

# Voter's Guide

## OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

### 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

### West Starkville

Oktibbeha County Storm Shelter, 985 Lynn Lane, Starkville

### North Longview

Longview Fire Station, 11059 Highway 12 W., Starkville

### South Adaton

Adaton Baptist Church, 2872 Highway 82 W., Starkville

### Double Spring

Double Spring Baptist Church, 10284 Sturgis Maben Road, Maben

### Hickory Grove

East Oktibbeha Fire Station, 15052 Old Highway 82 E., Starkville

### North Starkville II

Mt. Pelier Church, 814 N. Jackson St., Starkville

### Osborn

16th Section Baptist Life Center, 5436 Old West Point Road, Starkville

### Bell School House

Bell School House Fire Station, 7407 Highway 389, Starkville

### North Adaton

Adaton Fire Station, 16 W. Reed Road, Starkville

### East Starkville

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 607 University Dr., Starkville

### Maben

Maben City Hall, 711 Second Ave., Maben

### North Starkville III

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 607 Hospital Road, Starkville

### South Starkville

Starkville Sportsplex, 405 Lynn Lane, Starkville

### South Longview

Longview Fire Station, 11059 Highway 12 W., Starkville

### Craig Springs

Craig Springs Fire Station, 7040 Craig Springs Road, Sturgis

### Sturgis

Sturgis Fire Station, 137 Montgomery St., Sturgis

### Central Starkville

Circuit Court Annex, 108 W. Main St., Starkville

### Needmore

RecPlex, 8 Buckner Lane, Starkville

### Oktoc

Oktoc Fire Station, 2024 Oktoc Road, Starkville

### Sessums

Blackjack M.B. Church, 4907 Blackjack Road, Starkville

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# THE STARKVILLE DISPATCH

Saturday, August 5, 2023

**Sheriff** **Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$100,000**



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. The winner of this race will replace three-term sheriff Steve Gladney. What do you plan to continue from his administration? How would you differentiate yourself from your predecessor?

**Democrat**

**John Rice**  
 Age: 50  
 Education: Liberal Arts - East Mississippi CC, B.S. in Science - Eastern Michigan University  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience: Candidate for Sheriff in 2019  
 Residence: Starkville  
 Family: NA  
 Email: ricej32@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 312-2187



Primary crime issues are individuals settling issues with weapons, juvenile crimes. Solving these issues will take a lot of change, change in the gun culture, change in culture with the help of the community, leaders, groups like (Violent Interrupters), and education.

Did not answer.

Uniting Community where the Sheriff's Office takes the lead creating a relationship with community leaders with monthly meetings.

**Republican**

**Shank Phelps**  
 Age: 51  
 Education: Starkville High Graduate, 1990, Graduate of the Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Academy, 1993  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: Constable District 1, Oktibbeha County, 2012-Present  
 Residence: Maben  
 Family: Married, two children, one grandchild and one on the way  
 Email: shankphelps@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 418-6444



I believe that the primary crime problem in Oktibbeha County is a combination of juvenile crime and drug-related offenses. Juvenile crime is a big concern to me because it is affecting the future of the young individuals involved. I would like to work closely with our youth court system to hold the juvenile offenders accountable for their actions, and letting them know there are consequences for their actions, while also providing them with support and resources they need to get their lives turned around. Additionally, drug-related offenses contribute to the rise of criminal activity and pose a threat to public safety. I think that expanding our narcotics team is a crucial step towards resolving these issues in our county. By increasing the resources and manpower of our narcotics unit, we can enhance their ability to investigate, apprehend, and disrupt drug trafficking activities, ultimately making our community safer.

Despite the challenging circumstances faced by many departments in maintaining full staffing levels, our sheriff has done an excellent job in retaining and recruiting all personnel. I would like to expand our department and believe that expanding our narcotics and investigation units would be a valuable step forward. By doing this, I aim to create more job opportunities within our department. Our department would offer comprehensive training programs to ensure that our deputies and personnel are well-prepared to handle the challenges of these units. I also feel like having competitive pay will play a crucial role in attracting, retaining, motivating, and rewarding our personnel within the department. I strongly feel that these factors will help protect the citizens of this county and help our department to grow even more.

