

Mountain Democrat's picks for the primary election

Mountain Democrat
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Vern Pierson for El Dorado County District Attorney

Since being elected DA in January of 2007 Vern Pierson has demonstrated a track record of personally and successfully prosecuting high-profile cases including Philip and Nancy Garrido for the decades old abduction of Jaycee Lee Dugard.

Pierson has a no-nonsense approach to fighting for justice and the good of the people. In addition to being a tough, effective prosecutor, he's a tireless worker for the rights of crime victims, always making sure their voices are heard.

Under his leadership the DA's Office staff has consistently sought justice for victims and held criminals accountable. He fought successfully for the death penalty for David Zanon, who ran down California Highway Patrol officer Scott Russell.

A successful leader knows how to build a good team and Pierson has done just that. The DA's office in El Dorado County has gained a notable reputation statewide and has earned the respect of law enforcement here and elsewhere throughout the state.

Pierson helped provide annual legal updates for front-line law enforcement through the Peace Officers Standards and Training and he helped create a field guide for officers' use throughout the state.

Relocating the DA's office to its new location downtown shows foresight and will further enhance the working conditions of his high caliber staff.

We support Pierson's efforts thus far and want to see him continue this hard work over the next four years. He has earned our endorsement for DA.

Michael Ranalli for District 4 Supervisor

Incumbent Michael Ranalli, District 4 Supervisor, has in-depth understanding of the local regulatory environment and its impact on our rural community and that makes him the most qualified person to continue to represent taxpayers on the Board of Supervisors.

He is currently chairman of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and the County Transportation Commission. Additionally he is currently Vice-chair of the County Water Agency, Vice President of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association, Vice-Chair of the Rural Counties' Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority and Board Member of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

As the county representative within the statewide Tree Mortality Task Force – a role that's placed him in state and federal-level participation, Ranalli has gained a better understanding of the connections between forest health and watersheds.

He believes as we do that there needs to be a balance between growth, preservation of natural resources and commitment to a rural lifestyle in El Dorado County.

His decisions are based on what is best for his district and has demonstrated his allegiance to the Constitution, protecting private property rights while also fending off potential costly litigation for county taxpayers. He understands the challenges we face repairing our county roadways and sees this as a priority.

Ranalli is living up to his campaign promises, listens to his constituents and has proven a well-informed hard-working Supervisor. He's our choice for District 4 Supervisor.

Todd White for El Dorado County Recorder/Clerk

Recorder-Clerk Bill Schultz is a tough act to follow. Schultz has performed his responsibilities masterfully while earning the respect of his staff and the residents of El Dorado County. Pollock Pines resident Todd White is heavily invested in the community. He was born and raised here and has an undergraduate degree from Sacramento State in social sciences and a graduate degree in management and leadership.

In 2010 White was elected to the El Dorado Union High School Board of Trustees becoming the youngest person to serve on the board. Prior to serving on the high school board, White served on the El Dorado County Parks and Recreation Commission and the El Dorado County Community Action Council from 2005 to 2007.

He has proven his commitment to service in the county by volunteering for the Junior Livestock Committee, the Boys and Girls Club, Chamber of Commerce from El Dorado Hills to South Lake Tahoe and as program manager for Big Brothers/Big Sisters,

His understanding of the position and his advocacy for the “people’s right to know,” is a crucial attribute. We believe he would uphold the values and integrity of Recorder-Clerk and continue the legacy Bill Schultz leaves behind.

Todd White is the right choice for Recorder-Clerk and has our endorsement.

Anne Billingsley for El Dorado County Treasurer-Tax collector

For the first time in decades El Dorado County voters will select a new Treasurer-Tax Collector and we think Anne Billingsley is right for the job.

A 15-year county employee, Billingsley’s experience in the Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office, where she works for five years, and the Auditor-Controller’s Office, where she’s worked for the past 10 years, will help her hit the ground running.

Following in the footsteps of Cherie Raffety, who has served as Treasurer-Tax Collector for the last 33 years, Billingsley said, if elected, she will do her best to model the “tremendous job” Raffety has done while in office.

