

2013 VOTERS GUIDE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER LAS CRUCES



QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

1. What do you think are the most important "quality of Life" issues in Las Cruces?
2. What responsibility does the City Council have in working with our community to have more affordable housing?
3. Describe your position on raising the minimum wage.
4. What are your views about ensuring an adequate municipal water supply?

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

City Council, District 3 Olga Pedroza



1. For some, quality of life means the upkeep of tennis courts, the beauty of the city, the availability of good entertainment and the knowledge that there are ways for them to help those less fortunate than themselves. For young residents, the issues are places to go and things to do. For many residents, the issue is having a job. The city's task is to build resources and opportunities in all of these areas.

2. The city needs to work with the state's Mortgage Finance Authority to bring back to Las Cruces tax incentives for those investors who finance affordable housing. In the past, those incentives, along with local nonprofits like Tierra del Sol, were able to attract investors. We need to develop as many resources as possible, including a comprehensive local transit system, to lower the relative impact of housing costs in our residents' budgets.

3. Without increasing the minimum wage, and possibly closing some of the loopholes in wage laws, residents will be unable to buy those items that in turn stimulate the economy. Overall, we need to adjust to a rapidly changing economy, where part-time jobs are becoming more common; we also need to develop our workforce so that residents are qualified for new job opportunities. Jobs in the new energy economy are especially promising for our area.

4. We need to provide resources for organizations like the Lower Rio Grande Water Users Association to update its study of water resources. Though drought will continue to be a challenge, I don't think diverting water from the Gila Rives is a viable solution to the water issue. At the city level, small water reclamation projects can irrigate schoolyards and parks with reclaimed water – an example of the multi-faceted approach we need to be taking.

City Council, District 5 Gill M. Sorg



1. Infrastructure - good streets that allow people to go from home to work, and to school and shopping with ease; better drainage, so homes and businesses don't flood; good parks so people have a place to enjoy our environment and play sports. Building on our cultural assets, including the arts; good recreational programs for our residents; a network of trails for runners, walkers and bikers. Preserved public lands within a short distance of the city.

2. We should commit to affordable housing initiatives with appropriate funding, as they build healthy neighborhoods and make our participation in state and national programs more competitive.

The Council should also prioritize overall economic development to make housing more affordable through better paying jobs, and through the growth and expansion of existing local businesses. Steady investments in public safety, streets

and transit will help revitalize older neighborhoods, where many affordable housing opportunities exist.

3. Our country has seen a growing income discrepancy between the rich and poor, and for our economy to thrive we need to revive the purchasing power of all residents. This includes building an educated workforce, helping local businesses expand, and attracting new residents due to our quality of life. In the short term, a minimum wage will help provide a platform for local families to fully participate in the economic life of our city.

4. I believe all water user stakeholders need to be at the table, especially since agriculture uses 80-90% of our county's ground and surface water supply. Conservation and reuse by all sectors will be necessary to ensure adequate resources for the future. Las Cruces has decreased its water use by 6% per capita over the last 10 years through conservation measures; other sectors need to join us in this effort.

City Council, District 6 Cecelia H. Levatino



1. The most important quality of life issue is fostering an environment that encourages job creation and allows individuals to reach their full potential. This is the key to ensuring that all Las Cruces have the opportunity to enjoy the quality of life they desire. We must develop a business and family friendly environment, cut through red tape and senseless regulations that drive employers from our city.

2. The City Council has the responsibility of developing policies and pursuing Federal and State grants to ensure that there are affordable housing resources, both private and public, available to our citizens that are economically disadvantaged. When Council policies encourage job growth,

the need for public affordable housing is reduced. It should be the goal of the Council to develop economic policies that enable people to move from affordable housing to home ownership.

3. Minimum wage increases can certainly aid individuals and families to meet rising costs that we all face. Council policies, however, must be mindful of the effect that any such increase might have in discouraging job growth and development. An effective policy will balance the needs of both the individual and business community.

