

NORTH CLACKAMAS COUNTY CHAMBER QUESTIONNAIRE - COMMISSIONERS

The North Clackamas County Chamber of Commerce is made up of more than 600 businesses, representing more than 26,500 employees, located in the Clackamas County and Metro area. We may be considering endorsing in your current race, and need to know more about your beliefs to assist us in making our recommendations. Please complete the following questionnaire and return promptly.

Responses to these questions may be the basis of the topics at the Candidates' Issues Events at which you may be invited to speak. Questions at the issues event may include any of the following.

Responses to this questionnaire will also be posted on the Chamber's website, www.yourchamber.com.

Please return this by email to ceo@yourchamber.com before Monday, March 1, 2010.

Please limit your response to each question to no more than 100 words.

Name Robert (Bob) Austin

Office Sought: Clackamas County Commissioner Position No. 2 Party Affiliation (if applicable) Democrat

Phone Number (503) 880-8164 Fax No. N/A email robertjain@comcast.net

- 1.) What are the major issues facing the office you are seeking and how will you respond to those issues if elected?

Jobs: Maintaining existing businesses and attracting new ones that provide for family wage jobs by actively working with educational institutions and training organizations within the County such as Clackamas Community College, Workforce Investment Council, and Oregon Institute of Technology to ensure their viability for strategically providing training opportunities for displaced workers, particularly veterans, and meeting the ever changing workforce needs for local businesses.

Supporting strong and vibrant Communities: Encouraging walkable communities with housing, schools, work opportunities, shopping and recreational opportunities closely centered where people live. Using the appropriate tools such as urban renewal to build needed and desired infrastructure such as light rail, other transit, commercial centers, parks, trails and other capital improvements to add to the livability of our communities.

A Healthy Environment: This includes wise planning for growth while preserving farmland and open space for our future generations. Metro's urban and rural reserves process that Clackamas County just completed through approval of an IGA will provide for the county's future urban needs for jobs and housing while protecting prime farmland and natural geographic features for the next 50 years.

- 2.) What is your solution to funding the county adequately to develop and maintain needed infrastructure?

Clackamas County can do so by prudently managing the financial resources available to the County such as property tax revenue, enterprise funds, state shared revenue and the ability to use urban renewal to provide funding for needed public infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, water and wastewater infrastructure, parks and open space. As federal and state resources are more limited in

these difficult economic times, we need to be more self sufficient to provide both the needed infrastructure and the funding to maintain it over time.

One of the tools that other cities and counties, including Tualatin and Washington County, have used is a transportation utility fee that is assessed in an equitable manner over all users of the transportation system. I feel it is worthwhile for Clackamas County to explore the use of this funding mechanism to cost-effectively maintain our aging roads before they become too costly to repair and need complete replacement at a much higher cost to all of our citizens. Of course any establishment of such a new funding tool will entail discussion with all of our citizens including how much would be needed to be raised and how and where these funds would be invested.

- 3.) How would you recommend funding transportation in the county – both maintenance and capital?

Capital projects such as the first phase of the sunrise project near highways 224 and 205 and east to 122nd can be accomplished in part by cost-sharing and partnering with others such as federal and state agencies. A very important resource for the county is the ability to form urban renewal districts with community based project plans that use bonding authority based on the incremental growth of property tax within the district over a set time period such as 20-years. This tool levies no new taxes on residents or businesses and provides for capital construction of many types of needed public infrastructure as described and agreed to in the urban renewal plan.

Maintenance of our transportation infrastructure can be provided through existing sources such as the gas tax, franchise fees and through development of new funding tools such as a transportation utility fee, as described in my answer to question no. 2 above. Clackamas County has a rapidly growing backlog of transportation maintenance needs which will only continue to go unchecked unless we seek out other sources of funding.

- 4.) Will you encourage unincorporated areas to incorporate or join cities?

