

## Delaware GOP Picks Tully in Poll

Candidate in 127th Assembly District places first in weighted-voting system

A straw poll of Delaware County Republican Committee members from the 127th Assembly District conducted Saturday favored Mathew Tully among a diminishing field of candidates.

Davenport, Franklin, Harpersfield and Sidney are in the 127th District, represented by Assemblyman Daniel Hooker, R-Saugerties. Hooker announced earlier this year he is not seeking re-election.

Town of Sidney Republican Committee Chairman Bill Hunt said Tully, a lawyer from Greene County, took 14 votes to Schoharie County Clerk Peter Lopez's seven. No other candidates, including Otsego County Rep. James Powers, received votes, Hunt said. [an error occurred while processing this directive]

The 127th District sprawls across portions of seven counties: Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Columbia, Ulster and Greene.

In Otsego County, it includes the towns of Otego, Unadilla, Butternuts and Morris. The district includes Bainbridge and Afton in Chenango County.

Powers said Monday he remains in the race despite not attracting any votes Saturday. He said he has enough support in Delaware County and elsewhere to continue his campaign.

One potential Democratic challenger said Monday he is still considering a run.

Richmondville Mayor Kevin Neary, who narrowly lost to Hooker in 2004, said he will be meeting with Schoharie County Democratic Committee Chairman Clifford Hay today to discuss his political future.

According to the straw poll, Tully's Delaware County power base is concentrated in Sidney, the most populous of the four towns, and Harpersfield.

Lopez on Sunday shrugged off the vote count, which, according to committee members, was based on a weighted system using election districts.

Davenport and Franklin committee members are supporting his candidacy, Lopez said.

"My understanding is that 13 of the votes were Sidney committee members," Lopez said. "From my perspective, one town had more weight with their committee members."

Hunt said that is the way the numbers fell.

"Tully's been around a lot," Hunt said. "I have nothing but the best to say about Daniel Hooker, but I think this guy will do a good job."

Although Tully on Sunday called the vote an endorsement, Lopez said it is "informal" and not binding.

Delaware County Republican Committee Chairman Martin Donnelly said there has been no

official endorsement from the county committee and he was waiting for a written report on the straw poll before an endorsement is announced.

Davenport Republican Committee Chairman Todd Rider said the door is open for the Davenport and Franklin Republican committees to cast their lot with Lopez and endorse him regardless of the straw-poll result. Committee members from those towns voted for Lopez, Rider said.

"That is an option," Rider said.

Donnelly said any release of campaign funds by the county committee to support a candidate would have to be approved by a vote of the full committee, not just members from the four towns in the 127th District.

Any county committee funding could only be used for the Nov. 7 general election and not given to a candidate before a Sept. 12 primary if one is needed, Donnelly said.

Candidates must file party-designating petitions by July 13.

"I'm hopeful that we won't need a primary on the Republican side," Tully said. "I believe I'm the strongest Republican candidate."

Tully also came out as the front-runner in an informal poll conducted by the Greene County Republican Committee.

Lopez has received the endorsement of Schoharie County attorney Ryan McAllister and Ulster County legislator Joseph Roberti, both one-time Republican candidates in the race. He was endorsed by the Columbia County Conservative Party last week.

Greene County Legislator Michael Camadine is also considering a run for the Assembly seat.

Schoharie County Republican Committee Chairman Lewis Wilson said an informal poll held this year indicated Lopez has overwhelming support in his home county.

"No other name came up," Wilson said.

Otsego County Republican Committee Chairwoman Charlotte Koniuto said there will be a candidates' forum in May, and an endorsement would likely follow.