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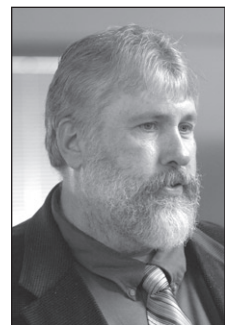
## Holmes, Randles Vye for Rathdrum Mayor

By TOM BURNETT  
*Of The Star*

To list Mayor Vic Holmes' accomplishments in his four years as mayor could fill a good-sized booklet. And, he says he's ready for the next chapter.

Posing a challenge in the Nov. 8 election is Kevin Randles, a successful businessman who's basing his campaign on "becoming personally involved and streamlining the government process and practices I have always applied in my own business and that is what I would do as the Rathdrum mayor.

"Considering our lagging economy, my involvement in local benefit auctions and listening to the concerns of business owners keeps me close to the needs of our hurt-



HOLMES

ing community," he said in a prepared brochure. "Meanwhile, Holmes, also a successful Rathdrum businessman, highlights his lengthy record of accomplishments with, "even in a down economy, our city experienced \$7,155,998 in new construction this past year.

"In fact, looking over the past years since 2005 when I was first elected to the City Council, Rathdrum's experienced \$148,052,519 in new construction.

"And at the same time, we've saved the taxpayer considerable monies because of our excellent staff. For instance, just recently, our people saved some \$60,000 by completing a study of new construction impact fees. Other communities had to hire consultants to do the same job - costing thousands of taxpayer dollars."

Holmes admitted serving as mayor "is somewhat like a juggling act. On the one hand, you want to retain the small town atmosphere we all enjoy while at the same time, growth is coming, we all know that. It's my desire to balance the two and come up with the best for the city - something I truly feel has been accomplished.

"We've tried new things and tried to improve on things of the past. Like," Holmes said, "dog licensing, the chicken issue and odd-even snow plowing in the winter. Also, look what we've accomplished at the Old Jail in the area of street improvements and sidewalks along Second Avenue and visitor parking at the site."

The city is in the process of providing irrigation in preparation for new grass and eventually, new lighting and maybe a bench or two, he said.

The city, under Holmes's direction, is continuing its aggressive pathway project with

a goal of linking the entire city with paved, pedestrian trails. Paved roadways are evident throughout Pinegrove Cemetery along with site improvements, a new entry fence and American flags are through the mayor's efforts.

"Which leads to probably my most noteworthy accomplishment - our new 11.2-acre Majestic Park. This park (at the eastern end of Majestic Avenue) will truly become the showpiece of the city's park system, he said, explaining how the park will include two softball diamonds, a playground, picnic areas and a water splash park. Tennis courts are on the agenda, "down the line," Holmes noted.

A "sizeable" grant has been approved - but not officially announced - to be used to develop Majestic Park. Until formally announced and the funds forwarded, the city cannot proceed with park improvements. Added to the "eventual" grant would be the use of impact fees collected from all new construction.

As for public services, Holmes points "with pride at our excellent water and sewer systems. Our crews have worked hard to avoid water rationing, even during the hottest days of summer. As for sewer; it's doing what it's supposed to do!"

And, with the many forward moves, the city has "only taken a 5.82 percent property tax increase over the past five years," where state law allows municipalities to increase taxes as much as 3 percent each year, Holmes said.

Looking into the future, the mayor said he's interested in developing crosswalk enhancements - similar to Sandpoint - to better protect pedestrians such as a safety refuge at Highway 41 and Nagel Road.

Another "priority" is gaining access to the 550 acres the city owns on Rathdrum Mountain. Currently, Holmes explained, negotiations toward the needed access are ongoing with a number of property owners in the area.

Holmes maintains memberships in several civic, business and professional associations including the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Association of Idaho Cities as the first member from Rathdrum to be elected a director. He has served as president of the Rathdrum Area Chamber of Commerce and is a former member of the Rathdrum Lions Club.

Meanwhile, Randles, also a Chamber member, wrote that, "I think everyone agrees this is a great place to live.

However, "I feel concerned about the stagnant state of our town. I hear concerns of hurting people. The business people continually talk about unrelentingly local regulations that stagnate and



bring growth to a standstill.

