

V ✓ LOWNDES COUNTY Voter's Guide

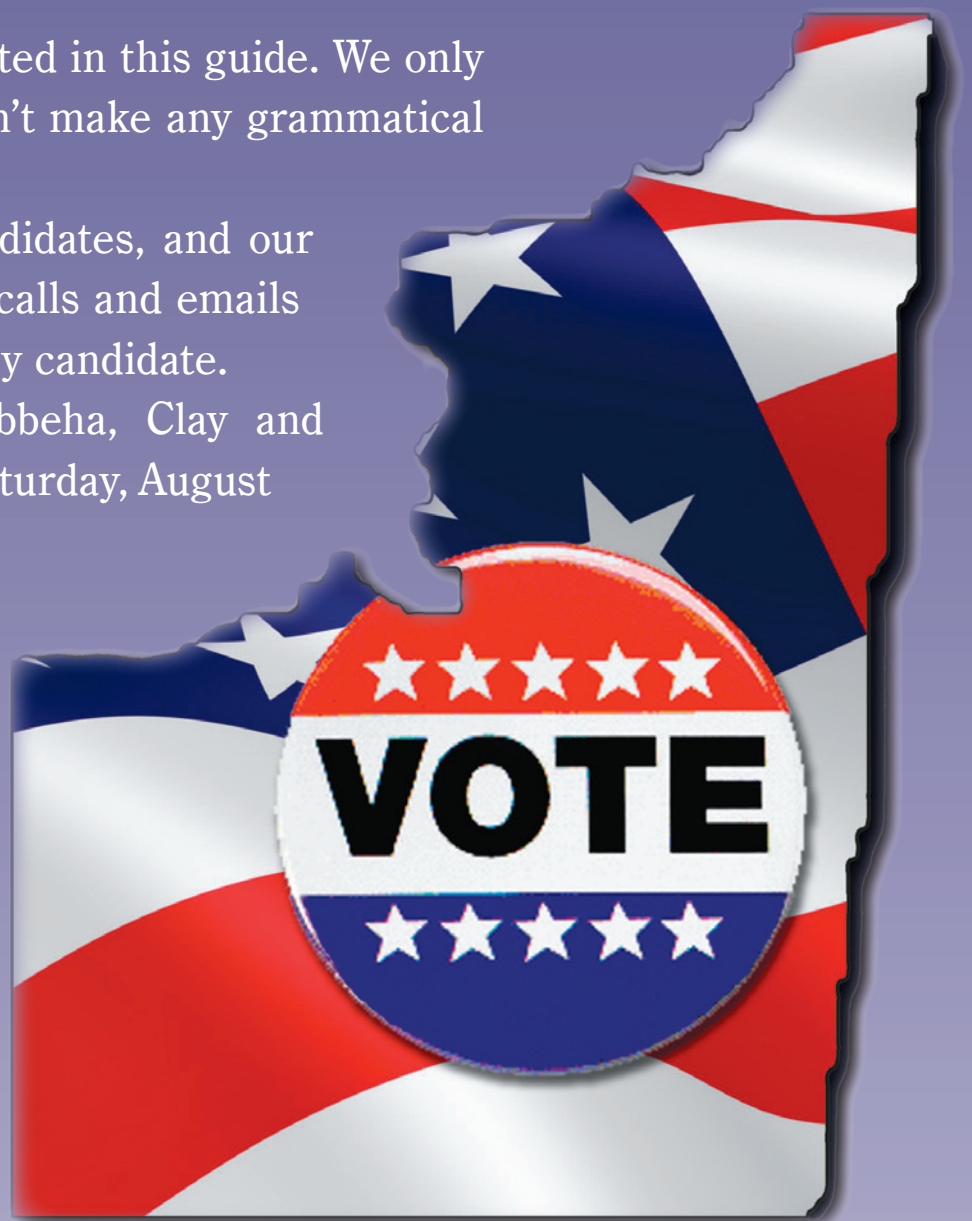
A GUIDE TO THE AUGUST 8 PRIMARY ELECTION

Leading up to this year's county elections, The Dispatch sent questionnaires to all candidates in contested races. Candidates were asked to provide basic information such as age, political experience and contact information. They were also asked to answer between 1-3 questions, limiting their responses to 150 words.

The answers provided to us are printed in this guide. We only edited the answers for length; we didn't make any grammatical corrections.

Questionnaires were sent to all candidates, and our staff followed up with multiple phone calls and emails in an effort to get responses from every candidate.

Sample ballots for Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Clay and Noxubee counties are printed in the Saturday, August 5 edition of The Dispatch.



Precinct Polling Places

- Caledonia**
Community Center, 205 South St., Caledonia
- East Columbus Gym**
East Columbus Gym, 207 Lawrence Dr., Columbus
- Immanuel**
Immanuel, 6342 Military Road, Steens
- Steens**
Steens Community Center, 118 Steens Vernon Road, Steens
- Airbase**
Antioch Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 128 Jess Lyons Road, Columbus
- Brandon**
Brandon Central School Office/Cafetorium, 2630 McArthur Dr., Columbus
- Lion Hills**
Lion Hills Center, 2331 Military Road, Columbus
- New Hope**
New Hope Community Center, 281 Stadium Road, Columbus
- Rural Hill**
Rural Hill Community Center, 61 Miller Dr., Columbus
- Coleman**
Columbus Housing Authority Building, 2201 Eighth Ave. S., Columbus
- Crawford**
Crawford Park & Rec Building, 783 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Crawford
- Southside Church**
Southside MBC Life Center, 100 Nashville Ferry Road E., Columbus
- Plum Grove**
Plum Grove Park & Rec. Building, 54 Minnie Vaughn Road, Columbus
- Townsend Park**
Townsend Park Recreation Building, 826 15th St. S., Columbus
- Artesia**
Artesia Community Center, 46 S. Front St., Artesia
- Hunt**
Stephen Chapel Life Center, 2008 Seventh Ave. N., Columbus
- Trinity**
Trinity Retirement Home, 146 South McCrary Road, Columbus
- Fifteenth Street Church**
Fifteenth Street Church, 917 15th St. N., Columbus
- University**
Boy Scout Building, 221 Second Ave. N., Columbus
- West Lowndes**
Lowndes County Schools Central Office, 1052 Highway 45 S., Columbus

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Sheriff **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$110,000**



1. What do you see as the primary crime problem in the county and how would you address it?

2. How effective have the sheriff's office's efforts to retain and recruit officers and jailers been, and what more can be done?

