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WKU, Daily News hosting legislative forum, debate

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The Bowling Green Daily News and Western Kentucky University's Department of Political Science will sponsor a state legislative candidate debate and forum Tuesday.

The free event will be at WKU's Downing Student Union Auditorium starting at 6:15 p.m. and will be livestreamed on the Daily News and Talk 104/93 WKCT Facebook pages.

"Working with the Daily News, we see the debate and forum as a way to serve the Bowling Green, Warren County and WKU communities. We would like voters, including our students that vote here, to be well informed on the candidates," said Scott Lasley, head of the Department of Political Science.

"Hosting political forums is part of our civic assembly process we started earlier this year to engage stakeholders and the public, and to further spotlight how important local news is to the community," said Joe Imel, director of media operations for the Daily News.

The forum will focus on the races for the 20th state House District and the 32nd state Senate District. All candidates were invited, but incumbent 32nd District state Sen. Mike Wilson, R-Bowling Green, declined to attend. His Democratic opponent, Jeanie Smith, a middle school teacher, will be interviewed by a panel of journalists at 6:15 p.m.

A debate between 20th House District Democratic nominee Patti Minter and Republican Ben Lawson will begin at 7 p.m. They are vying to replace retiring state Rep. Jody Richards, D-Bowling Green.

Minter, a WKU professor, topped a five-person race to earn the Democratic nomination. Lawson, who works in the insurance industry, beat two challengers in the Republican primary.

Free public parking is available across from the Downing Student Union in Parking Structure No. 2.

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Wes Swietek is the Bowling Green Daily News News Director.