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Wildomar residents will vie for council seats if incorporated

By: BRIAN ECKHOUSE - Staff Writer

WILDOMAR -- At least 14 residents intend to run for city council seats that don't exist today and are not guaranteed to be established any time soon.

Wildomar has been an unincorporated community governed by the county. But a group of residents -- Wildomar Incorporation Now -- led a successful campaign to place the question of cityhood before voters on the February ballot.

Voters probably will decide the fate of cityhood Feb. 5, as well as select five members for a city council that would be seated if incorporation is approved.

The election definitely will be held if courts rule against resident Gerard Ste. Marie, who sued the county Wednesday for agreeing to transfer millions of dollars from the county's coffers to a city of Wildomar to help ensure financial solvency in the first 10 years after incorporation.

Through Friday, 14 residents had sought paperwork from the county Registrar of Voters that would be needed to file for city council

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candidacy. Each candidate must collect the signatures of 20 voters and complete the paperwork by Nov. 9, said Rebecca Martine, chief deputy for the registrar of voters. There is no filing fee.

Only registered voters who live in Wildomar are eligible to run, county officials said. Anyone in prison or on parole with a felony conviction is prohibited from running.

The City Council would head a government overseeing a 22-square-mile community that is a mixture of suburban development and rural areas with an estimated population of 27,000 people.

Many of the 14 prospective candidates are community activists, and they include a few outspoken cityhood leaders. They are: Sheryl Ade, Gary Andre, Steve Beutz, Martha Bridges, John Burkett, Robert Cashman, Harv Dykstra, Scott Farnam, Roger Le Clerc, Bridgette Moore, Darryl Ruff, Marsha Swanson, Tim Underdown and Paul Williams.

Only Andre and Le Clerc have filed their paperwork, Martine said.

Ade, Cashman and Moore are leaders of WIN. Dykstra is a former chairman of WIN, while Farnam has attended pro-cityhood events.

Andre is a cityhood supporter and an advocate for the community's trail system. Ruff and Swanson are former members of the Wildomar Municipal Advisory Council, which acts as a community liaison to county Supervisor Bob Buster. Underdown recently joined the council and is president of the Wildomar Little League.

Beutz may be the most provocative prospective candidate, as he has been one of the more vocal opponents of cityhood. He also has challenged an annual fee assessed to property owners to help maintain three parks in the community. Beutz has said he is a parks advocate, but believes the fee is illegal; he filed a lawsuit against it last year in Superior Court, a case that is pending.

Bridges and Williams also have been outspoken critics of WIN's cityhood plan -- specifically the transfer of county money to a city of Wildomar -- and regularly attend community meetings.

Neither Beutz nor Bridges could be reached for comment.

Le Clerc, a member of the advisory council, is another opponent of cityhood seeking a council seat.

"Right now, I don't have any controls if I want to paint my house purple," he said. "Those liberties will be chipped away by all sorts of city council mandates."

Yet, Le Clerc is running for a council seat "because I would like to continue to participate."

Moore said she is running to help shape Wildomar's future.

"The first city council is very important," she said. "I want it to be staffed with people who genuinely care about Wildomar."

Ade is one of the more outspoken residents on the development of the community. She often speaks out about issues concerning Wildomar at local and county meetings.

"I care about the development of the community and the ultimate livability of the community," Ade said.

Contact staff writer Brian Eckhouse at (951) 676-4315, Ext. 2626, or beckhouse@californian.com.

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Comments On This Story

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Sparklug wrote on Nov 3, 2007 6:16 AM:

" Of all the candidates mentioned, only two have the approachable personality that reaches out to 'our communities'. It's important (accountable) that candidates be memorable, successful, and willing to cooperate when dealing with (Us) the constituents, and agency staff. "

New to Town wrote on Nov 3, 2007 8:20 AM:

" Hey Sparklug - would you mind telling us the two you think are approachable. I haven't lived here long and really don't know a lot of these people. "

To Sparklug wrote on Nov 3, 2007 8:41 AM:

" While being approachable and willing to cooperate with constituents are certainly desirable attributes, there are far more important ones. The people of Wildomar need representatives that are capable, honest, and independent of special interest groups. We've had enough of the ones that are tied to the County establishment and have a long list of political debts to pay. It's too soon to make these kinds of judgements about Wildomar's city council candidates. The nominating process is still in progress. The field is wide open. Why not meet them and listen to what they have to say before making up your mind whom to vote for? "

