



Alva Inc. is dedicated to preserving the tranquility and beauty of Alva
P O. Box 2022, Alva FL 33920
www.alvafl.org

Alva Political Candidate Forum Answers to Commissioner Questions

John Manning District 1

Question # 1 Impact of Babcock Ranch

Fortunately Lee County acquired several thousand acres of land that will be preserved within Lee's boundaries and that acquisition will help significantly. To minimize the impact to the rural areas of Lee County, including Alva, the Commission needs to continue to work with the permitting agencies, especially the South Florida Water Manage District, to make certain that in the overall surface water management plan, historic flows are maintained and improved. In addition the transportation mitigation plan must take into account the continuing rural character of the Alva area to reduce traffic impacts.

Question # 2 3 top sources of spending reductions in this year's budget.

First I agree with the proposal to cut spending by the \$ 48 Million presented to the board in General Fund appropriations.

Secondly I would be willing to consider across the board salary reductions to to soften the need to reduce key positions.

Third I would not be opposed to utilizing reserves to help to balance the budget but caution must be taken in future years to make sure that the county maintain a financially responsible position.

Question # 3 Vote on property tax increase.

No

Question # 4 Dividing the Alva community Planning area.

No. Contiguous, defined areas, especially when attempting to preserve the rural character of those areas, is essential in any planning effort and should not be tampered with.

Question # 5 Economic Recovery Platform.

- (1) I would propose a "Micro Loan" program for Lee county businesses administered by the Economic Development Office and funded by the Industrial Development Authority. Funds would NOT be tax-supported but loans would be made from fees collected by the IDA. This would give businesses who otherwise may not be able to get bank financing, the ability to expand and hire.

- (2) I would propose to build stronger Regional Partnerships to achieve business and job growth through local government cooperation and joint ventures on projects of mutual benefit.
 - (3) I would lobby the Legislature to streamline the incentive programs that are available to counties. Including Lee, over a three year period to accelerate the potential of outside companies to re-locate to Lee county and produce high wage jobs,
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Chris Berardi District 1

Q: The proposed Babcock town will change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

A: I will oppose any density increase for this environmentally sensitive land.

We must ensure that the developers hold true to the promises of preserving Babcock's Natural habitat for our wildlife, using native vegetation, maintaining wide buffer zones around any waterways, and building by utilizing "green" construction. Every effort must be made to limit traffic impact on surrounding communities.

It is vitally important that all of the land currently classified as "preserve" remains so in perpetuity.

Q: Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available funding.

A: A reduction in county spending can be accomplished by; eliminating waste and duplication of service, privatizing or consolidating departments and utilizing technology to increase efficiencies.

Tough decisions regarding what the true role of government should be will need to be made to prevent tax increases. It is time for **lower taxes, less spending and smaller government** after so many years of uncontrolled growth.

Q: How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

A: I will be voting NO on any TAX or MILLAGE increase proposed.

I have a proven record of opposing tax and fee increases. I am the only candidate in the District 1 race that has reduced the actual budget of a government entity (Cape Coral FY 2008).

I believe that the private sector will lead the residents of Lee County back to prosperity if government regulation and overspending are held in check. We cannot afford to raise taxes or spend your hard earned money on non-essential services in these economic times.

Q: How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

I believe that the boundaries of the Alva Community Planning Area, as they currently exist, are well defined. Additionally, the communities within these boundaries share many common goals and characteristics. I will vote against any proposal to divide or in any way disrupt the current planning area.

Q: Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

A: Most importantly, we must reduce the level of taxing and spending that has occurred over the past several years. It is only when the people of Lee County get to keep more of their hard earned dollars that real economic recovery can occur.

The private sector, not government, is best at creating jobs. Where government must get involved is in; working with local businesses to expand, recruiting national and international corporations to Lee County, and reducing the burden of government in the process. Tax incentives must be provided to fill the many vacant commercial properties that already exist.

