

Democrat says change is needed

By Ethan Fry
STAFF WRITER

BETHEL — David Stevenson said he's been rich, poor and everything in between.

And that sort of experience, he thinks, will make him a good representative in the state legislature representing the 107th District.

For Stevenson, 55, and a former teacher who now works as a Realtor, the biggest issue for the state is education. He said more money should be directed toward improvements early in children's academic careers.

"We've put a lot of emphasis on secondary education, but dollars spent on early childhood education derive a lot more benefit," he said.

"For every dollar spent on early childhood education, you get a lot more back later on. It's a better investment overall to start with our youngest children."

He also thinks that, given the mass downturn in the economy, the state should tap its Rainy Day Fund to bridge the gap in a budget projected to be between \$300 and \$800 million in

the red.

"I think it's wise to use the Rainy Day Fund in a situation like this," he said, remarking on the severity of the recent downturn. "I don't think we've seen anything like this before."

"It is the responsibility of our elected officials to make sound use of our taxpayer dollars to encourage economic development, which in turn provides revenue to offset those investments in our future."

Also high on Stevenson's priority list is employment. He said the state is in a better position than lots of other states in this respect.

"Connecticut has a very good economy in the sense that it's diverse," he said. "A lot of other states are going to be languishing in ways that we aren't."

And, he added, the state's economic diversity can only be helped by significant investment in alternative energy.

"One state or some states will lead the way forward on alternative energy industries," he said. "If Connecticut leads the way, it will not only be doing the



David Stevenson

David Stevenson

Age — 55
Residence — Bethel
Family — Wife, Diane, and children Kimberly, 31; Sarah, 27; and Colby, 22.
Occupation — Realtor
Education — B.S. in education from Western Connecticut State University
Hobbies — Guitar, poetry

right, just, and moral thing. It will also make Connecticut more profitable and provide good jobs for our skilled work force and improve our environment."

Regardless of the election's outcome, Stevenson preached a moderation and a readiness to cross party divisions and compromise on issues in the best interest of the voters in the 107th District.

"What separates liberal Connecticut Democrats and liberal Connecticut Republicans from progressives is their unwillingness to reach out and listen to voters about their feelings on issues facing our towns and our state," he said.

Residents overtaxed, Boucher says

By Susan Tuz
STAFF WRITER

RIDGEFIELD — Toni Boucher believes Connecticut residents are overtaxed.

Businesses are burdened with unrealistically high licensing fees, homeowners pay property taxes that are too high, and a myriad of tax burdens are driving residents out of the state and keeping businesses from moving here, Boucher said.

"I'm running for the state Senate seat in the 26th District because I believe how we fix the problem of the tax burden on Connecticut residents and businesses is critical," she said.

Boucher, a Republican, has been Wilton's representative for 12 years.

In that time, she has heard constituents' concerns transportation, health care, energy, education and the environment — all of which, she said, she has worked to improve.

But first and foremost, she said, she now is hearing worries about the economic crisis in the state and nation.

"The \$18 billion state budget has a projected \$300 million to \$800 million deficit

for this fiscal year and a \$2 billion deficit for the next two-year budget," Boucher said. "And these estimates do not even consider the effects of the current crisis on Wall Street."

Boucher said she will work to cut spending by ending non-essential programs and reducing the size of state government. She will not support drawing from the state's \$1.4 billion Rainy Day Fund at this time and will oppose tax increases.

Boucher supports the actions now being taken by Gov. M. Jodi Rell to reduce the deficit and Rell's exploring a tax amnesty program. She believes those actions must be "captured and carried forward" by the incoming legislature.

"I feel that even in a minority, we (Republicans) can push an agenda," Boucher said. "I'm energized about this possibility, having already had success in blocking a billion dollar tax increase and halting an increase in the gas tax in the last legislative session."

Boucher said the bottom line is that Connecticut is becoming too expensive for local businesses to thrive and for people to stay. Young



Toni Boucher

Toni Boucher

Age — 59
Residence — Wilton
Family — Husband of 38 years, Henry; three children and three grandchildren
Occupation — Director of the nonprofit Commonfund Institute, education and research arm of investment firm started by the Ford Foundation.
Prior political experience — State representative for 12 years, six as assistant minority leader; member of Appropriations, Transportation, Education and Higher Education committees; previously on Labor and Housing committees. Wilton Board of Education chairman; Board of Selectmen; state Board of Education's Policy and Long Range Planning Committee chairman.
Hobbies — Hiking, dancing, landscape design, reading, and classical music and movies

adults and seniors are leaving the state for different but "equally important" reasons — lack of job growth and "onerous" taxes.

Scribner says experience counts

By Ethan Fry
STAFF WRITER

BROOKFIELD — In the most turbulent economic climate in decades, David Scribner thinks his experience in the state legislature and financial industry are vital to seeing the state and the 107th District through to better days.

