

BONNER COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1

Profile of Glen Bailey

By Cameron Rasmusson
Reader Staff

Editor's Note: Glen Bailey is running as a Republican in the District 1 Bonner County Commissioner race, a position he currently holds.

Reader: Since being elected to the board of commissioners, what accomplishments are you proudest of?

Glen Bailey: As Bonner County and the Panhandle region has recovered from a severe economic depression and a lack of jobs, we've been challenged to update and restructure the pay and compensation plan for our county employees. I'm pleased with the way the board of commissioners has been able to work with our human resources department to bring our pay back in line with the job market and allowed us to keep our well-trained and experienced employees.

As county commissioner I've had the opportunity to serve on several boards and committees that provide great services and benefits for county residents. Working on the Panhandle Forest Collaborative I helped increase our forest harvest from 28,000 million board feet to 65,000 mbf, and we're moving towards 123,000 mbf. We're still far short of the 220,000 mbf we saw in the '80s, but each 1,000 mbf of log production generates 18 direct and indirect jobs for North Idaho, so our efforts have created or enhanced some 660 jobs in the Panhandle.

SR: What are some things you still want to accomplish?

GB: Unfortunately, the cost of quality healthcare for our employees and their dependents continues to rise. I want to ensure they have the best healthcare available at a reasonable insurance premium cost. We are having our insurance broker research and provide us with the best option that can be put into place for FY 2019.

We are also working to build EMS facilities on Kootenai Cutoff road and across from the county administration building on S. Division Avenue that would provide faster ambulance service to Ponderay, Colburn-Culver and the Dover-Laclede areas of Bonner County.

SR: Between you and your opponent, what would you say are the biggest differences?

GB: I have proven my executive management and leadership skills and experience as a Bonner County commissioner for over five years now and I also had great experience as a military squadron commander for 3.5 years and a detachment commander for three years.

SR: In your mind, what are the most important roles of county government?

GB: The primary role of county government is to provide for the safety, health and welfare of county residents.

That's why we fund and support our Bonner County Sheriff's Office and our well-trained paramedics and EMTs staffing ambulances in our Emergency Medical Services department. We also provide essential county road infrastructure to provide means for county residents to travel to work and schools. This is for their personal "welfare" that is defined as a state of doing well in respect to happiness, well-being and prosperity.

SR: Getting into specific issues, what are your thoughts on the restructuring of the planning department and process a few years ago? Those were changes that concerned some residents.

GB: I believe that the restructuring and new leadership in our planning department has been a breath of fresh air. We've been able to simplify and update our land management plans and regulations. We've made it easier and less costly to divide your property. This has helped our residents pass property to family members in a more cost-effective manner. We've also been able to reduce the fees for building location permits.

One of our biggest planning projects is to update the County Comprehensive Plan and create sub-area plans throughout the county. We started in Sagle and Selle Valley and now in Blanchard. These projects invite the local residents to be directly involved in the planning for future growth and the potential need for zoning changes.

SR: Even though it's not being built in Bonner County, do you have any thoughts on the Newport smelter and how it might impact the county?

GB: I think most of us agree that we live in one of the most beautiful areas in the Northwest. We enjoy the ability to breath fresh air, swim in clean, unpolluted blue waters and hike or ski on the mountains around us. We want to keep these natural resources as unsullied and well managed as possible. Numerous people have encouraged us to "vote against the smelter." The fact is that as a Bonner County Commissioner I have no vote on whether the state of Washington approves or denies the permits that HiTest Silicon is pursuing. I have been concerned enough to conduct my own research and I continue to follow the permitting process and the litigation brought by its opponents. I think it's critical that all of us carefully research this smelter proposal and that we differentiate fact from fiction before we decide to support or oppose it.

SR: What about the second rail bridge? Are you for or against that project?

GB: I do support a second rail bridge to relieve the single bridge choke point that's creating congestion and causing trains to stop and wait their turn to cross our bridge.

The new line would result in shorter wait times on nearby roads and streets that cross BNSF tracks. Because railroads have become the most efficient means of moving freight by land, we often forget that a good portion of the commodities carried by rail might otherwise be shipped on our highways. I can't imagine how many semi-trucks would have to cross the Long Bridge if BNSF doesn't find a way to increase its rail capacity.

SR: The Scotchman Peaks Wilderness proposal is certainly a major issue this primary election. What are your thoughts on it?

GB: During the last two years the issue of whether the people of Bonner County support Scotchman Peaks becoming a federal wilderness has generated a lot of discussion and arguments both for and against.

I applaud this discussion and encourage people to research the good and the bad of having a "wilderness" just north of Clark Fork. A year ago the Clark Fork City Council was unanimous in their vote against a wilderness next to their community.



I respect their decision, and it has caused me to reflect on why I should or should not continue to support Scotchman Peaks as wilderness.

To better understand the public's attitude on Scotchman Peaks the commissioners have authorized an "advisory vote" ballot for the May 15 primary election.

The advisory vote will state: "Do you favor Senator Jim Risch's proposal for congressional designation of a 13,960 acre Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area in Bonner County?"

SR: What would you say are your greatest strengths that benefit your work as commissioner?

GB: During my military experience commanding both an Air Refueling Squadron and an Air Force Office of Special Investigations Detachment I was successful because I based my decisions on the most current and accurate intelligence: facts and not speculation or assumptions. That pattern of decision making continues to be my greatest strength. I listen carefully to the subject matter experts, ask questions to clarify the issues and determine the facts then I make my decision based on those facts.

SR: Is there any specific message you want to send to voters prior to the election?

GB: I have the knowledge, experience and proven integrity of 5

years' public service as your county commissioner. I ask for your vote again on May 15.

Editor's Note: This concludes the election profile series. Find this and every election profile on SandpointReader.com and click on "Special Features" tab.

Glen Bailey AT A GLANCE

AGE: 62

BIRTHPLACE AND RESIDENCE: Born in Ocala, Fla.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE: 22 years of service USAF, retirement in 2002 as a Lt. Col. Worked as civilian contractor for Montana Air National Guard 2003-2008. Hired as Bonner County court bailiff in Aug 2008. Bonner County Commissioner District 1 from March 2013 to present

PROFESSION: Bonner County Commissioner

EDUCATION: BS History Utah State University, MS Business Systems Management University Southern California. Air Command and Staff graduate USAF

FAMILY: Married to Cheryl Bailey (Willford) who was born and raised in Cocolalla. We have six children and 15 grandkids.

FUN FACT: I enjoy helping wife breed, raise and train sport horses, and I like to hunt and fish when time allows.