

Posted Online: March 24, 2011, 10:39 pm

Independent challenges Democratic incumbent in Silvis' only contested race

[Comment on this story](#)

By Seth Kabala, correspondent@qconline.com



Photo:
Kathryn (Kathy) Hall



Photo:
Kitty Lopez



Photo:
Robert "Bob" Rockwell



Photo:
Michael Walz



Photo:
Caryn Unsicker

SILVIS --First Ward Ald. Kitty Lobe, a Democrat, is being challenged by an Independent candidate in what will be the city's only contested race on April 5.

Ald. Lopez, who has represented the 1st Ward on the Silvis City Council for 11 years, faces Independent candidate Michael Walz.

"I want to complete projects this council has started," Ms. Lopez said recently. "And I'm excited to get moving on projects we have on the planning table."

Mr. Walz believes Silvis will see more progress with new people on the council.

"I am running to bring a fresh face and a new voice for the residents of Silvis," he said. "When you have people holding the same position year after year, the productivity of that person decreases. By electing new people, you get fresh ideas and new ways of conducting business."

Ms. Lopez thinks Silvis should focus on citizens' day-to-day experiences with the city, and to do that, the city needs to watch its checkbook carefully.

"We serve our citizens with quality city services," she said. "To keep our city running with these high standards is costly and requires money and personnel. Our staff is second to none, and working together we will achieve and maintain those services."

The biggest issue facing Silvis is "finding money for major projects given the economy," Mr. Walz said.

With its current leadership and city staff, Silvis has a bright future, Ms. Lopez said.

"Silvis will prevail," she said. "This council and all those who are employed here come together and make things work. There are no obstacles we will let Silvis succumb to."

The city's future could be brighter with new leadership, Mr. Walz asserted.

"This city is predominately Democratic," he said. "I am running on the Independent ticket (to change that)."

The 1st Ward candidates will be joined on the ballot by Democrats Kathryn Hall, 2nd Ward; Robert "Bob" Rockwell, 3rd Ward; Ald. Caryn Unsicker, 4th Ward; and Ald. Tom Conrad to serve the two years remaining in his 4th Ward term.

These candidates are running unopposed.



Photo:
Tom Conrad

Name: Michael Walz
Party: Independent
Age: 43
Family: two sons
Occupation: EMT and volunteer firefighter in Silvis
Political experience: none
Education: associate's degree in computer aided drafting

Name: Kitty Lopez
Party: Democrat
Age: 62
Family: married with two children and one grandson
Occupation: school bus driver
Political experience: 11 years as 1st Ward alderman
Education: 1966 graduate of United Township High School

Name: Robert Rockwell
Party: Democrat
Age: 64
Family: married with four children
Occupation: retired pipefitter Local 25
Political experience: none
Education: Alleman High School graduate

Name: Thomas M. Conrad
Party: Democratic
Age: 64
Family: married with two children
Occupation: retired teacher
Political experience: one year as alderman in Silvis
Education: B.S. and M.S. in education from Northern Illinois University

Name: Kathryn (Kathy) Hall
Party: Democrat
City: Silvis
Age: 65
Family: Two children and two grandchildren
Occupation: Retired program/management analyst at Rock Island Arsenal
Political experience: None

Education: Graduated from Villa de Chantal in Rock Island, attended Black Hawk College, graduated from Army Management Staff College in Alexandria, Va.

Name: Caryn Unsicker (incumbent)

Party: Democrat

City: Silvis

Age: 63

Family: Married with one son and one granddaughter

Occupation: Counselor at the Bethany Black Hawk Phoenix Program

Political experience: 4th Ward alderman since 2007

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in English and education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Master of Arts degree in counselor education from the University of Iowa.