

agle - Ron Harris

Qualifying slow but warming up, party officials say

By ED HOWELL
Eagle Senior Writer

It's been a slow qualifying season for county officials running in the June 3 primaries, but some activity has finally started to heat up in the past few days.

Local Republicans are expected to get their first candidate in any race. Jerry Bishop, who already has campaign signs out, said Saturday he will sign up Monday as a Republican to run for chairman of the Walker County Commission. He is the brother of state Sen. Charles Bishop, R-Arley.

The current chairman, Democrat Bruce Hamrick, has already qualified for re-election.

There had been speculation Jerry Bishop might run as a Democrat. Democratic Chairman Chris Pendley said Jerry Bishop had told him at one point he had picked up Democratic qualifying papers at the Probate Judge's Office and would turn them in to him.

Bishop did not turn anything in to Pendley.

Jerry Bishop — who said that he made his decision without influence from his brother — had thought about qualifying as a Democrat but continued to be bothered watching TV news coverage of Democratic candidates' calling for faster pullout from Iraq. He served in the military for three years.

"I've been watching the news and talking to people. I

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address that they give on in the memo the nation they d defend."

peaking for theocrats, however, Sen. rt Menendez of New y called on Bush to the reality" in Iraq "tell us the truth" t the cost of the con- as America is strug- g with a faltering omy and mounting alty tolls.

U.S. officials have ted to a number of itive signs, including a percent drop in vio- ce since Bush ordered 000 U.S. reinforce- ts to Iraq early last ar. Iraqis have also ade some limited ogress in power-shar- g deals among rival hite, Sunni and urdish communities.

However, U.S. military mmanders have been areful to point out that

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Mahdi Army militia.
On Saturday, a U.S. attack helicopter fired on two check-

the attack may have been a Sons of Iraq checkpoint," the military said.

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just don't think I can support their policies," he said. "I made my decision watching TV."

The candidacy comes as Charles Bishop has touched on commission issues of late. He has become a leading opponent of electronic bingo and is sponsoring bills that would end electronic bingo in the county.

In October, he blamed the commission for allowing many problems with electronic bingo to take place because it did not ban electronic bingo as Jasper did.

"All they had to do was disallow it," he said.

The status of a local bill to abolish the Treasurer's Office — which is also up for election this year — is uncertain, as Charles Bishop has indicated he may not support the bill — in part, because he thinks the treasurer's office can be a check-and-balance in reviewing the commission's finances.

He also indicated he would not allow the treasurer's bill if anyone qualified for the race. Democrat A. Ruth Cloud of Jasper has now qualified, according to Pendley on Saturday.

The treasurer's election is unique because of the local bill, sponsored by state Rep. Tommy Sherer, D-Jasper, to abolish the position with this term, preventing the need for an election this year. The Alabama Legislature could meet through May 19.

The Walker County Republican Party will meet at 6 p.m. Thursday at Moore's Landing.

Qualifying forms will be available for those who want to sign up as a candidate, and an information update on electronic bingo, which the local party organization has come out against, will be given.

The primaries will be held June 3, with voter registration set for May 23. Runoffs, if necessary, will be held on July 15, while the general election will be held Nov. 4.

Registration for Democrats is currently set to run until noon Monday, March 31, although Pendley said Thursday there is discussion within the party about extending the deadline four days until 5 p.m. Friday, April 4, when local Republicans and state offices in both parties will end.

Democrats who have qualified as of Thursday for the June primaries are the following (with "I" signifying incumbents):

County Commission, Chairman

•Bruce Hamrick (I), 751 Phillipstown Rd., Empire

County Commission, District 1

•Dual Tubbs (I), 789 Alexander Road, Jasper.

County Commission, District 2

•James "Pete" Bray, 346 4th Avenue NW, Carbon Hill.

•Dan Wright, 1019 Pleasant Grove Rd, Oakman.

County Commission, District 3

•Ben L. Huggins (I), 30 Huggins Rd., Cordova.

•Daniel "Dan" Earnest, 1306 Blackwell Dr., Parrish.

County Commission,

District 4

•Steven Aderholt, 392 Rocky Ridge Road, Dora.

Revenue Commissioner

•Jerry Guthrie (I), 235 Prospect Rd., Nauvoo.

Board of Education, Chairman

•Erwin Peake, 736 South Lowell Rd., Jasper.

•Bill Smith, 2929 Hillard Loop, Townley.

Treasurer

•A. Ruth Cloud, 3544 N. Airport Rd., Jasper.

•Wayne Smith, 446 Thach Loop, Jasper.

Constable, Beat 37

•Christopher Upton, 124 Roberts Street, Sumiton.

Constable, Beat 39

•Homer Estes, 4515 Fall City Road, Jasper.

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