

BAXTER MAYOR UNSEATED

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By LINDSAY McREYNOLDS

The only upsets in Thursday's Putnam County General Election were in Baxter.

Former Baxter Mayor John Martin unseated longtime Mayor Jeff Wilhite by 47 votes, according to unofficial results posted Thursday evening on the Putnam County Election Commission website.

"It was just a wonderful night," Martin said Friday morning. "I'm looking forward to working with the city."

Martin, who first became mayor as a write-in in the 1970s, said, "I want to work with all of our aldermen. I've already talked to the ones seated now. We talked quite a bit last night. We want to meet with different companies or businesses."

As far as what he sees as Baxter's biggest challenge, Martin said, "Cooperation. Everyone needs to cooperate and get along. We're all going to do that. We've already met and talked about it. We want to work with the business people downtown. I think they've been forgotten. I think we need to appreciate them more than they have been."

Martin retired from Nutro of Tennessee, served in the National Guard for six years and was a volunteer firefighter.

He received 58 percent or 163 votes, while Wilhite received 41 percent or 116 votes.

Baxter alderman candidate Dustin Stanton also unseated incumbent Harmon Garris for one of the two seats elected on Thursday.

"I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to vote for me," Stanton said. "I appreciate everybody's support."

Stanton echoed Martin's focus on business.

"I'd like to see a lot more businesses downtown," he said. "We're going to work for that. We're going to work to see our town grow."

Stanton works for the Cookeville Water Quality Control Department for the past six years and has owned a lawn care business since 2008.

He received 164 votes to Garris's 51. Incumbent Jeff Herald was re-elected with 146 votes for the other seat, winning over challenger Todd Bowman with 122 votes.

Herald is a retired mechanic from Yellow Freight. He previously worked for the Hartsville Nuclear Plant. Herald, who has lived in Baxter since 1983, has served as an alderman for 18 years.

Martin and Stanton, along with all candidates elected to local offices Thursday night, will officially begin serving on Sept. 1.

*Read more about the people and places of Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>