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By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

Liberal Athletic Director Scott Hinkle has been working to find Liberal's next head football coach two ways. He has received applications, and he has approached some candidates to find their interest.

In all, 28 coaches have shown interest in the job.

The vacancy became available in December when Tom Schroeder turned in his resignation at the request of district representatives.

Two names that have been bantered around in Liberal's coffee shops are not on the list: Gary O'Hare and Cliff Abbott.

O'Hare is the current coach at Andale and was a former Southwestern heights coach.

"I visited with him, but he said he was not interested in leaving Andale at this point and time," Hinkle said.

Abbott is a current board member and operator of Abbott Construction.

He stepped down from his role as a board member in the fall of 2008 to fill a middle school football coaching vacancy. Abbott's son was a player for the West Warrior seventh grade team. After the season, Abbott was reappointed to his seat on the school board.

With those two not in play, Hinkle said that a list of four individuals has risen to the top, and that three of the four have visited the community to discuss the possibility. The fourth is expected to make the trip later this month.

"Ideally, we would like to have a football coach named by the first week of February," Hinkle said.

One of the four is ready to accept the job, Hinkle said, and two others are still considering the possibility and are interested.

"There were four that we pursued without them sending us anything,"

Hinkle said. "We contacted them to see if they had an interest. What we've done is we've brought them in informally, and we have met with them. We did that for two reasons. One, to ask us any questions they might have, and for us to ask in more of a relaxed setting to see if it is a good fit for them."

If no agreement can be reached with any of the four, Hinkle said there were still 24 more to choose from.

Although the names on the short list are being withheld, Hinkle said three of the four had strong ties to Liberal and the football program.

## Four leading prospects for football coach

Tuesday, 13 January 2009 00:00

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