

ELECTION 2010: CITY COUNCIL

WARD 5

Petersen, Sasso emerge in crowded field

RUNOFF SET FOR JUNE 29: Winners each received a third of vote to beat out three other city council hopefuls.

By Emilie Rusch Journal staff

Bonny Petersen and Ron Sasso rose to the top of a crowded field Tuesday in Rapid City's Ward 5 to earn spots in a June 29 run-off election. Petersen led the pack with 33 percent of the vote, with Sasso following with 29 percent. They were

followed by Michael Stanley and Jody Harold Speck each with 12 percent, Frank Robbins with 7 percent, and Joseph Budd with 4 percent. Alderman Malcom Chapman has held the Ward 5 seat for six years but did not seek re-election this year. City election rules require that candidates get at

least 50 percent plus one vote to win outright or a run-off election is triggered between the top two vote-getters. A total of 1,965 Ward 5 residents voted Tuesday. Petersen, 55, a registered nurse with Regional Health, thanked the voters and credited her professional experience as a nurse, secondary education teacher and small-business owner for distinguishing her from the diverse group of candidates. "I have a broad base of experience," Petersen said.

"I'm inclusive. We all need to come together and do what's best for our home. We need to get along on the city council." Sasso, 45, director of Community Transitions, a brain injury rehabilitation program, said he proved to voters he would not be afraid to speak up when necessary, including at the February council hearing that ended in Alderman Sam Kooiker's censure. "Often people worry about politicians who get in and aren't going to voice concerns, who aren't going

to occasionally go against the grain," Sasso said. "I think there's a lot of great things the city does, but when something is wrong, I will speak out." Stanley, 31, a landscape architect with Dream Design International, focused on his experience working with city government, as did Speck, 50, a local attorney who worked for the city in the 1980s. Both Budd, 36, who is self-employed, and Robbins, 34, a loss-prevention manager for the local Common Cents



Petersen



Sasso

convenience stores, argued they would bring a "blue collar" perspective that they said was lacking from city council. Contact Emilie Rusch at 394-8453 or emilie.rusch@rapidcityjournal.com.

WARD 3

Davis credits 'years of preparation'

WIDE SPREAD: Litzen received less than 30 percent, Jones 8.67 percent.

By Emilie Rusch Journal staff

Dave Davis beat out two newcomers to Rapid City politics by a wide margin Tuesday to replace three-term Ward 3 Alderwoman Karen Gundersen Olson on city council.

Davis won with 61.7 percent of the vote, followed by Lori Litzen with 29.63 percent and Clark Jones with 8.67 percent. A total of 3,021 residents voted in Ward 3, which covers the city's southwest side.

Davis, 55, an insurance agent with American Family Insurance, said he was humbled to be chosen from three "quality" candidates and attributed his win to his record of leadership and consensus building. Unlike his competitors, Davis has served on numerous city and community boards, including the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, the Rapid City Convention & Visitors Bureau and Highmark Federal Credit Union. "It was years of paying the dues," Davis said. "It was years of being on different boards and years of preparation."

Davis said more than any one issue, he wants to focus on building new relationships among council members and working together as a team. Davis is one of four new council members who will take office in July.

"The challenge is you've got the inexperience, the learning curve. The opportunity is you don't have the baggage. You don't have the baggage in the personalities, you don't have the baggage in the beliefs that things can and can't get done," Davis said. "There's a freshness of direction, a freshness of energy."

Litzen, 51, an environmental engineer at KL Energy Corp., said she felt good about her first foray into city politics, but the results came down to name recognition.

She ran her campaign on her experience making analytical decisions and working on infrastructure projects. "When I filed my petitions, there wasn't an incumbent running. Who knows who's going to run?" Litzen said. "You go and try to get your name out, and I feel good."

Jones, 43, a bus monitor for Rapid City Area Schools, focused his campaign on reducing city interference in residents' lives. A member of Citizens for Liberty, Jones also advocated a streamlined city permitting process and zero-base budgeting.

WARD 4



Aaron Rosenblatt/Journal staff

Ward 4 City Council candidate Jordan Mason campaigns along Haines Avenue on Tuesday afternoon in Rapid City. Mason, Tuesday's top vote-getter, will face John Roberts in a run-off election June 29.

Kooiker censure cost LaCroix council seat

By Mary Garrigan Journal staff

Incumbent Lloyd LaCroix fell to voter anger over the censure of Alderman Sam Kooiker in Tuesday's city council election, according to the two candidates who challenged him for his seat.

Challengers Jordan Mason and John Roberts will face off in a special election June 29 for the Ward 4 city council seat. Mason, 25, was the top vote-getter in all four precincts in Ward 4. He finished with 520 votes, or 45.5 percent of votes. Roberts got 334 votes, or 29 percent. A candidate for city council must garner 50 percent plus 1 vote to avoid a runoff.

LaCroix lost his re-election bid for the seat he has held since 2006. This time, he finished third in a three-man race

with 290 votes, with slightly more than 25 percent of votes cast.

"The current incumbent wasn't willing to listen," Mason said of LaCroix. "I do believe the censure of Alderman Kooiker was the reason. I would definitely say that was a turning point for Mr. LaCroix."

Roberts agreed the censure vote cost the alderman his seat, but LaCroix said Tuesday night that he wouldn't change his vote if he had it to do over again.

"No, absolutely not," LaCroix said. "I stand by my decision, with all the information I had — the stuff that was in executive session and conversations with



Roberts



Mason

other council members. I had to make a choice — tough choice — and I believe I made the right one."

LaCroix said a general anti-incumbent feeling and unfair media coverage of the Kooiker censure, combined with long work hours that kept him from campaigning door to door as often as he wanted, cost him the race.

Roberts was disappointed not to be the top vote-getter Tuesday, but said he expects more of LaCroix's supporters to choose him over Mason in the runoff.

"I think a lot of Lloyd's supporters will come over to my side, and I think we're going to win," Roberts said.

WARD 1

Brown surprised by margin of victory

ALDERWOMAN: Martinson says anti-incumbent sentiment likely responsible for two-thirds victory.

By Mary Garrigan Journal staff

Alderwoman Patti Martinson was hoping it would be closer. Alderman-elect Gary Brown was surprised it wasn't.

"I did not expect that kind of spread," said Brown, who won election to a Ward 1 city council seat Tuesday by a 67 percent to 33 percent margin over Martinson.

Brown garnered 1,332 votes to Martinson's 659 votes.

"That kind of win just tells me I've got to make sure I do my work and that I produce," said Brown.

Martinson suspected an anti-incumbent sentiment in Rapid City hurt her. "I ran against an incumbent two years ago and won. It may be that same feeling again this year," she said.

Disappointed by her loss, she said there was "no doubt" that something about Brown, a well-known businessman in Rapid City, "really resonated" with voters.

"I was hoping the race would be close. But it's pretty clear that the people wanted Gary Brown," she said. "That's the way it goes. The people speak. I knew it was an uphill battle. That's how it goes."

Brown said he was gratified by his win and promised "better, clear communication with the constituents in Ward 1." He hopes to have a cup of coffee with the other Ward 1 alderman, Ron Weifenbach, and "compare notes with him on what we should be doing for Ward 1"



Brown

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