

KEPLEY

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getting into drinking water, and the newest threat is pharmaceuticals. With hospitals and medical centers aplenty in Davidson County, the incumbent worries that high levels of medical chemicals run into streams and aren't extracted during the purifying process.

"We're already finding deformed fish and male fish that can lay eggs," Kepley said. "It kind of frightens me, and what I would like to have is to compound the river creek watershed all in Davidson County. Then we can keep all contaminants from getting into that water. That would be for our future kids and grandkids. It's got to be done now because it takes 25 years."

But with the economy only just beginning to crawl out of recession, jobs remain the priority for most voters — and thus for most candidates. Small businesses have largely been championed as the key to surviving the economic climate.

"They are the economic backbone of our whole economy, not only in the county but in the state and in the nation," Kepley said. "They're more important than industrial development."

Kepley says small business development has been a focus of his for some time, particularly because these companies tend to hire local and keep

money in the county.

"I support anything Steve Googe [Director of the Economic Development Commission] can do for us in the large economic arena, but I've tried to work with employment training and the community college and all the folks to be sure that we can train people for new skills. I'd rather have 10 small businesses with 10 employees each than one industry with 100 employees because when that industry shuts down, all 100 jobs are gone."

A large advocate for tourism in the county, Kepley says he hopes to

continue to improve on that aspect of the local economy.

"The economics of tourism have grown from \$80 million a year to \$120 million," he said. "I'm still trying to up that figure because there's no way to ship that overseas. There's no incentives to get that over here."

Kepley's largest tourism idea rests in increased signage on major highways to promote what Davidson County has to offer, whether it be historical sites or barbecue restaurants.

Hand-in-hand with bringing jobs comes education, another challeng-

ing issue facing the county particularly in the face of state funding troubles.

"The county is really the primary administrator over education," Kepley said. "We have rules and requirements and a lot of the curriculum that is prepared out of Raleigh, but the educators are here, and they are the ones that really get across to the students."

Another focus for Kepley is increasing the amount of green technology in the area. A supporter of the county's solar farm and methane gas at the landfill, Kepley says his next project will be to research bringing

wind energy.

Earlier in the month, the commissioner took a trip to a wind turbine with 19 other county folks. He is currently working with North Carolina State University meteorologists on local wind currents and velocity to see if a wind turbine would be worth the county's while.

"I'm going great guns on that," he said. "It does look promising to me. A lot of people say it'll never work, we don't have enough wind here. We don't have enough wind every day, but in our area February and March are real windy months, even up into April. What I'm

interested in is how many days a year do we have where the wind velocity is more than 10 miles per hour. That's the breaking point."

The windmill Kepley went to look at was used to power a school, an idea which intrigues the commissioner. Even if wind velocities don't reach the benchmark every day or even half the days, Kepley says it still might be worth it.

"We've got 365 days a year," he said. "If you get performance out of 125 days, you take 125 days of a school where you don't have to buy any power. That's a big thing."

TUESDAY EVENING. Channel schedule grid with columns for time slots (6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30, 12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30) and rows for various channels (CBS, PBS, FOX, etc.). Includes program titles like 'The Bachelor', 'The Contender', and 'The Bachelor'.

GRICE

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as we can on the B&Es and larcenies because those are the crimes that impact the most people in the county. This year, it looks like our commercial and residential B&Es are down. We want to keep working on that. One of the rising problems we want to continue addressing is converted drugs like oxycontin and other prescription pills. These drugs seem to be behind a lot of crimes today. A lot of kids in school have access to these drugs and they are extremely addictive."

When it comes to saving money, Grice agrees with his opponent that measures such as electronic monitoring devices would be a good tool, but he warns that certain criminals shouldn't be treated so lightly. "We have discussed the use of electronic monitoring devices," said Grice. "We do a lot with non-violent criminals working for us and the county that benefit a lot of people. Electronic house arrest could be accepted for consideration and has been used by other law enforcement jurisdictions. My problem is these same people on electronic arrest, like the ones in for breaking and entering, are the ones causing the most problems in the community. You can save money that way, but it's a little different after they've been tried."

Grice is a grizzled veteran who has seen just about everything. He plans on spending the next week doing his job and getting ready for the rigors of election day on Nov. 2.

Old cowboys aren't so much concerned about the size of the bull as they are the size of the show. Grice is more than ready for another round in the bullring.

For more information on Grice, visit keepsheriffgrice.org.

WEDNESDAY EVENING. Channel schedule grid with columns for time slots (6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30, 12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30) and rows for various channels (CBS, PBS, FOX, etc.). Includes program titles like 'The Bachelor', 'The Contender', and 'The Bachelor'.