

Troutman headed to TV

Former congressional candidate will be 'Fox News Rising' co-host

Next week, Beth Troutman can add another entry to her resume, which so far includes:

- Child advertising genius.
- The Carolinas Carrousel Queen.
 - Assistant to Alex Graves, executive producer of "The West Wing."
 - Challenger - and not all that far from winner - for the congressional seat held by Rep. Robin Hayes, R-N.C.

TV/RADIO



Mark Washburn

Come Monday, the Concord native can put down full-time co-host on the WCCB (Channel 18) morning show "Fox News Rising" with Robin King.

Troutman, 27, replaces Adam Smasher, who is moving to Chicago for a new radio job. "Fox News Rising," which recently moved to a new studio, is expanding by coming on 20 minutes earlier, at 5:30 a.m.

"This is something I've wanted to do my entire life," says Troutman. "Even in the eighth grade I'd do video newscasts."

Hers has been a life with spotlights.

In 1986, as a third-grader at Cabarrus Academy, Troutman was one of 12 national winners from a field of 35,000 kids who came up with ideas for radio commercials about seat belt use (Plot: Alien offers kids a ride in his flying saucer; they tell him to buckle up.)

She was Carolinas Carrousel Queen in 1994, Miss Cabarrus County 1997 and Miss Raleigh 1999. She worked for Rep. Jim Black,

D-Matthews, while a senior at UNC Chapel Hill. After graduation, she went to Los Angeles and called up the production office of NBC's "The West Wing," her favorite show, and asked for a job.

Two hours later they called back with one.



Troutman

She started as a production assistant, a position in the Hollywood hierarchy roughly equivalent to professional protozoa. But she worked her way up and soon was involved with TV's business side.

Her contacts came in handy when she returned home and decided to run for Congress. She got campaign contributions from "West Wing" stars Martin Sheen, John Spencer and Allison Janney, among others. Sheen

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Washburn *from IE*

even came to Kannapolis to campaign for her.

(Attention history buffs: This led to one of the great quotes in N.C. election history. "She's out in Hollywood trying to raise money from her left-leaning, Barbra Streisand-listening, Martin Sheen take-your-guns-away friends," said Hayes spokesman Jonathan Felts.)

Troutman retains a keen interest in politics, but understands a morning show gig isn't a place to preach.

"I'm not going to get up on my soapbox and verbally vomit my views out to people. You've got the potential to get people's minds off the thought they've got a mortgage payment coming up.

"You've got the opportunity to uplift people. It's like when somebody smiles at you on the street when you're having a bad day."

Troutman says she knows who is going to be the next president on "West Wing." "But I can't say."

C'mon, Jimmy Smits or Alan Alda?

"Can't say."

So, you'd vote for?

"I love Smits' character."