

The Licking Valley Courier

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EARL W. KINNER Publisher	MIRANDA CANTRELL News Editor	RICK ADKINS General Mgr.
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OPINION

Democratic primary may seem like new vs. old

By Al Cross
From The Northern Kentucky Tribune

FRANKFORT, Ky., July 29 – The Kentucky Democratic Party is having a one-on-one primary election for governor, its first in more than 50 years. Those primaries were usually contests between two factions, one moderately liberal, the other more conservative. This one may turn out that way, but now the candidates’ differences are less ideological or issue-based than their styles, their geographies and their generations. O’Rocky Adkins, who announced his candidacy Tuesday, was a longtime member of the state House, and its

floor leader. He represented a rural district, and rural voters were his base of support when he lost the 2019 primary by 6 percentage points to Andy Beshear, who made him his senior adviser in the governor’s office. A rough-and-ready stump speaker, he is the closest thing the party has to Wendell Ford, who could rouse crowds even after he retired from the Senate in 1998.

Jacqueline Coleman, who announced April 20, is in her eighth year as Beshear’s lieutenant governor. A former teacher, coach, and principal, her core political base is teachers, whose support was essential to Beshear’s first election, and she has made inroads among other elements of organized labor, with which Adkins has long been aligned. She has become a smooth campaigner and speaker, and appeals to younger and more liberal elements of an increasingly liberal party.

Put simply, Coleman, 44, represents the new Democratic Party, dominated by urban areas and women, and Adkins, 66, looks like the old one, which has lost many if not most of the rural conservatives who voted for him in 2019.

That would seem to argue for Coleman, but only in the primary. Kentucky is now a Republican state. First District Rep. James Comer seems assured of the Republican nomination and is the favorite for the fall. Adkins’ underlying argument, which he so far has left to others, is that to keep the governorship, Democrats must nominate him. “There’s

only one Democrat in this state who can beat the Republicans,” Ray Perry, Adkins’ successor as senior adviser, said at Adkins’ first fundraiser Tuesday.

Adkins has followed his party leftward on one key issue, saying he now supports abortion rights and regrets voting for the “trigger law” that gave Kentucky an almost-complete ban on abortion in 2022 when the Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade. That 1973 decision that “probably had it right,” Adkins told WHAS-TV. Coleman has been endorsed by Hadley Duvall, the rape victim whose TV commercial on the issue was key to Beshear’s reelection in 2023.

A May 12-13 poll for the Democratic Lieutenant Governors Association gave Coleman a big advantage, but I think the questionnaire was slightly skewed toward Coleman, a member of the group. Her campaign said it had nothing to do with the wording of the poll. Another piece of the survey worth noting: It polled people who said they usually vote in Democratic primaries, and found 56 percent were women, showing the party’s evolution.

If Adkins’ challenge is appealing to female, urban and younger voters, Coleman’s challenge may be financing her campaign. She reported raising just over \$300,000 through June 30, a modest amount; Adkins won’t have to file a quarterly finance report until October, and he has more longstanding relationships with Kentuckians who finance campaigns.

Coleman’s finance report illustrates her base. Of the 62 contributors who gave the \$2,200 maximum, 29 were women, larger than the usual share in such reports; 25 of the top 62 were from Louisville and 19 were from the Lexington area. Other givers included former Lt. Gov. Crit Luallen, who introduced Coleman at her announcement. “Women tend to coalesce around a female candidate because we haven’t had the same representation,” Luallen told me.

The crowds at Adkins’ Lexington announcement and Frankfort fund-raiser had plenty of women, but skewed older than Coleman’s crowd, and probably more rural. The most common rationale they gave me in interviews was that he

Senior Citizens Menu

Meals Are Served With Water and Milk

Thursday, July 30 — RS Tomato Soup, Tropical Fruit Salad, RS Turkey Sandwich, Red Fat/Red Cal Broccoli, Raisin Salad, Colby Jk Red Fat Cheese Stick, 1% Milk.

Friday, July 31 — Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, 1% Milk, Clementine Manderin Frsh, Green Peas, Whole Grain White Roll, Margarine.