4. An adequate and safe water supply is vital to the City and its residents. The City Council must carefully consider all methods to increase the supply of water including contracting with private suppliers while respecting their rights.

City Council, District 6 J. Mark Cobb



1. My years as a financial advisor taught me the importance of building on assets, and one of our community's principal assets is quality of life. This includes investing in public safety, streets and utilities, so key services are never in question. It means continuing to make Las Cruces a great place to live, with excellent parks, ball fields, and senior and youth programs, and a system of walking and bike trails that connect our neighborhoods.

2. For Las Cruces to be a vibrant, healthy city, we need housing available at all income levels. The Council should not subsidize new development at the expense of existing neighborhoods, where older homes can provide affordable opportunities for buyers. Good planning can encourage a variety of housing options, and a strong transit system can lower overall living costs for working families. The goal

is a wide variety of housing costs, arrangements and opportunities.

3. Ideally, minimum wage should be addressed nationally, but local citizens, as they did in Albuquerque, may seek a referendum on the issue. I support presenting that question to the voters. Ultimately, there is no future in our region trying to be the low wage capital of the country; for the local economy to thrive we need working families to have money in their pockets to spend.

4. There is no question more crucial to the future of our city than an adequate water supply. The City has done a good job in purchasing water rights for future use, but these rights are meaningless unless the water actually exists on the surface and underground. We need to work closely with agricultural and business interests to make sure our overall water supply is managed wisely in coming years.

City Council, District 6 Curtis J. Rosemond



1. I believe in order to maintain a good quality of life we must first promote a strong local economy. I will fight to adequately fund the police and fire entities that protect our way of life. I will also work closely with city officials to promote planned residential and commercial growth throughout our community. I will support the development of safe corridors that provide accessible bicycle and pedestrian passageways.

2. Affordable housing begins with strengthening partnerships between the city, construction industry and most importantly, the consumer. I believe it is the city's responsibility to improve communication and prevent unnecessary regulations and excessive tax burdens to the builders. These taxes are subsequently passed on to the consumer and are detrimental to growing an

affordable housing market within our community.

3. Nationally, the cost of living has risen significantly over the past 10 years. Fortunately, the cost of living in our area does not reflect the national trend. Presently, with our moderate cost of living, raising the minimum wage at this time is not necessary. However, this does not mean we should disregard the issue and must remain cognizant that our national economy is fragile, always considering those who are living at the poverty level.

4. I believe that education and outreach are important to ensuring an adequate municipal water supply for the future. We cannot take our existing water supply for granted and should continue to enforce and strengthen current water usage regulations. I would make this a priority while serving as your city councilor for District 6.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATE FOR MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE, DIVISION II

1. Describe the experience and qualifications needed to become a municipal judge?
2. Give two examples of issues for the municipal court and explain how you would address them?

Municipal Judge, Division II Ben A. Longwill



1. I believe that broad, well-rounded, and extensive experience is necessary. A Municipal Judge must act as a representative of the citizens to impartially resolve cases where ordinance violations are charged. I have served as a judge for 4 years, as a prosecutor for 2 ½ years, and as appointed defense counsel for 27 years, in the Municipal Court.

2. I believe the Municipal Court is presently well managed and is not in need of any significant change. The associate Judge position involved in this election does not have authority to make management changes to the Court.

Municipal Judge, Division II Kieran F. Ryan



1. Municipal Judge needs to have a variety of experience. Experience comes with actually sitting on the Bench and performing judicial duties for which I have participated first as an Alternate Judge and second as a full time Judge unanimously appointed by the City Council for a total of 15 1/2 years of experience. As a private attorney for twenty years I gained legal experience also necessary for judicial decision making.

2. I would suggest that the citizens of Las Cruces deserve a new and improved Municipal Court building. The turn of the century building we now use does not provide the proper infrastructure to accommodate the 100,000 population of Las Cruces. The situation will only deteriorate with time. The lines here can be very lengthy and a new building will go a long way to alleviate this for the people.

THANK YOU

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