

# State senate candidates

## Republican started primary work early

By TOM BETZ  
The Goodland Star-News

A Goodland man was the first to announce for the District 40 State Senate seat seven months ago, and he is working hard in the final weeks before the primary election to win.

Dan Rasure, 22, a 2001 graduate of Goodland High School, opened a campaign office in January and has been busy traveling around the 40th District and meeting people. He is seeking the Republican nomination for the seat. "We have driven 32,000 miles so far," he said.

The Senate district has grown by three counties this year, and Mr. Rasure sees that as a good thing. "I like the addition of the three new counties," he said. "It brings a new emphasis on oil and gas exploration which we have in the district, and the correctional satellite facility in Stockton which they want to expand."

Mr. Rasure served internships for Congressman Jerry Moran and Sen. Sam Brownback while finishing his bachelor of business management at McPherson College last year. Graduating in December, Mr. Rasure decided to come back to Goodland and work with his parents, Kevin and Christie Rasure, at the family business, Rasure's Do It Center.

When he announced for the Senate seat held by the late Stan Clark, R-Oakley, Mr. Rasure said he felt it was time for a change after 10 years.

Mr. Rasure said he believes his youth is more of an advantage, and that his enthusiasm is a valuable asset.

"People want to see the young people get involved and know that we need that type of enthusiasm to help keep people in northwest Kansas.

"Young people want to come back here, and we need to find ways to help them."

Asked to compare himself to his Republican opponent, Rep. Ralph Ostmeyer of Grinnell, Mr. Rasure said he thinks he knows the education system better.

"I understand the education system and how important it is to the area," he said. "If we don't have a change we may see as many as five districts close in the next year or two.

"Ostmeyer is part of the problem as he has been on the education committee for years and his resolution has been 'let it rain, and everything will be all right.'

"We have seen droughts and times of rain, but the population continues to decline, and our schools are in trouble now."

Looking at the school finance situation Mr. Rasure says it is time for the hard decisions.

"We need to make a commitment that nobody leaves Topeka until they get something done," he said. "We have not seen anything



Dan Rasure

in four years, and the legislators have gone home saying they cannot solve it.

"The property taxes keep going up, and I don't feel this is a good way for local people to have to pay to keep the schools open.

"I believe we need a statewide plan, and that we probably only have a year or two to convince the representatives from Johnson County that they should support a statewide school finance plan."

If there needs to be a tax increase to solve the school finance problem Mr. Rasure would support it, but it is not his first choice.

"I have been very frustrated because my opponent has said one week he would approve a tax increase, but the next week he says he will not," Mr. Rasure said. "He signed the tax pledge saying he would not increase taxes, but has broken it in his voting in Topeka.

"I would not sign the tax pledge because I feel that is a closed-minded way to approach tough decisions."

The drought has hurt farmers, banks and downtown businesses, and Mr. Rasure said he believes it is a good time to push economic development.

"We need to make sure we are not overtaxing people and work to keep as many here as possible," he said. "Economic development is one of those things where you have to spend some money to bring the business to the area."

Talking about the costs of agriculture leads to water.

"We are always going to be concerned about the aquifer," Mr. Rasure said. "We don't know what we have, but we do know what the drops in water level are..."

Mr. Rasure said he is not sure what is the best way to save the aquifer, but he does not like Sen. Sam Brownback's "buy-back" plan.

"We have an older farming base, and I don't want to see them cash out because it is good for them and not leave the younger farmer an option.

"I have a vision that we are seeing stores open and schools having to hire teachers because the population is increasing," he said. "It is a nice vision, but it is going to take a lot of work to get there."

## Representative gives up seat in the House

By TISHA COX  
Colby Free Press

Ralph Ostmeyer of Grinnell gave up his seat in the state House of Representatives to run for the 40th District Senate seat this fall.

Rep. Ostmeyer, 61, had filed to retain his seat as representative for the 118th District, but withdrew to run for the Senate seat that had been filled by Oakley resident Stan Clark after his death two months ago.

Rep. Ostmeyer and Goodland Republican Dan Rasure will face each other in the primary election Aug. 3, then the winner will go up against Democrat Tim Peterson of Monmouth.

