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Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

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Ferrell, Wise run to be Hoopeston's Ward 2 representative



FERRELL



WISE

Editor's note: This is the final in a series of articles profiling candidates for Hoopeston Area School Board and Hoopeston City Council in the April 2 election. Today, Kellie Ferrell and Jeff Wise, candidates for Ward 2 alderman, are in the spotlight.

New faces will represent Hoopeston's Ward 2 and 4 in the April 2 election.

In Ward 2, Kellie Ferrell and Jeff Wise are vying for the seat currently held by Ryan Anderson, who did not seek reelection. It is the only contested election for the council this year.

Ferrell, 31, was graduated from Hoopeston Area High School and has taken some college courses. The daughter of Terry and Evelyn Buhrmester, she is married to Michael Ferrell and is a stay-at-home mom to four-year-old Korbin, Kirin, three, and Mila, who is one.

"I'm running because Hoopeston is home and it has been my whole life," Ferrell said. "I love hearing the stories about how busy it was back when our parents and grandparents were kids. I want to do whatever I can do bring even a fraction of that back and will utilize any resources available to try to make that happen."

Wise, 48, is a 1989 Hoopeston-East Lynn graduate. He graduated from Danville Area Community College with

an associate of science degree and has a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Illinois University. He was a business teacher at Hoopeston Area High School from 1995-1998 and, since 1998, is an Information Systems Instructor at DACC.

"I want to do what I can to help our community," Wise said. "There are so many people that have good ideas about how we might be able to improve things in Hoopeston. Most of them will never come forward to be heard. I want to be able to represent them, so everyone knows that the Council represents all people of Hoopeston."

See REPRESENTATIVE on other side

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Representative continued from other side

Wise said an asset he will bring to the board is his ability to research. “That’s probably my biggest asset,” he said. “I don’t make snap decisions, I analyze the research until I find what I think is the best alternative. I’m willing to do the research and work towards the best options for improving our city.”

A second asset is his experience working with various boards and councils in the area, including his current seat on the Hoopeston Planning Commission. “I know what it’s like to make decisions that are right, even though they may not be what I personally want,” he said.

Farrell said she will bring a new perspective to the board, “as well as serve as a voice for a slightly younger generation. We will be the ones trying to take care of this city in the coming years and it just makes sense to try and do something to help now rather than later.”

As for issues, “I believe we need to be taking better care of what we have by putting more pride in our overall infrastructure,” Ferrell said. This includes taking down abandoned buildings and dilapidated homes. She believes people are more likely to buy an empty lot than a building they aren’t allowed into to inspect before they buy.

Also under infrastructure, Ferrell would like to see side-

walks repaired and made handicapped accessible at crossings. “It’s past time to do something about this,” she said.

The city also needs to find a solution to the flooding problem. “This is one of those situations where 70 plus years ago, when it first became a problem, we should have been taking the steps to put money back to fix it. “ She suggests the city save what money it has to be better prepared “for when the inevitable happens.”

She would also like to see more jobs and entertainment options in the city. “We may need to veer away from the norm and look at more unconventional options,” she said of both. To stand out, Hoopeston will have to offer something not every town has and it’s going to have to appeal to families, not just one age group.

Ferrell said most entertainment here is geared to young children and pre-teens. Older youngsters, especially those too young to drive, have little to do and are bored, “which gets a lot of our youth in trouble,” she said. “I want to explore options that would bring something for our teens and young adults, but also create jobs.”

Wise groups some issues together under the heading of a blight problem. “Whether it’s caused from derelict houses, drug usage or an aging infrastructure, it has to be addressed now,” he said, adding the problem is not unique to Hoopeston.

He would look into stiffer, recurring fines for landlords who leave their houses in those conditions and better support for the city’s compliance officer. “The goal is to find some method of solving this problem without ever thinking of raising taxes,” he said.

Officials have made great strides toward remediating

blight in the last couple of years, and “we need to continue down that path and research more of what’s working and put it into action. We can either face it now or pay the price down the road.”

Secondly, he said, Hoopeston “has to come to terms that it is a bedroom community and its location isn’t the most desirable.” Efforts to make Hoopeston more appealing could be stepped up to join several groups already doing awesome things in this area, he said. “We have so much to offer people in Hoopeston and our neighboring communities - things that other towns would beg to have - but more needs to be done or we’ll continue to see our numbers decline.”

Wise would like to see more investors come to Hoopeston - such as has been done with the possibility of a hotel - to do the same for other entities that would make a bedroom community more appealing. Saying that’s “easier said than done,” he added “since we’re currently at a 100-year low on our population, we have to be open to all options.”

In Ward 4, Robin Lawson is running for the seat currently held by Brandon Hamilton. He turned election paperwork in to City Clerk Gail Lane but later requested that it not be filed with the Vermilion County Clerk, leaving Lawson to run unopposed.

From the Blotter

Two teen boys were arrested after police were called at 3:54 p.m. Monday for a fight in progress in the 700 block of East Thompson.

The boys, ages 13 and 15, were each charged with possession of cannabis. The 15-year-old was also charged with battery. Both were released to guardians on notices to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

A Wellington man was taken to the hospital after an accident at 7:25 p.m. Monday in the 900 block of East Penn.

Police said Donald Eckersley, 69, of Wellington, in a 2016 Toyota sedan, left the roadway and hit a tree. He was taken to Carle Hoopeston emergency room for treatment. Further details were unavailable at press time.

Hoopeston Fire Department and EMS also responded to the scene.

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 9:23 p.m. Monday to the 800 block of East Wyman for a smell of gas in the area.

Weather

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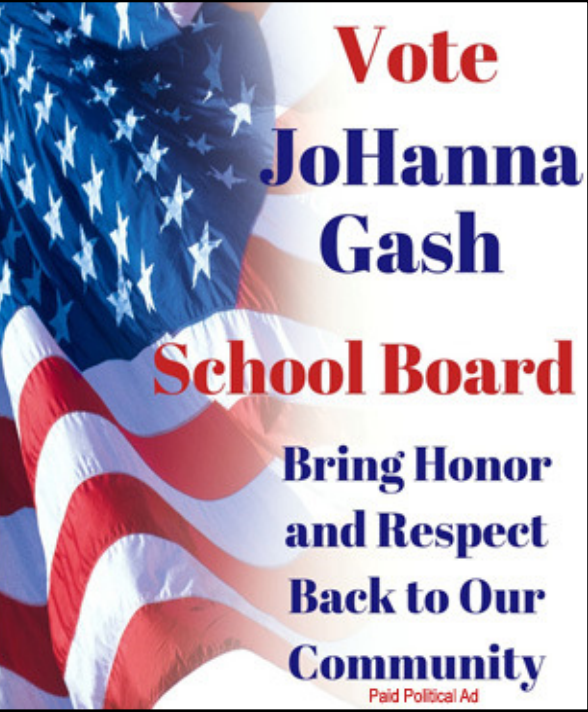
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