

Election

Man wants to contribute

With a desire to contribute to the community where he grew up, Lee "Doc" Franklin said, he decided to run for county commissioner in District 3.

He said a wide range of citizens and neighbors from the county asked him to run for office, so he decided to file on the Democratic ticket. He will meet the Republican candidate, Gene Gallentine, during the general election on Tuesday.

Thanks to God and Benjamin Franklin (whom Mr. Franklin said is a distant uncle or cousin about eight generations back), the candidate said, he enjoys public service work. The community and economic development are his passions and first love, Mr. Franklin said, and he'd be comfortable representing people in the courthouse, in Topeka or in the White House.

Mr. Franklin said his background offers a view of a western community from both inside and outside, and the advantages the county has to offer new businesses and families.

He said he was born and raised in Decatur County, graduating from Decatur Community High School in 1963. He attended college in Wichita and then received his master's degree while flying for the Air Force.

Mr. Franklin said he has worked for companies in and lived in Minneapolis, New York and Boulder.

Since returning to the county four years ago, Mr. Franklin has taken

part in Decatur Tomorrow and the Kansas Communities Conference, which included representatives from 15 or more counties around the state. It's one of the most successful stories of what works in community development, he said.

The plan included involving people from different walks of life and all parts of the "public square" in planning, he said. He added that he thinks television has invaded our homes and lives and distracted people from the energy they use to put into the community.

He said people should call Topeka and let their elected officials know about their latest blunder, the new state law requiring carnivals to carry more insurance, have their rides inspected and have all workers trained and certified. The decision is the overbearing big brother of bureaucracy run wild, he said, and it's a killer for the home-owned carnivals out there.

Fortunately, he said, Rep. John Faber and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer are working to get locally owned carnivals either an exemption or an outright reversal of the law.

Wind energy, he said, will possibly bring the largest development for the county and all of northwest Kansas. It will tune up the economy and take some strain off of the school and hospital budgets.

Wind will offer every taxpayer relief by greatly reducing and possi-

bly eliminating property taxes. The 18 counties of northwest Kansas are organizing to negotiate with wind companies from a position of strength and uniform policies, he said.

It's important to follow through with organizing the 18 counties into one strong block and make available assistance with contract negotiations and understanding most advantageous terms and qualities, he said.

With the new senior center, movie theater and bowling alley project, said Mr. Franklin, the community has really spoken out about what they want. The young, middle aged and seniors alike spoke up on the project to accomplish what they needed and wanted to help improve the community and make it attractive to new businesses and families.

If citizens want someone who will listen to them and find out their needs and requirements, said Mr. Franklin, they should vote for him. He will go to work to find that out and secure them for the people.

Over the next 10 years, he said, we will see the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth through estate settlements in history. People want to know that their contributions will make a positive difference permanently. In the next few years, said Mr. Franklin, the opportunity will be there to pay off bonds early, for example, the ones for the new community center. He said he will be willing to help make the case for that and get the county's major projects on a cash basis.



Lee Franklin



G. Gallentine

Farmer knows financials

Saying he has "a good feel" for what people's tax dollars should be used for, Gene Gallentine is seeking the Decatur County commissioner seat in District 3 in the general election.

Mrs. Gallentine, a Republican, will meet Lee "Doc" Franklin, a Democrat, in the general election. They seat is being vacated by longtime Commissioner Doyle Brown of Jennings.

Mr. Gallentine said he's run a farming operation for the past 32 years in Decatur and Norton counties. He has done business in Decatur County for many years, he said, and understands the economic factors of the county.

"Being a lifelong resident of Decatur County," said Mr. Gallentine, "I don't know any other place I would rather live in the heartland of America."

He said he looks forward to working with the other leaders in county government.

Mr. Gallentine said he graduated from Colby Community College with an associate's degree in farm and ranch management. Over the years, he said, he's served on the Decatur County Hospital Board for 14 years, the Garfield Township board for 20, the Decatur County Health Foundation for 12, the Oberlin Municipal Airport Advisory Committee for four and on some bank boards.

"Experience is the best teacher,"

said Mr. Gallentine, "Now having that, I feel a good commissioner must always have an open mind to learn, as different situations come up for decision making. One of the most important learning experiences for me will be to listen to the people and consider their needs and concerns."

If elected, he said, he would stay tuned into what's happening in the state Legislature, especially on matters concerning county government.

Mr. Gallentine said he's contacted both Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber about the new carnival law, which could close down the home-owned carnival here. The law means an increase in the liability insurance fees, which he said is high now and difficult to get. It could also make it almost impossible to get volunteers to operate the rides because of training requirements, he said.

Both of the elected legislators, said Mr. Gallentine, told him they are trying to get the home-owned carnivals exempted from that new law — or just have it repealed.

As a commissioner, he said, the group needs to look into what wind energy may provide and what economic impact that will have on the county.

"I am a proponent for wind energy," he said. "It is an alternative source of energy that must be con-

sidered, with all the possibilities of economic impact it could have for the citizens of the county and the communities that are in the county."