I will govern by the philosophy of **Lower Taxes, Less Spending and Smaller Government**. We must resist the urge to think of government as the provider of all things. Instead, we must rely on private enterprise and the ingenuity of our fellow citizens to lead Lee County forward.

Carla Johnston District 1

1. The proposed Babcock town will change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

It is imperative that all the stakeholders in both counties work together on this matter if rural east Lee County is to retain its character (as has been promised in planning documents developed with Lee County government.)

Obviously Alva Inc. will need to continue and expand its vigilance on every step of this process and will need to educate area media as well as area businesses about the options.

I think that there is a common self interest issue—protecting one’s own investment—that could become a place for common ground. Clearly all of those who own, live, do business in East Lee share this feeling.

In this economy, it should also be a self interest issue for Mr. Kitson and partners to consider the best ways to protect their investment. For example, there may be less delay and less cost to have one’s transportation consultants examine how to balance roads with express buses (owned by private companies who do just what is needed here) and possible rail (elevated to protect panther territory.) The transportation planning that I saw when I served on the LPA appeared to be hastily done, based on broad-brush computer generated assumptions, without any examination of alternative modes of transportation. How can Mr. Kitson, whose development is promoted as being a vision for tomorrow, simply accept such ‘yesterday’ transportation proposals.

In this economy, it should also be a self-interest issue for Mr. Kitson and partners to consider the best ways to attract buyers who will invest in this new city. The existing market is glutted with vacancies. Money from the banks is next to impossible to obtain either for the development

community or for the individual home owner who wants to a buyer for their old home, and who wants to buy a new home. Hence, there is time to get the transportation plan right. And, getting it right will also matter to the buyer/investor in this new city because there are lots of properties for that person to choose from. If this new city is to be such a monument to sustainable development, then Mr. Kitson and partners find it very much a self-interest issue to make part of their sales pitch the idea that coming in and out of Babcock city is a pleasant experience through aesthetically pleasing real rural neighborhoods.

All this is possible, if Mr. Kitson and partners instruct their consultants and agents to do the project right, and to make certain that common ground is found with the neighbors, and to put the tax burden on the county that receives the tax benefit—Charlotte County. Lee Commissioners need simply to insist upon this process. Alva Inc. needs to both watch it every step and to encourage a new way of reaching acceptable solutions—solutions that protect East Lee's rural character, tax base, and quality of life.

I think that any and all of the Commissioners have a splendid opportunity to take a leadership position expecting this approach, insisting that their staff put forth proposals consistent with new ways to think, and not accepting any less.

2. Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available funding.

The Commission will decide the 2011 budget before the election. Here's what they should do. Set millage levels so that no tax increases will happen—not this year. Do not take money from the reserves. Find places within the existing budget to 'right-size' the budget in ways that fit today's needs (not yesterday's) and today's resources.

In my opinion, as a former chief budget analyst for the eastern Massachusetts transportation system, proper budget management cannot happen with a chainsaw from a distance. It requires a scalpel. Here are some examples. There are huge savings in energy costs that have been realized in other governments in Florida; we could do that too. If economic development is a priority, as it should be, why would one allow the motor pool to have a higher budget than does economic development? Why do we trade in cars as often as we do? Which employees really need take home cars? (Current Manager Hawes understands this in forgoing the excessive auto benefit provided to her predecessor.) If Lee County's employee fringe benefit packages are much more generous than that of other comparable government jurisdictions, let's get a detailed proposal of how to 'right-size' this matter, in 2011. Today, people should be grateful to have a job, even if the benefits are less elegant. Clearly, administrative duplication across and within agencies need to be corrected. Many other examples for savings could be identified. And then one could also examine revenue opportunities and opportunities for collaborating with the city governments in order to provide better services in some areas at less cost. And, maybe in this climate, it will be possible for the state legislature to streamline our fire services to simultaneously cut costs and provide quality services.

The Lee County budget must be a key priority. It is costing the taxpayers far too much.

