

Duren

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time for a change to help our county grow," he added.

Duren says the current method of bookkeeping – he says all by paper ledger and pencil – has cost the county money over time – and money saved by upgrading to a computerized system could be put toward the expense of upgrading.

As well as computerizing the system of accounting in the Trustee's office, Duren says if elected he also would look into the office accepting credit card payments, and even creating a web site on which tax payments could be made online

using a credit card.

"We have a lot of taxpayers that live outside of this county, especially in our Pickwick area, and on around the lake, where this may be their second home and getting ready to retire here – we live in a technology world. That's very important to us, and it's a big factor in the businesses my wife and I own here. We owe it not just to current but future taxpayers to make the system as efficient and easy to access as possible," Duren said.

He said long lines to wait and pay in person are also inconvenient, and he'd like to see a system that allows payments online.

"Our taxpayers here in this county are working each and every day. There's times where they can't get in to stand in line to pay, and that's a convenience charge – they miss out on work if they have

to stand in line. We're at the point with technology we can accept payments online – embrace the technology to make people's lives easier."

Duren said he knows change can be difficult – and he respects the foundation the current and past Trustees have laid.

"You also have to be proactive and open, and look at whether the change is good or not. If it's a benefit, you have to ask, 'How can we adapt that into our daily lives?' These changes are definitely a benefit, and it's time to make a change – not only for us, but also as a legacy for our future generations," he said.

Duren grew up in Hardin and surrounding counties, and attending University of Tennessee at Martin, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture and Business Economics. He also

attended the Louisiana State University Graduate School of Banking, and was involved in finance and banking for 15 years.

He says his background in banking is one of the reasons he's running for trustee, and believes that experience would help him greatly in the position.

He now works in the agriculture field, and continues to work in finance through agricultural lending.

Duren has been involved in several civic capacities in Hardin County, and served as past president of the Savannah Rotary Club, where he received the Paul Harris Award. He's also been president of the Hardin County Farm Bureau board, and received numerous awards with his beef operation across the state by being involved in the agricultural community.

He is also a graduate of Leadership Hardin County, and their class project was to start and be a part of the Carl Perkins Center, where he had the opportunity to serve on the strategic planning committee and as the first chairman of the Carl Perkins board in Hardin County.

"I also feel very humbled to have received the Man of the Year Award through the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce," Duren said. He's a past president of the UT Alumni Association, and was recently placed on the American Farm Bureau Go Team, representing Hardin County, the state and the southeast in the Ag community.

"My faith is very strong with me and my family; I thank God every day for allowing me to give back to my church, my family, this community – because that's what we should

be doing," he said. "Looking to see ways of bettering our fellow man and help our fellow man, and when they fall, to help pick them up and dust them off and allow them to continue."

Duren says he believes in faith, family, conservatism and integrity.

"I'm running because I'm a taxpayer, and also a businessman. I look to see ways of how my money is being spent. When I look at efficiency, I want my money to be spent wisely and conservatively. For the future of this county, laying the foundations and building the things needed for the next generations, I'm running for trustee. With my experiences and the things I've been able to do I'm ready to serve this county, and help it improve and grow and move forward, and do that by bringing change to and making the office of trustee current."

Welch

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development status in Hardin County and Tennessee, Welch believes the timing is right to pull together all of the parties involved in economic development and make some of those needed changes.

"They're on the same team, but we need to get a focus on 'where are we going?' We need jobs, despite the low unemployment numbers – you can be deceived by that," he explained.

He says while employment numbers are positive, that's not the entire story.

"Someone that left Hardin County when they were young and wants to come back, there's hundreds of people that want jobs in Hardin County that don't live here now. If we had the technical jobs available, we could bring those people to Hardin County and make them very active citizens

in the community," he said.

He continued, "A lot of people in Hardin County are working two jobs, who are perfectly capable of holding a high-tech job, some with a little bit of training, with technical school – and we have these resources. I think we could utilize them a lot more for high-tech jobs."

For Welch, the key to a brighter future for Hardin County is economic development, and he wants to improve the quality of jobs in Hardin County.

Welch lays out the several areas where he says Hardin County is still lacking, and explains that because these areas are interrelated, with proper planning he believes improving basic things will lead to improvements in others.

