

Attendance an issue in race

By: JENNA PORTNOY Bucks County Courier Times

A candidate for Bucks Recorder of Deeds says photos of an empty parking space shows the current officeholder is a "no show." But he claims he's at his job "every day."

Bucks County Recorder of Deeds Ed Gudknecht says he shows up for work every day.

His opponent in the fall election is suggesting otherwise and claims to have photographic evidence: pictures of his empty parking spot that were compiled in a video and posted to the Web.

In the 90-second slide show, Democratic hopeful Robin Rosenthal calls Gudknecht a "no-show recorder of deeds," and alleges his employees call him "Tuesday Thursday Ed" for the only days he works.

"It's ridiculous," Gudknecht said from his office Monday. "I'm here every day. I haven't even had a vacation this year yet - not a real one anyway, just a few Mondays off."

The video is a rare political tactic in the usually low-profile recorder of deeds race. The office is one of several \$73,078-a-year elected positions up for grabs in November, along with controller, sheriff and prothonotary. Gudknecht, who is a Republican, said Rosenthal and her party are unfairly targeting him.

"Am I targeting him? Yes," Rosenthal replied. "I am not just a name on the ballot. I intend to win this."

Gudknecht said he suspects Rosenthal, who is executive assistant to minority Commissioner Diane Marseglia, looked out the windows of the commissioner's fifth floor office to see when he leaves for lunch. That's when she took the pictures, he said.

"I guess she sees my car when I go to lunch," he said. "I have no idea."

Rosenthal responded, "I'm busy. I'm not watching out the window to see if Ed's driving away."

She followed no set methodology when gathering the images. Rosenthal, who also parks in the so-called VIP lot at Broad and Court streets, snapped pictures almost every day between approximately early June and mid-August. She said she ended up with 52 images, although only a few weeks' worth ended up on the video.

Rosenthal originally intended to use one picture for a campaign mailer, but continued taking shots when she noticed a pattern, she said. The pictures do not have a time stamp, but generally she said she took them between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., during lunch, while on an errand for Marseglia or on a coffee break.

Gudknecht fired back: "I'm not sure she puts in an eight-hour day up there. When she's out where does she go? I have no right to question that."

In addition to leaving the parking lot every day for lunch, Gudknecht said he attends state lawmakers' senior expos, twice monthly commissioners meetings and two regional meetings of recorders of deeds and a week-long conference once each year.

Reading from a schedule of events for the county GOP, Gucknecht also pointed to various evening commitments that he keeps, such as a fundraiser for the Warrington Republicans at 5 p.m. Monday. These are political events unrelated to his county position.

A version of the video sent to this newspaper featured a Todd Rundgren song with the lyrics "I don't want to work/I just want to bang on the drum all day." Different music plays in the background of a similar YouTube video, which as of Monday afternoon had garnered nearly 40 comments.

Gucknecht, 72, has been recorder of deeds since 1985 when he unseated the last Democrat to hold the seat, the late Commissioner Lucille Trench. Rosenthal, 55, ran an unsuccessful campaign for the seat in 2005.