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**By Jon Schroeder**  
**The Cove Herald**

The campaigns of Rep. Sid Miller, R-Stephenville, and challenger Ernie Casbeer for the Dist. 59 position in the Texas House of Representatives are getting started in Copperas Cove, with both campaigns scheduling events in the area.

The first Republican event, a town hall meeting at the Copperas Cove Public Library, will kick off Miller's campaign in Copperas Cove at 7 p.m. July 31. Casbeer will hold his first publicly-targeted Cove event since the primary, called "Ears and Beers," at 7 p.m. Aug. 15 at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8577 in Copperas Cove.

Both campaigns have been active in fundraising already, with the incumbent Miller out-raising Casbeer by a more than two-to-one margin thus far. The two ran against each other in the 2006 general election, when Miller beat Casbeer by almost 3,000 votes, 55.5 percent to 44.5 percent.

Miller reported \$58,627 in total political contributions as of July 15, with \$27,600 in expenditures thus far. His largest donations have come from the Texans for Lawsuit Reform PAC (\$10,000); Weldon Huston of Dublin, Texas (\$7,000); and Mike Jordan of Mount Vernon, Texas (\$5,000). Miller also received \$5,000 in a direct contribution from Bob Perry of Houston, cited by Texans for Public Justice as "the man behind Swift Boat Veterans for Truth."

His town hall meeting on July 31 has no particular theme, Coryell County Republican Chairman Ed Thompson said Tuesday, but instead it will focus on a question and answer session. The campaign will accept contributions at the event, but specifically fundraising events won't begin until September.

"He's going to be addressing the issues that will be important to (lawmakers) in the upcoming legislative session and bring (residents) up to date on what has been important," Thompson said.

Miller did not return calls to his office in Austin.

Casbeer, of Oglesby, has received \$19,635 in political contributions, with \$8,154 spent. He has not received any campaign contributions above \$1,000 from a single person or entity.

Casbeer will speak at his Aug. 15 event about his plan for school reform. He also will talk about rising tuition costs and the high price of utilities.

"Something's wrong with the schools when you lead the nation in dropout rates," Casbeer said. "We're failing the students."

As a solution, Casbeer supports programs like those at Copperas Cove High School, allowing children who won't head to college to take more technical classes. He says that students who aren't planning on entering college don't need four years of math and science classes.

Libertarian candidate Coy Reynolds, of Glen Rose, who also is running for the Dist. 59 slot, listed no money in political contributions or spending in his July filing.

District 59 includes Coryell, Hamilton, Mills, Comanche, Erath and Somervell Counties. Coryell County is by far the most populous part of the district, with about 75,000 of the district's roughly 142,000 residents, according to census data from 2000.