

The County

Sheriff wants to go for 24 years on job

Finishing his fifth term in office, Sheriff Ken Badsky wants to shoot for 24 years of county service.

His aim must be good, since he has no opposition in the Republican primary or the general election this fall.

Sheriff Badsky grew up in Decatur County and has lived all of his life here except for nine months. Twenty years of that time, he has been the sheriff.

He said that he enjoys what he does. It is a challenge every day, he said, since it is a diversified field. Sheriff Badsky said there is always something new to do and the job never gets boring.

The biggest challenge, he said, is playing politics and keeping up on the current technology with the budget.

The job has changed since he was first elected. Sheriff Badsky said it used to be that it was just a good ol' boy job, and now they need to keep up with technology and the changing criminal, who has become more diversified and mobile.

Everything is much more high tech, from equipment to drugs. He said they have to keep up on all of that.

The economy, said Sheriff Badsky, makes a big difference. When the economy isn't good there are more bad checks, more depressed people and more drunk driving.

Sheriff Badsky said he would like to see a staff increase. He said they have been looking at federal grants, which aren't available until 2005, to get another officer. (The department usually has three, including the sheriff, but one officer is on military duty.)

He said he has been looking at grants a lot lately, trying to get money from other places to help with equipment needs.

Part of his job, he said, is being prepared in case of a major disaster. Anything can happen anywhere at any time. Sheriff Badsky said they are trying to be ready.

He received a degree in law enforcement from Garden City Junior College. He then got a job with the Oberlin Police Department, worked there for three years and then ran for his first term in 1984. When elected, he was the youngest sheriff in the state.

Sheriff Badsky not only holds the 24-hour-a-day job of sheriff, but farms west of town, raising wheat and milo. He said he also has zebras, llamas and horses.

He and his wife Jan have five kids, Tim, who sells Cummins tools; Paula, who is a registered nurse in Hays; Kenyon, who works for Cummins and goes to school at Fort Hays State University; Lacey, who is going to school to be a registered nurse in Hays; and Regan, a sophomore at Decatur Community High School. He said they also have one step-grandchild.



Ken Badsky

Commissioner ready for fourth term

With some unfinished business and the desire to help keep Decatur County viable for the 21st century, Doyle Brown is seeking re-election for the District 3 position on the County Commission.

He is running unopposed in the Republican primary and for the general election this fall.

This is Mr. Brown's 12th year as commissioner representing the southeast part of the county. Part of keeping the county viable for the next century, he said, is to keep health care services. He said he has focused on health care for some time and now would like to move over to focus more on economic development.

As a commissioner, said Mr. Brown, he can't really deal with the problem of education, including declining enrollment, but the county needs to have jobs for young people.

For the last few years, he said, he has worked on the health system, and he thinks it is well on its way to being the best health-care system in the area.

Mr. Brown said his main role as commissioner is to listen to the concerns of the citizens and provide the services they want. It is a fine line to walk, though, because people want services, but not any extra taxes.

As a commissioner, he said, he has served as a go-between for constituents and department heads.

People in his district can talk with him, he said, and then he either talks with the department heads or lets the citizens know who they need to talk to. He said he helps find answers for people.

The commissioners try to come up with the best possible solution to county problems while spending the least amount of money, said Mr. Brown.

Mr. Brown serves as the commission representative to the hospital board and the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission board. He said he attends other meetings as they come up.

In his spare time, he is a first responder for the Decatur County Ambulance Service, and a member of the United Methodist Church in Jennings, the Oberlin Rotary Club and the Jennings Lions, and is a certified lay leader in the church.

He is an organic farmer, growing mostly milo and wheat, but has tried anything that can be grown organically. He is a retired teacher and coach and a registered Republican.

Mr. Brown and his wife Kay have four children, Kent who lives in Estes Park, Colo.; Kara, who lives in Hays; Kurt, who lives in Quinter; and Keli, who lives in Wichita. They have five grandchildren and three step-grandkids.

As a commissioner, he said, he has served as a go-between for constituents and department heads.



D. Brown

Treasurer finishing her first four years

After learning the ins and outs in the Decatur County treasurer's office in the last four years, Jean Hale is looking to be re-elected.

Mrs. Hale has just about finished her first term in office, although she has worked in the courthouse since February 1986. She said she started in the appraiser's office and then moved to the treasurer's office.

She said she ran for treasurer four years ago after her boss, Pat Fringer, said she planned to retire. After the election, Mrs. Fringer stepped down and Mrs. Hale was appointed to fill her term, which ran to the next October. While she had opposition four years ago, she has none this time, either in the primary or the general election.

"I want to continue to be involved in county government," said Mrs. Hale "and I enjoy working with the finance part of it."

Before moving to the courthouse, she said, she worked at a bank.

The most important parts of the treasurer's job, she said, are investing the county's money, collecting personal property and real estate taxes and distributing them to the county, schools, cities, townships and cemeteries.

Mrs. Hale said the office also takes care of motor vehicle tags and registration, driver's licenses and the daily work and bookkeeping for the county.

The most challenging part of the job is probably keeping up with the state requirements when new laws come into effect, she said. When the laws change, said Mrs. Hale, they need to get the information out to the public.

She said they also work with all the banks to find a safe place with a good interest rate to invest the county's money.

Much of her job, she said, really depends on what the state does. She said through the Kansas Treasurer's Association, she has been taking an educational course to try to advance in her field.

Mrs. Hale said she was raised in Decatur County and graduated from high school here. She then took the secretarial science program at the Northwest Kansas Vocational school in Goodland.

