

# FORGOTTEN ELECTION

*Analysts fear the overshadowed city election may fail to bring out the vote.*

There's no dearth of politics in the public arena right now. Obama and Clinton, Romney and Giuliani, Risch and LaRocco are all bidding for your attention—and your vote. And, who could forget Sen. Larry Craig and the circus sideshow that has become his political career.

But does anyone remember there's a city election fast approaching?

On Nov. 6, Boise residents will have the chance to select a mayor and three City Council members, thereby determining the course of the city over the next four years.

They might not be household names, but the men and women running for Boise city offices are the ones who will have the most direct effect on the daily lives of most Boiseans. From development and transit to community safety and infrastructure, this is where the most basic and farthest-reaching decisions are made.

Unfortunately, this is also the level of government that historically sees the lowest voter turnout, and this year may be worse than usual.

Jim Weatherby, emeritus professor at Boise State and Idaho political guru, said he fears low participation in the election as a direct result of the Craig scandal—and not simply from voter disillusionment.

Weatherby believes the attention focused on Craig and the ever-developing story has eclipsed the city elections. While the two candidates for mayor, incumbent Mayor Dave Bieter and Council Member Jim Tibbs, have faced off in several debates and forums, the candidates for City Council have yet to appear at any event, and even political signs are a rarity.

In fact, only the three incumbents running for re-election have collected any measurable amount of funds for their campaigns.

According to the Boise City Clerk's Office, there have been 783 requests for absentee ballots, and 290 ballots returned as of the end of last week. The number of absentee ballots in an election is a traditional predictor for voter participation in the general election. There are currently 107,065 registered voters in the city, according to the Ada County Clerk's Office.

All these factors combined lead Weatherby to believe turnout could be particularly bad.

According to Weatherby, turnout for a city election in Boise hasn't passed 50 percent since 1975. In the 32 years since then, the highest turnout was 46.5 percent in 1993, and it has been as low as 10 percent in 1989, and 14.5 percent in both 1987 and 1999.

But we here at *BW* say buck the trend; get out there and vote, Boise.

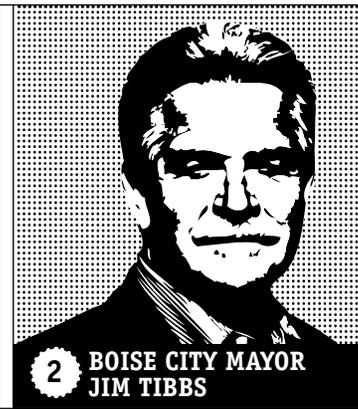
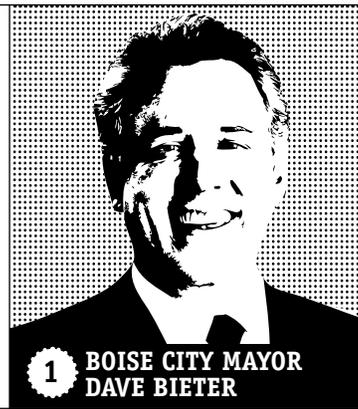
To help voters make their decisions, we asked all 10 candidates running for city office to answer a set of questions based on issues currently facing the city. All the candidates answered the same questions, allowing voters a comparison.

Their answers, in the candidates' own words, follow. Answers have been edited only for space and clarity.

