



By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

A panel of three Perkins County officials voted unanimously to place Leon Pankonin in a vacant commissioner seat.

He will complete the term of Dave Hoffert who resigned after nine months in the position.

“Thank you to the people who called to support me in finishing out the term,” said Pankonin. “I will do the best job I can for the whole county.”

Pankonin was defeated by Hoffert in last fall’s election process after serving as District 2 Commissioner for one full term. Although he came forward as an applicant to complete the current term, he told the panel he will not seek re-election in 2014.

The replacement process took place in the District Court room in the Perkins County Courthouse with five candidates applying for the District 2 Commissioner seat.

Applicants included Bernie Deaver, Ken Kohmetscher, Kelvin Kurkowski, Tom Schroder and Pankonin.

Schroder withdrew his application during the proceedings after. Schroder said he chose to withdraw after learning who the other applicants were. “They can do a better job than I can,” he said.

Each applicant came before a panel made up of Perkins County Clerk Rita Long, Treasurer Patsy Kroeker and Perkins County Attorney Rick Roberts.

Candidates were asked several questions by the panel, some of which included why they desired the position, their goals for the county, their qualifications for the position, their ability to deal with public criticism, their supervisory skills, whether they would run for the elected office in 2014, and their flexibility in order to attend meetings and workshops.

After each candidate answered the questions, the public was given an opportunity to provide input. Both positive and negative comments were invited.

Condition of the county roads in District 2 was the biggest issue addressed by the candidates and by members of the public.

“Roads are a concern—and they will be a concern before and after me,” responded Pankonin to a question by Attorney Roberts on Pankonin’s desire to complete the term in knowing residents are unhappy with road conditions.

Pankonin said his experience and knowledge of how the county works add to his ability to serve as commissioner.

Other issues addressed by candidates included the levy and the county’s budget.

Pankonin was sworn in by Perkins County Clerk Rita Long following the procedure and Pankonin took a seat at the following commissioner meeting on Sept. 19.