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Dedden brings blue-collar ethic to Boone fiscal court

BY MARK HANSEL • MHANSEL@NKY.COM • NOVEMBER 14, 2010

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BOONE COUNTY - It would be fair to call Matt Dedden a reluctant politician.

The 46-year-old owner of Dedden Excavating has always kept up with local politics, but has been mostly an observer.

Until recently, his civic experience consisted of a two-year stint as vice president of the Kentucky Cutting Horse Association and three years as a member of the Camp Ernst YMCA Branch Board.

That all changed on Nov. 2, when Dedden was elected as the District 1 Boone County Commissioner.

Dedden says he decided to run for office primarily because of deep philosophical differences with Steve Smith, whom he defeated in the Republican primary in May.

Those differences were brought to the forefront in 2008 when a parks tax was placed on the ballot in Boone County. Smith supported the issue and chaired a parks tax committee, while Dedden was strongly opposed to the increase. The parks tax failed by a large margin.

When Smith announced his candidacy for county commissioner, Dedden said he felt compelled to enter the race.

"Our views are so different and nobody else was going to step up," Dedden said. "I figured my opinion was close to what the average

person in Boone County would think."

Dedden won the primary convincingly and was unopposed in the general election. He said he plans to bring the same blue-collar work ethic that has served him well in the private sector to the fiscal court.

"Maybe that's what we have needed all along," Dedden said.



The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy Matt Dedden, an excavation contractor, will be sworn in as a Boone County Commissioner in January 2011. He ran unopposed after winning a hard-fought Republican primary against Steve Smith.

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An early indication of that approach came shortly after his win in the primary.

Dedden joined a committee formed to explore ways to revamp funding and services at the county's Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC).

One suggestion to alleviate a projected shortfall in funding was a reduction in the county's contribution to the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK). Dedden listened to the recommendation and then did something some elected officials might not - he rode a TANK bus from Florence to downtown Covington at two different times in the morning to help gauge how much it is used.

"The earlier bus wasn't very crowded but the later one was packed," Dedden said. "It gave me a much better understanding of the value of public transportation to some of our residents."

Dedden said he will bring that same hands-on attitude to the Fiscal Court.

"I plan to be in the office every day," Dedden said. "I will spend the first few months learning the ropes, but I want to get involved in as many things as possible as soon as possible."

He is strongly endorsed by the Northern Kentucky Tea Party and said he welcomes the support.

"I am proud to be associated with the Tea Party," Dedden said. "I share a lot of their views."

Because of those views, many expect he will fill not only the seat of Cathy Flaig, who left to challenge Judge-executive Gary Moore, but also her role on the fiscal court as the strongest voice of opposition to Moore.

"I'm sure there will be times when all of us disagree, but it doesn't have to be divisive," Dedden said. "I think we can discuss things from different viewpoints, take a vote and move on."

Dedden lives in Burlington with his wife, Kimberly, and his two children, Chloe, 15 and Matthew 12. He has owned Dedden Excavating for 24 years

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