

# Democrat County Commission Candidates

## Ervin Adams

ERVIN ADAMS of Revere is an incumbent seeking his sixth term as a county commissioner. He was first elected to two two-year terms in 1970 and 1972 and won re-election to four-year terms in 1974, 1978 and 1982. He has served several terms as chairman of the county commission.

A Madison County native of the Revere community, he is a graduate of Laurel H.S. and a retired construction worker. He is married to the former Neple Norton and they have two daughters, Sheila Barnhill and June Gahagan. Both daughters are teachers employed by the Madison County school system.

Why are you running for re-election to the county commission?

ADAMS: "I'm retired and got plenty of time to fool with it. I like to serve all the people, not just a few."

What can Madison County do to attract new industry and tourism?

ADAMS: "That's a hard question. What would help more than anything is improving the roads from Hot Springs to the state line and from Laurel to Greene County, Tennessee. That would open up avenues that would really help."

What can Madison County do to make up for cutbacks in federal assistance?

ADAMS: "In the legislature they are talking about raising another half-cent sales tax. That's about all we can do. I'm opposed to raising taxes. We'll have to use the half-cent sales tax or cut back."

Would you support a school referendum for new school construction?

ADAMS: "Absolutely yes. I supported it the last time. But they need to have a plan to start with. We need classrooms at Laurel, Hot Springs and Marshall. You have to have a plan in anything you go at. I've talked to the board of education about a school bond. They say, 'It failed before and that's the end of it.'"

What county services need to be improved? Are there any services that can be reduced?

ADAMS: "Everything needs to be improved, but how do you do it? I think Anita Davie does a wonderful job with less county money."

What are the major accomplishments of your administration in the past four years?

ADAMS: "First, we've developed a transportation program, the 40-unit housing in Mars Hill and Section 8 housing assistance program."

"We brought Kenpak into the industrial park and obtained a landfill truck and equipment at no cost. There are the six centralized garbage collection centers and soon there will be a new sewer line installed from Madison Manor. We opened two new senior citizen sites in Spring Creek and Upper Laurel and a new day care center in Upper Laurel. And we've begun tax mapping for the county. We also purchased two new ambulances for the EMS and helped Marshall and Mars Hill secure funding for water and sewer projects. We also help bring Banner House into Hot Springs."

## Virginia Anderson

VIRGINIA ANDERSON of Hot Springs is an incumbent seeking her fourth term on the board of county commissioners. A former chairman of the Madison County Board of Elections and Board of Education member, she was first elected to the county commission in 1974 and has served as commission chairman.

A Madison County native, she operates the Alpine Court Motel and Trail Cafe in Hot Springs. She is married to Harold Anderson and they have two daughters, Amy Anderson of Mars Hill and Deana Goldstein of Asheville.

Why are you running for re-election?

ANDERSON: "I guess the main reason is our having so many programs that are vitally important for all our citizens, from senior citizens to day care. Being a native, I can sit in my living room and see the house I was born in. Anything I can do for the citizens of Madison County—that's reason enough for me to seek re-election."

How can Madison County make up for cutbacks in federal assistance?

ANDERSON: "Either we'll feel the cutbacks or we'll have to depend on taking up the slack with the half-cent sales tax or raise taxes which I am opposed to because there's no other source of revenue for the county."

Would you support a school referendum for new school construction?

ANDERSON: "Yes. And I hope everyone would. I think we have a good school program, but you don't make progress by standing still. We need to grow."

What can Madison County do to attract new industry and tourism?

ANDERSON: "Since I'm in the tourist business, it's of great interest to me. I'd like to work to continue the road building program from the Old Mill Wheel to the state line. We've gotten assistance from the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, but we will also have to work with our state representatives to attract new industries here."

What county services need to be improved?

ANDERSON: "Certainly education. I would also like to see more trash collection centers and improve our ambulance service. We now have seven day care and senior citizen centers and services for the handicapped, but they should be expanded. The new group home that will be built in Hot Springs will help."

What have been the major accomplishments of your administration in the past four years?

ANDERSON: "We've developed a transportation program for the county; built 40 units of public housing in Mars Hill and brought Kenpak into the industrial park. We're now in the process of repairing the courthouse. We developed a centralized system for garbage collection and obtained landfill equipment with funds from the state at no cost to local taxpayers."

