

Johnson kicks off campaign with fundraiser meet and greet

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 15 April 2016 02:04



An April 8 fundraiser held by state representative D. Wonda Johnson went well and was “very successful,” Johnson said.

The event, which was hosted by McKinley County Commissioner Genevieve Jackson, Gallup City Councilor Fran Palochak and State Rep. Patricia Lundstrom, took place at the Gallup Cultural Center and was attended by several members of McKinley County’s Democratic Party. Johnson is running again for the New Mexico House of Representatives District 5 seat.

“We did quite well,” Johnson said, noting that she’d rather not disclose the amount raised.

“It was a wonderful turnout. I was very pleased with the amount of people that came out.”

According to her April 11 campaign report to the New Mexico Secretary of State office, she has raised \$2,850 in contributions between Oct. 21- March 30. She has spent \$1,163.93. And she shows an opening balance this campaign season of nearly \$19,600, but has nearly \$5,000 in unpaid debt carried forward.

Johnson, a former educational coordinator with the Gallup-McKinley County School District, and part of former Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly’s administrative staff, said close to 65 people attended the affair. She stressed that fundraisers are important to every political campaign, irrespective of affiliation.

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“Everybody needs money to run,” she said.

Besides campaigning and fundraising, Johnson said she’s visiting chapter house throughout the Navajo Nation as the June primary approaches.

“I visited the Newcomb chapter house (San Juan County) over the weekend and that’s what I plan to do with other chapter houses as well,” she said.

Lundstrom helped to put on the fundraiser.

“It was both a meet and greet as well as a fundraiser,” Lundstrom said. “These races are very expensive.”

Lundstrom, a House member representing District 9 since 2001, noted that she will be hosting another fundraiser for GloJean Toadacheene after the primary. Toadacheene is a Shiprock Democrat running against incumbent Sharon Clahchischilliage, R-Kirtland, a former Navajo Nation lobbyist and Ivy League graduate and one of the few Republicans from the Navajo Nation to ever serve the N.M. House of Representatives.

Lundstrom said she’d probably host a similar fundraiser soon for McKinley County Manager Bill Lee. Lee is running for the District 3 County Commission seat vacated by Tony Tanner.

A Democrat from Church Rock, Johnson beat former McKinley County Treasurer Charles Long in 2014 for the District 5 seat. In the November general election, she beat former District 5 representative Sandra Jeff of Crownpoint in a landslide vote in which Jeff ran as a write-in candidate.

Johnson and Kevin Mitchell of Tohatchi are the sole candidates running for the District 5 post this time around, an area which includes McKinley and San Juan counties.

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Mitchell owns a local dog grooming business and is vice president of the Gallup-McKinley County School Board of Education. He is a Democrat.

Since taking state office, Johnson serves on the Economic and Rural Development, Indian Affairs, Legislative Education and Transportation Infrastructure Revenue committees, among others.

The state primary is June 7 and the general election is Nov. 8.

By Bernie Dotson

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