

EDC judicial race a heated political battle



Roland Tiemann, left, and Nelson Brooks are battling to be El Dorado County Superior Court judge.

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County's lone contested judicial race on the June 7 ballot is turning ugly, with the challenger accusing the incumbent of misleading the public about political contributions.

Ashlee Titus, an attorney with a law firm out of Sacramento, on May 10 filed a complaint with the Fair Political Practices Commission on behalf of Roland Tiemann who wants to unseat Nelson Brooks. The document alleges Brooks did not file the

proper financial paper work in a timely manner.

“Mr. Tiemann is grasping at straws because he is behind in the campaign,” El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Brooks told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There is no truth to any of the allegations.”

District Attorney Vern Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*, “It appears to be a pathetic attempt to resurrect a failing campaign.”

When told about the FPPC complaint by *LTN* on May 12, Brooks spent that night reviewing his paperwork with his campaign treasurer who is a certified public accountant. Brooks said a document might have been filed a couple days late, to which he would not be surprised if he were fined. That would be the normal protocol.

Brent Lowder, a political consultant acting as Tiemann’s spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News*, voters should be concerned with “how sloppy they have been with their filings.”

Lowder went on to say, “Someone running to be or continuing to be county judge should be expected to follow the law if they expect county voters to support them to enforce the law.”

Most of Brooks’ campaign has been self-financed – to the tune of \$300,000 from he and his wife. Small contributions add up to less than \$15,000.

It can be a big deal if contributors’ names come out after votes are cast because some voters are swayed – more often away from a candidate – if a controversial donor surfaces. Early voting started May 9 in El Dorado County and vote-by-mail ballots were sent this week.

Asked why he believes Tiemann is running, Brooks said, “I think he has been put up to it by a judge who wants to be presiding judge and he knows he doesn’t have the votes for

that with the current makeup of the bench. He wants to pack the court.”

The judge Brooks is referencing is Steve Bailey. Bailey has made it clear he wants to replace Judge Suzanne Kingsbury as the presiding judge.

The El Dorado County bench is a bit divided among those who support each candidate. On Brooks’ side are Kingsbury, Kenneth Melikian, Vicki Ashworth, and Jim Wagoner. Supporting Tiemann are Dylan Sullivan and Warren Stracener.

Sullivan, who was endorsed by Kingsbury when she ran a couple years ago, lost her original assignment last summer. Kingsbury made that decision. There has been a rift between the two since then.

Neither Sullivan nor Bailey could be reached for comment.

Brooks was first appointed to the bench in 2009 by then Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. He won the current six-year term a year later. Prior to that he had been an attorney for more than 25 years.

Tiemann has been an attorney for 10 years, the minimum required to be a judge in California.

Tiemann has appeared before Brooks a few times. Since the campaign started the judge has recused himself.