For instance, roads in the rural areas are in need, and he'd like to put together a plan to repair and maintain those roads. "Put a plan on paper, put a cost to it," as he says, "and then bring it to the people."

Regarding education, "the school system is very good, and works with outside groups to even get food sent home for

children. Of course, as you improve the economy and grow the economy, a lot of those problems will lessen – and we still have areas out in the county where they don't have safe drinking water," Welch said.

He is also a big believer in the improvement of services for retirees as a stepping-stone to improving other issues.

"Studies show that a baby-boomer retiree, if they move to your community, that's the economic equivalent of three manufacturing jobs. They're going to be active, they don't cause any stress on your tax system, they pay for schools – they're a big asset. You need those folks as well as manufacturing jobs and industrial jobs," Welch said.

He added that retirees are also very involved in the community, and with their life experience can be a guiding influence in the community.

Of course, those plans all come with a cost, something Welch says he very well knows and understands, after running the county's largest city for 12 years.

"In my previous job I was

very fortunate to receive a lot of grants, and I do pride myself on thinking outside of the box when it comes to financing projects. I was exceptionally proud that in 12 years as city manager, we were very successful with a lot of projects – a lot that you don't see with roads, and infrastructure and utilities – and we received millions of dollars in grants to help offset the cost of those," he said.

Welch said the city was able to accomplish those projects without a property tax rate increase. Savannah had revenue increases, but he was constantly looking for other streams of revenue.

Welch says that "outside the box" thinking on finance helped the city level its finances and build reserves, and helped him gain recognition among peers in municipal government. As a result of thinking outside the box and "planning your work and working your plan," the city's success during his tenure saw Welch receive a place as a representative on the Tennessee Municipal League board; various legislative committees,

where he's written statewide legislation and seen it passed into law; and serve as vice chairman of the TML Risk Management Pool, which is a \$250 billion asset with financial decisions and plans made by that board.

Looking back on the various visible projects he's steered to completion, outside of utilities and everyday projects, Welch said even though it has not been the largest, he is proudest of the Savannah Veterans Park.

"Nothing satisfies me more than to drive by there and I see someone wearing maybe a VFW cap, or something else signifying their service, and seeing them being respected and honored for that service – the feeling is immeasurable."

Welch says he's also very proud of the Tennessee Street Park, which has received accolades from across the state, and the refurbishment of the Historic Savannah Theater, which has been a staple of the performing arts in Hardin County.

Garry Welch is married to Marcia, and they will be celebrating their 20th anniversary

in June. "I owe 99 percent of what I do to her."

He's also a current member and past president of the Savannah Rotary, was on the Savannah-Hardin County Airport Commission and served as chairman for most of his tenure, and was chosen as the Hardin County Chamber's current Man of the Year.

Welch says while the structure and operations of county government are different from city operations, during the 18 years he's worked for Savannah, he's had a lot of opportunities to interact and work with county governments and understands a lot of what goes on there.

"County Mayor is an awesome position, with an awesome responsibility. That's why I'm running – because I do think outside of the box, and I do see a lot of things other people don't see to help our government prosper. That's what I bring to the table, and the question I want to ask voters is, 'If this was your personal business, who would you want running it?' I think I have the resume to say I am qualified for that."

Wilhite

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cash and check deposits, printing titles, inventory counts, and performing marriage ceremonies, among other duties.

As chief deputy clerk, Wilhite has officiated marriage ceremonies for over 1,100 couples – sometimes several in one day.

"I can't tell you how many times I've left my desk to go marry a couple in the gazebo,

or over at the courthouse – and Valentine's Day! Valentines Day was always the busiest," Wilhite recalled.

She noted that previous Clerk Connie Stephens initiated a policy of the Clerk's office not officiating wedding ceremonies a couple of years ago, a policy Wilhite says she intends to keep.

To keep up with the changing rules and regulations of the office, Wilhite says she received certification as Certified Public Administrator in 2007, and takes continuing education annually both to renew her certification and stay up-to-date on any changes in local government.

In 2008, in addition to chief deputy clerk, she stepped into the role of court reporter, where she was responsible for recording the minutes of the monthly County Commission meeting.

