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NORTH KITSAP  
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## Reelect Ed Stern and David Ellingson

By Herald Staff

Oct 29 2005

The North Kitsap Herald Advisory Board had a full slate of candidates this week and following two hours with candidates for Poulsbo City Council Position 5 and Kitsap County Fire District No. 18 (Poulsbo Fire) Position 4, it took us another few days to finalize our picks.

The toughest race to determine proved to be one that, in all honesty, this paper has seemed to glaze over in the past; that of fire commissioners. But with the recent population boom in the greater Poulsbo vicinity, we felt it only fair to offer the position the attention it so richly deserves.

Dist. 18 Position 4 incumbent David Ellingson and challenger Stan Thalberg offered one of the most difficult decisions we've had to make to date, the board agreed. Both candidates are extremely qualified and offer something unique to the position. One of our board members described the duo as the "firefighter" and the "businessman."

On the one hand, the firefighter (Thalberg) has obvious advantages. He's been there and done that.

He knows what it's like to be on the scene of a car crash at 2 a.m. and back out the same day to a house fire at 4:30 a.m. Basically, he knows what Dist. 18 personnel have and what they need. To say we were impressed by his record is an understatement — he worked 13 years as a firefighter/EMT, pulled duty after Sept. 11, 2001 at the Pentagon and the World Trade Center and locally donated about 2,000 hours to the district to help reassess its policies and job descriptions. Ellingson's qualifications are astounding as well. He's served on the district board since 1999 (as chairman from 2002-2004), was vice president of the Kitsap County Fire Commissioners' Association, has worked since 2004 as chairman of the CenCom Policy Board and is appointed to serve as a member of the Washington State Firefighters Technical Review Board.

He's also been an effective part of the board for the past six years, using his business sense to help Fire District 18 continue to move toward excellence. We think doing away Ellingson and his considerable

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business savvy could prove a mistake.

While we agree with Thalberg’s push for annual performance evaluations of personnel and his ideas on making the board more accessible to the public, we think Ellingson’s impressive service to District 18 — which included building a new station at no additional cost to the taxpayers — is tough to surmount.

The final call to give Ellingson the nod was made on deadline, after considerable thought.

Thalberg’s a hell of a good candidate and we sincerely hope Ellingson, if elected, will make every effort to get to know him better. Thalberg’s got the firefighters’ support, which definitely counts for something and we feel he has already proven himself a valuable asset to Dist. 18. Either way, the board agreed that while the district is good, it can be better and we think Thalberg’s plan to review positions and policies annually is second to none.

We also feel that, despite our endorsing his opponent, Thalberg shouldn’t give up hope.

We double checked with Chief Jim Shields to confirm that if he loses the race, Thalberg can seek another board position in the future. If he comes out on bottom, that’s the road we strongly feel he should consider taking.

For Poulsbo City Council, we like how Ed Stern is adamant about moving the city beyond single-issue politics and, more and more, find ourselves compelled by his arguments that Poulsbo needs to move to a city manager system of government. It is, after all, a \$40 million business, as he puts it. We also like how he sees city government as a “bottom-up” process that starts with the public.

“It needs to be inclusive,” he said of the city’s ongoing visioning process, explaining that the public should be updated on how things are shaping up at least once every year. “I want to hear what the community thinks.”

He was instrumental in helping land Olympic College at Olhava and has been a staunch advocate for creating living wage jobs locally, thus reducing the impact on the increasingly overtaxed transportation system.

Stern’s a thinker. Pure and simple. He realizes the city’s mistakes of the past, learns from them to the best of his ability and applies that knowledge to future decisions. Poulsbo is truly fortunate to have a council member of his caliber and we wholeheartedly endorse his run for re-election.

Kennedy seemed too caught up in downtown parking. While we agree the historic corridor’s just as historic problem needs addressing, we felt his call for a “high rise” parking garage would severely detract from its inherent beauty.

We also agree that downtown is a destination location for boaters and tourists alike but feel it’s not the only part of Poulsbo that needs or deserves attention from the city council. Like community advocate and city council candidate Herb Kai impressed upon us, “Poulsbo should not be fragmented.”

Kennedy seemed to have more criticisms about city government than solid plans to fix them. He raised some valid concerns about environmental problems in Liberty Bay and unfinished city business. But he also called endorsements a “liability” — stating that those elected are then beholden to those who endorsed them. We disagreed. We feel endorsements serve as a reflection of the candidates and a show of the type of people who agree with their past actions rather than a group that is trying to control their future decisions.

