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SEPT. 11 PRIMARY

GOP's council contenders bring breadth

Emphasis put on public safety, economy and transportation

VICTORIA CHERRIE
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GOP's council
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Emphasis put on public safety, economy and transportation Victoria Cherrie

There are four at-large seats open on the Charlotte City Council and six Republican contenders.

They're running in the Sept. 11 primary for the right to challenge four Democrats on Nov. 6.

Incumbent councilmen John Lassiter is seeking re-election. Dan Ramirez, a Mecklenburg County commissioner, also wants a council seat. Other contenders are: Chris Bakis, a welder; retired retailer Gerry Mudge; David Romero, a benefits consultant; and Edwin Peacock III, who does marketing for insurance and investments.

Three-term incumbent Councilman Pat Mumford announced that he wouldn't run because he wants to spend more time with his family.

The candidates bring a variety of experience and different backgrounds to the race. Lassiter and Ramirez already serve in public office, Mudge ran once for school board and Bakis, Peacock and Romero are political newcomers.

The Black Political Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg recently endorsed Peacock, Romero, Lassiter and Ramirez for the primary.

Lassiter, elected in 2003, is serving his second term.

"We've got some real challenges to maintain quality of life and job creation that has helped make this community what it is," Lassiter said. "That means a renewed focus on public safety, continued economic development beyond the center city and a way to continue to meet the transportation needs beyond what is already underway."

Ramirez, who just finished his seventh month as a commissioner, said he wants to serve on the council because the issues it handles are business-oriented. At a debate last month, he said the city must focus on crime problems, transportation and fiscal responsibility.

Peacock has no political experience but is following in his father's footsteps. Ed Peacock Jr. once chaired the Mecklenburg County commissioners and served on the City Council in the 1980s.

Peacock said he was inspired by his dad's service and wants to try it himself. His major priority is transportation, he said.

Romero grew up in Charlotte and did an internship with U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick, R-N.C. He plans to retire here and wants to focus more attention on the city's crime problems, he said.

Mudge, whose two sons died in an alcohol-related crash in the 1990s, has no political experience. But she said she makes up for it with her will to help the community.

"I am really concerned about our young people," she said. "It's really nice that they want to make us a world-class city, but without any young people to take it over, it's not going to do any good."

She and Bakis both support an effort to repeal a half-cent sales tax that pays for buses and trains.

Bakis said he wants a seat on the council in part because the current members fail to listen.

"The blue-collar and poor neighborhoods do not matter to the City Council and the powers that be," he said. "We need to have a strong mayor and a strong City Council. They don't listen. I'm sick of it."

The four Republican winners will face off with four Democrats in the general election: incumbent council members Anthony Foxx and Susan Burgess; and Raphael Basisa and Jack Flynn.



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Chris Bakis

Party: Republican. **Age:** 46

Address: No address provided. **Internet or e-mail:** round_christos@hotmail.com

Occupation: Welder.

Political experience: None.

Family: Single.

Education: Attended UNC Charlotte and CPCC to study welding.

Top priority: Violent crime, traffic. **Last book read:**

"Practical Metallurgy and Materials of Industry" by John Neely and Thomas J. Bertone.

Favorite movie: "Ghandi." **Something voters would be surprised to learn about you:**

I was the only student at UNC Charlotte hired by the Physics Department as a tutor/paper grader.

John Lassiter

Party: Republican.

Age: 52.

Address: 2632 Winding Oak Drive, Charlotte.

Internet or e-mail: lassiter@bellsouth.net. lassiter@bellsouth.net

Occupation: Small business owner. President of Carolina Legal Staffing.

Political experience: At-large member, Charlotte City Council, 2003-present; Chairman, Economic Development and Planning Committee; Member, Restructuring Government and Governmental Affairs Committee. Former member of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission and Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education.

Family: Wife, Beverly; two children.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in politics, Wake Forest University, 1976. Masters of Public Administration, N.C. State University, 1977. Juris doctorate, Wake Forest University, 1980. Kenan-Flagler Executive Education Program, UNC Chapel Hill, 1994.

Top priority: "We must preserve the quality of life and affordability that has made this city attractive for job creation and business investment. Our task includes a strong focus on public safety, investing in needed infrastructure and encouraging economic development throughout all of Charlotte."

Last book read: "Pistol: The Life of Pete Maravich" by Mark Kriegel. **Favorite movie:** "

Caddyshack." **Something voters would be surprised to learn about you:**

I'm a country music fan.

Geraldine 'Jerry' Mudge

Party: Republican. **Age:** 65.

Address: 6605 Mallard Park Drive, Charlotte.

Internet or e-mail: jerrymudge@bellsouth.net

Occupation: Retired from Winn Dixie.

Political experience: Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board candidate 1995.

Top priority: A future for all our youth.

Family: Husband, Skip; four children, four grandchildren.

Education: Garinger High School graduate, 1950.

Last book read: "Walking by Faith" by Jennifer Rothschild. **Favorite movie:** "

Places in the Heart." **Something voters would be surprised to learn about you:**

I was MADD Volunteer of the Year in 1994.

Edwin Peacock III

Party: Republican.

Age: 37.

Address: 27 Hermitage Court, Charlotte.

Internet or e-mail: edwin@edwinpeacock.com

www.edwinpeacock.com

Occupation: Marketing of insurance and investments primarily for Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Political experience: None.

Family: Wife, Amy; two children.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in political science and certificate of global studies, University of Georgia, 1992.

Top priority: Transportation. **Last book read:**

"Parent Power!" by John Rosemond. **Favorite Movie:**

"Casino Royale." **Something voters would be surprised to learn about you:**

I was in an accident in which Mayor Pat McCrory hit our car. No one was hurt.

Dan Ramirez

Party: Republican.

Age:60.

Address: 4625 Piedmont Row Drive, E-407, Charlotte.

Internet or e-mail: dan@danramirez.com

Occupation: GIS. Surveying, mapping.

Political experience: Vice chairman, Mecklenburg County board of commissioners, 2002-2004; Member, board of commissioners 2006-present.

Family: Wife, Cecilia. Three daughters.

Education: Civil engineering (Colombia, South America).

Top priority: Public safety, transportation, fiscal accountability. **Last book read:**

"Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking" by Malcolm Gladwell.

Favorite movie: "Braveheart."

sept. 11 primary



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