3. What role does LCSO have — if any — in working with Columbus Police Department?

Democrat

Willie D. Jones
Age: 50
Education: High school diploma; Aberdeen High School
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: None
Residence: Lowndes County
Family: Single, no children
Email: lowndesso5@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 251-7952



Drugs and gun violence. I would make sure we had more officers on patrol throughout the county. More police visibility may deter criminal activity.

Since I'm no longer a part of the Sheriff's office, I am unable to answer questions about efforts to retain and recruit officers. But if I am elected I would make sure the officers are treated with respect and fairness. I would also maintain an open door policy and listen to their suggestions and concerns.

Again, since I'm no longer a part of the Sheriff's office, I'm unsure of the LCSO's role in working with the Columbus Police Department. However, if I'm elected as Sheriff, I would request a meeting with the chief and hopefully we could come up with a plan to create a partnership between the departments and work together to reduce crime for the citizens in then city of Columbus and Lowndes County.

Republican

Eddie Hawkins (I)
Age: 56
Education: New Hope High School; Jefferson State Community College
Political party: Republican
Political experience: Running for second term as sheriff
Residence:
Family: Married, one child, one grandchild
Email: ehawkins@lowndes-so.org
Phone: (662) 798-9963



One would think that violent crime is the biggest problem that the Sheriff's Office faces, but that's just not the case. Property crime in Lowndes County is much more common than violent crime. By far the most common form of property crime is larceny/theft, followed by burglary and motor vehicle theft. These types of crimes are usually committed by someone addicted to drugs and supporting their habit. Among violent crimes, aggravated assault is the most common offense, followed by robbery, rape, and murder. It's hard to predict when and where a violent crime will occur because most of these types of crimes are a crime of passion and happen in the heat of the moment. In my first term in office, the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office has done several things to combat property crime.

Getting and keeping good people is critical to the effectiveness of all law enforcement agencies. Currently we have a full staff at the Lowndes County Sheriff's office, but we have a few openings for correctional officers in the Adult Detention Center. Recruitment, hiring and retention of the best deputies is critical for a safe, thriving community. Recruitment drives retention and we ensure every deputy and correctional officer is a recruiter. We project the right image and maintain communication with applicants during the recruitment process. Selecting the best qualified candidates as deputies is key. The goal is to find a deputy with both good communication and customer service skills who can serve our community well. We do not want to lower our standards and settle for a bad recruit.

The Lowndes County Sheriff's Office works closely with all local, state and federal law enforcement partners. Annual events like the Market Street Festival and Fireworks On The Water are examples of the LCSO & Columbus Police Department working together. Although the CPD answers all calls for service in the city of Columbus, LCSO assists with enforcement activities as needed. Both entities have the same mission and a common goal, to serve the public. An example of this collaboration is the active shooter incident that occurred at the Fitness Factor. Both agencies working together resolved this incident quickly, without anyone getting injured.

Circuit Court Clerk **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: Fee based (\$99,500 cap)**

Teresa Barksdale (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

Chancery Court Clerk **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: Fee based (\$99,500 cap)**



1. What more should be done to modernize and digitize chancery court records?

2. What are the biggest challenges facing the chancery clerk's office and how would you address them?

3. What experience/ qualifications make you the right candidate for the position?

Democrat

Andre D. Roberts
Age: 49
Education: High school graduate; some college
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: Ran for office in 2011, 2015, 2017, 2019
Residence: Columbus
Family: Four children
Email: andre.roberts81@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 889-2152



A huge part of it is getting in assessing everything. I know they have been doing a great job of that already. Continue to research and implement new ideas and technology.

From an outside vantage point the biggest challenges truly can not be determined. I know that there is no challenge to huge that we can't be solved with good teamwork and leadership.

I have worked with the public almost my entire life . I have had the honor of managing millions of dollars worth of equipment and goods. Leadership, encouragement, going the extra mile is some of the things I do well.

Republican

Cindy Goode (I)
Age: 52
Education: Bachelor of Science from Mississippi University for Women (Paralegal degree)
Political party: Republican
Political experience: First term as chancery clerk
Residence: Lowndes County
Family: Married
Email: cindykodi@yahoo.com
Phone: (662) 251-2950 (cell)
 (662) 329-5805 (office)



Since taking office in 2020, I have continued digitizing records. This extensive project has made records freely accessible online to the public, attorneys, banks, and realtors. My office has state-of-the art equipment and data processing programs. I have also implemented the use of debit/credit cards and e-recording of land records.

One of the biggest challenges for our office is the misconception our office can give legal advice and provide legal documentation. We simply explain to the customer we are filing clerks and refer the customer to their attorney and/or Mississippi's many free legal resource services.

My first term in office (4 years) along with 31 years in the courthouse as a Paralegal and Deputy Chancery Clerk, I am the right candidate for Chancery Clerk. (total of 35 years of experience) I am dedicated to service and efficiency. My experience, resources and knowledge allow me to assist the public with resolving their needs or concerns and move them in the right direction for a resolution. I have a solid record of meticulous record management and restoration/preservation of historical documents. I understand the importance of accurate records and maintenance of the County's large archive documents.

