

Vote Tuesday

Republican wants promotion

By TISHA COX
Colby Free Press

Republican Ralph Ostmeier hopes to be promoted next week from the state House of Representatives to the Senate.

Ostmeier, 61, of Grinnell, filed earlier this year for re-election for his seat as representative for the 118th District, but changed his plans after Sen. Stan Clark, an Oakley Republican, was killed in a car accident in May.

Mr. Ostmeier said he never intended to run for Senate, but after Clark's death, with encouragement from family and friends, he decided to run for Clark's seat.

He is facing Monument Democrat Tim Petersen in the Nov. 2 general election.

Mr. Ostmeier said he wants to protect traditional family values and thinks of himself as a fiscal conservative.

Ostmeier, a fourth-generation farmer, and his wife Kay have seven children and 13 grandchildren. The couple farms with their son, Terry Ostmeier of Oakley. The candidate says he enjoys spending time with his grandchildren and working on antique cars. He is a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Grinnell.

He said education and health care are two of his main concerns, including school finance. Mr. Ostmeier said Judge Terry Bullock's decision ordering the state to increase spending by almost \$1 billion is now before the Supreme Court, but the Legislature will have to deal with this issue one way or another.

"We'll have to move on from there," he said. One of the main issues on school finance is getting enough money to the classroom, he said, and that is his priority, but he wouldn't support a property tax increase to fund education.

Mr. Ostmeier said property taxes are already high enough, and are starting to create a burden for small businesses. He suggested that the sales tax could be used to fund education instead.

Mr. Ostmeier also touched on the state's budget. He said the state was \$50 million to \$60 million positive this year, and the numbers are looking better.

He said the state is still feeling the effects of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The state has a tax structure in place, he said, but the economy still hasn't turned around yet.

Mr. Ostmeier said other issues he sees include a law on used car valuations for sales tax purposes that went into effect July 1, and the destination sales tax issue that

was put on hold until Jan. 1.

He said the way the car sales tax law works right now is a "bad idea." The law requires people to pay sales tax on a used car based on the book value instead of what they actually paid. It only applies if someone buys a car from a private seller or auction and not a dealership. People who buy junkers have found themselves paying tax on the price of a vehicle in much better shape.

The law was passed because tax officials thought people often understated what they paid in private transactions to keep taxes down.

"It's something we can fix easily," Mr. Ostmeier said. "Something has to be done."

He said the destination sales tax is "detrimental to small business," adding the state will have to see what the federal government is going to do before the state moves.

On the horizon, Mr. Ostmeier said, he sees several matters that could be important in northwest Kansas, including health care, an animal identification system for cattle, homeland security and economic development.

He said health care will probably continue to be an issue as counties must deal with insurance for their employees and medical lawsuits keep cropping up.

"I'm not sure where we need to start," Mr. Ostmeier said, adding that the health care savings accounts the Legislature approved are a start.

For farmers, he said, animal identification tags and emergency response plans for counties in case of disease are going to be an issue, and federal money is available for that and homeland security use.

He said economic development will take time, but efforts will benefit the entire state, including western and northwest Kansas. He emphasized taking care of the area and the people here, including getting people to come back.

Mr. Ostmeier said he is pro-business and thinks communities need good schools, hospitals and more in order to survive.

"The best economic development a community has is its own people," he added.

Mr. Ostmeier said he isn't in favor of more casinos in Kansas. He said there are too many problems associated with gambling, problems that far outstrip the financial benefit of having them in the state.

"I don't support gambling," he said, adding that he would instead favor tax increases over gambling.



R. Ostmeier

Democrat seeks Senate spot

By TOM BETZ
The Goodland Star-News

Democrat Tim M. Peterson of Monument is facing Republican Ralph Ostmeier of Grinnell for the 40th Senate District seat that became open after the death of Sen. Stan Clark in a dust storm last May.

Peterson, born and raised in Oakley, said he hadn't planned on running for the Senate, but that changed when Clark was killed earlier this summer.

Peterson, a Monument farmer, has served as the chair for the 1st District Democrats since 2001, and was treasurer from 1995-2001. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Boston in August.

While in Boston, Peterson said, he wanted to attend church.

"I got into town on Sunday, and I wanted to go to church," said Peterson. "I'm Lutheran, and I found a place called Faith Lutheran Church."

Faith Lutheran Church once was a Swedish Lutheran congregation, Peterson said, but he was greeted by a church filled with Lutheran immigrants from — Thailand. And that made the after-church potluck something to remember, he said.

"We had salmon, fish dishes, things that I don't know what they were, but they were good," he said. "And they were amazed that a delegate from Kansas was worshipping with them."

Peterson said his top priorities as a state senator will be school finance and balancing the budget.

"The state has not properly funded our schools," he said. "My children do not have up-to-date textbooks. My son could not bring his science textbook home because there were not enough to go around."

"Clearly, there are not enough funds available at the classroom level. My goal as state senator will be to find ways to get more money into the classroom. I will encourage the development of auditing tools that will allow taxpayers to closely examine school finances."

