

Democrat Natalie Tennant Files for Secretary of State's Race

If elected, she would work to put confidence back in the voting process, fight to protect citizens' privacy and continue to streamline e-government to better serve businesses and taxpayers.

In making her announcement, she said, "We need to make sure the public has confidence in the election process with secure and accurate voting systems while maintaining the privacy of citizens' personal information."

Tennant has developed a program that would build that confidence by getting people involved.

It is called VOTE —Volunteers Organizing The Electorate. According to Tennant, VOTE works within our own communities and existing civic organizations to use positive peer pressure to motivate each other to get out and vote and get involved. It would use leaders in the communities, colleges and high schools to set examples as poll workers.

"As a secretary of state candidate, I have set an example of open and upfront campaigning myself by signing the code of fair campaign practices and I encourage others to do the same," Tennant said.

The code of fair campaign practices is a voluntary bond between politicians and the public to run a clean campaign, based on issues and limit campaign spending to \$150,000 for the primary.

Tennant also plans to use her experience as a small business owner, former television news reporter and former state treasurer's office employee to help promote West Virginia's small businesses and streamline the interactions for organizations and governmental agencies that deal with state government.

"We can do that by using technology and e-

government to make the process simpler," Tennant said.

Four years ago, Tennant lost the Democratic primary race by 1,118 votes. Nearly 3,000 votes in the secretary of state's race in 2004 were thrown out because of over-voting due to poor ballot format. It was one of the closest statewide races in years.

Tennant said she is showing her loyalty to her party and the voters of the state by staying involved and continuing to build on her strong showing as a statewide candidate.

"I am so encouraged by the overwhelming support I have received as I travel the state and talk about the issues important to the office and my vision for moving our state forward," said the Marion County native.

"My love for West Virginia is no secret and I know how to promote the state. I have done it my whole life. As the first female Mountaineer Mascot at West Virginia University, I stood strong to represent my school and state," Tennant said.

"We need someone who knows West Virginia, someone who understands where West Virginians are coming from, someone with convictions of doing what is right and not be swayed by naysayers or tough situations. Through my life and work, I have shown that I will stand tall in the face of challenges and still ask the tough questions," she said.

Tennant has a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in corporate and organizational communication from West Virginia University.

She and her husband, Erik Wells, own Wells Media Group LLC.

They live in Charleston and have a 5-year-old daughter, Delaney.