"I believe in better and a balance between growth and regulation that encourages our small town entrepreneurs to be excited about new projects, instead of feeling the bitter frustration of a project taking twice as long and costing so much more because of excessive reviews by the city.

"I believe a more productive and helpful government is attainable. I believe in better..." he wrote.

"For over 30 years, I have had extensive experience in the business world managing budgets, deciding where to scrimp and where to expand. I've overlooked large staffs of people deciding who is a good manager and who might be better working with the public.

"I believe the Dashco staff is a good example of an important train of any mayoral candidate. Good communication is absolutely essential..."

"One of my best assets is my ability to look at the big picture (which) I believe is an important trait for the mayor of Rathdrum."

## RLM Honors Servicemen, Women

An open invitation to all military men and women is being extended by Real Life Ministries to join for breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m. Nov. 19 at either the RLM auditorium on Cecil Avenue, Post Falls, or at the Golden Spike Community Center in Rathdrum.

## Park Restrooms Closed for Season

As of today (Wednesday) the public restrooms at both City Park and Stub Myer Park will be closed for the season, according to a Parks Department spokesman.

## City Reduces Impact Fees

In a move to lessen local building costs, the Rathdrum City Council has adopted a "revised" impact fee code, chopping \$782.97 from the cost of building a single family home.

Impact fees, imposed on new construction only,



## STEM Charter Academy Begins Accepting Student Applications

By TOM BURNETT  
*Of The Star*

A promising new addition to the regional education horizon - and to be built in Rathdrum - the STEM Charter Academy is now accepting applications for the fall of 2012.

And, as of just last week, the North Idaho STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math - was approved by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission to accept kindergarteners through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Before the required approval, STEM could only accept students for grades 4 through 8.

The STEM Academy, while a publicly-funded education facility, operates and is funded totally within its own budget and not a part of Lakeland District 272. A charter academy cannot solicit public funds through any form of a levy.

The perceived advantage of a charter academy is lesser student population with a strong emphasis on science, math and technology. As well, social studies, reading and language arts also will be included in daily curriculums.

Students from Lakeland schools as well as schools in Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Bonner and Boundary School districts may apply. Home-schooled students along with

those currently attending private schools are equally eligible to attend the STEM academy.

The school has purchased land along Meyer Road, a few yards south of Highway 53, and plans to locate portable classrooms "in the near future. We will be starting with portable classrooms, much like the Coeur d'Alene Charter did. It's what taught inside that'll make the difference," said Scott Thomson, a leading advocate of the STEM Charter and its first principal.

The STEM Charter is allowed a prescribed number of students in each grade level - exact figures to be determined based on applications for admission. Once those numbers are determined, should more students apply, enrollment would be based on a lottery in accordance with current state law, he said. Once school has opened, students may still apply with their names being listed according to their application date.

Another difference is that STEM academy is planning a four-day school week, adding 1.5 hours to a student's school day. There will no half-days or early release days while students are expected to schedule doctor and dentist visits on Fridays. Fridays would be available for teacher professional development,

## Halloween Ready!

A tour of the Westwood Villa subdivision located these two Halloween-Ready houses, the top one on Westwood Drive while the second at Theo Drive and Gina Court. For even more fun take a look at the back page of today's Star for who just might be handing out treats for Trick-or-Treaters.

training, collaboration and conference days.

A four-day school week "allows families to schedule events on Fridays without students missing school" and permits more project-based learning and science labs, according to literature provided by the STEM Academy.

Students will be required to wear uniforms.

"As for staffing the academy, we've already had interest from teachers throughout all of Northern Idaho as well as quite a few from other states," reported Colleen Thomson, project coordinator for the school.

Both Thomsons currently teach at Spirit Lake Elementary School.

Both agree: "Many of the jobs your children will be seeking have not been invented yet. How will they compete for them?"

"Will they be ready? Are we willing to do what is necessary to make that happen?"

"The school encourages a strong work ethic from a student who is motivated to learn and to do the work required."

As an insight into an available education at the STEM academy: "They will be taught techniques for developing ideas, design and troubleshooting processes and mathematical modeling. Students will use projects such as building and testing hot air balloons, magnetic levitation vehicles and passive solar heating."

Applications for both students and teachers are available online at [www.northidahostem.org](http://www.northidahostem.org).

Teachers, Colleen Thomson added, cannot be actually hired until the class numbers are determined.