

# Meet the Candidates

By Karen Krien

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Most of the local candidates listed on the general election ballot are running unopposed with the exception of the county commissioners in District 2, incumbent Ray Lee and Dale Patton.

Following is a brief article about each of the local candidate.

## Ray Lee

### County Commissioner District 2

Ray Lee has lived in Cheyenne County almost all of his life except for a time when he was serving the country in Korea.

He said he likes Cheyenne County and that is one of the reasons he is running for a second term as commissioner of District 2. He also sees the population of the county dwindling and would like to find a way to bring people and businesses in.

"When there are less and less people, it makes it tough on the taxpayers to keep the county going," he said. "I'd like to see more businesses and jobs for young people."

Mr. Lee was the county sheriff for 28 years and a deputy for 4 years. He worked for the St. Francis Police Department on a part-time basis for 5 years.

As a sheriff, he said he was always able to maintain his budget and have money left at the end of the year. These funds were used to help in the next year's budget.

"Never did I have to approach the commissioners for additional money," he said.

Lee said that while sheriff, he seldom took time off and, today, if elected commissioner, will be available for meetings and to talk to the citizens if they have any concerns.

In the last 4 years as a commissioner, Mr. Lee said the board has updated some of the older equipment such as ambulances, fire trucks and other equipment. Most of it, he said, was paid for with government grants.

He commends the emergency medical service, technicians, and the county and city fire departments, noting that they are probably some of the best in the state of Kansas. Our county, he said, also has some very good employees.

"My door is always open to anyone needing my time," he said. "I am willing and excited to hear your ideas and concerns for our district."

"I hope I can help to make our county a place where we can all be proud while still keeping a close eye on the impact that can occur to the taxpayer's wallet."

In the early 70s, the sheriff's officers ran the ambulance service and Mr. Lee was one of those helping.

"We ran it for 10 years and I understand the concerns of the EMTs," he said. "But, today's EMTs have a lot more training than we did — they are good!"

Mr. Lee and his wife Jody have six children and a total of 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. They live north of Wheeler.

## Dale Patton

### County Commissioner District 2

Dale Patton is running for Cheyenne County Commissioner, District 2.

Mr. Patton and his wife, Deb, have lived in St. Francis for the last 10 years but, Mr. Patton is no stranger to the area. He and his family moved to St. Francis in 1950 where his father managed the Grain and Feed for two years. They then moved to Denver. However, during the summers, he was able to spend time in the St. Francis area.

Mr. Patton feels that he could bring experience to the commission board having been the mayor of Sheridan, Colo., for 8 years. He was also on the Sheridan City Council for 7 years; the planning commission for 15 years, fire commissioner, 15 years and the Sheridan Housing Authority for 15 years.

He said he understands budgets and is eager to see the county grow. He recently attended a meeting on bringing wind energy to northwest Kansas.

"I would like to continue to pursue wind energy," he said. "It is coming to northwest Kansas, maybe not next year or the next, but I want the county to be prepared when it does."

"We need to be proactive, instead of reactive, to business and county needs."

The Pattons were impressed with the community pride, caring nature and spirit of friendliness of the people. They bought a farm northwest of St. Francis when they moved from Denver.

"I feel I have a vested interest in the county's future," he said.

Mr. Patton graduated from the Community Builders leadership training classes and is excited to see the growth and retention ideas brought to action through the Builders.

"As a commissioner, I will be fair and impartial in my decisions and expect accountability of those who serve the county," he said. "I am

interested in making decisions that are in the best interest of the entire county."

He also noted that he has an open-door policy and is happy to discuss issues with residents. His phone number is 785-332-2153.

The Pattons have been married for 12 years and have five children between them. They also have six grandchildren.

He has served two terms as secretary on the Salem Lutheran Church council and continues to remain actively involved with the church. He also is a member of the Lions Club as well as participating in other activities in the county.

## Andy Beikman

### County Commissioner District 3

Andy Beikman is running in the general election for a second term as Cheyenne County Commissioner, District 3.

He has lived in the county for 28 years and is raising his family here.

"I care what happens and I would like to see the area grow and prosper," he said.

Keeping the young people in the county, he said, is one of the avenues he will continue to pursue. He will also continue using grant money for purchasing equipment and building bridges. Grant money, he said, can be used towards recreational and business development.

"We really need to work on a solid community development program," he said.

Cheyenne County, he said, is very fortunate to have the oil and gas productions. Within the next 5 years, he thinks that the county will be involved in wind energy.

"We have a great bunch of EMTs and firemen — People don't realize how much family time these people give up," he said. "Tell them 'thank you' when you see them!"

He is concerned about the senior citizens who are on fixed incomes, noting that it is important to work within the budget and keep taxes down.

