

Smith

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firm, SheriJen, where he focused on developing brand, marketing, and training strategies for the retail community.

Sam joined Mercy Ships in May of 2007 as vice president of development, which included oversight of fundraising efforts that established a new record for donations in the U.S.

"I am honored to help lead Mercy Ships into our fourth generation of service with a renewed commitment to utilize the people and assets that God has graciously made available for our cause," Smith said. "Our goal will be to maximize the impact we can make on the medical infrastructure of Africa and beyond. This is our charge and may the example of Jesus be the light that will illuminate our path into the future."

According to Stephens, marketing and branding efforts have increased significantly during this time and Mercy Ships exposure to the world has seen a new level of visibility under his guidance.

Sam holds a bachelor of business administration degree from Stephen F. Austin State University.

He and his wife, Jill, have two children, Sheridan and Jensen, and they relocated back to East Texas after having lived in Northern California and Wheaton, Ill.

They attend the First Baptist Church of Bullard.

Mercy Ships is the leader in using hospital ships to deliver free world-class health care services to the forgotten poor.

Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships has directly impacted over 2 million beneficiaries, with a value of over \$700 million.

Some of the more notable achievements include: treating more than 212,000 people in village medical clinics, performing 32,500 surgeries, 183,000 dental treatments and completing more than 900 construction and agriculture projects.

Each year more than 1,600 short-term volunteers serve with Mercy Ships.

Early voting begins Tuesday

Staff Reports

Early voting in the primary election begins Feb. 19 and continues through Feb. 29.

In Smith County, there are five designated early voting sites: the Smith County Annex, 200 E. Ferguson St., Suite 500; Noonday Community Center, 1662 County Road 196, Noonday; Lindale Masonic

Lodge, 200 Margaret St., Lindale; Whitehouse United Methodist Church, 405 W. Main St., Whitehouse; and Heritage Building, 1900 W. Bellwood Road, Tyler.

The hours of early voting will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Friday; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday; 1 to 6 p.m. on Feb. 24; and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Feb. 25-29.

Anyone registered to vote in Smith County can cast a vote in either primary at any of the early voting locations.

Voting is limited to either the Democrat or Republican primary race.

The elections administration office asks voters to bring voter registration cards with to the polls.

Filing open for city, school seats

Staff Reports

Filing is open for places on the Bullard City Council or Bullard Independent School District Board of Trustees on Monday.

Seats open will be voted upon on the May 10 ballot.

On the council, three positions are up. Seats held by Teresa Adams-Wilks, Lindsey Bradley

and Stacey Thompson are to be voted on this year. At BISD, places 1, 2 and 3 are up.

Currently those spots are held by Tony Johnson, Brian Whatley and John Alexander, respectively.

Both the council and trustees are at-large seats, meaning they are voted upon not by districts but by the entire voting population.

Boyter

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ational background - an MBA, as good as or better record of service to the community, a history of being objective and I've had to make tough decisions and live with the consequences - good or bad," Boyter said.

But public service has always been his passion.

"It's so important and vital for a healthy community to have choices at the poll," the 45-year-old businessman said. "And I think it's great that this is a contested race."

He said government should be guided by sound business principles.

"County government should be operated as a business, and with my education and experience, I want to help do that," he said. "And I want to help foster cohesiveness with the commissioners."

"Smith County has a reputation of divisiveness, and that doesn't need to be the case. It's OK to disagree, but it can be done and should be done in a professional manner."

Boyter does have a clear set of goals he'd like to see if elected.

"We need to continue to look at the county's Roadmap," he said. The Roadmap - a master plan for Smith County - was commissioned a few years ago, but Boyter feels it's not realizing it's potential.

"It's a living, breathing document - not just a study to be put away," he said. "It needs to be utilized."

He would also - just like his opponents like to see Smith County pass a jail bond - but one that the voters have more input on.

"I think it's fairly obvious by now that voters aren't happy with the plans set before them, and we need to listen to them," Boyter said. "It may have to be done in pieces - but I think we're close to a good plan."

"We just need to see what the voters will support, and town-hall meetings - with voter input at those meetings is key to the success of any long-range and expensive project."

Boyter earned his MBA from The University of Texas at Tyler. He served in the U.S. Army from 1983-85 and began working in the financial services industry in 1987. He opened Boyter Financial

Planning in Tyler in 1995.

Boyter has served as a board member for Meals on Wheels, Tyler Community Concerts, Leadership Tyler and Camp Fire Boys and Girls.

He is a past president of Smith County Young Republicans and a precinct chairman for the Smith County Republican Party. He's also been a delegate to the state

Republican convention.

But whatever the outcome, Boyter is just happy to be in the race.

"I think I've already won just being on the ballot," he said.

Boyter is a member of Green Acres Baptist Church, and serves as a Sunday morning Bible study teacher.

He's also president of the

Hogg Middle School PTA, and his wife is a third-grade teacher.

For more information on the other candidates, see the archives section of bullard-news.com.

There is no Democratic candidate for the commissioner seat. Early voting gets under way Feb. 19 with election day on March 4.

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