

LOCAL

Primary election is Tuesday, May 6

GARY STEWART

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Most local races will not be contested until the November General Election, but all signs point to a big turnout for the Tuesday, May 6 Democratic and Republican Primaries.

The Democratic race for President is still up for grabs as the last candidates standing - Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton - seek the votes in North Carolina and Indiana that could put them over the top.

Polls open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. in Cleveland County. Persons who for some reason can't vote Tuesday or

would just like to avoid the crowds can still take part in "early voting" through Saturday.

Cleveland County Elections Board Chairman Debra Blanton said early voting is available from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday and Friday and from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday at the Elections Board in Shelby. In addition, a satellite voting site is available in Boiling Springs from 9 a.m.-5:30 today and Friday and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday.

Most local officials such as Cleveland County Commissioners, and some state legislators like Rep. Tim Moore of Kings Mountain, will not be on Tuesday's ballot because

they have no primary opposition. However, they will face nominees from the opposing party in November.

Still, Blanton predicts a high turnout of around 50 percent.

"We've had a fairly good absentee or early voting turnout, and that is kind of what I base my prediction on," she said. "The State Board of Elections also anticipates a greater turnout than normal."

Blanton said it's important for people to vote Tuesday and to also understand what a primary election is all about. It will decide the Democratic and Republican nominees for the General Election.

"The primary election is the only time political affiliation is of importance," she said. "North Carolina has what is called a closed primary, which means if you are a Democrat you have to vote the Democrat ballot. If you're a Republican you have to vote the Republican ballot. If you're unaffiliated you can choose either the Democratic or Republican bal-

lot or you can vote the nonpartisan ballot."

Sample ballots are available on the Board of Elections website at www.elections.cleveland-county.com

Blanton said the results of Tuesday's primaries will either be on the Elections Board website or there will be a link there to direct voters to another site.

Several area residents will face primary opposition on Tuesday, and one race has been thrown out by the State Board of Elections.

Republican Kelly E. Hastings of Cherryville, who was seeking the NC State House District 110 nomination, two weeks ago was ruled ineligible to run by a local panel of Cleveland and Gaston County elections board officials because he allegedly had not established his current residency within a year of the 2008 November election. That ruling was upheld last week by the State Elections Board and the Board issued its official order late Tuesday that Hastings' opponent, Pearl Burris Floyd,

would be declared the winner and that votes in that race would not be counted.

However, Hastings said he may appeal the ruling to the NC Court of Appeals. Ballots have already been printed and his name will appear on it.

U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry of Cherryville also faces Republican primary opposition from Lance Sigmon.

Walter Dalton of Rutherford County stepped down after several years in the NC Senate to run for Lt. Governor and he is in a four-person race for the Democratic nomination.

Keith H. Melton of Ellenboro faces Phil D. Clark of Rutherfordton for the Democratic nomination for Dalton's NC State Senate District 46 seat. The winner will face Republican Debbie Clary of Cherryville in the fall.

WHO'S ON BALLOT

Democratic Primary

President of U.S.:

- Hillary Clinton
- Mike Gravel
- Barack Obama
- No Preference
- US Senate:**
- Kay Hagan
- Duskin C. Lassiter
- Jim Neal
- Howard Staley
- Marcia W. Williams
- US Congress District 10:**
- Steve Ivester
- Daniel Johnson

Governor:

- Richard H. Moore
- Dennis Nielsen
- Bev Perdue

Lieutenant Governor:

- Walter H. Dalton
- Hamton Dellinger
- Pat Smathers
- Dan Besse

Auditor:

- Beth A. Wood
- Fred Aikens

Commissioner of Insurance:

- Wayne Goodwin
- David C. Smith

Commissioner of Labor

- Mary Fant Donnan
- Ty Richardson
- Robin Anderson
- John C. Brooks

Supt. of Public Instruction:

- Eddie Davis
- June St. Clair Atkinson

Treasurer

- Janet Cowell
- Michael Weisel
- David Young
- NC State Senate District 46**
- Phil D. Clark
- Keith H. Melton

Republican Primary

President

- Mike Huckabee
- Alan Keyes
- John McCain
- Ron Paul
- No Preference
- US Senate**
- Pete DiLauro
- Elizabeth Dole

US Congress

- Patrick McHenry
- Lance Sigmon

Governor

- Bill Graham
- Pat McCrory
- Robert F. (Bob) Orr
- E. Powers
- Fred Smith

Lieutenant Governor

- Timothy Cook
- Greg Dority
- Robert Pittenger
- Jim Snyder

Supt. of Public Instruction:

- Joe Johnson
- Richard Morgan
- Eric H. Smith
- NC State House Dist. 110**
- Pearl Burris Floyd
- Kelly E. Hastings

Nonpartisan Offices

Court of Appeals Judge

- Jewel Ann Farlow
- Dean R. Poirier
- James A. (Jim) Wynn
- Court of Appeals Judge**
- Sam J. Ervin, IV
- Janet Pueschel
- Kristin Ruth
- John M. Tyson

Miss Down Home Festival Pageant slated, Registration deadline is Tuesday, May 6

The Miss Gastonia Scholarship Association will sponsor the Miss Down Home Festival Pageant on Saturday, May 10 at 10:30 a.m. in downtown Bessemer City. The pageant is an official event of the 20th annual Down Home Festival.

Girls newborn to age 19 are eligible to compete in one of 10 age categories. All contestants receive a tiara and the winners

become members of the Miss Gastonia queens' court.

For more information or to receive an application, call (704) 827-7277 or visit online at www.missgastoniapageant.com. Applications also are available at City Hall in Bessemer City. The deadline to enter is Tuesday, May 6. Proceeds benefit the Miss Gastonia scholarship fund.

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