"The next Legislature should use the pending Kansas Supreme Court decision as an opportunity to completely revise school finance laws. There is no reason for budgetary deficiencies that allow plenty of funds for buildings and hardware, but force teachers to beg for supplies from parents."

Peterson said he isn't convinced that the state needs to raise taxes.

"As your state senator, I will work to solve our budget problems in three steps. First, I will make sure that

all administrative costs in our state government are similar to those of a well-run business or charity — 3 to 5 percent of total costs.

"Second, I will argue forcefully that our spending priorities change. We need to spend more for our schools and less in other areas of our government."

"Finally, if taxes must be raised, I will fight any increase in property or vehicle taxes. These taxes hurt our seniors who are on fixed incomes."

Peterson feels controlling health care costs and economic development are important.

"I will work for the Kansas family morally and physically," he said. "I believe that it is morally wrong to take money from cigarette, alcohol, and gambling syndicates. This is dirty

money. These companies prey on families. My opponent takes their money."

"Physically, I will support families by working to improve our health care, our schools, and our economic opportunities. We should not force families to choose between proper health care and food. We should not force families to gamble by going without some type of basic health insurance. I will work to help these families."

"I will work hard for economic development in Senate District 40. I will use every opportunity to promote northwest Kansas as a great place to live, retire, and do business. I will work to build networks between local entrepreneurs and venture capitalists."

"Finally, I want to make Kansas 'senior friendly,' and promote northwest Kansas as a retirement destination."

"We have many blessings that make this area a great place to retire: good health care, good transportation, low crime, low cost homes, clean air and solid community volunteers. We need to count our blessings and use what God has given us."

Peterson and his wife Rebekah have two children, ages 12 and 10. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kansas with a major in geography and quantitative methods (statistics). Two years ago, he became nationally registered as an emergency medical technician and is a volunteer with the Logan County.

He is the past chairman of the U.S. Farm Service Agency state committee and now is vice-chair of the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Board. He was appointed to the board by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and confirmed by the Kansas Senate in January.

Peterson serves as one of the northwest Kansas representatives on the Rural Life Task Force appointed by Gov. Sebelius.



Tim Peterson

Incumbent wants his seat

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

As a former member of the Breswter School Board, Rep. John Faber says school finance is one of his top priorities.

Rep. Faber, who has served for the last eight years, said he isn't sure there is a good answer to the school finance problem. He said he believes the state should step in and eliminate local sales taxes going to school districts. For instance, every time someone buys something in Johnson County, part of the tax goes to that district.

There was a bill passed in the Senate last year, said Rep. Faber, that would have meant over \$200 a student more for education, but the House couldn't get it passed. Most of the packages that would provide increased school money also would raise taxes, he said.

Rep. Faber said he has never agreed with the local option budget, which allows a district to raise the property tax to bring in more money. From the beginning, he said, he's felt the state should pay for schools. When Johnson County can get millions of dollars with just one mill, Decatur County can only raise \$20,000 with one mill. That isn't a good economical situation.

The school finance lawsuit, he said, scares him because the Supreme Court could cut the low-enrollment weighting which helps schools in this area.

He said he thinks the state's revenue situation is going to be different in the next two years, and that may help us catch up on school money and other programs.

Another important area is rural economic development. He said there is \$2 million a year available for

economic development. The money comes out of a bill for research units to be put around colleges and universities. Some of that money has been put aside to be used in this region.

Rep. Faber said Kansas needs to keep taxes in line with other states in the area. Kansas taxes are higher, he said, but the state has better roads and better schools.

Roads are a part of the economic development picture, too, he said. The highways need to be maintained to keep businesses coming here and people, too.

Rep. Faber serves on the Joint Committee for Information Technology and the Joint Committee for Economic Development. During the legislative session, he served as vice chair of transportation, which deals with all state roads, driver's licenses and truck regulations, and on the environment, agriculture and taxation committees.

Rep. Faber won the Republican primary over Doug Sebelius of Norton, 3,404 votes to 2,375. He will meet Democrat Bob Strevey in the general election.

Two years ago, the race featured the same line-up for the 120th District House seat. Rep. Faber said he feels good about the campaign and the election. He said he thinks it will go pretty much like it did last time.

He said he has been out to Phillips, Norton, and Rawlins counties and will be here and in Cheyenne County before the election.

Rep. Faber is a fifth-generation farmer in southwest Rawlins County.

The district includes Decatur, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Norton and Phillips counties.



John Faber

Newcomer anxious to serve

By VERONICA MONIER
The Norton Telegram

House of Representatives candidate Bob Strevey thinks that he can make a difference for western Kansas.

Mr. Strevey, who is running in the 120th District, said he would like to be able to take part in decisions for the good of western Kansas, including school finance, economic development and whether to make U.S. 36 a four-lane highway.

"I want to be in a position to try and help with these things," he said.

Over the course of his campaign, Mr. Strevey said, he's seen some positive response to his ideas. The district covers a large area, he said, and people are concerned with different things. But, he said, everyone is worried about schools and the weakness in the agricultural economy. These are things he wants to do something about.

A major issue he would focus on is school finance, which represents close to half of the state's budget. He said it needs to remain "front and center" in the minds of the legislature.

