

## POCAHONTAS PROSECUTOR FACING CHARGES



Donna Meadows Price fell in Tuesday's election in hopes of unseating the incumbent Pocahontas County prosecutor. Her attempt for a second term was halted by Marlinton attorney Eugene Simmons. Unofficial results displayed the 67-year-old Simmons, an Independent, as the victor over the 44-year-old Democrat in Price by a 1,883 to 1,372 mark. However, much bigger issues are head for Price. On September 27, 2011 Price was charged with a six-count statement from the Lawyer Disciplinary board, which is the prosecutorial section of West Virginia's Supreme Court. The statement branches from protests filed against her by the pair of county circuit judges in Joseph C. Pomponio, Jr. and James C. Rowe. They cited her relinquishment of responsibility and controversial decision making. In his protest on February 14, 2011 Pomponio contends Price failed to prep orders for cases, including juvenile delinquency, exhibit cases to the grand jury, return phone calls, log enough office hours and co-exist with law enforcement. Sheriff David Jones stated that Price did not conduct several cases related to drugs for the last two years and requested a special prosecutor take care of them instead. Rowe's complaint came almost two months later on April 8. Rowe was displeased with Price utilizing a woman, who the state's Department of Health and Human Resources put on an improvement timeframe, to purchase drugs covertly as an informant to an abuse and neglect case. Price rejected the notion and Rowe claimed it was a conflict of interest since she opened her up to the substance she was trying to overcome, while also putting her in danger of holding child custody from defying her improvement period. Rowe stated that following her promotion to special prosecutor, Price ignored a case that involved a minor having sexual intercourse with a Greenbrier County sheriff. Price requested to be taken off the case in the winter of 2011. On October 18, Pomponio requested a new special prosecutor to seize the eight drug cases in limbo as well as a special investigation if Price was stripped of her prosecutor title for "malfeasance, misfeasance or neglect". After the request, Rowe and Pomponio asked to be taken off the case and motioned to appoint Chief Justice Menis E. Ketchum as special judge. Ketchum deferred the next day by selecting retired Justice Larry V. Starcher to hear the case. Nothing has happened since October 19. A hearing in regards to the charges versus Price was scheduled and continues a trio of times before election night. No new date is on the horizon as of November 8.