3. How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

I will vote for no increase to property taxes. But, it will be the interim Commissioner and the sitting commissioners who decide this in late September, after the primary and before the November election.

4. How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

I will vote to keep the integrity of the existing district. We must find a position that finds a way to honor any specific Bert Harris protections of existing properties while also finding language that prevents any erosion of the integrity of the Alva Community Planning Area. It does not serve either Olga or Alva to be divided; the stakes are too high.

I will also find ways to encourage existing community planning, to enable the process to be used (independent of government, or in conjunction with government) to plan, advocate, operate programs that serve the interests of the residents and businesses in the given community. Having been professor teaching planning and policy, I have seen from experience how much stronger and how effective communities are in charting their own future course when they have dynamic civic groups of their own.

5. Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

Jobs are too few. Tax costs are too high. Talk exceeds action. It is imperative to provide assistance to the working families who are—now—not a decade from now—trying to make financial ends meet. For some this is a job. For others is it preventing home foreclosure—or figuring out how to pick up the pieces when that happens. For others, it is a question of how to avoid the stress without resorting to drugs and alcohol. Times are tough.

I think it's great that some big plans are out there, if they are managed in ways that respect individuals rather than rolling over them. I speak here of development. But there are also good plans to increase high tech jobs in concert with the university, and to utilize the airport as a central point to employers engaged in international activity. But, I think that this approach alone is insufficient because it will provide no help for a number of years. That's a long time away if your bank account is empty now.

I think we need to start at home and find businesses interested in expanding, find retired persons who might help attract a business with which they were involved to locate in Lee County. Clearly, too many of our jobs are public sector and we need to grow a healthy private sector. I think the county must collaborate more with the cities on this kind of development. (Separate cities are relatively new in Lee County and the old culture that the county is superior is too pervasive. I saw this as Mayor and know my colleagues did also. A partnership is required.)

County government can help in several ways. It can do collaboration with cities. It can join with cities to secure both entrepreneurs and grants. It can facilitate creation of private sector technical assistance to small businesses. It can encourage locally based consortiums of business to expand microbusiness opportunities. It can broker with the banks to hope to overcome some of the financing paralysis. There's more, too.

Bottom line, all these issues are tied together. To have economic recovery, we need to recognize that the environment is the economy. We need to advance new ways to grow. And we need to think about solving each of these problems by finding new ways to think about solutions. If we get serious about reaching beyond the past's view of how to grow and the past's political gaming, we can succeed. Let's get it done!

Cecil Pendergrass District 2

ALVA POLITICAL CANDIDATE FORUM

Cecil Pendergrass

1. The proposed Babcock town **will** change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

As a lifelong resident of Lee County, I understand the importance of protecting and preserving the Florida ecosystem. First and foremost I will listen and learn about the concerns of our East Lee County residents regarding the Babcock lawn proposal. I will fight to preserve the tranquility and beauty of Alva by supporting preservation of our rural lands in order to protect from water runoff and habitat fragmentation. I am committed to safeguarding our natural resources and wildlife habitat as well as maintaining the unique character and lifestyle in which Alva residents are accustomed.

2. Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available funding.

1. Eliminate wasteful expenditures for conducting studies and/or projects when the County lacks the funding to complete the projects.

2. Reduce personnel costs by evaluating departmental needs and restructure/downsize County departments through attrition.

3. Re-evaluate the County's existing contracts to bring them to today's reduced competitive rates; replace high cost larger vehicles with smaller fuel efficient vehicles.

3. How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

I will not support any increase in property taxes as it will facilitate additional economic hardship on our residents.

4. How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

At this time, without any proposals to vote upon, I would not support any changes dividing the Alva Community Planning Area. I support maintaining Alva's current Rural Village Overlay Plan.

5. Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

I will work with Tourism & Development, local teeiirs, and not-for-profit organizations to inform potential residents about our current affordable housing market, pristine beaches, and countless recreational activities to attract more year-round residents. More consumers will facilitate a more prosperous local economy.

