

PRESENT

Do you support a tax increase to fund the Johnson County Education & Research Triangle?
I support the triangle question.

Why?

The projects are well thought out, education spending is a good investment in economic development and there is 100% efficiency in the collection and expenditure of the funds within Johnson County.

Initially, I did not support the sales tax authority being requested from the legislature by the triangle group because the county was also seeking dedicated sales tax authority. I believed the triangle group should team with the county to get up to 1% dedicated authority consistent with county and Kansas Association of Counties legislative programs. Within expanded county sales tax authority the triangle projects could be supported. Once the legislation was passed I reconsidered my opposition and decided to vote in favor of placing the question on the ballot. I have been pleased with the fact that unlike the soccer complex issue the commission has held three public hearings on the triangle question and sales tax. Philosophically, the state should support higher education projects such as the triangle; however, I do not sense the legislature is willing to support expanding higher education offerings when they will not even address the facilities maintenance backlog. Additionally, because Johnson County provides a tremendous percentage of revenue to the state a statewide funded plan for higher education involving increased taxes would likely result in Johnson County providing more revenue than would be retained for projects in the county. Having the local control to raise and spend the tax assures county taxpayers that 100% of the revenue raised will be spent in Johnson County.

2. What are the top 3 or five most pressing items facing the JoCo Commission and what will you do about them?

- Addressing our transportation needs in a coordinated and fiscally responsible manner.

I have been laying the groundwork on this issue for virtually my entire term on the commission beginning with the transportation future focused task force and continuing with the Transportation Cooperation Council (TCC).

A safe and efficient transportation system is critical to the economic health of our community.

Our community cannot afford to keep building an automobile only transportation system. The ever increasing costs of building new roads and maintaining the existing roads following a suburban only development pattern is threatening to bankrupt our community. Additionally, we have an aging population that will no longer be able to get around a community when they are unable to drive their car. To address all these issues our community must think more collaboratively and cooperatively.

The TCC for the first time brings together policymakers representing all of the cities and the county to discuss transportation issues on an ongoing and permanent basis. Through the TCC I envision our community coordinating and participating in the funding of major investments in our road infrastructure to support not just automobiles but also expanded public transit. I expect that the TCC will break down the old barriers and challenge the suburban development patterns that lock us into automobile only transportation. Through the TCC I expect that in 10-15 years the citizens of Johnson County will enjoy a vibrant economy and lifestyle based on a true multimodal transportation system. In short we will have been able to build a 21st century transportation system that meets our needs and that we can afford.

My creative and open leadership in helping move the TCC to achieve this vision is essential.

- Dealing with the need to expand and improve our library facilities and parks.

The County Commission is long past due developing a realistic capital improvement plan with both the library and park boards that meets the needs of our growing community. We have failed to support or even seriously discuss the MAP 2020 plan of Parks and Recreation and the needs outlined by the Library.

In the next term I will push the commission to meet with the boards to develop both a capital and funding plan to meet these needs. By 2010 I expect a bond election question placed before voters that will address the approximately \$50-60 million in identified needs facing our library system. For District 2 this means executing on the long promised expansion of the existing Shawnee branch, a new Monticello branch in western Shawnee and the replacement/relocation of the Lackman branch in Lenexa to the City Center development. In 2006 I was able to win a \$1 million commitment from the commission to purchase land for the Monticello branch, we must now move to the construction phase of this project.

My willingness to tackle the tough issues that will help the people in these important quality of life areas is critical to the successful improvement and expansion of our parks and libraries.

- Building community partnerships to ensure that we provide human services to the disabled and elderly populations in an affordable manner.

Taking care of our vulnerable populations is one of the most important jobs of county government.

The commission has failed to have a serious discussion with the various boards and commissions advising us on these important matters.

I will work to support a systematic approach to addressing the present and projected needs of at risk populations under the public and mental health departments along with aging services, developmental supports, corrections and the myriad of non-profit community groups.

As our population grows and becomes more diverse we must be able to meet the needs in an effective manner that is affordable. We cannot do this without leadership and a commitment by the board of commissioners and I intend to help stimulate our leadership on these issues.

