

Shelby County candidates rush to file as election season begins

BY TAYLOR DAVIS
EDITOR

Filing for 2026 local candidates officially opened on Wednesday, Nov. 5, and several candidates rushed to the Shelby County Clerk's Office to put their names into the political hat.

Partisan offices with a primary election can file through 4 p.m. on Jan. 9, 2026. Non-partisan offices, such as city races, judicial contests and school board seats, will remain open for filing until June 2.

On the first day, two candidates for Shelbyville mayor filed, including incumbent Troy Ethington and challenger Josh Berkley.

Rob Rothenburger (R) filed for County Judge Executive.

Two candidates for Shelby County Jailer have filed,

including incumbent Sandra Ashcraft (R) and challenger Nick Yount (R).

Incumbent Tony Harover (R) filed for re-election for Shelby County Clerk.

Kelly Samples McNew (R) filed for Shelby County District Four Magistrate.

Gene Witt (R) filed for Shelby County District Five Magistrate.

Brock Lisby (R) filed for Shelby County District Six Magistrate.

Throughout the filing season, The Sentinel-News will run an updated list. Candidates wishing to have a news story written about their candidacy should contact Editor Taylor Davis (tdavis@sentinelnews.com). A profile of all races will be published later in the spring.

Meet McNew, candidate for Shelby County Magistrate- District 4

BY TAYLOR DAVIS
EDITOR

Kelly Samples McNew is a new face in the running for Shelby County Magistrate for District Four in the Republican Party.

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

McNew served nine years at the Sheby County Public Schools as a Family Resource Coordinator and Work-Based Learning Liaison.

She has four years of experience as Director of Marketing and Events for the Bagdad Farmers' Market.

Currently, McNew serves as the Engagement Manager for the Shelby County Industrial Foundation and the Shelby County Chamber of



Kelly Samples McNew

Commerce.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO RUN IN THIS PARTICULAR RACE?

McNew has dreamed of being a magistrate for District Four since she began her career.

"I grew up in Shelby County and witnessed firsthand what it means to be a public servant," McNew said. "I am ready to serve my community and be a representative for my area, which is my favorite place in the world."

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Improving parks
- Expanding local activities
- Supporting small businesses

- Focus on projects that allow the community to grow in ways that bring people together while preserving the small-town charm that makes District Four and Shelby County so special.

WHY SHOULD VOTERS CHOOSE YOU?

McNew believes residents should vote for her because she is someone who is easy to talk to and who truly cares about understanding others.

"No matter your background or situation, I'll always take the time to listen and see things from every side," McNew said.

McNew values empathy and open conversation; she is not afraid to speak up or bring fresh, innovative ideas to the table.

"My goal is to be a voice that represents everyone in our community and to be

someone that is open, approachable, and committed to doing what's best," McNew said.

MOST PRESSING ISSUE IN YOUR GOVERNMENTAL BODY?

McNew stated that depending on who is asked, several pressing issues may be brought up, including roads, internet access, or the potential for new businesses in rural areas. However, McNew believes that the most pressing issue is transparency.

"People should always know what's going on in their local government and feel included in the process," said McNew. "When we are open and honest about what's happening, it builds trust and helps us make better decisions together as a community."

Meet Tipton, candidate for Shelby County Sheriff

BY TAYLOR DAVIS
EDITOR

Among the latest to file is Kyle Tipton for Shelby County Sheriff on November 13 as a republican.

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Tipton has nearly 17 years of dedicated law enforcement service with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, spanning from Deputy Sheriff to Patrol Sergeant and his current position as Operations Captain.

"Over the years, I have worked alongside exceptional leaders who have shaped my leadership style, grounded in faith, integrity, accountability, and a commitment to public service," said Tipton.

In addition to his law enforcement experience, Tipton has also previously served on the Shelby County Board of Elections, where he gained valuable insight into local government operations and community engagement.

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

At the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Tipton has been directly involved in the office's business and financial management. His duties include securing grants, purchasing safety equipment and department

needs for Deputies and staff, assisting the Sheriff and Chief Clerk in preparing balanced budgets, and maintaining strong working relationships with county magistrates and the Fiscal Court.

"These experiences have strengthened my understanding of fiscal responsibility and effective resource management," said Tipton.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO RUN FOR THIS PARTICULAR RACE?

From a young age, Tipton aspired to serve his community as Sheriff. He believes it is an honor even to be considered for the opportunity.