"This should be our first concern," he said.

Mr. Strevey said he hopes the Kansas Supreme Court will realize that it's the legislature's duty to raise money and decide how and where it's spent, not the courts'.

He said a lot depends on the economy. If it improves, then the state has some breathing room, and if it doesn't, then belts will have to be tightened again.

The development of U.S. 36 is one thing that could help the economy in western Kansas. Another way, he said, is to develop wind energy.

He thinks that there is a lot of opportunity in the wind energy area and that the state should nudge it along.

Mr. Strevey said another issue is animal identification to control possible diseases. He said he didn't think the state should do animal identification until it's known what is happening at the federal level.

"I don't think the farmers should have to pay for something like this twice," he said.

Retired after teaching for 31 years, Mr. Strevey lives outside of Norcatour on the family farm with his wife Kay. They have three grown daughters, Trudi, Wendy and Hollie.

In addition to campaigning, he volunteers at the Norton Correctional Facility and farms. He is a board member of the U.S. 36 Highway Association and is president of the Norcatour Citizens Alliance. He served in the Army and Army Reserves, retiring in 1992 as a lieutenant colonel.

This isn't Mr. Strevey's first run for the House. Two years ago, he was defeated by 178 votes, losing to incumbent John Faber 1,122 to 944.

No matter the outcome, Mr. Strevey encourages everyone to vote.

"However it turns out, it is important for people to participate and let others know what they want," he said.

Mr. Strevey will face Mr. Faber again on Tuesday, Nov. 2.



Bob Strevey

Sheriff has 20 years' experience

With 20 years of public service under his belt, Ken Badsky is in a sixth four-year term as Decatur County sheriff.

Sheriff Badsky, a Republican, said he became interested in law enforcement while he was attending Garden City Junior College. He said his football coach was the law enforcement instructor, so he got a chance to see what the field was about.

After getting his degree, he returned to Decatur County and built terraces for a while, then served for three years on the Oberlin Police Department before running for his first term as sheriff. At the time, he was the youngest sheriff in Kansas.

He said there is a lot more to being a sheriff than just carrying a badge and gun. There are a lot of administrative details, public relations and just common sense things.

Sheriff Badsky said since first being elected, he has worked on getting the department up to date with technology and people who have the ability to do the job.

He said he is holding a spot for Undersheriff Randy McHugh, who was called up for service in Iraq. There is one full-time deputy, he said, plus he has some part-

time people.

The job is around the clock, seven days a week, he said; it doesn't end at 5 p.m. or on the weekends.

Over the last 20 years, he said, he has tried to do the job to the best of his ability with the equipment he has. He said he has stayed current on computers, which has helped run things through dispatch and work with communications.

The office has a lot of assets, said Sheriff Badsky, and it is ahead of a lot of other offices in the area. For example, the office has an emergency trailer full of equipment which an officer can take to a disaster scene. He said he doesn't want anything to happen, but the county has the equipment just in case.

It is important for the office to look for and get grants, he said. The county can't just depend on the budget and local tax money to get the equipment it needs.

Sheriff Badsky said he would appreciate everyone's support, and hopes that everyone will remember to vote on Tuesday.

Although Sheriff Badsky had been running unopposed, Derrick Bolliger, also a Republican, is running a write-in campaign.



Ken Badsky

Man asked to run as write-in

Derrick Bolliger says several people asked him to run for sheriff, so he decided to run a write-in campaign in the general election Tuesday.

Mr. Bolliger, a Republican and a former city police officer here, said people told him they wanted a change. He ran four years ago against Sheriff Badsky and lost. Before that election Mr. Bolliger was serving as a reserve deputy for the department, but he lost that job.

Interested in law enforcement, he said, he moved to Colorado in 1988 to go through training at the police academy, and then got a job in Silt. Mr. Bolliger returned to Oberlin to work for the police department for two years, and then worked as a reserve deputy.

In all, he said, he has 10 years of full or part-time experience in law enforcement under his belt.

He said he could be certified, although he would have to take a test in firearms instruction again. He said he also would have to see if some of his paperwork is current.

If elected, he said, he would be just like another road deputy. The county is small enough, said Mr. Bolliger, that the sheriff needs to be out on the road just like oth-

ers. He promised not to use the sheriff's vehicle for personal use.

Mr. Bolliger said he would like to go with a three-man road department and possibly two inside deputies upstairs. Although a four-to-five-man department would work great, the county might not be able to afford it. He said he would have to check into it, but he would like to have a big enough crew that people can take vacation, go to school and be out for sick time if needed.

He said he wasn't sure what the sheriff's budget is or what it has been for the last few years because he hasn't looked into it. Mr. Bolliger said he would definitely look into grants for equipment.

There are drug problems in the county, he said, and he would like to work on that, although he isn't sure how much of the budget could be used for drug investigations.

Currently, Mr. Bolliger owns his own business, Derrick's Trucking. He also is a state-licensed grain inspector and works for Kansas Grain Inspection as a contract prober. He is originally from Norcatour and moved back here in 1990 after living in Colorado.



D. Bolliger