

2010 elections

Adams proud of his work on Youth Court

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By **BOB DARDEN**

Staff Writer |

The Voters League of Itta Bena begins each meeting with a rendition of childhood favorite “If You

Thursday’s featured speaker, Leflore County Judge Kevin Adams, said the song has become a favorite

“The song must work, because every time I’ve been here — either to speak or listen to other speakers in a

Adams, 38, will face Greenwood attorney Fred Clark in the nonpartisan Nov. 2 general election.

A native of Greenwood, Adams has served as Leflore County judge since 2008. He was first chosen for

“The good news is I absolutely love my job,” Adams told the audience. “The bad news is I can’t do it. The

He said he is particularly proud of his accomplishments in Youth Court. “I believe the best future

Adams said he understands the frustration of law enforcement officers when it comes to juveniles

The ancient Roman playwright Terence wrote, “The strictest justice is sometimes the greatest injury absolutely true,” Adams said.

The judge said nationally 4 percent of juveniles suffer one traumatic event. Juveniles are twice as likely to be assaulted as older people, he said.

A study of juveniles detained in Chicago revealed most had experienced as many as six traumatic events. 75 percent of youths in juvenile detention nationwide suffer from multiple mental disorders.

“Those children need treatment, counseling, mentors ... the community,” Adams said. “Detention safety. It’s not going to change juvenile behavior.”

Adams said more must be done to direct youth away from incarceration.

Among the programs he has initiated are:

- Joining with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to create alternatives to juvenile detention.

- Developing a Juvenile Drug Court within the Youth Court. “We’ve seen very good results from

- A program for testing juveniles detained at the Leflore County Juvenile Detention Center for sex offenses. The tests are kept confidential between the juvenile and the state Department of Health, Adams said.

The judge said he would like to see the court acquire 20 ankle monitoring bracelets so nonviolent juveniles can be monitored under well-defined parameters.

Also, he would like to see more cooperation between the court and community-based groups such as

“If we can keep (juveniles) active — know where they are, keep them supervised — they are less likely to re-offend,” Adams said.

The job of Leflore County Judge is difficult, yet Adams treasures it, he said. Youth Court requires

“It is the most important job I think I will ever have,” he said. “I believe it gives me the opportunity

Adams is the son of Jackie Adams, former principal of East Elementary School, and Ann Adams, superintendent of education.

A graduate of Greenwood High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Millsap University of Mississippi School of Law in 1999.

He and his wife, the former Tammy Clolinger, have four children, Justin, 18; Jonathan, 15; Jack,

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