

Bob Bruce

Candia Democrat says it's time for a change on the Executive Council

BY MICHELLE SATURLEY

Staff Writer

Bob Bruce, a Candia resident, recently announced his intention to run for the District Four Executive Council Seat in 2006, opposite incumbent and former Manchester mayor Raymond Wiczorek. The grandfather and Vietnam veteran said that it's nothing personal; he just thinks it's time for a change.

"Let's put it this way – Ray Wiczorek is a good man, and he's done a lot for the city of Manchester," Bruce said. "But as far as I know, he has not reached out to constituents in other towns in his district. I think it's time for more accurate representation."

Voting on Executive Council seats will be held Tuesday, Nov. 6. Councilors serve two-year terms and all five seats will be open at the election.



Candia resident Bob Bruce is hitting the streets of Manchester, as well as other towns in District 4, to spread the word to voters about the important work done by the Executive Council.

Mirror/Michelle Saturley

Do you have any experience in the political arena?

I ran for Congress in 2004 and lost. But I wouldn't say that I'm a career politician. And, I think to be an effective Executive Councilor you should not be a career politician. The people who are elected to serve on the Executive Council are supposed to be regular citizens. They shouldn't just vote down party lines. It has to be a more common sense approach.

What is it about the Executive Council that appeals to you – why not run for alderman, or mayor, or for state rep.?

I like that it is supposed to be more nonpartisan. It's about running things efficiently. You have these five people who are from different regions of the state and they make some major decisions. They decide if appointees are qualified. They approve any state contract over \$5,000. They're the people's eyes and ears in Concord.

The average voter in New Hampshire isn't really aware of what the council is or what it does. Do you hope to change that?

I would like to change that. In the days since I announced my candidacy back in April, and have been visiting towns and talking to people, I have come to realize that 90 percent of people have no idea what the Executive Council is there for. And, you know, it's the only council of its kind anywhere in the United States, so people should know about it and be proud of it.

What are the top three issues you feel strongly about that made you want to run?

I'd say transportation is a big issue. Our district is dealing with the I-93 expansion, and all the things that go along with that. There's also no adequate east-to-west road system in the state. As more and more people move to Southern New Hampshire from Massachusetts and other states, this is going to be a problem. I'm also very interested in the appointees' approval process. We need to be absolutely sure that the people who are nominated to the positions are qualified to carry them out, and they aren't just

friends of people in high places. The contract bidding process, too, needs to get looked at with a fine-tooth comb. We need to make sure that we are accepting the most reasonable bid, and whenever we can those companies bidding for services should be from New Hampshire. We need to create jobs within the state so that everybody benefits.

How much time do you have to commit to the position?

I'm a freelance data storage consultant, so I can pretty much make my own hours. The Executive Council meets twice a month, but there is also a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes on – a lot of reading, and a lot of meeting with constituents. I'm lucky to have the time built into my schedule to be able to do that. It's a priority.

How much support are you getting from the Democratic Party?

At the moment, not a lot. They are focused on some special elections that are coming up. But I have received calls and e-mails from many people in the community – Democrats, Republicans and Libertar-

ians – who are supporting me. When I officially announced my candidacy on Jan. 14 in Manchester, about 75 people came out to show support. That may not seem like a lot, but for an early announcement like this, it's pretty good. As the campaign goes on I will be doing more radio spots, mailings, TV spots, and I will be talking a lot to voters. I want people to understand that I'm serious about this. I take this responsibility very seriously.

Why do you think you should be on the Executive Council instead of Ray Wiczorek?

I'll put it this way. Ray is a good man. He's done a lot for the city of Manchester. But it's time for a change. There are four Republicans and one Democrat on the council. I don't think that's an accurate representation of the voters in New Hampshire. If you go to the Executive Council Web site, you'll see that he is one of the only councilors who doesn't post a report of the things he's working on, what he's voted on, and so on. Ray has been my councilor for almost four years, and I've never seen him in Candia. I think Gov. (John) Lynch has done a great job opening up the government, but it's not open enough yet. There's got to be a better way.