



Hess announces bid for state attorney post

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Confirming what one supporter called "the worst-kept secret in Bay County," former Circuit Court Judge **Glenn Hess** formally entered the race for 14th Judicial Circuit State Attorney on Wednesday.

At a noon rally of more than 150 supporters on the Bay County Courthouse lawn, **Hess** announced he is running as a Democrat against incumbent State Attorney Steve Meadows in the Nov. 4 general election. Meadows, who ran as a Democrat in 2004, changed his party affiliation to Republican on Feb. 19.

"For almost two years now, you've been hearing the rumor that Judge **Hess** is going to retire from the bench to run for state attorney. I didn't start that rumor," **Hess** told the crowd. "Today, I want to put that rumor to rest; I'm running."

In his brief speech, **Hess** did not mention Meadows by name but levied a list of accusations against the incumbent, accusing him of being "addicted to plea bargaining" and trying, on average, less than one felony case per week.

Hess said as a judge he became "frustrated" by the level of performance of the State Attorney's Office under Meadows.

"The State Attorney's Office continued to plea bargain 99 percent of its cases, primarily for probation," **Hess** said. "When the State Attorney's Office does go to trial, a defense verdict can be expected 50 percent of the time."

"Plainly put, it has been a long time since anyone has felt good about our State Attorney's Office," **Hess** said.

Hess said that if elected, he would implement a number of reforms to increase the professionalism and legal competence of the staff. He described the role of state attorney as both a leader and coach for his subordinates.

"Since 2005, the State Attorney's Office budget is up \$2 million, but what have we gotten for that money?" Hess asked. "You'll find a slew of new pickup trucks in the (State Attorney's Office) parking lot. It's supposed to be a law office, not a trucking firm."

Hess warned his supporters of the possibility that the upcoming race, as in 2004, will be marred by mudslinging and negative attack ads. He pledged his own effort will be "a campaign worthy of your vote."

Hess, who turns 60 on Saturday, was accompanied by his wife, Maureen, and other family members.