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Political signs spring up all over town

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If political signs were bluebonnets, much of Lewisville would be in full bloom this week.

That's true, especially around Lewisville City Hall and the Municipal Annex where people are voting early through Tuesday and on Election Day on May 10, and on rights-of-way of major city streets.

Greg Tierney is seeking re-election to Place 1 and is being challenged by John Gorena. Lathan Watts is seeking re-election to Place 3 and is being challenged by David Fogle.

If the outcome of the election is based on who puts up the most signs, Tierney and Watts will win by landslides. The number of their signs is at least five times greater than those of their opponents.

On Thursday morning, Watts had 20 signs on the city right-of-way on Charles Street between Main Street and Walters, a single block just west of city hall. On Tuesday, Tierney had about as many on the same site, but had fewer than Watts on Thursday. The site was similar on Mill Street, on the east side of city hall. Gorena and Fogle had no more than two or three each at each site.

The scene was about the same Thursday morning on Civic Circle, on the west side of Municipal Annex.

Watts said he had his signs placed throughout the city in order to publicize the election.

"It is a way to let people know that there is an election taking place and that I am seeking re-election," he said.

Gorena and Fogle have also placed their signs at various places throughout the city, but not near as many as have Watts and Tierney.

Gorena said that at several sites where his signs have been placed, someone places "Re-Elect Tierney" signs both immediately in front of and behind his sign.

Gorena said Thursday, if elected, he will propose an ordinance that would limit the number of political signs to no more than one of each candidate on each street corner.

Tierney said "a sign war" takes place nearly every year during campaigns.

"People complain that their signs have been stolen or someone has placed a sign in front of theirs," he said.

"Name recognition is a big player when people get into that booth to vote," he said, explaining why he has so many signs placed throughout Lewisville. "The signs help get the word out that there is an election taking place. We just hope people will pay attention to the

signs and get out and vote.”

The city code bans multiple garage sale signs and other signs on rights-of-way of city streets, but exempts governmental signs. Julie Heinze, city secretary, said political signs qualify as governmental signs.

However, the Texas Department of Transportation does not allow governmental or political signs on rights-of-way of state highways.

A print-out from TxDOT states, “It is illegal to place any signs on or within the right-of-way. This includes posting signs on trees, telephone poles, traffic signs and other objects in the right-of-way.”

“During campaign season,” the print-out states, “the landscape blooms with a special kind of flower n the political sign. Unlike wildflowers that are welcome anywhere, putting campaign signs on public lands is illegal. So before you plant that sign, learn the law and Keep Texas Beautiful.”

Tierney’s and Fogle’s signs are erected on wooden stakes and remain pretty-well upright. Gorena’s and Watts’ signs are on flimsy wires and were bent over throughout most of the day Thursday due to high winds, making them difficult to read.

That fact may have been more significant if Fogle was running against Tierney and Gorena against Watts.

Early voting will take place 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 3, and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, May 5-6. Lewisville voters may cast their ballots at Lewisville City Hall at 151 W. Church Street or at the Municipal Annex at Main Street and Civic Circle.

On Election Day, voters may cast their ballots between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. at those two locations.

In addition to the city council election, voters in the Lewisville Independent School District may also vote on Proposition 1, which would provide \$697 million for school improvements, and Proposition 2, which would provide \$79 million for a special events center.

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