

**GROWTH**

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population continues to exceed capacity. The county last summer started accepting bids for a feasibility study on the jail, which will decide if the current building can be expanded or if the county should build a whole new facility.

"We're always overpopulated in the jail," McWhorter said. "So we're gonna have to do something about that future expansion."

Challenging McWhorter in the Republican primary is Terry Hendrick. Hendrick, a farmer, is a retired 27-year employee with Bowling Green Municipal Utilities. Hendrick previously ran for magistrate in the fourth district as a Democrat in 2022.

Public safety support would be a priority for Hendrick if he is elected, saying it would be a "number one priority" for him, and pointed to the county fire department and the Warren County Sheriff's Office.

Like McWhorter, Hendrick said he would focus on the jail expansion if he is in office.

"I'd certainly like to be



Top from left: Fourth District Magistrate Rex McWhorter and Sixth District Magistrate Ron Cummings. Bottom from left: Terry Hendrick, Rod Hutcheson and Justin Gearlds

a part of that because it's amazing how many inmates on a daily basis are in the Warren County Regional Jail compared to what it was designed to hold," he said.

Enhancing infrastructure in the county would be another of Hendrick's focuses. He said with the growth rate that is expected in the county's future, managing the growth and getting the county ready for it are important. For Hendrick, this means expanding water connection and fire hydrants in the county for emergency needs and possibly increasing staffing in the county's road department.

"There's a lot of things

that I think are on the table right now," he said. "But public safety is going to be my main focus."

**SIXTH DISTRICT MAGISTRATE**

Current Sixth District Magistrate Ron Cummings has served in the role for a little over seven years. Expanding rural fiber in the county is likely the number-one thing he is most proud of in his time on the fiscal court.

A Realtor, Cummings said before the expansion, he would be with prospective home buyers who would sometimes back out of the deal due to a lack of internet connection.

"That's a major accomplishment," he said. "I feel like not only

me, but everybody in the court had (a) part to do with it."

Cummings also lists the creation of the county fire department last year as an accomplishment. He described the volunteer firefighters as "amazing" at their roles but, as the county grows, there would not be a way for them to keep up with the need down the road.

Looking forward, Cummings said he plans to work to preserve Warren County's quality of life through enhancing public safety and managing the county's population growth.

He said this means continuing to support county first responder needs and making sure that as new neighborhoods appear, "protecting the integrity of existing neighborhoods."

"This is the best place to work, eat, play, and worship anywhere in the country," he said. "I want to protect that quality of life initiative that we've already been doing even before I got in office."

Two challengers are in the running in the sixth district Republican primary.

Real estate agent and general contractor Rod Hutcheson is the president of the local Kiwanis

Club and in the past has served on the Site-Based Decision Making councils for Greenwood and South Warren High Schools. This is his first time running for public office.

Hutcheson said if he is elected, preparing the county for the growth that's coming would be a focus.

"We know that this county is growing faster than any county in the state of Kentucky," he said. "The question is where we're gonna put them."

Hutcheson believes the county needs to be better prepared for the growth. For him, this means taking action on issues outlined in various studies done in the county and organizing construction projects to get infrastructure upgraded more quickly.

"There's been a ton of consultants that have given us all kinds of plans and research and information, but I think we've got to now pull that together and start taking action on some of it instead of doing three more studies on issues that we already know were out there," he said.

Also in the running is Justin Gearlds, a local business owner who runs The Tree Company and

the construction business Motley Trading Company. Like Hutcheson, this is Gearlds' first time running for office.

Gearlds said if voters send him to the fiscal court, he will be a voice at the table for his constituents and their concerns, and said he would look at improving the county's response to road improvement needs.

"I feel like on some of our roadways, we're behind the 8 ball," Gearlds said. "We're a little more reactive in fixing them rather than proactive."

Gearlds would also focus on preserving Warren County's agricultural industry. He said a big step toward doing this will be figuring out how to increase the density of new neighborhoods to fit more people on less land, and said the key to this is expanding sewer connections.

"Instead of 100 houses taking up 100 acres, if we had (increased) sewer, we could create density and that would allow 400 houses for 100 acres," he said.

The primary election will take place on Tuesday, May 19.

**BG**

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In court on Monday, Allen's defense team of Steve and Jacob Romines indicated that they would be ready to proceed before a jury next month, though Steve Romines said that there is some DNA analysis that is outstanding in the investigation.

