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Commissioner Seat # 3

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Top Priorities

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

Accountable representation: Local government should be responsive to the needs of its people, and run with integrity and transparency. As commissioner I will listen to multiple perspectives, weigh evidence, explain decisions, and spend tax dollars wisely. I will be accessible to the public, collaborate with elected officials, and adapt as circumstances change.

Safe and Healthy Communities: As we face an erosion of federal support systems, I will protect essential public health and safety, ensure access for all residents and fight food insecurity. I will seek secure and sustainable funding for public health and behavioral health care, law enforcement, and emergency response systems and defend our Healthy Schools Program.

Sensible Planning: As a former land use planner, I know the tools for creating thriving communities. In Deschutes County, we must manage growth wisely to protect rural lands and scarce water supply while also promoting the economic development and workforce housing we need. I will weigh trade-offs and seek practical solutions as we

site a new landfill, prepare for wildfire, and build the infrastructure we need to support our regional growth.

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?

It's incumbent upon local governments to create an environment that helps businesses thrive so area residents have local access to living wage jobs, goods and services. It's also essential to grow the tax base through economic development in the private sector so the public sector can afford to provide basic services like health care, infrastructure, and law enforcement. We need to diversify the regional economy to withstand unexpected changes in the international economy, adapt to climate change realities, and ensure working people can afford to live and thrive where they are employed. It's appropriate for the County to attract or incubate new enterprises and help existing businesses to grow. I applaud using public private partnerships like EDCO to leverage dollars and build relationships that attract and retain business and create jobs. I support using land use planning to locate business into areas with shared utilities to maximize efficiency while protecting rural lands. Finally, workforce development projects like more support for union apprenticeships, and expanding career technical education programs at our high schools and colleges are also appropriate ways to grow our own skilled workforce and attract related businesses, especially to the Innovation Hub alongside OSU Cascades.

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 current County Commission is not working as a partner with cities. As a commissioner, I would work more collaboratively with regional cities to plan for growth using urban reserves so utilities and other infrastructure are ready before construction and to promote more integration of commercial and residential development for more mixed use. The County could incentivize deed restricted housing to ensure availability of workforce housing, could offer county-owned parcels for affordable housing units, and could identify a percentage of properties they own to be offered at below market rate for sale to community land trusts with a track record of providing low-income housing options. The County could push the state to allow ADUs in all zones and could add more clarity to code on tiny homes. County EDCO and city Chambers could work with Early Childhood Education students at COCC to prepare to be business owners of childcare facilities, not just poorly paid employees of existing daycares. I'd like to see larger employers offer on-site daycare for employees as part of their site planning.

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?

The County should work to ensure robust State funding for our transportation needs. Specifically, we need to fix the poorly planned entry of Highway 20 into

Empire Road in Bend and to address the need for a four-way traffic signal at the intersection of Highway 126 and SW 35th. The region needs an airport shuttle and expanded ride options especially for very early and late flights in and out of RDM. Dedicated shuttle lines and ride sharing programs between area cities would also help reduce traffic for commuters. The County can collaborate with COIC to better plan transit routes from residential to commercial areas. There are over 20 bridges in need of correction or repair within the boundaries of Deschutes County, and 4 of those fall under County jurisdiction to address. Our region lacks a large auditorium. We need a performing arts center that can accommodate both local needs and attract national acts and audiences. This could be an excellent economic driver and if located centrally, could serve the larger region. Plenty more infrastructure needs that aren't transportation per se but are integral to economic growth, like energy infrastructure, wastewater treatment, and upgrades to the Fairgrounds and Expo Center.

Education & Workforce Readiness

Strengthening the regional workforce pipeline requires collaboration between employers, education providers, and public agencies. How should Deschutes County support partnerships with schools, colleges, and workforce training programs to strengthen the regional talent pipeline?

Deschutes County should continue to support existing career technical education partnerships with high schools and COCC, and could expand options into areas that our region needs by recruiting state investment in workforce training. EDCO could pair solar, wind, and geothermal companies with students and professors at OSU Cascades for collaboration at the Innovation Hub. The County could develop scholarships for students who agree to fill a regional niche alternative energy production and grid resilience makes sense here in the sunny high desert. Some of our local schools need robotics program leads. The County could pair industry

professionals with school clubs that give students marketable skills. Construction projects are sometimes stalled because of scarcity of critical skilled tradesmen in our area. The County could do more work with trade unions and their apprenticeship programs here locally, so we have the plumbers, steamfitters, electricians, and welders we need. We also have Heart of Oregon Corps and Habitat for Humanity that give younger people job readiness training. The County could channel into priority projects. Oregon's education system as a whole needs revamping to be attractive to companies looking for a state to relocate, but that is beyond the scope of The County Commission.

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?

As an undergrad preparing to be a land use planner, I studied Oregon's landmark land use laws and recognized the utility of an Urban Growth Boundary in protecting rural lands. Oregon is distinctive because cities are discrete and it matters that we continue to preserve high quality agricultural land and open space by channeling development into urban areas. However, urban areas need to be able to grow up and out. Deschutes County's population growth and impressive economic engine (Bend produces 85% of Central Oregon's GDP) must be accommodated with UGB expansions and urban reserves. Though I strongly oppose leapfrog development, I would not oppose every rezone, as some are reasonable and beneficial. When conflicts arise between competing land use goals, I would consider the location of

the proposal, proximity to existing development, the water and energy needs, the sensitivity of the existing habitat, and the community benefit of the proposal. Where rigidity of state law is consistently creating an insurmountable challenge, I would work with our state representatives to modify the law rather than disregard it. I prefer proactive solutions to endless appeals and litigation.

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?

I am a lifelong learner and approach differences in opinion with curiosity. As a social studies teacher and civics educator, I have coached civil discourse and collaborative problem-solving to help people find common ground. As a leader in my teachers' union, I helped shape our state legislative priorities and advocated to bring a better future to Oregon's young people. I have led state councils and represented Central Oregon at national conventions. And I know our elected leaders because I helped elect them. I continue to provide testimony on bills and give input on policy on a variety of issues. Once elected, I will regularly consult and partner with the local chambers and EDCO on economic development as a critical part of local governmental responsibility. I plan to advocate in Salem alongside our business community to ensure Central Oregon's needs are heard and will work with local leaders to identify priority projects for state and federal support. In addition, I will seek to increase public private partnerships that can help us navigate these challenging economic times and find creative solutions to our budget constraints.