



Phone: 865-686-9970 | PO Box 18377, Knoxville, TN 37928 | Located at 4109 Central Avenue Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37912

Tony Norman kicks off re-election campaign

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

District 3 school board incumbent Tony Norman drew a crowd Wednesday evening in a campaign kickoff event at the Holiday Inn on Cedar Bluff Road. The well-respected former Knox County Commission Chairman and former Knox County Schools biology teacher drew praises from supporters including Law Director Richard (Bud) Armstrong, and Deputy Law Directors David Buuck and Daniel Sanders.

Residents and supporters from his district loudly applauded Norman's address where he spoke of the changes he helped bring about on the board of education. Norman said the school board was divided and in disarray when he was elected. His election and the election of other reformers tipped the scale to public representation and led to the retirement of Superintendent Jim McIntyre.

"The administration did not understand what it meant to be in the classroom. They didn't appreciate the classroom, the teachers or the working teams," Norman said, adding, "I think we've been able to change the direction of this system."



Tony Norman addresses a big turnout at his re-election reception for his 3rd District school board seat.

He asked his supporters to help him continue working for the needed changes for the betterment of students, teachers, employees and the administration. Attendees asked several

questions that Norman was quick to answer. "I've got to have a lot of help to do this. The people after me want me gone," he said of the effort to unseat him from the school board.

Early voting for the primary begins February 12. Norman has one primary opponent and whoever wins the March 3 primary will become the new representative for the 3rd District.

5G tower plans upset Farragut residents

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Some Farragut homeowners are finding markings in their lawns and are upset about the planned location of 5G towers there. They stood before the mayor and aldermen Thursday evening to ask for help but found there's little the town can do other than seek help from their state lawmakers.

Although the tower placement was not on the agenda the citizens demanded some type of action during the public forum.

Eleven sites were approved earlier in the month by the Farragut Planning Commission and the towers would be built on public right of way in the town. Some 120 people attended the meeting and heard Town Attorney Tom Hale tell them there's little the town can do to stop the towers.

If the Board of Mayor and Aldermen fail to vote within 61 days then Verizon's application for eleven towers would automatically be approved. Two other companies, AT&T and T-Mobile, may also apply for the small 5G towers.

One resident, Bill Bryant, said his lawn has been marked for a tower but the neighborhood has underground utilities. He called on help from the area's state legislators to protect Farragut home owners.

Laura Squire told the meeting she feels "violated" with the proliferation of the towers.

"We only have the powers given to us by the state," Attorney Hale said.

"No one understands it, what is a 'right-of-way'?" Squire inquired, encouraging the body to go to the state and seek about opting out of the tower placements.

"State law trumps ours," Town Administrator David Smoak said of the difficulty of the town to fight the state and federal regulations.

One resident said the powerful little towers cause cancer and asked that the towers be located in commercial areas only.

Mike Mitchell said that state Senator Richard Briggs is asking for a resolution for the town to opt out. He called the 5G towers a "massive overkill" of data capacity and added, "There's no need for those in a residential neighborhood."

He said the state legislators don't understand the impact that residential towers on rights-of-ways will have on Farragut. Mitchell said the towers will reduce home values as much as 21 percent.

Several other homeowners spoke against the location of the 5G towers. It was noted that the

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Free Remote Area Medical Clinic this week

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Knoxville and East Tennessee will be the focus of a FREE Medical Clinic Friday through Sunday at the Jacobs Building in Chilhowee Park. Last year's clinic served 1,543 people seeking medical, dental and eye care. This year the clinic will also spray or neuter pets during the three days.

It's an early morning clinic and parking there ends at midnight on the first night. Ticket distribution begins about 3 a.m. and patients are served in numerical order according to their ticket. Clinic doors open at 6 a.m. and the process is repeated each day.

Patients are asked to choose between dental or vision services. More information can be available by calling (865) 579-1530 or going online to www.ramusa.org/clinic-schedule/.

IMG Academy pulls away from Catholic late, wins 71-53

By Steve Williams

Knoxville Catholic took a shot at one of the nation's premier high school basketball teams Saturday afternoon and gave them all they wanted.

IMG Academy got out of town with a 71-53 win, but it wasn't easy for the tall and talented squad from Bradenton, Fla.

"I thought we played toe to toe with one of the best teams in the nation until 2:55 to go," said Catholic Coach Mike Hutchins.

Standing room only crowd of 1,625 watched the battle that saw the Fighting Irish (15-4) overcome a 12-point deficit at halftime and take a 45-43 lead late in the third quarter.

IMG Academy (14-4) retook the lead, but Catholic still had a chance to make it a two-score game with 2:45 remaining, but twice missed the front end of 3-and-1 free throw opportunities.

The 6-10 Moussa Diabate from Paris, France was a force inside and led IMG with 20 points. Duke commment Mark Williams, a 7-footer from Virginia Beach, added 14 points and point guard Jaden Springer, a Tennessee signee and crowd favorite, chipped in 11.

Sophomore guard B.J. Edwards, who has offers from UT and Auburn, led Catholic with 17 points. Blue Cain added 12 and 6-9 senior power forward Aweem Odusape 10 before fouling out with 6:48 left in the game.

Hutchins said "their size and depth" was the difference.

"They're amazing," he added. "That's why they are one of the top 12 teams in the country now and won the national title last year."



IMG Academy's Jaden Springer, a UT signee, misses an acrobatic slam on this play but was still impressive in his team's 71-53 win over Catholic Saturday afternoon. Irishman B.J. Edwards, who has an offer from UT, watches on the play. He led Catholic with 17 points.

"That kind of game is only going to make us better and that game was great for basketball in Knoxville. That's probably the most talent between two teams that's ever been on a high school floor in the City of Knoxville."

IMG Coach Sean McAlon was impressed by Catholic.

"What we did had a lot to do with them," he said. "Their zone was very good and active. We turned the ball over way too much, but that's a credit to them. They did a good job of being super active and we didn't do a very good job of finding guys that were wide open. But we did enough to be able to pull away towards the end."

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