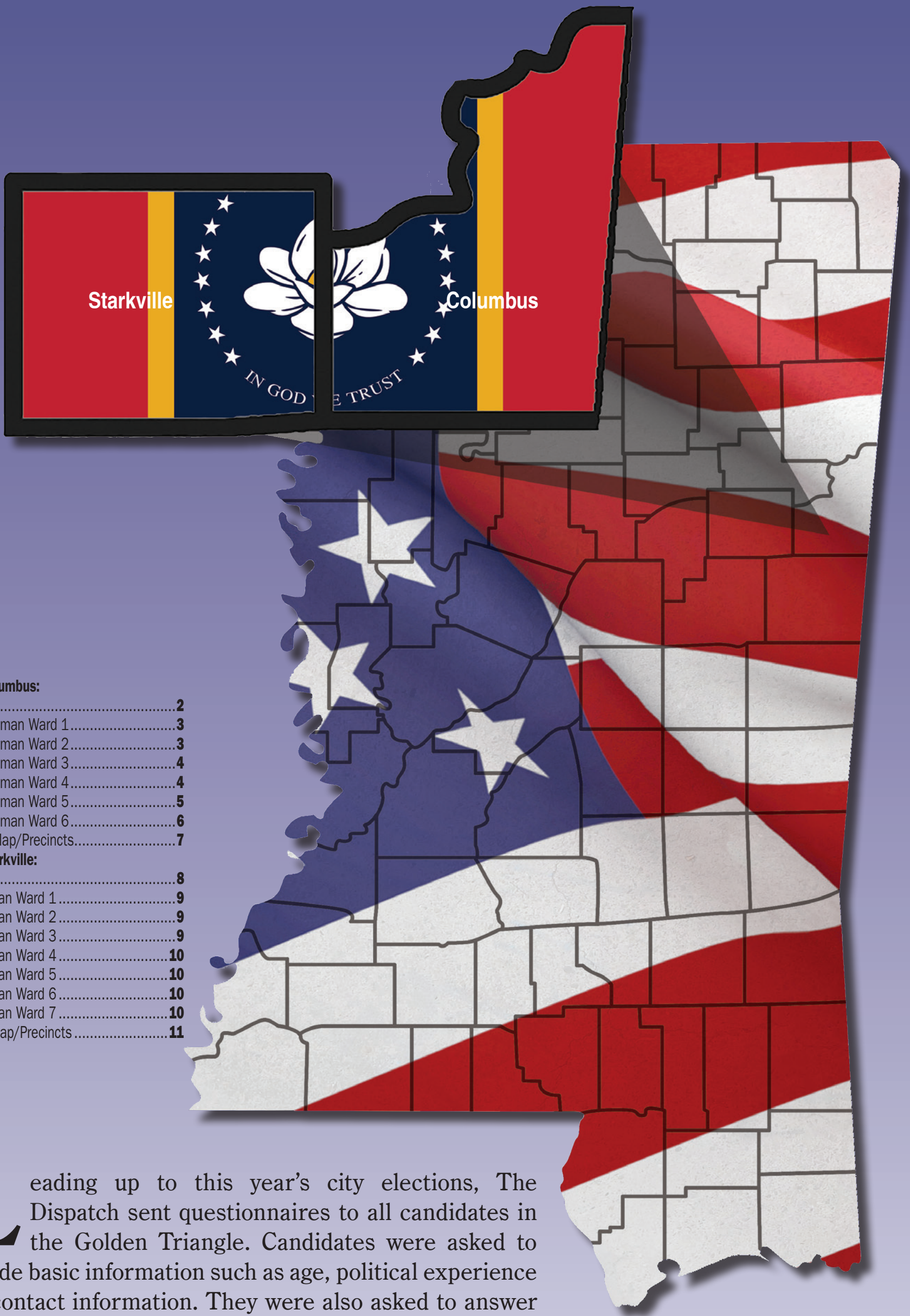


# ✓ COLUMBUS & STARKVILLE Voter's Guide

A GUIDE TO AREA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

PRIMARY: APRIL 1 | GENERAL: JUNE 3



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Leading up to this year's city elections, The Dispatch sent questionnaires to all candidates in the Golden Triangle. Candidates were asked to provide basic information such as age, political experience and contact information. They were also asked to answer three questions, limiting their responses to a set word count.

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 phone calls and emails in an effort to get responses from every candidate.

Ward Maps and voting precinct lists for Columbus and Starkville are included in this special section.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

Mayor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$86,104



1. What is the biggest challenge facing the city and how would you address it?

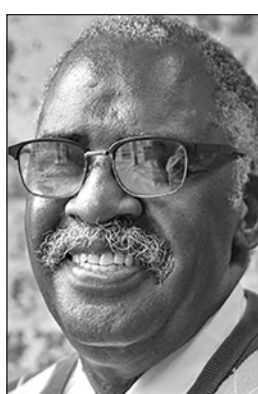
2. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects, the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

3. How would you seek to build consensus with the council on a shared vision for moving Columbus forward?

Democrat

Leroy Brooks

**Age:** 71  
**Education:** BA Degree Political Science; Master of Social Studies, concentration Public Administration  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:**  
**Residence:** 214 12<sup>th</sup> Street North, Columbus, Miss. 39701  
**Family:** Married; Shirlet Nash, 2 children, 2 grandchildren  
**Email:** lbrooks@lowndescountymys.com  
**Phone:** (662) 251-8125



The biggest challenge facing the City of Columbus is a lack of Leadership. Therefore, they have failed to develop and implement public policies necessary to move the city in a positive direction. It would be address with the election of me as Mayor, working with the City Council to develop a plan of action to make government functional and effective.

It's obvious, to complete these projects will require millions of dollars. I'm sure the city doesn't have enough money for each of these projects. Therefore, It will be necessary to prioritize them. Drainage would be my number one priority. As for the Amphitheater, I would like to research the possibility of leasing or selling the facility to be completed and the city receive some compensation. I do not have enough information regarding the Kerr-McGee. These projects will not be completed in four years.

The initial step would entail a retreat to allow each councilperson to share their vision of the city and what specific action needed to be taken. Through a process of discussion and elimination, develop an internal plan of action that's achievable and adopt it. Establish an on-going in house planning session to make sure the agenda is carried out.

Stephen Jones

**Age:** 55  
**Education:** 1987 Graduate of Lee High School, Licensed Realtor 2007, 2014 graduate of Leadership Lowndes County, 2018 Graduate of the Mississippi Black Legislative Institute and 2023 Certified Municipal Official Professional Development Graduate  
**Political party:** Democratic Party  
**Political experience:** Ward V City Councilman 2017 – Present  
**Residence:** 802 4th Avenue North, Columbus, MS  
**Family:** Married to Stephanie Johnson Jones, father of three and grandfather of one  
**Email:** sjones1055@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 574-2029



Changing the narrative of how it is portrayed. One advantage cities like Tupelo, Starkville and WestPoint have over Columbus is their residents, media, and elected officials tend to refrain from speaking negatively about their City.

Columbus is leading in tax revenue within the GTR, the value of homes in is up by 9.9% in Columbus and only 5.7% in Starkville, the City consistently meets its budgetary goals and has established a Capital Fund. The GTR Link has attracted a national retailer to the Old K-Mart building on Hwy 45 and the Hull Group is revitalizing our retail corridor. CMSD's academic rating has significantly improved and MSMS has more National Merit Scholars than neighboring states combined. The Columbus Redevelopment Authority and the Blight Elimination Program are investing millions into eliminating blight and putting new construction on the tax rolls.

The City of Columbus has had several reviews of drainage issues over the past five decades, the most extensive being a city-wide drainage master plan done in 1971. This study identified over \$100,000,000 worth of drainage priorities. Some issues have been addressed over the years; however, some of the study priorities are more critical than others.

We just received bids for the Senator Terry Brown Amphitheatre. I think we have an opportunity to have it up and running within the year. The State Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 to the City of Columbus last year and our City Engineer feels it will take about \$4,500,000 to finish it. It's very easy to say let's just put in seating, bring in food trucks and rental porta potty services but I think we should hear from a concert promoter to help us decide what amenities we should invest in.

