

Area Republican club to host debate

The Farmington Area Republican Club will host a candidate forum at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26, at Farmington Hills City Hall.

Participants will include James Brady and Annette Raczowski, vying for the 47th District Court judgeship; Republican David Moffitt and Democrat Jim

Nash, Oakland County Commission District 15; and Democrat Ryan Gesund and Republican Mike Rogers, Oakland County Commission District 14.

Knol kicks off campaign

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Saying she wants to focus the campaign on issues and not personal matters, Valerie Knol, Republican State House candidate for Farmington/Farmington Hills, launched the first of several public meetings where she will announce her plans to make the community and state a better place to live and work. Wednesday's first "Valerie's Visions" session was held outside the Farmington Hills Police Department.

Focusing on police and public safety issues, Knol was joined by Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcey and Farmington Hills Police Officer Wayne Beerbower, who is president of the Farmington Hills Police Officers Association and vice president of the Police Officers Association of Michigan.

All three said they endorse Knol for the job in Lansing where term limits are forcing the seat to be vacated by Andrew Raczowski.

"This race isn't about the past — it's about the future," Knol said.

Among her goals: ■ **Drug forfeiture money:** Knol said she would propose a bill that would place seized money in an interest-bearing bank account. "That money would then earn interest during the trial and sentencing," she said. If the accused is acquitted, that person would get the principal and interest, she suggested. Having the money in a bank would also be safer, she said.

■ **CCW:** Since the passage of the latest concealed weapons permit law, retired and reserve officers are subject to the same restrictions as citizens allowed to carry a concealed firearm. Since CCW carriers cannot carry weapons to places of large public gatherings, it prevents the effectiveness of police agencies using reserve or retired officers, Knol said. She supports giving retired and on-duty reserve officers the ability



Candidate Valerie Knol is pictured with Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcey and Farmington Hills Police Officer Wayne Beerbower.

to obtain CCW permits without having to undergo the same training process and restrictions as the public.

■ **Law enforcement communication:** Knol said she supports legislation to require Michigan State Police to share communication towers with local police agencies rather than requiring local agencies to spend millions of dollars on new towers for better public safety communications.

■ **White collar crime:** Knol said she supports Michigan joining a coalition of states, including California, New York, and North Carolina demanding the nation's largest investment banking firms adopt conflict of interest policies designed to eliminate abuses within the nation's investment system.

■ **Drug use:** Because of recent reports concerning the increase in use in the street drug Ecstasy among youth, Knol supports designating the drug as schedule 1 controlled substance, which would increase penalties for the manufacture, sale or possession of the drug.

■ **Local correction officers training:** Knol advocates giving the Oakland County Sheriff's Department the option of charging inmates a \$5 booking fee to be used for a training fund. That money would pay to professional training in conflict resolution, negotiating skills and self-defense tactics.

■ **Child support:** Knol supports a plan to recover unpaid child support in Michigan that would create a Child Support Division of the Attorney General's Office. Such a division would use state and national databases to track down deadbeat parents, she said.

Knol said she plans to conduct at least five more sessions before the November general election. Upcoming topics include economic development, health care, education and the environment, she said.

The candidate is being challenged for the seat by Democrat and former Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

Contacted after the meeting, Vagnozzi said he has a proven record of helping police and firefighters.

"I lead a campaign for a millage increase in Farmington Hills that added 16 police officers and 15 firefighters," he said. "And I worked on the renewals of those millages." Vagnozzi also said he helped lead the fight to have the Hills run its own emergency medical response program that has cut average response time by two minutes.

The candidate said he has also been staunch supporter of both emergency departments and has fought any cutbacks in state-shared revenues or proposed control of city operations by the state.

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