

Republican candidate forum held in Goodland

By Kevin Bottrell
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Four Republican primary candidates for the Kansas Senate and House of Representatives faced off against each other at a candidate forum in Goodland on Tuesday, July 17.

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

Sherman County Republican Chairperson Jeanie Shields allowed each candidate to make a three-minute introduction, then asked each set of candidates one or two questions, allowing a 1 minute response.

John Miller, a 16-year Norton County Commissioner, 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.

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

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

Incumbent Sen. Ralph Ostmeier spoke next. Ostmeier has served two terms in the Senate, and before that served two terms in the House of Representatives. Before that he was a school board member, a county commissioner and a KSHSAA official.

Ostmeier said he chaired the Senate Natural Resources Committee during this years session, a committee which had some prominence because of Gov. Sam Brownback's focus on water legislation. He said he is proud of the eight or nine water policy initiatives developed by his committee.

Ostmeier was also on the redistricting committee. He said he is willing to take the blame for the Senate's failure to pass a map. "We weren't able to pull it off," he said. "I wasn't able to convince my colleagues."

Ostmeier said he also helped work out a compromise on home-owned carnivals, which had been facing stricter safety requirements.

Shields' question for the Senate candidates was "What is the proper role of state government and what should its top priority be?"

Ostmeier said the budget should be the first priority. The Legislature was able to put a surplus in the budget this year, he said.

"With the governor's tax plan I feel that we're on the right direction," he said.

The other priority should be education, Ostmeier said. Many of the counties in the 40th District are down to one school per county, he said, and they can't get cut any further.

Miller said the first priority of the Legislature should be to make to the state succeed. Miller cited the Kansas Legislative Research Committee, who said that the state could have as much as a \$2 million budget deficit. Miller said the Legislature's role is to fix that budget.

Fixing the budget may take either serious cuts or raising taxes, he said.

Shields then introduced the House candidates. Both Rick Billinger of Goodland and Ward Cassidy from St. Francis are incumbents, each having served one term in the House.

Billinger spoke first. He is originally from Park and moved to Goodland in the 1970s. He was elected by the 121st District's Republican Committee to fill Rep. Jim Morrison's post after his death in December, 2010.

Billinger said the Legislature needs to stick behind schools, agriculture and hospitals. It has been doing a good job with the budget, he said. There was a deficit in 2010, and the Legislature was

able to get to a surplus this year. However, he said, the state can't afford to keep spending money and expect future generations to pick up the debt. Billinger said he did not vote in favor of the governor's tax plan, because it was projected to result in a budget deficit down the road he favors property tax relief over income tax relief.

With many new legislators Billinger said there will be a lot of opportunity for people with only one term under their belts to get choice committee assignments.

Cassidy, a former principal and current school counselor, beat a 14-year incumbent for the old 120th District in 2010. He said his first priority was to get on the appropriations committee, which at the time had no members from west of Salina. He was able to get on the committee during this year's session, and said before long he had people listening to his western Kansas perspective.

With all of the incumbents running against each other, Cassidy said he might be the only one next year who has any background in school finance.

Shields asked the House candidates the same question, "What is the proper role of state government and what should its top priority be?"

Cassidy said his priority is western Kansas. He said he likes to get involved in issues that affect people in western Kansas. For instance he has been talking to the Board of Cosmetology about the length of time it takes to get board certified. Currently it can take up to six months, he said, which can hurt people's chances of getting jobs.

"That's what I like to do: get involved," he said.

Billinger agreed that the priority should be western Kansas, and other than that, legislators should focus on the budget.

"You can't spend what you don't have," he said. "And with 60 or more new legislators, we'll have a lot more say."

After the forum, the candidates stuck around to speak to members of the public one-on-one.



TIM NETZEL visits with Tracy Wheeter about American Implement's acquisition of the Goodland Greenline tractor dealership in Wheeler. Times staff photo by Tim Burr

Tractor dealership bought by company in Garden City

By Tim Burr
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American Implement Inc., headquartered in Garden City, has announced the purchase of Goodland Greenline and the Greenline facilities in Goodland and Wheeler. American Implement has also announced the merger with Colby/Oakley Implement.