Kerr-McGee lies in District 5 and the heart of Ward IV. Ward IV City Councilman, Pierre Beard and I agree that the endorsement for redevelopment at the Kerr-McGee site should be cause for serious alarm.

I have learned while representing Ward V that the members on the City Council agree more than we disagree. However, our disagreements tend to get more press. We all love the City of Columbus and want to see it prosper. One of the problems we have with the current Mayor is that he does not work with all the City Council. He leaves that up to his executive staff and although it's good to have employees who can be a bridge, the Mayor and City Council were elected and our constituents expect us to work things out in their best interest. If I am elected Mayor, I will push for the hiring a City Planner, creating a comprehensive plan and an organizational chart to ensure accountability. I will also pick up the phone and call councilmembers into my office, hear their positions, communicate mine and work to meet in the middle.

Independent

Darren Leach

**Age:** 58  
**Education:** B.S. Mechanical Engineering, Tennessee State University  
**Political party:** Independent  
**Political experience:** No office held, extensive community engagement with government  
**Residence:** Columbus, MS (Ward 1)  
**Family:** Wife - Jackie Leach, Children: Dontay Evans (deceased), Cameron Leach, Macy Leach, Matthew Leach, Madison Leach, Maxwell Leach  
**Email:** leachformayor@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 251-5584



The biggest challenge facing the city is division. It is the primary barrier to building a consensus on how to grow the city and address the city's pressing issues. I would like to address this problem by doing three things:

Create alignment by working with the council to develop a vision for the city to include recreation and education systems, infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and the overall condition of neighborhoods.

Collaborate with a variety of stakeholders to create a comprehensive plan to get to the vision. The comprehensive plan would include goals, strategies, measures, and milestones to ensure that we remain focused on delivering results.

Conduct regular reviews with responsible parties to measure progress in each area versus the agreed-upon plan. These reviews would include celebrating and publicizing when we achieve critical results.

**Drainage:** The city should publish the overall project management schedule for completion including timelines for ALL critical path items and milestones. Every review with the project managers must be done with that document as the guide for the review.

**Amphitheater:** The city should start by opening the amphitheater. This would allow it to contribute to the revenue needed to "finish" it. This does not mean abandoning the other bells and whistles that have been identified. It would also help avoid either going into the emergency fund or borrowing from the citizens and raising taxes to complete the project.

**Kerr-McGee Site:** The issue of contention appears to be caused by false or incomplete information about what is safely possible to do on the site. I personally think that a multi-use facility (including storm shelter) checks a number of boxes concerning things that would enhance the city.

I would start building consensus with the council on a shared vision by conducting one-on-one conversations to get to know each council member and what they see as important in their Wards and city. I would make sure that those things were captured in the city's vision, and I would follow up to make sure the council member felt heard. I would also work with each Council member to develop consistent feedback loops in their Wards and support them in addressing concerns in their community. I believe that there are far more things that the Mayor and Council agree on than not. I would document and highly publicize those areas of agreement. Those would be constant reference points for our discussions. I believe consensus begins with relationships and those are built eyeball to eyeball and kneecap to kneecap in empathetic, sometimes tough, but necessary conversations.

Bill Strauss

**Age:** 66 years young  
**Education:** College Graduate 44 years business, development and Realtor experience  
**Political party:** Running as Independent I don't feel we should be divided on a local level. We must all live and work together.  
**Political experience:**  
**Absolutely None,** I have lived my experience and only owe my allegiance to the citizens of Columbus.  
**Residence:** I live in the heart of Columbus at Fifth St South and Main St. Have resided in downtown for over 15 years. My building is owned by me.  
**Family:** I have 4 Children all raised in Columbus. In a relationship with Mille Todd  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**



The biggest issue facing Columbus is that of leadership, we have a large void that starts with our City council. As leaders we need to communicate to our department heads what is expected from them and hold them accountable to do their jobs. As a business man I understand the chain of command and holding people accountable for their work performance. Trust but Verify

As far as unfinished projects such as the Amphitheater we should be able to get a working facility with the current money available.. I sat at many concerts under the river bridge where we used our seats and they had port-a-potties. The Kerr McGee site from what I understand has 20 plus clean acres. If we can get a grant for Re-development there I'm all for it. At this time I can not see where the city has funds to develop there. I'm not in favor of using any contaminated lands. The health of our citizens is too important. Drainage is a problem city wide. We need a plan to tackle the worst areas first and repair as we go. We need to utilize all grants and matching funds to get the most out of our money spent.

As a Business owner, developer and Realtor I can work with any and every one. Once the Council see's how to manage a city they will be eager to work with me. We can all look like hero's and make Columbus a city to be proud of again. Private investment will return, businesses will want to locate in Columbus. We can't depend on the Federal Govt or the State Govt to bail us out we must get to work, pool resources and move our city forward. Look no further than downtown Columbus there is your model and I will be discussing this as we move forward.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

City Councilman Ward 1

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. How can the city most effectively invest in crime prevention?

3. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

Democrat

**Tommie Smith**  
 Age:  
 Education:  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience:  
 Residence:  
 Family:  
 Email:  
 Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

**Ethel Stewart (I)**

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



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

Independent

**Keith Gaskin**  
 Age: 60  
 Education:  
 Political party: Independent  
 Political experience: current Mayor of the City of Columbus  
 Residence: 216 3rd Avenue South  
 Family: Married with 2 adult children and 2 grand children  
 Email: gaskin48@icloud.com  
 Phone: (901) 238-8238



Ward 1 is a large diverse area with several challenges. A majority of the neighborhoods are dealing with blighted properties which lead to more criminal activity and a decline in property values. The work that we are currently doing with our \$6 million blight program will address some of these issues, but we must continue to be aggressive in seeking funding to address the watershed and flooding issues which causes damage in many of the resident's homes and continues to deteriorate their property and streets. I want to also expand our cleanup efforts and focus on regular ward meetings to bring the citizens together to build support for one another and unify a diverse city ward around programs such as community gardens, neighborhood watch programs, parks and preservation.

I believe we have made great progress in adequately funding the Columbus Police Department. We have also added cameras throughout the city, improved lighting and established neighborhood watch programs. However, crime prevention is a complex issue that requires a broad approach. Columbus would greatly benefit from establishing a formal crime prevention and re-entry program by partnering with local non-profits, churches, schools, universities and businesses to equip vulnerable residents, youth, and past offenders with the necessary skills, training, and education achieved through community partnerships to reduce recidivism and increase community accountability. Research shows that this type of program will increase the safety, welfare, and protection of all residents while strengthening the community and providing continued support of existing and new assets.

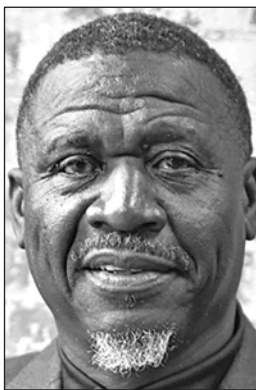
An engineering study completed in the 1970's proved that much of our infrastructure throughout the city is inadequate and thus a major cause of our drainage and flooding issues. Identifying funding to correct this issue should be a top priority for the City. We have recently made progress, but much more work is needed. This should be prioritized as an economic development issue for the city. We should begin using the amphitheater for local events immediately as we continue to seek the funds to complete the venue. There is great potential to develop an entertainment district on the island near the amphitheater. I'm pleased to see that city-wide attention is once again being paid to the old Kerr-McGee site. Columbus needs to make sure all decisions for future development are based on proven scientific data and not rumors and misinformation. The citizens who live in and around this superfund site deserve nothing less.

City Councilman Ward 2

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265

Democrat

**Joseph Mickens (I)**  
 Age:  
 Education:  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience:  
 Residence:  
 Family:  
 Email:  
 Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

City Councilman Ward 2 (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. How can the city most effectively invest in crime prevention?

3. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

Democrat

**Laisha "Ms. She-She" O'Neal**

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



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

**Roderick Smith**

Age: 32  
Education: Pursuing Bachelor's Degree  
Political party: Democrat  
Political experience: None  
Residence: 226 Meadow Drive, Columbus, MS 39702  
Family: Avisha Shelton-Smith (wife); Children: Avianne, Armoni, Evalyn, Bryson, and Ariana  
Email: rod4ward2@gmail.com  
Phone: (601) 604-7700



One of the biggest challenges in my ward is deteriorating infrastructure, particularly poor street conditions. I will address this by advocating for the fair distribution of city funds, prioritizing repairs based on community input, and ensuring the efficient use of resources to improve roads and drainage — without placing additional financial burdens on the city.

1. Strengthening Community Policing
  - Increase the presence of officers in neighborhoods, not just for enforcement but also to build relationships.
  - Implement regular community patrols where officers engage with residents.
  - Provide training in de-escalation techniques.
2. Expanding Youth Programs
  - Create mentorship and after-school programs to provide positive role models and safe spaces for young people.
  - Invest in vocational training and job placement programs.
  - Support sports leagues, arts programs, and leadership initiatives.
3. Improving Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
4. Strengthening Economic Opportunities

1. Prioritizing Drainage Projects
  - a. Conduct a thorough evaluation of existing drainage systems to identify the most critical areas in need of immediate attention.
  - b. Utilize available resources, such as "Use Tax" revenue, to finance these projects without incurring additional debt.
  - c. Community Engagement: Involve residents in planning and prioritization.
2. Advancing Amphitheater Development
  - a. Collaborate with private investors and organizations to share costs and resources, making the project financially feasible.
  - b. Choose a location that is accessible and aligns with community interests, ensuring the facility accommodates a variety of events.
  - c. Assess potential benefits, such as job creation and increased tourism, to build a strong case for investment.
3. Redeveloping the Former Kerr-McGee Site

City Councilman Ward 3

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265

Republican

Candidate is running unopposed

**Rusty Greene (I)**

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



The questionnaire was not sent to unopposed candidates.

City Councilman Ward 4

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265

Democrat

**Lavonne Harris**

Age: 63  
Education: Graduation from Noxubee High School & EMCC Schooba Campus  
Political party: Democrat  
Political experience:  
Residence: 511 North McCrary Rd Columbus Ms.  
Family:  
Email: viciousvon62@yahoo.com  
Phone: (662) 549-2390



It's the street with all the pot holes and the cracks up sidewalk, I would sit down with public work director and go through the ward and list all the street and sidewalk that need repairs and come up with a plan to address the problem and do a quarterly follow-up on the progress and develop a program to keep the up.

To address this problem is to talk and develop a plan of action with the chief of police and identify the problem in the city that major important and that affect the life of the citizens also the mayor and council must address this problem and draw up a plan to make the citizens aware of the plan so they can feel safe.

- A.) we have flooding all over the city the city engineering and public work need to work together to come up plan of action to go in and maintain the drainage and find out and keep up every quarter.
- B.) The person or persons in charge of this project once the mayor & council put the proper resources to this project and get it finish it long overdue and be like the other city building and it can bring in revenue for the city.
- C.) The developing of the old Kerr-McGee I think the site need to be managed by the city of Columbus the court wanted to deed this property to the city when it safe of all the contamination in the soil it's a long process I think their lot of steps that involve. The mayor and council should have already study and verify the safety measures to be put in place before accepting anything about this site that's important information.

**Marty Turner**

Age:  
Education: Associate Degree in Business I Jones County Junior College  
Political party: Democrat  
Political experience: Ward 4 City Councilman 2013 - 2017  
Residence: Ward 4 in Columbus  
Family: Born and raised in Columbus  
Email: Martyturner3989@gmail.com  
Phone: (662) 242-8682



Poverty is the biggest challenge in Ward 4. Poverty leads to hopelessness, and hopelessness leads to desperation, and desperation leads to crime.

To approach this problem, we must first make our neighbors aware of Columbus and Lowndes' opportunities and what qualifications are needed to match the citizens with opportunities. We must make sure the training that our neighbors need is more convenient and acceptable.

- The city must invest in up-to-date equipment and training our police need. Specialized equipment, such as street cameras, must be purchased to help suppress and solve crimes.
- Encourage the community to get involved in programs like neighborhood watch and create a ring doorbell society to help the community participate in policing ourselves, working hand in hand with the Police Department to make the City of Columbus safer.

- Fixing the drainage problem will be a multifaceted approach that will include the city council, the Light and Water Department, and the city engineers. Modern technologies can replace pipes without damaging our streets and roads. We also need to complete any existing past projects that are unfinished. Doing this will help address flooding.
- The Terry Brown Amphitheater needs a public/private partnership that can work in stages until it can open for events to create revenue to pay for itself.
- The old Kerr-McGee site has outstanding potential for revitalization, but we first need to gain our neighbors' trust to ensure it is clean and safe. A green space with a multifunctional storm shelter would be a great addition to our Parks and Recreation Department.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

City Councilman Ward 4 (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. How can the city most effectively invest in crime prevention?

3. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

Republican

Robert S. Johnson IV

Age: 43  
 Education: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: Volunteered for the Obama campaign  
 Residence: 711 Waterworks Rd. Col  
 Family: Wife, Desiree Johnson. Son, Cinco (9). Son, Sirius (5). Daughter, Olivia (2)  
 Email: goldmouf1981@gmail.com  
 Phone:



The biggest problem facing my ward are crimes of opportunity. Underprivileged communities suffer from a group of people that aren't employed and youths without extracurricular activities. A work program that brings "shovel-ready" jobs and job training for skills to build upon, like entry level construction trades and entrepreneurship will be most beneficial for the future of Columbus.

Crime spikes during the summer months. Allowing police officers to work overtime during this time, I feel, will lower crime due to just having more of a police presence. Also an enforced curfew will ensure the safety of our children.

I don't know much about CPD's surveillance systems. The Sky Cops (video cameras) are effective only if someone is actively watching to dispatch patrol units as needed. Just having a record of a crime is not preventing crime.

Knowing the EPA is in control of that site, elected officials should bring this contamination to the attention of the U.S. Government. Without the "OK" from the EPA, no developer will touch the property. After the permission to build on the land, the next step is to find a company that will provide jobs and be a community resource.

I think the location is perfect for a solar field. A solar field would help lower energy cost for residents and provide jobs. The contaminated soil shouldn't matter when constructing a field of solar panels.

Independent

Pierre Beard (I)

Age: 36  
 Education: Bus. Admin Degree  
 Political party: independent  
 Political experience: 6 years Ward 4 City Councilman  
 Residence: Ward 4  
 Family: Son Pierre Jr (PJ) (9 y/o)  
 Email: pierredbeard@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 418-7329



Issues arise daily and they are very unique pertaining to the area within the Ward. I address them by first asking what can we do to solve the issue and seek out the party responsible for helping us both get the issue resolved.

As a 6 year councilman, I had the privilege of hiring our New Chief, Chief Daughtery, I lean solely on his expertise by providing the Columbus Police Dept with all the essential items they need to perform efficiently and proactively. Not a micro manager, crime is very unique in the City of Columbus and it has declined tremendously under this current administration. I appreciate Chief Daughtery and his staff for all they do to keep Columbus Safe, and I will always be an advocate for CPD in whatever they need to make their jobs better! We have brought the PD to new age technology and the morale in the dept shows.

Drainage has been an issue in the City of Columbus since before I was born. Keep in my mind the entire city is flood prone. Ward 4 in the near future will see work done in the "Brick Yard" area soon to help combat with the northside issue especially "Memphis Town". Retention/Detention pond, cleaning and concrete lining of ditches will soon come to fruition.

Amphitheater was stalled due to lack of funding, well now we have received 1 million dollars from our state legislature to help the city get the amphitheater in a working status. I'm all for the advancement of this project.

The hottest topic Kerr McGee, this land is contaminated and only 22 of 90 acres has been "remediated" This chemical, of which the EPA has tested multiple times, has killed and harmed a great deal of people throughout the Golden Triangle, especially Northside. Until that land is clean I don't see any development where humans will inhabit the area in my future.