During my time working under Sheriff Gladney from 2012-2015, I learned a great deal about effective community policing and building strong relationships with residents. Our county has changed a lot over the past 12 years and I think that Sheriff Gladney has done a great job at keeping our department up to date. I hope to keep promoting teamwork and making sure everyone feels included in our department. I plan on using lessons I have learned from Sheriff Gladney to keep the good changes going while also adapting to what our community needs as it changes. Our county is growing every day and my goal is to keep Oktibbeha County a safe place to raise a family.

**Tax Assessor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$74,925 (baseline)**



1. What are your plans to modernize/digitize record keeping in the tax assessor's office?

2. What are the other challenges facing that office, and how would you address them?

3. What experience/qualifications make you the best candidate?

**Democrat**

**JoHelen Walker**  
 Age: 50  
 Education: Starkville High, I've studied at EMCC (East Mississippi Community College), MUW (Mississippi University for Women), certified under Mississippi Office of the State  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience: Member of the National Democratic Party for women. Rally to vote.  
 Residence: Starkville  
 Family: Two children, four grandchildren  
 Email: johelenjoeywalker@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 418-9244



The current program that is used to my knowledge is working to the best of its ability, and with Oktibbeha County growing in leaps and bounds, I plan to keep website updated about exemptions, laws passed by legislation, maps and the land roll.

In the current position I am in: We face long lines! There are times we can not avoid that! Every situation is different and it takes time depending on the matter(s) at hand. However, when you are in front of the deputy, you will have their undivided attention.

I have 24 years of experience being a deputy clerk with a few years of banking. For me, it's not about just collecting money for tags and taxes. I try to understand the questions, situations and problems from "PEOPLE"! I answer questions from "CITIZENS" all across the world trying to get established in general, from understanding documents needed for services requested, who makes the decisions on how taxes and fees are calculated and where your money is going!

**Republican**

**John Montgomery**  
 Age: 45  
 Education: Graduate from MSU in the fall of 1999 in Risk Management/ Insurance/ and Financial Management  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: Served as Oktibbeha County Supervisor from 2012 to current. Finishing my 3rd term.  
 Residence: Oktibbeha County  
 Family:  
 Email: johnmontgomery1977@gmail.com  
 Phone: (672) 312-0131



It's important to keep a hard copy of all the land deeds and tax records while having a safe backup digital copy off-site to protect the landowners of Oktibbeha County as well as the Tax Assessor's Office in Oktibbeha County. A digital system does currently create and hold this data off site in digital form, and it is also stored and backed up daily. If given the opportunity to serve as your Tax Assessor and Collector, I will certainly explore new technology that will continue to modernize and digitize our tax records. I also want to continue to ensure that the taxpayers of Oktibbeha County have the option to pay their taxes online, in person, or mail them in.

Currently, the Tax Office and the Board of Supervisors are constantly communicating effectively to update and improve the Tax Office for our citizens, and I believe it is vital to keep the line of communication open. Oktibbeha County has experienced and continues to experience growth, and I am very proud of that, and we have to make sure that the Tax Office can keep up with that growth by being efficient, effective, and knowledgeable. I want to ensure that the Tax Office is prepared to handle growth through periodic training to ensure our staff is up to date and knowledgeable to help the tax paying citizens of Oktibbeha County.

I have a degree in Risk Management, Insurance, and Financial Management from Mississippi State University. I graduated with honors in the fall of 1999. I have always been a servant at heart, and after graduating, I wanted to give back to my community so I joined the Starkville Fire Department. That role helped me grow as a leader and taught me the importance of making tough and responsible decisions. I retired from that role as a Lieutenant. I also founded a small business, Montgomery Lawn Maintenance. I was elected District 1 Supervisor in 2011, and I am currently finishing out my third term thanks to the voters of Oktibbeha County. I am currently the Board of Supervisors Vice-President, and I served as Board President in 2020.

