



[TOP](#)

Libla Ready For State Senate Race

OCTOBER 30TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Libla Ready For State Senate Race

Special to the ShowMe Times

By Tim Krakowiak, Editor

SEMO Times

POPLAR BLUFF – Two Poplar Bluff natives have dropped out of the Senate race, clearing the way for another local candidate who has proven his commitment to a first run at office, raising \$180,000 in just over a month.

Having celebrated his 40th year as a self-made businessman this summer, Doug Libla, co-owner of Mid Continent Nail Corp., is grooming his successor for his position at the manufacturing plant, in hopes of filling the seat of Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, who is terming out in 2012.

But first Libla must vie in the Republican primary against state Rep. Billy Pat Wright out of Dexter, who is completing his fourth two-year term in the House. The victor will face the only Democrat thus far who has announced his candidacy for the 25th District next November, Rep. Terry Swinger of Caruthersville, also serving his final term.

“I’m at a point in my career where I’ve been such a critic of politics for 20, 30 years, I’m ready for public service,” said Libla, who was born in Greenville and resides in Poplar Bluff. “The direction of our state and federal government is stunting the growth of our young people, killing the American dream, and I feel compelled to step out and put 100 percent of my effort into representing the 25th District and all it entails.”

TRADE WAR

One of the largest manufacturers of nails in the United States, Mid Continent has been on the frontlines of the trade war against China, having won a lawsuit in 2008 through the U.S. International Trade Commission that required the Commerce Department to impose a tariff on Chinese companies “dumping” cheaply made nails in our country in an attempt to kill competition.

While the family owned business spent more than \$1 million to win the unfair trade case, the nails kept coming in, so Mid Continent invested another \$75,000 to hire a private detective who discovered that Chinese manufacturers were simply exporting their nails through Korea and Taiwan to avoid paying the duties, according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

"We've lost several domestic competitors over the last 10 years because they couldn't compete with the government of China, where they don't have to pay workers comp, [provide] benefits and decent salaries," Libla pointed out.

Before he announced his candidacy Aug. 22 in the *SEMO Times*, Libla said he spent time in Jefferson City visiting each chamber, meeting legislators and doing his "due diligence." His strength, he said, will be his "negotiation skills on both sides of the aisle" and he is not looking to "garner the spotlight."

"This isn't part-time work; it's a tremendous responsibility that should not be taken lightly," Libla said. "I've traveled all over the country, and have seen big employers taxed to death, so I do think I can make a difference, getting in there with other like-minded senators and reps, making Missouri a more business-friendly state, and improving our self-perception."

Libla has received large campaign donations from regional business leaders of varying backgrounds, not surprisingly including the medical community, which is poised for major growth.

Last month, Libla flew community members to the state Capitol in his company airplane for Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center's relocation hearing on its \$173 million replacement hospital, which broke ground Oct. 6. One member of the Missouri Health Facilities Review Committee said the overpowering in-person support is what led to her approval.

Libla has already opened a very visible office in the heart of Poplar Bluff's retail district at Mansion Mall, which he said he would staff full time in January. He also plans to organize policy advisory teams representing multiple groups of constituents including agriculture, education, health care, industry, municipality and senior citizens.

"It's important to me to keep up with everybody's needs, because you can't know everything," Libla said. "I feel like we've lost the way to what we're trying to get accomplished within government in the state of Missouri."

A key to Libla's early success in fundraising has been his committed campaign team, led by treasurer Herman Styles Jr., a successful businessman who co-owns Colton's Steak House & Grill in Poplar Bluff, as well as restaurants in Farmington, Jefferson City, Sedalia and Springfield, with more expansion plans slated for next year.

"I'm at the tail end of my career—no more seven-day work weeks for me—so I'm helping Doug contact people for money and votes, or both," Styles commented. "We're all enthusiastic, running around like a bunch of 18 year olds."

