

Colton's Grace Hawley GOP's Pick To Challenge Swafford

By LARRY ROBINSON

COLTON - The Republican party in Colton appears to be heading for a primary race this fall that will pit Acting Supervisor Bill Swafford against Councilwoman Grace Hawley.

Hawley, 68, announced her candidacy for town supervisor this week, saying she has decided to seek the town's top elected position in part because she is unhappy with the direction politics have taken in the community in recent months.

If elected, Hawley would be the first female supervisor in the town of Colton.

Swafford has not officially announced his candidacy for office, however, he is currently circulating an election petition in the town.

Swafford became town supervisor in Colton after long-time Conservative Hank Ford stepped down from



GRACE HAWLEY

office unexpectedly this past spring.

Hawley announced her candidacy for supervisor in a letter to the editor of the *Courier-Observer*.

"During my six years of serving on the town board, we have faced some difficult

decisions and spent many hours attempting to resolve issues in a manner that would benefit the majority of residents," Hawley wrote.

"Having lived her all my life, I have a genuine interest in trying to improve conditions in the community and keeping taxes at a level which will not cause great concern to our residents."

When contacted, Hawley said she was entering the race for supervisor because she is unhappy with the current political tone in the township. In particular she said she does not approve of the current way town board meetings are conducted.

"To me a board meeting is held to conduct business," according to Hawley. "You can have courtesy of the floor, and then after that it is time to conduct business."

Hawley is referring to the leadership style brought to

Colton after Swafford filled the position left vacant by Ford. Since taking over, Swafford has pledged a more open government and has allowed citizens attending on regular meeting nights to interact openly with the board.

Hawley said she understands Swafford's intentions, but suggests he may have swung the pendulum too far to the left in trying to make everyone happy.

"I think he is trying too hard to appease the people in opposition to Hank," she said.

A Republican primary will be held in Colton on Sept. 18, according to Hawley. Regardless of the outcome of the primary, she still has two years to serve on her current term as a member of the town council.

The Democratic Party has not yet said if it will field a candidate for supervisor in the fall election.