

Travis: Monroe council needs a Democratic woman

By Kurt Van der Dussen, Herald-Times Staff Writer

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Sophia Travis says it's time the Monroe County Council has a Democratic woman on it again.

Travis is one of four Democratic candidates in the May 4 primary for three spots on the November ballot for council at-large. She laid out her reasons for running before supporters at the courthouse Thursday.

A professional musician and county resident since 1984 who lives in southwest Monroe County in the historic old Ketcham house, she said she wants to get minorities and women more involved in local government.

She stressed quality-of-life issues, speaking of preserving the county's unique characteristics and fragile natural environment.

"I am deeply concerned about the value of preserving the integrity and the soul of the place," she said of the county.

She said she's concerned about the future of local business.

"I am alarmed that many a small business in our lively downtown has fizzled out and that in a recent listing of top restaurants in the H-T, I did not read the names of those locally owned establishments that I have an affection for," she said.

"Businesses with personality and service are being abandoned for the big boxes. As quickly as the big boxes appear like a growing cancer, the true Monroe County is getting snuffed out," she said.

Travis also lamented the steady increase in crowding and inmate population at the Monroe County Jail.

"Those men and women are our county's neglected and underserved children, ravaged by alcohol, on methadone, uneducated, unloved," she said.

Travis said the mentality of a musician fits many of the criteria for a good council member.

"Musicians are acquainted with thrift, social welfare, heartbreak, joy, the power of words, the power of the voice," she said. "On the flip side, musicians learn to persevere when they perceive that they are shut out or disconnected from the scene. They cannot be repressed."

Travis summed up her platform as "social services, not prison services; economic development, not land speculation; a government as diversified as the people it serves."

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