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Race for Matoaca's supervisor seat is wide open

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

It's less than 10 months before Election Day, but the apparent frontrunner, Republican Steve Elswick, has withdrawn from the race for supervisor in Matoaca District.

Late last year, Republican Supervisor Renny Humphrey announced that she would not run for the Matoaca seat for a fourth term and was donating a portion of her remaining campaign funds to Elswick. Humphrey beat three other candidates in her first run in 1995 but barely edged out Democrat Bill Hastings in 2003. Growth and its impact on schools and roads is the top issue in the mostly rural district that sweeps from eastern to northwest Chesterfield.

Elswick's father, a coalminer for 40 years, has serious health problems, and the former Chesterfield Fire Department and EMS chief is dropping out of the race to care for his out-of-town family. "I will assist

the party any way I can," Elswick said, "but my Dad comes first."

"When other Republicans find out Steve is not running, other committee members may step forward," said Sherman Litton, chairman of the Chesterfield Republican Committee. "Independents and Democrats may also realize it's open season."

"He was the anointed candidate," commented Bob Herndon, a fellow Republican committee member for almost four years who's also deciding whether to run. He is a revenue manager for the Richmond Department of Finance and treasurer of the Alliance for Responsible Growth for Chesterfield, a citizen group that has been critical of the county's handling of growth issues.

Herndon and Kevin Salminen have filed with the county Registrar's Office to organize a campaign committee, and Hastings, a retired high school biology teacher, already has a committee filing because he has money left over from his run in 2003. However, no one has

filed their intentions to run for the Matoaca District seat.

Salminen is also a Chesterfield Republican Committee member and works as the controller of Virginia United Methodist Homes. He has been distributing his campaign literature at committee and com-

munity functions, which promotes his Web site (www.kevinsalminen.com).

Though Hastings received previous support from the Chesterfield Democratic Committee, party support is now in doubt because Don Wilms, a member of the Democrat's

county board of directors, is considering running. Wilms is a Woodlake resident and former president of the Chesterfield Education Association.

"We need a change in county leadership," he said, "or it's

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Three of the possible contenders



Wilms



Salminen



Herndon

More than language

Specialty center teaches community involvement

By Shariq Torres
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Spanish Immersion Specialty Center at Manchester High School teaches students more than a language, it teaches values such as volunteerism and cultural tolerance.

The specialty center's service learning class is where students get the opportunity to hone their language skills and help the local Latino community at the same time.

"They volunteer, they help out people in the community," said Anne Dunn, whose child attended the program. "It's a shame that no one acknowledges what they do."

Students who attend the specialty center translate for the area's Latino

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Gabriel Gonzalez (center) teaches Spanish to kindergarten students at Alberta Smith Elementary School, including (from left) Madison Smith, Joseph Meadows, Kayla Tench and Elijah Castro. Gonzalez volunteers at the school regularly as part of his service learning class through the Spanish Immersion Specialty Center at Manchester High School.

Greenacres rezoning denied by commission

Playing politics is alleged

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

The Chesterfield Planning Commission last week voted to recommend denial of a 53-acre residential project by Greenacres Limited Partnership to the county board amid accusations of playing politics and not playing fair.

The parcel is owned by Yi Nan Chou and Wan Fen Chou, who also own 235 adjacent acres that were rezoned residential in the late 1980s before the proffer system began. Though only 24 lots are at stake for Greenacres, the 3-0 vote with two abstentions could portend a change in direction.

"This is the year for change in the county," proclaimed Planning Commission Chairman Dan Gecker during a recess after the vote. Gecker is the newly elected chairman.

2007 is also a year when all supervisors stand for reelection, and Gecker's election to chair gives him added visibility for the possibility that he might run again for Midlothian

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Gecker

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