Dick Ripp District 2

ALVA POLITICAL CANDIDATE FORUM - Answers to advance questions:

Monday: July 12, 2010

By: Dick Ripp

1. The proposed Babcock town will change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

I'm not aware of any way that it would be possible to eliminate Babcock town and all of its impact on rural east Lee County. However, by controlling and designing roads east to west and not approving north to south roads, leading to/from the town, (which is supposed to be self sufficient in terms of emergency and other municipal departments), we could potentially minimize the impact on our rural east Lee County. If at a later date conditions change, it will be possible to modify the proposal on an as needed limited, basis.

With respect to the Babcock town, I'm afraid that Frank Mann is not al/ wrong when he says - "Lee County gets the IMPACT, while Charlotte County gets the impact FEES". To that end, in addition to mitigating any impact, we need to make sure that Babcock town pays its fair share to offset its impact to Lee county as well. We must also be vigilant in protecting the longstanding rural character of Alva and Bayshore, which is unique to Lee County. We must also do al/ we can to protect and preserve our

wildlife and minimize the impact of water. flow from Babcock to the River, and elsewhere, not only in terms of both water quality and quantity.

2. Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available Funding?

Since labor is the highest cost of Lee County's budget, concessions on salaries and benefits is going to have to be on the table if we are going to "live within our means" (without dipping into reserves). Some ideas for cutting labor costs might include:

- I would first propose that vacant positions remain unfilled until re-examined on October 1, 2010, and after that be filled on a basis of urgent need only.
- We should continue with the process of allowing attrition, via retirements or other voluntary means, to keep reducing staff, and only look at replacing them in manner similar to the previous point.
- If necessary to "live within our means", I would consider proposing an across the board reduction in all Lee County salaries that are higher than \$25,000.00, with a lesser (if any) reduction for persons earning less than \$25,000.00. I feel that rather than discharge people it is better for ALL to take a modest salary decrease. After all, JOBS is our number one priority.

I propose that the County Commission use the same manner of Budget accountability that the City of Sanibel uses, which requires a monthly examination and adjustment rather than get behind the curve one year after another. We can't keep "kicking the can down the road", without making realistic and ongoing spending cuts to match our actual revenue stream.

I propose that "out-sourcing of non-essential, non-emergency services be considered, and I would ask that the Lee County Manager take steps to identify activities which can be out-sourced.

3. How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

I will vote AGAINST any rate or millage change that will increase taxes. I believe that with a firm commitment, we can avoid raising taxes on an already overburdened citizenry in Lee County. We have not even begun to start making serious cuts even remotely commensurate with the drop in revenues. During last fall's Goal-Setting process, we even turned down departments who were voluntarily proposing cuts that they indicated would not unduly negatively impact services. We've got to stop "kicking the can down the road" with respect to deficit-spending and living within our own revenues.

4. How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

I would vote against any change that is proposed, unless the change is approved by the Alva Community Planning Area citizens, by a 2/3rds majority. I was at the BoCC meeting last year when the N. Olga community was split in favor of the few over the many of N. Olga. I would never take an action that I did not feel was representative of the area as a whole, regardless of what power and/or money was in play.

5. Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

I am very much in favor of Lee County supporting micro-business loans since they help the small businesses grow and hire at virtually no cost to the community.

I also believe that the county, in concert with private industry, and our excellent Centers of Higher Learning, should bring High Tech industry, with high paying salaries, especially in the healthcare areas, and train our local residents to be able to fill the high paying, high tech jobs.

Lee County has a large senior population which now, and in the future will need support. Let us think FORWARD rather than, as now, merely attempt to "catch up" to the needs of our area. In doing so we will invigorate our area, citizens, educational institutions, and every other aspect of the Lee Community, and get us out of the hole we have been forced into by a lack of foresight and proper planning.

