

County returns four Republicans to commission

[Michael Barrett](#)

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Red ruled Tuesday on the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, as Republicans swept all four races to maintain their monopoly on the panel.

Commissioners Mickey Price, Joe Carpenter and Allen Fraley won re-election in South Point, Crowders Mountain and Gastonia townships, respectively. Donnie Loftis won the Gastonia Township seat held by Jack Brown, who did not seek re-election.

Price, 59, a pharmacy supervisor for CVS Pharmacy, won his third consecutive four-year term. He earned about 56 percent of the vote and defeated Tommy Loudermilk, 61, a retired teacher.

Price said it's gratifying to have the voters' confidence, and said he will have two priorities over the next four years.

"The top two will be finding ways to pay for the (\$175 million) school bond and get schools built," he said, "and continuing to seek jobs and industry to diversify our work force."

Carpenter, 72, a landscape contractor, was first elected to the Board of Commissioners in 1988. He served one four-year term, then was re-elected in 2000.

Carpenter defeated Blake McLean, 35, a local auctioneer, by taking 57 percent of the vote.

Carpenter said he wants to continue finding jobs for people who are out of work here.

"The thing that goes along with economic development is education, and having a good, educated work force," he said.

Loftis, 52, won Gastonia Township with about 55 percent of the vote. He defeated Jennifer Pharr Davis, 62, a human resource consultant and 12-year member of the Gaston County Board of Education.

A retail store manager, Loftis served on the Board of Commissioners from 2000 to 2004. He said he appreciates Davis running a good race, and wants to focus on reducing property taxes here.

"We also need to expand economic development and bring in folks to help us diversify and become immune to the recession," he said.

The most convincing victory went to the 47-year-old Fraley, a real estate broker and investor who won his second straight four-year term. He defeated Lewis Guignard Jr., 56, a Libertarian and trucking company owner.

Fraley won with about 85 percent of the vote.

"I appreciate the votes and the support of the people of Gaston County and look forward to working with them for four more years," he said.

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