"Most disturbing," the Republican said, is a proposal floated by some legislators to use the state's so-called Rainy Day Fund to rectify the projected deficit this fiscal year of between \$300 and \$800 million.

That's because other projections have forecast deficits to get much worse.

"Beyond July 1, (the deficit) is projected to be \$1 billion each of the next three years," Scribner, running for re-election representing the 107th District, which covers Brookfield and part of Bethel, said. "You've got to either curtail spending, find another source of income, or elements of both."

He said the state shouldn't increase taxes and should instead "look for responsible ways to reduce spending and restructure tax policy to lessen the impact" of the projected budget shortfalls.

Scribner, 51, has been a member of the Legislature's Revenue and Bonding Committee for 10 years, the Banks Committee for six years, and has been Brookfield's Treasurer for 13 years.

"That is valuable experience to be utilized in a valuable time

like this," he said, noting 100 percent attendance in the legislature.

While he believes the economy is the most important issue in this election, he knows there are more, among them health care, energy and transportation.

He cited the state's high number of complex mandates on health insurance providers, which causes higher rates for residents and employers. But more important than anything else, he said, is a consensus on the issue from which to go forward.

On energy, Scribner said the state needs to make an effort to focus on alternative sources, and said he has worked with state agencies, other lawmakers, business leaders and investors to promote the industry.

He also cited his experience on the issue of transportation, pointing out he is a leader on the Legislature's Transportation Bonding Committee. He said he brought DOT officials to the area to tour the Route 7 bypass project in Brookfield and the Bethel train station to show them improvements are needed.

Above all, Scribner said, his understanding of the communities he



David Scribner

David Scribner

Age — 51
Residence — Brookfield
Family — Wife, Pamela Kirschbaum Scribner and children Kathryn, 15, Victoria, 11, Elizabeth, 8.
Occupation — Legislator/
Municipal Finance/
Financial Advisor
Education — Post College, Western Connecticut State University, American Institute of Banking

sents has demonstrated that he is a valuable asset in Hartford.

Hartwell wants to push for growth

By Susan Tuz
STAFF WRITER

For John Hartwell, the overriding issue facing the state of Connecticut is economic uncertainty due to the "meltdown" of the financial services industry.

Hartwell is the Democratic candidate for the state Senate seat for the 26th District, which includes Ridgefield, Redding and parts of Bethel. With 35 years of financial work experience, including serving as vice president of Chase Bank,

Hartwell is targeting

the economy.

He believes Connecticut, and Fairfield County in particular, is over-reliant on the financial services industry, and as layoffs come in that sector a large number of residents in Fairfield County are going to need services provided by the state.

The \$1.4 billion Rainy Day Fund must be drawn on to continue providing services, he said.

"Here in Fairfield County, we will have a lot of layoffs coming up," Hartwell said. "The comptroller of New York estimates that another three jobs in businesses related to financial services are lost with every layoff in that sector."

"I don't think that projection is far off for Fairfield County, as well."

These people will have to have adequate health care coverage while looking for work or if they start their own businesses, he said.

All Connecticut residents need affordable health care, Hartwell said. To that end, he supports bringing the health care pooling bill, vetoed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell last year, back before the legislature.

He will



John Hartwell

John Hartwell

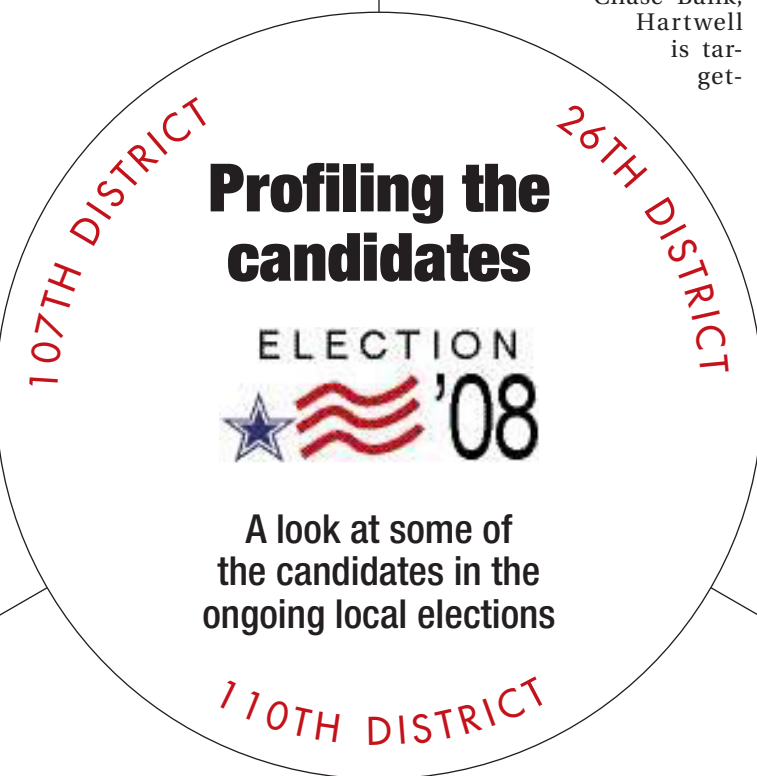
Age — 61
Residence — Westport
Family — Wife, Janet, and children Elliot and Chloe
Occupation — Independent management consultant, following 35 years in Fortune 100 firms.
Prior political experience — Various national and local political campaigns. Treasurer of Ned Lamont for Senate; Fairfield County co-coordinator of Dean for America; meetup coordinator for Democracy for America-Fairfield County; student organizer for Gene McCarthy for President campaign in 1968.
Hobbies — Reading, soccer

