

Four county officials run unopposed

Written by Chris Lee

Three of the four unopposed Republican candidates on the 2010 Phillips County ballot are incumbents. The fourth, Joe Kinnie, is seeking the County Commissioner District One seat currently held by Susan Roll Walters, who chose not to seek re-election.

The other three candidates include Beth Cumming for Clerk and Recorder, Doug Kamery for Assessor and Rob Urbach for Sheriff.

Because each candidate is running unopposed, they only need one vote to earn an elected four-year term. Assuming each will vote for themselves, each should be in office until the next election in 2014.

Even though the four positions are vastly different, a common item each expressed was the concern for what Amendments 60, 61 and Proposition 101 will do to Phillips County if they pass.

Kinnie believes people in Holyoke and surrounding areas are well educated on the initiatives but is worried what voters on the front range will do.

Following is a brief profile on each candidate:

Rob Urbach



When running for his second term in 2006, Urbach stated he was interested in adding another officer to his force. Two years ago, that wish became final when Michael Grant was added as part of a courtroom security grant.

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The department currently is made up of Urbach, undersheriff Thom Elliott, deputies Barry Winckler and Grant and the department's search dog Ace. Shawna Bergstrom serves as the administrative assistant.

Ace was added to the force in March and has been through an abundance of training. Urbach, who has a background in dog handling and training, has worked with deputy Grant who serves as Ace's handler.

Although Ace has extensive training, he isn't certified yet and hopes are to get him certified soon. "He (Ace) will be a great tool for us," Urbach said.

Urbach is proud with how the last four years have gone and is looking forward to the next four. "I love this community," the sheriff said. "I really like working with the people and for the people of Phillips County. I can't see myself doing this any place else."

The department has also updated the security standard at the courthouse by implementing the magnetometer and video cameras in the courtroom. Additional video surveillance is scheduled for the future as well.

Something Urbach is excited about is the implementation of an ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) unit in the area. He said more information on the program will come in the very near future.

"I've always stressed working with the kids, educating the kids and trying to keep them out of trouble," Urbach said. "I'd much rather educate than incarcerate."

The sheriff was elected in 2002 to his current position and has 26 years of law enforcement experience. He stresses he has, and always will have, an open door policy to the public.

Urbach serves on the Eastern Colorado Plains Drug Task Force as the board president, is the

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president of the E911 Board, president of the P.C. Comm Board, board member of ICAC and also sits on the board for F&H golf course.

Urbach has a son Christopher whose mother died in 2006 from cancer. Urbach is remarried to wife Chris.

“I really appreciate the support the community has given me the last eight years,” Urbach said.

Beth Cumming



Cumming is seeking her third term as County Clerk.

“I enjoy working with the public,” Cumming said. “I look forward to continue serving the public to the best of my ability.”

A native of Sedgwick County, Cumming moved to Holyoke in 2000 and was elected to Clerk in 2002. She served as the deputy clerk in Sedgwick County from 1993-2000.

Something the office has done to better serve the western part of the county is implement a drop-off place for mail-in ballots in Haxtun, according to Cumming.

Some of Cumming’s duties include working in the motor vehicle department, CDL licensing,

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marriage licenses, recording, accounts payable and elections.

The clerk's office staff includes Val Danielson, Sheila Gift and Diane Rahe, and Cumming said they really help the office run smoothly.

Cumming enjoys spending time with sons Brett, 16 and Bradley, 13 in her free time.

Doug Kamery



Kamery was elected in 2002 and is seeking his third term as Phillips County Assessor.

Kamery noted the office has implemented a website where people can visit to see their property values as well as others. He also said 2011 will be another re-evaluation year, one he said will be tough as Phillips County isn't following the trend in housing like the front range. The county doesn't have near the number of foreclosures, and sales are holding steady and not decreasing.

Kamery said gas production has decreased, lowering county value by a substantial amount. Wells are being drilled, according to Kamery, and he hopes to see that increase.

The assessor hopes to continue his job fairly and equitably for the next four years. He said the office wouldn't function without the help of Toby Thompson and Judy Beavers, and they will continue to encourage the open-door policy.

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Kamery is past president of the Colorado Assessors Association, past chairman of the Manufactured Home Task force and current co-chair of Phillips County Relay for Life. Kamery also serves as president of the congregation at Haxtun Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Kamery and his wife Pat live in Haxtun and co-own PAK Enterprises. The couple has two daughters. Jennifer, 26 and husband Nathan Businger live in Sterling. Miranda, 23 lives in Ft. Morgan.

Joe Kinnie



Kinnie announced his intent to seek candidacy for County Commissioner at the county's Republican assembly in March.

He moved to Holyoke in 2006 after marrying wife Ruth. He is a third-generation farmer with operations in Phillips and Sedgwick counties.

Kinnie said he is pleased with how things are going within the county currently and hopes to help be a part of continuing it.

Kinnie began farming in northeast Colorado in 1972 after being employed for three years with Sandia Corporation, a prime contractor of the Atomic Energy Commission. He took over the family farm after his father began a quest into the political arena. His father, Kenneth, was a two-term state senator.

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He has been involved in various community projects. He has served as a member of the board of the Marks Butte Groundwater Management Dist. since its inception and was on the committee that introduced the county-wide television translator system which brought rural television to N.E. Colorado farm families.

Kinnie served on the board of the Colorado Conservation Tillage Association for six years, with two of those as president. He currently serves on the rural fire board in Sedgwick County.

He is a member of First Baptist Church of Holyoke. Additionally he is a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association and helped form the Northeastern Rifle and Pistol Club.

He served with the Sedgwick County Republican party as precinct committeeman while he lived there.

Kinnie's family was instrumental in helping to bring Seaboard Foods into Sedgwick County by selling tracts of land owned by the family farm so Seaboard could build their hog confinements. Four of the 11 hog sites were built on property previously owned by the Kinnies.