

Black Mountain News

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Photo by Mark Vanderhoff

(above) Riders on bus route 28 from Asheville to Black Mountain may see a change in bus service if federal and state governments don't restore funding.

Five candidates will vie for two aldermen seats

By Mark Vanderhoff
STAFF WRITER

Five candidates have filed for the Town of Black Mountain Board of Aldermen election, in which two seats will be up for grabs in November.

The current holders of those seats, Rosalie Phillips and Chuck McKeown, will run for re-election. Carlos Showers, Buzz Yeatman, and Tim Rayburn will challenge them.

Rayburn filed to run in June, while the rest of the candidates filed in July. The deadline to file was noon, July 17.

This week, the Black Mountain News will profile Showers and Yeatman. Profiles of Phillips and McKeown will be published next week; Rayburn was profiled in June.

If Showers and Yeatman have anything in common, it's that they both said they want to add a "fresh face" to the board of aldermen.

Carlos Showers

Showers has run twice for the board of aldermen and once for mayor. He said he is running again at the urging of friends and colleagues in the Black Mountain area.



Showers

Business

Business owner returns to Black Mountain, opens IT business

By Mark Vanderhoff
STAFF WRITER

Ray Nightingale met his wife, Kathryn, in Black Mountain in 1992, when they worked together at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly. The couple wed three years later, and while they only spent a



Nightingale

few months here together, the town stayed in their memories. "It was a place we said we would always move back to one day,"

Nightingale said.

They did move back, in 2006, and this year Nightingale launched Grey Eagle IT, an information technology company that caters to small business and individuals.

The new company also brings him full circle to his roots in a small computer shop outside London, England, where the English native and his wife first lived. He and his partner went on to grow that operation into a successful IT business that served large and small corporations.

"It was quite stressful in London," he said. "I had a lot of clients that were 24-hours. I got calls at all times of the night and day."

Two events drew Nightingale back to the quieter pace of Black Mountain.

First, his wife's father battled cancer back in the United States, making her homesick for her native country. Then, one of Nightingale's biggest clients went bankrupt, cutting out a significant source of revenue for his London-based company.

With their eldest son approaching kindergarten, the family decided to make their move. Kathryn got a job as the assistant art director at The Biltmore Company. Nightingale stayed home with the two boys, now five and eight.

When his youngest boy finally reached school age, he

decided it was time to get back into the business.

Nightingale got off to a good start when he learned of another IT business owner who was moving out of town, and from whom he was able to pick up local clients such as Take a Hike outdoors gear shop, Red Radish catering, Helgreen and Dalton, and Asheville Elevator.

At Take a Hike, he installed a new Point-of-Sale (POS) computer system and oversaw the transfer of inventory data from the old system to the new.

"I thought he worked really quickly and I was very pleased," John McFerrin, owner of the store, said of

Nightingale. "He was very reasonably priced."

Nightingale prides himself on his "friendly, one-on-one service," which he said many customers don't receive from larger retail IT companies.

"The feedback I get from everybody is they don't like dealing with bigger stores where there's no personal interaction. Somebody just takes the computer from you and that's it," he said.

He's back to serving small businesses and individuals, rather than large corporations—at least for the time being. He sees an underserved market.

"I didn't realize how many businesses there were here, especially small businesses

and people working from home," he said. "I used to see Black Mountain as mostly tourism and tourist shops."

The IT industry faces some trouble in the current recession, with new equipment sales and server installations hit the hardest, but his niche remains fairly resistant to the downturn, he said.

"It is something people now rely on so much they can't do without, whereas people can cut back on other areas," he said. "If you get an IT issue that's stopping your business, you can't delay."

Contact Grey Eagle IT at (828) 348-4663 or www.gre eagleit.com.

Art from the Heart opens



Lewis named senior vice president

From Staff Reports

AdvantageWest CEO Scott Hamilton announces the promotion of Pam Lewis, formerly of Black Mountain, to senior vice president of entrepreneurial development.

AdvantageWest is the regional economic develop-

ment commission, managing of entrepreneurial initiatives such as the Certified Entrepreneurial Community program," Advantage West Board Chairman Tommy Jenkins said.

"With Pam's assistance, 14 communities in the region have completed or are in various stages of the