

Second Time Around:

Steve Valdez Says "The Issues Haven't Changed"

Steve Valdez looks cool even when he doesn't try to. His black hair is swept back; his clothes are always trim. He rides motorcycles for fun.

And he's running against Del Schwab and Robert Rowland for County Commissioner for the same reason he ran in 2008: "The roads are terrible out here." To that end, Valdez has busied himself working on the Master Transportation Plan, and serves on the Transportation Board of Adjustments with Commissioner Schwab, recommending variances and other items that come up along the byways and roads of the County.

"Besides transportation," Valdez says, "the issues are the same as they were in 2008: trust in Elbert County Government and transparency." He's gone door to door before; he talks with people often. The same issues reappear. He applauds the streaming video of the BOCC meetings but brings up a contrast: "I'd hold a town meeting every quarter; tell the people what the issue is and what I think ought to be done, then ask them what they think." This method, Valdez believes, will make him more accessible to the public: "Republican or Democrat-it doesn't matter," and also help him make the right decision.

He cites his 32 years as a telecom executive as his strongest asset in tackling the County debt: "I'll bring people in who are experts in dealing with it," and his managerial skills handling million dollar budgets in construction, infrastructure and personnel. "I'd look at how each department is run and its efficiency. Layoffs are the last thing I would consider."

Regarding roads and their maintenance, Valdez was a proponent of Referendum 1A, which lost by over 1,000 votes. 1B, which passed, taking a percentage of each purchase in Elbert County and dedicating it to a "Road Fund," is "too variable and subject to the downturns" of the economy. It "isn't enough to really make a difference" in road building. He believes the County can build and maintain roads through bonding, which he frankly wonders why has not been done before.

Valdez, who serves on the Running Brook Estates Homeowners Association Board of Directors, the Conservative Breakfasts Board of Directors, has schooled



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people on water adjudication in November and December 2011, plans to stay active no matter what the outcome at the Republican Assembly, and should he win office, to resign his current positions: not because he sees a conflict of interest, but because the job of County Commissioner is all-encompassing.

Unlike a number of Conservatives whose rhetoric is fueled by jingoism, Valdez is fairly quiet about his beliefs. "I am deeply conservative," he says, "but I don't advertise it." He believes regulation has its place in terms of land use on oil and gas: "We needed regulations where there weren't any before;" but he's no fan of "government intrusion," citing the idea of controlling trans fats and other things we can eat.

Valdez also believes that the current meet and greet events held by other candidates before the caucuses are too early. "The caucuses haven't happened yet," he says. "After those, I will expect the Party to hold Meet and Greet events for all of us."

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