

Inside:

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• See Opinion/Forum pages on A6 & 7 •

• See Sports on page B1 •

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Local candidates take center stage

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Leading up to the primary election, several organizations, including the Black Political Awareness League (BPAL), Winston-Salem Black Chamber of Commerce, Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, The Chronicle, and the local chapter of the NAACP, will be hosting a series of forums to give voters a chance to hear from the candidates before casting their ballots on March 3.

The first of five forums that will be held at various locations throughout the city was held earlier this week at the Central Library and was headlined by the incumbent mayor, Allen Joines, and challenger JoAnne Allen.

To open the forum,

helped launch while in office, including a free college program accessible to all graduates from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School system. Joines also mentioned a paid internship for high school juniors and seniors that he plans to announce next week, and other initiatives to improve third grade reading scores and create jobs in the community.

Allen, who is a native of Winston-Salem and president of Action4Now, a local activist organization, said she decided to run to uplift her hometown and help bring about change. She said the most pressing issue facing our community is the fact that there aren't many jobs.

"That's where all the other issues come in," Al-



Photos by Tevin Stinson

Earlier this week candidates running for mayor and clerk of court came together to discuss their platforms and plans if they are elected. The forum held at the Central Library was hosted by the Black Political Awareness League (BPAL), and several other organizations.



Incumbent Mayor Allen Joines talks about his plan to bring jobs to the city during the Candidates Forum on Monday, Jan. 27.

both candidates for mayor had the opportunity to introduce themselves and give a brief summary of their platforms. Joines, who has won re-election five times and is the city's longest-serving mayor, said he decided to run for re-election because there is still work to be done. He said, "We want to continue our efforts to interrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty in our community."

He went on to discuss initiatives that he has

len said. "That's where the violence, that's where the gentrification, that's where the unemployment, that's where the housing ... all of this basically starts with the fact that we don't have any jobs."

Allen said since Joines has been in office, the city has given incentives to the wrong companies who all left the area after a few years. She said Winston-Salem has some of the best schools in the state and we should be using that to attract companies from

across the country. "We have to utilize that," Allen said. "We have to make sure that we can actually reach out across the country and stop giving incentives to all the wrong companies because after an incentive, those companies can pick up and leave and we're right back where we started and that's what has happened here, we're down to one headquarters."

Joines said that isn't the case. He said the job market has seen a 3.9% increase over the past two

years, which is equivalent to 5,300 jobs. He mentioned that a large part of that growth has come from the growth in entrepreneurship in the area.

"Creating jobs is pretty simple - it's three ways you can do it. You recruit new companies coming in; you help existing companies expand that will create about 50% of the new jobs; then the third piece of it is helping new start-up companies that get started here, grow, and become part of the fabric here in Winston-Salem," Joines said. "We've got a great

system here in our city that is making us a strong area for entrepreneurship. That's where the jobs are going to come from."

When asked their plans for the first 100 days in office, Allen said the first thing she will do is an audit on the different departments to see where taxpayers' money is going.

"There's no organization in city government that will not do an audit to know where your tax dollars is going. Once we find out exactly where your tax dollars are going, then we will be able to say this

doesn't work, this doesn't work, this doesn't work," Allen continued. "We will be able to come in and actually do some policy that's going to affect not just gentrification, but poverty, unemployment, and homelessness."

In his first 100 days, Joines said he plans to continue the push against gun violence. He also discussed plans to have a public safety summit to get input from the public on how to stop violent crime in our community.

See Candidates on A2



JoAnne Allen, a candidate for mayor, makes a point during the Candidates Forum earlier this week.

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