Mr. Beikman is against districting which could force all citizens to travel to Colby or even Hays to pay their taxes or get a driver's license.

"Our county treasurer does a good job in house and treasurer's meeting to voice the need for this service to our county," he said.

The county's landfill is another of his concerns.

"I feel we are doing a good job as a county with recycling, although we all can probably do a little more," he said. "I have seen the dollar figures for the counties that do not have landfills — they are scary figures!"

"There are so many things going on in our county and I will continue my best to meet the challenges to help the county prosper without putting a burden on the taxpayers."

Mr. Beikman and his wife Mary, who is an art teacher, have two children, Mariah and Martin. They live southeast of St. Francis.

## Terry Miller

### County Clerk

Terry Miller is completing his

second term in the office of Cheyenne County Clerk and is running unopposed on the ballot for a third term.

"I can't believe it's time for my re-election and the start of my ninth year with the county," Mr. Miller said. "There have been so many changes in the office that time has flown right by."

During the last term, he said, we have added paying taxes on line. More links have been added to the website that may be of help to the citizens.

"I've had e-mails from across the country inquiring about different aspects of Cheyenne County, so the site is working for us," he said. "As usual, you can check for election night results on the front page."

There have been changes in the election equipment. The voting machines have been implemented thanks to the federal mandate. The machines Cheyenne County chose to have on site are just marking machines and do not tabulate the votes as they are voted.

As it turns out, he said, many election advocates are now saying the country needs to go back to paper ballots.

"So, while many may think we're backwoods rural, we are actually cutting edge, he said with a smile. "Paper ballots are still used in Cheyenne County and counted by real people. I'll back our results 100 percent!"

Another computerized improvement will allow the county clerk to tell if someone is registered in a different county when they register to vote.

While Mr. Miller gets much of the credit for running an election, he states that it couldn't be done without the organization and help of his deputy, Deb Lindsten.

I look forward to serving the citizens of Cheyenne County and appreciate their confidence in me and support of me.

Mr. Miller's duties are many this time of year as he is also the county's election officer and is responsible for ballots, voting places, people to work on election day and the final counts.

Besides his duties as county election officer, he sets levies, fills out abstracts for the state of Kansas property valuation, makes payrolls, is the Freedom of Information officer, takes minutes for the commissioners' meeting and is responsible for the hunting licenses sold in the county.

It is now election time and people are able to link to [www.cheyennecounty.org](http://www.cheyennecounty.org) and find the ballots on line.

"The state is leading the way in mandating county offices to become more computerized," he said.

Miller helped with the development of the Kansas Kids Voting program where kids can come vote for the candidates with ballots that are geared to their age. St. Francis students, kindergarten through seniors, will be voting at Peace Lutheran

Church along with the adult voters.

Miller and his wife, Dr. Mary Beth, have three children, Sheryl, Sara and Marvin.

He is the son of Marvin and Anita Miller, St. Francis.

## Dolores Jenik

### County Treasurer

Dolores Jenik is running unopposed for the office of Cheyenne County Treasurer.

Jenik has been in the treasurer's office for a total of 10 years, three years as deputy treasurer and seven years as county treasurer.

Her duties include:

- Keeping an accurate account of all county funds and tax records.
- Being responsible for collecting, disbursing and investing county money.
- Working with the state of Kansas to provide Motor Vehicle titling, registration and driver's license services to county residents.
- Staying knowledgeable on the laws that govern the treasurer's office and the motor vehicle, driver's license department.

In the next three years, Jenik plans to improve services in the office and, with the Internet, be more accessible and user friendly.

"I would like to bring more knowledge to the public for easy access and work with county residents to help them meet their tax obligations in these tough economical times," she said.

Help can come through agreements for delinquent taxes or escrow payments for current taxes.

One of the changes Jenik sees coming is:

- The new personalized license plates which will start being issued in February.

"Usually the new design for the regular plates follow the next year so we will be looking forward to the new looks and distributing them," she said.

"It seems that the legislature is passing new laws and regulations semi-annually, which change or affect the treasurer's office which keeps it interesting, as well as challenging."

"We know about some laws and regulations in advance and some are told just in time for them to come into effect."

Jenik told about an incident a couple years ago when the state office offered E-Tags, where credit card payment options were offered on the Internet to renew vehicle registrations.

"At the same time I added the same option for real estate and personal property, since they offered it at no expense to the county. I felt it would be easier for myself and the staff to train on both at the same time."

"This year they added the option to pay by E-Check as well as credit card, so I am adding this option to the tax side also."

Jenik plans to offer easy access on the Internet to locate information, forms and answers to questions the public may have or need for all ar-

reas including motor vehicle, driver's license and taxes.

