

1. *Why should you be elected to the county commission?*

I take the time to connect people and resources with community needs and to monitor their progress. Citizens in District 15 share their appreciation for the stronger collaborative relationship with Comstock Township, City of Galesburg and Kalamazoo County that exists due to my regular attendance at their monthly meetings, community project involvement and frequent voter interaction. I look forward to strengthening the partnership.

Taxpayer dollars need to be protected. I continually question proposed financial investments such as the arena and the \$500,000 mobile dental unit. I pursued the county's reinvestment into Drug Court, initiated the jail garden, assisted Galesburg DDA, responded to constituents impacted by the 2008 flood, monitored the Gilbert Drain improvements and have scrutinized the oil spill clean-up. I worked hard on the law enforcement and transit millage requests and am appreciative of the voter support.

I communicate regularly with state legislators on the need for elder abuse legislation, the danger of educational and law enforcement cuts, and the importance of reducing government costs. I am honored to serve the people and want to continue the work needed to sustain a vibrant Kalamazoo County.

2. *What is the biggest issue facing the county?*

Our biggest challenge is the financial crisis we face with tighter budgets and shrinking revenues. County Commissioners must understand the significant reduction in state and local revenues and calculate the 2011 budget accordingly. We need to re-assess what County government should and should not do by rethinking the mission, focusing on core functions, embracing technologies and organizational approaches that deliver true public value.

County commissioners must join forces with other community leaders and speak with one voice regarding the fiscal and social damage of unfunded State mandates as these mandates endanger local government. County commissioners must be active participants and help create a new statewide funding mechanism that provides adequate dollars to reinvest in our transportation infrastructure rather than depend upon the current failing gas tax structure. The investment in our infrastructure will create jobs, attract new businesses, increase property values, and save tax dollars.

We need to streamline county operations by centralizing services, improving information accessibility so residents are immediately connected with correct information and emphasizing customer service and satisfaction.

3. Are you in favor of allowing voters to decide whether taxes should be raised to help pay for the construction of an arena/event center in downtown Kalamazoo?

I support voter-driven government – representing the wishes of my district accurately and fairly has been a cornerstone of my first two years on the Kalamazoo County commission. My constituents and I agree that county government should not be in the business of owning or operating an arena/event center. County government must be financially responsible in tough times and not place county general funds in jeopardy. Increasing taxes for an unproven venture is risky business. The constituents of district 15 and I are in support of redeveloping the proposed area but not at the expense of taxpayers. I discuss this issue on a regular basis with my constituents. I believe their voice has been heard through my actions. The residents of district 15 have not indicated any interest in pursuing this project. I see no reason at this time to place the arena/event center excise tax question on the ballot. I will continue to listen to my constituents to ensure that their voices are heard.

4. Are you in favor of renovating and expanding the county jail?

I am a strong advocate for funding programs that intervene and prevent crime within our communities. I would prefer to direct additional monies to these important programs rather than increasing expenditures on inmate incarceration.

I do understand the safety needs for the jail renovation; however, I would prefer to see the structural safety deficiencies addressed rather than have the construction emphasis focused on increased jail inmate capacity. More beds require more personnel and I do not foresee the County general fund being able to support the additional staff expenses.

Currently there are too many variables that can impact the County general fund, *pending state arbitration changes, the loss of jail inmate mental health monies, the continued threat to eliminate State jail reimbursement and the risk to revenue sharing*; so I support the recent decision to defer the jail renovation project.

5. Are you in favor of keeping a 17 member board?

Discussion among a 17 member board is quite difficult and I am not in favor of retaining the current board size of 17 Commissioners. The real question that needs to be addressed is: ***What is the right number for a Board of Commissioners?*** The Michigan State statute states a county may have not fewer than 5 commissioners and no more than 35 commissioners on the

Board of Commissioners. I believe there is no magic number that will ensure that a Board of Commissioners operates perfectly. The size of the County board should be driven by the roles and responsibilities of a County Commissioner. The Reapportionment Committee must balance the size of the board between equal representation for all citizens county-wide and the ability for Commissioners to communicate and interact effectively. What is most important to remember in redistricting is that the final decision will affect Kalamazoo County for the next 10 years.