What Agency? wrote on Nov 3, 2007 8:43 AM:

" What "agency" are you referring to? "

Just Say NO wrote on Nov 3, 2007 9:00 AM:

" This is a joke. I am voting No on cityhood. Can you imagine these guys in office trying to figure out how to raise my taxes so they can play government. Now with the downturn in the economy they will be more creative than ever trying to reach into my wallet. No ones money will be safe when they are in session. "

Then Move wrote on Nov 3, 2007 1:04 PM:

" You know, the negativity constantly emanating from the likes of Ste. Marie, Beutz, and Martha has gotten me to wondering why in the world they still live here. If you don't like what's going on here that much, have such distrust for what the County &or the citizens of the area would like to see happen - then pack up and go where you think that you won't feel so threatened or doomed. The sky is gonna' fall rhetoric is getting old. Sheesh. "

GET A NEW LINE wrote on Nov 3, 2007 3:59 PM:

" I am so tired of the cityhood folks saying "If you don't like it...THEN MOVE". Maybe you should try being civil to

the people who don't share your opinion. People who truly care about a community now how to treat their opponents with respect. Not just the ones they're friends with. But that just showcases their mentality. Instead of trying to work with people who disagree with them they just write them off. Well believe me...you'll get my opinion at the polls! "

Martha wrote on Nov 3, 2007 5:39 PM:

" I'm glad to have the "THEN MOVE" folks out in the open where people can see them for exactly what they are – uncivil, rude and intolerant of anyone who's opinions differ from their own. I suppose, god help us all, they expect to run the city that way too. Who do these people think they are to suggest I give up my home of nearly 20 years? They're the ones who moved into the community more recently and decided to recreate it to fit their vision and interests. I have big news! I'm not going anywhere else, and I'm not going to step aside and let these self-serving egotists steamroller over my community and me. You have tried to threaten me repeatedly, but I am not buying into it. I'm betting the decent people of Wildomar will see through your half-truths and manipulation. Worst comes to worst, I'll be one of the long-term residents who is here to clean up the mess you and your WIN cohorts want to make of our community. "

To Bridgette wrote on Nov 3, 2007 6:08 PM:

" I agree with Bridgette Moore at least on one point, the first city council, which if elected will serve for four long years, is very important, and should be comprised of people who are genuinely care about Wildomar. Anyone worth electing to the city council has to have the wisdom and balance to step back and see the bigger picture. They have to be willing to listen respectfully to diverse opinions and represent everyone in the community – not just the people they agree with. If that's the case, maybe she and the other WIN candidates should stop asking these concerned people to pack up and leave our community. "

To Then Move wrote on Nov 3, 2007 6:36 PM:

" Let me see, it's negative to suggest that people adhere to the Constitution of the State of California and the laws of the land? Oh my, what do you think is positive? Supporting all your views and opinions? Oh sure, guess you are always right, and everyone else is wrong. Sorry, that logic isn't going to fly. "

Then Move wrote on Nov 3, 2007 8:17 PM:

" Seem to have struck a nerve. Let's establish some things first: I am not a WIN member, or a MAC member, or a PAC member. I am not running for city council. I have owned a home in this valley for 24 years and I was born 40 miles from here 53 years ago. I first laid eyes on the then dry Lake Elsinore in 1959. Probably few in this valley distrust Supervisor Buster more than I. So I am neither new here, naive, nor do I have any political aspiration. I am nothing more than an interested observer. I am civil, I have interest in the opinions of others, and I abide by the laws of our land. Ste. Marie, Beutz, and Martha you by all means have every right to question authority, as should everyone. No goose-stepping tolerated. There comes a point, however, when endless negative diatribe on most every idea entertained by those wanting firmer control of their own destiny just gets tiresome and becomes counter-productive. I for one am falling deaf to your negativity. The lawsuits, the complaints, the gloom and doom predictions. There is constructive criticism and there is obstructionist, frivolous drivel. Which is more effective? "

ME wrote on Nov 3, 2007 10:14 PM:

" BRIDGETTE IS AWESOME!!!! "

To ME wrote on Nov 4, 2007 12:50 PM:

" LOL - Is this what you think of yourself? "

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