

Oldham judge-executive won't run for re-election

By Andrea Uhde • auhde@courier-journal.com • July 7, 2009

Oldham County Judge-Executive Duane Murner will not run for re-election to a second term next year. Instead, he plans to support Paula Gish, who now works as his second-in-command.

Gish and Murner, both Republicans, announced their decision on Tuesday at a La Grange Rotary Club meeting. Gish plans to officially announce her candidacy for the county's top job Wednesday in front of friends and family at her Goshen home.

"I think she is without question the most qualified person in Oldham County," Murner said in an interview.

Gish, 59, who was a magistrate for 11 years and is now deputy judge-executive, said she wants to guide the county through the bad economy.

"We need to deliver responsible government and live within our means," she said. "That's what people are trying to do in their personal lives, and county government should be no different."

The primary election isn't until May, but two Oldham Republicans already have announced their decisions to run. There are no Democrats on Fiscal Court, and none have publicly announced they will run.

County treasurer Stan Clark of Pewee Valley said he also will run, saying "we're heading into a period of time right now that's going to require a strong financial person."

Also, some magistrates might decide to run for judge-executive. Republican magistrates David Voegele and Scott Davis have said they are considering it. Davis said he plans to announce his decision in the next week or so.

In a recent interview, Gish said she has started raising money for her campaign, and she has "had a really good response and good support."

She said her top priorities, if elected, would be to continue balancing the county budget.

"I feel like I certainly have every opportunity and take every opportunity to work with each of the directors on their budget," she said.

Gish said there's always room to be more [efficient](#), "and I'm open to doing that."

She also wants to keep the tax rate from rising, and be more creative with expenses. Another goal, she said, is to continue making a plan for capital improvements, and set aside money for those improvements.

"That's planning for our future responsibly with our funds," Gish said.

She said she also wants to support "smart, well-planned" economic development, as well as support current Oldham businesses.

"The bottom line out of all this is I'm going to work for the people of Oldham County, and I'm going to provide them a safe and clean" place to live.

If elected, Gish would be Oldham's second female judge-executive.

Clark, a well-known Oldham County track coach, has been county treasurer since February 2007. He was chief financial officer of Thornton Oil Corp. from 1984 to 1991.

In a recent interview, Clark said he wants to "continue on the path of the financial responsibility that Judge Murner's put the county on."

He said he has some ideas that will allow for more savings.

"I feel like it's going to be some tough decisions" and some complex financial issues, he said.

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