City Councilman Ward 5

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265

Democrat

Cequeila Clark

Age: 40  
 Education: Bachelor of Science/ Healthcare Administration  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience: 0 but is remaining teachable.  
 Residence: 1804 14th Ave North Columbus MS 39701  
 Family: Married to Eugene F. Clark Jr/I have 3 daughters and 1 son  
 Email: cequeilaclark@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 245-9743



In my respected opinion, the biggest challenge facing our ward is torn up roadways and street ways. I also see abandoned buildings that could be used for other projects in the area. Ward beautification can be more appealing as well. If I am selected over Ward 5, I will work tirelessly go through every concern that our citizens may have concerning the area, I also will make sure that I can be flexible for service and impactful projects in the area. I will create open spaces of availability to invest time in the citizens of Columbus.

I believe that we need to start with our own individual selves. Some of the things that we can do to lower crime in the city is meet your neighbor, host different fun events in your area that spark the interest of the youth, create a neighborhood watch. Allow different responsible people in the neighborhood watch programs to voice their opinions. Create positions within the organization that gives people a sense of responsibility to run such said organizations. Create a beautification committee within that area that would give the older and younger generation something to do. Host different community events that would create fellowship and trust amongst the citizens in that area. Create a public event that would allow them to get to know their law enforcement personnel. Host a fun day with law enforcement personnel and public citizens to grow better together.

Drainage projects will always be around. You address that specifically with meeting with the right people and organizations that will be about action rather than talk. Columbus has known that these said projects continue to lay dormant in the city of Columbus unless we reach out to real vendors or organizations that would not hesitate to take on projects as such.

The amphitheater was something I grew up going to so to see that it is continuously dormant is shocking. The right people and motivation has to be behind business ideas for things like the amphitheater. If we market and advertise more of the dormant buildings that have potential more, we might just get good businesses or vendors that would like to take on projects like that.

Concerning Kerr Magee, the first thing I believe we need to do is find out if the said area is still affected by creosote. We need to put more money into finding out if that ground has potential to sustain life. If life is sustainable there, apartments or homes or even a homeless shelter can go there.

Sedrick Fenster

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



There is a lot of diversity in Ward 5, with families of all backgrounds and races. Unfortunately, not everyone in the ward comes together as a community to address issues such as crime, youth programs, and littering. I would like to see community watch groups, programs for young people like community or family days, and volunteer litter clean ups where neighbors can help others and get to know them in the process.

Crime prevention: Again, neighborhood watches are key. I'd like to partner with the Chief of Police and CPD to train individuals willing to serve. The city needs an anonymous tip line like the Sheriffs Department has, so that locals can feel free to report suspicious activities. More cameras are key to aide our officers, and I would seek grants to get more installed in Ward 5.

Unfinished business:  
 There are a lot of great projects in Columbus that have been stalled by politics. The amphitheater is great, but has not moved forward due to arguments amongst our leaders over who should get what contracts to finish it or see it through. The community then loses faith in our leaders to get things done. We need doers; not talkers.

I support finalizing the amphitheater so that we can hold concerts/plays that bring in tourism revenue. But, I've yet to see well thought out plans to make it a reality.

We need to partner with the W to identify students needing internships. Have these students research issues, identify and draft grants, and/or help develop marketing plans for more businesses coming into the city.

The old Kerr-Mcgee site is a blight in our community. Studies have shown that parts of it have been deemed safe. I'd like to see something on the site that is useful and beneficial to the community. Even if we only plant trees in the area and develop it as Greenspace or nature habitat with walking trails, etc.. The data on this is still developing, and I look forward to learning more. I don't want to be short-sided on progress, but respect the need to develop the property in a safe manner. Again, transparency is key. I'd like to have the city publish the most recent environmental studies online.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

City Councilman Ward 5 (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. How can the city most effectively invest in crime prevention?

3. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

Democrat

**Gregory "Gary" Jefferson**  
 Age: 58  
 Education: Graduate of Caldwell High School  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience: 4 years on the zoning board  
 Residence: 1708 4th Ave N. Columbus, MS 39701  
 Family: Married with 3 children  
 Email: garyjefferson2003@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 386-3738



The biggest challenge facing my ward is abandoned homes and overgrown lots. I plan to address it by supporting the current BLIGHT program in hopes of getting investors to tear those down and rebuild new homes. For the overgrown lots, I will get in touch with the owners and encourage them to keep their lots clean. If they don't, the city will put up notices and fines will start.

The city can most effectively invest in crime prevention by staying engaged with the current neighborhood watch programs, getting involved with more youth programs, and continuing to put up more video cameras.

For the drainage projects, I will seek federal grants and work closely with the city engineer, the mayor, and the council to move forward. Regarding the amphitheater, I will need to assess where it stands in the city's priority list before commenting on it. For the old Kerr-McGee site, I will work with the community in the area to come up with an agreeable decision on what they would like in that space. While there has been talk about solar panels, I wouldn't make a final decision until I have spoken with a significant number of residents in the ward.

Republican

**Mary Jeter**  
 Age: 60  
 Education: Bachelors Degree, Paralegal  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: No direct political experience, a member of Lowndes County Republican Party  
 Residence: Lowndes County, 520 8th Street North, Columbus, MS  
 Family: Husband, Holly Jeter, two daughters, Olivia Plant and Gracie Hubbard, as well as four granddaughters.  
 Email: marybethjeter@aol.com  
 Phone: (662) 364-6343



The biggest challenge facing my ward is crime. It has affected not only me personally but also every neighbor within my block and several that are blocks away. As well as several friends that are in my ward.

I would work with the other council members to increase budgets so that we could not only hire more cops but so that we can pay cops a livable wage to avoid the increased turnover we have now. A cop cannot do their job, nor do they want to when they are putting their life on the line and not being rewarded monetarily.

The city needs to hire more police and increase the budget to supply them with the equipment, technology, and training necessary to better track down and apprehend criminals.

First, we have to address crime before we can add value to the community. It makes it harder to attract citizens to your community when we do not have a lot to offer as far as making them feel safe, as well as cleanliness and our school systems, which are below average for the nation. We must first address these problems before we spend more taxpayer dollars on projects that are not being utilized.

City Councilman Ward 6

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265

Republican

**Kimberly McCarty-Davis**  
 Age: 67  
 Education: B.A. Elementary Education & B.S. Christian Education from Belhaven University. I attended Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi for a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. I am a Licensed Mental Health Therapist for Mississippi and Alabama. A licensed Supervisor for MFT, as well as addiction specialist and former educator in Mississippi.  
 Political party: Common-Sense Republican  
 Political experience: Grass roots experience beginning at a very young age for our local city council and our mayoral elections.  
 Residence: Holly Hills Neighborhood Ward 6  
 Family: 3 adult children and 7 grandchildren  
 Email: kdavsmc@yahoo.com  
 Phone: 662-435-7600



While our city may be divided into Wards, we are collectively one city. Ward 6 residents tell me that they are concerned about the majority of the current council's lack of transparency and fiscal restraint. Ward 6 must be the voice of reason. As a small business owner, I understand how hard it is to earn a dollar. Accountability and stewardship will be my focus, as well as workable plans for city growth. I care about Columbus and I believe I offer a fresh perspective.

I don't believe we can tax our way to a better city. Columbus has a high millage rate reported from Columbus-Lowndes taxing authorities. The highest rate is set by Columbus Municipal School District, a body appointed by our city council. Public schools should be places of solid education for the good of the students, not for anyone else's political gain.

Tackling crime is tough and I have utmost respect for our first responders. We must have reliable crime data and crime rates to really understand how to move forward. I have managed an Employee Assistance Program for the city of Mobile as well as helped to implement a Minors in Possession Program. These experiences allowed me to hear firsthand practical ideas that would help reduce crime. As an outreach coordinator for Memorial Behavioral Healthcare, I managed 14 counties in central Mississippi. I was acquainted with schools, medical professionals, community agencies, government officials, and first responders in my region. I would hear that data-driven decisions help tackle what works and what doesn't.

We need to know why CPD has a high attrition rate and what hindrances to effective recruitment and retention exist. Collaboration between CPD and the Sheriff's office is also helpful for crime reduction.

Why does Columbus have unfinished business? The solution requires proper hiring and supervising of contractors. A comprehensive needs and status assessment should be conducted.

