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Oldham political candidates talk growth during Brownsboro forum

By Andrea Uhde • auhde@courier-journal.com • April 21, 2010

Roads, taxes, schools and budgets were on the priority lists of Oldham County candidates at a forum in Brownsboro Wednesday.

For two hours, candidates for three Fiscal Court districts in the Brownsboro area — Districts 2, 7 and 8 — along with hopefuls for judge-executive, county clerk, attorney and property valuation administrator, discussed their ideas for the county.

The Brownsboro Conservation Council organized the forum, which drew more than 100 people.

Brownsboro is the first of eight areas in the county to finish a master plan that will help guide growth in the area.

Candidates were asked a number of questions, including what they see as the most important issues facing Oldham in the next 20 years.

“Let’s expand in ways to not denigrate what we have here,” said Magistrate David Voegele, a Republican running for judge-executive.

He said the county needs to pay down the debt, which he said is \$18 million.

Voegele’s competition, Republican Deputy Judge-Executive Paula Gish, said it’s important to bring in more businesses like the Rawlings Group in Oldham Reserve.

“More companies like Rawlings will help us to not raise the tax base for homeowners,” she said.

County Clerk candidate and Republican Julie Barr said she sees traffic in La Grange and the growth of the business base as big issues in the county. Gena Harrison, her Republican competition, agreed and said she tries to support Oldham businesses whenever she can.

Property Valuation Administrator Ron Winters said Oldham still has rural roads that can’t shoulder more traffic and needs more roads and wider roads. His competition, Albert Harrison, said the county needs more sewers, more water, safer roads and broadband countywide.

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County attorney hopeful Galen Clark, a Republican, said roads and schools are a focus as the county grows, and he worries about drug abuse in schools. Incumbent John Fendley, also a Republican, said he believes in keeping government small, and that the county made industry “a dirty word, and now taxpayers are paying.”

Stuart Ulferts, the only Democrat running for county attorney, said schools, roads and infrastructure deserve attention, and the government has a duty to provide them.

Michael Logsdon, a Republican running for District 8, said roads, taxes and Oldham Reserve are issues to focus on as Oldham grows and the county should work to bring in more businesses to help with the tax base. Incumbent Bob Deibel of District 8 said the roads are the biggest issue in the next 20 years, and he’s worked with the legislature for decades on improvements.

Bob Dye, a Republican running for District 7, said the county is behind in improving its roads, and more businesses will help pay for improvements. District 7 incumbent Rick Rash, a Republican, said he’s afraid of shrinking revenue and the cost of government, but said the county has made a number of changes to decrease spending.

Sheri Betz, the only Democrat running for the District 7 seat, was not at the forum.

Wayne Theiss, the lone candidate in District

2, said schools and infrastructure are the key issues, and the county should work to gain ground during this lull in the economy and work with legislators.

Reporter Andrea Uhde can be reached at (502) 582-4663.

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