

Supervisor Candidates Answer Questions

Amador Ledger Dispatch
The Candidates
May 12, 2016

The Ledger Dispatch recently sent a list of 11 questions to the six candidates for seats on the Amador County Board of Supervisors. The candidates were asked to keep their responses down to a total of 700 words, and all six made a concerted effort to do so. Ultimately, a bit of leeway was allowed. The questions are listed below, followed by the candidates' answers, by district, then alphabetically. Not all candidates answered all of the following questions.

- 1) What have been your major accomplishments as a supervisor, and/or what are goals you'd like to achieve as a supervisor during the next four years?
- 2) The county has allegedly spent more than \$2 million fighting the creation of new casinos. Should the county continue these legal battles?
- 3) The Pine Grove area is currently divided among four supervisorial districts. Do you think anything should or could be done to ensure that most or all of Pine Grove is in one district?
- 4) Do you think Amador County should establish design standards for commercial projects in unincorporated areas?
- 5) What is or should the county be doing about the condition of its roads, recently rated as the worst in the state? And should it regulate or prohibit ridge-top building?
- 6) What are the most critical issues in your district?
- 7) Amador County has a sign ordinance that limits the size and location of signs. Do you think it should be strictly enforced?
- 8) Do you hold out hope for completion of an updated Amador County General Plan in the foreseeable future? How would you go about achieving that?
- 9) What sets you apart from the other candidate or candidates running in your district?
- 10) What do you think can be done to improve Amador County's economic and employment situation?
- 11) How should the county plan for and respond to the extensive bug- and drought-killed tree mortality issue affecting private property and county infrastructure?

District 1 candidate Pat Crew, running unopposed, said, "As a new supervisor, one of my goals will be to continue on a path of fiscal discipline, as employed during my time on the Jackson City Council. You simply cannot spend money you don't have. I am also very interested in the tree mortality question and what effective means can be implemented to help alleviate this problem, as fire protection is on the top of everyone's list. Another goal is to listen to all who come before the Board, treat them with respect, and make a trip to the speaker's podium something not to dread — something I believe

we have achieved at Jackson City Council. As I have said before, I think a three-minute speaking limit is too short. I believe a five-minute limit makes more sense.

A comment on the Buena Vista legal issues would only be a guess either way, since I have not been privy to the closed sessions on this issue. I have said that, according to what I read in L/D, it would take a tremendous sales job to convince me to spend monies needed elsewhere on more litigation with the information I have now.

At several meet-and-greets, where the issue of Pine Grove representation has come up, I proposed a scenario to consider as a result of the 2020 census. I predict population growth in Lone and Plymouth. This will start the discussion to realign districts, which may re-draw Districts 2 and 4 westward and start to unify the Pine Grove area into one district. Realignment is a slow process, but I believe this will ultimately occur.

Roads are definitely on the “must repair” list, but how to proceed? There are many ideas on the table for funding, including grants, road taxes and an increase in gas taxes. At this point, I don’t pretend to know how to get some of these funds directed to rural roads, but it will be one of my primary concerns.

I feel I am uniquely qualified for District 1 Supervisor because of my broad range of experiences. These include 38 years as a business owner in Jackson and seven years on the Jackson City Council, with four years as mayor. I also have served on two county decision-making bodies: LAFCO and the Amador Air District board. I was raised in Amador County and raised my own family here. This is my home and its future is very important to me.

In District 1, the major issues, aside from fire protection and road conditions, are homelessness, vacant buildings in our downtown, and the drug culture in our area.

Preserving our rural and historic character is important to county residents and our tourism industry, but I don’t believe in over-regulation of small business. In Jackson, we have focused on educating our businesses on the city sign ordinance, rather than enforcement. That has been successful and I think that’s the way to go in unincorporated areas, as well.

Yes, I hold out hope for an adoption of the General Plan sometime later this year. I know the BOS authorized more monies to finish answering some 1,200 issues that are required by law to be addressed. I understand the process is somewhere near 85 percent complete, and ready to move into its final hearings before adoption.

At one time, Amador County had an economic development department, and possibly it is time to resurrect that position. We have quite a few groups working on aspects of economic development; the Chamber of Commerce, city groups, Business Councils, etc., but having a central point within the county structure to send, share or develop ideas seems to me to be a positive first step. Another important group is the Amador Community College Foundation. I fully support whatever education that be can be provided locally, especially when that leads directly to better job opportunities. A better-educated work force will help attract new businesses to Amador County.