The drainage problem results from failure to perform decades of proper maintenance allowing the problem to compound through the years of neglect. Perhaps leadership could be re-evaluated, equipment needs addressed, along with a practical plan and committee oversight to improve infrastructure problems.

Columbus started the amphitheater project without a clear path to completion. We have money allotted from the legislature that could help us begin to use the site, perhaps opening the door for public or private investors.

The city of Columbus does not own Kerr-McGee site, but that does not absolve the local government from an interest in the property. This is an industrial site with a multitude of commercial uses as it is presently zoned. Finding the right investors could be helpful.

Jason Spears

Age: 45  
 Education: Bachelor of Business Administration Managerial Finance  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: A great deal of public service, but first-time candidate for office  
 Residence: Edinborough Drive, Columbus, MS  
 Family: Paige (wife), Barrett, Pearson, Henry (children)  
 Email: jasonspearsward6@gmail.com  
 Website: www.spears4ward6.com  
 Phone: (662) 816-0967



Ward 6 plays a significant role in our city's economic growth. With the space once occupied by Ceko Buildings, we must evaluate how to return it to a vibrant and tax-generating property. From Bluecutt Road, traveling south on Highway 45, we must work to grow our sales tax base with new businesses offering various shopping, dining, and service options to keep more local dollars circulating in the local economy. It will be essential to work to recruit businesses that currently do not operate in the city but meet our citizens' essential needs.

Nothing is more effective than a skilled, well-trained police officer patrolling streets across our city. However, until we can create a sustainable plan of pay and benefits along with increased numbers within our department, we must be proactive in the technologies and monitoring of those additional assets to help deter and solve crimes. One quick solution is better and more lighting throughout the city in areas with higher crime activity. When new technologies are instituted, we must have the ability to monitor and report issues to the patrolmen in real-time.

To make an impact in our city, we must focus on those projects that will put our city on a path toward growth and are generational in their implementation. For drainage and other infrastructure needs, we must work to identify and plan which projects are the most essential for growth. Whether it is for residential values, possible commercial development, or simply an enhancement to the quality of life for residents, before we spend money, we need a plan of attack. Then, we must actively work to allocate or secure funds to pay for these projects. Concerning the Amphitheater and the development of the old Kerr-McGee site, I see them as special projects that must stand alone. We must create a system in which the city's goals for growth are not compromised by diverting funds toward special projects. Special projects should operate similarly in activity to how a revenue bond operates.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

City Councilman Ward 6 (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$26,265



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

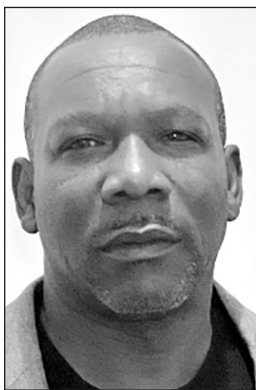
2. How can the city most effectively invest in crime prevention?

3. How should the city address its unfinished business, specifically needed drainage projects the amphitheater and redeveloping the old Kerr-McGee site?

Independent

Donald Pope

Age: 61  
 Education: Bachelor Science in Paralegal Studies from Mississippi University for Women  
 Political party: Independent  
 Political experience: None  
 Residence: 402 25th Avenue North Columbus, MS 39705  
 Family: Wife / Angla Pope  
 Email: dppostman@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 251-6900



The biggest challenge is to bring in and sustain new businesses. My way of addressing it would be to make things more appealing to business and consumers by offering some incentives to businesses and encouraging consumers to support local business based on their wants and needs.

By making sure that the Columbus Police Department has the necessary resources including hiring and maintaining personnel. Rely on technology and community/citizen involvement.

The drainage issue would be to prioritize the most affected and worst areas first. After the most difficult area is done, continue the process until the entire city is done. The amphitheater would be to look at the cost and benefits to the city and citizens. Kerr-McGee is to first and foremost make sure the site is safe and free of contaminants. Possibilities abound from housing, to recreation, to industry.

I = incumbent

Columbus Precinct Polling Places

**Ward 1**  
**Southside Church**  
 100 Nashville Ferry Road E.

**Ward 2**  
**East Columbus Gym**  
 207 Lawrence Drive

**First Assembly**  
 2201 Military Road

**Ward 5**  
**Boy Scout Building**  
 221 Second Ave. N.

**Townsend Park**  
 826 15th St. S.

**Fairview School**  
 225 Airline Road

**Ward 4**  
**Fire Station No. 1**  
 205 Seventh St. S.

**Fifteenth Street Church**  
 917 15th St. N.

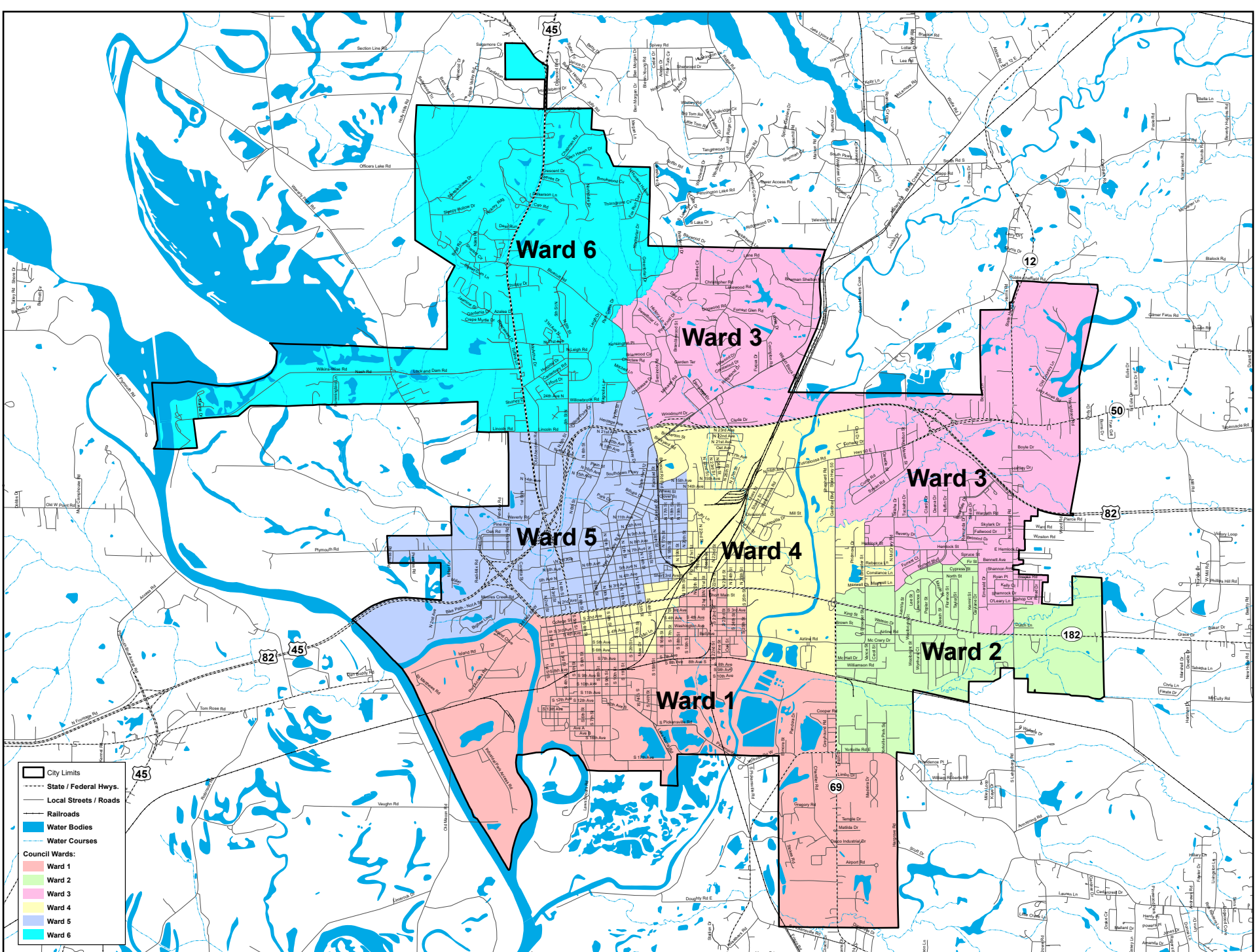
**William Washington Terrace**  
 2201 Eighth Ave. S.