Having just completed his second term in the House, Rep. Ostmeyer said he is giving up his seat to run for the Senate because he feels a conservative needs to continue on in the 40th District seat to protect the interests of northwest Kansas, help reinforce traditional family values and to take a stand on issues like school funding.

By e-mail, Rep. Ostmeyer answered questions about his stance on issues ranging from school finance and economic development to water issues and transportation.

On the issue of school finance, Rep. Ostmeyer said he supports "adequate funding" for kindergarten through 12th grade education for all students in Kansas with as little of the money as possible coming from the property tax.

"I would hope the Kansas Legislature would develop school finance legislation which provides for minimal reliance on the property tax for support of public elementary and secondary schools," he said.

"Schools will open this fall, and the money is already budgeted."

He said taxes shouldn't be raised.

As soon as the economy takes a turn for the better, he said, he'd like to see some cuts restored in the state budget.

Those would include demand transfers, money the state usually gives back to cities and counties for property tax reduction.

Rep. Ostmeyer said it was one of the first things cut when the state hit budget troubles and it needs to be restored to higher levels to help local governments.

On economic development, he said, cities, counties and development directors need to get involved to "create a business-friendly atmosphere and have incentives to encourage new businesses to relocate to western Kansas."

Rep. Ostmeyer said he is in favor of alternative energy sources.

"I support wind farms and ethanol production," he said. "I helped pass tax incentives my first term for ethanol production."



Ralph Ostmeyer

Rep. Ostmeyer also said farmers don't need any new regulations tossed their way.

"This new 2004 economic development act will address some of the problems in western Kansas," he said.

"I have always supported diversified farming and most farm issues are solved on the federal level."

Water was another issue he weighed in on.

"The state is currently working on water issues," Rep. Ostmeyer said.

"We need to make sure generations to come have access to water. We must conserve."

He touched on transportation and health care.

Rep. Ostmeyer said he supported the 2004 transportation plan and he said rail service needs to be protected, which would help save wear on roads.

He doesn't support increasing speed limits in the state because he thinks people are already driving too fast.

Rep. Ostmeyer said the state must find ways to control health care costs or it will "consume the total state budget in the future."

"Socialized health care is not the answer," he added.

As far as issues in northwest Kansas are concerned, Rep. Ostmeyer said he thinks the most pressing issues are protection of the ground water supply, money for local government and trying to stem population loss in the region.

"When I talk about local government, that includes cities, counties and schools," he said.

Rep. Ostmeyer and his wife Kay have seven children and 13 grandchildren.

A fourth-generation farmer, Rep. Ostmeyer and his wife farm with their oldest son Terry.

He is a member of Immaculate Conception Church of Grinnell and enjoys spending time with his grandchildren and working on antique cars.

Ruth Clark, who was appointed to fill out her husband's term in the senate, but who isn't running for election, has given her support to Rep. Ostmeyer's bid for the seat.

## Democrat has no primary race

By PATTY DECKER  
Colby Free Press

Born and raised in Oakley, Tim Peterson is the only Democrat vying for the 40th Senate District seat that came open following the death of Sen. Stan Clark last May.

With Republicans Ralph Ostmeyer and Dan Rasure battling it out, Mr. Peterson won't know until after the August primary who his challenger will be.

He said he hadn't planned on running for the Senate, but plans changed when Mr. Clark was killed earlier this summer.

Mr. Peterson has served as the chair for the First District Democrats since 2001 and was its treasurer from 1995-2001.

Mr. Peterson said his top priorities will be school finance and health care issues.

Admitting that the problems with school finance didn't happen overnight, he said, it isn't something that will be fixed overnight either.

As for any increases in school finance, Mr. Peterson said he will not support unnecessary taxes.

"There are two important questions that must be answered," he said. "First, can we make more dollars available for the classroom by streamlining administrative costs? and second, are there areas in our state government where we can reallocate money to be used by schools?"

"If taxes must be raised," he said, "I will not support any legislation that raises property taxes."

Mr. Peterson said he believes the state should work to lower the cost of health care and help expand the prescription drug program.

"Our senior citizens should not have to choose between medicine and food," he said, "and the cost is also forcing middle class families to gamble on their health care needs. This is not right."

Proper health care should be provided to everyone, he said, and that can be done without socialized health care plans.

