

GOP nominee thinks nod from Birkett a benefit

By **Robert Sanchez**
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Joseph Birkett is on a roll.

After running away with the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor, the DuPage County state's attorney saw one of his friends bounce a county board member out of office in the GOP primary.

Jerry "J.R." McBride said Wednesday he owes part of his District 4 victory against incumbent Grant Eckhoff to the endorsement he received from Birkett. The 38-year-old Glen Ellyn insurance broker is the only county board candidate Birkett supported.

"The endorsement helped," McBride said. "To have Joe Birkett behind you — he means a lot to a lot of people in DuPage County."

Eckhoff agreed the Birkett endorsement was enough to make a difference. "I am sure it had an impact," he said.

But Eckhoff also gave a nod to the time and effort McBride put into the campaign.

"He had a ton of signs up," Eckhoff said. "He was well organized. And I am sure all his friends and family and contacts in Glen Ellyn marched to the polls."

Still, McBride said he's "shocked" to defeat Eckhoff. Unless Democrats slate an opponent in the fall, McBride will represent the district, which includes all or parts of Addison, Bloomingdale, Carol Stream, Glen Ellyn, Glendale Heights, Lisle, Lombard, Wheaton and Winfield.

"I am a very, very humble guy today with everything that's gone on," McBride said.

Party switch

Talk about sour grapes.

One day after losing the Republican nomination for the county board seat she's held for two decades, Irene Stone is refusing to support the GOP candidate who defeated her.

Instead, Stone said Wednesday she's going to endorse DuPage Water Commissioner Elizabeth "Liz" Chaplin — the Democrat seeking the District 2 seat Stone has held since 1986.

"I think she would do a great job," Stone said of Chaplin.

"She would do a good job with seniors because she has concern and cares," the 77-year-old Lombard resident added. "She's not full of baloney."

The endorsement surprised Jeff Redick, who bested Stone in the GOP primary.

"You're kidding me?" Redick said. "Unbelievable."

Chaplin said she appreciates Stone's support. Both women worked together when contaminated private wells were found in Chaplin's neighborhood near Downers Grove.

"I have a great deal of respect for her," Chaplin said. "We share some of the same views on things. I am flattered she is endorsing me."

Stone doesn't hide her anger toward Redick — and his claim that she didn't provide the energetic representation to the district.

Still, Redick said he's disappointed about Stone's decision to support a Democrat.

"But the fact of the matter is, the race for Nov. 7 is starting today," he said. "And we're moving forward with that."

District 2 includes all or part of Clarendon Hills, Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Glen Ellyn, Hinsdale, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Oakbrook Terrace, Villa Park, Westmont and Woodridge.

Hard work

Don Puchalski, picked by DuPage County Board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom to fill a vacancy last fall, credited his District 1 primary win to old-fashioned hard work.

Puchalski soundly defeated Republicans Richard "Chip" Collis and Paul DeMichele.

"Every weekend I was walking a different precinct," the 51-year-old Addison resident said. "I also had a lot of support from family, friends and neighbors."

Puchalski will face Democrat Robert Peickert in the fall. Incumbent board member Yolanda Campuzano, who ran unopposed in the primary, will face Democrat Rita Gonzalez.

Puchalski said he plans to run on the county's record.

"The county board works well," he said. "There's no controversy. And Schillerstrom has done a great job."

District 1 includes all or part of Addison, Bensenville, Bloomingdale, Elmhurst, Itasca, Lombard, Roselle, Villa Park and Wood Dale.

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