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The State News



JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS

Eighth District congressional candidate Bob Alexander listens to Rep. Mark Meadows, D-East Lansing, speak at an open forum Tuesday night hosted by the MSU Democrats at Erickson Hall Kiva. Alexander is running against U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers.

Democratic hopeful tries again

Alexander goes up against Rogers for seat; candidate hopeful to achieve victory

"This is not about his career. He's perfectly content retiring and dealing with local activism. He is informed of the working political process in the sense of you and me and working for the everyday people."

Stephen Purchase,
former president of
MSU Democrats

By Zack Colman
THE STATE NEWS

Bob Alexander knows what he's up against. The Democratic candidate for the 8th District's Congressional seat lost to Republican incumbent U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, in 2004 and has worked on the campaigns of every Democratic candidate to challenge the congressman since Rogers has been in office. The district is comprised of Clinton, Ingham and Livingston counties, along with parts of Oakland and Shiawassee counties.

Alexander said he thinks the fourth campaign to unseat Rogers will be successful. To ensure that, the former Peace Corps officer and critic of the war in Iraq is going to battle this time. "We didn't in '02, '04, '06 really go after Rogers for being deceptive," Alexander said.

When talking about Alexander, though, his friends and constituents said what you see is what you get.

"This is not about his career," said Stephen Purchase, a former president of MSU Democrats. "He's perfectly content retiring and dealing with local activism. He is informed of the working political process in the sense of you and me and working for the everyday people."

Once a teacher in the impoverished Chicano/Latino section of Detroit, Alexander moved to Lansing in 1979 when his friend Edward

Pierce won a state Senate seat. The move was supposed to be for just one year, but he hasn't left Lansing.

In that time, Alexander has established himself as what Purchase called a grassroots activist. He has led movements in the Lansing area to expand health care options to senior citizens, improve nursing home facilities and was a key figure in petitioning for the increase in the state's minimum wage in 2006.

Alexander and East Lansing City Councilmember Nathan Triplett, then a student at MSU and volunteer for Alexander's campaign, organized a petition drive that spanned 54 performances of "The Lion King" at Wharton Center that winter. He said Republican politicians and their families witnessed people scrambling to

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CRIME

PAST OFFENSES MIGHT CHANGE SENTENCING

By Abby Lubbers
THE STATE NEWS

Another charge was added against the suspect in an Oct. 6 assault near Beaumont Tower and West Circle Drive.

Jason H. Evans was first charged with felonious assault with a dangerous weapon. The additional charge of unlawful imprisonment was added during a preliminary examination Tuesday in East Lansing's 54-B District Court.

Prosecutors also requested Evans' bond be increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000. He is being held in the Ingham County Jail.

Evans reportedly approached a 19-year-old student at about 2 a.m. while she was walking from the Main Library to Campbell Hall. He held a pocket knife to her neck, but fled when two men approached the scene.

The victim did not report any injuries, MSU police Sgt. Florene McGlothian-Taylor said when the assault

was reported.

Evans, if convicted of both charges, will be considered a habitual offender, McGlothian-Taylor said.

"He's got a record," defense attorney Alan Bloomfield said. "But whether he ends up being charged as a habitual criminal remains to be seen."

The charge of unlawful imprisonment carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. If the defendant is a habitual offender, the sentencing could be extended to life in prison, Ingham County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Linda Maloney said.

But the defendant's criminal background should not be taken into account until after the trial, she said.

"Habitual is not a charge; it can only be taken into account after the conviction," Maloney said.

"The only thing it can do is enhance the sentencing."

The case will now be moved to the Ingham County Circuit Court.

UNIVERSITY

COURSES USE ELECTION TO FOSTER DISCUSSION

By Heather Guenther
THE STATE NEWS

Charles Atkin loves every fourth year.

For more than three decades, Atkin, chairman of MSU's Department of Communication, has taught various versions of a special topics communication course examining how the mass media — more specifically TV — influences voters.

Atkin hasn't missed teaching during a presidential race since 1972, when Richard Nixon was elected president.

"I could keep going as long as (Republican presidential candidate John) McCain is running for president," Atkin said, laughing. "Everything's fun for me this time of the year."

Atkin is about halfway through this election season's variation, Communication 402. Students enrolled in section 301

spend Wednesday nights with the professor, studying the candidates' different strategies for generating positive news coverage.

"It's much more interesting when there's a presidential race," Atkin said. "You can actually see the nuts and bolts every day. That makes it more relevant."

In MSU's Department of Political Science, some professors put a new spin on familiar courses during a presidential election year.

For Matt Grossmann, that meant finding ways to integrate this year's race into the standard syllabus.

Grossmann, an assistant political science professor, requested to teach Political Science 334, Campaigns and Elections, this semester.

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EAST LANSING

Future development of bike lanes considered

By Allison Bush
THE STATE NEWS

Students and East Lansing residents might have more of an incentive to get out of their cars and onto their bikes in the upcoming years.

The East Lansing City Council received an update on the city's nonmotorized transportation development plan at its work session Tuesday.

"The idea is that the existing street network would be evaluated to see if bikeways should be added, or (if the) trail system should be extended," said Todd Sneathen, director of public works for East Lansing. "It's a comprehensive look at the system to see what would make sense to construct."

"It's good for the environment, good for the health of citizens and it makes the community more livable."

Nathan Triplett, City Council member

A subcommittee, which consists of two members from four of the city's commissions, was formed to come up with goals and objectives for the plan last fall, Sneathen said.

One of the main ideas that came out of the subcommittee's meetings was that there are two different kinds of bicyclists and pedestrians, and there almost needs to be two separate plans for these, Sneathen said.

"Some are looking to do it recreationally, and some are

commuting," he said.

The proposal for a nonmotorized transportation plan was generated from controversy during the past couple of years about whether the configuration of Hagadorn Road should be changed to include bike lanes, Councilmember Nathan Triplett said.

The road would have been converted from four lanes to three with a bike lane, but it was ultimately decided to not make any changes, Sneathen said.

"The thought behind (the nonmotorized transportation plan) is that instead of waiting until we're in the middle of rebuilding a road to have these discussions, (we could) have a plan up front before the projects start, so we could actually build it into the roadway," he said.

English and Spanish junior Elizabeth Butler said she thinks it would be a fantastic idea.

"Green transportation is really popular right now," she said. "In the university, there are already a lot of people with bikes who would love to travel that way, and cars are expensive."

More pathways would not

only be helpful for students getting from where they live to campus, but they would benefit all residents, Triplett said.

"If you're out on (Burcham Drive) on any given morning, you'll see East Lansing residents on their bikes commuting, or walking their kids to school," he said.

The next step in the plan is to ask several consulting firms to give the city information about how they would develop a plan like this, Sneathen said. He said he hopes to have the requests out by the end of the year.

"It's good for the environment, good for the health of citizens and it makes the community more livable," Triplett said.

SERIES

The Latino vote is becoming increasingly important in the election process, page 3A.

BUSINESS

An MSU alumnus starts a licensing business that's growing, page 3A.


Weather
Partly cloudy
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Three-day forecast, page 2A