A great potential for jobs in Kansas would be to look at economic development based on value-added industries, he said.

"Likewise, we have only begun to tap our tourism industry in northwest Kansas," he said. "We must work together as a northwest Kansas region to develop our tourism industry, and that will take leadership that I will try to provide."

He said he believes people in this area are concerned with the survival of their families.

"We want the best for our children and our older parents," he said, "and we want to keep our towns safe and healthy."

Kansas is the best place to live, he said, and he wants to see it stay that way.

Mr. Peterson said he thinks we must encourage development of ethanol alcohol plants and other



Tim Peterson

agriculture-related industries.

"The increase demand for grain by ethanol plants raises the local grain prices," he said. "A few cents per bushel increase in the local price of grain translates into millions of dollars to be circulated locally."

There are no easy solutions in keeping people farming, he said.

"Structural changes to agriculture have turned farmers into managers," he said, "and smaller profits per acre have forced farming operations to become larger."

Mr. Peterson said, the best thing the government can do regarding the drought is to provide needed services as efficiently as possible to keep taxes low.

The Peterson family farms land east of Page City, in northwest Logan County, and grow wheat, milo, corn and sunflowers on 2,800 acres.

"I believe that administrative cost for state government should be the same as any well run business or charity," he said, "and that is, around 3 to 5 percent of the total budget."

"I don't think we have reached this objective, and if economic factors change, we must be prepared for worst-case scenarios."

Another economic development issue Mr. Peterson believes is critical is the state's highways. He said the state must continue its highway program.

He said he would support raising the speed limit.

Mr. Peterson and his wife Rebekah have two children, ages 12 and 10. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kansas with a major in geography and quantitative methods (statistics). Two years ago, he became nationally registered as an emergency medical technician and serves with the Logan County Emergency Medical Service.

He is the past chairman of the Farm Service Agency state committee and currently serves as the vice-chair of the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Board. Mr. Peterson was appointed to the board by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and confirmed by the Kansas Senate in January.

**Let's Get The Facts Straight**  
Re: City/County Cooperation

- ★County helped city with water line to Industrial Park
- ★County built a bridge on Case Street at County cost
- ★Have a joint agreement to chip-seal asphalt roads
- ★Donated to: City Parks, Tennis Courts, Lights at Race Track, Waterslide at Municipal Swimming Pool
- ★Bought Road Millings and sold back to city at cost
- ★Reached dispatcher agreement that was fair and equitable for both city and county
- ★Have city/county clean-up days
- ★Airport agreement with county support for municipal airport
- ★Beginning hiring director, a phase of economic development with city
- ★Supporting Chamber of Commerce with Economic Development Funds
- ★Have a City Rep from City Council to the County
- ★County furnished \$8,000 for new fire equipment to Almena from terrorism fund; \$10,000 for new fire equipment to Lenora; \$14,000 for Norton City Fire Department

**SUPPORT LEROY LANG—**  
AUGUST 3  
REPUBLICAN 2ND DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
*Working For All Of Norton County*

**RE-ELECT**  
**JOHN MILLER**  
NORTON COUNTY  
THIRD DISTRICT  
COMMISSIONER

- 90 Miles New Roads in Norton County
- 120 Miles of Road Millings and Reshaped
- 21 Bridges in Norton County

**Revolving Economic Development Loans Made in Last Three Years to:**

- Miltech
- Town and Country Kitchen
- Mortensen Computers
- Hot Shots Photography
- White Fields Coffee House
- Oak Shop in Almena
- Contributed Funds for Park Improvement in Almena and Lenora
- Added Ambulance to Lenora

POLITICAL ADV. FOR JOHN MILLER, KAREN REDDY, TREASURER

**VOTE**  
**Ivan Kingham**  
Republican Candidate  
for Norton County  
Commissioner  
District Two

- Lifelong Norton Resident
- Farm Bureau Board for eight years — President two terms
- Norton County Co-op Board since 1990 — Chairman six years
- Airport Board 20 years — Current President

I want to be a commissioner for all people of the county. My goal is to bring cooperation between county and city government.

**Your support on August 3 will be greatly appreciated.**

Pd. Adv. by Ivan Kingham for District 2, Norton Co. Comm., Craig Renner, Treas.