- Continuing to provide the public safety facilities needed by a growing population.

At the top of this list is a new courthouse building. This need was identified 4 years ago in a consultant's study. As the consultant told the commission, usually courthouses get replaced when someone dies in a courthouse assault. The current facility is unsafe and inefficient and must be replaced before a tragedy occurs.

I have a number of ideas on how to help the community afford this facility estimated to cost \$250-\$500 million one of which involves using potential property taxes from redevelopment activity in downtown Olathe around the courthouse. It is possible that this idea could provide up to 10% of the cost of the building. We should also look to the state help us with these costs, because the courts are a state function and Johnson County processes a large volume of these cases. I will use every bit of my creative energy and

encourage staff and the private sectors creative energy to help bring the courthouse costs down to fit into our community budget.

- Improving the processes of the County Commission so that we can work more effectively for our citizens.

This item is perhaps the most distant and boring to the people we serve, but it is critically important. In my time on the commission I have observed a group made up of solid citizens with the community's interests at heart function below the expectations of the community. I have brought a fresh and open approach to our processes and have worked to help provide and support structure to the decision making process through the creation of written rules of order and a committee structure. It is now time that we take the next step and build a board that sets goals and works to achieve them. I stand prepared to work with any majority on the board that is willing to break down the orthodoxy of silence and avoidance that too many elected bodies fall under.

In my next term I will propose that the commission create two committee's instead of the current one to meet on Thursday's to study and address issues in depth. These committee's will support the efficient use of staff time and really help develop leadership on the board. Through this dual committee structure I believe that we can address all of the issues facing our community today and into the future.

We cannot work effectively for the people when our processes do not encourage high performance.

3. What makes you the most qualified candidate to represent your district?

Demonstrated Success

I have been solidly representing District 2 for the past four years.

During my service I have helped put the county on a sound financial footing such that general property tax increases should not be needed over the next several years. I led the effort to put a bloated reserve fund to work for the people and invest in public safety by expanding the jail and other public safety facilities. As promised in 2004, I supported emergency funding for our public schools. I have worked to build trusted relationships with our cities so that we can all serve the taxpayers efficiently and effectively.

According to my colleagues, I have also led the most successful future focus task force resulting in the creation of ongoing, meaningful institutional cooperation on transportation issues among Johnson County cities and the county with the creation of the Transportation Cooperation Council (TCC).

I have influenced positive change in the way the County Commission does business by co-authoring written rules of process to guide the commission's deliberations.

Accountability and Communication

In addition to working hard every day and speaking and standing up for my constituents I have done my best to keep in touch and be accountable.

I have held monthly coffee chats in the fall, spring and early summer months to keep in touch with my constituents. I regularly attend community celebrations and events to be visible to my constituents.

I have the most active district web site on the county commission to keep citizens informed about my work for them. I regularly write editorials explaining my thoughts and positions on issues.

I have provided instant messenger communication opportunities to the community with me during the live broadcasts of meetings so that citizens can ask questions and participate in the meeting.

Future Vision

As a City Councilmember and now County Commissioner, I demonstrated the ability to help make positive change by identifying challenges and then developing and implementing solutions. Creating positive change takes curiosity, creativity, understanding and stamina. Successfully adapting at both the county and city level demonstrates my ability to work productively with others in various organizations.

Although the TCC is up and running it still needs the guidance that I can provide to achieve its' potential to help us define and build the 21st century transportation system that we need and can afford. My experience in helping create collaborative relationships is necessary to move this effort forward.

The experience and understanding of the County organization and operation that I have gained over the past four years will help me reform county services to ensure they meet our needs as we move into the future and really work effectively for the people in the community.

4. Should Johnson County elect its district court judges or retain current nomination practice?

The current community process of nominating qualified judges should be retained.

Why? Elected judges introduce politics into the technical application of the law. The law is made by elected representatives and it should not be made by activist judges who by the fact of election will be taking political positions on the application of the law. Politics should not pervert rulings on legal matters and we should not confuse judging with legislating.