District 2 Challenger Amber Hoiska provided these answers:

1 - Goals I hope to have inspired more citizens to take part in our local governing. I want to be approachable, to inspire others to action and to ask what they can contribute, whether on a committee, at a workshop or in a council seat. I hope for a comprehensive transportation plan to address traffic concerns in Lone and Pine Grove. I hope to have increased technology available to connect our citizens and support business development. As a board, we will be more transparent, have more outreach and workshops to answer the valid questions and concerns of the community that have become so divisive over the years. What prompted me to challenge myself and the incumbent for this seat was my desire to restore a sense of altruism, civility and democracy to Amador; to be the change I want to see in Amador politics.

2 - New casinos We should not continue to file appeals when federally mandated conditions have been proven in court. I have managed business transactions for construction projects at the Jackson Rancheria and none of the standard process of law applies, because it is recognized as tribal land. You put aside the paperwork and hammer out an agreement and trust that it will be fair and equitable, which it was. It's simply time to better manage funds now that criteria have legally been met to claim the 67 acres of Buena Vista as tribal land; it's over.

3 - Pine Grove I would like to see Pine Grove unified and given autonomy by having one Supervisor to represent their needs and concerns.

4 - Design standards Yes, I believe we need to maintain the small-town appeal in our county and part of that is having design oversight and architectural standards to provide a cohesive and desired aesthetic.

5 - Roads We need to better use the transportation taxes and mitigation fees to address the areas that have been neglected for years. We have to recognize that they are our everyday needs. We do need regulation on ridge-top building, lest we lose what has been the source of wealth for this region.

6 - Critical issues Residents do not want to destroy a beautiful untouched ridge of grazing land to put in a proposed asphalt plant at Newman Ridge. It's unnecessary, as well. The litigation with the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me Wuk Indians is at a critical juncture, with the choice to file another appeal, adding to the millions in legal expense. We have had county layoffs and furloughs, yet are sparing no expense in litigation. We have 800 homes slated for Lone and the impact on our deteriorating roads is critical, including the ongoing parking and traffic issues by our elementary school, the largest in the county. The City Council and AWA are cooperating to replace the leaking water line at Howard Park. Our vacant Main Street is critical, because it negatively impacts the businesses that remain. I am impressed with our city leadership in Amador City and Lone and look forward to seeing who steps up to fill vacating council seats in November.

7) - Sign ordinance Not only are there county ordinances, but city as well. Like most enforcement, we need to consider the resources required to do so.

8 - General Plan I am inherently an optimist, so yes, I hold out hope for completion. Our General Plan is from 1967 and was last updated in 1973. We need to better address the EIR's and comments and concerns that are delaying progress. We have to make some compromises and focus on where we can find common ground.

9 - Sets you apart My 20-year career in financial risk management has provided me with technical and executive skills to better manage the fiscal complexities facing our county. I have extensive experience with litigation and finding mutually beneficial solutions without being mired in lengthy lawsuits. I have two small children my husband and I are raising in the City of Lone, and I uniquely understand the needs of working families and young families.

10 - Employment We need reliable, high speed internet and cell phone service. Without these two functions of any business, we can't attract young entrepreneurs or an established business headquarters. We need to support small businesses and that includes frequenting them. We need to put our money where our values are and support the businesses we want to see in our community.

11 - Tree mortality Prevention is the best method for bark beetles and, of course, we're seeing the devastating and lingering effects of the Butte Fire and the years-long drought we've been experiencing. We need to realize that we are more likely than not to continue to have these environmental impacts and budget accordingly, possibly looking at state or federal grants or other avenues to address the urgency for the tree removal.

District 2 Supervisor Richard Forster gave these answers:

1 - Accomplishments As President of the California State Association of Counties, I have helped Amador County to obtain a \$17 million grant to expand our jail. I've worked hard to approve projects that will provide jobs for my district and provide a balance between agriculture and industry. We need good-paying blue collar jobs, in addition to jobs from CDCR and CAL FIRE. I've worked to help build tourism, form a countywide recreation department, and advocate for increased fire funding for local agencies. I intend to see the General Plan completed, continue efforts to deal with tree mortality, and maintain our annual, regionally unique, balanced county budget.