Tax Assessor **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$69,575**

Greg Andrews (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent

Tax Collector

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$64,575



1. How would you seek to make your mark as the county's first dedicated tax collector?

2. What are the primary differences between assessor duties and collector duties?

3. What experience/ qualifications make you the right candidate for the position?

Republican

Maci Griffin

Age: 23
Education: High school diploma; EMT certification
Political party: Republican
Political experience:
Residence: Caledonia
Family: Married, one child
Email: macigriffin@yahoo.com
Phone: (662) 769-6224



Get Lowndes County online as quick as possible to accept debit and credit cards, pay taxes online, and to make sure you always have someone to answer your phone call by the second ring. Last but not least to do my best to bring peace and harmony among the workers in the office unlike what is happening now.

Tax assessor determines the value of your property and how much taxes you owe. Tax collector collects those taxes and distributes them to different entities.

I am a young, eager, overachiever that loves working with my community and people. Per Mr. Andrews, nobody in Lowndes Co. is qualified for this position, not even anyone already in his office staff. This is a position that will have to be learned. I have already reached out to other counties to get knowledge of what this involves. Mr. Andrews also assured me that he would start training me as soon as possible. I am the only candidate that has never worked inside the County office and I owe nobody any favors. I wish to be the new face of the Lowndes County Tax office.

Diane Whaley Stephens

Age:
Education:
Political party: Republican
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

Kalee Talley

Age: 25
Education: East Mississippi Community College with my associated degree
Political party: Republican
Political experience: I have worked in the Lowndes County tax Office for four and a half years so I am familiar with the political arena.
Residence: Lowndes County
Family: Married
Email: kaleetalley@gmail.com
Phone: (6621) 251-5597



I would like to make my mark by implementing debit, credit and online payments. I also would like to improve communication between the office and the tax payer.

The main differences between the Tax Assessor and Tax Collector are the Assessor sets values on property then that value is multiplied by the mileage rates. The collector collects all ad va taxes and fees for all the entities and distributes that money into municipalities, schools and the department of revenue.

I believe my experience makes me the right candidate for this position because I am currently employed at the Lowndes County Tax Office. I am very efficient in the computer systems we use at the Tax Office. With my experience I have formed relationships with current employees and that will make for an easy transition between myself, the data processor and the current bookkeeper. Also, I am aware of the changes Lowndes County would like to see.

Coroner

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$185/per death investigation



1. How will the new office space benefit the coroner's office, and what steps should be taken to best use the new facility?

2. What experience/ qualifications make you the right candidate for this position?

3. What are the other challenges facing the coroner's office over the next four years?

Democrat

Leonard Williams Jr.

Age: 24
Education: Associates in Funeral Service Technology; Bachelors in Theological Studies (current)
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: N/A
Residence: Columbus
Family: Williams
Email: leonardwilliams4coroner@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 386-0595



The new coroner's facility would greatly benefit the department because it would allow families to have secured spaces for proper viewing and ID of their loved ones. This facility would also allow proper office space for those who work within the coroner's office and allow for a great amount of square footage for the proper storage of deceased persons.

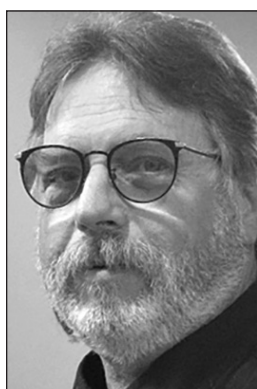
I have worked around the funeral business for 10 years, and for 3 of those years I have been a licensed funeral director and embalmer for the state of MS. My skills and trained knowledge on how to properly communicate with grieving families, showing both love and compassion during one of the hardest times of their life, is what I love to do. This is a ministry and Working with grieving families and deceased persons is my calling.

The coroner's office should look towards implementing provisions regarding giving families the necessary communication regarding any questions pertaining to their loved ones, such as: The time it takes to receive cases back from the crime lab and questions regarding questionable or criminal deaths.

Republican

Greg Merchant (I)

Age: 60
Education: RS Caldwell High School; East Mississippi Jr. College; Dallas Institute of Funeral Service; Death Investigation
Political party: Republican
Political experience: 19 plus years as Lowndes County Coroner
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, four children, five grandchildren with another expected in October
Email: gmerchant@lowndescountymys.com
Phone: (662) 327-5197 (office) (662) 386-0704 (cell)



The new facility will provide us with enough office space for each of my 3 deputies and administrative assistant to each have there own office to complete their death investigation reports in a more controlled and secured area rather than working from their vehicle or homes. We will have ample filing room to maintain and secure investigation reports for many years. When a tragic death occurs, I am always asked if the family can view their deceased family member and we have never had a controlled environment to let this happen because of cross contamination and possibly loss of evidence, we will now be able to offer a state of the art viewing room. This office will offer A conference meeting area for follow up conferences with families. This facility will allow for growth in the future.

I have had a long rewarding Funeral Service career of 45 years, where I graduated from Dallas Institute of Funeral Service with Honors, along the way I have worked a number of years as a Sheriffs Deputy fulltime and as an auxiliary officer and most importantly serving most of the last 20 years as Coroner. My staff and I bring more than 60+ year experience of Death Investigation to the office. My three deputies bring a wide variety of experience, one has a 30 year EMS experience, one a RN waiting to sit for her Nurse Practitioner board and one a 35 year law enforcement career. I am the State Commander of the Mortuary Response Team that response to mass frailties such as tornados, Airplane crashes, etc. I have lead operations in Choctaw, Monroe, Winston and most recently in Sharkey County and the Jackson Response to the KC 130 Marine Airplane Crash.

The ever raising drug problem, old drugs new drugs and the supplements sold at the corner gas station. The associability of internet drugs creates delays in death certificates being issued, delays in Toxicology testing and the concern if the labs are testing for the correct substance. The lack of Doctors at the at the State Medical Examiners Office to complete and issue autopsy reports in a timely manner. The need for additional Doctors and staff to get the deceased released back to their grieving families in a more acceptable time.

