



Our view: Prepare now so your voice will matter

September 27, 2007

Political candidates are knocking on doors all over Central Louisiana. It's a good bet most voters aren't sure how many races are being run. The list is long and important.

It's time to get ready for the Oct. 20 election.

Locally, voters already have had some chances to listen to candidates at events and forums. More opportunities are scheduled.

Be sure to make time to attend and learn.

In Rapides Parish alone, the ballot lists governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, insurance commissioner, attorney general, treasurer and commissioner of agriculture and forestry, a representative to the Board of Education Secondary Education, a state senator and a state representative in Districts 25, 26 and 27. Those are just the statewide races.

Voters also will choose a sheriff, an assessor, a justice of the peace in Ward 10, and police jurors from every district except District D (Juror Theodore Fontaine Jr. is unopposed). The clerk of court and incumbents in some other posts also are unopposed.

Lots of candidates want your attention and your vote.

Forums give people a chance to learn firsthand where they stand on the issues -- crime, health care, education, infrastructure, workforce development, and more.

Much is at stake in Central Louisiana, which is on the brink of unprecedented opportunity. Important pieces are in place. Leadership is needed to make the right things happen.

Ask the candidates for state representative about the issues: completing La. Highway 28 so it is four lanes from Alexandria to Leesville; requiring regional cooperation among law enforcement agencies, planning agencies and other functions where consolidation makes sense; demanding ethical behavior so you know how elected officials make a living and who writes the checks; and calling on candidates to be strong, vocal and persistent advocates for Central Louisiana.

Other relevant topics have been compiled by the non-partisan Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana in "Questioning Candidates Beyond the Platitudes." Read it online at www.la-par.org.

An opportunity to learn about the top four candidates running for governor will air at 7 p.m. today on Louisiana Public Broadcasting.

The Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce will conduct a forum for legislative candidates at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 4 at the Alexander Fulton Inn (formerly the downtown Holiday Inn); and a local fraternity will present a legislative forum Oct. 10 in the Alexandria City Council Chambers.

Go, listen, ask -- be prepared to vote.

Online election resources include the following:

- www.thetowntalk.com (click Decision 2007).

- www.la-par.org.

- www.sos.louisiana.gov.