Jenik and her husband Mark, owner of Jenik Oil in St. Francis, have four children: Shawn Riedel, Kiedra Riedel, Jacob Riedel and Kattie Jenik.

She is the daughter of Shirley Pianalto of Bird City and the late LE (Gene) Pianalto.

## Mary Morrow

### Register of Deeds

Mary Morrow began working in the register of deeds office in the fall of 1984 when June Henderson held that office. She was elected to serve her first term in 1997 and is now running for her third term as register of deeds for Cheyenne County.

Among her duties as register of deeds is to record documents presented to her which are mostly real estate. Other documents include death and cemetery certificates, discharge military papers, various affidavits, and she assists the public in researching the records. She also gives phone callers needed information.

Lately, she is staying very busy due to the petroleum activity. At any time, she said, there can be from one to 13 petroleum land men in the office.

Approximately 85 to 90 percent of the recordings is due to this activity, she said.

Carol Whipple serves as the deputy register of deeds.

In the future, she will be working at computerizing the office. A technology fund has been started and when there is sufficient money, she will purchase a scanner. She will then be able to scan documents into the computer which will make researching records much easier and quicker.

"I plan to go back as far as possible but my goal will probably be going back 10 to 20 years — it is going to take a great deal of time," she said.

She also sees minor changes which are government mandated coming into the office but nothing that is concerning.

Mrs. Morrow and her husband Norman, who is a minister, mechanic and farmer, have four sons: John and wife Susan, Doug and wife Cari, David and wife Talley, and Derek. They also are very proud of their six grandchildren: Megan, Gage, Ian, Alyssa, Amber and Mia.

## Robert Van Allen

### Magistrate Judge District 15

Robert Van Allen, Wheeler, is running for the seat of Magistrate Judge, District 15.

Van Allen feels like he has a proven record of being fair. He has dealt with people for 40 years and has gained a lot of experience in many different situations.

"My main goal is to make decisions and get them right based on the law and the facts pertaining to the case."

Van Allen says he has no ties or obligations to anyone but the citizens of Cheyenne County. He feels

like he could make a difference and would like the opportunity to prove it.

"I think the position would be a 'challenge' and I would like the challenge. I know that the position of Magistrate Judge will be demanding."

The owner of Van Allen Implementation Inc., Wheeler, for the last 30 years, Van Allen says, if elected, he will leave Van Allen, Inc., in the capable hands of his two sons.

"I want to be a working judge," he stated, noting that he will constantly be learning but it is something that he is looking forward to.

"I have maturity and good common sense and I want to get down to the issues and see court cases closed in a timely manner," he said. "I think it is important to work with the county attorney, whoever he or she may be."

"The most important thing is to get it right!"

Van Allen and his wife Barb, owner of Video Connection in St. Francis, live in Wheeler where they raised their three sons. They now have five grandchildren.

## Craig Van Allen

### County Sheriff

Craig Van Allen has been the Cheyenne County Sheriff for over a year, having stepped up when Sheriff Troy Gardner resigned. Before then, he had been at the county sheriff's office as deputy for 2 years and 1 year at the city police department. Also, for 3 years, he was a Lindsborg Reserve Police officer.

I am dedicated, he said, to protecting lives and helping people in need. He thinks it is important to conduct thorough investigations and creating a safer county for the future.

The sheriff's office oversees the county and the city of Bird City. Officers are available to help the city of St. Francis officers when called upon. In the time he has been sheriff, he has established working relationships with the St. Francis city police and other agencies.

He graduated from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Academy and has over 100 hours additional training in Kansas Law Enforcement. He is knowledgeable of the current laws and applications.

"I have dedicated myself to work hard and earn the trust of the people," he said. "Through this commitment, I have been able to advance from part-time deputy to the current sheriff."

Sheriff Van Allen has lived in the county for 35 years and graduated from St. Francis Community High School. He and his wife, Sharon, have two sons, Trey and Josh.

He is a member of the Lutheran Church.

Prior to working in law enforcement, he was employed as the department manager at Van Allen, Wheeler.

He is concerned that the tax dollars are used wisely and that all people are treated fairly. Whatever the situation, he said he has the courage to face it.

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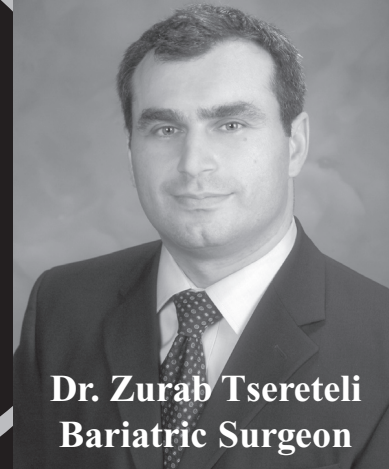
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