2 - New casinos I oppose actions of tribes to unlawfully affect the status of land to facilitate the construction of casinos. Many impacts are felt from casino operations. The county (4 supervisors in favor, 1 recused) is opposing the Buena Vista Rancheria attempt to approve a casino because the Board believes the property in question is ineligible for gaming. The county is also litigating the attempt to take land into trust in Plymouth, which we feel is a clear case of reservation shopping. This has nothing to do with aboriginal rights. When there are factors pointing to illegality, I feel the county is compelled to challenge such tribal actions. A former Undersheriff stated that the advent of casino operations in Amador County caused crime to increase exponentially, and the impacts are rarely fully mitigated. Other members of the Board of Supervisors agree that the costs to county residents to challenge illegal gaming is money well spent.

3 - Pine Grove Short of Pine Grove incorporating as a city, which I believe is a bad idea, I have not heard a massive outcry from voters for change. There will always be people dissatisfied with their representation. Their prerogative is to do as they are doing now – vote.

4 - Design standards I am in favor of holding workshops to discuss this concept. I believe we can formulate standards to accommodate all sides. I favor letting a proposal

go through the proper channels (TAC committee, Planning Commission) and then the decision is made based on public input and common sense.

5 - Roads The roads in our county and across the state are deteriorating due to loss of funding. I am working with our state association of counties to advocate for Republicans and Democrats to set aside party differences and work for the common good. On May 19, I will lead a rally and press conference of county and business leaders at the State Capitol to urge legislators to act now to help our state and counties deal with the funding shortfall.

6 - Critical issues I have been an active member of my community for 34 years. I am an officer of the Lone Business & Community Association, a member on the Lone Rotary Club, Preston Castle Foundation and hospital foundation boards. I was on the Amador County Fair Board for 17 years. I attend lone and Amador City Council meetings regularly, and nearly all Camanche Park and Camanche Homeowner's meetings. I participate in my community because I enjoy it, not because I'm running for supervisor!

7) - Sign ordinance The most critical issues are: dealing with the ARSA-lone agreement dispute and wastewater disposal; ensuring CDCR adheres to recent commitments negotiated prior to construction of the infill project; working towards a positive resolution of gaming disputes; and leading the discussion of the tree mortality issue.

8 - General Plan Enforcement of the sign ordinance is complaint-driven. The county runs on a tight budget and I do not see a change in our current policy. I do think that all citizens, whether they live in the cities or the county, should comply with sign ordinances.

9 - Sets you apart The Amador County General Plan will be completed shortly. This will require all parties to sit down at the table and discuss the issues. This will happen if people and groups decide to work towards a win-win resolution and accept compromise.

10 - Employment I have supported increased funding for tourism and projects that will provide people with an above-average living wage. Both of these are part of the solution, but more needs to be done. We are actively promoting broadband and other technology to make our county more attractive.

11 - Tree mortality I serve as co-chair of our Amador County tree mortality core planning team and as a member of the State Tree Mortality Task Force. Our Board has declared a state of emergency and now will adopt a tree mortality plan. Because of our strong advocacy, Amador County has just been accepted as a provisional high mortality county. A priority is to protect vital infrastructure and have access to resources to get dead trees out of the forest.

District 4 Challenger Frank Axe provided these answers:

1 - Goals My top priorities are to: improve fire and other public safety; strengthen and diversify our local economy while protecting our quality of life; support critical services for seniors, children, veterans and adults; ensure that county government is efficient and accountable; and restore respect, inclusion and civility to county government.

2 - New casinos I opposed additional casinos here, but it's becoming clear that Amador County is unlikely to win its Buena Vista Casino lawsuit. The supervisors should have an independent, expert attorney assess their case. If there is no real chance of winning, the board should negotiate an agreement with the tribe to address local concerns. We can't afford to keep throwing money at a lawsuit we can't win.

3 - Pine Grove I am committed to keeping communities intact. The supervisors have made no effort to do that for Pine Grove. I support forming a citizen redistricting commission to start work on this problem so we're ready for the next census. Meanwhile, I will hold regular town hall meetings and office hours in Pine Grove.

4 - Design standards Yes. People love and visit our county because it's a beautiful, authentic, rural place. Commercial design standards would help us maintain our small-town identity and quality of life, and keep Amador from becoming "Anywhere, USA." I support county commercial design standards similar to those in our cities.