County Prosecutor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000

William Starks (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

District 1 Supervisor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000



1. How can the county best capitalize/build on its economic successes over recent years?

2. How can the county more effectively work with the city of Columbus?

3. What other challenges do you see the county facing and how would you address them as supervisor?

Democrat

Tommy Lee Kidd

Age:
Education:
Political party: Democrat
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

Republican

Michael L. Brock

Age: 59
Education: Associate degree in business-EMCC; Life Underwriting Training Council Fellow-American College
Political party: Republican
Political experience: I ran for Supervisor 30 years ago
Residence: Caledonia
Family: Married, four children, two grandchildren
Email: mbrock39740@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 386-9555



Success begets success, so we should continue to make development a priority and actively pursue it. However, we must balance attracting industry with developing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure, workforce capability, and debt load to sustain that success. Some challenges new industry could face are raw material transportation to the site; facility power requirements; local community safety and acceptance; a trained and willing workforce; and final product transportation to the buyers. We can also pursue industry types that don't require a mega site such as smaller manufacturing companies like APEX ammunition. We can even think outside the box and consider pursuing a small nuclear power plant on the river in south Lowndes County. This isn't as far-fetched as it may seem, since Steel Dynamics is the single largest user of electricity in the TVA system. When Aluminum Dynamics comes online, a small nuclear plant could aid the current system.

I'm in favor of a culture of cooperation that projects a positive community. I believe the county and city can work more effectively together the same way each member of a family works together for the benefit of the whole family. We first define the role of each member and determine their responsibilities. If those responsibilities are not being met, and they should be, then that entity must work to correct the problem before we move forward. Second, we identify overlapping or duplicate services which can be merged to eliminate waste and frustration. Then we evaluate how we might assist each other to better serve all. Finally, we implement a clear plan of action that results in a win-win for both the county and the city and monitor the plan to make sure that one member isn't left behind or is carrying out a disproportionate share of the work.

The greatest challenge our county will face is the loss of forty years of leadership experience because of the retirement of Mr. Harry Sanders and Mr. John Holliman. I have studied our county. I interviewed many current and former county employees to better see their perspectives. I reviewed the latest financial audit. I met with volunteer fire fighters to grasp their challenges. I visited with elected officials in other counties to learn their successes and failures. I talked with local industry managers. As I campaign, I keep a detailed journal of conversations with suggestions from voters in my district. Proverbs says there is safety in an abundance of counselors. Therefore, I will continue to seek wisdom from competent counselors and advisors, so I can help fill the void left by the retirement of Mr. Holliman and Mr. Sanders.

Kevin U. Clark

Age: 49
Education: Bachelor's Degree, Mississippi State University
Political party: Republican
Political experience: Years of being a frustrated taxpayer.
Residence: Steens
Family: Married, two children
Email: kczbest@yahoo.com
Phone: (662) 574-0245



Success breeds success. We must keep our foot on the gas and continue to recruit new Industries and employment opportunities. We are blessed to have the Hospital Fund, and we must continue to protect it as an investment in the future of our children and grandchildren.

First things first, the City needs to complete a forensic audit of its finances. We need to know exactly where each other stands financially before we can trust each other enough to truly and openly increase collaboration between both entities.

I am very proud of the current industries that we have and the pending Aluminum Mill. We currently have industries that are paying very well, and we have been told what to expect the Aluminum Mill to pay, and these are both very good opportunities. However, it is also a two edged sword in that many of our County employees are underpaid while at the same time we are hearing about all of these good paying jobs coming soon. In order to attract and retain people with the experience and skill set that the County needs, we must find a way to be more competitive with our employees pay packages while at the same time keeping the tax burden down on our taxpayers.

Matt Furnari

Age: 47
Education: Bachelors Degree in Business Management from Mississippi State
Political party: Republican
Political experience: 6 years (Currently serving 2nd term as Alderman for Town of Caledonia)
Residence: Caledonia
Family: Married, two children
Email: rtdllc05@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 574-2591



Do not take the proverbial foot off the gas. Success breeds success and this is the time to attract more industry/businesses to our area. As stable as a business may be or perceived to be it could close the doors tomorrow. We witnessed it in our own community with General Tire/Omnova, Bryan foods in neighboring West Point, and others. With added revenue comes opportunity to improve infrastructure, public safety and recreation, which in turn will help attract more industry/businesses. If we invest our money back into the community properly by making measurable improvements in these areas we will see the benefits. It truly is a circle effect, attract business – spend money wisely on improving community – more business will come. The goal is to not break this successful economic circle.

It is crucial that Columbus is a thriving city. No matter how successful Lowndes County becomes, it will hit a wall if its anchor city Columbus does not keep up. An overly simplified answer to this is communication and cooperation. Lowndes County and Columbus are two separately governed entities, but we have to work together wherever the law and common sense allows. Public safety would be my main recommendation. Making sure our Sherriff's department and the Columbus City police department have a productive working relationship.

Something I have always said when talking about growth is, I do not want growth just to say we are growing, I like to say what we want is good growth. With our economic blessings come the responsibility to use that money in the best places possible to improve the most lives. Another issue we will face is having qualified employees to fill all the new jobs. We must be a good partner with Lowndes County Schools to make sure there is a continued focus on vocational programs that match with the highly skilled jobs available.

District 2 Supervisor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000

Republican

Trip Hairston (I)

Age: 51
Education: B.A. degree in Banking and Finance from the University of Mississippi and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Belhaven University
Political party: Republican
Political experience: 1 term as District 2 Supervisor, Board President since October of 2020, employed as a Budget Analyst for the Legislative Budget Office from 1995 to 2000
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, three children
Email: hairstontrip@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 251-5006



Lowndes County has been very successful in economic development through the efforts of the Golden Triangle Development LINK. We have a lot of momentum and have become an economic hot spot in the State and region. I believe developing another certified megasite is necessary for future growth and allows us to be immediately competitive in recruiting additional industry by having 1,000 plus acres available with access to highway, available power, and potential for rail. With all that said, I also recognize that over the years the normal business lifecycle resulted in loss of industries that were once staples of our community: Omnova, EcoLab, Ceco Engineering, American Bosch, etc. I am committed to paving the way for future economic development in Lowndes County because we can never rest on the laurels of our successes.

