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Top Priorities

What are your three top priorities if elected to the Board of County Commissioners?

1. A Strong Community-Focused Economy. An economy that works for everyone requires housing for workers, predictable land-use rules, reliable infrastructure, and an environment where small businesses can grow and hire.
2. Community-Needs-Driven Public Health & Safety. Public safety depends on coordination, reducing service silos and bridging gaps. Law enforcement, emergency response, behavioral health, the justice system, family systems and housing all have a role to play but they can't exist in isolation.
3. Responsible Stewardship of County Resources and Land. This includes stewardship of land and that balance between private and public lands, urban and rural. Taxpayer dollars must be used strategically, transparently, and with clear connection to long-term outcomes, not short-term fixes.

Business Competitiveness & Regulatory Predictability

County governments play a key role in land use planning, permitting, and regional economic development. What role should Deschutes County government play in

supporting economic development and maintaining Central Oregon's competitiveness as a place for businesses to invest and create jobs?

The county government needs to promote sustainable growth that strengthens the county instead of straining it. This is achieved by creating operational efficiency and regulatory predictability.

1. **Align Growth and Infrastructure:** We must ensure development and policy decisions are aligned with infrastructure capacity, such as roads, water, and services, to prevent congestion, strain, and higher long-term costs.

2. **Predictable Land-Use:** We need to solve the underlying conflict that is perpetuating the cycle of endless land use battles and appeals. The county commission can then set a standard for implementing predictable land use rules and permitting processes that are timely and transparent. Historically, slow permitting, restrictive zoning, and constrained land supply have choked housing production and hindered economic opportunity.

3. **Fiscal Stewardship:** Use taxpayer dollars strategically and transparently to build public trust and invest in solutions that hold up over time.

Workforce Availability

Employers across Central Oregon report difficulty recruiting and retaining workers due to housing affordability, childcare access, and other cost-of-living pressures.

What actions should Deschutes County take to help increase the supply of workforce housing as well as access to childcare in the region?

The county must take a systems-focused approach, recognizing that issues like housing and behavioral health are interconnected with family support systems. The

county's role in housing is to responsibly plan growth to increase supply and stabilize prices:

Workforce Housing: We must increase supply by continuing infill within existing Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) across the housing continuum with the addition of mixed-use, live-work areas and commercial zones to foster economic opportunities. This while also streamlining the rural Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) process and non-prime resource (NPR) land application processes, consideration of small zone changes within existing NPR lands (like reducing 10-acre minimums to 5-acre minimums) to increase housing opportunities with minimal rural impact, and removing administrative hurdles to allow agricultural and service workers to reside where they are employed, such as allowing rural ADUs on agricultural zoning.

Childcare Access: The lack of accessible childcare exacerbates cost-of-living pressures. We should leverage county coordination to align providers and public/private partnerships, treating childcare access as an essential piece of community infrastructure necessary for a strong workforce pipeline and a stable economy.

Infrastructure That Enables Regional Growth

Rapid population growth in Central Oregon is increasing demand for infrastructure to support housing, job creation, and economic activity. What transportation investments or state highway priorities should Deschutes County advance, particularly related to Highway 97, to improve safety, reduce congestion, and support regional mobility?

Central Oregon's rapid population growth demands transportation decisions that are disciplined, systems-driven, and focused on long-term outcomes, not quick fixes. As Deschutes County continues to add housing, jobs, and economic activity,

U.S. Highway 97 has become a clear stress point in the regional system. Addressing safety, congestion, and mobility along this corridor and its adjoining corridors requires coordinated planning, responsible use of taxpayer dollars, and the willingness to make tough, forward-looking choices.

My approach starts with safety as the non-negotiable foundation of transportation policy. Highway 97 must function as a regional highway, not an accumulation of short-term compromises. That means prioritizing proven safety improvements such as access management, grade-separated interchanges at high-risk locations, and corridor-wide upgrades that reduce conflict between local traffic and high-speed through-movement. A systems-based approach recognizes that serious crashes are rarely random, they result from predictable design failures that can and should be corrected.

Congestion between Bend and Redmond illustrates why reactive, short-term thinking is not sufficient. Simply adding signals or piecemeal lanes without considering long-term growth patterns creates new problems and wastes public resources. Deschutes County must advocate for targeted capacity improvements where they provide real benefit, while coordinating land-use and transportation planning so infrastructure investments support sustainable growth rather than encouraging sprawl. Reducing local dependence on Highway 97 through parallel routes and improved east-west connections is a smarter, more cost-effective solution than continually overloading the highway itself.

Highway 97 is also a critical economic corridor, supporting freight movement, workforce mobility, and access to regional employment centers. Long-term solutions must account for how people and goods move across the entire system—not just during today's commute, but over the next several decades. That means designing infrastructure that accommodates freight, holds up under heavy use, and remains reliable as climate conditions change. Responsible stewardship of taxpayer

dollars requires investing once, investing wisely, and avoiding designs that will require costly rework in the future.

Finally, lasting solutions for regional mobility cannot rely on highways alone. A coordinated transportation system integrates transit, park-and-ride options, and safe pedestrian and bicycle access at key interchanges. This systems-focused approach improves access for workers, reduces congestion pressure, and strengthens regional resilience. Achieving it requires strong collaboration with ODOT, neighboring jurisdictions, and regional partners. Leadership here must value that coordination over ideology.

