



Ross Park, moderator, introduces state senate candidates (from left) Ellen Roberts (R), Dean Boehler (R), and Bruce Whitehead (D), at the LWV candidate forum in Ignacio.

Candidates' Forum, Ignacio July 20, 2010

[Ed. Note: A similar forum, held at Durango City Council Chambers July 22, was also well-attended and was videotaped by CitySpan10 for multiple rebroadcasts.]

The LWVLPC held a Candidate's Forum in the Community Room of the Public Library in Ignacio on 7-20-2010 for the Colorado State Senate District 6 seat, and for the La Plata County Board of County Commissioners District 1 seat. The forum was well attended with 7 candidates, 8 League workers, and 29 attendees present. Ross Park presided as moderator and Grace Deltcheff and Maria Baker did the timing. Questions from the audience were sorted/screened by Judith Aitken, and Gail Harris. Deanna Collins and Marilyn Sandstrom assisted at the forum.

Ellen Roberts (R) and Dean Boehler (R), Republican primary candidates, and Bruce Whitehead, (D), incumbent, gave opening and closing remarks as to why they were the best candidate to represent District 6 in the Colorado Senate. Ms. Roberts lauded her four years record as House Representative in the 59th District, Mr. Boehler promoted his life long conservative principles, and Mr. Whitehead pointed to his knowledge of water resources, and his ability to be a bipartisan consensus builder.

Audience questions focused on the 2010 Colorado State Budget, how to balance the 2011 budget when even more cuts would likely be needed; the Federal Health Care Plan and its implications for Colorado; the effects of the state's new oil and gas regulations on exploration and drilling in Colorado; clean energy Bill 1365 and resulting impacts on the coal industry; ballot issues 101, 60, and 61; and candidates thoughts on diversifying the state's energy portfolio and moving to a green economy. All candidates agreed that the ballot issues were not good for the state, and should be defeated, that state revenues would most likely decline in the coming year and therefore further cuts in current programs would have to be made, and that Colorado's natural resources could offer new revenue sources. The candidates disagreed on development strategies and industry regulations. Healthcare and diversification of our energy portfolio also elicited differing views.

The Board of County Commissioners candidates included Ken Root (U), Bobby Lieb (R), and Democratic primary contenders, Scott Graham and Bruce Baizel. Their questions concerned the county's Comprehensive Plan, how to balance surface owner and mineral owner rights, experience in working with the S. Ute Tribe, the need for a new business park, how to balance the budget with declining revenues and tax base while maintaining services, the BOCC's recent marijuana vote, and in what areas might the county reestablish itself as a state leader. Discussion of these issues was lively and thoughtful. All were supportive of the completion of the Comprehensive Plan and a

subsequent Land Use Plan, believing that they would be useful guides into the future, and should be completed as soon as possible. Differing views emerged on the mission of county government, the role of county commissioners in development, and how to increase revenues.

-Julie Ward



Bruce Baizel (D) introduces himself at the Ignacio candidate forum while candidates (from left) Ken Root (U), Bobby Lieb (R) and Scott Graham (D) observe.