I believe it is up to the will of citizens in unincorporated areas to decide whether they desire to be part of a city or form their own city. The County is fiscally unable to provide services at an urban level to citizens in unincorporated areas. Many parts of the unincorporated urbanized County residents pay additionally for water, waste water, and higher levels of public safety through special districts. Other than through the County Commissioners, these citizens currently lack a locally elected governance structure. These citizens look to Community Planning Organizations and other non-elected advisory groups for advice on land use issues. The county can and will provide some level of technical support and other information to those citizens wishing to consider incorporation. I also suggest they seek guidance from their neighboring cities as well as from the League of Oregon Cities who represents the 242 incorporated cities across Oregon.

- 5.) Business is seeking an environment that is supportive of growth and expansion. What obstacles does it face and what will you do to assist in overcoming these obstacles?

Businesses need a healthy climate in which to expand including adequate land, public infrastructure such as roads and/or rail to ship products to market and for their raw materials. Most importantly, an educated and well trained workforce is essential for businesses to succeed particularly as we move into an uncertain and rapidly changing business environment that is more dependent upon a highly educated and creative workforce. The county has some excellent training institutions such as Clackamas Community College and the Oregon Institute of Technology (and neighboring institutions like Marylhurst and Portland State University) which in concert with the workforce Investment Council can provide needed training in a wide variety of areas including health care, renewable energy, mechanical trades and service industries.

Additional land is also now available for growth of businesses over the next 50-years with the newly approved IGA with Metro that reserves urban land suitable for industrial expansion. Many of these areas are adjacent to transportation corridors and are also close to urban centers thereby reducing the transportation and commuting time costs for our citizens.

6.) What will you do to promote and encourage job development in the county?

The board of county commissioners has recently purchased several small individual parcels within the Clackamas Industrial area along Hwy 224 for the purpose of reserving them for future businesses. Clackamas County has many vacant and underutilized areas that are suitable for existing businesses to expand into and also for recruitment of new businesses. By keeping employment areas close to where people live we can help keep costs to our citizens, for housing and transportation, at a minimum.

I have also supported and encouraged our educational institutions such as Oregon Institute of Technology to stay within the County as they look for additional space for their students, many of which are being trained in the renewable energy field which will be a critically important part of our future high tech and creative edge sector businesses in the County. We need to be prepared for our rapidly changing business needs and requirements including providing a highly skilled workforce so Clackamas County can be highly competitive and attractive to these high paying businesses.

7.) List briefly your biographical information limited to age, former/current elected positions, years in State/region/County/district, community involvement.

Age: 59

Elected Positions:

Current: Clackamas County Commissioner, January 2009 - Present

Community Involvement/Former Elected Positions

Mayor, City of Estacada, 1999 - 2008.

City Councilor, City of Estacada, 1998.

Estacada Community Foundation, Board Member, 2000 - 2004

Estacada Grower's Market, Board Member, 2005 – 2008

Chair, Estacada Urban Renewal District – 2008

Clackamas County Committees:

Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C-4) Executive Board, 2003 – 2004

Clackamas County Coordinating Committee Member (C-4), 2002 - 2008

Mt. Hood Economic Alliance, Board Member, 2001 - 2008

Complete Communities Steering Committee – 2000 – 2001

League of Oregon Cities:

Board Member, 2003 – 2005

Vice President, 2006

President, 2007

Immediate Past President, 2008

Other Regional Committees:

PGE Roundtable, City of Portland, 2003 - 2004

Oregon DEQ Blue Ribbon Commission, 2003 – 2005

Metro Policy Advisory Committee, November 2007 – 2008

Portland Creative Capacity Steering Committee – 2007 – 2008

Metro Urban/Rural Reserves Steering Committee – 2008

Awards and Recognition:

Mayor's Leadership Award, Small City, 2007 – Oregon Mayor's Association.

Administrator's Excellence Award, March 2008 – Bonneville Power Administration.

Years in State/region/County/district: 23 years in Clackamas County, Oregon