**Circuit Court Clerk**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$99,000**

**Tony Rook (Independent) - Unopposed incumbent**

**Chancery Court Clerk**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$99,000**

**Sharon Livingston (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent**

**Coroner**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: Up to \$56,500**

**Michael Hunt (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**County Prosecutor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$42,500**

**Haley Brown (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**



**District 1 Supervisor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**



**1. Currently, the board of supervisors divides money for road projects near-evenly among the five district, rather than operating a countywide program for paving priorities. Which method do you favor and why?**

**2. How can the county work more effectively with the City of Starkville?**

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

**Democrat**

**Ronnie Clardy**

**Age:** 42  
**Education:** I attended Starkville academy until 1997 and completed with homeschooling from Old Dominion in Kosciusko Ms. GED and also attended EMCC in Mayhew and received a basic EMT certificate  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** Center Grove community  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:**  
**Phone:** (662) 418-3804



I agree with the districts "sharing" the money. I think projects would have a better chance of getting completed that way rather than running out of money and having to come back to it later

As far as communicating with the city, I really don't have a good answer. Again, I am new to this and don't have all the answers, but if elected im willing to work with whoever and whenever to make Oktibbeha county, regardless of district, a better place for all and try to resolve any issues for all residents.

I would like to address issues such as speeding on county roads, traffic light at intersection of self creek and 182, street lights for better illumination around dollar general and same intersection, and also better drainage and road conditions when and where funds are available.

**Erik Young**

**Age:** 39  
**Education:** Starkville High School graduate 2003  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married, four children  
**Email:** elyoung84@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 418-6032



I would like to see the money dispensed countywide. Many areas are being omitted that needs repairs and upgrades. With everyone paying their taxes, we do not want them being or feeling left out. We would like them to feel included and to have access to the same services as other areas in the county while getting the upgrades needed.

The county can work more effectively with the city by cross training. Meaning that the city allows the county see what projects that the city considers a priority and the county allows the city to see what projects the county considers a priority. This collaboration will work for the common good of the people by allowing both teams to find common ground to move projects forward. The city and the county can then work to build a plan where the needs of the people are a priority while the needs of the city and county are being met.

Although I think the county is doing a fantastic job, there is always room for improvement. One needed improvement I see is the trash cans. Our residents are paying for the trash cans. They should not have to call to have destroyed or damaged trash cans replaced. The trash cans should be replaced once they reach a certain number of years of usage. In addition, I see low hanging limbs and debris on the county roads that can be deemed as a hazard. There is also a need to ensure that our county and city employees feel valued and appreciated within their positions.

**Republican**

**Ben Carver (I)**

**Age:** 42  
**Education:** Starkville High School c/o 1999 East MS Community College c/o 2001 Delta State University c/o 2004 (Bachelor of Business Administration) Mississippi State University 2008 (Masters of Public Policy and Administration)  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** I am currently serving my fourth term (14 years) as Ward 1 Alderman for the City of Starkville.  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:** b.carver@cityofstarkville.org  
**Phone:** (662) 769-7017



Since 1989, each county (without exemption) operates under the countywide (unit) system. Oktibbeha County is one of the 44 counties that operate under the unit system. Regardless of how I feel about it, we will continue to operate under the parameters of the law. The greatest asset I bring to the office is the ability to inspect and assess county road conditions, and coordinate with the Road Manager. My 14 years of experience as an Alderman will be extremely valuable in the capacity to pave as many road miles as possible each year. I've voted on ensuring that all of the most needed roads are paved in town, and I look forward to seeing substantial progress in the near future for the County as well. Maben-Sturgis Road will be getting paved around time of this printing, and that project will serve as an example of future road projects.

The most important way to facilitate communication between the City and the County is to host quarterly or annual meetings. This allows all newly-elected and incumbent officials to meet people on the "other side of the table." Whether you live in town or the county, we are all residents of Oktibbeha County. Having said that, if elected, my immediate responsibility becomes the integrity of the County roads and the immediate maintenance of District 1 roads and bridges.

As previously stated, Oktibbeha County must further improve road and bridge conditions countywide. Also, if elected, there will be significant job creation in the near future. Oktibbeha County Residents routinely drive to other counties to work. And while that is admirable, we need more local manufacturing jobs. Oktibbeha County residents deserve more diversity of employment options. I believe with the addition of the SDI aluminum plant, you WILL see an exploration of new industry opportunities in the near future. The next decade will be an exciting time to live in Oktibbeha County.

**Greg Fulgham**

**Age:** 43  
**Education:** Associates Degree from EMCC and Graudate of Casey and Son Farrer School  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** 12 years as district 1 Election Commissioner  
**Residence:** Double Springs community  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:** fulghamsfarrierservice@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 418-1110



I would like to see the money divided based on tax revenue. Tax payers are taxed at different rates based on land values. It's nice to see your tax dollars at work.

I think a better communication system would make a huge difference.

