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Sent: Friday, April 18, 2008 3:18 PM
To: Mary Ann Barr
Subject: SANTA ROSA CHAMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

SONOMA COUNTY SUPERVISORIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE for April 2008

Please fill out the following questionnaire and return to the Santa Rosa Chamber no later than 5 pm on Thursday, April 17th. Please limit your responses to no more than 200 words per question.

The responses to this questionnaire will be posted on the Chamber website (www.santarosachamber.com) after the April 23 Good Morning Santa Rosa event.

1. For nearly a decade Sonoma County has lagged other California communities in economic and income growth. Yet the current and draft 2020 Sonoma County General Plan, unlike many other counties including Napa, does not have an economic development section to address job creation and future location of businesses. Should such an element be included in the plan?

Yes. Economic development is particularly relevant to the 5th District where we have little industry and need to create jobs that people can get to without long commutes.

Do you believe in the following statement? Why?

There needs to be a balance between enhancing a community's economy and protecting the environment. You can enhance both without being detrimental to either

As Executive Director of the Russian River chamber of Commerce, I became intimately aware that tourism, one of our County's major sources of jobs and revenue, is dependent on having an environment that will attract people to spend their leisure time in it. With proper planning, both the economy and the environment – and I am very concerned about both - can thrive. In the West County we need to become engaged in "Village Building" and in developing the infrastructure for electronically enabled cottage industries.

2. Board of Supervisors also serves as the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency. What do you see as the biggest obstacle to securing a sustainable water supply to meet General Plan needs for the County and for the Agency's customers?

We need to understand that water is a finite resource that needs to be both conserved and reused. Sonoma County has been late coming to this realization – Rohnert Park only recently installed meters. One key component of the solution is to gain access, in an environmentally responsible way, to the water in Lake Sonoma. This will require a significant pipeline project, but can be both an environmental and an economic asset.

3. Sonoma County has the worst rating for quality of County roads in the entire Bay Area, principally due to deferred road maintenance in the unincorporated area of the County. How do you propose to fund repairs, maintenance and improvements of local roads?

It is very tough to come in at the end of a process where my predecessors have done too much

“penny wise and pound foolish” deferral of maintenance. Our PVI is one of the lowest in the state. Until I know what the state is going to do to us in the May revision of the budget, I am not willing to spend the effort developing a specific plan. Once we can start budgeting, road improvement will be a priority. I might add that West County probably suffers more from poor road maintenance than do other districts.

4. Please state your position on the recent decisions by the County to adjust employee’s benefits. How would you address the OPED (Other Post Employment Benefits) issue?

This is another very unfortunate situation where my predecessors made decisions that had short term benefits but created unfunded long term liabilities. It is inexcusable that the liabilities were not funded just because the accounting rules at the time allowed them not to be carried on the balance sheet. The current retiree health plan is unsustainable. On the other hand, people have made life decisions, sometimes irreversible, based on promises that could not be kept. Changes in the plan are necessary, and I will try to implement them in a way that does as little harm to people as possible. But leaving the plan as is would not be an option.

5. The key to Santa Rosa’s Economic Health is our ability to implement Redevelopment areas throughout our City. Do you support Santa Rosa Redevelopment efforts?

That is the responsibility of the Santa Rosa City Council. If the council decides that tax increment financing is an appropriate mechanism to achieve blight removal and/or economic development, I would have no reason to oppose them.

Please return this questionnaire to the Santa Rosa Chamber, 637 First St. Santa Rosa, CA 95404, attention Mary Ann Barr or email at maryannb@santarosachamber.com.