

VIEWPOINTS

Sat/Sun/Mon/Tues, November 3-6, 2012

EDITORIAL

The Record endorses: Carson Armstrong, McMullin, Knauer

As of Friday afternoon, 6,728 of Summit County's 26,163 registered voters had cast their ballots. That means one in four of you have already voted and we hope the rest of you are planning to turn out on Tuesday. In 2008 Summit County's voter turnout rate was 62.5 percent and it would boost our civic pride to top that this year.

For those who are still weighing their options in the local County Council races, we have waited for the candidates to rest their cases before sharing our own endorsements. They are offered as suggestions informed by our ongoing coverage of county issues and we fully expect some to disagree. It has been a turbulent campaign season befitting our rambunctious democratic process, one that we hope will return to civility and commitment to cooperation after Election Day.

In the race for Seat A on the Summit County Council, political newcomer Roger Armstrong has exhibited a well-researched and balanced approach to many of the complex issues facing our towns and unincorporated areas. At the same time, his opponent, Max Greenhalgh, has the benefit of prior experience through his service on the Snyderville Basin Planning Commission and the Basin Open Space Committee. Both share our concerns about preserving our mountain environment.

But, as Summit County continues transitioning toward the future, we need fresh eyes and new perspectives on some of the recurring controversies that have bedeviled local leaders for decades. Though Greenhalgh helped guide the county through the changeover from one to two planning commissions and from a three-person county commission to a five-member council, his frame of reference is still rooted in the 1980s and '90s when he served as a planning commissioner. We suggest giving Armstrong a chance to help unravel those old knots.

The campaign for Seat B has been unnecessarily personal and hostile. Incumbent Claudia McMullin and challenger Suzanne Pollard, who are both smart, articulate, concerned citizens, have been cornered by a process that has become destructively polarized. McMullin, the Democrat, has been stereotyped as a tax-and-spender while Pollard has been pigeonholed as anti-environmental. In fact, when given a chance, both have nuanced opinions on these highly divisive topics.

Pollard is justified in cross-examining McMullin and all of the current council members about the county's budget shortfalls and their calls for tax hikes. However, we can't support Pollard's suggestions that the county should cut back on sup-

port for nonprofits, like Recycle Utah or her skepticism about setting aside more open space.

Pollard has been honest and upfront about her priorities, but we believe they are shortsighted and not representative of the progressive future that we envision for Summit County.

The race for Seat C took an about turn when Republican Duane Schmidt, the current mayor of Coalville, dropped out for health-related reasons. What had been a mild-mannered race between Schmidt and his Democratic opponent, Kim Carson, turned into a blistering contest between Carson and Tea Party candidate Jacqueline Smith.

Smith who recently, through a petition effort, forced the County Council to roll back two tax increases, is running as a write-in candidate. The repeal of the tax increase will cost the county two sheriff's deputy positions and one planner post, losses that we believe will make citizens less safe and less equipped to prepare for future development.

As a write-in candidate, Smith is not officially linked to the Republican ticket. However, the Summit County Republican Party did contribute \$3,000 to her council campaign. It is important to note, though, that Smith does not represent the mainstream of the Republican Party. She is a founding member of the Coalville branch of the S.T.A.R. (Save Our American Republic) Forum which touts the extreme right wing principles that are antithetical to many local citizens on both sides of the political aisle.

Carson, on the other hand, has a solid record of public service and fiscal responsibility that would make her a valuable asset to the County Council. As a former member of the Park City Board of Education, she is no stranger to making tough financial choices. She has also proven to be a leader who can take her constituents' visions for the future and turn them into solid policies. In this race there is no question: Carson is the best candidate for Summit County.

Finally, in the sole contested race for a seat on the Park City Board of Education, we wholeheartedly support Tania Knauer, a proactive parent who has served on countless school district community councils and advisory committees.

Unfortunately, her opponent, Kristen Brown, lost our support when she accused Knauer of injecting partisan politics into the race. In fact, by making that claim, Brown was guilty of introducing politics into a race that should be about our kids, not about party bickering. Brown may have impressive financial credentials for the job but her temperament does not seem to be conducive to compromise and cooperation.