The county roads are in such poor condition. This, along with the current amount of unnecessary spending there will be an inevitable deficit, causing possible tax hikes. My first objective would be to look at the county budget and try to address the distribution of tax revenue. So many new industries are coming into surrounding counties. I'd like to address this and lobby for businesses to come to Oktibbeha county and generate jobs as well as revenue for our community and residents.

**Sammy Wade Jones**

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



I would want a detailed County Road Plan that will be based on number of things, such as the population, residential areas, business areas, schools, traffic usage and flow, etc. I would hope that the Board could work together to design and implement this plan to serve all of the County residents, including each district. Based on what I have observed in other counties where team work and growth occur, I think following a well designed road plan better meets the overall needs of the County. It also helps with our limited budget resources and helps us stay on budget for road funding. Of course, good criteria, planning, and fairness are keys. Each Supervisor must add well documented needs to the plan from their district that are based on an established criteria, but work collectively to implement the road plan effectively across the entire county. We are all in this.

I think that mutual respect and effective communication is where positive relationships must start. If I am elected, I will suggest and work toward having a quarterly meeting between City and County officials. This meeting can be a time to understand each other and our separate and collective responsibilities. Mississippi State University could help facilitate this meeting since they have city and county government experts who provide leadership, staff development and selected certifications to city and county officials. This meeting can foster a collective working relationship between us and we can work together on selected projects that will be mutually beneficial for all of us.

I think the lack of budget resources and infrastructure needs are two of our largest issues. However, our county has opportunities. We are growing, and expanding. While COVID caused a dip, we are rebounding now. New businesses are moving here. MSU is growing. I want to serve my district and the County to capitalize on these opportunities.



**District 1 Supervisor (continued)**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**



**1. Currently, the board of supervisors divides money for road projects near-evenly among the five district, rather than operating a countywide program for paving priorities. Which method do you favor and why?**

**2. How can the county work more effectively with the City of Starkville?**

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

**Republican**

**Ed Whitehurst**

**Age:** 53  
**Education:** Maben High School graduate and special training in sales and customer service with Ford Motor Co.  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** This will be my first political office.  
**Residence:** Maben  
**Family:** Married, two children and four grandchildren  
**Email:** ezauto@bellsouth.net  
**Phone:** (662) 418-6757



I believe that the county, should have a county wide road plan. Also, understand that unforeseen situations can arise and some districts may need more funds directed in a particular area as needed. So it may not always be an even split. I believe working in this manner will enable the county to repair roads with more serious needs in a timely manner.

I believe the county and city should work together to achieve the goals of the entire county including the city. This will take strong communication and willingness on both sides of the county and the city. This can be achieved if the county, city, and surrounding towns all understand that we must work as a whole unit to get the most benefit of the resources we have available.

With the increasing population in Oktibbeha county, I would like to see us do a better job at attracting new businesses and industry to our area. To fill some of the opening properties that are available for businesses and to attract large industry to some of the larger building sites we have available in Starkville and Oktibbeha county. Additionally, I would like to see us secure additional state and federal funding that may be available in the form of grants or other dollars to secure additional funds for our infrastructure, roads, bridges, etc... I believe this can be achieved by board members working together and with other agency's within our county, city, and university.

**District 2 Supervisor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Orlando Trainer (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**District 3 Supervisor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Marvell Howard (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**District 4 Supervisor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Republican**

**Austin Check**

**Age:** 39  
**Education:** 2 Bachelor of Business Administration Degrees (Marketing and Real Estate Finance) – Mississippi State University, Master's Degree (Public Policy and Administration) – Mississippi State University  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** Previous Candidate for City Alderman  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married  
**Email:** Check4Supervisor@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (601) 934-0379



I support the unit system of government, where funds are allocated on the needs of the County as a whole, rather than an even split of funding.

Using the current methodology, our tax dollars are wasted by the process of paving a portion of a particular road, then later paying for someone to come back and pave another portion. The current process is akin to painting a room but only paying the painter to complete one wall; then hiring them to return and paint another wall.... until the room is completed. This inefficient system has led to many substandard roads, clogged ditches, and closed bridges.

By being more systematic and planning ahead, Oktibbeha County can save a significant amount of money by approving road projects based on the condition of the road, instead of which district the road is located. This in turn will provide more capacity for road improvements.