She and her husband Byron, the county extension agent, live in Oberlin. Mrs. Hale is a registered Republican.



Jean Hale

County attorney shooting for twenty

Steve Hirsch has been the Decatur County attorney for 16 years, a record for the office, which was created in 1880.

And it looks like the Republican will win a fifth term in November as he is running unopposed in the primary with no Democratic opposition.

Besides being county attorney, Mr. Hirsch has been the Oberlin city attorney for almost six years. He is city attorney for Dresden, Jennings and Norcraft.

Before becoming county attorney, he was in private practice with Stan Morgan and then with Preston Pratt, his current partner.

Mr. Hirsch said that the difference between private practice and being county attorney is that you are on a different side in criminal cases. In private practice, you often represent the offender, but as county attorney you represent the

prosecution. Mr. Hirsch graduated from Washburn University in 1986 and earned his law degree there. He and his wife Anita have two children, Jennifer, 15, and Joseph, 12.

He is the secretary of the Kansas State Firefighters Association and works with the Hoxie Fire Department as a training officer. He also helps with fire schools around the state and puts together the *Firewire*, a six-times-a-year newspaper with information for Kansas firefighters.

He and his family live on the outskirts of town.

"It has been a pleasure working with law enforcement and other county officials, and we have done a good job," said Mr. Hirsch. "I have a good working relationship with county officials and law enforcement and would like to see that continue."



Steve Hirsch

Magistrate judge in office since 1974

First elected in 1974, John Bremer has been the magistrate judge for Decatur County for three decades. He is seeking another term in the Republican primary election on Tuesday.

Before becoming a judge, Mr. Bremer was a corporate lawyer, then Decatur County attorney, and also had a private law practice.

He was born and raised in Oberlin and went to school at Washburn University in Topeka.

Being a judge gives him finality at the end of a case, he said. After the sentence is read, his job as judge is over, unlike a lawyer, who may stay with that client if they want to appeal or aren't happy with the decision.

As a judge, Mr. Bremer said, he deals with a variety of cases. He said that the most enjoyable duties he handles are marriages and adop-

tions, because normally everyone leaves happy.

Mr. Bremer said that the most frequent cases he hears are small claims and limited action suits and misdemeanor criminal trials.

His biggest worry these days is that the state will eliminate the position of magistrate here. There have been several pushes in the Legislature to cut down the number of judges in rural areas and shift the money to the cities.

"I don't want to be the last one to hold this position," he said.

He is married to Dianne and they have two daughters, Kristen, who lives in Beatrice, Neb., and Jessica, who will be a freshman at Decatur Community High this fall.

Mr. Bremer is running unopposed in the Republican primary. There is no Democratic candidate.



John Bremer

Clerk thinks this will be last election

With 18 years of service as Decatur County clerk — including four full elected terms — Marilyn Horn is seeking another four-year term next week.

Mrs. Horn said when she started her county service she was appointed to the job and then decided to run for re-election.

She said she likes her job and wants to continue doing it, but thinks this will be her last term.

In the next four years, said Mrs. Horn, she would like to get someone who is really knowledgeable in data processing in the building. The state tells them what kind of computers to use and the programs, but she said it would be nice to have someone who really knows how to use the computer. Everyone is trained on them, but she would like to find someone who was raised with computers.

As the county clerk, said Mrs. Horn, she is responsible for elec-

tions, accounts payable, the payroll, budgeting, taking minutes for the commissioners and motor vehicle tax distribution.

At the courthouse, she said, all the mail comes through the clerk's office. She said they are also responsible for hunting licenses, homestead tax exemptions and supplying tax forms.

Mrs. Horn said she is from Nebraska, and moved here from Denver

when she and her husband Steve became house parents at the former Cookson Hills Children's Home in 1981. After two years, the couple moved to Cedar Bluffs. She said that is when she first ran for clerk.

The couple has three children, Douglas, who works at the Decatur County Feed Yard; Diana, who works for the state of Colorado; and Darren, who teaches in Colorado. They also have three grandkids.

Mrs. Horn, 62, a Republican, has no opposition this year.



M. Horn

Variety challenges new register of deeds

In the last four years, Judy Gaumer has learned the register of deeds' job and she'd like to be re-elected for another four-year term.

Mrs. Gaumer said as the register, she records any record that affects real estate in Decatur County, whether it be a deed, mortgage or oil or gas lease. All are recorded in her office, she said. She also deals with powers of attorney, death certificates, veterans' discharge papers and surveys.

The biggest challenge in the office, she said, has been learning to work with so many different documents that come in and knowing the details for how to handle all of them. It is a challenge to deal with the changes that come from the state also, she said.

Mrs. Gaumer said she is converting the records from microfilm to computer disk. She said she still has

to keep the documents on microfilm as a back up copy because state law says the office has to have an archival file. Compact disks haven't been certified as archival.

"I have enjoyed the job immensely," she said, "and would like to serve the people of Decatur County for another four years."

Mrs. Gaumer belongs to the state register of deeds association, is a member of the Lund Covenant Church and is active in the Democratic Party. She is a registered Democrat.

She grew up in Sheridan County and went to school in Hoxie, but has lived in Decatur County for more than 35 years.

She and her husband Jim have two children, Amy, who lives in Tecumseh, near Topeka, and Nathan, who lives in Cambridge, Neb. They have three grandkids.



Judy Gaumer

Vote Tuesday!

Polls open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. in Decatur County

