

## 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 17<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://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?

**Absolutely. The private sector is the source of wealth and opportunity, and that fundamental truth should be addressed in the general plan.**

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

**I completely agree. When economic and environmental policies are based on facts and common sense, they should not conflict. All public policy should be based on facts, the rule of law and common sense, and pass two fundamental tests: is a public purpose being served? And does this respect and uphold individual rights?**

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?

**Water usage can generally be divided between imported water for households, and groundwater for agriculture. There is an adequate supply of imported water from the Russian River and Warm Springs Dam. Outflow is impeded politically, not physically, due to species protection. Sonoma County first needs to pressure state government for more rapid processing of application of increased outflow – the current processing estimate of 2017 is not acceptable.**

With respect to groundwater, there is initial evidence that aquifers are stressed. However, there has been insufficient monitoring, so there is no base of scientific data. Before any government action, there must be a system of groundwater monitoring undertaken for a scientifically significant time period. The Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management plan adopted by the county does this, and should be a model for other watersheds in the county.

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?

The larger question is fiscal management practices. Sonoma County spends the least on roads – by any measure used – of all counties in the North Bay and North Coast. The budget information available to the public is completely inadequate, and resembles nothing that a financial professional would recognize. The county's biggest problems are lack of transparency, convoluted fiscal management practices, and abdication of policy leadership by the board to staff. These structural problems need to be solved first.

If I am elected from the 1<sup>st</sup> District, there will be a new board majority. It should undertake an A to Z budget analysis of all 26 county departments, one by one, to identify and eliminate waste and inefficiencies. Current fiscal management appears to have put much budgetary control down the organization chart, to those with the least incentive to economize for the benefit of the organization. All of the county's challenges are fiscal, and we need to spend smarter.

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?

Although I sympathize with the plight of county retirees, I recognize that public benefits are proving to be actuarial time bombs. Local governments are headed in the direction of the American auto industry, where health care is now the highest cost component in the construction of a car. Public pension and health care plans need to be brought into line with those in the private sector, particularly with a shift from defined benefit plans to defined

contribution. Concurrent with this, I would advocate personal financial planning as an employee benefit.

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?

I support redevelopment efforts anywhere as a classic use of government to achieve benefits for all which none of us can accomplish individually. I would hope, however, that redevelopment will proceed much more efficiently than in the Springs Redevelopment Area of Sonoma Valley. Here, redevelopment in the Boyes Springs area has been talked about for 20 years. After the Redevelopment Advisory Commission was formed 6 years ago and it identified sidewalks along Hwy. 12 as a top priority, they are still not a reality. They have been in the design phase – bogged down in county and CalTrans bureaucracy – for all those six years, with the cost going from \$6 million to \$13 million.

**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](mailto:maryannb@santarosachamber.com).**