Monday, August 3 — Closed for Bath Co. Senior Center Rib-bon Cutting.

Tuesday, August 4 — Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, 1% Milk, Clementine Manderin Frsh, Green Peas, Whole Grain White Roll, Margarine.

Wednesday, August 5 — Chicken Strips MTG, 1% Milk, Herb Glazed Carrots, Au Gratin Potatoes, Apple Cinnamon Roll Cobbler.

Thursday, August 6 — Salisbury Steak MTC, Parmesan Noodles, Creamed Spinach, 1% Milk, Whole Grain Dinner Roll, Brownies, Margarine.

can win in the fall. “You can’t win in Kentucky unless you’re somewhere in the middle or right-middle,” said former state Rep. Cluster Howard of Jackson.

Many Democrats hope Coleman and Adkins can avoid attacks that will create bad blood and division, but Adam Edelen, the liberal who ran third in the 2019 primary with Adkins and Beshear (who has indicated he will stay neutral in the primary), said the give and take in that contest “made Andy a better candidate.” Edelen looks forward to “a humdinger of a race” that will energize Democrats dispirited over their party’s decline in the Donald Trump era. (He said he doesn’t expect to support a candidate in the primary because of his renewable-energy business interests.)

“A tough race shouldn’t hurt a minority party,” Edelen said. “I think the Democratic Party doesn’t need unity, it needs energy . . . and I think we’re gonna get it.”

Al Cross, Pprofessor emeritus of journalism, University of Kentucky, has covered Kentucky politics for more than 50 years. His column originates in the Northern Kentucky Tribune.

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Wolfe County Bitcoin operation shuts down

A Bitcoin mining operation that generated nearly three years of noise complaints from residents along Ky.1036 in Wolfe County is much quieter now and according to a story by Leigh Searcy of WLEX News, the facility is being dismantled.

Barbara Campbell, who lives near the Artemis Power Tech facility, told Searcy the constant industrial hum that plagued the community disappeared last week.

Searcy said an employee at the facility told her the plant had closed and that dismantling of the equipment is expected to take about a month. Searcy said she was told that “the Bitcoin market collapsed and it shut down.”

The facility began operations without public notice to residents, highlighting gaps in local regulation of industrial operations in rural counties.

Artemis Power Tech did not return phone calls seeking comment. Wolfe County Judge Executive also did not respond to requests for comment.

County tax records show the

operation generated \$11,450 in combined property and occupational taxes for 2024 and 2025.

Michael Brand, a candidate for Judge Executive at the upcoming November election, told Searcy, “We’re not collecting any revenue from it — \$11,000 isn’t enough for the downside that happens,” Brand said he would consider proposing a noise ordinance if elected, noting that without such regulations, mining operations and data centers can establish facilities without community input.

The closure reflects broader challenges facing cryptocurrency mining operations, Searcy noted, stating:

As Bitcoin prices have fluctuated and energy costs have risen. Similar facilities across Appalachian communities have faced resident complaints about noise and environmental impacts.

Wolfe County, with a population of about 7,000, lacks specific noise ordinances governing industrial operations, allowing companies to operate with minimal local oversight.

DO YOU HAVE AN OPINION?

The Licking Valley Courier welcomes your comments about current events in the form of letters to the editor. Letters must be signed and include the writer’s address and phone number for verification.

Letters to the Editor should be brief and to the point, no more than 500 words. The Courier reserves the right to edit (or reject) all letters submitted for publication. Letters should be mailed to:

The Licking Valley Courier
P.O. Box 187
West Liberty, Ky. 41472

Opinions expressed in letters to the editor or guest editorials are not necessarily those of the publisher.

MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL LUNCH / BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Morgan County Schools will be participating in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, Morgan Central Elementary School, Wrigley Elementary School, East Valley Elementary School, Ezel Elementary School, and Morgan County High School will offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST to the students due to the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision for school year 2026-2027. Students will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee. For more information, you may call Sarah Beth Legg at 606-743-8002 or e-mail at sarah.legg@morgan.kyschools.us.

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