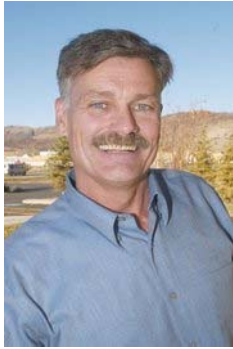


White wins Senate District 8

Republican moves down the hall in state Capitol

By Brandon Gee (Contact)



Al White

Riding huge victories in Routt and Moffat counties, legislative veteran Rep. Al White, R-Hayden, will represent the residents of Northwest Colorado for another four years in the Colorado General Assembly.

But he'll move down the hall in the state Capitol, from the House to the Senate.

White defeated Steamboat Springs Democrat Ken Brenner on Tuesday in the race to replace term-limited state Sen. Jack Taylor, R-Steamboat Springs. White was term-limited in the state House of Representatives. Senate District 8 includes all of Moffat, Routt, Jackson and Rio Blanco counties, as well as parts of Eagle and Garfield counties.

According to data available to the Steamboat Pilot & Today early this morning, Brenner led Eagle and Garfield counties by a combined 487 votes, but trailed in Routt and Moffat counties by a combined 4,062 votes. Overall, White was up 28,943 votes to 24,157 votes.

"I knew it was going to be close," White said. "I give Ken Brenner all the credit in the world for running a tough race and working hard."

Brenner, a strength and conditioning coach and owner of a sports medicine clinic, is a former Steamboat Springs City Council president. He also is a former member of the Steamboat Springs Planning Commission. Water issues were Brenner's No. 1 reason for running for the state Senate. Among his contentions, Brenner believes the state has inadequate data regarding water quality and quantity.



Ken Brenner

After first being elected to the state House of Representatives in 2000, White won the past three campaigns for House District 57, which includes Routt, Moffat, Grand, Garfield, Rio Blanco and Jackson counties. In November 2006, he won a strong victory against Democratic challenger Andy Gold, of Tabernash, despite an election that saw widespread victories for Democrats across the county, state and nation.

Despite White's strong performances in the House races and Taylor's long tenure in the Senate, Democrats considered Senate District 8 very winnable. In the 2004 election, Taylor barely hung on against Democratic challenger Jay Fetcher, a rancher who coordinates U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar's visits to Routt County. Taylor won by a slim margin of 28,521 votes to 26,896 votes.

"There was just no way it was going to be a landslide," White said. "If these numbers hold, I think I have won a huge victory."

Throughout the campaign, White touted his legislative experience at the state level as an advantage over Brenner's experience in local government. White is a member of the state Legislature's small and powerful Joint Budget Committee, has a bipartisan reputation, and focused on issues, including tourism and education in the House.

In addition to a legislator, White also is a businessman who has owned ski shops, a bike shop and a mountain lodge in Winter Park. He established residency in Hayden in 2006.

Financial reports through Oct. 22 showed White's fundraising leading Brenner's, \$144,757 to \$58,974, according to the Colorado Secretary of State's campaign finance database.

Brenner did not return messages left on his cell phone Tuesday night.