"My heart is full to serve Shelby County and to protect the men, women, and their families with pride and honor," said Tipton.

Tipton also believes that his commitment to the community extends beyond his professional law background, as he has been actively involved with Shelby County youth recreational sports for the last few years.

"These coaching opportunities and involvement have fostered personal growth and provided ways



Kyle Tipton

to connect with youth and young adults, offering a positive interaction with law enforcement outside official duties," said Tipton.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Continue supporting the men and women of the office who serve the community by advocating for better salaries, enhanced and modernized training, and meaningful career advancement opportunities.
- Renewed focus and investment in positive and sustainable growth to benefit courthouse security, patrol, administrative, and investigative divisions.

WHY SHOULD VOTERS CHOOSE YOU?

As voters head to the polls on May 19, Tipton asks them to consider his nearly 17 years of experience with the Shelby County Sheriff's office, his dedication to public safety, and his deep commitment to both the Sheriff's office and the community.

"I've worked hard to serve with integrity and transparency, and I'm prepared to continue that service as your next Sheriff. I will continue

to lead with faith, remain invested in our families, and stay passionate about the people and community we call home," said Tipton.

HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CANDIDATES ALREADY IN OFFICE)

Tipton highlighted accomplishments from his current position as Operations Captain, including:

- Overseeing two successful inspections by the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police, maintaining Accreditation certification.
- Updating the Shelby County Sheriff's Office policy and procedure manual to align with state and national standards, supported by the Kentucky Law Enforcement Professional Standards Committee.
- Securing local, state, and federal funding for critical equipment such as body-worn cameras, ballistic vests, and investigative tools like Flock cameras and TruNarc, which enhance deputy safety and save taxpayers money.
- Collaborating directly and currently working with Shelby County Public Schools officials to ensure improved, up-to-date emergency action plans for Shelby

County schools and leading efforts to increase School Resource Officers to better protect students and staff.

- Maintaining established positive working relationships with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, currently serving with the U.S. Marshals Service-Fugitive Task Force.

MOST PRESSING ISSUE IN YOUR GOVERNMENTAL BODY

Tipton believes the most urgent challenges he faces today are employee retention and recruitment.

He believes that addressing his issue starts with creating a work environment that rewards dedication and offers opportunities for professional growth.

"My goal as Sheriff is to ensure that every member of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office feels valued, supported, and empowered to serve with pride," Tipton said. "With proven leadership, dedication, and integrity, I am ready to lead the already established Sheriff's Office as the next Sheriff and continue the tradition of excellence Shelby County deserves."

Thoroughbred trainer Romans enters the Kentucky Senate race

BY BRUCE SCHREINER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUISVILLE — Longtime thoroughbred trainer Dale Romans on Wednesday entered the Kentucky campaign to succeed Republican Mitch McConnell in the U.S. Senate, portraying himself as an independent Democrat willing to cut through "partisan nonsense" and tackle trade, health care and immigration.

Romans criticized President Donald Trump's tactics in his immigration crackdown and pointed

to his decades of work alongside immigrant laborers who toil for long hours cleaning stalls and performing other labor-intensive tasks tending to horses at racetracks.

"I've traveled around the world, but I also saw the plight of the immigrant workforce we needed back here," Romans said in an introductory campaign video. "The ones that are here working, doing jobs that are necessary in this country. We need those people. We don't need a fight, we need a fix."

Romans said the nation's borders

must be secured and that people living in the United States illegally who commit crimes should be sent back to their home countries. But raids by immigration agents under the Republican administration, he said, have created fear and resentment in targeted communities, sometimes ensnaring innocent residents while hurting businesses and the economy.

With more than 2,250 career victories as a trainer, including in the Preakness Stakes and Travers Stakes, Romans said he knows how

to win as an underdog.

Romans joins a large field of Republicans and Democrats competing in 2026 for the Senate seat held since the mid-1980s by McConnell, who is retiring when his current term ends. Kentucky's primary election is in May.

"We need a senator who reflects our people," Romans said in a news release. "Not polished insiders or party-line politicians running the same old partisan nonsense, but someone who has built a career the hard way and lived the struggles

that Kentucky's working families face every day."

Romans stressed his working-class background and said he would protect workers and businesses from overregulation and "destructive" tariffs. He pledged to take action to make Kentucky more affordable. Affordability was a key issue in Democratic victories in last week's elections in places such as Virginia and New Jersey.

