

Commissioners train for bright future

BY **JAMES CLARK**
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)*

Eleven new county commissioners are set to begin guiding Warren County government in three days.

Let's hope they know what they're doing.

In an effort to provide officials with training as they take office, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a state law this year which requires all new county commissioners to receive 12 hours of training in their first 120 days. The new law went into effect April 12.

"We're trying to make sure we don't make blunders in the future," said Charles Curtiss, executive director of the Tennessee County Commissioners Association, which pushed for the new law. "There was one case where a county built a new school and paid nothing but interest on it for 20 years. After 20 years passed, they still owed the same amount they borrowed. We're trying to prevent things like that and I don't think there's any question this training will make a tremendous difference."

Curtiss, who represented Warren County in the Tennessee House for 19 years, says the state usually has a 40 to 50 percent turnover rate when it comes to county commissioners. That translates to 600 to 700 new county commission-



County commissioners take their oath of office Monday night. Visible on the front row are, from left, David Dunlap, Carlene Brown, Carl E. Bouldin, Lori Judkins, Tommy Savage, Steven Helton, Steve Glenn, Deborah Evans, Christy Ross, Tyrone Sparkman, Joseph Stotts, and Robert Hennessee.

Lisa Hobbs photo

ers statewide every four years.

In Warren County, 11 of our 24 commissioners will be taking office for the first time. That's a turnover rate of 45.8 percent.

Thirteen of our commissioners took part in a two-day training session last week in Murfreesboro to fulfill their state requirement. That included three sitting commissioners in

Tommy Savage, Scott Rubley and Blaine Wilcher.

"The ethical portion is what made the biggest impression on me," said first-term Commissioner Joseph Stotts. "They went into great detail about things you need to be mindful of in public office. It's about serving the people, not personal gain. We should treat the office with respect and show respect for the people who voted us

in. If you always keep your focus on the people and making the community a better place, you'll excel."

Michael Bell is joining Stotts as a newcomer to the County Commission. He described the two-day training session as very informative.

"We learned what we can do and what we can't," said Bell. "The speakers were all very knowledgeable and talk-

ed a great deal about procedures and budgets. I made plenty of notes."

Commissioner Blaine Wilcher has eight years of county government experience and isn't required to attend sessions, but he went last week to ensure he's up to date on his training.

"One of the parts I really enjoy is talking with commissioners from other parts of the state to

see what issues they're facing," said Wilcher.

Having once been a new commissioner himself, Wilcher realizes the value of training.

"I found out early on that I didn't know how local government works," said Wilcher. "Experience is the best teacher."

Newly elected county officials take office Sept. 1.

Vineyard says 33,844 signatures too many

BY **JAMES CLARK**
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Vinnie Vineyard wants to run for Tennessee Governor as a Libertarian candidate.

But the Sevier County resident can't get the 33,844 signatures required

to appear on the ballot as a third party candidate in Tennessee. So Vineyard is on the ballot as one of many independent candidates for governor.

"You need 25 signatures to run as a Democrat, Republican or an independent," said Vineyard. "But you need more than 33,000

signatures to run in the Green Party, the Reform Party or the Libertarian Party. In this day when everyone is supposed to get a fair shake, this is really limiting our choices. What you get is a logjam of 35 independent candidates at the bottom of the ballot and you get lost in all those

candidates."

Vineyard says during a recent signature drive he collected 37 signatures in about three hours so he calls the 33,844 mark, or 2.5 percent of people who voted in the last gubernatorial election, an impossible threshold.

"We need more choices because there are more than two ways to look at things," said Vineyard. "Instead we're told we have to be liberal or conservative and that's it."

Vineyard said minorities typically vote Democrat, while pro-life supporters typically vote Republican. But what if you're black and pro-life?

He says people who support gay marriage typically identify with Democrats, while people who favor little gun control are more in line with

Republicans. But what if you support gay marriage and want everyone to walk around with a loaded gun?

It's for these reasons, and many more, Vineyard says he believes voters should have more than two legitimate choices for statewide office.

Vineyard say he supports many of the long-held Libertarian principles, one of the main ones being peace.

"We're against all these stupid wars that go on and on forever and people don't know why we're there," said Vineyard.

He's against "crony capitalism" and by that he means he's against gov-



VINEYARD

ernment bailouts of large companies that are deemed too big to be allowed to fail. Big companies, in turn, often end up running the government because their large campaign contributions often influence policy.

He also stands for smaller government and cutting taxes.

"Our government spends so much money in so many wasteful places it's insane," said Vineyard.

Vinnie has been married 17 years to wife Julie and they have one child.

More information on Vineyard can be found on his Facebook page or his website, www.BelieveInTheFunk.com.

Google defends itself after Trump claims result biases

(AP) -- In a tweet early Tuesday, President Donald Trump called Google's search results "rigged," claiming searches of "Trump news" only showed reporting by what he called the "Fake News Media."

Google responded, saying in a statement, "We don't bias our results toward any political ideology."

Here's a look at how Google returns results when you search for things, news, and even news about Trump.

complete the words as you go.

WHAT HUMANS DO

Search results are created by an algorithm that has been fine-tuned to incorporate the reviews of some 10,000-plus employees commonly known as search quality raters.

These individuals follow a set of guidelines to judge the quality of search results, particularly when Google engineers are considering changes to the search algorithm.

Last year, Google engineers tweaked the search algorithm 2,400 times based on the results of more than 270,000 experiments, rater reviews and live user tests.

When it comes to judging the quality of the top news stories Google displays, three major issues come into play, according to Google: freshness, relevancy and authoritative-ness. Google's crawlers scan pages more frequently if they change regularly.

In the case of news sites, new stories can be added to the index within seconds of publication. Fresher stories will get bumped up in search results.

Results that are more rel-

evant to a search tend to appear higher on the results page.

WHAT IS AUTHORITY?

Raters measure the authoritativeness, expertise and the trustworthiness of the sources that appear in search results. Google suggests raters consider recommendations from professional societies and experts to determine a page's authority.

Examples of high-quality news sources include ones that have won Pulitzer Prizes, that clearly label advertising as such, and that garner positive reviews from users. Pages that spread hate, cause harm or misinform or deceive users are given low ratings, Google says.

The guidelines tell raters to give a low ranking to pages "deliberately created to deceive users."

Results for most people look the same, but Google results are heavily impacted by location, especially if you search for a physical location like a store. Users' search history can also impact results slightly based on frequently conducted searches.

Missing funds in Parks and Rec lead to indictment of Lawson

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Daniel Lawson, a former assistant adult sports coordinator for Williamson County Parks and Recreation. The investigation began after Williamson County officials discovered a discrepancy related to the Adult Softball League program and reported possible missing funds.

Investigators determined Lawson stole funds totaling at least \$7,615 over a two-and-a-half-year period.

Lawson failed to turn over money he collected from patrons as payment for softball league regis-

tration and out-of-county fees. In several instances, Lawson met patrons at an offsite location and collected cash or checks naming him as the payee.

Lawson should have remitted these funds for deposit into the parks and rec bank account. Instead, he kept the money for his personal benefit. Lawson also altered computer records to cover his actions.

In August 2017, Lawson admitted to Williamson County officials he took the money without permission. His employment was terminated Aug. 22, 2017.

"Separating financial tasks and providing pre-numbered receipts

when collecting money are vital controls," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "It's important the same person who collects fee payments isn't allowed to adjust fee amounts due in a computer system."

In August 2018, Lawson was indicted by the Williamson County grand jury on one count of theft over \$2,500 and one count of official misconduct, the Comptroller's Office revealed Tuesday.

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