

# Shallenburger repeats promise not to cut education

CANDIDATE, from Page 1

College president, came, and so did Larry Keirns, retired president of the technical college.

The candidates spoke briefly to the gathering and then moved around the room to meet voters.

In an interview, Shallenburger said he's organized bus tours before. It's cheaper and more efficient to have a group of candidates travel together, he said, but the goal is to get information on local problems and ideas for solutions.

"We're better off if we listen more than we talk," Shallenburger said. "We can hear about local issues."

He said the main thing he's been hearing about is the state's budget problems. Shallenburger said people want to know whether he plans to raise taxes to fill the huge gap between what

the state wants to spend and the money it actually has.

The candidate said he assures people their state taxes won't go up if he is elected.

Shallenburger said raising taxes would be counterproductive during a recession and instead, he will ask each state department to reduce its budget by 5 to 7.5 percent.

"It's not too much to ask in a bad economic time," he said. "We're confident we can do it."

At the same time, Shallenburger said he won't cut the budget for education, making schools his top priority. He said he won't forget his promise if he is elected.

"You have to prioritize," he said. "We are staking the claim today; we're not cutting schools."

If other department heads complain about having to reduce their budget,

Shallenburger said, they could lose their job.

"They'll have to make it work," he said.

The candidate said he will ask schools to tighten their budgets as much as possible. To spread out education money as fairly as possible, he said, he plans to review the current formula used to figure out how much each district receives.

Several larger districts have sued the state, saying the current school formula, which provides extra money to low-enrollment districts, discriminates against minority students.

Shallenburger said the day he is elected, he will form a committee of school officials from across the state to define what a suitable education is and how much it costs. The school formula could be changed based on the committee's report, he said.

The candidate claimed that Sebelius is in favor of saving money by pushing schools to consolidate, but he thinks small schools are valuable and should be preserved.

"Small-town districts are the town," Shallenburger said. "I'm not an advocate of consolidation."

Small schools are suffering because enrollment is steadily declining as many young people move away after high school and end up raising families elsewhere.

Shallenburger said Sherman County's economy will probably always be agriculture-based and it's unlikely the city will ever grow into a metropolis, but there are things the government can do to help stabilize the population.

Good schools will attract young parents, he said, and economic development efforts will bring in new busi-

nesses and new jobs. He said existing businesses can also be offered tax breaks to help them expand.

Shallenburger, who grew up in Baxter Springs, said he plans to take actions to help farmers become more prosperous and make it easier for young people to start farming. The candidate said he understands rural problems.

"I'm a rural guy," he said.

Schilling, one of the county campaign chairs, said he is backing Shallenburger because he agrees with the candidate's conservative platform.

Shallenburger says he won't raise taxes, Schilling said, and, as the state treasurer, has already proven he is a good money manager. While in the treasurer office, he said, Shallenburger was able to reduce the budget and increase services at the same time.

Schilling said he thinks Sebelius

would be a capable governor, but he sides with Shallenburger on more issues.

Schilling said, as a school board member, he agrees with Sebelius on at least one issue, though, and that's school consolidation.

"In some instances, it would be a wise thing to do," he said, noting that he's always believed merging the Edson and Kanorado districts into Goodland was a good step.

Schilling, an Edson farmer, said his father-in-law was on the Edson School Board when the districts merged. He got a lot of angry calls, Schilling said, but history has shown it was the thing to do.

"I always think education should come first," he said.

All of the candidates seem to agree with that.

# States meet to consider who will prosecute sniper cases first

SNIPER, from Page 1

had been sleeping in their car.

Both are suspects in attacks that killed 10 people and critically wounded three in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., Montgomery County Police Chief Charles Moose said.

In Alabama, Wilson told reporters today that investigators believe Muhammad fatally shot the woman and wounded a second outside a liquor store on Sept. 21. He said witnesses saw Muhammad standing over the slain woman's body. On Thursday, Wilson said one person had been spotted at the scene and he suggested it was Malvo.

Prosecutors from the jurisdictions where the shootings happened were discussing charges today.

"I think the general consensus is that the case will be tried first in Montgomery County," said Douglas Gansler, state's attorney for the Maryland jurisdiction. "We have the best evidence in the case; also the investigation was run out of Montgomery County."

But he stressed that no final decision had been made. He said authorities would be conferring on the phone and then meet this afternoon.

One issue in deciding who prosecutes the two may be the death penalty.

Like Alabama, Maryland and Virginia also have capital punishment.

Maryland, where six victims were slain, has had a moratorium on executions since May. Virginia, where three were slain, has executed more death row inmates than any state but Texas. The states' laws also differ on age: A 17-year-old would be eligible for the death penalty in Virginia and Alabama but not in Maryland.

Maryland Gov. Parris Glendening said the moratorium would not affect this case, because it was put in place to determine any prior institutional bias. Speaking with Glendening at a briefing in Rockville, Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner the death penalty is "clearly" appropriate and there could be a series of prosecutions involving several districts.

Officials say a federal prosecution is unlikely because it appears there is no federal law that would make the sniper eligible for the death penalty.

In court Thursday, U.S. District

Court Magistrate Beth P. Gesner ordered Muhammad held without bail at an undisclosed location on a charge of violating a 2000 restraining order that barred him from harassing or using force against his wife and children. His next scheduled court appearance is Tuesday.

Malvo, a Jamaican citizen being held as a material witness against Muhammad, is considered a juvenile, so his court proceedings are closed.

Jim Wyda, Muhammad's attorney, noted that his client has been charged only with that firearms offense, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Michael Bouchard, special agent with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco, said a Bushmaster rifle found in Muhammad's car had been linked by ballistics to 11 of the 14 shootings.

The rifle is the civilian form of the

M-16 military assault rifle. As a soldier, Muhammad received a Marksmanship Badge with expert rating — the highest of three ratings — in the use of the M-16, according to Army records. Police also found a scope in the car, a law enforcement source told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Muhammad, in handcuffs and a green prison jumpsuit, spoke little dur-

ing Thursday's hearing. When Gesner asked if he understood the charge, he quietly answered, "Yes, ma'am."

The motive behind the slayings wasn't clear, and authorities didn't want to speculate.

Federal officials have said, however, that Muhammad and Malvo had been known to speak sympathetically about the Sept. 11 terrorists. The Seattle Times reported. There was no indication they

were linked to al-Qaida or any terrorist group, but authorities didn't rule out that the suspects may have had help.

Muhammad, a Gulf War veteran, converted to Islam several years ago and changed his last name last year from Williams.

A law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity, outlined developments that led to the arrests:



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