

Dalton kicks off campaign

By **LARRY DALE**

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SPINDALE — Rutherford County native Sen. Walter Dalton officially kicked off his campaign to be North Carolina's lieutenant governor Monday night at a rally at Isothermal Community College.

The 12-year state senator said, "I want to continue to work with you" on education, access to health care, job building and land preservation.

"I want to build a better and more prosperous North Carolina," Dalton said. "I see a brighter day in North Carolina."

Dalton said he is driving 1,000 miles a week to get out the campaign message, "except last week, when we drove 1,500 miles."

In his 12 years as a senator he has traveled the state, he said, "and what people don't want is petty politics. What they do want is someone who will work as hard as you do and as they do to make North Carolina better."

He noted that North Carolina has been through hard times but is turning the corner. He commented on education issues, for example, that the state has gone from 43rd in the nation to 21st in teacher pay, that the state has Smart Start, and that SAT scores and dropout rates are improving.



Dalton told the crowd of some 275 people, mostly made up of people from Rutherford and Cleveland counties, "You have the attention of everyone in Raleigh. We are the front candidate in this race."

Then he cautioned his supporters not to be like New England, the Super Bowl favorite who lost, as he urged them to "not let up."

"I cannot thank you enough, not only for your financial support, but also for your time and your trust," he said at the conclusion of his talk.

Dalton was introduced by State Rep. Dr. Bob England, who *Garrett Byers/Daily Courier* represents the 112th District. England told the crowd that they are a part of history in the making, by "sending one of your own to Raleigh as the next lieutenant governor. There's not much to match that."

"What he has meant to this county and state there is no way to measure. In Raleigh, I brag that that's my senator and that's one of my constituents."

The Foundation at ICC was festive, with red, white and blue balloons and bunting as kickoff participants had a barbecue meal and cake to begin the evening. Entertainment was provided by a band, Unknown Moniker, that includes Dalton's son, Brian. About a dozen Democratic elected officials in the county attended the event.

Dalton is running for the nomination against three other Democrats: Canton Mayor Pat Smathers, Winston-Salem City Councilman Dan Beese and Raleigh attorney Hampton Dellinger. The nominees will be chosen in the May 6 state primary.

Security consultant Greg Dority, state Sen. Robert Pittenger and attorney Jim Snyder are seeking the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

Current Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue is running for the Democratic nomination for governor.

Dalton of Rutherfordton said he had \$904,192 in cash entering 2008 after raising \$382,909 in the second half of 2007. Next in fundraising was Dellinger, who reported \$726,439 on hand after raising \$243,536 during the period, including a \$100,000 loan from his parents. Smathers reported raising \$60,270 in the second half of the year, with \$13,500 in loans, and had \$5,178 on hand as of Dec. 31. Besse reported raising \$29,178, with \$4,000 in loans. He had \$122,402 in cash to start 2008.

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