

## Candidates talk about the issues

This week's *Oberlin Herald* features extensive coverage of candidates and issues for the Decatur County primary election coming up Tuesday, Aug. 7, much of it compiled by reporter Stephanie DeCamp.

Stories on a candidate forum Sunday at The Gateway and on unopposed candidates start below on Page 1A, along with an item on candidate Brad Long buying a house in Oberlin. Below at right is a story

on candidates for the state Legislature, who appeared at a forum in Goodland.

On Page 6A, you'll find interviews with candidates for county commissioner and magistrate judge. On Page 7A, DeCamp reports on answers given by candidates at the forum here Sunday. Election coverage will continue in the next two issues, with the Aug. 8 paper to be printed late so complete results can be included that week.

## Candidates offer answers

**By STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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Candidates for Decatur County commissioner and magistrate judge sat at a table at the front of the theater screen Sunday as Judy Scott, a member of the Decatur Professional Women, asked questions concerning their candidacy.

About 25 people attended the event in anticipation of the imminent Republican primaries.

Candidates were called up in the three groups that represented the three positions in question: magistrate judge of the 17th Judicial District, county commissioner for District 2 and commissioner for District 3.

The Professional Women orga-

nized the forum so that residents could attend and not only listen to candidate's answers, but ask questions of their own. Two candidates, however, were unable to make the event due to previous family commitments: current District 2 Commissioner Ralph Unger and Brad Marcuson, candidate for District 3.

Brad Long of Norcat, the only Democratic candidate for District 3, was not there either. Since he is unopposed in the Democratic primary, his name will appear on the fall general election ballot regardless.

Mr. Marcuson and Mr. Unger sent in their answers to the prepared questions and had them read during (See CANDIDATES on Page 5A)

## County jobs safe for five officials

**By STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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While there is a lot of candidates running for the county commission this year, there are still five county positions in which the incumbents are running unopposed, which basically means they have their jobs for another term.

Treasurer Jean Ann Hale, County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, Registrar of Deeds Kari Ketterl, Sheriff Ken Badsy and County Attorney Steve Hirsch all will appear unopposed on the Republican ballot for re-election. So far no Democrats filed for those offices, so they most likely will be unopposed in the fall,

as well. So what, exactly, do these people do for us every day, and why does no one feel the need to run against them this year?

### The Treasurer

Jean Ann Hale was appointed as county treasurer in 2001, when the old treasurer retired, and had to run against another candidate in her first election. She had been the deputy treasurer since 1989.

Mrs. Hale said that when she started, every note and file was taken by hand. On top of receiving and making payments for the county coffers, she also handles license (See SOME on Page 5A)

## Candidate to keep home in commission District 3

**By STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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Though he recently purchased a home in the City of Oberlin, Brad Long, a Republican, says he will stay in the race for county commissioner, in District 3.

Though there has been some speculation that he would be unable to remain in the race Mr. Long said

that he will keep his residence in rural Norcat and his new home in Oberlin, living part of the time in both locations.

Anyone running for county commissioner must be a resident of the county and the district they wish to represent, said Colleen Geihlsler, the Decatur County clerk and election (See MOVE on Page 5A)

## County fair section is part of today's paper

Inside today's *Oberlin Herald* is the annual Fair Days section featuring the upcoming Decatur County Fair and home-owned carnival.

The special edition includes a little history about the carnival, ideas for things to do during the county fair and a complete schedule of activities.



**FIREFIGHTERS USED HOSES** (above) and shovels (below) to prevent another wildfire from getting away Monday, as the flames headed for an island of timber west of the Lyle community. Volunteers from all three Decatur County fire departments and from Norton came

out, dousing the flames on foot and from their rigs (below right). In the timber, the fire burned logs and dead trees, grass and trash and even an old fenced (bottom photo).

— Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp

## Firefighters put out blaze in Lyle area

Decatur County firefighters spent the afternoon and evening controlling, then mopping up after a fire which broke out about 1:40 p.m. Monday west of Lyle.

The Norcat Fire Department got the first call to the blaze, which was reported about two miles west of the Lyle United Methodist Church near the former Terry Rippe place. Firemen responded with two rigs.

Soon, firemen could see the size of the fire and asked for help. They reported "lots of smoke." Jennings volunteers were paged out at 1:48 p.m.

At 1:53, as firemen were arriving at the blaze, they asked for the Oberlin Rural Fire Department to be called out as well. Just after 2 p.m., the county road and bridge department asked if it could help. The response was yes, along with a plea for tractors and disks or blades to plow fire breaks.

At 1:24, a call came for more help as the flames spread through grass and timber along Sappa Creek.

"I think you'd better roll Norton, too," one fireman said.

The Norton Fire Department sent two rigs right away and later sent another.

By 2:20 p.m., however, crews reported the west side of the blaze under control and asked that trucks

coming in go to the east side, near the point of origin.

One witness said the fire may to have started near a car.

A farmer on a tractor with a blade showed up at 2:33 p.m., and firemen put it to work.

Oberlin did not return to the station until nearly 10 p.m. as volunteers spent the evening putting out hot spots in the timber. Flames burned downed trees, grass and old wooden fences. While the fire came near to at least one house, there was no report of any buildings involved.

Another blaze was reported earlier, about 9:30 a.m., north of Lyle. It was under control a little more than an hour later.



## State candidates appear in Goodland

**By KEVIN BOTTRELL**  
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All four Republican candidates for the state Senate and House of Representatives faced off against each other last Tuesday at a candidate forum in Goodland.

The forum included both Senate candidates for the 40th District, John Miller and Ralph Ostmeier, and both candidates for the 121st District House seat, Rick Billinger and Ward Cassidy. The event, organized by the Sherman County Republican Committee, also included candidates for sheriff and county commissioner. About 50 people attended.

Jeanie Shields, Republican county chair,

allowed each candidate to give a three-minute introduction, then asked each set of candidates one or two questions, allowing a 1-minute response each.

Mr. Miller, a Norton County commissioner for 16 years, was the first Senate candidate to speak.

The Legislature needs to change, he said. People are paying too much in property taxes, while a lot of blame was handed out and money was spent on the failed redistricting process.

Mr. Miller said he would rather communicate than blame. He said that because the various Norton County agencies have communicated well, the county has been steadily improving.

"We are going to have to make some sacrifices in the Legislature," he added.

Sen. Ostmeier spoke next. He has served two terms in the Senate, and before that, two in the House. Before that, he said, he was a school board member, a county commissioner and an official for high school sports.

Sen. Ostmeier said he chaired the Senate Natural Resources Committee during this year's session, a committee which had some prominence (See SEVERAL on Page 5A)