We have a 3 legged stool of Farming, Construction, and Hospitality, which has, in the past served this community well. Now, I propose adding the 4th leg, High Tech Industry, to make the stool more solid, and dependable, especially in times of crisis. Collier and Charlotte counties are doing it, why aren't we? We CAN and we SHOULD add this 4th leg to better balance and utilize our economic clout. We MUST diversify our economy before the end of the next "boom" cycle which, although anticipated in a few years, is also expected to be relatively short in duration with few future booms projected after that.

Robert Chilmonik District 1

I support keeping the rural nature of Lee County intact and I will resist any efforts to increase sprawl in the Alva community.

High personnel costs have to be cut first since this represents the largest portion of the Lee County commission budget. That will mean a reduction in benefit packages. The County will also have to look at consolidating services and more emphasis on providing Internet services to our citizens.

Cut taxes now! Cut borrowing now! Cut spending now!

No, we should extend the Alva community planning area to guarantee that the rural nature of East Lee county continues so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy and appreciate our beautiful natural surroundings.

Cut taxes now! Cut borrowing now! Cut spending now! I propose to step up efforts to attract small, clean, light manufacturing to Lee county. The only way that our local economy can recover without excessive spending and borrowing by the government is to produce manufactured goods and sell them nationally and to the rest of the world. Manufacturing has the most potential in increasing wages in Lee county which will aid our long-term economic outlook.

Robert "Bob" Chilmonik

Brian Bigelow District 2

1. The proposed Babcock town will change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

A comprehensive planning effort, such as the one I successfully championed for the southeastern DR/GR area.

I opposed the Babcock development because of the external impacts on the rural areas lying between it and other more densely developed areas of our county. This is the inevitable consequence of leapfrog sprawl development. Now that the Babcock development has been approved, our ability to limit and mitigate those external impacts depends on a comprehensive plan for the rural northeast quadrant of our county and a meaningful commitment to adhere to it.

When I ran four years ago, one of the pledges I made was to push for such a planning effort in southeast quadrant aka DR/GR. We have completed such a plan for the Southeast which takes into account the conflicts of intense developments such as FGCU, the RSW airport and rock mining with the important rural and environmental character of the remaining area. Whether we will adhere to that plan is still in doubt.

I will push for a comprehensive plan for the NE that is similar in scope to the one completed for the DRGR and which preserves to the greatest extent possible the rural nature of the area. I will also push for adherence to that plan when new development plans are proposed within the planning area, including development to mitigate the external impacts of actual development in Babcock. (We must be careful that we do not commit to facilitate more of the Babcock development than is likely to actually occur. That is the challenge of all comprehensive planning.)

I emphasize the need to adhere to an adopted plan. It is not yet clear that adherence to the DRGR plan is assured as a recent land use decisions already made by the BOCC threatens to undermine important aspects of that plan. *Constant vigilance is required!*

2. Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available funding.

My three cost containment targets are: I. the largest category of county expenses under direct BOCC control (personnel salaries, wages and benefits), II. the fastest growing category (sheriff office), and III. the least transparent, most insidious category (contracting policies and procedures).

I. During the boom years when county revenues swelled, county salaries and benefits surged upward out of proportion to what was happening in the private sector. Historically public employees earned less but had more security than private sector employees. That has changed as a result of the surge in public salaries and benefits to the point that some private employers are complaining that they cannot compete and are losing employees they have trained to the county. Now that revenues are contracting, the increases that lead to lack of balance with the private sector should be reversed.

II. Public safety must be a high priority for government, but it cannot be immune from cost containment. Even the Department of Defense is reducing its budget in a time of war. Locally, not enough attention has been paid by the BOCC to its legal duty to be a counterbalance to the Sheriff in the process of allocating resources to law enforcement. As a result, the Sheriff's budget has increased in an unsustainable and exponential rate compared with our population and cost of living increases while crime rates have been dropping locally and nation wide. There is no need to micromanage the sheriff's office, as that is what the sheriff is elected to do. But Commissioners are elected to contain the costs of government, even law enforcement. That duty must be taken very seriously, especially in these economic times.