The new senior center, bowling alley and theater is important for the county, he said. It will provide a much-needed service to all citizens and will have an impact for the economic and social future of the county.

With the global financial crisis, he said, which it looks like we will all inherit, no one knows what the impact will be here.

"It will affect Main Street America," he said. "Decatur County is not immune to this, which is why it's important for people to exercise their right to vote and do it with the utmost consideration."

"What influence this will have on Decatur County, we can't tell yet. Will tax evaluations change? Will the county revenue stream be affected? These are just some of the unknowns that will have to be dealt with. If it does, this will affect all of us. These are all reasons we have to elect the best people to 'watch the store.' I will do my best to do just that."

Mr. Gallentine and his wife Kristi have two children, Jason, 24, and Kelsey, 21.

His grandfather served as a Decatur County commissioner for at least one term, he said.

Accuracy her speciality

With a desire to keep accurate records and the know how to do the job, Kari Ketterl is seeking election as Decatur County register of deeds spot.

Mrs. Ketterl, a Republican, will meet Democrat Shanna Long in the general election Tuesday. One of them will replace Democrat Judy Gaumer, who is retiring.

Mrs. Ketterl said she believes that it's important to keep good, accurate records. Those records, about everything from land transactions to oil leases, hold information on the county that will last years. If you don't have good, accurate records, she said,

then how will people know who's who and what's what?

She said she's been working with records for years, keeping the documents for the family farm. She's worked with deeds because of the farm, she said, and is a quick learner.

For things she will need to learn, said Mrs. Ketterl, she has talked with the current register, who said she would help train her replacement.

Mrs. Ketterl said she decided to run for the job because she thought it would be a good one. She said she's always been interested in genealogy, something the office's

records hold a lot of information on, and she believes she could be good at the job.

She has lived in Decatur County, on a farm three miles west of Traer, for the past 30 years, since she married her husband Vernon. Originally, she's from Morland.

Mrs. Ketterl said she works on the farm with her husband and helps operate the family's dairy. She did spend one year working at Ward Drug Store.

The Ketterls have three sons, Spencer, who is engaged to Krickit Steinmetz; Jason and his wife Megan; and Todd and his wife Sandy. They have five grandchildren and one on the way. All of the kids live in Decatur County.



Kari Ketterl



Shanna Long

Teamwork is her strength

Saying teamwork is one of her strengths, Shanna Long is seeking the office of register of deeds for Decatur County in the general election Tuesday.

Mrs. Long, a Democrat, is running against Kari Ketterl, a Republican, for the office.

The office, said Mrs. Long, is basically where everything gets its start in the county. Information on land sales, mortgages, mineral-rights transactions and dozens of other things has to be recorded in that office before it goes anywhere. It's important for that information to be filed accurately, she said. Ac-

curacy, said Mrs. Long, is one of her strong points, as she is a very detail-orientated person.

Currently, Mrs. Long is administrative assistant at United Agri Products north of town, where she has worked for the past 10 years.

She said she decided to run for register of deeds because it sounded like a fun job, and it's something new and fresh. Just the history that's held in that office, said Mrs. Long, is fascinating.

Mrs. Long said she has good people skills and knows quite a few of the people here and where they live. She's worked in the

grain business, at a feed lot and a chemical fertilizer plant, has a wide knowledge of computers and uses logical thinking.

She said there's training set up with the state in January for the new registers to learn the skills they will need.

Mrs. Long and her husband Brad, an area farmer, have a daughter, Miranda, 9. Mrs. Long is originally from Decatur County and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1979.

The register's job, she said, is all about maintaining and keeping public records and assuring their accuracy. It's for the people, said Mrs. Long. That's the root of the job, and she likes people.

Incumbent wants to return

With 12 years of service under his belt, Rep. John Faber is seeking to represent the 120th District in the state House of Representatives for a seventh term.

Mr. Faber, a Republican, will meet Bob Strevey, a Democrat, in the general election on Tuesday. This is the fifth time the men have run against each other. The district includes Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties.

Mr. Faber said he was born and raised in Rawlins County, where he still lives and farms. He said he thinks he's been successful over the years as a representative and wants to continue that job.

He said he's fighting a new state law would mean carnivals would need to carry more insurance, have their rides inspected each year and all of the workers would have to be trained and certified. It could close down volunteer-run home-owned

carnivals like the one in Oberlin.

On Sunday, he said, he was part of a meeting in Oakley about the law and about a new bill which will exempt home-owned carnivals. Mr. Faber said he will be a co-signer on the bill, though since he's in a race, he can't ask for a bill now.

The proposed bill will exempt home-owned carnivals from the law passed last year, he said, although they would still have some of kind of inspection. One person in each community, a local person, he said, could be trained and certified to inspect the rides.

Mr. Faber said he's always supported development wind energy and will continue to do so. There are already transmission lines coming into this area, he said. On the state level, he said, he's been in favor of exempting those from property

taxes. Of course, the federal government has also given wind energy a break. Wind energy, said Mr. Faber, is actually expensive power, but with the tax breaks it's workable.