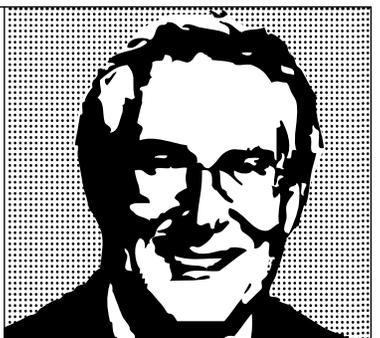
—Deanna Darr

**1 DAVE BIETER**  
(INCUMBENT) AGE: 47,  
OCCUPATION: Mayor of Boise

**2 JIM TIBBS**  
AGE: 60,  
OCCUPATION:  
City Councilman,  
Retired Police Officer



	<b>1 BOISE CITY MAYOR DAVE BIETER</b>	<b>2 BOISE CITY MAYOR JIM TIBBS</b>
<b>Family</b>	Wife, Julie Nemeth-Bieter; daughter, Josie	Married to Sally Tibbs (38 years) two grown children.
<b>Time in Boise</b>	Nearly 40 years. I was born and raised in Boise with time at school, Sandpoint and the Basque Country.	50 years.
<b>Previous Political Experience</b>	Mayor of Boise 2004-present. State representative, District 19, 1999-2003.	Boise City Council, Idaho drug czar, chair of Idaho Board of Corrections.
<b>Reason for Seeking Office</b>	In my first term as mayor, I've made a real difference. I've had the courage to stand up for Boise and stand up for what is right. Bringing integrity and accountability back to city government was just the start. I've made our neighborhoods stronger by opening two neighborhood libraries without raising taxes, doubling the neighborhood grant program and leading the efforts to bring a detox facility to the area. I've kept us safe. Major crime declined in 2006, thanks in part to strong community policing and budget decisions that have put more police officers on the street. And I'm pressing hard to build a transportation system that works effectively and efficiently by improving the bus system, tying transportation planning to land use to avoid gridlock, and working to bring rail to the valley.	I am a candidate for mayor because as a life long public servant and citizen of Boise, I have become frustrated with the lack of leadership from the current administration. Hearing the leaders in our neighboring communities call Boise the "bully" of the valley, indicates to me that Boise needs more effective leadership. I believe in collaboration rather than solving problems with lawsuits. Throughout my years of public service, I have built the relationships necessary to resolve city and regional issues. I understand that we cannot solve our problems alone. Every day, people share these same frustrations with me. They want a mayor who will listen and be responsive. Rather than waiting for lawsuits and employee protests, citizens want a mayor who is not just pro-active but is co-active in resolving community issues. I know that I am that mayor.
<b>Would you support a local option tax for transit? Why?</b>	Absolutely. We're going to need the local option tax to provide the long-term, stable funding needed to build and maintain a truly effective transit system.	Yes, I support a voter-approved option tax that is not limited to only rail, but allows for maintenance and construction.
<b>Would you support another Foothills levy to support future land purchases? Why?</b>	The Foothills are a unique part of Boise, and protecting public access is critical. As long as I am mayor, I will continue to push for public funding of open space, and work closely with other governmental agencies and private citizens to find the dollars needed to protect our open spaces. I was a big supporter of the first Foothills levy and would certainly consider supporting something similar in the future.	Yes, however the current administration has \$4.3 million left unspent on acquisition. I would use those funds to fulfill the mission of the levy before asking the voters for additional funds.
<b>Do you think Capital City Development Corporation still has a role in Boise's future? Why or why not, and what would you do with the agency?</b>	Thanks to the efforts of CCDC, we've enjoyed many successes downtown, so yes, I do believe that CCDC still has a role in Boise's future. As mayor, I've pushed every department to "be nimble, Jack." That same philosophy applies to CCDC. The shape and mission of CCDC in the future, however, may need to be adjusted to meet the changing demands of our city.	Yes. CCDC has done much of the work in Boise that makes downtown great. That being said, I do not support its expansion to shift the tax base from the city to the urban renewal district without voter approval. I support keeping the district as it is until it has reached the goals of its original scope. When those goals are reached, CCDC may close the current district and allow them to ask the voters to approve a new district in an area where they can do great things.
<b>What do you think should be done with a city budget surplus?</b>	Thanks to hard work we've been able to restore accountability to city finances, allowing for modest surpluses. I believe that those surpluses are best used to match the priorities determined by the citizens. So far, we've been able to use our surpluses to add neighborhood libraries, recreation centers and parks.	The majority of funds should be reserved for a period of two years. I do not support obligating those funds before they are collected, as the current administration has done.
<b>Do you support special tax considerations to attract new industry?</b>	I believe that if we continue to build a great city, new industry will be attracted here, and current businesses will want to expand without special tax considerations. I've made it a priority to visit with local businesses on a regular basis to determine what the city or I as mayor can do to help them succeed.	No.