Her attention to detail and emphasis on great customer service will ensure those walking through the doors or calling on the phone get correct information about property tax bills, business licenses or other related matters. She’s also committed to collaboration with other departments and keeping staff’s training up to date — which is especially important since the county is getting a new property tax system.

Billingsley has a deep understanding of the office, a wealth of accounting and financial experience and what we believe will be the right approach of fostering a smooth transition with an eye on providing superior service to county taxpayers.

Anne Billingsley is our choice for Treasurer-Tax Collector.

Joe Harn for Auditor Controller

Voters who want an Auditor-Controller who will act in their best interest don’t need to look beyond incumbent Joe Harn.

El Dorado County needs an experienced CPA who dedicates 100 percent of his time to the job of maintaining the fiscal integrity of county finances. Many times Harn has demonstrated his commitment to protecting taxpayers’ money — opposing frivolous

spending, working with developers to ensure they pay their fare share and making sure the county and special district follow the law.

In doing so, he's ruffled feathers of other politicians and county department heads/staff. He's not just a watchdog of government fiscal prudence but a relentless pit bull where and when it matters. He's been a strong advocate of government transparency and a leading voice of reason to the Board of Supervisors.

His diligence has brought in money for parks, contributed to building the El Dorado Hills Library and Silva Valley interchange and helped the county secure a low-interest loan to fund the public safety complex.

Understanding the intricacies of government accounting can't be grasped by taking a courses here and there. Harn has been a CPA since 1982 and has worked in the county government trenches for more than two decades, advising the Board of Supervisors and working with the Chief Administrative Office to keep the county financially sound. His expertise is recognized statewide and he currently serves as chair of the California State Controller's Advisory Committee of County Accounting Procedures.

Efforts to improve the community go beyond Harn's role as an elected official. The El Dorado High School graduate is a member of the El Dorado Hills Rotary Club, serves on the boards for the Boys and Girls Club of El Dorado County Western Slope and Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises (MORE) and previously served on the Cameron Park Community Services District Board of Directors. He's a longtime member of the El Dorado County, El Dorado Hills and Shingle Springs-Cameron Park chambers of commerce and gives his time and money to causes that make El Dorado County a better place.

Harn's independent voice is refreshing in this day of good-old-boy politics and his positive campaign rises above mud-slinging techniques used by others. This veracious fighter for fiscal responsibility does his job well, earning gratitude and respect from the public and this newspaper.

The Mountain Democrat's choice is easy — Joe Harn for Auditor-Controller.

Sue Novasel for District 5 Supervisor

Incumbent Supervisor Sue Novasel isn't about party lines; she's about El Dorado County,

She looks at the issues and decides what is best for her district. She brings years of public service experience to the job, including time as a Lake Tahoe Unified School District trustee.

She faces challenges in her district, most notably South Lake Tahoe's vacation home rental ordinances, which she views as too aggressive. Though the county is being pushed by some to adopt similar policies, Novasel said it's important to remember the differences between cities and counties. Her work with El Dorado County District 4 Supervisor Michael Ranalli on an ad hoc committee looking over the 20-year-old rental policy in Tahoe is a good step in the right direction.

Her concern about the lack of housing for the area's working-class citizens is to be commended. She's seeking solutions to this problem while also balancing the value tourists bring to the area. Novasel is looking into a pilot project aimed at turning old hotels into livable, affordable housing.

Among these issues, including development in areas of El Dorado County, Novasel feels adaptation is necessary. Although she's often cast as a "developer's friend" she's really all about what makes sense to the county.

Sue Novasel has performed admirably in her first term as Supervisor. South Lake Tahoe continues to remold itself and this takes vision. We believe Novasel has that vision and what's best for Tahoe and that includes Pollock Pines. She understands the value of tourism while protecting a district rich in natural resources.

The Mountain Democrat endorses Sue Novasel for El Dorado County District 5 Supervisor.

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