The people in District 2 deserve and expect us to effectively work with the city of Columbus as well as the towns of Caledonia, Artesia, and Crawford. I share a good working relationship with the mayor and individual council members, and I plan to continue to partner with them in areas where we have a common interest. I am proud that during the current term, we have developed new initiatives and collaborations with Columbus in the following ways: agreed to share in the expense of mowing the interchanges on Hwy 82; committed to fund \$450k of ARPA funds for storm drainage improvements inside the city; gifted property to the Columbus Redevelopment Authority for a proposed residential development surrounding the Roger Short Soccer Complex; submitted a joint grant proposal for funding an assessment study of recreation taking into account any future developments and current facilities.

Upward wage pressure for our county employees is a challenge. We will lose talent and experience if we do not stay on top of wages. The loss of machine operators, deputies, jailers, 911 operators, purchase clerks, etcetera could cripple the County's operations and decrease the quantity and quality of services provided to the taxpayer. Inflation is a challenge. In real terms, for every 10 miles of roads paved in 2021, only 5.2 miles of roads can be paved with the same money in 2023. We will have a lot of economic growth with the addition of new development projects, and with that growth comes higher demand for the services we provide. We will have to continue to closely manage budget pressures and finances through this next term by trimming expenses in some areas and increasing expenses in others to meet these challenges.

District 2 Supervisor (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000



1. How can the county best capitalize/build on its economic successes over recent years?

2. How can the county more effectively work with the city of Columbus?

3. What other challenges do you see the county facing and how would you address them as supervisor?

Republican

Brad Holliman
 Age:
 Education:
 Political party: Republican
 Political experience:
 Residence:
 Family:
 Email:
 Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

District 3 Supervisor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000

Republican

Chad Frasher
 Age: 51
 Education: Caldwell High School
 Political party: Republican
 Political experience: None
 Residence: Columbus
 Family: Married
 Email: cfrasher5@gmail.com
 Phone: (662) 574-7206



The County can capitalize on its economics by keep pushing forward, keep recruiting large and small business to Lowndes Co. This is the future for our family's. We all want Lowndes Co. to succeed in every way possible. Continue to push hard for economic development/infrastructure. More development means more jobs for people and the growth of our great county.

How can the county more effectively work with the city of Columbus? More communication between the Mayor, City Council, and Supervisors. Communication is the key! It's imperative for the city and county to have a viable working relationship.

We need to make sure that we have a trained and skilled workforce to fill these jobs. Work with the local schools and colleges to insure they have the training needed to keep as many jobs as possible for the people of Lowndes Co.

Anthony "Tony" Hannah
 Age:
 Education: 1990 Graduate of South Lamar High School
 Political party: Republican
 Political experience:
 Residence: Columbus
 Family: Married, six children, 11 grandchildren
 Email: ahannah8675@gmail.com
 Phone: (662) 251-4782



The best way to capitalize is to not become stagnant, continuing the path of bringing new industries and good paying jobs into the area will build on the recent successes. Being able to bring in accommodations in the way of shopping, entertainment, etc... for the existing and new incoming citizens would only make Lowndes County more attractive rather than losing incoming citizens to Clay or Oktibbeha Counties.

A better open line of communication with the city will be a start. The possibility of having a quarterly meeting between the county supervisors and the city council should be discussed. Both the county and the city need to have the realization that anything that happens in both areas affects the other in both good and bad ways. The county may have strengths in areas where the city does not and visa versa. We should be able to capitalize on each other's strengths for the betterment of the city and the county.

Growth of citizens to the area from incoming industries will be a challenge in many areas. Housing, infrastructure, spousal job placement, growth in school placements, etc..., as each of these challenges arise, they will have to be addressed with the board individually, however, having foresight for the anticipated growth and making plans ahead of time should be something of priority.

Andy Williamson
 Age: 51
 Education: Graduated from New Hope 1990
 Political party: Republican
 Political experience: None
 Residence: Columbus
 Family: Married, four children, four grandchildren
 Email: williamsonelec@gmail.com
 Phone: (662) 242-2102



Use that track record and success to continually pursue more mega site locations and more industry, we can't afford to let our foot off the gas on economic development for Lowndes County.

I would try to have a friendly working relationship with the city, I have a good friend on that board.

I think the illegal drugs are getting out of hand, I would want to give the Lowndes county sheriff's department all the tools and resources that they need to combat this issue.

Independent

Christopher Moore
 Age: 37
 Education: High School, airman leadership, NCO leadership school both military, 4 month lineman trade school
 Political party: Independent
 Political experience: None
 Residence: Columbus
 Family: Married, two children and one on the way
 Email: Badddoggy@yahoo.com
 Phone: (662) 352-6464



We have to keep growing. Start bring in company's that can use the the products from Aluminum Mill. Start looking for investors to bring shopping, eating, and entertainment to the community.

I believe the sitting board does a good job working with the city now. I would continue to grow the relationship to better the growth of our community.

With the lack of volunteer response during the day in all areas I would like to work with all five chiefs and the Fire Coordinator to move forward with a full time daytime fire dept for faster response times during the day. I also want to work with EMA/911 Coordinator to research what it will take to hire and retain 911 employees, the backbone to all of the EMS in the Lowndes County area dispatching for 9 different agencies plus calling Mississippi Highway Patrol and utility companies on certain calls. The current board has done a great job by raising wages but would like to see what else can be done to improve the existing strides already made. Challenges facing Dist 3 would be the lack of community events.

