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Few changes in Gem County election process

By MESSENGER INDEX STAFF
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Redistricting and rebalancing precincts has been a significant undertaking for many cities and counties in Idaho this spring as 2020 Census numbers were put into play. The only major change for Gem County voters will be the movement of the county from state Legislative District 8 to state Legislative District 14 for the upcoming May 17 Primary Election.

Changes within the county are minimal according to Gem County Clerk Shelly Tilton.

“We really have no changes in polling locations for the upcoming Primary election,” Tilton said. “The only change would be in Ola where the polling will return to the Community Center from the Fire Station where it had been moved while the Community Center was housing the school kids during the school renovation.”

According to Tilton there were no precinct boundary changes resulting from the Census. The Commission District boundaries for District 1 and 2 have changed slightly with the Butteview precinct now completely in District 2. Previously that precinct had been split between the two districts. It should have no effect on this election cycle as the Commission districting pertains only to candidate residency to run for a seat. It does not impact actual voting as all residents vote for all three commission seats.

The state Legislative District switch, however, is substantial as Gem County has joined Eagle in the new District 14. Previously paired up with rural counties to the north and east of here, Emmett had been the largest city in District 8.

A full breakdown of the Legislative District 14 races and a complete voters guide will appear in the April 27 Messenger Index.

When Seasons Collide

Late winter blast may ease snow pack concerns a bit, but devastates fruit crops



DEL GRAY / MESSENGER INDEX

While fruit and ornamental trees have been in full blossom, a string of storms bringing freezing temperatures along with snow and rain has killed off many of the fruit ovaries inside those blossoms.

By DEL GRAY
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The last two weeks has seen an unseasonal amount of snowfall and cold temperatures in Gem County. The return to wintry weather may have sparked a little hope for a better irrigation year but

it comes at a high price for local fruit growers.

While snowpacks in some parts of the state picked up two to three feet of additional accumulation, the freezing temperatures sustained over several nights have heavily damaged local fruit prospects for this year — perhaps entirely wiping out some varieties of cherries for

this season.

“It’s very concerning,” said Jackie Williams. “It’s pretty scary. Cherries are mostly gone and other fruit has taken a heavy hit. Now we will have to wait and see if we will have enough water to finish a season with what crop is left.”

More **BLAST** | **A8**

Campaign ads begin to fill Idaho’s airwaves

A look at the messages ahead of May primary

By BETSY Z. RUSSELL
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BOISE — Some are positive, some are negative, but all the TV campaign commercials running now ahead of the May 17 primary election have lots for Idaho voters to unpack.

“It can be important to do a little bit more information-gathering, beyond the claims sometimes made in advertising,” said Boise State University political scientist Jaelyn Kettler, “whether it’s a TV ad or a mailer. Sometimes we do see things framed in a way that can be misleading.”

She also advises voters to pay attention to the source of the advertising. Thus far, all the major campaign commercials running on TV in Idaho appear to be from the candidates’ campaigns, but it’s not uncommon for outside groups to run their own ads, something that we’ve already seen in Idaho this spring with campaign mailers.



SCREENSHOT

This image from a Scott Bedke campaign commercial shows Bedke, left, out on the ranch.

“That’s something that’s key to watch, is who’s the source of the message, the advertising,” Kettler said.

Here’s a look at an array of TV campaign commercials that have run in Idaho in the spring primary contests:

GOVERNOR’S RACE
 Idaho Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin was the first out with

a campaign ad, debuting a TV commercial on Jan. 24 featuring her endorsement by former President Trump, which proclaims, “Trump says she’s been a true supporter of MAGA since the very beginning.” The ad mentions “elec-

tion integrity, ending COVID mandates, banning critical race theory, the 2nd Amendment and

our farmers,” while providing no details. The ad has since stopped running.

“It’s slick, it’s hitting on issues that may be especially salient to some primary voters,” Kettler said, “and really highlighting the Trump support.”

Kettler noted that when McGeachin’s commercial debuted, “I think we expected (Gov. Brad) Little would run for re-election,” but he still hadn’t announced his intentions. “We didn’t even know at that point.”

Little then launched his own commercials — even well before he announced he’d run. He’s run three so far. The first, entitled “Idaho Conservative,” shows Little, a rancher, working on his ranch, shooting a gun, and visiting with folks on a job site, with police officers on the street, and in the Capitol; it launched three months ago. The second features a testimonial from Canyon County Sheriff Kieran Donahue that Little “backs the blue” and is “tough on crime and illegal immigration.”

More **ADS** | **A13**

See local **EVENTS CALENDAR** at messenger-index.com/onyourradar

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