, while a rancher was on his way to ending Sen. Sheryl Nuxoll's re-election hopes in Idaho's sprawling 7th Legislative District.

Priscilla Giddings coasted to victory over McMillan on the Republican side of the ballot. Giddings had 2,847 votes to McMillan's 1,794, or 61 to 39 percent.

Nuxoll, a Republican, trailed Carl Crabtree by 123 votes at press time, too close to call. Crabtree had 2,503 votes to Nuxoll's 2,380, or 51 to 49 percent.

Incumbent District 7 Rep. Paul Shepherd handily defeated challenger Kris Steneck, 3,259 votes to 1,192, or 73 to 27 percent.

And in District 5, Carl Berglund appeared to be headed toward victory over Bill Goesling in another contested Republican race. With results from all of Benewah County and all but three Latah County precincts included, Berglund had 1,357 votes to Goesling's 1,110, 55 to 45 percent.

Giddings said she was honored and humbled by her victory.

"I'm looking forward to the next six months, and having a good campaign and getting to know the voters in the rest of the district," Giddings said. "In the northern part, some (voters) are hesitant to vote for two representatives that are down in Idaho County."

Being a pilot will make it easier for her to hop up to Bonner and Shoshone counties, she said, noting she already has speaking engagements and business tours lined up in those areas.

The daughter of Idaho County Sheriff Doug Giddings, Giddings differed with McMillan's vote against funding for the Idaho National Guard Youth Challenge Academy, a boot-camp style program for troubled youth in Pierce. She also campaigned against regulation of the natural resource industries in her district, and for more vocational programs in schools.

McMillan could not be reached Tuesday night for comment. Giddings will face Bonner County Democrat Jessica Chilcott in the November general election.

Crabtree ran on a platform of improving education without large increases in spending as a way to bring jobs to his district. Nuxoll based her campaign on continuing her pursuit of state rights and sovereignty issues, and a pro-life agenda rooted in her Christian faith.

The victor will face Sagle Democrat Ken Meyers in November.

Shepherd could not be reached for comment on election night. Steneck decided to run against him over his vote for a gas tax increase. She called herself a "true conservative," and labeled

Shepherd a "progressive" on taxes. But Shepherd, vice-chairman of the House Transportation Committee, said the increase was to fund badly needed road and bridge work that could have forced a larger tax increase in the future.

No Democrat filed to run for Shepherd's seat, so he will run unopposed in November unless there is a write-in challenge.

Like Steneck, Berglund said the 2015 gas and vehicle registration tax increase spurred him into running for office. A former member of the far-right Constitution Party, Berglund also advocated for local takeover of federally owned lands. Goesling, a member of the State Board of Education, struck a more moderate tone in calling for extending educational opportunities to more Idahoans.

If he holds on, Berglund will face Rep. Paulette Jordan, D-Plummer, in November.

Mills may be contacted at jmills@lmtribune.com or (208) 848-2266.