When Stephens became ill in 2017, Wilhite took over the office as interim Clerk until she was appointed by the county commission as full-time Clerk to serve out Stephens' term in November.

"I feel like I'm the most qualified for Clerk in Hardin County, and every time the former Clerk was away I ran the office. It has been a pleasure to serve our county, and to work with everyone

we have in our office. They go above and beyond for our customers, and do everything they can to make sure each and every person that comes in has a pleasant experience and accurate documentation for their vehicle, business or marriage," Wilhite said.

If elected, she plans to continue that level of service – and she hopes to relocate her individual office space from the back of the office to the front, so she can be more readily available when needed.

She has other plans in the works as well, such as installing several more "print-on-demand" decal machines to

reduce customer wait times, and to sell temporary tags for those moving a vehicle into or out of the state, or waiting on paperwork to complete a vehicle change-of-ownership.

Paula has been married to Joe Wilhite for 34 years, and they have two children, Brandon and Makayla. The Wilhites attend Turkey Creek Union Church.

Commenting on the amount of business the Clerk's office does, Wilhite pointed out her office has collected over \$4 million in fees over the last year, and served customers totaling 38,771 individual transactions – 7,754 transactions for each of the

office's five work stations.

"And this office has stayed within budget; we just closed out the fiscal year books and we balanced just fine, as they have since 2004 while I've principally been responsible for them," Wilhite said.

Asked why she thinks she should be elected Hardin County Clerk, Wilhite smiled and said, "I love what I do and I love serving the people of Hardin County. If elected, they can know they will continue to receive the same high level of customer service they have come to expect. I will do everything in my power to help them solve their problems."

Dedicate your vote with Honor Vote

Tennesseans will head to the polls in 2018 with an updated way to proudly honor someone who is serving or has served our country.

The Honor Vote program allows registered Tennessee voters to dedicate their vote to a U.S. veteran or active duty military member, both online and with a commemorative button, to thank them for protecting our country.

Once enrolled, dedications are posted on the official Honor Vote List as well as the Honor Vote Twitter account @tnhonorvote. Voters can also share their dedication on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram using #GoVoteTN.

The Division of Elections will send a packet to each participant with an official Honor Vote button. Voters are encouraged to wear their button while going to the polls in honor of the veteran or service member they are recognizing.

"The men and women of the U.S. military ensure our freedom and democracy, allowing us to cast a ballot each Election Day. It's important we honor those who protect that right," said Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett.

"I'm proud we are able to offer customized buttons to honor the specific branch each honoree represents."

The program returns this election season with the ability to honor military service members by branch, including Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Tennessee National Guard. Each branch now has its own button branded with its unique camouflage pattern.

To learn more, visit GoVoteTN.com/honor.

TENNESSEE HONOR VOTE PROGRAM

Dedicate your vote to those who are serving or have served in the U.S. Military

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following vehicles have been abandoned at Savannah Body Shop for over one year. Storage is \$40 per day. Any person who has an interest in any of these vehicles contact us within 30 days of receiving this notice to make arrangements to pay the balance due.

Mercury Grand Marquis
VIN#2MEFM75W81X657070
GMC Yukon VIN#1GKEC13VX2J166215
2016 Ford Fusion VIN#5FA6P0G70GR254705

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Savannah-Hardin County Airport
BID NOTICE

The Savannah/Hardin County Airport is accepting bids for a new Kubota L4760 fourwheel drive utility tractor with a diesel engine of minimum 49 HP gross, a hydrostatic transmission and an enclosed cab with heater and air-conditioner, or equivalent.

Sealed bids will be accepted until 5 P.M. on Friday, July 20, 2018. Bids will be opened at 12 P.M. on Monday, July 23, 2018. Mail or bring sealed bids to: Savannah/Hardin County Airport, 100 Airport Lane, Savannah, TN 38372. Airport officials reserve the right to reject or accept any or all bids.

Early Voting - Lucky Friday 13th

As your county clerk, you can expect customer service will be my top priority. I'm the ONLY candidate who will be donating 10% of my annual salary to youth oriented programs in Hardin County.

Visit me on Facebook - Inbox any questions or comments.

Thank you for your vote and support!

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GOD BLESS • HARDIN • THANK YOU

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