"Now we are helping Mars Hill and Marshall with their water and sewer problems and we've opened new senior citizen meal sites in Spring Creek and Upper Laurel. Plans are now underway for a group home in Hot Springs and we were helpful in attracting Banner House to Hot Springs."

## Bobby Capps

BOBBY CAPPS of Mars Hill is one of three challengers in the Democratic primary. Capps operates the Capps Funeral Home in Mars Hill and is active in youth programs throughout the county. He is a graduate of Enka H.S. and the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. His wife is the former Louedith Wiggins. They have two sons: Todd, 13, and Tim, 9.

Capps is a member of the Bethel Baptist Church and the Bald Creek Masonic Lodge No. 397 AF&AM.

Editor's Note: Mr. Capps' answers are taken directly from an advertisement which appeared in last week's edition. Questions were submitted by The News Record.

Why are you running for the county commission?

CAPPS: "I am running for county commissioner because I am concerned for Madison County and its future. If elected, I will devote an honest and trustworthy government to all residents of Madison County. I am interested in Madison County schools, bringing industry into our county and making Madison an even greater county in which to live. I will work to keep any undesirables, such as the nuclear waste site, out of our county."

What can Madison County do to attract new industry and tourism?

CAPPS: "Attracting new industry can be done by the following: We need to have land prepared and ready for construction to start immediately when an industry is ready to come to Madison County. We need to consider forming an Economic Development Fund. We need to work closely with the (Asheville Area) Chamber of Commerce. I feel that if we could have a Madison County resident appointed to the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, it would be beneficial in bringing industry and tourism into the county."

Attracting tourism may be done by the following: We need to work with the Chamber of Commerce, print a brochure of Madison County and distribute it to chambers of commerce and travel agencies in other states, keep our air clean, keep our

rivers and streams clean and attractive and keep our natural environment and scenery as beautiful as possible."

How can Madison County make up for cutbacks in federal assistance?

CAPPS: "Since I am not in office at the present time, I do not know exactly what cutbacks have been made. I would take a good look at each service that Madison County has and make every effort to make it self-supporting if possible."

Would you support a school referendum for new school construction?

CAPPS: "Senate Bill 431 states that when the half-cent sales tax went into effect in 1985, this bill was intended to be used for public school construction. Madison County was to receive approximately \$363,804 for the year 1985-86. Madison County schools received \$145,521, which is 40 percent (of that amount.) This is the minimum amount allowed by the state."

I would vote to give the entire half-cent sales tax for school construction. After this has been done and all avenues have been taken to construct schools and there is still a need, I would support a referendum. I have pledged to do everything possible for our children. We must give our children the best!"

What county services need to be improved? Are there any services which can be reduced?

CAPPS: "I believe all services can be improved. I don't feel that any county can say that all their services are exactly as they would desire them to be. One of the services which I feel needs improvements very much is our ambulance service. I would work to make this important service exceptional."

"I am unable to say which, if any, services can be reduced. I would make my decision after giving a close analysis of each service which could be reduced and give my fair and honest recommendation on each."

## James Ledford

JAMES T. LEDFORD of Mars Hill is an incumbent seeking his fifth term as a county commissioner. He was first elected to a two-year term in 1972 and won re-election to four-year terms in 1974, 1978 and 1982. He is currently the chairman of the commission.

A native of Madison County, he is a graduate of Mars Hill H.S. and a retired veteran of the U.S. Navy with 20 years service. He is also chairman of the Land of the Sky Regional Council, Blue Ridge Mental Health Center and Madison County Health Dept.

Ledford is president of Ledford Enterprises and operates three service stations in the Mars Hill area. He is married to the former Nina Balding and they have three children: a daughter, Nina, and twin sons, John and Michael.

Why are you seeking re-election to the county commission?

LEDFORD: "After returning from the Navy in 1964, I opened a business in Madison County. My business was successful through the support of the people. I was approached by interested Democratic officials to file for the county commission. I accepted with the understanding that I would work for all the people, with no strings attached. I won the election."

"Madison County has made progress in industry, education and services to the people. We've opened day care centers and services for the elderly, made many road improvements with the support of the board of education, Social Services board and all the community development clubs, state and regional and federal officials."

"I feel like I have the experience and confidence of the people to continue to make progress in all levels"

What can Madison County do to make up for cutbacks in federal assistance?

