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PROGRESSIVE PEORIA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE CANDIDATE SURVEY

Peoria City Council at large survey

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Please include a resume and any campaign literature that you would like to share with the Progressive Peoria PAC.

What are your top three priorities if elected?

My top three priorities are 1) holding the line on property taxes and instead focusing on expanding the tax base through enhanced business retention efforts and attraction of new business, 2) strengthening our older neighborhoods and our core downtown; and (3) supporting the necessary public safety measures to make Peoria a safer place to live.

What are the key business issues in the city and what will you do to address these issues?

One of the key business issues is keeping the property tax rate affordable for our existing businesses. If elected, I will continue to hold the line on any increase in property taxes. Another key issue is improving the perception of Peoria to promote a more positive business climate for customers. The city should work with the Economic Development Council and the Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote Peoria. I will support initiatives that do just that and my past record underscores my commitment to such efforts. Finally, I will work to ensure that the city services necessary for our businesses to function are top-notch and delivered in a fair and equitable manner.

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What will you do to make Peoria city government more effective?

This is a very general question. Effective as related to what? City government affects our day to day life. In order to be most effective, city government should be thoughtful, responsive, flexible, ethical, exhibit leadership, and occasionally exhibit restraint. I will strive every day to exhibit those traits as a member of the City Council.

What do you believe needs to be done to make Peoria City Hall more business friendly and how will you accomplish it?

City Hall, while it has made some efforts in the past to untangle the various bureaucratic mazes that one must maneuver through when conducting business with City Hall, can and should always be looking for more efficient and less confusing methods for businesses to access information in order to address their service issues.

What do you see as key budget issues facing the City of Peoria? Would you consider alternate sources of revenue other than a real estate tax increase? If so, what alternative source do you prefer?

I am not in favor of a real estate tax increase. Key budget issues for the City are not much different than those that face the business community. Personnel, benefits, and health care are big ticket items for the City as they are for most businesses. The City is growing geographically and the challenge is how to best continue to provide the necessary city services when the costs to provide them are escalating. I will always consider alternative sources of revenue, but it is impossible to identify a source of revenue without knowing the need that the City is trying to address. A better approach is to encourage and support economic development as a means to address the need for increased revenue.

How will you work to develop and maintain a cooperative intergovernmental relationship with other local units of government, particularly that of Peoria County and Peoria Public Schools?

Being a public official is not easy. It is important that we respect our fellow officials and work together because our actions impact each other. Communication is key. If the local public bodies who are all working on behalf of the same constituency are communicating, then chances are they are working together, or, at the very least, listening to one another. Liaisons between public bodies are a good idea and it is also imperative that the leaders of each

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respective public body meet and talk on a regular basis. The people of Peoria are not best served when there is little or no cooperation between public bodies. The intergovernmental efforts on the part of the City, the County, and the Park District, in conjunction with the private efforts of the Springdale Foundation to restore Springdale Cemetery are a good illustration of what can be done when such bodies work together.

What is your opinion on the Heart of Peoria Commission's proposed form based code for targeted areas of the City?

I am very much in support of the efforts to construct a form based code in addition to being very supportive of the overall work of the Commission. One size does not necessarily fit all and Peoria needs to be creative in order to address some of the zoning and land use issues that are standing in the way of progress in our older neighborhoods and our core downtown.

What do you believe the City should do to attract and retain businesses in the City?

We need to develop a "Red-Carpet" strategy that involves representatives from the City and other entities such as the EDC and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, in addition to some of our business leaders. We have done it on an occasional ad-hoc basis, for instance, such as when we were courting March Madness. But we need to formalize the process and not just roll it out for new business, but also for existing business as they consider expansion efforts, or perhaps more importantly, as they consider abandoning Peoria or the Peoria area.

What is your position on the use of cumulative voting for the at-large council positions?

Cumulative voting is the current method of electing the city's at-large representatives. It will only be changed if the proponents of the lawsuit against the City choose to petition the Court to change the voting process which was a portion of the settlement of the lawsuit. This is not a matter over which the City Council has any control.

What is your position on City funding for the Economic Development Council of Central Illinois?

It is imperative that the City fund the Economic Development Council. It is also helpful if other municipalities in Central Illinois provide some funding to the EDC as well. While the City does have an Economic Development Department and it certainly must work to retain and promote new business development, the City cannot do it alone and, if anything, I would like to see a much stronger partnership between the EDC and the City with respect to our overall economic development efforts for Central Illinois.



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Promoting a Positive Business Climate

A copy of our report will be filed with the State Board of Elections and the County Clerk. The report will be available for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois or the County Clerk, Peoria County Courthouse, 324 Main Street, Peoria, Illinois 61602.