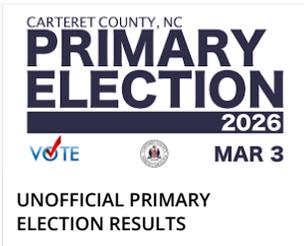


Nyberg wins Republican Primary in sheriff's race, likely to face off with Rice in November

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John Nyberg, left, beat Shane Guthrie, right, in the Republican primary for the office of Carteret County Sheriff. (Contributed photos)



CARTERET COUNTY — Carteret County Chief Deputy John Nyberg secured the Republican nomination in the Carteret County sheriff race March 3, beating competitor Pitt County Sworn Sheriff's Deputy Shane Guthrie.

Despite winning the primary, Nyberg is not guaranteed a win in the general election just yet as Franklin Rice, who's been petitioning for a spot as an unaffiliated candidate on November ballots, seems to have met — and likely even exceeded — the minimum signature requirement needed to do so.

While Guthrie managed to snag the Harkers Island precinct by 64 votes, Nyberg won 25 out of 26 precincts in Carteret County, raking in an unofficial total of 9,207 votes to Guthrie's 3,095 votes.

In comments made to the News-Times, Nyberg expressed his appreciation for the support he's received and said the experience has been "very humbling."

"I think probably the biggest thing about last night's results: from one end of the county to the other, support was very, very strong. So many positive comments, it's just very humbling," Nyberg remarked.

He added that, "The biggest thing is we still have to get our work done within a conservative budget," adding that, "I think that was kind of the message that resonated with our group."

Nyberg affirmed that, "We're gearing up to get ready for November."

While Guthrie did not respond to a request for comment, he posted on his campaign Facebook page Tuesday evening, thanking his supporters.

He made another post Wednesday morning stating his official endorsement of Rice. In this he writes, "We need someone who has the best interest for the citizens of this county at heart. Franklin has also worked real criminal cases, not just traffic related cases. Franklin will lead the Sheriff's Office with integrity."

Rice shared with the News-Times that he dropped off a final 400 signatures to the county Board of Elections on Tuesday. With this addition, he says he's turned in more than 3,500 signatures in total. Rice was required to meet a minimum threshold of 2,275 signatures, or 4% of all voters registered in Carteret County on Jan. 1, to earn a place on the Nov. ballot, per state election law.

Rice is, as he explained, hesitant to announce his candidacy to the public before receiving a letter of certification from the Board of Elections. North Carolina allows county election boards until April 15 to verify signatures on petitions.

In spite of the pending verification, Rice shared a post on his campaign Facebook page Wednesday morning congratulating Nyberg, adding that, "when I turned in our final four hundred signatures, I was told by the Board of Elections staff that we had already reached the required number needed, and we now wait for the official certification letter."

Rice explained to the News-Times that he did so because he "wanted to let my supporters know that 'it ain't over.'" Rice called the pending outcome "the biggest miracle."

While the sheriff candidates prepare for the general election, departing Sheriff Asa Buck, who left the office in pursuit of the U.S. House of Representatives in North Carolina's redrawn 1st Congressional District, was just defeated by retired Army Col. Laurie Buckhout of Edenton in the Republican primary. Buckhout managed to sweep, as of Wednesday evening, 39.5% of the vote, breaching the 30% threshold and blocking any possible runoff election from taking place.

Had none of the candidates surpassed 30% of the vote, the runner-up could have requested a runoff election for May 12.

The general election is set for Nov. 3.