

Judge Brooks wins; EDC growth measures split

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County voters put Judge Nelson Brooks back on the bench, but were divided over what to do with growth initiatives.

Brooks was first appointed to the bench by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2009, and was elected a year later to a six-year term with more than 75 percent of the vote. This go-round he came in with 58.53 percent, or 25,568 votes, while his opponent Roland Thiemann had 41.16 percent, 17,982 votes.

Their race was bitter, contentious and turned heads throughout judicial circles in the state. This is because it is almost unheard of for a sitting judge's colleagues to support a challenger.

El Dorado County Superior Court is split, though most are in Brooks' corner, which is led by presiding Judge Suzanne Kingsbury. On the opposite side is Judge Steve Bailey who wants Kingsbury's title. He put Thiemann up against Brooks.

"It's really too bad that happened," Brooks told *Lake Tahoe News* of the divisiveness. "I will do anything I can to heal any rifts there might be and getting people to work together instead of at cross purposes."



It was a slow, steady stream of voters on June 7 at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photo/LTN

Measure E and G pertain to growth initiatives for the county. A yes vote limits growth, a no doesn't. The no position was heavily funded, with Parker Development writing most of the checks. Some expect the "no" side to have spent \$1 million to defeat the measures. The television ad buys in the final weeks leading up to the June 7 primary were impressive.

"They are two different measures. The more important one is E," Sue Taylor, community activist, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "That is what we have had since 1998 to keep it a slow growth county. It will be harder for developers because of the gridlock on the freeways that need to get mitigated."

Developers will have to address the road concerns before they can build.

Measure E passed with 51.81 percent; 1,701 votes separate the yes votes from the no.

Measure G was defeated by 1,168 votes. No – 51.24 percent, yes – 48.76 percent.

A new supervisor is going to occupy District 1 because Ron Mikulaco decided to vacate his seat. He instead ran for state Assembly because incumbent Beth Gaines is being termed out. She in turn was running for his supervisor seat.

Mikulaco, a Republican, came in second in El Dorado County in this race, but didn't fare as well with voters throughout the 6th District. Democrat Brian Caples and Republican Andy Pugno will be on the November ballot.

Gaines was the top vote getter with 25.58 percent, and John Hidahl a close second with 23.17 percent. More than 200 votes separate them.

Brian Veerkamp will retain his seat for District 3, and Shiva Frentzen for District 2.

Placer County voters kept its incumbents, with Supervisors Jennifer Montgomery, Kirk Uhler and Jim Holmes decisively winning re-election.

Statewide seats have the top two vote getters squaring off in November, no matter the party affiliation.

State Sen. Ted Gaines handedly took top honors in the 1st Senate District.

"While it is early, I am pleased by (Tuesday's) election results. It proves that my positive message of stopping tax increases and limiting government spending resonated with voters across the North State. I look forward to continuing this work on behalf of the people of El Dorado and Placer counties," Gaines told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Republican will face Democrat Rob Rowen in five months.

While some areas of the state experienced reporting glitches, El Dorado County had no problems, according to elections officials.

“With everything going on out in the media, we expect the turnout in the 60 percent area. That is still to be seen,” Linda Webster, EDC elections worker, told *Lake Tahoe News*. She said previous presidential primaries had turnouts between 40 and 60 percent.

Winners in other El Dorado County races:

- 5th Assembly District – Republican Frank Bigelow, incumbent.
- 4th Congressional District – Republican Tom McClintock, incumbent.

Placer County winners:

- 1st Congressional District – Incumbent Doug La Malfa (R) and Jim Reed (D) will meet in November.
- 4th Congressional District – McClintock.
- 1st Assembly District – Brian Dahle, had no challenger.
- 5th Assembly District – Bigelow.