These actions have resulted in a business that has over 90 years of industry experience and produce knowledge, 10 contiguous locations and over 260 employees.

There is a long history of the John Deere dealership in Cheyenne County. The dealership was originally operated by the St.

Francis Equity, with the shop, parts and showroom located downtown where the feed store and fertilizer shop are now located. In the fall of 1973, Robert VanAllen obtained the dealership, built facilities and moved it to its present location at the intersection of U.S. 36 and K-27, in Wheeler. In the fall of 2005, VanAllen sold the dealership to Goodland Greenline, who has operated it until the acquisition by American Implement.

Tim Netzel, location manager for the dealership at Wheeler, said this move will benefit the customers.

"Our current employee group will remain intact," Mr. Netzel said. "We will have access to 10

lots of new and used equipment, and have easy access to a larger number of in-stock parts.

"I am excited about being able to better serve our customers."

American Implement began operations in 1970 when Duane Koster opened the first location in Garden City. There are now locations in Colby, Elkhart, Goodland, Hugoton, Oakley, Scott City, Ulysses, Wheeler and Walsh, Colo., with its headquarters in Garden City. Officers of the corporation are: Duane Koster, president, Chad Koster, chief executive officer, and Ryan Ortner, corporate sales manager.

Knights of Columbus BBQ & Meat Bundle Giveaway

70 lbs. of hamburger and approximately 40 lbs. of steaks
\$5 for 1 ticket, 3 for \$10 or 6 for \$20

Saturday, Aug. 4 ~ 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Cheyenne County Fairgrounds

Serving BBQ Beef • Baked Beans • Potato Chips • Iced Tea • Watermelon by Farm Credit

\$5 per person with children under 5 free

Proceeds go to: Help fund 2 scholarships, Free-throw Contest, Help county families in need during times of disaster (tornado, flood, fire) and other County projects.

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World Heritage is a public benefit, non-profit organization based in Laguna Beach, CA.

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I would appreciate your vote on Aug. 7th
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Ad paid for by Cassidy for Representative, Mike Day Treasurer

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CHEYLIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #103 BIRD CITY

Enrollment for Cheylin students will be held Wednesday, Aug. 1 • 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

GRADES K-12 WILL ENROLL AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY IN BIRD CITY

Preschool, Kindergarten and new students will need to have their Certified Birth Certificate, Immunization Record, and Current Health Assessment when they register.

ENROLLMENT FEES

Book Rental (K-6) = \$30 Book Rental (7-12) = \$50
Family Limit of \$90 for Book Rental

Drivers Education=\$50 Biology=\$10 Industrial Arts=\$15
Activity Fee (6-12)=\$20 Project Biology=\$10 Chemistry=\$10
Vo Ag Classes=\$30 Drafting=\$10 Physics=\$10
Band (4-12)=\$15 Food/Nutrit/Textiles=\$20

Elementary Meal/Milk Tickets
20 Day Breakfast = \$30 20 Day Lunch = \$44

Middle/High School Meal Tickets
20 Day Breakfast = \$32 20 Day Lunch = \$48

Reduced Price Breakfast 30¢ Reduced Price Lunch 40¢
Applications for free/reduced price meals will be available. Reduced price meals are the same for K-12 students. Applications are also available in Spanish.

FIRST SCHOOL DAY - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15

Classes will begin at 8:15 a.m. and will be dismissed at 4:15 p.m. Kindergarten students will attend school on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. from 8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Preschool students will attend school on Tues., Wed., and Thurs., 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The first two weeks of school, kindergarten students will have class from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. They will eat lunch at school. Kindergarten students will ride the buses in the morning to school with other students. Parents will need to pick up their child at the elementary school in McDonald at 12:30 p.m. and in Bird City at 12:15 p.m.