

## Susano kickoff a family event

By Mike Steely  
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Charles Susano III, who prefers "Charlie," rallied a crowd of supporters Thursday evening at The Foundry as he kicked off his race for the Republican nomination as Knox County Circuit Court Clerk.

Present for the event were several county and city officials, candidates, family, friends and supporters. Many supporters brought their spouse and the event was attended by both candidates for Knox County Sheriff. Also present Nick McBride, R. Larry Smith, George Wallace, Sherri Witt, Ted Hatfield, Ed Shouse, John Whitehead, Larson Jay, Ron Rochelle and many others.

Susano has been serving as Collections Coordinator and Legal Assistant to the Knox County Trustee's Office. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee. He and his wife live in West Hills and have been married for 20 years and have two children.

As an archeologist for UT he managed teams with the goal of preserving the history of Knox County and the East Tennessee area. In thanking his supporters he said his father, Judge Charles D. Susano



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

*The family of Charlie Susano turned out for his campaign kickoff for Circuit Court Clerk Thursday. Charlie is seen standing with wife Robin, mother Carolyn and daughter Sophie. Seated is his father, Judge Charles D. Susano Jr.*

Jr. had instructed him to "keep it short" and he thanked his family for support, especially his wife Robin. Referring to public service, Susano said the

most important person is "standing in front of you." Susano's humor was apparent in his brief remarks.

He thanked Trustee Ed Shouse for his guidance

during Susano's five years in that office and thanked Dean LaRue, Susano's campaign manager.

Susano says he is a "lifelong Knoxville" and grew

up here going to school, worshipping, playing sports and learning the importance of a tight-knit community."

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## Three high paying county offices have only one candidate each

By Mike Steely  
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It is unusual that three of the highest paid elected jobs in Knox County are getting no challengers in the upcoming primary?

The County Trustee makes \$125,829.34 each year and only incumbent Ed Shouse has picked up a petition and filed for re-election. The Criminal Court Clerk job pays \$138,412.04 each year with an \$8,400.08 travel allowance. Only incumbent Mike Hammond has filed to keep his position. The Register of Deeds position pays \$125,829.86 with an \$8,399.82 travel allowance. Only Nick McBride has a petition for that position.

At least three Republican candidates have indicated they will seek to become the Knox County Mayor, a job that will pay \$172,738.02. Two county commissioners and an insurance agent all want that job. They are Bob Thomas, Brad Anders and Glenn Jacobs. On Friday Ronda Gailman picked up a petition for county mayor in the Democratic Primary.

Five people want to be the Circuit Court Clerk, which pays \$159,174.08 each year. Republicans in the primary race are Don Ridings, Scott Smith, Charlie Susano and Tom Wheeler. Sheri Ridgeway is the lone Democrat and will face the Republican winner in the general election.

The sheriff makes \$156,174.08 in salary and two deputies, Tom Spangler and Lee Tramel, are in the race for the Republican nomination.

Thus far no Democrat other than Ridgeway and Gailman have stepped forward to qualify for the top jobs and a victory in the upcoming Republican Primary on May 1st will mean the winner will be elected.

In the race for County Clerk Republicans Roger Kane and Sherry Witt face off in the primary. The salary for County Clerk is \$125,829.34 per year.

Knox County Commissioners will receive \$22,111.96 each year and there's some

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## Stretching the Almighty Dollar Budget Time at Knox County Schools

By Anne Primm

The two and a half month process of creating a budget for fiscal year 2019 began last Monday evening at the Knox County Board of Education's end of month meeting. Gary Spencer of the Knox County Schools Finance Department is in charge of this endeavor. April 15, 2018 is the deadline for the KCS budget for 2019 because it has to be incorporated into the mayor's budget that has to be approved by Knox County Commission. This process is complicated by the fact that it is difficult to estimate how many funds will be available at this point in the year. Estimates of tax collections are strictly preliminary in February (sales tax, property tax, etc.) Estimates of Better Education Funding will not be available until April 15, 2018 and the final allocations

will not be evident until July of 2018. The student population in Knox County Schools looks like it will be flat at this time for next school year. Yet Principals have a deadline of February 14, 2018 to submit projected staff allocations for the next school year. The first draft of the budget is due March 21, 2018.

Knox County Schools is opening two new middle schools in the fall of 2018. Both are long-term budget items. The Magnet Schools and Magnet School programs are not scheduled to have an increase in the 2019 budget. First District representative Gloria Deatrledge expressed concern that perhaps monies were being diverted from the magnet programs to fund the new schools. Deatrledge emphasized that the magnet programs and magnet schools have different

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## Amber Rountree seeks re-election to BOE seat

Amber Rountree has announced her intention to run for re-election to represent the 9th District on the Knox County School Board.

She will host a campaign kickoff on Feb. 6 from 5:30-7 p.m. at 3 Bears Coffee, located at 1120 Sevier Ave.

Rountree, who is the board's vice chair, played a key role in hiring current schools superintendent Bob Thomas, developing and supporting the renovation of the South Doyle High School Library, and helping to eliminate developmentally inappropriate testing for local K-2 students.

She's also worked with the Great Schools Partnership to expand community schools, pushed for new athletic fields and restrooms at South Doyle Middle School, and partnered with Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett and the County Commission to successfully address sidewalk and traffic concerns at



Amber Rountree is pictured with her husband Bart and sons Teddy (left) and Holt (right).

South-Doyle High School.

Rountree joined the school board in 2014. The non-partisan election for the 9th District seat is set for May 1.

"As an educator, a UTK doctoral student studying literacy, and a mother of two future Knox County students, my life's work has been devoted to public education," Rountree said.

"Students, teachers, parents and community members in South Knoxville deserve a strong advocate for public education and who will make sure our dollars are wisely spent."

As a board member, Rountree is responsible for helping to oversee a \$471 million budget, developing

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