Unfortunately, the state of relations between Oktibbeha County and Starkville seems to have become adversarial. I have no doubt both parties are working from positions of what they perceive are in the best for their constituents, but the public spats do not benefit anyone and only degrade our image to outsiders.

I think both government bodies could benefit from regularly scheduled meetings, outside of instances when one is asking for something from the other. To build a better relationship, both sides need to approach any discussion with a bit of humbleness and be open to compromise.

In my experience the best negotiating tool is listening and approaching a conversation with the mindset that all parties have good intentions. Once that groundwork is laid, then both parties can negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement that benefits all. I feel this is a key skill I would bring if elected.

Oktibbeha County and all other local governments in Mississippi are facing a significant involuntary increase in employer contributions to the state retirement system. It is imperative that local leaders work with our legislators to find another solution to properly funding the system. Continually asking taxpayers to foot the bill for poor policy, management, and investment decisions is unreasonable and wasteful.

Additionally, the County seems rudderless with regards to economic development policy. While we do employ various organizations to work on our behalf, there is a lack of direction. What makes Oktibbeha County competitive? Where can we improve? Why do businesses choose to locate elsewhere? These are the questions (amongst others), that we should be asking. We must be intentional and seek opportunities, rather than waiting for them to come to us. I believe with my education and experience (including \$2,000,000.00+ in grants); I am well suited to lead this discussion.

**Pattie Little**

**Age:** 55  
**Education:** Bachelor of Science from Delta State  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** I have worked on several local and state level campaigns as well as the wife of a 2-term city Alderman.  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married, three children  
**Email:** little4supervisor@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 418-5401



I support creating a roadway improvement plan prioritizing roadways and bridges based on conditions and traffic patterns while anticipating growth and connectivity needs. With these considerations, the Board of Supervisors can create a multi-year plan to prioritize county-wide needs to ensure our roads and bridges are updated and repaired. Far too often we put a temporary band-aid on our roads and bridges, without addressing the root of the problem. Funds should be used where they can be best utilized when it comes to roadway improvements based on their condition and traffic usage. We also need to be making long-term plans for the growth of Starkville and its impact on the county as it relates to increased traffic and how we should plan accordingly.

Through better communication plain and simple. I will work with the City of Starkville and the Town of Sturgis to ensure that we are coordinating together to properly spend our tax dollars on projects wisely. There are millions of dollars in grants sitting there waiting to be claimed by counties and municipalities. Through effective communication with the City of Starkville and the Town of Sturgis, we can apply for these grants using matching dollars from the municipalities and county to address local problems. These grant dollars will also ensure local tax money is saved while generating more job opportunities and ensuring Oktibbeha County continues to be the best place to raise a family.

Money is always tight and I do not want to put any further burden on our hard-working tax paying citizens. I want to wisely stretch our available funds as far as possible to address our infrastructure, roads and bridges, water and sewer needs. As we have seen recently, flooding can also be an unexpected challenge. We need to ensure the board is taking the necessary steps to mitigate future flooding problems that can be avoided.

**District 5 Supervisor**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Democrat**

**Walter James Stewart**

**Age:** 46  
**Education:** Attended Starkville Public Schools through high school  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:**  
**Family:** Married, three children, two grandchildren  
**Email:** wjstewart1202@yahoo.com  
**Phone:** (662) 418-1967



I prefer dividing the money evenly among the districts. This method prevents favoritism. It also gives each district a chance to improve its road infrastructure.

I believe that the County Supervisors should work with with the Mayor and City Council to address issues affecting all the residents of Oktibbeha County, such as public safety, fire protection and schools.

Currently, Oktibbeha county has a need for programs for youth and senior citizens. I propose the county come together with the community to fulfill this need.

**District 5 Supervisor (continued)**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**



**1. Currently, the board of supervisors divides money for road projects near-evenly among the five district, rather than operating a countywide program for paving priorities. Which method do you favor and why?**

**2. How can the county work more effectively with the City of Starkville?**

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

**Democrat**

**Joe Williams (I)**

**Age:** 71  
**Education:** College Graduate  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** 12 Years as District 5 Supervisor, previously served on the Oktibbeha County Economic Development Authority Board for over 20 Years. Presently serving on the Golden Triangle Waste Management Board.  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married  
**Email:** jwilliams@gtpdd.com or wjoe36700@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 312-3558



I recommend that the board continue to maintain the present method of paving roads. The present method gives each citizen an opportunity to be equally represented by the work of the supervisor that they elected. The citizens is now able to hold their supervisor accountable, and not the whole board based on a 3-2 majority vote. The present method also gives each supervisor an opportunity to develop and complete a 4-year road plan which is required by state law.