This is Styles' first time being heavily involved in a political campaign, he noted, and he is not alone. Deputy campaign treasurer Brent Davis, who had a 31-year career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and now conducts compliance training for Gamma HealthCare, explained how he admires what Libla stands for.

"Doug won't be bought," Davis stated. He recalled in the mid-1970s meeting Libla through the businessman's lead role with the Missouri Association of State Troopers Emergency Relief Society, which provides funeral expenses for fallen troopers killed in the line of duty, and guarantees a college education for any surviving children.

'SETTING THE TABLE'

Publicly endorsing Libla a month ago, Jeff Shawan, a leader of Poplar Bluff's nonprofit sector, announced in March he was running for the senatorial seat, but since then he has gracefully bowed out.

Shawan described how he was involved in Rep. Todd Richardson's successful campaign last year for District 154, and was working to find a business-oriented candidate for Mayer's seat, originally concluding he would enter the political arena himself.

"Why I got out really came down the reason why I got into the race—I thought it would be counterproductive to compete against someone with very similar Conservative views as me, thereby splitting the Butler County vote and setting the table for what I would consider a Jefferson City insider going back to office," Shawan said. "It's my belief with the recession in our economy that we need representation from the business sector to streamline what I consider

to be an overreach of the government, both on the federal and state levels.”

The first Poplar Bluff candidate to announce his intent to file was Gayle Kingery, Richardson’s eight-year predecessor, who dropped out of the Senate race in June. Unlike Shawan, Kingery said he would not endorse a candidate until after the primary in August 2012.

“I got to thinking, at my tender age, which is 72, that ‘Hey, I probably got another 10 good years in me of traveling and enjoying the country and my grandkids,’” Kingery said. “I certainly will miss the public service. For what it’s worth, I was told I was the candidate to beat.”

Having just returned from a trip to Colorado earlier this month, Kingery said he has not followed who is running at this early stage, but when asked, admitted his initial thought was that it would be nice to bring the seven-county senatorial seat to Poplar Bluff.

“Poplar Bluff is the largest community in the 25th District, and we have the infrastructure in place with Highways 60 and 67 divided, to put us on the map to be the capital of Southeast Missouri,” Kingery said. “Having the seat here would be a good thing, but it doesn’t necessarily have to be, as we were well served from Dexter for eight years by Rob Mayer, who I will continue to support in whatever he does.”

Tim Krakowiak can be contacted by emailing tim@semotimes.com, or follow him on Twitter [@timkrakowiak](https://twitter.com/timkrakowiak).

LAST UPDATED ON OCTOBER 30TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uklu/Libla-Ready-For-State-Senate-Race>

Go to post



More from ShowMe Times:

Elisa Hester Named University Homecoming Queen

OCTOBER 30TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Elisa Hester Named University Homecoming Queen

Searcy AR – With the same beautiful smile that captured the Miss DHS in 2007, Elisa Hester was crowned the 2011 Football Homecoming Queen of Harding University.

The crowning ceremony was held at halftime of the Harding University's game against Quachita Baptist on Saturday.

Elisa is the daughter of Terry and Ranan Hester of Dexter. Elisa's brothers, Bryn and TJ Hester, and many friends were on hand for the celebration following the game.

There is a certain genuine glow in the smile and spirit of Elisa Hester that removes the surprise of her crowning. During her summer work at Hidden Trails Country Club or Hickory Log Restaurant, she has always been able to touch people with her willingness to love and care for others. She is an incredible young lady that is well deserving of this title.

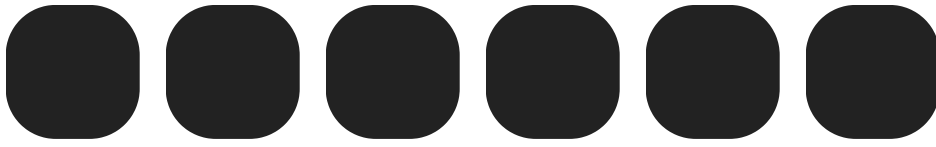
Miss Hester is a senior at Harding University, majoring in family consumer science research. Her current plans are to complete her degree and then pursue a master's degree. She hopes to work at the university level as an educator.