**Ward 3**  
**Columbus High School**  
 215 Hemlock

**Propst Park Community Hut**  
 2535 Main St.

**Ward 6**  
**Brandon Central Office**  
 2630 McArthur Dr., Columbus

**Stephen Chapel Life Center**  
 2008 Seventh Ave. N.



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 507 HERITAGE DR. STE. 201 | PO BOX 1482 | OXFORD, MS 38655

**City Council Election Wards**  
**Columbus, Mississippi**  
 Approved by the City Council on September 3, 2024



Data Sources:  
 U.S. Census Bureau PL 94-171 data for 2020, City of Columbus, MARIS, Bridge & Watson, Inc.  
 September 23, 2024



**Make your voice heard.**  
**Primary Election - April 1, 2025**  
**General Election - June 3, 2025**



**Polls are open until 7 p.m.**

CITY OF STARKVILLE

Mayor

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$95,110



1. What is the biggest challenge facing the city and how would you address it?

2. How can the city better position itself to recruit industry?

3. How can the city effectively balance the needs of tourists, college students and long-term residents in a growing city with plenty of each?

Democrat

**Brenna Hunter Betts**

**Age:** 25  
**Education:** Bachelors of Science in Geoscience, Masters of Art in Teaching Interdisciplinary Sciences  
**Political party:** Progressive Democrat  
**Political experience:** local activism, College Democrats at Mississippi State University  
**Residence:** Starkville  
**Family:** Dr. J. Logan Betts (PhD Mechanical Engineering), Magnolia (Chocolate Lab)  
**Email:** brennabettswx@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (912) 577-2942



Starkville's biggest challenge is ensuring that our long-term residents have the resources, services, and infrastructure they need while balancing the unique responsibilities that come with being a college town. Mississippi State University is a vital part of our community, contributing to our economy and culture, but it also brings challenges related to housing, traffic, and city services

**Infrastructure & Accessibility** – continuing to improve roads (Safe Roads for All already established), expanding sidewalk network, and public transportation (creating bus drivers program, potentially with university, contributing more \$) to accommodate both year-round residents and the seasonal influx of students and visitors.

**Housing & Development** – Encouraging responsible development, expanding code enforcement in an effort to hold rental maintenance to a higher standard, encouraging the development of walkable neighborhoods

**Infrastructure (Again)** – continuing to improve roads, expanding public transit, and increasing broadband access (fiber)

**Workforce Development** – Partnering with Mississippi State University, EMCC, trade schools, SOCSO to create a skilled workforce tailored to high-demand industries

**Economic Incentives** – Reevaluating the existing tax incentives, grants, and other policies to encourage investment

**Quality of Life** – Expanding housing options, recreational spaces, and city amenities (family focus, make people want to stay)

**Recruitment** – Working with state agencies and regional partners to continue to market Starkville as a superior location

**Streamlining** – Continuing to work with the Greater Starkville Development Partnership to assist companies in setting up operations quickly and efficiently

**Infrastructure** – Investing in sidewalks past requirements of the UDC, continuing bike lanes project, and expanding public transit to improve mobility for residents and students while making the city more walkable for visitors

**Zoning & Development** – Encouraging mixed-use developments that cater to all groups, ensuring a blend of student-friendly businesses, family-oriented spaces

**Support for Local Businesses** – Promoting policies that help local businesses thrive, ensuring they can serve a wide customer base, from students to families to game-day crowds

**Affordable & Safe Housing** – Encouraging housing policies that meet the needs of students while preserving affordable options for long-term residents.

**Community Engagement** – Creating open communication lines for residents, students, and business owners to voice concerns and collaborate on city improvements

**Lynn Spruill (I)**

**Age:** 72  
**Education:** Starkville High School graduate; Bachelor Science in Business from Mississippi State University; Masters Public Administration and Juris Doctorate from Georgia State University  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** Served as a Council member and then Mayor of Addison Texas; Serving as Mayor of Starkville since 2017  
**Residence:** 315 Greensboro Street, Starkville MS  
**Family:**  
**Email:** lynn@spruillapts.com  
**Phone:** (662) 648-9706



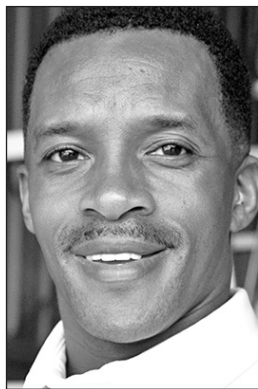
Currently the biggest challenge in the city continues to be our infrastructure needs. Starkville is seeing record growth all around which means we must make necessary improvements to our aging infrastructure to provide quality services to our residents. Over the next four years, Starkville will need to make significant upgrades to our wastewater treatment plant to meet the needs of our population and business growth. By making upgrades to our wastewater treatment plant, we will be able to capitalize on the steel and aluminum mill expansions and the new cinco megasite development.

The best way to recruit industry is to focus on the services the city provides. Starkville has been focused on a multi pronged approach to attracting potential new industry to our community. We are making large investments in our public safety which allows us to produce one of the best and highly trained fire and police departments in the state. We are focused on quality of life issues in the city by building new facilities and upgrading every single park we have in the city as well as adding more bike lanes and sidewalks to the city each year. The city has a partnership with the university to invest in public transit that allows people access to jobs, shopping, and recreational activities. When you combine this with our outstanding schools and the university, it helps us position Starkville and the Golden Triangle as top notch areas to potential employers.

I think in some measure those needs all work in concert with one another. Long-term residents, college students, and tourists all want basic city services to work for them. Which means we must focus on public safety, indoor and outdoor recreational activities, community centers and parks, good streets, bike lanes, and sidewalks. In addition, we must focus on quality restaurants, shopping, and entertainment in the city. We must work with potential new businesses to provide city incentives to help them locate in Starkville. Currently, we are working to accommodate new businesses that want to open activity centers like a new indoor pickleball facility. This balance comes from a smart budget approach which prioritizes how we spend tax dollars that allows us to provide something of value for everyone. We are working to bring in new retail businesses, more restaurants, and community activities that all our residents and visitors might enjoy.

**Charles Yarbrough**

**Age:** 52  
**Education:** Masters of Science in Executive Fire Leadership from Grand Cayon University  
**Political party:** Democratic  
**Political experience:** None  
**Residence:** City of Starkville  
**Family:** Dr. Lestonio Yarbrough (Spouse); Fantashia, Javarest, Willie "TJ", Rainey, & Victory (Children)  
**Email:** cprfiresafety778@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (662) 722-0051



One of the most pressing challenges identified is youth crime. To combat this issue, I propose several initiatives focused on community engagement and support for young residents:

**Mentorship Programs:** Collaborate with Mississippi State University, the Starkville- Oktibbeha School District, and local businesses to establish mentorship and internship opportunities for at-risk youth.

**Community Building:** Assessing and investing in opportunities to add a quality of life to the residence and their families. One way to do this by creating safe, accessible spaces for after-school programs, offering activities that engage youth positively, and constructively, such as additional training for sport activities including track and field, boxing, and swimming.

These initiatives aim to provide young people with guidance, opportunities, and safe environments, steering them away from criminal activities and fostering a sense of community involvement.

To attract new industries and support economic development, it my position to promote:

**Streamlining Regulations:** Simplify business licensing processes and revise the Uniform Development Code to reduce barriers for small businesses and potential investors. This includes addressing housing affordability and finding opportunities to increase mixed-use development across the city.

**Attracting New Investments:** Starkville has a reputation as an unfriendly business community. To change this city's reputation, we need to change how leadership approaches the issue, develop best practices, and create an environment that appeals to industries as well as has alignment with Starkville's values and long-term goals for sustainable growth.

By easing regulatory hurdles and promoting a business-friendly atmosphere, Starkville can become more attractive to industries seeking new locations, ultimately allowing residents benefit.

Balancing the diverse needs of tourists, college students, and long-term residents requires inclusive planning and community-building efforts.