The board of supervisors is presently working effectively with the city when assistance is requested. The board has always agreed to assist the city with projects within the city limits. The board presently has an agreement to assist with the improvement of Spring Street crossing of Hwy 12, and onto Blackjack Road. Additionally, the board just shared in the cost of paving Hospital Road. The board has provided funds and entered into many interlocal agreements with the city. The above are just the most recent ones.

The county faces challenges of having enough funds to pave State Aid Roads. Too many county dollars are presently used to pave State Aid Roads. As a supervisor, I will continue to request that the state provide more funds for paving State Aid Roads, thereby maintaining county dollars to pave county roads.

The county faces a challenge with not having public wastewater sewage in the county. As a supervisor, I will continue to search for federal and state dollars to provide public sewage for county residents.

The county faces challenges of having jobs that are appealing to young adults while starting a family. As a supervisor, I will consult with economic development agencies that could suggest solutions to address this challenge.

The county faces challenges in helping senior citizens during cold and hot weather and providing a healthy meal to seniors who need it.

**Republican**

**Les Lindley**

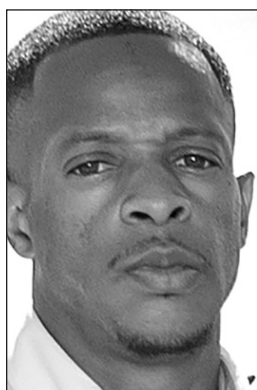
**Age:**  
**Education:**  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:**  
**Residence:**  
**Family:**  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

**Anthony Watt**

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



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

**Justice Court Judge District 1**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Tony Boykin (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**Justice Court Judge District 2**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**

**Larnzy Carpenter (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**Justice Court Judge District 3**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**



**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**

**Marty Haug (I)**

**Age:** 46  
**Education:** Graduate of Starkville High School, Bachelor's Degree from Mississippi State University, Juris Doctorate from Florida Coastal School of Law  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** Two prior terms as Justice Court Judge  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:** marty@martyhauglaw.com  
**Phone:** (662) 617-9489



I am the only candidate that is a lawyer. I have been practicing law for 20 years and have trial experience in every trial court in two states. Further, I have experience presiding as a Judge in both Sturgis Municipal Court for 5 years and in Oktibbeha County Justice Court for 8 years. I am from Oktibbeha County, and I am raising my children in Oktibbeha County, and I want to do everything I can to make it a safe environment for all of our children to thrive.

It is an amazing oversight by the Legislature that no legal degree is required to be Justice Court Judge. Many courts suffer from having elected Judges that have no legal training or experience. The main reason I ran for Justice Court Judge in the first place was to bring the law to a previously hit and miss court. The law is what makes a Court run fairly and consistently. Without knowledge of the law through actual legal training and experience, it is unlikely that Justice can be administered fairly and consistently. My legal training and experience contributes to Oktibbeha County Justice Court now being one of the best in the State.

Our Courts' biggest challenge is maintaining credibility in the minds of those who come to Court. Throughout the years, credibility in Justice Court has greatly diminished, and along with that comes lack of faith by the citizens of the County that their case will be heard fairly. Every day, I strive to use my knowledge of the law and integrity to ensure that everyone who comes before me in Court is treated fairly and honestly. If citizens believe they cannot have their issues heard fairly by a knowledgeable Judge, they then take matters into their own hands which has a heavy cost on our community.



**Justice Court Judge District 3 (continued)**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$47,000**



**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?**

**Republican**

**Brian Michael Linder**

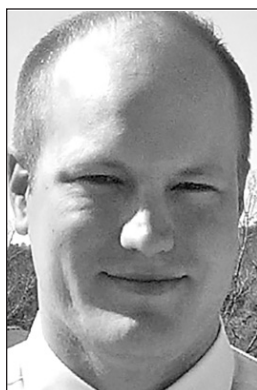
**Age:**  
**Education:**  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:**  
**Residence:**  
**Family:**  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire by the deadline.