LEDFORD: "The Madison County budget has grown from \$1.5 million to \$7.2 million since I have been in office. We receive about \$1.9 million from Madison County taxes. In order to make up for federal cuts, there is only three ways to cut the budget. We can cut personnel, raise taxes or completely eliminate programs."

"I believe in evaluating all programs and the county commission then makes the decision on the proper action to take. As long as I am on the board, I will vote for the choice I think is best for all the people, but I assure you that the budget will be balanced without raising taxes to a rate where people can't pay it. I am a taxpayer and work for the people."

"Madison County is in good, sound financial condition. We can absorb some of the cuts."

What can Madison County do to attract new industry and tourism?

LEDFORD: "Law enforcement, education, roads, schools and environment attract industry. All the industry now located in Madison County have come to Madison County in the last 16 years. We have increased our tax base to over \$200 million by bringing in new industry and housing. Madison County belongs to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. We have unpaid concerned citizens working as volunteers to attract new industry to the county."

"We are working closely with the N.C. Department of Commerce. We have developed the industrial park and new industry has located there. We now have water and sewer on the site."

"We need more clean industry. By working with all the people, we will get new industry. We have a good

labor force, good schools and other services. That attracts industry."

Would you support a school referendum for new school construction?

LEDFORD: "As you know, the school board has to initiate a bond by requesting one from the county commissioners. The last time they called for a bond referendum, the county commission approved and actively supported the school bond which could have raised \$2.5 million at five percent interest at a 40 year payback. The taxpayers of Madison County voted against the bond."

"If the board of education requests another bond referendum, I will support it."

What county services need to be improved?

LEDFORD: "The Madison County commissioners are striving to im-

prove all county services. We need improvement in our ambulance service, transportation and recreational facilities."

What are the major accomplishments of your administration in the past four years?

LEDFORD: "Madison County has attracted two new industries in the past four years. We've improved the ambulance service and purchased the old French Broad Electric building for the Dept. of Social Services."

"We've also approved two new fire districts, purchased two river sites for recreation, improved all county services and opened new senior citizen and day care centers in Upper Laurel and Spring Creek."

"We constructed new housing in Mars Hill and built a new elementary school in Marshall. We helped both the Greater Ivy and Upper Laurel Community Development Clubs develop new recreation fields and re-roofed both the old Ebb's Chapel and Beech Glen school buildings."

## Reese Steen

DR. REESE A. STEEN of Mars Hill is a challenger in the Democratic race for the three county commission seats. He practices dentistry in Mars Hill. A graduate of the University of North Carolina and the UNC School of Dentistry, Steen is a former president of the Mars Hill PTA and chaired the Mars Hill Planning and Zoning Board before resigning in March.

He and his wife, Lynn, are members of the Mars Hill Baptist Church. They have three children: Justin, 6, McKenzie, 5, and Tracy, 16.

Why are you running for the county commission?

STEEN: "My decision to run for the county commission stems from a genuine interest in making county government more sensitive to the needs of all the people. Having lived on both ends of the county, I want to help unite everyone and work together to improve the quality of life for all our citizens, not just the school kids, but also our senior citizens and all those in between."

What can Madison County do to attract new industry and tourism?

STEEN: "We have depended on the state and the Asheville Chamber of Commerce to bring industry and tourism to Madison County for too long. If you want something done, do it yourself the old saying goes. We have to do our homework to create the conditions necessary to attract industry and tourism. If elected, I feel that I have the qualifications

necessary to meet, entertain and show off our county and its people to industrial prospects."

Would you support a school referendum for new school construction?

STEEN: "I think that with some of the programs now pending in the state legislature to help local school systems that we can improve our schools without increasing taxes. However, I will do what is necessary

to provide our children with an education equal to any other school system in the state of North Carolina."

What can Madison County do to make up for cutbacks in federal assistance?

STEEN: "The more the federal government cuts back, the harder I will work to keep county spending down. Thank goodness that we have so many volunteers that already help

us stretch our tax dollar. Volunteerism and wise spending can save us from higher taxes."

What county services need to be improved? Are there any services which can be reduced?

STEEN: "I am going to try to improve all county services. I don't think there are any services which should be reduced. Hopefully, every taxpayer will receive some benefit from their tax dollars."