5. When should Johnson County build a new courthouse, what should it look like and how should it be funded?

A new courthouse building is in the capital improvement plan starting in 2011 (land in 2010); however, unless we come up with creative and innovative financing and construction options for this building, it is going to be difficult to afford. The courthouse should be a well constructed, attractive, safe and efficient building. It will also likely have to be expandable.

It will have to be funded with debt, just like how we, as individuals, buy a home. The debt will be paid for with taxes generated county wide and also within downtown Olathe, I propose using tax revenue generated from redevelopment in downtown Olathe to pay for a portion of the costs (maybe 10%).

6. Is the tax burden in JoCo too light, just right or out of sight? Explain.

The old adage of you get what you pay for comes to mind. I think the value for our tax money in Johnson County is fair when the services provided are compared to the cost. Would we be getting a better deal if it cost less to get the same service? Yes. Would I like to see our taxes decrease? Yes. Do I work every day as a commissioner to lower the cost of local government and improve its efficiency? Yes. I do think that countywide property taxes should be lowered for 97% of the citizens through the unincorporated service area mill levy I proposed.

7. Commissioners earn \$50,000 a year plus benefits for a part-time position. Is that compensation about right?

I work very hard as a commissioner to earn the commission salary by improving our community for the people of Johnson County. Even my opponent has recognized that I am "one of the hardest workers he knows".

But, I am sure most people would think we are paid too much.

However, based on the fact that the commission is scheduled to meet all day on a workday and that this schedule impacts commissioner's career and earnings capabilities I think that the compensation is fair for the expectations and demands of the position. I do think that the commission can and should perform better to demonstrate its worth as a serious and responsible decision making body for the people of Johnson County. I have worked to help improve the performance of the board.

8. What is your campaign strategy to win?

Explain to the voters that as their County Commissioner I have a solid and quantifiable set of actions that have helped make our community better and outline how I can help do the same over the next four years.

Point out that I have always stood up and spoken out on issues that help improve our community when my opponent has often chosen to stay safely in the political shadows and remain silent.

In tough situations I think the people want a representative who is always going to stand up for them and fight for their interests, I will explain how and when I have gone to bat for our community.

9. What are the three most important things voters need to know about you that they don't already know?

- *That I am the incumbent.*
- *The amount of creative energy I dedicate to helping our community become better.*
- *That tasks such as ironing clothes, doing dishes and mowing the grass all help me focus and organize my thoughts.*

10. Do you support the county's 1 percent for art program?

Yes, I voted in favor of creating the program and I believe we should execute on the program and modify it as needed in order for it to continue and be successful.

Should it be modified as has been suggested?

There have been no coherent suggestions for how to modify the program nor do we have any experience with the current program to assess its current positives or negatives.

FUTURE

1. What transportation options do you favor to connect JoCo with a workforce willing to fill service jobs?

Transportation is about more than importing cheap labor. Ideally our community should be the home for workers of all salary levels. This means that we will also need housing that service

workers and even teachers can afford. That said transportation options that are economically efficient must be pursued through an expanded bus based transit system. Accompanying expanded service must be a coordinated effort by our cities to encourage transit oriented development (TOD) so that both workers and residents can be served efficiently. The TCC (mentioned above) is critical to both encouraging TOD and also creating the broad based support needed to fund transit in the community. Additionally, the TCC will provide the forum in which a consensus can be reached on our community's support for regional transportation which is critical when it comes to moving workers into and out of the county.

Even with expanded transit I expect that most workers will continue to move themselves by personal automobile.

2. If we keep tossing trash at the current rate, the county landfill, run by private hauler Deffenbaugh Industries, will run out of space in nine years. Is enough being done fast enough to recycle and site a new landfill?

Not really, but we are working on it. The solid waste plan adopted last year does for the first time contemplate the closure of the Deffenbaugh landfill. As the liaison to the solid waste committee I know that we have put in place a number of recommended measures to reduce the Johnson County generated waste stream. I expect that it will be a monumental community effort to reduce the waste stream and build personal responsibility into a system that has been pretty much a free for all. We should have been working to reduce the waste stream over the last 10 years.

I have been connected to the waste disposal future when as a councilmember I approved the landfill expansion in Shawnee. I took this politically unpopular decision as with my candidacy for mayor on the horizon. So I think that the landfill and waste disposal issues really show that I have the selfless character that I want in my elected public servant.