<p><b>1 ALAN SHEALY (INCUMBENT)</b> AGE: 54, OCCUPATION: Investment Management</p> <p><b>2 STEVEN C. KIMBALL</b> AGE: 57, OCCUPATION: Self-Employed Contractor</p> <p><b>3 FRANCES WRAY</b> AGE: 63, OCCUPATION: Social Worker</p> <p><b>4 DAVID EBERLE (INCUMBENT)</b> AGE: 55, OCCUPATION: President of Eberle Consulting Inc., An Economics Consulting Firm</p>	 <p><b>1 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #1</b> <b>ALAN SHEALY</b></p>	 <p><b>2 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #1</b> <b>STEVEN C. KIMBALL</b></p>	 <p><b>3 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #1</b> <b>FRANCES WRAY</b></p>	 <p><b>4 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #3</b> <b>DAVID EBERLE</b></p>
<b>Family</b>	Wife, Laura; sons, Scott, Grant; daughter, Roxie.	Wife, Patty, three boys, three girls. One son at home.	Three children, Christine, Patrick and John; one grandchild, Constantine.	Wife, Sara Hill; daughter, Brooke.
<b>Time in Boise</b>	Nine years.	57 years.	I have lived in Boise for 30 years.	I was born at St. Luke's Hospital in 1952 and have lived in Boise for 42 years.
<b>Previous Political Experience</b>	Boise City Council, four and a half years.	Candidate, Ada County commission. Candidate, Boise City Council. Precinct committeeman. District Chairperson.	None.	I am currently a Boise City Council member. I was elected in 2003.
<b>Reason for Seeking Office</b>	To continue the important work of the last four and a half years regarding air quality, growth and transportation.	Failure of incumbents to curb spending, resulting in higher property taxes and increasing urban sprawl. Common sense needs to replace bureaucratic rule.	I have watched the City Council of Boise for many years. I feel there are many gaps in their service, as well as many costly mistakes. As a social worker, I feel the citizens of Boise are being ignored and taxpayer money is being spent on projects that are not appropriate for Boise City. I want to change those mistakes and provide a more professional city council.	In 2003, I ran on fiscal accountability. Today the Boise City budget is balanced for the first time since 1999. In the next four years, I will continue to watch the budget, work to create a workable public transit system, rewrite the Boise City Comprehensive Plan to be consistent with Blueprint for Good Growth, negotiate with ACHD to rebuild city streets for an urban standard of service that is more pedestrian and transit friendly, and work to build a new main library.
<b>Would you support a local option tax for transit? Why?</b>	Yes. We cannot solve air-quality and transportation problems simply by building more roads. Mixed use, transit-ready development needs convenient transit solutions to succeed. To pay for a convenient system and the rights of way to establish it, we need a predictable source of funding. The Idaho Legislature should allow valley residents the right to bring local option funding to the ballot.	At this time, I have not seen that publicly subsidized transit is more cost effective than personal transit on a cost/mile basis. I cannot support a system that is doomed to be a failure without evidence otherwise. If people want to work in Boise, they should live in Boise. Even the bus is subsidized at more than \$30 for each dollar collected.	Yes. Many of our citizens are in need of a transit system that will provide them a reliable way to get to work and appointments. At this time, we do not have that service.	Yes. I would prefer to have an excise tax on transportation-related goods and services, but this is prohibited by the Idaho Constitution. The local option sales tax is the second-best solution. Municipalities must have a funding source for building and operating a transit system. Boise needs a transit system to combat air pollution and to build a city oriented toward people.
