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JULY 25, 2014 AT 11:56 PM

Three GOP candidates battle to face incumbent Hackel for Macomb Co. exec

URSULA WATSON THE DETROIT NEWS
4 COMMENTS

Three Republican candidates are vying for the chance to take on Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel in the November general election.

Two of the three, Randell J. Shafer and Erin A. Stahl, ran against Hackel and lost when the former sheriff was easily elected as the county's first executive four years ago. Hackel, 52, is unopposed in the Democratic primary.

Stahl, a former St. Clair Shores councilwoman, and Shafer, a retired Army chief warrant officer from St. Clair Shores, are joined in the Aug. 5 GOP primary by David J. Novak of Chesterfield Township, a program manager for an engineering company.

Novak and Stahl, while avoiding direct criticism of Hackel, say they would make some changes in how county [finances](#) are handled. Shafer did not respond to interview requests from The Detroit News.

Under Hackel, the county has eliminated a \$13.5 million deficit, partly by cutting 450 positions since 2011. Earlier this month, he presented a \$192.5 million general [fund](#) budget for 2015 that calls for neither tax hikes nor layoffs.

The executive also has clashed at times with commissioners over budget issues and control of county contracts.

Asked how he would be different from Hackel, Novak, 47, answered in an email, "I have an ability to lead and work WITH elected officials and Department heads."

Novak, an Army veteran who ran for a state House seat in District 32 four years ago, said he wants to shrink government and make Macomb County more business-friendly.

"I want to help expand on the opportunities that Macomb can offer to the [business owners](#) and give them a reason to invest in Macomb," he said. "I would also like to help create an environment where employees can keep more of their hard earned income, by lessening the burden of an over bloated government intent on spending more and more and taxing more and more to pay for these bad habits."

Stahl, 44, said she would analyze the county's budget to find savings.

"I plan to design Macomb County government into the example for other communities of how to live with our means while strategically dumping our debt," she said.

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Stahl, who was a St. Clair Shores councilwoman from 2003-07 and mayor pro tem in 2007, also said she wants to make it easier and cheaper for citizens to get information about county government

"I will provide free FOIA information to citizens to hold elected officials and employees accountable, then use the inquiries to develop statistical reporting systems," she said. "I want to give citizens the truth so we can fix problems and have a higher quality of life for Macomb County families."

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John Shibbish · Top Commenter · School of Hard Knocks, University of Life

The only reason we have a county executive in Macomb County is because it was placed on the August low turn out ballot 4 years ago buy friends of then Sheriff Hackle all Democrats looking to create jobs at the public troth. Hackle has these friends who are retired from the county back on the public pay roll working for Hackle as pay back for their effort to create a new form of stream line transparent government called Macomb County executive. It was modeled after the Wayne County play book when they elected their first county executive years back. If you keep a eye on what is going on in Wayne County run by Democrats you now have a glimpse of the future of what is coming to Macomb County more friends and family on the public doll. Oakland County has a Republican executive their doing fine. Ours run by Democrats will catch up to Wayne County in time.

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Vigorous prosecution of public corruption has always been vital to our country. Public corruption takes a heavy toll on our communities. Corruption gives unfair advantages to those willing to break the law: public officials, their relatives and friends, and those who willingly pay bribes to gain (Government) public Contracts and other government actions. But there are many (CRIME) victims: both those who are shaken down [Retired (OPM FEHB) HMO Beneficiaries: <http://www.michigan.gov/documents/...> See More

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Kimberly Kimball · Top Commenter · Richmond, Michigan

Why would ANY company want to invest in Michigan, when the State Attorney General is defrauding the MEDICAID Account (in the General Fund), allowing Anti Trust Violations (illegal health insurance premiums increases) basically running a Criminal enterprise Against the elderly, middle class and poor ?

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John Garfield · Top Commenter · Highland Park High School

I hate to say it. But they can battle all they want. Hackel should have been the Dem governor candidate. And no Republican is going to win that county exec seat.

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