The following information was published in the October 27, 2016 *Wright County Journal Press*. “Each candidate was sent a questionnaire. They were asked questions related to their background, qualifications and the issues they feel are most important. Candidate profiles based on the questionnaires are intended to help voters gather information as they prepare for the Nov. 8 General Election. Here are the candidate’s responses:”
MEET THE CANDIDATES

SWCD Supervisor, District 2

Jeffrey Burns

City or township of residence: Monticello

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.): I am a 22 year long resident of Monticello and have been active in many community organizations. As a Monticello School Board member, I was able to work with both administration and staff to bridge economic situations during the 2008 economic slump. I served for six years on the Wright County Extension Committee (5 years as chair) and became familiar with how the county works and also what resources are available from the state level. I have been married to Ann for 36 years, and we have two adult children.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service): I have degrees in both biology and ecology. As do many Wright County residents, I value the great resources that the county offers. I am a landowner myself, albeit in Northern Minnesota, and I know how precious farmlands and lakeside properties are, both in dollars and family legacies. I also have a sense of how fragile some of those resources are, especially as Wright County is more densely settled, and how important it is for organizations at all levels to work together to maintain our great natural environment. I have been effective as a board member of Buffalo Community Orchestra, of Monticello District 882 School Board, Monticello Community Education Advisory Committee, and the Wright County Extension Committee, and can bring this experience to work to protect our lands and waters.

Why have you chosen to run for this office? I have always loved biology and our natural resources, and I believe this will be a way to both extend that interest and serve our community.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek? Increasing populations and increasing temperatures (what ever the cause) will aggravate environmental disturbances, be they invasive species or soil erosion with the onset of heavy rains. Multiple agencies work on these topics. They need to be able to work effectively together, both for the sake of economies and also for the sake of minimizing bureaucratic paperwork.
Sheila Greninger

City or township of residence: Otsego

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.): I am a lifelong resident of Wright County and live in the City of Otsego. Russ and I have been farming land in Wright County for 40 Years; 63 percent of Wright County is farms.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service): As good stewards of our own land, and because of our experience with good farming practices, I want to give back to the county’s citizens by serving on the Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Elected board members should reflect natural resource concerns of county residents and landowners while adopting management to changing land use practices. Additionally, annual goals should be established to improve those practices.

Why have you chosen to run for this office? As a Wright County land and lake property owner, with 40 years of farming experience, I will serve knowing firsthand the needs and concerns of soil and water conservation, yet remain open to learning of new issues and listening to citizens concerns. I believe the Soil and Water Conservation District Board offers a connecting voice between the citizens and County Government policy and decision making. I will serve as a board member to help establish conservation priorities through natural resources and management programs at the local level. I see my primary service on the Board as a responsibility to ensure that our community uses its natural resources wisely and with an eye toward the future. This will require seeking a delicate balance between people and the land we make use of.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek? Important issues facing Wright County private land owners include: Ongoing development of county land and its affect on land owners, clean drinking water, the emergence of invasive species in area lakes, and good farming practices, such as proper use of pesticides and operation of feed lots. Preventative measures, coupled with good conservation practices and community outreach, can often be implemented before an issue becomes a problem. The goal of being concerned about today’s conservation issues is to safeguard the land so it is available for good use from generation to generation.
Bill Nibbe

City or township of residence: Marysville Township

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.): Born the middle of five kids to two outstanding parents from Morris, Minn. I grew up in Willmar, Minn. but was still able to fish along the shores of the Pomme de Terre River in Stevens County with my grandpa. I met my wife as a short order cook while still in high school, and through her I first heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While attending the University of Minnesota I became a Christian, and a year before graduating with my degree in Computer Science, Vickie and I were married. We bought our first home in Brooklyn Park, and lived there for twelve years. In 1996 we bought property in Marysville Township, built our new home in 1997 and since then have raised five children.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service): As a citizen of Wright County, I have the privilege to be placed on the ballot to serve everyone who owns land in Wright County.

