

# Cute hunters



Lacy Garrison photo  
**Above, Anthony Cruz, 6, proves it takes speed and strength to earn not one, but two stuffed bags of Easter eggs. Over 140 people gathered at the Kids of the Community Egg Hunt on Saturday to enjoy the food and fun despite rainy weather.**

**Left, nine-month-old Elizabeth discovered a pink egg that matched her outfit while watching a large group of children nearby. She and her family were looking forward to a visit from the Easter Bunny, who hopped by after the egg hunt Saturday at the Kids of the Community building.**

## Sheriff race

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Rowland expressed confidence in the SROs who are in place at schools and is reluctant to arm teachers.

"I have mixed feelings about that," said Rowland. "How do we determine who is the teacher and who is the shooter? We surely don't want to run in there and start shooting our teachers. There are going to have to be a lot of questions asked and answered before I'd be for that at all. Right now we have school resource officers at every school. They are doing a good job. I think they are capable of doing their job and we have things going in the right direction. I'm just not sure about putting teachers in schools with guns."

The opioid epidemic has made state and national headlines as legislators grapple with ways to snap America's addiction to painkillers. The two candidates were asked what could be done from law enforcement and legislative standpoints to ease the problem.

Said Rowland, "This is not a legislative problem. It's not a law enforcement problem. This is an everybody problem. We are all going to have to get involved in this if we're going to make a dent in it. We have doctors who are prescribing these things hand over fist and lots of times they don't even see the patient. It's a problem and it does have to be dealt with."

Whiles sees rehabilitation and new laws as ways to reduce opioid abuse.

"We need to see legislation to strengthen the laws so doctors can't prescribe it as easily," said Whiles. "For the ones who are already on it, we have to offer a different plan of rehabilitation for them. I've already talked to the County Commission on some different plans that insurance pays for that's for a different style of rehabilitation. Lawmakers and rehabilitation are the two things to address that problem."

When it comes to the Warren County Jail, current capacity is 251 inmates. But the jail regularly houses over 300 inmates and the county is advancing plans for a \$6 million expansion to increase capacity to around 400 inmates.

Said Rowland, "The jail expansion will be a great asset to the county because we have 100 sleeping on the floor now. The state has already come in and threatened to close us down if we go over 350 people and I don't know what we'd do with 350 people if we have to farm them out to another jail somewhere. But as far as putting people back in jail

who are repeat customers, we are not like Jim Reed. We don't like those repeat customers. But there are going to be some people who are going to be repeat customers and there's nothing you can do to stop them. Those people are lying out there sleeping. I think sometimes the good people of Warren County would be better off in jail and letting the county fix our teeth and letting the county take care of our medical problems so we wouldn't have to pay so much insurance."

Whiles says he favors putting inmates to work. In his introduction, he pointed to Coffee County saving over \$900,000 thanks to inmate labor and he reiterated those comments when asked specifically about the jail.

"One thing I've been screaming from day one, minute one, of my campaign is change, change, change, change," said Whiles. "We've got to get these inmates in something different. Now they currently, and ask any one of your commissioners or people who work at the jail about this, they sleep all day and tear the jail apart at night. Taxpayers are paying for it the next day. One thing I want to do is actually work the inmates."

In his introduction, Rodney Whiles said he started his law enforcement career 13 years ago with the Warren County Sheriff's Department. He's been a state trooper with the Highway Patrol for the past 10 years.

"During those 10 years, I've worked seven counties for seven different sheriff's departments and I see first-hand on a daily basis how other sheriff's departments run and how they can run more efficiently, more effectively, some not as good as others," said Whiles. He praised the Warren County Sheriff's Department but said on the technology side, it has fallen behind "just a hair."

In his introduction, Rowland emphasized his 40 years of law enforcement experience, about 35 of those with the Warren County Sheriff's Department. He started with Sheriff Tom Garmon in 1978 and has worked for every local sheriff since.

"I've gained a world of knowledge working for these sheriffs, some good and some not so good," said Rowland, who served 17 years as chief investigator under Sheriff Jackie Matheny. "My plan is to be the best sheriff Warren County has ever had and I have some big shoes to follow."

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