<b>Would you support another Foothills levy to support future land purchases? Why?</b>	Yes. I liken the Foothills to a picture frame reflecting the value our citizens place on open space and an unspoiled environment close to the city. Through the Foothills levy, we have been able to leverage \$6 to every levy dollar through partnerships, land swaps and donations. I am in favor of expanding this program if, through public input, we determine it is in our best interest to preserve this treasure for the future.	For \$10 million, we have purchased 1 square mile of land. Not only were we taxed to pay for that land, the sales were not recorded so as to lower our property taxes. We have decreased the tax base, and increased the cost of land for development, which has increased our property taxes. The City of Boise owns the equivalent of 10 percent of the land mass of the city. It does not make economic sense to me.	Not at this time. We need to look closely at the integrity of the Foothills before we allow any more building.	Yes, however, I need to qualify my support because there are competing needs for the serial levy. I support going to the voters every two years for a serial levy to fund additional open space in the Foothills, neighborhood reinvestment projects, park green-up projects including Williams and Esther Simplot park, and to help build a new main library. The order with which we fund these initiatives should be voter-driven decision.
<b>Do you think Capital City Development Corporation still has a role in Boise's future? Why or why not, and what would you do with the agency?</b>	As a CCDC commissioner, I believe strongly in the potential of the agency. I believe that urban renewal districts can contribute meaningfully to the public welfare by boosting investment in critically important locations in the city. This includes the downtown, where CCDC has enabled successful projects such as BoDo. I joined CCDC to have influence in improving the design of downtown buildings and in broadening our mission to assist struggling areas become healthier and economically vital.	Development in CCDC's district has been lackluster at best. I would favor a review and reassessment of goals for downtown. I have more faith in the market system to get things accomplished in a timely manner.	This agency needs a social and financial audit before any decision is made to discontinue CCDC.	Yes. As a commissioner on the CCDC board, I am a strong supporter of the benefits that urban renewal districts can bring to Boise City. And CCDC still has a role to play in bringing the street car back to downtown. Since coming to the board in 2005, I have advocated for CCDC to also move into disinvested neighborhoods, and use tax increment financing to reinvest in these areas to reduce crime and urban blight and increase safe neighborhoods and livability.
<b>What do you think should be done with a city budget surplus?</b>	My preference is to make investments that are critically important to the health of our city and to bolster our reserves against economic decline when we can. I try to protect the taxpayer at every turn, as evidenced by my vote against a police contract that I believed was excessive and by initiating a study focused on the issue of double taxation.	As a taxpayer, I would like my money returned or have the mill levy reduced the following year. Government in general has proven that the budgetary process is flawed.	Invest this money, and do not spend it on inappropriate projects.	One must understand that the base budget is the property tax on existing properties, and there is no surplus of base budget. This is one-time money. If it were returned to the taxpayers, it would result in a one-time return of pennies. Rather, I believe money generated from new growth should go to support our quality of life.
<b>Do you support special tax considerations to attract new industry?</b>	I believe that if tax subsidies are to be enacted, they should be modest and given across the board, with emphasis on the small companies that produce two-thirds of the job growth. Boise's economic health depends on attracting diverse, economically relevant companies that pay decent, competitive wages.	No. I feel new growth should support itself and so should new industry. If our productive work force, low power rates, clean environment, education system and outdoor climate isn't enough, let them go elsewhere and increase their property taxes.	No. I feel that Boise is a desirable community for new industry at this time, we need not make exceptions for new business.	No. This is a zero-sum game. Governments that have played end up increasing the tax on residents to attract what often are low-value jobs. The type of industry attracted by this strategy will leave when another city offers a better deal. It is better to keep the tax rates competitive and make Boise a great place to live, work and play.