Why have you chosen to run for this office? I decided to run for the Soil and Water position after attending a class offered through the State Extension Office. The class was titled “Living off the Land.” I attended the eight-week course hoping to get some insight into how to better my property on my own and be more self-reliant. While those who led the class were well educated and insightful, we were not taught about how to live off our land or to use it to its full potential. We were instead presented with how to get others to pay for our fencing or to get others to pay for any improvements to the property. With each lecture, we were encouraged to become dependent on State Programs. This struck me more like living off others and not off the land.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek? I would like to be in a position where I could encourage land owners that they are ultimately the ones who decide what is best for their property. That it is more important for them to cultivate working relationships with their neighbors then with state agencies. As a district supervisor, my challenge would be to support land owners in Wright County, to truly “Live Off Their Land.”
Chris Uecker

City or township of residence: Annandale (Albion Township)

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.): My name is Chris Uecker, and I’m a sixth generation farmer. I’m 42, married and have three beautiful children. I attended Hutchinson Technical College for their certified Welding program. I’ve worked at Caterpillar Paving Products in Brooklyn Park for 18 years and am currently a Mechanic in the Research and Development laboratory.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service): I have ten years of experience as a Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor and have been appointed to the Clearwater River Watershed District Board of Managers (2015-2018). I serve on an advisory committee for the Wright Technical Center welding program. I am a Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Middleville Township member and have served various positions on the council, currently as a Trustee. I have personal knowledge and experience with conservation practices being used on our farm, such as grass waterways, terraces and basins, and nutrient management.

Why have you chosen to run for this office? I care about the environment and believe it should be left in the same, or better, condition for future generations. I also chose to run for office as a way to better serve my community.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek? Invasive species and increased rainfall events are some of the most important issues facing the county. We need to have better control strategies in place for the spread of zebra mussels, starry stonewort and other invasive species. We also need to help landowners protect their valuable soil from large rain events, which have become more frequent in recent generations.
Greg (Butch) Bakeberg

City or township of residence:  Waverly (Victor Township)

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.):  I am 69 years old, married to Faye Bakeberg and we have 5 children and 10 grandchildren.  I graduated from Howard Lake High School in 1965.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service):  I am currently a Victor Township Supervisor, a director of the Wright County Fair Board, served as president of the Howard Lake FFA Alumni, Treasurer of the Wright County American Dairy Assoc., Catholic Rural Life Board, St. Mary’s Parish council, Eucharistic Minister at St. Marys, Crow River Watershed Board member.

Why have you chosen to run for this office?  Being a dairy farmer my entire life, I feel I have the experience to serve on the water quality management board.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek?  Managing water and how it affects peoples lives.
Duane Dahlman

City or township of residence: Cokato Township

Tell us about yourself (education, family, age, etc.): My name is Duane Dahlman. I am 57 years old and have been a lifelong resident of Cokato in Wright County. I am married (33 years) to my wife, Tammi. We have 2 children, Emily (Kirby) Graff and Eric (Jessica) Dahlman. I also have 2 grandchildren, Leo and Marnie Graff. I received my Bachelors of Science in Agronomy from the University of Minnesota in 1982. I currently own (with my two brothers, Kevin and Craig) Dahlman Farms Inc and Dahlco Seeds. We produce and process hybrid seed corn and seed soybeans, along with cash crop corn. I am a member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cokato, Minn.

Describe your qualifications for the position you seek and how you can serve the people (for example, describe leadership experiences and past accomplishments in the area of public service): Currently, I am serving my 28th year of service to the Wright SWCD. I have served as an officer for the Wright SWCD, as well as a liaison to the Wright Water Management Task Force, Anoka Sand Plains, personnel committee, and numerous others throughout the years. I was also selected as a member of the Wright County Board of Adjustments. I have been a member and chairman of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Board. Locally in Cokato, I served as President and Treasurer of Evangelical Lutheran Church, a Cokato Manor Longterm Care Volunteer, Dassel-Cokato Basketball Association. 4-H continues to be a very important interest of mine. I am currently a Minnesota 4-H volunteer. I have also served as President of Premier Seeds, which is a corporation of 12 seed companies through the upper Midwest of the United States.

Why have you chosen to run for this office? While most of us would not agree with Mikhail Gorbachev political views, he is quoted, “Water, like religion and ideology, has the power to move millions of people. Since the very birth of human civilization, people have moved to settle close to it. People move when there is too little of it. People move when there is too much of it. People journey down it. People write, sing and dance about it. People fight over it. And all people everywhere and everyday, need it.” This is the foundation why I want to continue to serve the citizens of Wright County as a Wright SWCD board member. Water affects all of us in one aspect or another, whether you reside in the urban or rural. There are laws governing water, and whether you agree with or not, we need to abide by them or be an activist to have them changed by your state and federal legislatures. Working together as unit is always a better option and we can achieve that much more.

What do you consider to be the most important issues facing the person who is elected to the position you seek? Water, water and more water. There seems to be too much or not enough. The management of water is and always will be changing. How we as citizens put our mark on it sets the ground work for the future generations. The Wright SWCD needs board members that have a vision where water quality should be now and how we are going to get there using an approach that makes sense feasible and economical.