

COMMUNITY FORUM

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

LETTERS • OPINIONS

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Popkin for sheriff

Whatever happens in the Sept. 14 primary and Nov. 2 general election, come Dec. 6, Montgomery County will have a new sheriff for the first time in 24 years. After six terms, Raymond M. Kight, a Democrat first elected in 1986, is not seeking re-election.

With no Republicans running, Democratic primary voters will choose Kight's successor. **The best choice has been Kight's No. 2 for the past 12 years, Chief Deputy Darren M. Popkin.**

The sheriff's office, with about 180 employees, is responsible for a range of

duties: transporting prisoners to and from jail, providing courthouse security, and serving eviction notices and protection orders. The agency was instrumental last year in establishing the Family Justice Center, a one-stop location to help to victims of domestic violence. **Popkin said expanding the center's services is his top priority.**

The next sheriff will need to discharge these duties with fewer resources, as the department's budget has been cut by 5.2 percent from fiscal 2010 to \$20.2 million.

As chief deputy and a 25-year veteran of the sheriff's

office, Popkin is uniquely positioned--having longstanding and positive relationships with current staff and key personnel in other agencies — to provide continuity and oversee the office through tight fiscal times.

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Democratic voters are fortunate to have an impressive choice of sheriff candidates. **Given his experience, dedication and intimate knowledge of the sheriff's office, Popkin stands out.**