

If Larry Ross Were Commissioner...

by William C. Thomas

If you measure Commissioner candidates by height, Larry Ross wins; in true Western style, he's also soft-spoken and a real listener. Ross had a Meet and Greet on Sunday in Simla. Following are some of his views.

"I won't mislead or deceive," he says, promising to keep the County informed regarding any business dealings before the BOCC. "A good example is the Compactor issue. They suddenly shut it down after letting a contractor put his equipment there and they were supposed to have environmental testing before the steel was removed. There wasn't a contract; nothing was said about it, and just how was the County going to profit from it?" He promised to inform the public; "to fully comply with the Sunshine Laws."

Ross wondered how Amendment 3 even came into being this last summer and even now wonders how the current BOCC would have voted on it. (Amendment 3 was proposed by the Elbert and Hwy 86 Water District to move water from Lamar to Elizabeth and back. Its chief proponent was Karl Nyquist). "Nyquist's water district had just been for Wildpointe when it was approved," he says, "and that's as far as it should have gone. But he had some skillful people working for him and they caught us all by surprise." Under his administration, Ross says, "people would know."

He plans to consult the citizenry as he holds office; "see what people feel is important; involve them." He promises to answer e-mails: "It's been my experience that you get a lot more e-mails when people suspect you of something than when they don't," and he believes the number in his inbox will decrease exponentially as a result "because I talk to people; I want to know what they're concerned about, and the major one right now is fiscal responsibility."

Ross believes it's crucial for the County to have "enough revenue to pay the bills and people's salaries." He suggests that the Assessor's Office needs more staff in order to bring revenue in. "They've got three on staff now when they had fourteen earlier. Three staff in a county of over fourteen thousand homes?" Of course, he adds, the Assessor is an elected official responsible for her staff; "but there are ways to encourage more hiring."



Ross had once asked Craig Curl, Elbert County Economic Authority Director, exactly who Curl "worked for" because it did not seem that Curl was working for Elbert County but for himself. "There are other ways to bring economic development to the County and there are so many talented people who are ready to do it for free-all you have to do is ask them."

Ross also contrasts himself with his opponent by his water work. He believes in ensuring water for generations to come in Elbert County and to this end, Ross has an ongoing dialogue with John Stulp of Governor Hickenlooper's Cabinet "to make sure State Agencies protect our water." He wondered aloud whether the newly-appointed County Water Board truly had representatives of the people on it, or of "Gas and Oil."

When asked about property rights, Ross stated that he did not wish to infringe on anybody's; however, when asked about Meadowlark Cooperative and its tires for fencing (BOCC Meeting, January 11, 2012), he said "the County needs to step in and do something about it." He is concerned that "the owners will walk away and leave all that mess there."

"I'm not corruptible," Ross says. "I'm a fourth generation Elbert County native and I believe in being accountable for what I do."

