

EDC supe candidates try to sway voters



Candidates for El Dorado County District 5 seat are Angela Swanson, from left, Teresa Piper, Sue Novasel, Gerri Grego, Kevin Brown and Kenny Curtzwiler. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Few specifics and little substance came out of the first candidates' forum on the South Shore for El Dorado County District 5 supervisor.

While economic vitality and the need for jobs that pay more than minimum wage were themes echoed throughout the night, the details of how to make that a reality were lacking from the six candidates.

What specific companies might make the difference were not mentioned – not even the genre – other than perhaps Internet based. And like so many discussions on this topic, what wasn't addressed is why aren't the companies with high paying jobs already here.

The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Tahoe Regional Young Professionals sponsored the May 6 event at the California Conservation Corps.

Some of the questions were directed to all of the candidates, while others were to specific individuals. The audience had a

chance to submit questions as well. The questions that could not be asked and answered within the two hours will be given to the candidates, with responses posted on TRYP's website.

Gerri Grego was asked for an example of how she would stimulate job growth.

Her response – Fewer government regulations. She is worried about an increase in recreation jobs because they don't pay well. She would like the area to focus on what she calls the "silver tsunami" – or the aging population – as a sector that will need care and therefore jobs specific to cater to that group.

Angela Swanson was asked how she would balance economic vitality with a healthy environment.

Her response – She said the economy and environment are inseparable. She pointed to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan as the answer – that good science will make all the difference.

Teresa Piper was asked how she would give Meyers a voice.

Her response – She said it's not just Meyers that feels disenfranchised, but every community east of Placerville does. She said with the East Slope having water and recreation that support the West Slope, it's time the West Slope gives something back. She would like that something to be jobs; Internet based specifically.

Kevin Brown was asked how he would fit in with others.

His response – He is an advocate of partnerships, finding solutions together. He would like to establish a county newsletter to reach people. And he wants advisors throughout the district to give a voice to more people.

Sue Novasel was asked how she would engage constituents of all ages.

Her response – She would also like to establish an online newsletter so it reached people who get their info via their computer or smart phone and don't necessarily go to meetings. She said it's important to be involved with all sectors of the district.

Kenny Curtzwiler was asked how he would hold agencies, businesses and individuals accountable.

His response – He said it's time for residents to take over and make sure everything agencies have talked about is implemented, and for the agencies to take a back seat.

The public's questions were more specific and concise. One was about what the candidates would do about mental health.

Grego – She said the biggest problem is getting services to the people who need it.

Piper – First responders need more training.

Brown – Hold people's feet to the fire and figure out the real reason for the continual turnover in Child Protective Services.

Novasel – There needs to be better coordination between first responders and service providers.

Curtzwiler – Too much of the time people are reactive instead of proactive.

Swanson – The culture in Placerville needs to change, it's dysfunctional, especially with 11 human resource directors in the last nine years.

They all agreed not much could be done about Red Hawk money being spent on the West Slope and that the Indian casino is an economic knife in the South Shore's back.

They also agree the Meyers Area Plan should be slowed down.

Swanson proposed Meyers create a community service district so then they would have more of a say as well as more elected oversight. Curtzwiler said the decision should be made when there is a new supervisor later this year.

Another question was about how best to represent the county as a whole when on other boards like TRPA and the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Brown said he would likely appoint a representative to TRPA like Placer County does. He also pointed out how the three Nevada representatives live outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The others said being on those other boards is critical because they are Tahoe centric.

They were asked how they would decide if a project that comes before TRPA is good for Tahoe.

Swanson – Projects will have to meet community plan area guidelines, and most will be rebuilds, not new development.

Curtzwiler – Cities and the county should be making those decisions, not TRPA.

Grego – High-rises are not needed, but instead be sensible and considerate projects. She pointed out that it's not up to board members what projects come before them.

Brown – There are regulations in place that have to be met. It's a team approach, not one person's decision on a project.

Novasel – Local representation is important on boards.

Piper – Look to see if it fits an area and don't base decisions on personal choice.

The election is June 3. To win outright, a candidate must receive 50 percent plus one vote. Otherwise the top two vote getters will head to a November runoff.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe is hosting a supervisor forum on May 14 from 11:30am-1:30pm. For reservations, email soroptimistslt@gmail.com by May 12. Cost of the lunch at Harrah's Lake Tahoe is \$10.