III. The letting of contracts by the County is nearly invisible to the public even though it involves very large sums of tax dollars. While the board authorizes the procedures and has final approval of contracts, the negotiations and the selection of the provider is mostly within the control of the county manager and her staff. The BOCC has authorized procedures and granted authority to the administration which minimize competition, allow contracts to grow and change in compensation and scope of services, and limit the service providers who can participate in county business. One example is the authority granted to the manager and department heads to increase the scope of services and to increase compensation for add-ons to an approved contract *without board approval*. As a result one consultant contract nearly grew three-fold as its services changed from a toll study to an energy grant lobbying effort with virtually no BOCC oversight. There are other procedures that need to be changed in order to contain costs, maintain a level playing field for competition, and fulfill the board's oversight responsibilities.

3. How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

I would not vote to increase the property tax rates for the major property tax funds for fiscal year 2010-2011.

I have and will continue to vote to not raise the tax rate until every effort to cut costs is exhausted. While real estate prices were in an expanding bubble, revenues to the county swelled and the BOCC saw no need to reduce the rate of taxation and enjoyed large revenues. Now that prices are contracting it would be hypocritical and self-serving to adjust the rate in order to maintain the same revenues. If the tax rate is not held stable there is insufficient incentive to search for reasonable cost cuts.

4. How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

Comprehensive planning must occur in the largest practical context. To properly plan and maintain the rural character of the northeast area, all of it should be planned together. While there may be differences from neighborhood to neighborhood, all parts are interrelated and must be co-coordinated and differences in intensity must be contained to prevent intrusion into other areas than where planned. The fact that one part may have fewer rural aspirations or be capable of supporting more development than another does not justify considering each in separate parts. They must be planned together. This is especially true when the obvious impacts of the Babcock development must be planned for throughout the area. I would prefer we keep traditional Alva and Bayshore areas united into a larger comprehensive planning area. Thus I do not support dividing planning areas any more than they are currently.

5. Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

Rather than hand-outs to multi-millionaires (baseball teams and algae researchers), I'd rather we spend our money developing a more centralized urban center for the county and building from that base with more transportation alternatives to connect the outlying areas. Developing on the edges of our county, whether that's within cities or the county itself, is not conducive to spurring economic viability because it does not provide residential and business synergy that comes from a more compact and centralized form.

The economic recession we are in is global in scope. To pretend there is a single simple solution that BOCC can undertake to reverse this very large problem is fanciful. Thus far the BOCC has set aside a large sum of money to offer subsidies to businesses indicating a desire to relocate here.

My plan would be more complex, strategic and have a short run and long range component. Over the short run we should seek to help small business, over the long run we should set the stage for a more efficient business environment. All of this should be articulated in an economic development plan considered and adopted by the BOCC including goals, strategies and a budget with limitations and pragmatic targets within our capability. Our present approach emphasizes romantic notions such as sports stadiums and corporate subsidies to interesting new business. I urge a more pragmatic approach.

In the short run, we should ease the tax burden on existing local businesses by holding the line on our tax rate. Business properties are experiencing the same loss of value as homes have and are experiencing the same burden of over-taxation. Rather than subsidizing large new business we should fund and administer a program to assist small businesses already in our area as they are the biggest job providers. We should ease the regulatory burden on small businesses by streamlining our processes and by assisting the cities to do the same. We should more closely coordinate all activities by the cities and the county that bear on economic development.

Over the long run, we should spend our money developing a more centralized urban center for the county and building off that with more transportation alternatives to connect the outlying areas. Developing on the edges of our county, whether that's within cities or the county itself, is not conducive to spurring economic viability because it does not provide residential and business synergy that comes from a more compact and centralized form.

