

## County to get new assessor; commissioner incumbents win

Written by Ty Albin, The Lawton Constitution  
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The voters decided to turn out the incumbent Comanche County assessor and gave nods of confidence to the incumbent Eastern and Western district county commissioners in Tuesday's Republican primary elections.

Challenger Grant Edwards, defeated incumbent assessor Richard Strickland 3,265 votes to 1,932 votes.

Edwards will face Democrat Gary Yackeyonny, Cache, in the Nov. 4 general election.

"I'm still kind of in shock," said Edwards.

He said Tuesday night that he was overwhelmed with the level of support he had received and was looking forward to the general election.

He praised Yackeyonny as a "great guy" and said he has actually worked with him professionally.

Strickland, who will remain in office until the end of the year, congratulated Edwards on his victory and said he is welcome at the assessor's office at any time to learn more about operations.

Strickland also took the opportunity to praise his staff at the assessor's office. He described the workers as responsible and well-trained.

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Strickland's term as assessor has been criticized by his opponents for ongoing legal battles with several businesses in the county over assessed property values, especially Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, which has disputed its assessment every year of Strickland's time as assessor.

In the Eastern District Comanche County Commissioner's race, incumbent Gail Turner defeated challenger John Bordelon 1,128 votes to 830 votes.

Bordelon faced Turner in the 2010 commissioner's race for the Eastern District and the two men went through a recount that resulted in Turner winning by only a handful of votes.

Turner thanked everyone who worked on his campaign and voted for him Tuesday evening.

"It was a group effort," he said.

Turner said he will take a short break from campaigning and then prepare to face Democrat Joe West in the Nov. 4 general election.

Bordelon said Turner won this time because he switched parties from Democrat to Republican.

Bordelon said he will not run against Turner in the next election.

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“The voters have decided twice and I don’t need to be hit over the head again,” said Bordelon Tuesday night.

In the Western District Comanche County Commissioner’s race, incumbent Don Hawthorne prevailed against challenger Waylon Stricklin 1,706 votes to 442 votes.

There are no Democrats seeking the Western District Commissioner’s office, so Hawthorne has automatically secured reelection for another four years at the end of his c u r r e n t term, Dec. 31.

“ I ’ m pleased voters have confidence in me,” Hawthorne said.

He said his first four years as commissioner were productive and he will continue to seek new sources of funding for roads and bridges.

Stricklin did not return phone calls seeking comment on the race Tuesday evening.

All election results are considered unofficial until certified by the Oklahoma State Election Board.