The guiding question is what creates the healthiest transportation system for the entire region over the long term. By applying disciplined, real-world leadership and systems thinking to Highway 97 and related investments, Deschutes County can improve safety, support economic growth, and ensure regional mobility keeps pace with Central Oregon's future.

Education & Workforce Readiness

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Strengthening Central Oregon's workforce pipeline requires more than isolated programs or short-term training initiatives. It demands a disciplined, systems-driven

approach that recognizes education, workforce readiness, and economic stability as interconnected parts of the same system. Deschutes County's role is not to duplicate what schools or employers already do, but to coordinate efforts so public investments produce durable, long-term outcomes for the region.

A healthy workforce system starts upstream. Investing early in our youth. Vocational education, mentorship, and opportunities that build skills, confidence, and a sense of purpose. These actions reduce costly downstream consequences such as chronic unemployment, justice system involvement, and reliance on public assistance. When youth have access to meaningful career pathways and trusted adult support, they are more likely to graduate, gain stable employment, and contribute to the regional economy. These early investments are not only socially responsible; they are fiscally responsible and reflect a long-term commitment to system health.

At the same time, workforce development must be coordinated, not fragmented. Deschutes County can play a critical convening role by aligning school systems, Central Oregon Community College, employers, workforce training providers, and social service agencies around shared labor-market priorities. Training programs should be clearly connected to real, local employment needs in healthcare, trades, public safety, technology, and other high-demand sectors.

Effective workforce strategy also requires making tough, practical decisions grounded in real-world conditions rather than ideology. That means focusing on outcomes like credential completion, job placement, and job retention. We need to avoid simply funding programs because they are well-intentioned. A systems approach emphasizes feedback loops, data, and continuous improvement so workforce investments adapt as the regional economy evolves.

Ultimately, the goal is a reliable pipeline from education to employment that supports both individual stability and regional economic resilience. By investing

early, coordinating across systems, and staying focused on long-term results, Deschutes County can help build a workforce that is prepared for today's needs and resilient enough to meet tomorrow's challenges. This is how public leadership moves beyond quick fixes and delivers lasting value for the entire community.

Balanced Environmental Stewardship & Economic Vitality

Deschutes County must balance competing priorities including housing availability, protection of agricultural lands, water use, rural open space, wildfire preparedness, and habitat preservation. How would you approach these tradeoffs, and what principles would guide your decisions when conflicts arise between increasing housing supply and preserving resource lands?

When competing priorities arise, my guiding principle will continue to be what decision best supports the long-term health of the entire system? I do not view economic vitality and environmental stewardship as a zero-sum game, but rather as two halves of a sustainable future for Deschutes County.

To address the housing crisis without sacrificing the rural character that defines our region, my approach focuses on strategic growth. We can increase supply and maintain affordability by prioritizing infill within Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) and strategically utilizing Non-Prime Resource lands (NPRs). By streamlining rural ADU permits and considering surgical zone changes within these NPR areas, we can provide necessary housing inventory while strictly minimizing the impact on our high-value agricultural and timber lands.

In terms of resource management, I believe in proactive sustainment rather than reactive crisis management. This is particularly vital for wildfire preparedness and

water security. For example, I am a strong advocate for incentivizing juniper removal. Because junipers act as "massive straws" in our aquifer system, removing them serves a triple purpose: it reduces volatile wildfire fuel, improves water recharge for our farmers and residents, and rehabilitates our natural ecosystems.

When conflicts arise, I will prioritize data-driven solutions that protect our natural resources while ensuring our workforce has a place to call home. My goal is to ensure that Deschutes County remains a place where the economy can thrive because the environment is protected, not in spite of it.

Regional Representation

If elected, how would you work with cities, regional organizations, and the state to advance Central Oregon's economic and infrastructure priorities? How will you ensure local employers and business organizations remain engaged in county decision-making?

To address Central Oregon's growth and infrastructure needs, I will approach governance through the lens of integrated leadership. We cannot afford to operate in silos; the challenges we face, from housing to transit, do not stop at city limits or county lines.

- Strengthening Regional Partnerships -

My approach to intergovernmental coordination is built on a mission-focused commitment to shared goals. Rather than making isolated decisions, I will work to align our efforts with cities, regional organizations, and state agencies to ensure our infrastructure priorities are synchronized. By establishing consistent, transparent communication channels, we can leverage state resources more effectively and ensure that regional projects, like wastewater expansion or highway improvements,

benefit the entire county ecosystem.

- Elevating the Voice of Local Employers -

A thriving economy requires more than just good intentions; it requires regulatory predictability. I view our local employers and business organizations as vital stakeholders with essential "boots-on-the-ground" experience. To keep them engaged, I will:

Integrate Direct Feedback: Leverage the firsthand expertise of business leaders to identify specific workforce challenges and regulatory bottlenecks.

Simplify the System: Use employer input to refine and streamline our permitting processes, moving toward a culture that values efficiency and collaboration.

Predictable Land Use: Work toward land-use rules that provide the certainty businesses need to invest in our region long-term.

By treating business organizations as active participants in the decision-making process rather than afterthoughts, we can ensure that Deschutes County remains competitive, sustainable, and focused on the health of our community-driven economy.