District 4 Supervisor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000



1. How can the county best capitalize/build on its economic successes over recent years?

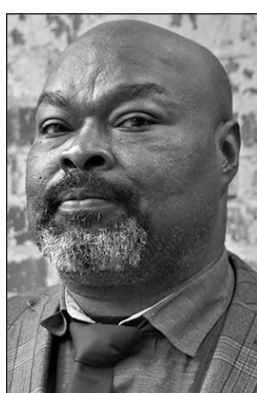
2. How can the county more effectively work with the city of Columbus?

3. What other challenges do you see the county facing and how would you address them as supervisor?

Democrat

Herman Phillips

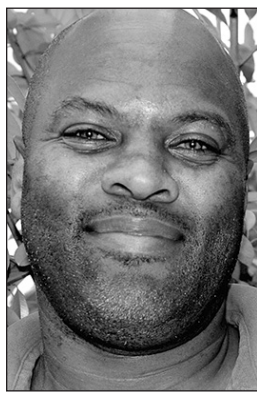
Age:
Education:
Political party: Democrat
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

Anthony Sanders

Age:
Education:
Political party: Democrat
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

Jeff Smith (I)

Age: 61
Education: Caldwell High School
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: 16 Years County Supervisor (Lowndes)
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, three children
Email: jsmith@lowndescountymys.com
Phone: (662) 386-6923



Continue to aggressively Identify land under the leadership of the Link that will successfully create additional economic growth.

City & County Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Committee Re-established annual meeting to focus on joint issues that Impact the City & County ability to successful serve.

Housing...Housing...Housing, with Job growth come a need for more living space. County leadership & Private Developer Partnership working together to focuses on creating badly needed designated housing communities.

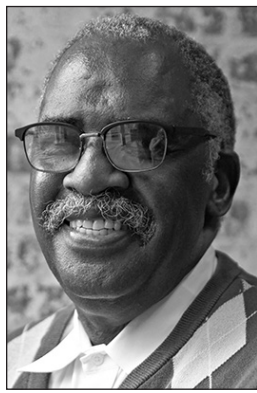
District 5 Supervisor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000

Democrat

Leroy Brooks (I)

Age: 69
Education: B.A. Political, Masters of Social Studies; Concentration Public Administration and Policy and Psychology
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: Supervisor nearly 40 years; student of Political Science; College Instructor in Political Science
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, two children, two grandchildren
Email: lbrooks@lowndescountymys.com
Phone: (662) 328-0032 (home), (662) 251-8125 (cell), (662) 329-5871 (office)



The county can best capitalize/build on its economic successes by maintaining a strong partnership with educational and training facilities to insure there is a viable workforce. To enhance the quality of life in the community through viable recreation and cultural programs; encourage housing development.

The County has actively supported the city of Columbus on several projects through direct financial support or in-kind services. A strong partnership will only develop when each elected official recognize that working together is a give and take proposition and we're working for the good of the community and not personal agendas.

The county will face a number of challenges with its continuous growth. The construction and maintenance of county roads, the need for viable fire protection that is not being provided in some parts of the county, increased law enforcement and the overall need to enhance the quality of life for all citizens. I feel confident through a viable plan of action and a reasonable approach to spending, we can meet the challenges.

Independent

Tiffany Turner

Age: 35
Education: Columbus High School; East Mississippi Community College; Mississippi University of Women
Political party: Independent
Political experience: Historic Preservation Commission, Former Utility Commissioner, Community Activist
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married
Email: tsturdivant1987@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 609-4976



We have to start preparing a workforce for the incoming industry. Preparing the workforce is essential for the betterment of our economy. We have to start with accessibility to our workforce readiness programs at East Mississippi Community College, the Greater Learning Center and other trade schools and targeting 18-25 year olds and any other ages that want to join. This is the age group that ironically is responsible for 20% of crime in our area. Crime is the result of poverty, poverty is a result of hopelessness. Hopelessness can be from a lot of things but mostly from not being able to provide a substantial income. A more interactive campaign for accessibility to these opportunities would make our county better not just economically but it will decrease our crime at the same time.

Lowndes County Board of Supervisors does not have a fair agreement with the City of Columbus. It feels like our elected officials of Columbus and the Board of Supervisors seem to be more divided now more than ever. The city of Columbus is one of the largest tax bases in Lowndes County. Citizens pay both city and county taxes but benefit the least. We have to start with building a long term mutual relationship with Columbus and all of the municipalities, townships and communities of Lowndes. (Even New Hope if they so choose to become a township.) We need to get in a serious work session where we talk through strategic planning over the next 3-5 years. We need to be planning our efforts together in infrastructure, parks and recreation and crime. We can have a greater impact if we use our resources together because we service the same people.

Mental health: 1 in 5 people are affected by mental health challenges in this country. Our county has room to grow in knowledge and resources as community stakeholders on how to access and handle situations before it escalates to a crisis. As a certified Mental Health First Aid Trainer, I have access to training sessions and materials that can be available to community stakeholders. With the proper training we can spread awareness and dispell stigmas to get these individuals the proper assistance needed. Drugs: We have a serious problem with drugs. The availability and appearance of these drugs can be deceptive and deadly. Our law enforcement is doing great work to rid the streets of these drugs and most recently our state legislation has passed a law permitting use of test strips to identify fentanyl which could be fatal in a single dose.

Justice Court Judge District 1 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000**

Chris Hemphill (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

Justice Court Judge District 2 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000**

Ron Cooke (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

Justice Court Judge District 3 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$52,000**



1. What makes you the best candidate for justice court judge?

2. No legal degree is needed for this position. How will you ensure knowledge of the law when hearing cases?

3. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge in the justice court system?