He said he would work to

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the Fiscal Court magistrates why they decided to rezone it as I-1 when they, and the Industrial Foundation, all say there are 1,400 acres that are already zoned industrial," said Hardesty. "I would also ask the Industrial Foundation and ask them if they believe there are still 1,400 acres of industrial land and if they support the land being zoned industrial."

He explained that, through this rezoning, two industrial buildings were approved for construction without the Shelbyville City Council's input.

He believes that the rezoning set the precedent for this new situation on Logan Station Road.

With that, Ethington began the motion:

"At this time, I am going to ask if anyone from the Shelbyville City Council wants to entertain a motion that the council does not accept the recommendation and findings of fact and does approve the zone change from agricultural to light industrial," said Ethington.

A pin could have been heard dropping as no one spoke up.

Ethington made a second call for a motion, and it was

silent once again, which meant that no motion to overturn the recommendation was made, and the recommendation stood.

Ethington followed up with a statement replying to recent comments made at planning commission meetings.

He stated that at a public hearing for a previous project, it was stated that the city took in property on Brunners Town Road so that they could get a water tower, and that they don't have an adequate water supply.

"And folks, that is absolutely not correct," said Ethington.

He explained that the water tower was part of a long-term plan to strengthen emergency storage and was not about acquiring any specific property; rather, the property was chosen through a series of comprehensive land studies.

He also commented on statements made during planning meetings regarding the Logan Station Road rezoning.

"It was stated that this property was annexed from the county in the blind part of the night, and that is incorrect," said Ethington.

He stated that each and every annexation has been done directly with the county judge beforehand, meeting with him beforehand and hand-delivering the request letters, as well as

reviewing the details face-to-face.

"There have been no blind or unlawful annexations under my administration," said Ethington.

The council then moved on to public comment.

"I'd like to thank the council for upholding the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation on this project. This would have been a disaster for all of those who live there," said John Davis, resident of Logan Station Road.

"It gives me hope that maybe we can work together as a community to save the best of what is Shelby County, it's not just people trying to protect themselves from growth, it's people wanting to have the right kind of growth," said Bonnie Burks Gray, Logan Station resident.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

- The Shelby County City Council recognized Rep. Jennifer Decker and Sen. Aaron Reed for receiving the Kentucky League of Cities 2025 Friend of Cities Award for their support of cities through bill sponsorship during the legislative session.
- The council heard and approved a second reading of an ordinance creating a position of deputy city engineer for the

public works department.

- The council heard and approved a second reading of an ordinance amending the position of City Engineer/Public Works Director at the Public Works Department.
- The council heard and approved the first reading of an ordinance amending the position of Administrative Assistant to the Office of the Mayor, changing the title to Part-Time Communications Administrative Assistant/Executive Support and Communications Specialist. This ordinance will be heard and may be approved by a second reading at the next meeting.
- The council heard and approved a first reading of an ordinance amending the position of Receptionist/Accounts Payable and renaming it to Administrative Support Clerk. This ordinance will be heard and may be approved by a second reading at the next meeting.
- The council approved the purchase of a new ladder truck for the Shelyville Fire Department.

Ethington explained that the current ladder truck used by the fire department is about 28 years old, and although it has served the community well, it has a few mechanical issues

causing it to fail tests and needs to be replaced.

Delivery of the new truck is not expected until next September, meaning the bill will be incurred in the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Therefore, the council will not be paying for the truck this year, according to Ethington.

When the new truck arrives, the city will put the old truck up for sale.

The price tag on a new aerial

ladder truck is around \$1.46 million, according to Ethington.

"It's not cheap, I about fell out of my chair," said Ethington jokingly.

The council approved the purchase of the ladder truck, and for Ethington to enter into a contract to square away funds for the purchase.

The next Shelbyville City County meeting will be held on Nov. 20 at 5:30 pm at City Hall. The public is invited.

The Sentinel-News

Your *Hometown* Source for *Local* News

(No. **USPS 492-580**)

Published each Thursday morning at 233 Alpine Dr., Unit A, Shelbyville, Ky.

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Postmaster: Send address changed to Sentinel-News, 233 Alpine Rd., Unit A, Shelbyville, Ky 40065. Second class postage paid at Shelbyville.

Subscription prices:
One year print and digital: \$57.99
One year print and digital out of area: \$85
One year digital only: \$24
**prices do not includes applicable sales tax*