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Marshall man hopes to see new party flourish

By JEFF LEHR
News Messenger

Daryl Ware of rural Marshall is preparing to lead the East Texas effort to get the American Constitution Party of Texas, a newly formed affiliate of the U.S. Taxpayers Party, on the state's ballot for the 1998 general election.

Following the Democratic and Republican primaries March 10, the new party will have 75 days to collect about 45,000 signatures on petitions to get its candidates on the ballot in Texas for the November election. The petitioners must be registered voters who did not vote in either primary.

"So it's really tough. We may need about 90,000 signatures to get 45,000 good ones," Ware said.

When you consider that the American Constitution Party of Texas has less than 100 members in East Texas today, the task is all the more daunting. The number of petitioners required to gain ballot access is 1 percent of the total number of votes cast in the 1994 gubernatorial race in Texas.

Ware, a 36-year-old train conductor for Union Pacific Railroad, has a personal political stake in the bal-

lot access drive. He intends to run for state representative on the ACP-Texas ticket in House District 8, which covers all of Harrison and Panola counties and part of Rusk County. If the party's ballot access drive succeeds, Ware's name could appear on District 8 ballots along with incumbent Democratic state Rep. Paul Sadler and Republican challenger Gene Barron.

But first he'll have to pass muster with party members at a convention scheduled for June 13.

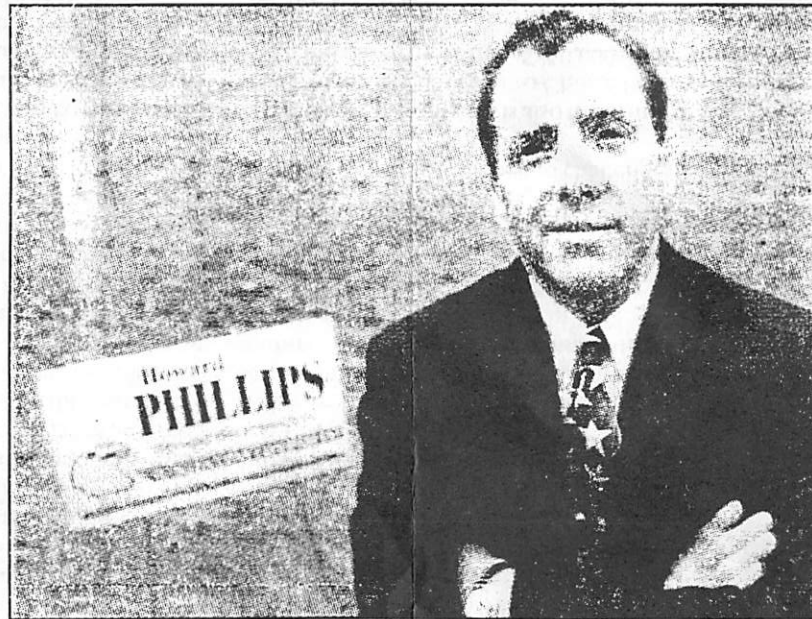
"The difference between our parties and other parties is our candidates are required to read and subscribe to the party's platform,"

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Ware said.

The platform was approved by the national committee of the U.S. Taxpayers Party in 1996. The USTP founded by former Nixon administration official Howard Phillips in 1992 — was on the ballot in Texas and 38 other states in 1996. But Phillips, who ran for president, drew less than 1 percent of the vote in Texas and the party



Les Hassell/News Messenger

DARYL WARE, aims to see the new political party make an impact.

needed 5 percent to retain ballot access in the state.

Nevertheless, leaders of the USTP, which has subsumed a number of variously named state parties under its national umbrella,

believe the party picked up significant political momentum two years ago. The USTP tends to attract pro-life Republicans disenchanted with the GOP's failure to take a tough anti-abortion stance

in its national platform.

When a recent proposal of Republican National Committee member Tim Lambert of Texas to make opposition to partial-birth abortions a litmus test for Republican candidates was defeated by others on the RNC, ACP-Texas state Chairman Jim Wade issued an open invitation to pro-life Texans to switch parties.

"The Republican Party can no longer hide behind their meaningless 'pro-life' plank and should now have the honesty to remove it from the platform," Wade said in a press release this week. "They have not done anything in 25 years to stop abortion, so it's about time the wool came off the wolf. We invite all pro-life Texans to join the only party in Texas that stands for life."

The release pointed out that Gov. George Bush and both Texas senators, Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison, opposed adoption of Lambert's resolution.

Besides calling for an outright ban on abortion, the RU-486 birth control pill and assisted suicides, the USTP platform supports elimination of the Department of Education, abolition of federal pay and pensions for members of Congress, abolition of the civil service system, a halt to the practice of U.S.

troops serving under United Nations command, the rights of states to apply the death penalty in some drug trafficking cases, repeal of the Voting Rights Act and the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, and U.S. withdrawal from NATO amongst other things.

Ware said the party's insistence that its candidates subscribe to the platform is an effective way to ensure voters that they're getting what they vote for. He said diversity within a party is valuable only up to a point.

"Of course we can't all agree 100 percent, but there are certain standards we need to go by," Ware said. "We have to stand for something. I think people will respect us for that."

Ware first learned of the USTP in August of 1996 when he watched the party's national convention on C-Span. He worked for Phillips' presidential campaign that year and was named East Texas regional chairman for the ACP-Texas by the party's state executive committee in November.

He also was named Harrison County party chairman, but he had to give that position up when he decided to run for the Legislature. Mel Hutzler of Marshall has been named the new local chairman.