Democrat

James E. Gunter
Age: 60
Education: Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice, Troy University
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: None
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, two children
Email: gunterteam00@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 386-4438

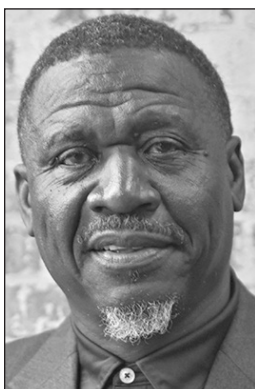


My life experiences, 28 years in law enforcement, 30 years in the military, and a B.S. Degree in Criminal Justice makes me the best candidate for justice court judge.
 In my career, I was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant in the Army and Captain with the Mississippi Highway Patrol. I developed qualities of patience, decisiveness, and good verbal communication skills.
 My level of training and expertise meets the very highest standards of integrity, fairness, professional competence and judicial temperament which are instrumental in being an effect justice court judge.

I will follow all mandatory training and professional development set by Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance. I will attend Justice Court Seminars/Webinars throughout the state to stay abreast of laws passed by Mississippi State Legislatures. These continuous trainings/seminars in law and court proceedings will ensure fairness and consistency when interpreting law and rendering decisions in court proceedings.

I believe the biggest challenge in justice court today is the rehabilitation of offenders while ensuring the protection of vulnerable members of our community. This is being discussed at length in criminal justice programs and remains an issue of high importance in our court system.

Joseph Mickens
Age: 65
Education: Graduated Noxubee County High School; Completed Course Work in Business Management at EMCC and Alcorn State University
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: Served 14 years as the Ward 2 Councilman for the City of Columbus
Residence:
Family: Married, seven children, nine grandchildren
Email: floorspecialist146@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 251-0724



To fulfill the duties of a justice court judge on must be fair and impartial. I have learned a lot through my experience as Councilman for Ward 2 over the past 14 years. During this time, I have proved that I can make decisions with an open mind while remaining firm and confident even when I must stand alone in my decision. I am an active and compassionate listener who operates with honesty and integrity, and I believe in walking the talk. As a business owner and independent contractor, I must be a good listener to meet the needs of the consumer. I will approach the duties and responsibilities of the justice court judge with the same level of accountability and commitment. I feel I have the experience, care, and concern for the citizens of Lowndes County to serve as district 3 justice court judge.

While no legal degree is required, there are requirements that I plan to fulfill by completing the required training course and the competency exam. I will familiarize myself with the manual for Mississippi justice court. Above all I will be patient, clear-minded and fair, understanding that I will often make difficult and unpopular decisions.

I feel the biggest challenge is making sure that everyone is treated with fairness and equality. Judges serve a diverse population who deserve fair representation and equal access to justice.

Peggy Phillips (I)
Age: 83
Education: High School graduate and 100 of hours of continuing education from the University of Mississippi Judicial College
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: Incumbent Justice Court Judge from the Third Judicial District
Residence: Crawford
Family: Widow, three children, one grandchild, two great-grandchildren
Email: bigmamajudge@aol.com
Phone: (662) 272-5777 (home)
 (662) 329-5928 (office)
 (662) 252-8116 (cell)



I am the best candidate because of my years of experience, dedication, and availability and the education received from the numerous training seminars that I have attended and most importantly to pray to my God for guidance in making my court decisions.

By continuing as required to attend the training seminars, researching the Mississippi Code, studying and using the criminal and civil statutes and codes in making judgements according to the minimum and maximum penalties and civil judgements.

The biggest challenge is to make litigents aware that we as judges can only give the court procedures in filing criminal affidavits and filing civil suits and not give legal advice. We are the peoples court and are available to the people but are limited as to the duties of a judge. The only exception is the exparte communication in petitions for protection from domestic abuse we do have personal communication on those types of civil cases.

Constable District 1 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$4,500 + \$55/per paper served**

Chris Griffin (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

Constable District 2 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$4,500 + \$55/per paper served**

Joe Ables Jr. (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

Constable District 3 **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$4,500 + \$55/per paper served**

Willie Sonny Sanders (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent

District Attorney **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$134,400**



1. How do you view the balance between punishment and diversion in the criminal justice system, and what do you believe is the district attorney's role in striking that balance?

2. What efforts can the district attorney's office make or support over the next four years toward reducing recidivism?

3. How important of a role should victims' advocacy play in the district attorney's office, and in what ways would you promote that over the next four years?

Democrat

Scott Colom (I)
Age: 40
Education: Juris Doctorate
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: 2 terms as elected District Attorney
Residence: Columbus
Family: Colom
Email: scolom@msda16.org
Phone: (662) 329-5911



I think the difference between punishment and diversion depends on the nature of the crime, the recommendations of the victim, the criminal history of the person, and the best options for rehabilitation. In my eight years as DA, I've prioritized prison for violent crime because violence destroys families and communities. My office has a 95% conviction rate for indictments and over 85% for jury trials. I've personally led the prosecution of 26 violent criminals and gotten guilty verdicts in 24 of them with 1 hung. When it comes to non-violent crime, first offenders, I prioritize rehabilitation. For people suffering from substance abuse, I'll typically offer pretrial diversion services that try to connect them with rehabilitation services or job placement or educational services. For people suffering from advanced drug or substance abuse issues, I'll work with the Drug Court to determine if they have services that could be helpful.

The first problem with recidivism in Mississippi is our prison system does not have the resources to provide enough opportunity for rehabilitation. Too often what I hear from inmates is that they had to do everything in their power just to survive. Until MDOC is properly funded, the best way to reduce recidivism is to focus on young people. Over the next four years, I plan to work with the Youth Court to identify juveniles on the wrong track and partner with those courts to find resources and grants to help them provide services and mentorship. I also plan to work with the schools in my district to help identify troubled youth and determine what assistance can be provided to get them the guidance they need to reach their potential. This will take the involvement of community partners like churches, non-profits, and other community organizations.