**Will McNeel**

**Age:** 38  
**Education:** Liberal Arts from East Central in Decatur MS and BA of General Business Administration UWA- Livingston AL  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** 3rd time as a candidate  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:**  
**Email:** mcneelwill@aol.com  
**Phone:** (662) 323-4900



I feel I have the unique ability to listen and understand both sides of any issue and make fair and consistent rulings for all.

I have had extensive experience in law from college and also from being in multiple courts.

Repeat offenders, we have so many that come in and get slapped on the wrist and then commit felonies. We must do something.

**Constable District 1**

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

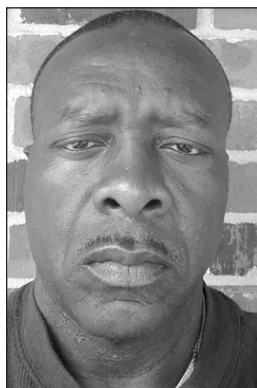


**1. What makes you the best candidate?**

**Democrat**

**William Ford**

**Age:** 55  
**Education:** High School Diploma  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** Maben  
**Family:** Married, three children  
**Email:** william@sheriff.oktibbeha.ms.us  
**Phone:** (662) 425-1402



I have over 25 years of Law Enforcement Experience. I've been a Shift Supervisor for the past 20 years. whether it was working in the jail as a Jailer or on the road as a Deputy. I have years of experience with serving papers, which is primarily a Constable's job. I am very dedicated to my job as a Deputy, I would be the exact same way if I'm elected as District 1 Constable for Oktibbeha County.

**Republican**

**Joe Morse**

**Age:**  
**Education:** High school education  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** U.S. Navy veteran and a member of American Legion Post 13 in Oktibbeha county  
**Residence:** Oktibbeha County  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**



I worked with the Oktibbeha County Sheriff's Department for 30 years as Reserve and Part-time deputy and 12 years full time as Transport Officer and Detention Officer. At this time I work as a court Bailiff for the courts in Oktibbeha County. I feel with my years of experience with the Sheriffs Department I know first hand the job of being Constable . If elected ,being Constable would be my primary job and to ensure the duties to be carried out in an effective and timely manner to keep our courts moving at a smooth rate. I am a 50 year resident of Oktibbeha County and I want to continue to serve the people of this county and help preserve it as a good place to live and raise a family. I last ran for this office in 2017 and again I'm asking for your vote and support.

**Kenneth Watkins**

**Age:** 38  
**Education:** Bachelors Degree (Mississippi State University)  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Married, two children  
**Email:** kennywatkins@yahoo.com  
**Phone:** (662) 312-9530



As a life long resident of Oktibbeha County I look forward to representing District 1 as it's next Constable. I am a Starkville High School graduate (2003). I obtained my Bachelors from Mississippi State Univeristy. I have gained very valuable experience working with Starkville Police Department since 2009. I am currently a Patrol Lieutenant. Past experience includes: Patrol Officer, Patrol Sergeant, Narcotics Sergeant (Starkville PD and Metro Narcotics Task Force). With over 14 years of experience and training I feel that I have the tools to bring true professionalism to this position .

**Constable District 1 (continued)**

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



**1. What makes you the best candidate?**

**Republican**

**Shannon Williams**  
**Age:** 54  
**Education:** MLEOTA, 1996  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** The only office I've sought  
**Residence:** Pheba  
**Family:** Married, three children  
**Email:** deputy5306@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 769-4561



Born and raised in Oktibbeha County, I have devoted over half of my life to the citizens of Oktibbeha County. I started my career in law enforcement as a jailer working up to a patrol deputy and eventually a lieutenant at the Sheriff's Office. Throughout my career, I closely worked with the Justice Court, Circuit Court, Youth Court, all of which closely align with those duties of the Constable. These duties included serving warrants, replevins, youth court documents, chancery court orders, circuit court subpoenas, indictments and testified in different capacities in these courts as well. With 25 years of certified experience, I am capable and qualified to carry out the duties of Constable, Dist 1.

