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# 44th candidates address economy, local issues

## Beach, Bertram Fleischauer meet editorial board

**CANDIDATES** Cindy Frich and Alex Shook met with the editorial board on Wednesday. A recap of the meeting appeared in Thursday's paper. Candidate Charlene Marshall did not participate.

**BY TRACY EDDY**  
The Dominion Post

Three of the six candidates running for 44th District House of Delegates seats said West Virginia needs to be cautious with its investments in the face of the national financial crisis, even though the state is currently fiscally sound.



**Bob  
Beach**

Democrat incumbents Bob Beach and Barbara Evans Fleischauer, and Republican challenger Harry Bertram discussed the state's stock market plays, cleaning up WVU's Board of Governors and maintaining Monongalia County roads, among other topics, during *The Dominion Post's* editorial board meeting Thursday.

Fleischauer said right now West Virginia is in a better spot than other states in the country, but she predicts the investments the



**Barbara Evans  
Fleischauer**



**Harry  
Bertram**

Legislature should think about "putting the brakes" on the state's Investment Board, and banning it from making risky investments.

Beach said West Virginia needs to be cautious with its investments and watch what's happening on Wall Street carefully.

"We're all in this together even though the picture in West Virginia is very rosy," he said. "There are up times and there are down times, we'll see that with West Virginia."

state has made will take a hit and affect the state's revenue in the long term.

"We'll have to tighten our belts," she said. "We've done it before and we'll do it again."

Fleischauer said the Legisla-

Beach said the state must be conservative with the money it spends, because even though the budget has a surplus, it shouldn't all be spent.

Bertram said he believes the country's bailout bill is a "Band-Aid approach" to the crisis, not a solution.

"It's not solving the problem," he said. "It's just going to snowball and get bigger."

Bertram said the state should be cautious with its investments in the stock market, as well as its expenditures. The state should keep some of its surplus on hand, he said, because "you don't want to tap into everything."

### WVU BOG

The candidates also offered suggestions on adjusting the composition of WVU's BOG, in light of last

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spring's Heather Bresch scandal — in which a special investigative panel determined WVU awarded Bresch, the daughter of Gov. Joe Manchin and chief operating officer of Mylan Pharmaceuticals, an executive MBA degree she did not earn.

During that period, some criticized the BOG for its appointment of former President Mike Garrison — who had ties to Manchin and Mylan — and for its response to the scandal.

Fleischauer said she is planning to suggest a screening committee as part of new legislation that will revamp the terms and requirements for BOG appointments.

The committee would contain people who are knowledgeable about academics and higher education, she said.

When the governor is making appointments to the BOG, the committee would give him three names to pick from for each appointment. If the governor doesn't want to pick from the names he is given, he can ask for three more.

"The governor signs the bill," she said. "We have to work with him to come up with a product everyone can live with."

Beach said he has been working with Fleischauer on the screening committee suggestion, but he believes the number of appointments the governor is allowed should be reduced.

The governor currently appoints 12 of the 16 BOG members.

Beach said he believes the governor should appoint eight or nine of the 16 members.

"I think the key element is the screening process," he said. "It's an effective way to eliminate the people who should not be there."

Beach said he also believes anyone appointed to the BOG should file an extensive "ethics report" prior to appointment.

The ethics report would reveal whether the appointee had a "conflict of interest" with the appoint-

ment, such as a business relationship with the university, he said.

Bertram said he believes WVU faculty and staff should make up their own BOG and select the university's president themselves.

"There needs to be less power for the governor and more at the WVU level" he said.

Allowing the governor to make appointments to the BOG leads to the use of the "buddy system," which means the governor selects the appointees based on who contributes to his campaign and so on, Bertram said.

"We need to get rid of the buddy system," he said.

### Road repairs

Many people have said the roads running through Mon County are in poor condition, and the candidates discussed how they would improve travel.

Fleischauer said construction causes most of the poor road conditions in Mon County.

The state Division of Highways works with the developers to coordinate some road repair, she said, but the repairs would be easier if the developers were made to take out a bond to support the repairs.

"It would be easier to work out an agreement if money was set aside in advance," Fleischauer said.

Countywide planning and zoning would also work to restrict some of the construction from tearing up the roads, among other things, she said, and she is considering suggesting a referendum that would allow people in the county to vote on whether they want planning or not.

Beach said he supports the creation of a Road Building Authority, which would work in the same way the state's School Building Authority does.

The suggested RBA would fund new roads, he said, and determine how much money goes to each county based on need and the projects the counties proposed.

"It would give everyone an opportunity to ask for money in a fair way," Beach said. "Mon County isn't the only county in need."

Money from the state's general revenue fund would be set aside for the RBA, he said, and the taxes on gasoline and licensing would go toward road maintenance.

Bertram said the county's user fee failed in the February special election because the people of Mon County don't want to pay more taxes.

Road projects need to be taken one step at a time, he said, and the state needs to gauge the community support for each project and figure out where the funding can come from.

Bertram said if a large group of residents continually called the DOH to "put pressure" on the right individuals, he believes the needed road work will get done.

### Candidate's choice

The candidates also talked about the issues that are important to them.

Fleischauer said health care is one of the biggest issues West Virginia faces because there are 275,000 people in the state living without it.

"So many people are one car wreck or one major illness away from being in serious economic trouble," she said.

Fleischauer said she would like to expand the eligibility guidelines for Medicaid so some families without health care can be covered.

Beach said he would like to see more infrastructure development in the state, such as water and sewer systems.

Anywhere from 8 to 10 percent of the state's population is living without running water in their homes, he said.

"That's just an unbelievable number in 2008," Beach said.

Bertram said he would like to fight illegal immigration in West Virginia.

"The federal government is doing a poor job," he said. "It's falling back on the states."

Bertram said he would stop economic support for illegal immigrants, such as food stamps, and crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants in order to pay a lesser wage.