The role of victims' advocacy in the district attorney's office is of paramount importance. Victims of crimes often experience significant trauma and emotional distress, and it is crucial for the justice system to prioritize their rights, needs, and support throughout the legal process. Here's how I have promoted victims over the previous four years. My office was the first in the state to offer grievance counseling for survivors of gun violence to help these survivors work with each other to learn how to live with the loss of a loved one. We were also the first DA's office in the State to offer tree planting ceremonies for victims of violence to symbolically help them deal with the long, arduous grieving process. Finally, my office has also prioritized restitution for victims of property crime to help them recover the financial loss someone's crime caused them.

District Attorney

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$134,400



1. How do you view the balance between punishment and diversion in the criminal justice system, and what do you believe is the district attorney's role in striking that balance?

2. What efforts can the district attorney's office make or support over the next four years toward reducing recidivism?

3. How important of a role should victims' advocacy play in the district attorney's office, and in what ways would you promote that over the next four years?

Republican

Jase Dalrymple

Age: 31
Education: Mississippi State (2014); University of Mississippi School of Law (2016)
Political party: Republican
Political experience: None
Residence: Starkville
Family: Married
Email: Jase@recsi.net
Phone: (662) 327-1088



A balance between punishment and diversion simply doesn't exist. Cases must be assessed and prosecuted on a case by case basis. Drug abuse cases and cases involving first time offenders of non-violent crime qualify for some form of "diversion." All others must be sentenced accordingly based upon the severity of their crime, their likelihood to re-offend and what type of threat they pose to society (usually evidenced by their criminal history). There is a fine line between placing the interests of a felon before the interests of your community.

It is not the district attorney's role to ensure that individuals don't re-offend. All I can do is give a qualifying individual a second chance (completing a court program so they will not be a convicted felon), which puts them in the best possible position moving forward. I would like to be more actively involved in the community, particularly in our schools and youth courts, so we might curb some of this crime on the front end. More of our kids need to know who the district attorney is, what he does, and the reality of punishment awaiting them if they break the law. Not to scare them, but to educate them on reality before they make a decision which could ruin their lives.

I believe victims advocacy is vital in the criminal justice process. I believe that prosecutors owe a duty to the victims of crime to make them as whole as they could possibly be given the circumstance. Sometimes this involves affecting retribution in the form of a lengthy, or permanent, jail sentence. Other times this involves making them financially whole. My office will provide and type of special assistance needed, including assistance with applications to state and federal grants for victims. My primary focus will be putting criminals who create victims in a position where they fear the repercussions so much that they never do it again, and in some cases, they won't be able to.

Chuck Easley

Age:
Education:
Political party: Republican
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

State Representative District 37

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Andy Boyd (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

State Representative District 38

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Cheikh Taylor (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent

State Representative District 39

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Dana McLean (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent

State Representative District 41

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500



1. How can the state best use the influx of revenue it received from federal sources during the pandemic?

2. What are the priorities for your district in the next four years?

3. What is your position on expanding Medicaid?

Democrat

Kabir Karriem (I)

Age: 50
Education: S.D. Lee High School C/O "91"; Hinds Community College; Mississippi State University, Bachelor of Science
Political party: Democrat
Political experience: Two term State Representative House District 41, Two term Columbus City Councilman, Past aMember of the Lowndes County Industrial Development Board
Residence: Columbus
Family: Married, five children, one deceased
Email: reelectkabirkarriem@gmail.com
Phone: (662) 328-3063



To best utilize the federal revenue influx during the pandemic, Mississippi should prioritize the following areas:

Healthcare: Allocate more funds to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, improve access to quality care in underserved areas, expand telehealth services, and invest in public health initiatives (Expand Medicaid) This will enhance preparedness for future health crises and improve healthcare outcomes for residents.

Education and Workforce Development: Increase more funding for public schools, focusing on addressing pandemic-related learning gaps. In past sessions, we have invested in technology infrastructure, by expanding broadband access and providing more pay and resources for our teachers and students. Lastly, we must continue to allocate funds to vocational training programs and community colleges to equip Mississippians with needed skills.

Economic Recovery: Our small businesses and industries were severely impacted by the pandemic. We need thorough grants, loans, and business development programs, to invest in job creation initiatives.

There are a plethora of priorities for House District 41 in the next term

Economic Development: Lowndes Co. Is one of the most progressive counties as it relates to fostering job creation and attracting new industries to the district. This past session the legislature passed the biggest economic development package in Mississippi's history in the sum of \$2.5 billion. I was proud to be a part of that team and be an Author of the legislation that made it happen. We need to do a better job promoting entrepreneurship and supporting minority-owned small businesses, by continuing to invest in our communities' workforce development programs, equipping residents with the skills needed for available job opportunities.

Infrastructure: We must improve and maintain critical infrastructure in the district, such as roads, bridges and develop some kind of public transportation, and broadband internet throughout the entire district.

I support the expansion of Medicaid wholeheartedly because it will increase access to healthcare. Expanding Medicaid can provide health insurance coverage to a significant number of uninsured individuals who would otherwise lack access to affordable healthcare. This can help improve overall health outcomes, provide preventive care, and ensure timely treatment for chronic conditions.

Medicaid expansion will have positive economic impacts. It will create jobs in the healthcare sector, stimulate local economies, and reduce uncompensated care costs for hospitals and healthcare providers. By drawing down federal funds, Mississippi can benefit from the increased federal spending within its own economy.

Financial Relief for Low-Income Individuals: Medicaid expansion can alleviate financial burdens on low-income individuals and families by providing them with access to comprehensive health coverage. It can reduce medical debt, prevent families from falling into poverty due to healthcare expenses, and promote financial stability.

Libertarian

Claude Simpson

Age:
Education:
Political party: Libertarian
Political experience:
Residence:
Family:
Email:
Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

State Representative District 42

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Carl Mickens (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent

State Senator District 16

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Angela Turner-Ford (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent

State Senator District 17

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$23,500

Charles "Chuck" Younger (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent