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McBride looks to unseat Eckhoff in county race

By Wilson Brown

Staff writer

If re-elected, the incumbent hopes to finish local and county projects he started in years past, but a newcomer said he'll bring enthusiasm and more fiscal responsibility to the DuPage County Board District 4 seat if elected.

Jerry "J.R." McBride, an insurance broker from Glen Ellyn, is challenging incumbent Grant Eckhoff of Wheaton for the County Board District 4 seat in the Tuesday, March 21, primary.

McBride, 38, is a relative newcomer to public office but served on the Glen Ellyn Architectural Review Committee from 1997 to 2000.

This is the first time he's run for public office.

According to McBride, it was the next logical step to run for the County Board since he hears residents' concerns on a daily basis.

"If you always treat other people's problems as your own, you can't go wrong," he said.

McBride has lived in DuPage County for 16 years and is the owner of McBride Insurance Agency in Glen Ellyn.

He graduated from Fenwick High School in Oak Park and is married to Becky McBride.

The couple has five children: Lauren, 18; Molly, 15; Abigail, 15; Sara, 13; and Marty, 8.

Residents should vote for him, he said, "because I think I'm going to bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the board."

"I think the citizens want fiscal responsibility," he said.

With the recent completion of property reassessments and more money taken into the county's budget "we really need to be responsible to taxpayers," he said.

If elected, McBride said he hopes to be innovative with the county's existing money so it won't have to ask residents for more money each year.

"I want (residents) to say, 'Wow, they did something without asking us for any more money,'" McBride said.

"You have to work with the budget," he said. "As a business owner I think I bring that to the table."

But Eckhoff, who's served on the DuPage County Board for more than three years, said he knows the issues and the community better than his opponent.

"I can deal with the issues better," he said. "I think experience counts for a lot."

The Wheaton attorney also served on the Wheaton City Council for 13 years before being elected to the County Board.

While on the City Council he said he helped introduce measures to redevelop Wheaton's downtown.

Eckhoff has lived in Wheaton for 41 years and graduated from Wheaton Central High School.

He's practiced law in DuPage County since 1985 and opened his own firm in 1996.

He is married to Sheila Eckhoff.

The local civil litigant said voters should re-elect him because of his "track record of experience."

"I've gotten around the community," he said.

If re-elected, he said he hopes to finish the Five Corners reconstruction in Glen Ellyn and add a stop light at Williams Street and County Farm Road in Wheaton.

Eckhoff also said he also wants to continue work to spur economic activity in the northeast quadrant of the county.

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