Neupert holding out hope in Clallam Superior Court race against Coughenour

By Rob Ollikainen
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Brian Coughenour

Clallam County Superior Court Judge Brian Coughenour held a four-point lead over a “hopeful” Dave Neupert after the first batch of general election ballots were counted.

Coughenour was leading Neupert 11,651 votes to 10,734 votes — 52.05 percent to 47.95 percent — after the Clallam County Auditor’s Office processed ballots Tuesday night, Nov. 8.

“I knew this race would be close and I’m not surprised to learn where we are after the first count,” Neupert said in an interview Nov. 9.

“It’s always tough to beat an incumbent, no matter what the position, but I’m still hopeful that the next count is going to put me over the top.”

The auditor’s office estimated there were 10,000 ballots left to count.
Neupert, 61, is a Port Angeles attorney who retired from Platt Irwin Law Firm in December.

Coughenour, 65, was appointed to the Superior Court bench by Gov. Jay Inslee in May 2015 to fill the unexpired term of retiring Judge George L. Wood.

Coughenour said he was pleased with the early returns but was not prepared to declare victory.

He borrowed a quote from the “great American philosopher” and baseball legend Yogi Berra.

“It ain’t over ‘til it’s over,” Coughenour said.

The four-year judgeship was the only contested local election on the countywide ballot.

The other judges on the Clallam County Superior Court bench, Christopher Melly and Erik Rohrer, were unopposed.

The position held by Coughenour pays $165,870 in salary, up from the $162,618 it paid prior to Sept. 1.

Sixty members of the Clallam County Bar Association rated Coughenour higher than his opponent in an October poll.

Neupert, who also applied for the vacancy filled by Inslee, raised nearly four times as much money as his opponent did in the run-up to the election.

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