<p><b>1 REDGIE KATE BIGHAM</b> AGE: 49, OCCUPATION: Owner, KB Builders Group, Inc.</p> <p><b>2 MARLENE K. SMITH</b> AGE: 42, OCCUPATION: Secretary of the Board, Council of Homeless Affairs, Inc.</p> <p><b>3 ELAINE M. CLEGG (INCUMBENT)</b> AGE: 52, OCCUPATION: City Council President; Nonprofit Projects Manager</p> <p><b>4 CAROL WINGATE</b> AGE: 50, OCCUPATION: Catering Sales Manager</p>	 <p><b>1 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #3</b> <b>REDGIE KATE BIGHAM</b></p>	 <p><b>2 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #3</b> <b>MARLENE K. SMITH</b></p>	 <p><b>3 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #5</b> <b>ELAINE M. CLEGG</b></p>	 <p><b>4 CITY COUNCIL SEAT #5</b> <b>CAROL WINGATE</b></p>
<p><b>Family</b></p>	<p>Husband, John Bigham; five college-age children.</p>	<p>Single mom.</p>	<p>Married to Brett Clegg; five children; One son-in-law; two grandchildren.</p>	<p>Husband, four children, one grandchild.</p>
<p><b>Time in Boise</b></p>	<p>Lived in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, with parents in the '60s. Returned to Idaho in the late '90s.</p>	<p>Six years.</p>	<p>I was born in Boise and have lived here nearly all of my life.</p>	<p>16 years.</p>
<p><b>Previous Political Experience</b></p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>I have served one term on the Boise City Council.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Reason for Seeking Office</b></p>	<p>My reason for seeking office is in order to give our residents choices in the next city election, and this is a time in my life when I can give back and assist with the matters at hand.</p>	<p>I'm tired of watching the city promote policies that not only waste taxpayers' money, but violate federal guidelines, costing people's freedoms and lives. The city tends to accept substandard housing as affordable housing solutions. With disregard for the safety of our children, the city has allowed pedophiles to be put on the streets. Thus creating potential and increased opportunity to re-offend. Not dealing with a situation doesn't make it go away.</p>	<p>I would like to leave my children and grandchildren a great place. The last four years have set the stage for real progress on a high-quality transit system, new parks and libraries, continued revitalization of our neighborhoods and building great new neighborhoods—all things that will keep Boise great. I'm committed to solving air quality and transit issues and I can affect positive change with my proven ability to gain support and consensus at a regional level.</p>	<p>I want to make a difference in Boise's future and be involved in planning.</p>
<p><b>Would you support a local option tax for transit? Why?</b></p>	<p>I would support the local option tax for transit. My general thought on taxes is that, the voters need to be in control of how much and how often we are taxed. I do not believe in giving all the power to a local government. I would lend my support to using money as the voters chose the money to be used. As a local unit, residents could decide and vote on what is best for them.</p>	<p>Yes. A small increase in taxes would provide the services so desperately needed.</p>	<p>Yes. Without a dedicated tax source, it will be impossible to build a high-quality transit system that offers real choices for Boiseans. The system I envision includes interconnecting buses, street car or commuter rail on high-capacity corridors and the existing rail corridor. A quality system runs every 15 minutes, is clean, comfortable, runs seven days a week, goes where you need to go.</p>	<p>Yes. We need to be prepared for the inevitable growth we are facing. I also think there are a few other revenue sources.</p>
<p><b>Would you support another Foothills levy to support future land purchases? Why?</b></p>	<p>I am not certain that an election would be our most productive to re-enact. It may be the only way to bring resolve to the issue, however, this issue will take time to review all options. We have conflicting arguments. We need a very calculated and balanced/fair effort to bring understanding to the goals at hand, the end results and how we all would live with the consequences and what will really work for the Foothills.</p>	<p>I believe we need to stop developing the Foothills.</p>	<p>The serial levy is a tool that can address pressing needs and offer a better quality of life when used wisely. Boise citizens have told us that transit, parks, libraries and open space are important to that quality of life. I support using levies to address one-time capital funding for issues like those when they rise to priority in the city's strategic goals; there is a solid plan for using the money; and when other money is not available.</p>	<p>Yes, but only if approved by the majority of citizens.</p>
<p><b>Do you think Capital City Development Corporation still has a role in Boise's future? Why or why not, and what would you do with the agency?</b></p>	<p>After the enormity of complaints I've personally heard about the CCDC, I would say that this is another area of serious concern for the city. We need to know more as citizens and taxpayers about the work of the CCDC and consider its advantages or not. Whether it is an entity for the people, or not, we need to be able to gather and report pertinent information and decide if this is a corporation that will enhance Boise and her citizens or if it is another attraction for loss.</p>	<p>At the moment, I don't see a purpose for this agency.</p>	<p>CCDC has played a vital role in revitalizing downtown Boise. The ability to bond for infrastructure investments like parking garages and streetscape improvements, and the ability to assemble land and work with developers is essential. CCDC continues to play that role in emerging districts downtown and must continue to pay off bond debt. I support retiring districts when that debt is paid. In addition, the agency should move into a role in revitalizing areas outside the downtown core.</p>	<p>I'd have to find out more about their role before answering this question.</p>
<p><b>What do you think should be done with a city budget surplus?</b></p>	<p>Spending the city budget surplus ... what a job! This is for many to decide. There are many needs that need to be addressed, too many to list in a quick questionnaire. Talk to me in November.</p>	<p>We need to increase social services to the community. That's where a lot of solutions are accessed.</p>	<p>This City Council adopted new policy for year-end money by creating an unfunded priority list based on strategic goals that has been adopted this year by a unanimous vote of the City Council. I support using any end-of-year money, as planned, to fund in priority order projects on the unfunded priority list.</p>	<p>I think we need a rehab/detox center available to anyone wishing to seek help.</p>
<p><b>Do you support special tax considerations to attract new industry?</b></p>	<p>That depends on the industry, what "attract" would involve, and just how "special" the tax considerations would have to be.</p>	<p>If it would help more local industries.</p>	<p>Boise has always had corporate citizens who were willing to pay their fair share. I expect them to continue while I work to make sure Boise remains an attractive place for business; that we maintain a high quality of life; we educate and attract an excellent workforce and that we build infrastructure that is efficient and cost-effective.</p>	<p>In general, no. But this would be best considered on a case-by-case basis.</p>