

Snyder to challenge DeWeese

By Jon Stevens, Staff writer, jstevens@observer-reporter.com

WAYNESBURG - Greene County Commission Chairman Pam Snyder announced Monday she will seek the Democratic nomination for state representative in the 50th District.

Her announcement comes four days after incumbent Bill DeWeese said he will seek re-election to the seat he has held since 1976.

"Frankly, I didn't think Bill would run," Snyder said. "But I have been thinking about this for a couple of months, so I am just going to stay the course."

When DeWeese made his announcement, he told members of the Observer-Reporter editorial board he was confident he would be vindicated of charges contained in a statewide grand jury presentment Dec. 15, charging the former speaker of the House and majority whip with four counts of theft, and one count each of conspiracy and conflict of interest.

"I would not want to casually walk away from 34 1/2 years of public service and achievement," he said.

Snyder said she will run her campaign as if she were losing. "I intend to meet as many people as possible," recognizing she has her work cut out in Washington and Fayette counties. The 50th District covers all of Greene and parts of Washington and Fayette counties.

"I am hoping on Election Day there will be a new face in Harrisburg," she said.

Snyder said she is running "because now is the time to bring reform to Harrisburg by putting the interests of families in Southwest Pennsylvania first and to change the way our state legislature does business," Snyder said.

She is currently serving her second consecutive four-year term as a Greene County commissioner, having been elected to serve as chairman both terms. She said she was elected under a platform to aggressively pursue economic, recreation and infrastructure development initiatives for the county.

"Watching the events in Harrisburg unfold this year, specifically the lack of a state budget for 101 days and subsequent cuts to county budgets, inspired me to step into this election.

These cuts forced many boards of commissioners across the state to raise property taxes in order to fund programs that, ironically, are mandated by the state," she said.

She said she is proud that throughout both of her terms, the board of commissioners have been able to come together to make great things happen for Greene County.

"We have not let partisan politics or power deter us from representing the best interest of all Greene County residents," Snyder explained.

Projects completed since the beginning of Snyder's tenure include new sewage lines through Cabbage Flats and Jefferson, the Greene River Trail extension, a new family water park and the opening of WalMart.

Snyder said she actively participated in securing the funding necessary to complete the streetscape project in the Borough of Waynesburg, which is poised for completion this spring. She was one of the first elected officials to actively oppose the construction of a 500 KV transmission line, which was proposed to stretch across the entire length of Greene County.

Prior to her tenure as Greene County commissioner, Snyder served as a senior aide to former U.S. Rep. Frank Mascara from 1994 to 2002, working with constituents from Greene, Allegheny, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

Currently, Snyder is a member of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, serving as chairman of the Community and Economic Development Committee. She also is a member of the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission, the SPC Executive Board of Directors, the Community Advisory Board for Southwest Regional Medical Center in Waynesburg.

A graduate of Jefferson-Morgan High School, Snyder received an honorary bachelor of arts from Waynesburg University in March 2008 and is a graduate of the County Leadership Training Institute at New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Snyder and her husband, Jack own and operate a small family farm in Jefferson. They are the parents of two daughters, Maddie, a junior at Waynesburg University, and Joy Eggleston, senior public affairs officer at Southwest Regional Medical Center.