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Ballots to be mailed this week

FROM STAFF AND NEWS SOURCES

SPOKANE — It's finally almost here. The Nov. 3 General Election is just 13 days, and by now most voters in Spokane County should have received their ballots. If you haven't received a ballot, or haven't registered and wish to do so, you have until Oct. 26 to turn in new registrations and check the status of a current one.

If you haven't received a ballot, contact the county Elections Department at 509-477-2320 to make sure your information, such as correct current address, is up to date. You can also go online at VoteWa.gov to update your information.

If you haven't registered, you can do so online at olvr.votewa.gov. Make sure you have a current Washington state driver's license, permit or identification card.

Washington is an all-mail-in ballot state. Since 2019, all ballots have included pre-paid postage — no additional postage is required and will not speed up ballot delivery if affixed.

Additionally, the Election's Department has established ballot drop-box locations throughout the county. Drop boxes opened Oct. 10, and will close promptly at 8 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Drop boxes on the West Plains are located at:

- Airway Heights Library — 1213 S. Lundstrom St.
- Cheney Library — 610 1st St.
- Medical Lake Library — 321 E. Herb St.
- Spangle Town Hall — 115 W. 2nd St.
- A drop box is also located at the Election's Department in Spokane.

Finally, voters can track their ballot. To track your ballot, go to voter.votewa.gov. Results of the Nov. 3 General Election will be released to the media and public by 8:15 p.m. on election day.



Look inside for our Rural Voters Guide

Mayor Richey resigns

By DREW LAWSON
Staff Reporter

AIRWAY HEIGHTS—Kevin Richey will resign from his position as city mayor effective Dec. 31, 2020. He informed council of this decision at council's study session Oct. 12.

Richey recently accepted a new job as assistant chief of the Spokane Valley Police Department, which contracts with the Spokane County Sheriff's Office. He had been a sergeant with the sheriff's office, supervising the special assault unit and major crimes. He's been with the Valley department for just over 17 years.

"Every day that I go to my new job, I get a new project. I'm getting pretty busy," Richey told council. "The city deserves to have council and a mayor that are engaged. Frankly, it's been a while since I've been really engaged, and it's just going to get worse."

Richey had one year left on his term after Dec. 31, 2020. The city will now begin the process of finding his replacement until next year's election, and must also fill his council seat.

"I just have too much other stuff to do, so it's not fair to the city for me to hang on just because my term has one more year on it," Richey said. "I'd rather have the city be served by someone who's able to give it the attention it deserves."

Both processes come down to a vote by council, which will first vote on filling his council seat. Candidates can submit qualifications, and council decides how to appoint, whether that's per interviews or another process, according to the city.

Either subsequently or concurrently, council will also vote on who will replace Richey as mayor. That position could be filled by one of council's

Photo by Drew Lawson



Covering all the bases

The first day of school on Monday for Medical Lake kindergartners carried all of the usual uncertainties — plus some new ones. Masks were the norm for those leaving their parents for the first time, as were temperature checks, such as the one performed on a youngster by Hallett Elementary School Principal Kristin Kuster (left). Staff said 40 new students attended school on Monday.



Putting a hold on block grants

By JOHN McCALLUM
Managing Editor

CHENEY — City officials are planning to hold off for now on making a specific application for Community Development Block

Grant funding from Spokane County.

Public Works Director told the Planning Commission during a public meeting on the program on Monday, Oct. 12, that the city didn't apply for

any money from the program last year out of concern for funding levels in the Water Department reserve accounts. That remains true this year, with Cheney taking steps to replenish those levels through

rate increases and fee restructuring.

The city has been relatively successful over the years in getting money from the program

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Making it safe to walk to school

Safe Routes project at high school / Betz Elementary winds up

By JOHN McCALLUM
Managing Editor

CHENEY — Construction crews will be soon wrapping up a project that should make pedestrian and bicycle travel safer in the neighborhood around

Cheney High and Betz Elementary schools.

The work improving sidewalks, crosswalks, curbs and adding extra signage is being funded by a grant from the Safe Routes to Schools Program, part of a national program with grant funding awarded from the Washington State Department of Transportation. Earlier this year, the school district received \$598,619 in grant funding from WSDOT for the \$748,273 project

— funding that is being passed through the city of Cheney.

"The city had to manage the project due to the improvements being on city right-of-way and not school district property," Director of Public Works Todd Ableman said.

Project manager Todd Smith, of the district's project management consultant OAC Services, told the school

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Photo by John McCallum

Part of the Safe Routes to Schools construction at Cheney High and Betz Elementary schools will feature a path through Hagelin Park.

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