

Dawson Co. candidates offered chance to talk about selves

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 17 April 2014 14:00 -



More than 100 attend county Farm Bureau candidate forum

Candidates for contested races in Dawson County showed up to share their qualifications and answer questions during a candidate forum April 8.

Even more people crowded a room in the Wilson Public Library to hear what they had to say.

The Dawson County Farm Bureau sponsored the forum attended by voters from Dawson, and Buffalo and Custer counties.

District 36 encompasses Dawson and Custer and part of Buffalo counties.

Matt Williams of Gothenburg, a Republican, and Democrat Luis Sotelo of Lexington are running for the legislative seat which is now occupied by Sen. John Wightman.

Term limits will force Wightman from the seat.

Williams and Sotelo started off the forum by telling about themselves and answering questions.

Asked about top issues in Nebraska in the next four years, Sotelo said early childhood education and the demand for farmers and ranchers to feed the world.

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Williams said agriculture and water and the need for a sustainable water policy, the state's tax structure and economic development topped his list.

Another question asked was the most important decision the candidates had ever made.

Sotelo said it was deciding to run for the District 36 legislative seat.

After being approached about running, he said he thought about it for eight months because representing constituents has to be taken seriously and done well.

"We also need fresh voices from the working and middle class," Sotelo said.

For Williams, the hardest decision was selling part of the family farm during the farm crisis in the 1980s so Gothenburg State Bank, founded and operated by his family, could be successful.

The decision was difficult, he said, because the land had accumulated and been farmed and ranched for more than 100 years.

Within Dawson County, four seek the district court seat—Jackie Rowan, Maria Barajas, Maria Reutlinger-Maravilla, all of Lexington, and Becky Boryca of Cozad.



As far as challenges facing the office, Rowan said litigation as more clients represent themselves and finding interpreters for the many languages represented.

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For Barajas, it's helping people with multicultural backgrounds and making the most efficient use of the budget with a growing population.

Maravilla said breaking down language barriers is important and having enough interpreters.

Humbleness is also critical, she added.

Boryca thinks managing the budget and identifying cost-saving measures is a top issue as is technology and listening to and communicating with the public.

Two seek the register of deeds seat. They are Debra Stuchlik and Dian Lauby, both of Lexington.

The biggest challenges in the office, according to Stuchlik, are preservation of records and filing documents electronically.

Lauby sees modernizing technology and increasing the efficiency of the office as top issues.

Incumbent sheriff Gary Reiber of Lexington is being challenged by Ken Moody of Gothenburg.

As far as challenges, Reiber mentioned keeping up with technology, maximizing jail revenue and preventing crime.

Moody said he views community involvement with an open door policy and reaching out to and educating youth as important issues.

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Running for county surveyor are Mark Streit of Lexington and Shawn Boyd of Gothenburg. Streit was appointed to the position and now must run for election.

Issues important to Streit are preserving government corners of properties and digitizing survey records.

Boyd said educating the public about property lines and the importance of good surveys and digitizing records are challenges facing the surveyor's office.

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