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Focus Springfield Provides Election Profiles

SPRINGFIELD - Focus Springfield Community TV, the city's community access media center, today announced a new program called Election Profiles, a show that gives all candidates for City Council and School Committee an opportunity to broadcast a personal profile of themselves that will air on Ch. 17 between now and the Preliminary Election election on September 19, and the General Election on November 9.

"The goal of this program is to increase voter participation by providing brief profiles of the candidates for these important offices," said Steve Cary, Executive Producer and Station Manager at Focus Springfield.

"These profiles give candidates a chance to speak directly to the voters, in a simple, unadorned fashion. By giving all candidates equal access to media our production services--regardless of the size of their campaign budgets--we hope this leads to a better informed and motivated voter," noted Mr. Cary.

"Focus televises, live, all Council and School Committee Meetings on Ch. 17, and live-streams them over the internet. We are acutely aware of the important issues that come before these bodies; these profiles are a natural extension of that coverage, giving exposure to the non-incumbents, who are not on the regular broadcasts.

Working with Election Commissioner Gladys Oyola, Focus contacted all qualified candidates by email to schedule a video session. Follow-up emails, phone calls and letters went to those who did not respond to initial messages. More than 125 individual 30 minute time slots were made available to the candidates, between August 18 and Sept. 8. To date, 40 candidates of 45 total took advantage of this service.

"We managed to reach almost all candidates through a combination of email, phone calls, US mail, and personal visits" said Mr Cary, "and we are very happy so many decided to participate in this public service."

The Candidate Profiles will to appearing on Comcast Ch.17 in Springfield on Sept. 11, at noon and six o'clock, to be repeated daily until the polls close on Sept. 19. This show will include only those candidates on the Preliminary Ballot, running in contested races. Following the preliminary election results, a second version of the Candidate Profiles will be on Ch. 17, featuring all of the General Election candidates on the Nov. 8 ballot.

In addition to the Ch.17 broadcasts, these programs are available On Demand over the internet, at: focusspringfield.com/election-profiles-2017.

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