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Lewisville: Early voting begins Monday in runoff election

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Gilmore, Gorena differ on how to deal with illegal immigrants

By DAN EAKIN, Staff Writer

Early voting begins Monday in the June 13 runoff election to decide whether TJ Gilmore or **John Gorena** will replace Dean Ueckert, who was elected mayor, in the Place 4 position on the Lewisville City Council.

Early voting will be at Lewisville City Hall and the Municipal Annex located at Main Street and Civic Circle, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 1-5, and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. June 8-9. Election Day voting will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. June 13 at city hall, municipal annex, and at Memorial Park.

In the May 9 city election, Gorena got 875 votes, including 468 in early voting, or 44.26 percent. Gilmore received 577 votes, including 348 in early voting, or 29.19 percent. Margie Rochelle received 525 votes, including 304 in early voting, or 26.56 percent.

Although Gorena got the most votes of the three candidates May 9, Rochelle is campaigning hard for Gilmore and is asking all of her supporters to vote for him in the runoff.

Gorena and his supporters are fighting hard to the finish. Gorena is asking all who voted for him in the May 9 election to be sure to remember to vote for him again in the runoff election.

Gorena and Gilmore differ on several issues, but the most prominent difference is their views on how to combat what many view as an illegal immigration problem in Lewisville.

People driving up and down Interstate 35 or Mill Street just south of Old Town see large numbers of men standing or sitting, hoping someone will come by and get them to perform day labor for them.

Some Lewisville residents see this as only a small problem, or maybe no problem at all. Several have been heard to say, "They will do work for us that no one else wants to do. They will mow lawns, do housework and other chores that no one else will do."

However, many of these day laborers, maybe most, are believed to be illegal immigrants who pay no income taxes and whose families receive free food, medical care and other services at the expense of the government.

Gilmore believes that the city of Lewisville is already doing what it should be doing to deal with illegal immigrants. **Gorena believes Lewisville should participate in the 287g program, a federal government program which provides training to police officers on how to deal with people who may be in the U.S. illegally. It also allows police officers to search federal data bases to determine whether a person is in the country legally.**

Farmers Branch, Carrollton and Harris County are the only three entities in Texas now participating in the 287g program, which has been in existence for about 13 years. About 60 law enforcement organizations in about 20 other states are now participating.

Gilmore said he is against Lewisville participating in the 287g program because it results in unnecessary paperwork for officers and is redundant to the existing ICE ACCESS program which the city of Lewisville now utilizes at no cost.

"ICE ACCESS checks anyone arrested against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) databases with a phone call to an ICE agent," Gilmore said. "If the criminal is here illegally; once processed for breaking the law, they are sent to an ICE detention facility until deported. No liability, no expense, no reduction in police presence. The only difference is our police make a phone call instead of check a database."

"The best part of ICE ACCESS," he added, "is that Lewisville has used it to remove over 600 illegal criminals in 2008."

However, Gorena said it should be obvious that the city is not doing enough to combat a growing illegal immigration problem in Lewisville. Large numbers of day laborers, many of whom Gorena believes to be here illegally from several countries, are seen daily at the Huffines Plaza on Interstate 35E and beside a 7-Eleven store at the intersection of Business Highway 121 and Mill Street.

"I think that 287g training is the first step," Gorena said. "It would allow us to do some things without waiting for ICE to respond. Keep in mind that 287g has been around for 13 years. It is just in the last three years that many more cities have turned to this. The illegal alien problem is getting unbearable for many locations, including Lewisville."

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