Warren County Assis-

tant Commonwealth's Attorney Daniel "Tres" Miller said that he anticipated DNA testing to be completed around the end of this month or the start of next month.

Miller said that law enforcement has completed the interview process of the investigation, while Steve Romines noted that a man who the defense has identified as an alternate perpetrator was questioned by police

in January and declined to voluntarily surrender his cell phone.

Allen and Swain, who are both being held in Warren County Regional Jail, are due back in court on March 30.

Authorities have largely relied on cell phone tower data and surveillance footage to connect Swain and Allen to the shooting of Dark, which was investigated by the Bowling Green Police

Department.

Police believe that Swain was dropped off on East 10th Avenue just before the shooting on June 25 and is the man seen walking into Martin Auto Mart when the fatal shots were fired, before being picked up in the same silver 2014 Cadillac that dropped him off in the area and that was found that afternoon partially covered by a tarp at a residence on Plum

Springs Road where Allen's nephew lived.

Camera footage showed a Chevrolet Suburban leaving that residence early in the afternoon of June 25 and police believe a Chevrolet Cruze driven by Swain followed the Suburban to Interstate 65.

A cell phone belonging to Swain pinged off cell towers in the Bowling Green area the night before the shooting and during the next day, and

a car registered to him was also captured on video cameras during that time, according to court records.

An affidavit for a search warrant sworn by BGPD Detective Kyle Scharlow said that Allen "helped out with" a business in which Dark invested, before Dark "pulled out of the business deal" while the other owners owed him money.

**COUNT**

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hope is useful, especially when we're able to do those interviews and really drill down," Foley said. "This (...) helps tell a portion of the story ... localized to Warren County."

After taking KHC several months to compile and review, the previous year's results indicated 181 homeless people, up 16% from the previous year.

This year's planning involved insights from numerous local nonprofits that support unhoused residents in



DAVID MAMARIL HOROWITZ / DAILY NEWS

Goodwill Another Way Program Outreach Specialist Kristopher York looks for unhoused residents on Wednesday for the annual Warren County homelessness count.

Warren County, using a strategy developed and led by HOTEL INC Director of Operations Rebecca Troxell.

At the same time — whether in Warren County or elsewhere nationwide — the natural limitations of a one-

day operation mean that these PIT counts are undercounts. PIT counts, for instance, don't account for those couch surfing or staying with a friend, which represents many who are unhoused, Witthuhn said.

"It's always a big undercount despite best efforts, just because it's hard to locate people, and it's based on being on foot and finding folks and getting their consent to log their information," Witthuhn added.

Added York, "The challenge is, a lot of

people don't want to be seen, and they don't want to be known where they're at."

Another metric that keeps a pulse on the count is attendance at Room in the Inn, which provides winter overnight shelter from Nov. 15 to March 15 — and during the previous season counted 256 people, unduplicated, using its services. This season, the nonprofit surpassed that count by late February, its board chairman Janet Yaeger said.

Unhoused Kentucky

residents also have further incentive to stay hidden due to the Safer Kentucky Act, which in July 2024 banned camping and sleeping on public property. Troxell added that because unhoused residents know about the legislation, some will move farther out of town — which makes them harder to find.

"They don't want people to know where they live and where they stay, because they have to be removed from the property," York summed up.

**GOP congressman fighting to keep his job after allegations of an affair**

(AP) — Republican U.S. Rep. Tony Gonzales of Texas sought to fend off a primary challenge Tuesday that comes as he faces calls to resign following allegations of an affair with an aide, who later died after setting herself on fire.

Gonzales, who has said he won't step down, entered the nation's first big primary of 2026 under pressure from fellow House Republicans after published reports last month that alleged to show explicit text messages between him and

the former staffer.

The three-term congressman was locked in a rematch against GOP challenger Brandon Herrera, a gun manufacturer and YouTube gun-rights influencer who narrowly lost to Gonzales by less than 400 votes in the 2024 primary.


President Donald Trump endorsed Gonzales in December, and last week, Gonzales was among the Texas Republicans in attendance for Trump's visit along the Texas coast.


"There will be oppor-

tunities for all of the details and facts to come out," Gonzales said last week in Washington. "What you've seen is not all the facts."

Gonzales, a father of six, first won his seat in 2020 after retiring from a 20-year career in the U.S. Navy that included time in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The San Antonio Express-News reported that it had obtained text messages in which the former staffer, Regina Ann Santos-Aviles, wrote to a colleague that she had an affair with Gonzales.






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