

2016 County Commissioner candidate John Leyzorek's July 2016 responses to

Eight Rivers Council's 2016 Questionnaire for County Commission Candidates

By John Leyzorek

July 7, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to address your interesting questions!

Question #1: What kind of development do you see as appropriate/inappropriate for this county? Please give specific examples. How would you directly involve yourself in development projects?

Answer: Development is not a primary responsibility of Government. Government's attempts to push or guide development tend to be oppressive, wasteful, corrupt, and ineffective.

A present example of this is our own "Flood Plain Ordinance" By making development in flood plains eligible for Government-subsidized flood insurance, it actually encourages development of areas that would provide more benefit to watershed functioning and recreation by remaining in a natural state.

Another is the interminable and agonizing history of "Development Authorities", which have tied up our land and wasted our money on unharvestable fields and empty unusable buildings for many years.

A more robust, that is, a wealth-creating local economy, is important to Pocahontas County's health as a human habitat. Historically, there are only two sources of human material wealth, they are natural resources and intelligent human labor. We are blessed here with an abundance of certain resources including soil, water, timber, and stone, however we are distant from mass markets. We also have suffered from generations of brain- and labor-drain.

Thus the material products most suited to be produced here are high-value ones (eg furniture, medicinal herbs, sculptures, not crude raw materials like unprocessed logs), whose value is much greater than the cost of transportation. Private control of these resources and low property taxes (because high taxes force owners to squeeze money out of their property) are the best insurance that they will be managed sustainably and not suffer the "tragedy of the commons".

Affordable land costs and improved Internet access are two factors that can encourage more of our own young people to build lives (and livelihoods) here, as well as encouraging immigration of people looking for more than just a vacation home.

In my view, tourism is a two-edged sword. It certainly provides revenue and entry-level jobs. It presents Pocahontas County to the world as a place of beauty, kindness, and serenity. If this encourages vigorous people to bring their intelligence and energy here to contribute to our communities, that is all good. If it drives up the cost of homes for working people, that is bad.

Question #2: What special qualities does Pocahontas County have that could be utilized toward building a brighter future?

Answer Natural resources, including pure waters and great beauty, and a local culture which still embraces a certain amount of politeness, self-reliance, and respect for hard work. Relative proximity to population centers .

Question #3: What infrastructure and county services need to be strengthened in

Pocahontas, and how would you go about it? (*Internet is one example, but you may include other infrastructure and services as well.*)

Answer Internet is the prime example, to facilitate commerce and education and attract intelligent people, but low taxes and minimal intrusive and bureaucratic regulation (like building codes) are key, as well. We can keep taxes low by remembering that Government is never the low-cost provider of services, nor is it moral to take by force from one to give to another. As Commissioner, I would stand against any increase in taxes, and against land-use regulation. Rule of Law is of vital importance as an "infrastructure improvement". When individuals can expect prompt redress for injuries to their own properties, potential polluters think twice before fouling their neighbor's space.

I proposed, and will again promote a distributed, voluntary flood mitigation and watershed improvement plan called, "The Thousand Ponds".

Question #4: The proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument has been controversial in Pocahontas. Please state some of the major arguments for and against that proposal.

Answer Proponents look for better protection of nature and more tourism, in my view two incompatible goals. Opponents fear regulation of traditional land uses. I oppose this designation. This is our home, not the Nation's diorama. More regulation and loss of local control does not encourage but frustrates stewardship and love of one's home. We do not need more lost economic base---60% of our land is already largely "off the table".

Question #5: What do you consider as appropriate and inappropriate applications of Eminent Domain? Please explain how you view the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline and how it might positively or negatively affect Pocahontas?

Answer I suppose I might support use of Eminent Domain for urgent national defense purposes---but under NO other circumstances. I am on record as an Intervenor in opposition to the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline., which in my opinion offers zero long term benefit to Pocahontas County, and is being promoted by fraud.

Question #6: The previous two questions are just a couple examples of the many controversial issues that face our county. How would you help our county come together to resolve difficult issues?

Answer On some issues many people can come together, on others irreconcilable disagreement will remain despite all efforts. I often say that private property is one of the best human inventions, because it allows you and me to disagree and still get along. The best hope for consensus on issues that cross property boundaries is careful research and full disclosure; diligence and honesty. Attempting to manufacture consensus by hype and emotional blackmail is dishonest and only erodes the social fabric. Respect for the rights of others is the foundation of any workable society.

Question #7: A County Commissioner receives \$39,500 salary plus generous health and retirement benefits. Commission meetings and appointed board meetings take about 250 hours per year. How will you use your non-meeting time to benefit Pocahontas?

Answer I think this salary is excessive, and will support reducing it. I expect my making myself available for listening to public input and discussion of issues in public and in private, and necessary research to develop ideas and evaluate proposals will require five or more times the scheduled hours.

Question #8: This is open-ended. Please feel free to bring up other issues, or make

statements pertaining to your candidacy, your background and experience, your interests, and your goals.

Answer I came to Pocahontas County 29 years ago looking for the opportunity to live in freedom, in harmony with nature, and to belong to a community that respects the traditional values of work, neighborliness, and family. I have been richly blessed here with opportunities to raise a family, engage in business on a small scale, and build a home. This community is my home, my livelihood comes from it and my children grow into it. I cannot shut my gate and ignore its issues and its future, rather I must fight to defend and improve it. I hope to contribute to making it possible for at least some of my children to do the same.