

Familiar faces win STPUD, Lake Valley Fire seats

By Susan Wood

In the management of fire and water, South Shore voters seemed to go with the flow in opting for those who have already been serving.

With 35.48 percent of the vote, or 4,076 cast for the top spot, current South Tahoe Public Utility District Board Chairman Randy Vogelgesang characterized his run this time in a high profile election as “humbling.”

“The last time I ran in an off year, so I didn’t know if the vote would hold up,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Vogelgesang represents a board member who understands the duty before him – especially when it means all citizens expect wastewater to leave their home and clean drinking water to enter it.

“We’re going to spend about \$35 million in this district. I really appreciate their trust,” he said of the voters.

Incumbent Kelly Sheehan captured the second seat on the STPUD board with 27.72 percent of the vote or 3,184 ballots, according to El Dorado County Elections.

“I’m excited. My goal was to remain on the board. I feel good about where I am. I feel I have something to contribute,” she said while serving in her South Lake Tahoe bar, Steamers.

The third candidate Nick Exline secured 2,212 votes at 19.25 percent; the fourth is Kirk David with 17.29 percent of the vote – 1,986 counted.

For an agency dependent on STPUD’s fire flows, the Lake Valley

Fire Protection District has three seats open.

The top spot goes to former Lake Valley staff Leona Allen with 1,796 votes at 29.93 percent. Phone calls to Allen were unreturned. This will be her first term.

Incumbent board member John Rice as the second top vote getter by raking in 27.85 percent of the vote with 1,671 cast.

With 23.20 percent of the vote, incumbent Bob Bettencourt edged out Tony Sears who had 18.47 percent.

"I feel as far as Lake Valley goes, we've moved so far in the last six months. We have a new leader, and there's togetherness in the house we haven't seen in a while," Rice said, referencing the hiring of Fire Chief Tim Alameda to replace former head Gareth Harris.

Rice, who has a stellar reputation as the general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resort, pledged to continue to make a difference in the community.

"If there's anything this election has taught us it's that everyone's not happy. Pretending everything's good is wrong," Rice told *Lake Tahoe News*.