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Davis faces Higginbotham for Dixie County commissioner

By Jeff M. Hardison © July 16, 2016 @ 6:47 p.m.

DIXIE COUNTY -- In the race for Dixie County Commission District 1, it is incumbent Wade "Gene" Higginbotham versus Micah Jon Davis.

Higginbotham said he feels has done a good job during the past eight years as a county commissioner in Dixie County, working very hard at it.

Gene Higginbotham

The 59-year-old man said his record stands on its own as a reason for people to reelect him again. The county commissioner said that although he is listed

as the District 1 representative for people, he works for everyone in the county and has helped people all over Dixie County.

Davis, 42, said he has considered seeking office as a county commissioner since he was in his twenties.



Micah Jon Davis

"I'm going to work for the people full-time for four years," Davis said.

The candidate said he plans to get things done all the time, not just during election periods. Among his top priority is to do what he can as a county commissioner to strengthen existing business interests in Dixie County and to attract new enterprises to the area.

Another important focus for the man seeking to become a county commissioner is to work on infrastructure. The biggest thing as a building block for business, he said, is having a strong infrastructure.

Davis said this will involve long-range planning, starting with the taking of inventory and the prioritization of the greatest needs.

Davis said he believes the people want to see someone respond to their requests, and he intends to listen to the people.

Building now, he said, and planning for future growth are his ideas for going into the future.

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Chuck Clemons courts Dixie County voters



Candidate Chuck Clemons prepares to quickly visit with possible voters during a free lunch event in a Cross City park on Friday afternoon (July 15).

Story and Photo © July 16, 2016 @ 10:17 a.m. By Jeff M. Hardison

CROSS CITY -- One of the three Republican Party candidates seeking election to the Florida House of Representatives District 21 seat was at a hot dog lunch in Cross City on Friday (July 15).

So far, he appears to be the most visible runner in that race to show up in Dixie County.

Chuck Clemons (R-Newberry) was the single candidate at the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce's business showcase (Business Expo) and fly-in earlier this year at the Cross City Airport, and he again appeared at the park in Cross City with his wife Jane Clemons and grandson Christian Zika.

The Friday afternoon outdoor picnic lunch gathering at the city park behind the courthouse in Cross City was sponsored by an agricultural interest in the area.

Among his campaign promises, Clemons pledges to promote agriculture.

He mentions that he grew up on a poultry farm in High Springs as a child. Clemons notes that he is a fourth-generation Floridian, whose ancestors lived in Florida before it became a state in 1847, and his family is still here.

There was possibly a fundraiser in Fanning Springs for Clemons at the agricultural pavilion in the Levy County part of that the city of Fanning Springs on Friday night, but Clemons did not mention that in an interview on the spot at the Cross City park earlier that day.

Rep. Keith Perry (R-Gainesville) is currently the District 21 member of the Florida House of Representatives. However, rather than seek reelection, Perry is seeking election to one of the new Florida Senate districts -- District 8, which came into existence with the redrawing of boundary lines for the state senate.

Democrat Rod Smith of Gainesville is the only other candidate running for that senate seat. Dixie County voters will not be deciding the Perry-Smith contest.

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Dixie County is in the new state Senate District 5. The unopposed candidate in the race for Florida Senate District 5 is Rob Bradley (R-Fleming Island). Sen.-elect Bradley visited the Dixie County Rotary Club recently.

City Manager Gary Pinner approached Clemons at the park on Friday, and Pinner mentioned that State Rep. Perry had established an office at City Hall in Cross City. Clemons was relatively non-committal to a question posed when he was asked by the press if he would have an office in Cross City, where constituents could meet with him or staff on any regular basis. He stressed instead that first he must win in November.

Even before November, though, Clemons must beat Wenda Lewis and Tim Rogers, who are the other two competing Republicans in that race for Florida House of Representatives District 21.

That Republican primary race will be decided by registered Republican Party voters in Florida House District 21, from Dixie County, Gilchrist County and western Alachua County on Aug. 30.

While Clemons was the sole contender for attention at the Cross City Airport event, Lewis was the only candidate at the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Annual Chili Cookoff earlier in the year. Rogers has not been on the radar enough yet in Gilchrist or Dixie County to be seen by *HardisonInk.com*.

Ryan Thomas Dyson and Richard Allen Swilley are write-in candidates in this race Florida House of Representatives District 21, and they, too, are relatively invisible so far in the places they hope to be elected to represent.

Marihelen Wheeler (D-Gainesville) is the only Democrat in this race. And while she already has cleared the Aug. 30 primary hurdle, Wheeler, also is the only candidate smart enough to send information for people to read about her campaign in *HardisonInk.com* -- the strongest media outlet in Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

Florida House District 21 includes all of Dixie County, Gilchrist County and part of western Alachua County.

As for Clemons on Friday, he said that since Dixie County will have only one representative in the Florida House of Representatives, in contrast with Dade County, which has "a bus load" of representatives, the man or woman representing Dixie County in the House knows that he or she must represent all of the people in this county.

Clemons said the people of this House district should vote for him because he has conservative values. Clemons said he values faith, family, hard work and veterans. Clemons dislikes government handouts, he added.

Marihelen Wheeler seeks election to Florida House District 21

Wheeler wins as Democrat; Three Republicans face-off on Aug. 30

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GAINESVILLE -- Marihelen Wheeler (D-Gainesville) is a ball of energy – as anyone who comes within her sphere knows, according to a press release from her campaign.

An educator for more than 37 years, Wheeler has recently retired from teaching, but that's as far as retirement goes where Wheeler is concerned. She's now focusing her boundless energy on winning the Florida House of Representatives' seat for District 21.

This district includes Dixie, Gilchrist and part of Alachua counties.

Wheeler is the only Democrat. In the primary election on Aug. 30, it will be Chuck Clemons, Wenda Lewis and Tim Rogers competing as Republicans to see who faces Wheeler in the November election. Ryan Thomas Dyson and Richard Allen Swilley are write-in candidates in

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this race.

What drives Wheeler to take on a diverse district that stretches from Gainesville to the Gulf?

“Aside from having been nudged by a lot of people to run, it’s something I want to do,” Wheeler said. “I’ve been an activist for years. I’ve fought for a variety of things, from water protection and better pay for teachers to human rights and immigration reform. Being an elected representative allows me to take it a step further. I can better serve the people in District 21 if I represent them in the State House where decisions that will ultimately impact their lives are made.

“But as a representative in the Florida House, looking out for your district isn’t your only responsibility,” Wheeler continued. “The decisions made by State House representatives affect every district in the state. Bearing that in mind, I intend to fight for Medicaid expansion, raising the minimum wage, paid sick and maternity leave, funding of basic public services, and ending the privatization that is ruining our education system. The sweetheart deals with corporate interests that are making it almost impossible for so many Floridians to climb out of poverty also need to end.”

Marihelen Wheeler Campaign for Florida House District 21 has been endorsed by The Florida AFL-CIO 2016 Committee on Political Education. The Tallahassee-based Federation represents about 450 unions in Florida with half a million members.