My experience in creating the TCC will help me navigate the city-county-homes association-resident relationships that will need to be forged and strengthened to ensure that a personal responsibility and more unified waste disposal system will require.

I think that we may be able to add a few years to the life of the landfill, but not likely to the 2027 city deadline imposed by Shawnee. By reducing the waste stream from the county I expect that the Hamm Landfill will become the economic option of choice when the Deffenbaugh landfill closes. Therefore I think we are proceeding at an acceptable pace to site a new disposal location.

3. How important is it for the region to site the BNSF intermodal rail hub and warehouses near Gardner?

It is critically important for the Kansas City region to remain a vibrant economy based not just on the movement of goods into the community, but also as a manufacturing center. The expanded capacity the new facility will offer will ensure that goods come into our community and are potentially less expensive for our consumption. The outflow of containers from the intermodal will provide an expanded manufacturing base a competitive advantage when it comes to exporting products. As the dollar weakens America and the Kansas City region can take advantage of export opportunities.

The county must stand on behalf of Johnson County's people with the City of Gardner to ensure that the intermodal provides the safest and most efficient movement of goods within and through our community. I want the intermodal to be the best of its size.

And what safeguards must be in place?

Ultimately the national and global market will determine the success of the intermodal and for this we have few safeguards. For the county's part we must support the development by partnering with Gardner, the state and federal government to ensure that the public infrastructure is adequate if not exceptional. Public infrastructure investments will support the efficient operation of the facility, but must be timed with the private investment to ensure that the development will support the costs through the taxes generated by the economic activity.

4. Clean up efforts continue at the explosive-scarred land at the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant near De Soto, the future home to a community the size of Leawood. Do you support current development efforts?

Yes I support the current efforts.

It is critical that this site be developed into a high value development, because this will reduce the high property tax rate in the DeSoto School District which impacts a large number of District 2 residents.

What more must be done?

I think the Sunflower Redevelopment Authority needs to begin meeting and working to ensure that the redevelopment proceeds expeditiously.

The City of DeSoto must be an active participant in the redevelopment process and work to ensure that the project will integrate into the city seamlessly.

The County Commission must address the potential costs of this development on countywide taxpayers. For this reason among others I proposed an excise tax on new development to ensure that county taxpayers are protected from the costs of major road projects needed to support the development.

5. Faced with a sour economy, revenue projections for 2010 look dreary. Give five examples of where the county can begin to look to scale back.

Well I think that we have put the county in a stable and sound financial position to weather one or two years of flat growth. As emergency measures we can first direct staff to strategically save money with short term cost cutting measures as was done this past year. Some ideas I have are the following:

- 1) strategically delay hiring on open positions and*
- 2) delay capital replacement projects and major maintenance*
- 3) strategically reduce services and eliminate positions.*
- 4) stop doing programs that might otherwise be done by our cities (see comment below)*
- 5) invest in technology that can save money by eliminating positions.*

For the past three years I have been proposing that the county site down with our cities and discuss the services and programs provided by the county and look for ways of streamlining county government or combining services so that the taxpayers win. I am sure that this project could yield some savings to the overall taxpayer in Johnson County be they to the city or the county. I will continue to push to overcome the inertia that has prevented this exercise from occurring.

It is an unfortunate fact that as times become more difficult the social service programs provided by the county become more important to the average person. It is therefore difficult in difficult times to reduce services to the potentially growing number of vulnerable persons. It is therefore important that the elected representatives demonstrate thrift and control over spending when times are better. I believe that I have demonstrated the solid judgment, stability and clear leadership to staff that I will only support a county that is operated efficiently at all times. My

desire to have staff create performance measures that are reported to the commission on a monthly basis is just one example of building measures of success and efficiency into the expenditure of public dollars.

6 Anything else you care to mention?

Over the past four years I have enjoyed the opportunity to work to improve our community for the people. My experience on the board helps me see how we can work even more effectively for the people. I hope to have the opportunity to continue working hard and serving the people of Johnson County because I know that I am the most qualified candidate for the District 2 position.