This can be accomplished by fostering interaction between the groups and including them in the decision-making process. This could be accomplished by conducting town halls or community forums, where each group can express their concerns and needs. In order to capture the experience of tourist, we hope to work with event promoters and tourism groups to capture and assess the data collected by means of economic impact and/or personal testimony of their experience.

The key to balancing the needs of each group is to recognize the distinct needs of each, while creating an environment where all can thrive and coexist together.

Republican

**Roger Bassett**

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



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

CITY OF STARKVILLE

**Alderman Ward 1**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. Once the Highway 182 revitalization is complete, how specifically should the city pursue developing that corridor to generate tax revenue?

3. How can the city better position itself to recruit industry?

**Independent**

**Candidate is running unopposed**

**Kim Moreland (I)**  
 Age:  
 Education:  
 Political party: Independent  
 Political experience:  
 Residence:  
 Family:  
 Email:  
 Phone:



The questionnaire was not sent to unopposed candidates.

**Alderman Ward 2**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**

**Democrat**

**Candidate is running unopposed**

**Sandra Sistrunk (I)**  
 Age:  
 Education:  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience:  
 Residence:  
 Family:  
 Email:  
 Phone:



The questionnaire was not sent to unopposed candidates.

**Alderman Ward 3**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**

**Democrat**

**Laurel Lynn Rowse**  
 Age:  
 Education:  
 Political party: Democrat  
 Political experience:  
 Residence:  
 Family:  
 Email:  
 Phone:



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

**Republican**

**Jeffrey Rupp (I)**  
 Age: 64  
 Education: Bachelor's degree in Communications, Temple University; Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration, Mississippi State University; Continuing Education - Completed programs of study at the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: Former Mayor of Columbus; Current Ward 3 Alderman, Starkville  
 Residence: Starkville  
 Family: Wife, Donna, Sr. VP Corporate Marketing Cadence Bank, Daughters Taylor 24, Ellie 20  
 Email: jeffreybrupp@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 364-7021



The biggest problem facing Ward 3 is infrastructure and managing growth. South Montgomery has seen the rise of several new, highly desirable neighborhoods over the last few years. The city has looked at the feasibility of widening South Montgomery but the cost and time it would take to acquire the rights of way make it cost prohibitive. As an alternative the city has changed traffic signal times and re-worked intersections to improve traffic flow during the typical morning and evening rush hours. We are also in the middle of a comprehensive paving program using new overlay techniques and technologies to make our paving dollars go further. Finally, we are systematically replacing water and sewer lines that are decades old.

The city should NOT develop 182 to generate tax revenue. Our role in economic development is to create a place that attracts families and businesses. Starkville is booming; we're the largest city in the Golden Triangle, we're the preferred location for families relocating to the Golden Triangle for the literally hundreds of jobs being created at the GT Industrial Park. A great example is Cornerstone Park. There are tournaments booked every weekend from spring into the fall. This is critical because it brings thousands of people to town during the summer months when area businesses have historically struggled. The goal of the Highway 182 project is to focus on creating an attractive entrance to our community. Removing the current blight and creating a welcoming boulevard will create opportunities for economic development, which will create community wealth and create revenue for the city to pay for police, fire, sanitation, etc.

I think the city is in the best position it's ever been in. Tourists spent almost \$200,000,000 with us last year. Our relationships with our most important partners are incredibly strong. We work very closely with the Golden Triangle Development Link and Mississippi State University. Over the past couple of years \$50,000,000 has been invested in Starkville, that's from a combination of existing industries expanding, new industries coming in and a new shopping center. As I mentioned earlier, understanding our role as city leaders is an important part of economic development. I feel my time as mayor working on the Eurocopter deal and my experience graduating from the Oklahoma Economic Development Institute makes me the most qualified candidate to represent Starkville in matters of economic development and recruiting industry.

**James Kyle Skinner**  
 Age: 40  
 Education: Bachelor's degree @ MSU  
 Political party: Republican  
 Political experience: N/A  
 Residence: Starkville  
 Family: Wife, Kristen and two boys, Jon Kyle (11) and James (8)  
 Email: jameskyleskinner@gmail.com  
 Phone: (662) 418-7162



Property taxes are what I have heard most from my constituents so far when out campaigning. We need to look at ways to tax non-residents coming to Starkville, such as through a hotel tax. We have visitors coming for MSU related events (sports, meetings, orientation), youth travel sports, and concerts/festivals. It would generate revenue without burdening our citizens more.

It has been a great project for the city and will help attract businesses to the area. Once complete, it will grow with our population increasing and bring more jobs and revenue to the city. Our population has been growing over the last 10-15 years and that area will really benefit from the population growth.

I think we need to keep working with the LINK to help and hopefully pull a sister business off the aluminum mills. We need to make sure we are looking forward to the future to make sure we are ready for those businesses to come in and have the infrastructure ready for them.

CITY OF STARKVILLE

**Alderman Ward 4**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

2. Once the Highway 182 revitalization is complete, how specifically should the city pursue developing that corridor to generate tax revenue?

3. How can the city better position itself to recruit industry?

**Democrat**

**Candidate is running unopposed**

**Mike Brooks (I)**

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



The questionnaire was not sent to unopposed candidates.

**Alderman Ward 5**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**

**Democrat**

**Candidate is running unopposed**

**William Pochop**

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



The questionnaire was not sent to unopposed candidates.

**Alderman Ward 6**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**

**Democrat**

**Roy A' Perkins (I)**

**Age:**  
**Education:** a) Graduate of Starkville High School; Received a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Public Administration from Mississippi State University; Received a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Public Administration from Mississippi State University; and Received a Law Degree, (Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree), from Mississippi College School of Law.  
**Political party:** Democratic Party  
**Political experience:** Alderman For Ward 6, City of Starkville since July 6, 1993;  
**Residence:** Ward 6, Starkville, Mississippi.  
**Family:** I am married; and, I have two (2) adult children.  
**Email:** royaperkins@hotmail.com  
**Phone:** 662-242-7300



a) Securing additional funding from our Board of Aldermen each year for capital improvement projects in my Ward, including securing additional funding each year from our Board of Aldermen for the proper amount of street overlay on an annual basis. This is extremely important and very crucial to my Ward.  
Given the enormous size of my Ward and given the large number of streets in my Ward and due to the conditions of the streets in my Ward, an additional amount of streets in my Ward need to be overlayed each and every year with hot mix asphalt.

b) Recruiting businesses, including restaurants and other food establishments, to locate near and/or in the area of the NorthStar Industrial Park which is located in Ward 6; and  
c) Recruiting additional tenants, businesses and others to locate in the NorthStar Industrial Park in Ward 6.

The City, including myself, will continue to exert our best efforts to recruit businesses and industries to this Highway 182 corridor as a viable means of promoting and enhancing economic development and economic growth and as a very important means of generating tax revenue.

The City, including myself, will continue our best efforts, partnership, communications, involvement and engagement with the Golden Triangle Link, Retail Strategies, State Economic Development Officials, Mississippi State University and with the Oktibbeha County Board of Supervisors. We must continue to work together collectively as a team to provide for the overall betterment of our City.

**Tomeka Rhine**

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



Did not submit answers to the questionnaire.

**Alderman Ward 7**

**Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82**

**Democrat**

**Nedra Lowery**

**Age:** 40  
**Education:** Mississippi University for Women B.S. Mass Communication  
**Political party:** Democrat  
**Political experience:** Columbus Lowndes County Public Library Board  
**Residence:** Starkville, MS  
**Family:** Married with children  
**Email:** lowned@yahoo.com  
**Phone:** (662) 341-5417



My biggest challenge in my ward is people engagement. I would address this issue by focusing on more people of the community and including them in important decisions on future plans. I will always have an open door policy for my constituents making it easier for them to voice their opinions and ideas.

I think that the city should try to recruit more businesses to that side of town. I think that that side of town has been neglected for some time and the patrons of that side of town need more businesses that they can patronize to build revenue.

I think the city can better position itself to recruit industry by recognizing the specific industries needed for our city.