SMT staff is very happy for Elisa and the entire Hester family. Congratulations to the 2011 Harding University Homecoming Queen, Elisa Hester.

LAST UPDATED ON OCTOBER 30TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uklr/Elisa-Hester-Named-University-Homecoming-Queen>

[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:

[TOP](#)

County Road To Be Closed

OCTOBER 29TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

County Road To Be Closed

SIKESTON - A busy roadway in Stoddard County will be closed next week while state crews complete a project.

The Missouri Department of Transportation announced that Route AB in Stoddard County will be closed while crews replace a pipe beneath the roadway.

The section of roadway of Route AB that will be closed is located from Highway 25 to County Road 503. Weather permitting, work will be performed Monday, Oct. 31 and Tuesday, Nov. 1 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

The work zone will be marked with signs. Motorists are urged to use extreme caution while traveling near the area.

LAST UPDATED ON OCTOBER 29TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/ukln/County-Road-To-Be-Closed>

[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:

TOP

Fall Fest Planned At Central Gardens

OCTOBER 28TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Fall Fest Planned At Central Gardens

Can't get enough of fall fun? There will be fun around every corner Saturday afternoon at Central Gardens in Dexter.

Central Gardens will host its Fall Fest this Saturday, Oct. 29, from 1-3 p.m. There will be crafts, games and costumes and kids of all ages are invited to attend and participate.

Administrator Stacy Blocker says the event is free and all are welcome to come and enjoy the afternoon. Central Gardens is located at 302 North Elm Street in Dexter.

LAST UPDATED ON OCTOBER 28TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uklk/Fall-Fest-Planned-At-Central-Gardens>

[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:

[TOP](#)

Gargas Appointed Battalion Commander

OCTOBER 27TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Gargas Appointed Battalion Commander

CAPE GIRARDEAU – Lt. Col. Edward Gargas of Dexter has been appointed the new commander for the 1140th Engineer Battalion in Cape Girardeau.

The battalion has six units in seven locations - Headquarters Company in Cape Girardeau, Forward Support Company in Cape Girardeau, 880th Engineer Haul Team in Perryville, 1138th Engineer Sapper Company in Farmington and Fredericktown, 220th Engineer Company in Festus, and 1438th Multi-Role Bridge Company in Macon and Kirksville.

During a ceremony, the battalion guidon was passed to Gargas to symbolize the transfer of authority and responsibility.

“I’m looking forward to the challenge of leading one of the best battalions in the state,” said Gargas. “This battalion has an impressive legacy and I pledge to lead our officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers towards and beyond the goals set by our brigade.”

Brig. Gen. Randy Alewel, commander of the 35th Engineer Brigade, said his expectations for the battalion to continue moving forward are in good hands with Gargas.

“Lt. Col. Gargas was chosen because he’s a go to and get it done type of gentleman and officer,” said Alewel. “I’ve got all the confidence in him to lead the battalion and take it to the next level.”

Gargas’ military experience and history with the battalion also made him the right choice, said Alewel. Gargas enlisted in the Missouri National Guard in 1987 with the 1140th Engineer Battalion. Over the years he has had leadership positions with several of the battalion’s units, including platoon leader, executive officer, commander, and operations officer. He deployed with the battalion in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004-2005.

“I’m glad and honored I was selected to command the battalion I grew up in,” said Gargas.

Gargas and his wife Tina and son Nate live in Dexter. Gargas is a producer with County Wide Insurance in Dexter.

[Links of Interest](#)

- [Missouri National Guard](#)
- [Missouri National Guard on Facebook](#)

LAST UPDATED ON OCTOBER 27TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uklc/Gargas-Appointed-Battalion-Commander>

[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:



SUBSCRIBE TO "LOCAL NEWS"

ShowMe Gold Sponsors