

Downtown gets political Tuesday evening

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Photo by David W. Smith/Daily News
Abe Lincoln impersonator Bob Coffey of Mount Vernon speaks Tuesday night during a Kentucky Senate campaign event for Ed Mills at Verdi Restaurant on Fountain Square.

Tuesday was election day in some places across the country, but for Kentucky, it was the eve of election filings, and for two candidates, the kickoff of the race for the 32nd District Senate seat.

Warren County Republicans Ed Mills and Mike Wilson will be among those who begin filing today for the hundreds of spots up for election in 2010.

Mills kicked off the race Tuesday in an unusual fashion by asking his opponent to participate in the kickoff event attended by more than 150 people, many of whom huddled on the sidewalk in front of Verdi restaurant in downtown Bowling Green.

"If I lose, my family and friends will support Wilson," Mills said.

"Before this thing even started, Ed and I sat down and agreed we'd run a campaign on the issues," Wilson said. "We made a gentlemen's agreement to run a clean campaign. We are both on the same side."

Those issues, they both said, include the creation of jobs and improvement of the state's education system.

Both also referenced the need to distance the state from Washington politics and big government.

"It's important to promote a Republican for the state Senate because it's the only thing that's stopping what's happening in Washington from happening here," Wilson said. "We can't spend our way into prosperity."

Mills thanked the crowd because "you recognize this is a critical time" where a growing number of responsible citizens are demanding change and a time when schools should be emphasizing academics rather than attitudes and social agendas.

"We need leaders who recognize that," he said.

The 32nd District Senate seat is currently held by Democrat Mike Reynolds.

State Rep. Jim DeCesare, R-Bowling Green, said he would like to see the number of Republicans in the House grow to more than 40.

While DeCesare isn't aware of other candidates now, he expects that there will be a Democratic candidate in his race to be re-elected to the 21st District seat.

"There always is," he said. "So I have to get ready for my campaign."

Also speaking at Tuesday's event was Elkton Republican Bill Johnson, who is running for U.S. Senate.

"I'm in this to win," said Johnson, a Gulf War veteran. "I'm doing this because our country is under attack both by foreign terrorists and by domestic forces intent on destroying our way of life."

A first-time candidate, Johnson said he is traveling around the state to events such as the one in Bowling Green, getting to meet people face-to-face and handing them his platform printed in a mini newspaper.

"This is a really low-cost campaign," he said. "And these aren't very expensive to print."

He also is utilizing social media, such as Facebook.

"I am one concerned citizen who's had enough of the nonsense (in Washington) and decided it was time to get involved," he said.

Also running for the seat is Bowling Green Republican Rand Paul, who sent representative David Adams to the event.

Adams said his candidate is seeking the office to offset a government that has gotten out of control. As he spoke, Western Kentucky University College Republicans raised signs saying "Protect the Constitution" and "No government health care option."

He said his candidate's relatively low name recognition earlier this year has changed with Paul pulling ahead now by 3 points. A WHAS poll on Tuesday put Paul ahead of Secretary of State Trey Grayson.

The candidates at Tuesday's event represented just some of the many spots that will be open.

Offices where candidates should file with the secretary of state include U.S. senator, U.S. representative, state senator (even districts), state representative, justice of the Supreme Court, District 3 and district judge.

Offices that file with the local county clerk that are regularly scheduled to occur in 2010 include county judge-executive, county attorney, county clerk, property valuation administrator, sheriff, jailer, county commissioner, coroner, magistrate, constable, surveyor, mayors, city legislative bodies, boards of education and soil and water conservation district supervisors.

Republican and Democratic candidates have until Jan. 26 to file for office. Independent or political group candidates, excluding federal offices, must file a statement of intent by April 1. All independent or political group candidates have until Aug. 10 to file their petitions.

The Secretary of State's Office has started a new service this year for citizens looking for up-to-date information about those running for offices that file with the office. Citizens can sign up for instant e-mail alerts for filings. To register for the new service, visit www.sos.ky.gov/notificationservices.



David W. Smith/ Daily News Ann Oelker of Bowling Green and Abe Lincoln impersonator Bob Coffey of Mount Vernon sample some pizza during a Kentucky Senate campaign event for Ed Mills at Verdi Restaurant on Fountain Square Tuesday night.



David W. Smith/ Daily News Ed Mills speaks during a Kentucky Senate campaign event at Verdi Restaurant on Fountain Square Tuesday night.



David W. Smith/ Daily News An audience listens to a speech during a Kentucky Senate campaign event for Ed Mills at Verdi Restaurant on Fountain Square Tuesday night.

David W. Smith/ Daily News An assembly stands at attention during the national anthem at a Kentucky Senate campaign event for Ed Mills in front of Verdi Restaurant on Fountain Square Tuesday night.