The state budget, said Mr. Faber, will be really tight this year, probably the tightest since he's been in office. Even with concerns about the economy, he said, he is fairly optimistic that we can solve most of the state's problems.

Another project coming up, said Mr. Faber, is a new state transportation plan. If we can pay as we go on that, he said, it should come out OK.

Mr. Faber serves as the chairman of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, which deals with farming, wildlife, parks and water issues. Other committees he serves on include the Rules and Regulations, Education and Budget. He and his wife Renee have three boys, two of whom live in Colby and one who attends Washburn University in Topeka. They have six grandchildren.



John Faber



Bob Strevey

Retired teacher runs again

A retired teacher is making one more run for the 120th District seat in the state House of Representatives.

Bob Strevey, a Norcat Democrat, is running for the fifth time against incumbent John Faber, a Brewster Republican. The 120th district includes Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties. Mr. Strevey said he believes people should have a choice come election time, even though Mr. Faber is a veteran legislator. That means there has to be two candidates.

Mr. Strevey worked as a teacher for 31 years before retiring. He and his wife Kay live on the family farm south of Norcat. They have three grown daughters, Trudi, Wendy and Hollie, and six grandchildren.

He serves on the boards of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., the Norcat United Methodist Church, the U.S. 36 Highway Association, the Norcat Citizens Alliance and the Hunger Task Force for the Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Mr. Strevey said he and Mr. Faber have had a chance to talk about the new state law which would force home-owned carnivals to carry more insurance, have their rides inspected and all of the workers trained and certified.

The law slipped in through the process at the end of the session, said Mr. Strevey, but it could spell the end of home-owned carnivals throughout the state. That resonates a lot in this district, he said, because there are several home-owned carnivals, although they are not common throughout

the state.

He said he knows that Mr. Faber and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer are working to pre-file a bill so it can be brought up at the beginning of the session, to change the law back to how it was. This is a pretty steep hurdle to overcome, said Mr. Strevey.

He added that he knows his opponent voted against the bill, but surely he realized what a disaster it would be in this part of the state. He should have raised the roof, said Mr. Strevey.

There are finally some government subsidies to help with wind development, he said. It's surprising to hear about so many foreign countries developing wind energy and manufacturing the parts.

For wind energy to be fully developed, said Mr. Strevey, we need more transmission lines, especially to move that power into Colorado. This is where government can help out, he said, giving tax breaks and other incentives to develop those lines.

For so long, he said, those in power have borrowed money and cut the taxes to keep spending down. That plan is finally reaching a point where it is falling apart, he said. What would we do if the gov-

ernment could no longer borrow money? The government needs to get back to the pay as you go, which will be tough, especially in a falling economy.

The opportunity to pay down debt has been there in the past, said Mr. Strevey, but instead of current officials taking that opportunity, they have borrowed more and cut taxes.

That philosophy just isn't going to work any longer, said Mr. Strevey. Hopefully, people realize that it's time for a change.

Another thing to look at, he said, is that the courts have forced the government to spend a significant amount of money on education. The courts moved into a legislative role and have put the legislators into a bad spot, he said, because it will be hard to pay that with falling revenue.

The lawmakers need the freedom to make laws and decide the budget without the judicial branch stepping in.

"People should vote for me if they want to change what's happening in Topeka," said Mr. Strevey. "John has been part of the Republican leadership and has worked hard, but also has been part of the leadership that has brought us into these terrible times. If voters want to change that, they need to change who they send to Topeka."

Commissioner wants to continue

After 36 years of public service as a Decatur County commissioner, Ralph D. Unger is seeking another four years in the general election on Tuesday.

Mr. Unger, Republican, is running unopposed for the District 2 seat covering the west part of Oberlin and the northwest part of the county. He was first elected in 1972, taking office at the beginning of 1973.

"Service like this just gets in your blood," said Mr. Unger. "It seems

there's always some kind of project going that you want to see come to fruition."

Over the years, Mr. Unger has served on several boards and committees in the county and represented the county on the state level. He said he served as president for the Kansas Association of Counties and on the state Emergency Medical Services board.

Basically as a commissioner, said Mr. Unger, his job is trying to keep the interests of the entire county in his thoughts

when making decisions. Part of the process can be protecting the county's interests on the state and federal level.

Mr. Unger was born in rural Decatur County and still lives on the family farm. He attended Kansas State University and received a bachelor's degree in education and political science.

He and his wife Norma have three children, Colleen Rittmann of Shawnee, Dr. Ryan Unger of St. Francis and Oberlin, and Dr. Rachele Gorrell of Bland, Mo. The Ungers have four grandchildren and four step-grandchildren.



Ralph Unger

NOTICE OF VOTING MACHINE DEMONSTRATION FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

DECATUR COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE WILL BE HAVING THE AUTOMARK VOTING MACHINE AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC INSPECTION in conjunction with the 08 General Election on the Second Floor of the Courthouse at 4 p.m. on the 30th of October, 2008.