# CITY OF STARKVILLE

## Alderman Ward 7 (continued)

Term: 4 years, Annual salary: \$22,172.82



1. What is the biggest challenge facing your ward and how would you address it?

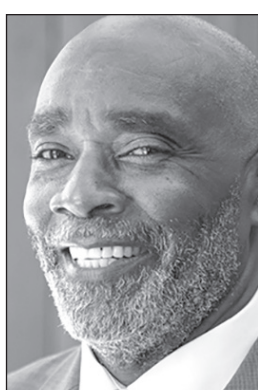
2. Once the Highway 182 revitalization is complete, how specifically should the city pursue developing that corridor to generate tax revenue?

3. How can the city better position itself to recruit industry?

### Democrat

#### Henry Vaughn (I)

Age: 72  
Education: two years of college  
Political party: Democratic  
Political experience: 16 years  
Residence: 105 Henderson St.  
Family: Married  
Email: henvaughn@yahoo.com  
Phone: (662) 769-9040



Open ditch at Forest Creek, communication with the Mayor, Engineer, and Board of Alderman. Installing sidewalks in much-needed areas in Ward 7. Collaborate with the Mayor, Engineer, and Board to secure grants.

Relying on retail strategies and developers.

Utilize our source and connection with link developers.

I = incumbent

## Starkville Precinct Polling Places

**Ward 1**  
**Starkville Sportsplex**  
Annex Building  
405 Lynn Lane

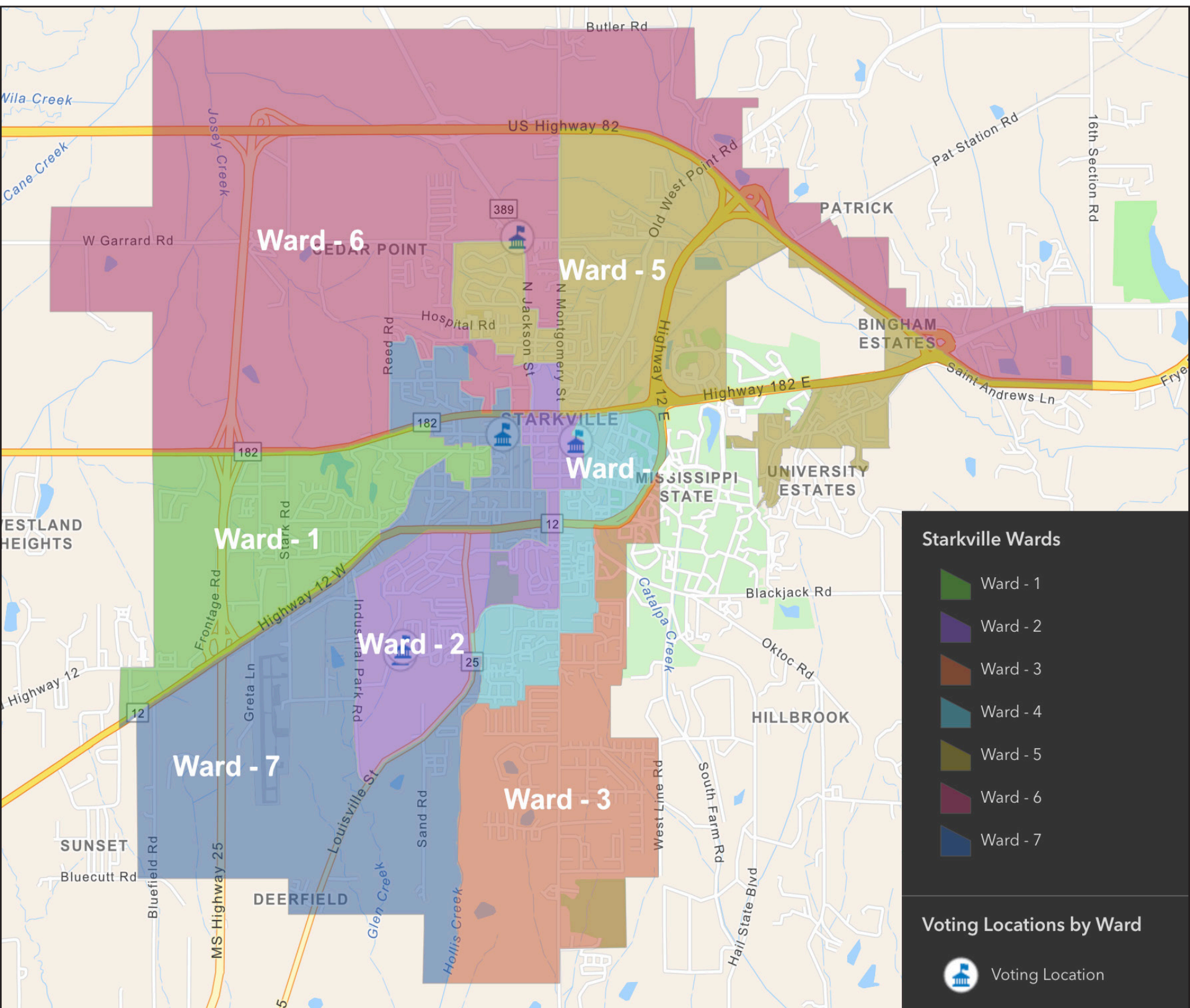
**Ward 4**  
**Starkville City Hall**  
110 West Main Street

**Ward 6**  
**Fire Station No. 3**  
102 Garrard Road

**Wards 2 & 3**  
**Starkville Sportsplex**  
Administration Building  
405 Lynn Lane

**Ward 5**  
**Fire Station No. 1**  
502 East Lampkin St.

**Ward 7**  
**Starkville City Hall**  
110 West Main Street



# Help make your community a better place.

## Primary Election - April 1, 2025

## General Election - June 3, 2025

### Polls are open until 7 p.m.

# *Don't forget to vote.*



# REACH YOUR ★ VOTERS! ★

## Advertise In THE DISPATCH



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Promote your campaign in every weekend edition **March - May for only \$100.** After the primary election, you can run your name in every weekend edition in **May for an additional \$60.**

Includes candidate's name, party, photo and office sought.

Once candidate is no longer in the race, their name will be removed from the list.

\* Candidates can add their name to the list at any time, but the price remains the same, regardless of when the candidate's information is added.

### POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENT

This is a paid political advertisement which is intended as a public service for the voters of Mississippi. It has been submitted to and approved by each candidate listed below or by the candidate's campaign manager. This listing is not intended to suggest or imply that these are the only candidates for these offices.

LOWNDES COUNTY	
<b>CHANCERY CLERK</b>	<b>TAX ASSESSOR</b>
John Doe (R)	John Doe (R)
Jane Doe (R)	Jane Doe (D)
John Doe (D)	<b>CONSTABLE</b>
Jane Doe (D)	<b>DISTRICT 1</b>
<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	John Doe (R)
<b>DISTRICT 1</b>	Jane Doe (R)
John Doe (D)	John Doe (D)

### Print Advertising Rates

Eighth Page .....	\$232.79
4.931"W x 5.25"H	+ \$37.50 for color
Quarter Page .....	\$456.57
4.931"W x 10.5"H	+ \$69.60 for color
Horizontal option available: 10"W x 5.25"H	
Half Page .....	\$931.14
10"W x 10.5"H	+ \$133.85 for color
Vertical option available: 4.931"W x 21.5"H	
Full Page .....	\$1,884.45
10"W x 21.25"H	+ \$214.25 for color
Post-It Notes.....	\$90cpm
14,500 required. Does not include the production of the post-it notes.	

### Online Advertising Rates

Home page ad on cdispatch.com .....	\$450/mo.
Billboard ad on cdispatch.com .....	\$500/mo.

Advertising space can be used for political advertising only. Custom web and print ads always available.

**ALL ADVERTISEMENTS MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

### Voters Read Newspapers

- » Our print edition reaches as many as 32,500 readers each day.
- » cdispatch.com is the most visited news website in the area. (Source: Alexa.com) We can link your internet ad to your campaign's website or Facebook page.

Contact Beth Proffitt at 662-352-1560 or [bproffitt@cdispatch.com](mailto:bproffitt@cdispatch.com)

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