**Constable District 2**

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

**Curtis Randle (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**

**Constable District 3**

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

**Democrat**

**Ronald Hannah**  
**Age:** 61  
**Education:** 2011 Graduate of MGCCC (Logistics Technology), 2010 Graduate from the South Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Academy, FEMA Certified, University of Southern Mississippi at Camp Shelby (Courtroom Testimony & Report Writing for Law Enforcement), Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (Active Shooter Training)  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** Sturgis  
**Family:** Married, four children, six grandchildren  
**Email:** ronhannah61@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (228) 366-0479



I have 14 years of Law Enforcement experience trained to uphold the laws of Mississippi. Experience from three different agencies right here in the great state of Mississippi.  
 \*Moss Point PD  
 \*Pascagoula PD  
 \*Starkville PD  
 Christian believer with a heart for the people.  
 40 year retired ship builder (Management)  
 If given given the opportunity "District 3" I promise to serve, protect and respect the community with compassion, as all law enforcement should.  
 I am Ronald Hannah candidate for Oktibbeha County District 3 Constable, and I approve this message.

**Republican**

**James Lindsey**  
**Age:** 78  
**Education:**  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** Worked as Deputy Sheriff and Constable for over 40 years.  
**Residence:** Sturgis  
**Family:**  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**



I feel I am well qualified in Law Enforcement with over 200 schools and classroom training. I have a great desire in Law Enforcement, love my job and helping people in need that we may live together in peace as a civilized society. Everyone will be treated with respect and honesty for everyone. I think God put me in this job for a reason. That's why I am still here. I would appreciate your vote. Will you add member of Friendship Baptist Church? Thank you for this opportunity.

**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 (continued)**

**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 43**

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

**Rob Roberson (Republican) - Unopposed incumbent**

**State Senator District 15**

**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?**

**Republican**

**Alan Sibley**

**Age:** 37  
**Education:** Old Dominion Christian School  
**Political party:** Republican  
**Political experience:** Conservative Activism  
**Residence:** Mathiston  
**Family:** Married, seven children  
**Email:** alan@votesibley.com  
**Phone:** (662) 617-3744



I would like to see that revenue returned to the people by allowing for the reduction and even elimination of various taxes.

A. Creating actual economic growth and prosperity by growing businesses locally.  
 B. Improving infrastructure in areas of our district that have been neglected.  
 C. Supporting the reduction of taxes locally and statewide, and working to eliminate wasteful spending of tax dollars.

Ultimately, expanding Medicaid is not the answer to the problem. My belief is all government assistance programs should be designed to lead to self-sufficiency instead of government dependency. Medicaid currently is a precursor to fully socialized medicine and needs to be reformed. The cost of healthcare is astronomical because of a lack of competition among the pharmaceutical, insurance and corporate healthcare companies.

**Bart Williams**

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



The state received 1,800,000,000 in ARPA funds. I had the privilege to serve on the Senate ARPA committee which was responsible for allocating these funds. We created a matching grant for which cities and counties could apply. \$486,000,000 has been awarded already. These dollars went into water and sewer projects across the state. Also, we have allocated 374,000,000 for rural water projects. These expenditures are greatly needed for our state infrastructure and will matter for generations to come. \$22,000,000 of those dollars were spent right here in district 15 on water and sewer projects. Since I have been your senator I have worked hard to insure that the pandemic dollars have gone into essential infrastructure in district 15. As long as I am given the privilege of representing the people of district 15 I will continue to fight to fund these under funded areas in our district

Public Safety is priority one. From proper funding for law enforcement and first responders to legislation that protects our children. I have introduced and passed legislation that protects our children and will continue to do so. Fear of consequence is not relevant to many that commit crimes in our society. We need to enact legislation that will put "Fear of consequence" in criminals minds. If you do the crime you do the time.  
 Economic Development. I have worked to bring projects to our region and am currently working to bring new projects to district 15. Government should be there to coordinate everyone and get out of the way and let business thrive once that is done.

If you are asking am I in favor of extending health care to non working Mississippians at no charge then I am not in favor. If you are asking would I discuss legislation that would provide health care for WORKING Mississippians that comes with a premium and verification of employment then I am in favor. We are facing many challenges in our Health care system in Mississippi. From accessibility to quality to affordability. I think we should discuss any option that can improve on any of these challenges. When we improve any of these we improve the quality of healthcare for ALL Mississippians. To dismiss an option simply to bias or misunderstanding is an injustice to all.

Education. I have been part of the largest teacher pay raise in history. \$7k+ per teacher. We must continue to put education at the top of the priority list.

**State Senator District 16**

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

**Angela Turner-Ford (Democrat) - Unopposed incumbent**