5 - Roads We must stop squandering money that could be used for roads on mistakes like the Health and Human Services Building lease, a casino lawsuit that may not be viable, expensive consultants, and excessive county supervisor compensation. We also need a county grantwriter to seek funds for road repair and other purposes. We need to develop a more-prosperous economy to provide additional revenues, too. Local residents want to protect the scenic bowl that contains Sutter Creek. The city policy is to protect ridgelines. The county should support that. I support adding policies to the county general plan to conserve scenic viewsheds, provided the county also develops ways to pay landowners for scenic easements.

6 - Critical issues See my answers to #1.

7 - Sign ordinance Yes. The sign ordinance is intended to protect our county's character and scenic beauty.

8 - General Plan After more than 10 years in the making, the general plan update is a mess. The draft plan will lead to more than 30 significant impacts, including harm to local agriculture, air quality, wildlife, habitat and fire safety. State fire officials and others have called the plan inadequate. The supervisors' failure to develop a good plan threatens our quality of life and fails to provide the certainty businesses need to invest here. I would bring people together to make sure the plan reflects what the citizens said they wanted: protect scenic beauty, agriculture, and open space; keep development in towns; and protect private property rights. We should have a plan that protects the county and helps it prosper.

9 - Sets you apart My life experience and skills have prepared me to be an outstanding supervisor. I grew up in a military family and lived all over the country. I had successful careers in industry and education. As an industry team leader and researcher for companies like Johnson & Johnson, I developed and marketed products, managed personnel, executed contracts and oversaw budgets. I know how to produce results on time and under budget. I will listen to and work with everyone, regardless of who they are or how long they've lived here.

10 - Employment Amador County needs a stronger local economy with more family-wage jobs. We need better job training and educational opportunities, a supportive business environment, and to maintain and enhance vital business sectors like agriculture and tourism. I will bring together diverse community interests to develop a countywide, long-term economic development plan. We need to identify the real opportunities for new and existing businesses and attract outside investment.

11 - Tree mortality We need to do as much as we can to remove the dead and dying trees that pose a threat to homes; work effectively with groups like the Amador Firesafe Council; and seek state and federal funding. In the long term, we need to support the cleanup and restoration of our forests. We should encourage value-added businesses that use small-diameter trees and brush. That will put people to work while creating healthier forests for our future.

District 4 Supervisor Louis Boitano gave these answers:

1 - Accomplishments I am proud of the fact that during my terms on the board, Amador County has maintained a balanced budget, despite historically hard economic times. I am very proud of helping identify and fund the fuel break that saved an additional 50,000 acres, including Pine Grove, from burning in the Butte Fire. We need more of these. I supported and helped pass Measure M to fund paid firefighters. Also, during my very first term, the county got out of the hospital business. Hospitals are best left to the health care professionals. I lobbied for the Sutter Creek bypass, which has eased the bottleneck congestion on Main Street in Sutter Creek, making it more business-friendly. As for the future, I want to get Phase One of the Pine Grove Corridor Project started. That is a public safety and business-enhancing project that will make Pine Grove a safer place

to live. I will continue to support fire-wise and fire-safe communities, work on road improvements and continue to protect our rural lifestyle.

2 - New casinos Back in 2005, the majority of the voters in this county let their Supervisors know that they don't want any more casinos. I do think we have a great chance of prevailing in our fight to uphold the will of the voters.

3 - Pine Grove During my first term, I brought that to the board and was told the districts need to be close in population numbers. There may be an opportunity in the next census to look at redistricting.

4 - Design standards Priority for the Planning Department right now is finishing the General Plan, re-doing the housing element and updating the airport land use element. Then we can focus on design standards in unincorporated areas. I am for design standards.

5 - Roads I don't believe we have the worst roads in the State. We are lobbying our State and Federal legislators to fund local road improvements. We set as much money as we can aside for our roads and manage our resources carefully. We are prioritizing projects for public safety. Personally, I don't care for ridgetop building, but it boils down to property rights.

6 - Critical issues The most critical issues in District 4 right now are fire readiness and public safety and working to eradicate the bark beetle infestation killing thousands of local trees. I think we should be proactive and create an economic development position like we used to have before the economic downturn. I support Veterans Services and advocate tirelessly for seniors in my district. Also, a balanced budget is crucial.

7 - Sign ordinance I think we should relax the sign ordinance to help promote businesses in these challenging economic times.

8 - General Plan We are working right now to carefully address the 1,840 comments on the General Plan. Most of those comments are from the same environmental group. I believe all comments deserve a response. That makes for a good General Plan. The planning department is one of the busiest departments in the county. The final product is coming.