work to see the bill is passed so Connecticut residents can use the insurance plans now offered to state workers.

He also plans to improve the Charter Oak health plan so it is available sooner than six months after Connecticut residents lose other health coverage, and that the plan pays better reimbursements to attract more hospitals and physicians to provide services.

The larger issue is economic growth. Connecticut has seen virtually no job growth over the past 20 years, Hartwell said.

The state must invest in education and transportation to become more competitive and welcoming for new business, Hartwell said.



Godfrey prefers consolidation over layoffs

By Dirk Perrefort
STAFF WRITER

DANBURY — State Rep. Robert Godfrey said many lawmakers may consider layoffs next year to control the state's expected budget deficit, but he would rather consolidate state agencies.

"There will be those who believe that the response to higher unemployment is to lay off more workers, that the response to increased applications to social services is to provide less of them, that the response to decreased revenues is to push cost off to municipalities and property taxpayers," he said. "I'm not one of them."

Instead, Godfrey said, he wants to see state and local programs and agencies consolidated to be more efficient. Regionalizing municipal services by sharing equipment and personnel — while not popular with some local officials — will save taxpayer dollars.

Godfrey, a Democrat who

serves as Deputy House Speaker, has been in the state legislature since 1988 and is chairman of the House Democrats Bill Review Committee.

He previously served five years on the Common Council and managed a family pet shop. He was born in Danbury in 1948 and graduated from Immaculate High School before joining the U.S. Naval Reserve.

Godfrey said he is the best person to serve the constituents of the 110th District, which represents Danbury, because of his on-the-job experience.

"This is not the first economic rain shower I've been faced with, nor the worst," he said. "I have been prudent and forward looking in developing policies that lead our state into better times."

Godfrey said he also takes great pride in staying in touch with residents in the district.

"I'm attuned not only to the wants and needs of



Robert Godfrey

ROBERT GODFREY

Age — 60
Residence — Danbury
Family — Unmarried
Occupation — Attorney, legislator
Prior political experience — 10 terms as state representative, five years on Danbury Common Council before his election to the legislature
Hobbies — Reading mystery novels, history and biographies

my neighbors, but to the shared values we hold," he said. "From the more formal annual constituent surveys, to community meetings, to hearing about issues and concerns while grocery shopping, I stay alert and interested, often getting the best ideas for legislation."

He has been endorsed by the Connecticut Education Association, the Sierra Club, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, and the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges.

Palanzo wants to try to tackle residents' taxes

By Dirk Perrefort
STAFF WRITER

DANBURY — City resident Roger Palanzo wants to address state residents' tax burden if elected to the 110th District seat in the state House of Representatives.

"Connecticut has become an incredibly expensive place to live and do business because of exorbitant taxes," Palanzo said. "Family budgets are being assaulted from every direction, and our state government is leading the assault."

The candidate proposes eliminating the tax on senior and military pensions, getting rid of the real estate conveyance tax, and requiring that any tax increases receive a two-thirds vote by both chambers of the General Assembly.

Palanzo, a Republican, said he would also like to see a property tax rebate for seniors based on the number of volunteer hours they work. He also wants to promote improvements to

elderly public housing and increase affordable senior housing.

"Rising costs due to record high taxes and inflation present our seniors with very tough choices," he said.

"Whether forfeiting their lifetime family home for a less expensive alternative, the struggle to heat their home, purchase food or medication, or winding the way through the maze of bureaucracy that surrounds health care, our seniors deserve our help, not just our promise."

Palanzo is a member of the Danbury Retirement Board, the Danbury Republican Town Committee and the Sacred Heart Church Pastoral Council.

He said his experience developing his own business consultant firm as well as his years of volunteer work will serve him well if elected.

"As a volunteer in the community in various capacities in many local service organizations, I engage others to participate in my passion of volunteering," Palanzo



Roger Palanzo

ROGER PALANZO

Age — 44
Residence — Danbury
Family — wife, Cindy; son, Roger Jr.; and mother, Micheline
Occupation — Business consultant
Prior political experience — Danbury Retirement Board, Danbury Republican Town Committee and its Government Committee
Hobbies — Reading, sports, American history, martial arts, cooking/baking, building and repairing computers, and spending time with family