

Jones, Schafer, Cefalu on STPUD board

By Kathryn Reed



Two of the incumbents for South Tahoe Public Utility District soundly won re-election, while one fell to a challenger.

Jim Jones and Eric Schafer are returning to the board. Chris Cefalu is replacing Ernie Claudio.

The utility district race was the most heated of all the issues before South Shore voters on Tuesday. Water is a hot topic in most of California, but the local race had nothing to do with bigger picture facing the state.

Instead, the issues that kept being brought up were accountability, transparency, water meters, rates, and relations between the board and the union.

Jim Jones, a civil engineer, served for 12 years beginning in 1977, was off for four years and has been on since 1993. He garnered 42.65 percent of the votes. Jones was unavailable for comment.

The closest challenger was perennial candidate John Runnels with 24.82 percent; Kenny Curtzwiler with 21.2 percent; and Tod Williamson with 11.08 percent.

One of the more bitter races pitted Schafer against longtime local businesswoman Peggy Cocores. Ironically, it was Scott Swift, a Lake Valley firefighter who was working more than

campaigning, who came in second.

Schafer was out collecting his signs about 9pm when the preliminary results came in. At that time he was encouraged by the numbers.

"I'm certainly looking forward to doing another four years," Schafer said. He said he has a lot of passion for the district.

Cocores called it "a great learning experience. I have no regrets."

With all the votes in, Schafer had 38.76 percent, Swift 32.53 percent and Cocores 28.37 percent.

Claudio, who was elected in 2007 to fill out a term, came in last for his seat.

Cefalu unseated Claudio with 33.23 percent of the vote; next was John Adamski at 27.46 percent; Jimmy Martin (who had pulled out of the race for health reasons) at 19.78 percent; and Claudio with 19.12 percent.

Cefalu and Claudio were unavailable for comment.