9 - Sets you apart A proven track record of balancing the budget, decades of experience in fire safety and emergency services, decades of local government experience, extensive knowledge of Amador County water rights, these are things that make me uniquely qualified to represent my district. At this point, the network I have built over the years, working with community leaders from all over the State, is a real resource for our Board.

10 - Employment As I said earlier, I want to bring back a county economic development position to help any businesses wanting to open or locate in Amador County. Right now, we have a real opportunity to develop our tourism and agritourism industries. We will continue working with our broadband partners to bring high speed internet. Our local long-term economic plan needs to include natural resources.

11 - Tree mortality The county is a member of a tree mortality task force working to identify a long-term plan and solution to this new threat. We'll continue to lobby for funding to help property owners unable to afford the cost of removing these hazardous trees. This is a health and safety issue. We want the State to use the local SRA (aka fire tax) money to help fund this fight.

District 4 Challenger Gwen Clayton gave these answers:

1 - Goals I am not the incumbent, but I have had several accomplishments at the county as a rank-and-file employee. When I left my post as clerk for Amador LAFCO, I was presented a Resolution recognizing my contributions to the commission in the areas of efficiency, quality and customer service. At my full-time job as an administrative assistant, I have implemented several processes that have helped increase workload productivity and brought revenues into the county. My first goal in the next four years is to ensure Amador's economic recovery, so that working families do not have to leave the county to find good-paying jobs. We can do this by actively researching and finding companies that are looking to expand or move, then marketing the county's assets to them. We can also do this for locally owned businesses seeking SBA loans or help with business planning and/or marketing plans. Our local community college effort - Amador College Connect - will be a major player in this effort, as will the Chamber of Commerce. Between my experience in marketing and public relations, as well as my

degree in Public Administration, I have the skills, education and experience to accomplish these goals.

2 - New casinos We need to stop the bleeding. Measure I was placed on the ballot for a special election during an odd year (2005), with low voter turnout. It was an advisory vote only — not legally binding. It asked, “Do you approve of the establishment of any more casinos in Amador County?” There was no fiscal or other analysis done. That was three years before the economy crashed, when the top three local issues were fire, roads and casinos. I do not want another casino in Amador County any more than I want another Dollar General, but I think it’s time for the county to cut its losses.

3 - Pine Grove Every 10 years, the districts are drawn based on US Census Bureau guidelines, e.g., “In establishing the boundaries of the supervisorial districts the board may give consideration to: (a) topography, (b) geography, (c) cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of territory, and (d) community of interests of the supervisorial districts.” I don’t see how Jackson (District 1) or Plymouth (District 5) are similar to Pine Grove. One or both of those districts might be able to give up some parcels. I think all supervisors who have responsibility for Pine Grove should be actively engaged in the Pine Grove community.

4 - Design standards When I worked in the Planning Department, one planner developed some commercial design review standards, well-received by the public, but never adopted. I would like to revisit those guidelines as a way to ensure our unique character, while making sure they weren’t so strict that mom and pop would have difficulty complying.

5 - Roads We need to direct funding away from high-risk litigation and put that money into our roads. We need to sell non-taxable property. We need to actively pursue economic opportunities to bring in new revenues for road repair.

6 - Critical issues I have seen how public policy plays out in the real world. I have analyzed several county operations and identified areas that could be improved. As the wife of a disabled combat veteran, I know first-hand what military families endure. As a mother who raised a child in Amador County, I know how hard it is to balance work and family in our modern world. I have been deeply engaged in this community for 12 years. I talk to people of all backgrounds. I have worked hard for Amador County, learning the issues and having a presence in this community. I view an elected official as a type of government contractor whose contract renews every four years. I will never take your vote for granted.

11 - Tree mortality We all saw the effects of 2015, the worst fire season in history. The Rural County Representatives of California counted 10.5 million trees as lost in our region, compared to only 300,000 trees in 2014. One way to fix this issue is to obtain USDA grant funding created in 2014 for the 11 California counties facing this issue — Amador is one of them. Another way is to work with the California Department of Resources to expand the wood products market in California. This is an area where Amador County can lead the state by example. Last November, Governor Brown issued an Emergency Proclamation allowing for expedited action so contracts for new forest bioenergy facilities receiving feedstock from high hazard zones can be executed within

six months. Amador County is centrally located, a perfect place for these types of facilities.

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