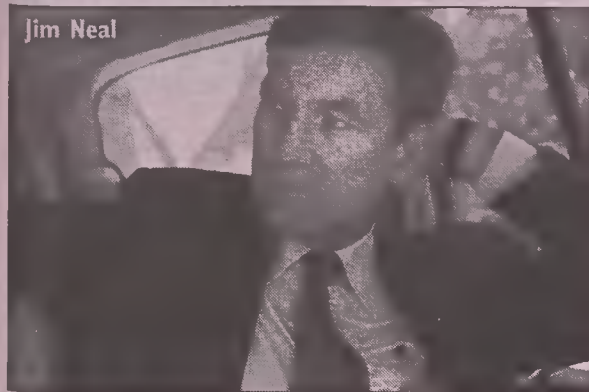


Gay politician speaks to Foxx constituents

One-time U.S. Senate candidate featured speaker at 5th District convention

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

STATESVILLE, N.C. — The goal: Galvanize Northwest North Carolina's moderate and liberal Democrats. The hope: The ouster of radically conservative U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx.



Jim Neal

That was the stated purpose of the Democratic North Carolina Fifth District Convention on May 16 at Mitchell Community College.

Party members welcomed one-time candidate for U.S. Senate, openly gay politician Jim Neal, as the featured speaker as they started to chart a course toward possible victory in the 2010 midterm elections.

"I don't plan on attacking Virginia Foxx, per se," Neal told *Q-Notes* a couple days prior to his speech. "I want to use Virginia Foxx, her ignorance and complete disregard for family values as a teaching opportunity."

Neal said Foxx "crossed the line" when she said the 1998 hate crime murder of Matthew Shepard was a "hoax" in late April.

The state's Fifth District covers almost all of Northwest North Carolina, including the mountain town of Boone and part of the Triad's Winston-Salem. David Crawford, the district's Democratic chair, says the district's conservative nature makes it difficult to organize and win.

"The energy Obama generated everywhere seemed to bring out the opposition here," he told *Q-Notes*. "It galvanized our opposition — that's not just Republicans, it is conservative Democrats, too."

Crawford said he thinks Foxx's move to the right is just a part of the game. "The fact that

Virginia Foxx is on this crusade to make herself look outrageously, radically right, I think that is calculated on her part. I think that is how she thinks she is going to energize her base."

Running a campaign portraying Foxx's actions as counterproductive for the district will be the key to success. "We can elect a moderate democrat here," he said. "It is a question

of presenting somebody who is palatable to the people who have voted for Virginia Foxx, to the Democrats who have voted for her."

Neal understands the frustration of district Democrats. Although he doesn't live there, he's more than happy to help constituents find a way to bring new representation to the area, replacing the "out of touch" elected official they currently have.

"She isn't only reflecting poorly on herself, but she's up there to represent the people of the Fifth District, to represent North Carolina," he said. "She's an embarrassment. She needs to be fired." ▀

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Charlotte Business Guild

Meeting Date:
Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Program:
Elke Kennedy, Sean's Last Wish
Crowne Plaza Hotel
201 S. McDowell St., Uptown Charlotte

Time:
Cash bar social: 5:30 pm • Heavy hors d'oeuvres: 5:30 pm

To Reserve:
Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members
Call 704-565-5075 by 12 pm, Friday, June 12, 2009
or email businessguild@yahoo.com
and request tickets for this event.

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