

Koenig gets surprise foe

Kenton County PVA Krey files for 69th House seat
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BY PATRICK CROWLEY | PCROWLEY@NKY.COM

It took a low-key, soft-spoken career public servant to provide the biggest Northern Kentucky drama on the final day to file for this year's major political races.

Kenton County Property Value Administrator Merrick Krey, an Erlanger Democrat, filed campaign papers Tuesday to challenge State Rep. Adam Koenig, R-Erlanger, in the 69th District race this fall.

"We think Merrick Krey is a wonderful candidate," said House Speaker Jody Richards, D-Bowling Green. "He's obviously been elected several times as PVA and we think he has a great chance to win. And we're going to help him."

Jonathan Hurst, director of the House Democratic Caucus, said the campaign "will be one of our targeted races."

"We came close in this district two years ago and we're going to fight hard to win it," Hurst said.

In an interview, Krey - a two-term PVA - didn't mention Koenig but said he filed because "I'm fed up with all the partisan politics in Frankfort."

"I feel like I can make a change," Krey said. "They can't seem to get much done down here, and I really feel like I have an opportunity to give something back to the state and people of the district."

Koenig, who is in his first term, said he is "proud of my record of working with both Republican and Democrats on behalf of my constituents to fix their problems. I look forward to spirited debate on the issues."

Tuesday was the final day for federal, statehouse and judicial candidates to file in Frankfort for the May primary and November general election.

In the 64th House District race Rep. Tom Kerr, R-Taylor Mill, drew a primary challenge from Steve Knipper of Independence. Democrat Ed Worland of Edgewood also filed for the race.

Also drawing a late opponent was Rep. Royce Adams, D-Dry Ridge. Republican Steve Wood of Williamstown filed to run in the 61st District House race.

The other contested local House race is Kenton County's 63rd District GOP primary. Rep. Alecia Webb-Edgington of Fort Wright, who was elected in a Jan. 8 special elec-

tion, is challenged by Will Terwort of Fort Mitchell. Democrat Ken Padgett of Lakeside Park filed Tuesday and is unopposed in the primary.

The biggest news out of the federal races was Democrat Bruce Lunsford's entry into the U.S. Sen. Democratic primary. Lunsford, a Northern Kentucky native and Louisville resident, joins a field that includes two other Louisville Democrats, Andrew Horne and Greg Fischer. Lunsford, a multimillionaire, spent \$14 million of his own money on an unsuccessful run in last year's Democratic gubernatorial primary.

Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell, a four-term Louisville Republican, holds the seat. Sen. Jim Bunning, a Southgate Republican, is not up for re-election until 2010.

Congressman Geoff Davis, a Boone County Republican, has drawn primary opposition from Warren Stone of Independence, G.E. Puckett of Fleming County. Michael Kelley, an Oldham County physician, was the only Democrat to file.

An open seat on the Kenton District Court bench attracted seven candidates: Dennis Alerding, Covington; Dorena Fox, Crescent Springs; Kathleen Lape, Erlanger; Keith Johnson, Fort Mitchell; Ken Easterling, Edgewood; Mary Fortner Rafizadeh, Edgewood; and Patrick Monohan, Fort Wright.

The crowded field will be cut to two in the May primary. Gov. Steve Beshear is also expected to fill the seat shortly with an appointee who will serve through the end of the year. Johnson is believed to have the inside track for the gubernatorial appointment. The field could be thinned further if, as expected, some of the candidates drop out if they fail to garner the appointment.

Contested Northern Kentucky state Senate races are:

District 17. Sen. Damon Thayer, R-Georgetown, is unopposed in the primary. Two Georgetown Democrats - Robert Powell and Rand Marshall - filed for the primary. The district includes southern Kenton County, including Independence and Taylor Mill.

District 11. Sen. Dick Roeding, R-Lakeside Park, is not seeking another term. No Democrat filed. On the Republican side are John Schickel and Charlie Walton, both of Boone County.

District 23. In a rematch from 2004, Democrat Kathy Groob of Covington is trying to unseat Sen. Jack Westwood, R-Crescent Springs, in the Kenton County race.

Some state lawmakers are getting a pass this year and did not draw an opponent: Rep. Sal Santoro, R-Florence; Rep. Arnold Simpson, D-Covington; Rep. Dennis Keene, D-Wilder; Rep. Addia Wuchner, R-Burlington; Rep. Joe Fischer, R-Fort Thomas; and Rep. Tom McKee, D-Cynthiana.

Senate President Pro Tem Katie Stine is not up for re-election this year.