Michael Jackson District 1

ALVA POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FORUM – JULY 12, 2010

Submission by:

MIKE JACKSON

REPUBLICAN, FOR DISTRICT 1, LEE COUNTY BOCC

239-573-9843

Introduction:

I am running because I chose to live in Lee County. It is my home; and I want to make my home as wonderful as I can. This is my first run for office, which means I have no political allegiances; and I am the only candidate in this race who's owned a small business, which means I am uniquely concerned about business issues. However, I am not new to government or to Lee County issues. I have more combined government and business experience than any other candidate. I have enjoyed three successful careers: most recently as economic development director in Cape Coral and marketing director for development in the State of Ohio; in business, as owner of a public relations company in Chicago; and in media, as NBC News Correspondent and Chicago TV anchor. I bring new perspectives, an open mind, mature judgment, and collaborative temperament.

The proposed Babcock town will change rural east Lee County forever. What is your plan to minimize or eliminate this planned impact?

The groundwork is laid for continued positive negotiations between residents of Alva and the Kitson Company. I am encouraged by progress to date. Based on market conditions, it appears as if it will be some time before development will begin. This means discussions about the impacts of the project now have time to mature. I encourage the community to continue its dialogue with the developer, and to continue to make progress. If elected, I will work to ensure that environmental, traffic, drainage and other relevant concerns are addressed before a development order is issued. I have personally experienced the kind of tumult that occurs when major developments appear on our horizon. I found that working with the developer, with support from government officials, resulted in a project that was better for everyone.

Please identify your three top sources of spending reduction to match the county budget to available funding.

There are three areas that offer the largest cost reductions: benefit packages, salaries and programs I believe in lean government, but not mean government. We must be fair to our citizens – who rely on current levels of service; and to our employees, who rely on the contracts and commitments we have made to them. I would implement the same cost-reduction and process improvement strategies used by businesses.

- I advocate a new study of wages and benefits and a restructuring of both (looking for greater employee participating in benefit expenses); and a redesign of wages so that increases are booked as annual bonuses, rather than being applied to base salaries.
- I am willing to examine every program. To the extent they are provided by the private sector, or if they could be provided by the private sector, we should examine out-sourcing and contracting.
- We should redesign our processes and provide cross-training for maximum staff utilization.
- I believe in providing sunset dates for programs, so they can be re-examined periodically.

How will you vote on any property tax rate increase?

The major budget issue is spending, not tax rates. Spending must be controlled and generally should reflect the same cost per capita, year to year. However, Lee County's budget per capita has increased from about \$730 to more than \$1000 over about eight years. There have been cost reductions recently, and this reduction must continue. Some Florida counties brag about their low cost per capita and the high-value of their services. I want to make Lee County a leader in efficiency. Tax rates are designed to rise and fall relative to property values. The issue is that spending has risen beyond acceptable levels.

How will you vote on any proposal to divide the Alva Community Planning Area?

I believe in local government. I am impressed with the level of cooperating and coordination between the Lee BOCC and the Alva community planning interests. I support and encourage this collaboration. I am mindful of the apparent difference of philosophies between the Olga and Alva areas. I think it would be best if the two entities will work to collaborate on planning issues, recognizing that development in one area will impact (and benefit) the other. I don't believe the BOCC needs to interfere in these efforts by dividing the interests.

Please identify your platform to spur economic recovery in Lee County.

We need to attack economic recovery at three levels:

1. Revise our regulations and processes to make them less costly for investors.
2. Establish specific targets for business attraction, focusing on diversifying our business base.
3. Establish a strategy for "economic gardening," to support entrepreneurial growth.

Economic development efforts do not deliver instant results. They are the result of careful planning, thoughtful strategies and community-based implementation. I believe our economic development office can receive more support from other county offices. In other words, Economic Development should be a culture, not just a department. I also know that businesses and investors think regionally and care little about government jurisdictions; therefore, Lee County government should seek more collaboration with nearby counties. In addition, I believe the best economic development efforts are driven by the private sector. Enterprise Florida, the state initiative, is private sector. So should be our regional efforts.

All this said, it is up to local government to establish objectives for business development, so that investors are clear about where they will be encouraged to develop.

At the strategy level, we must focus on supporting our universities – notably FGCU – so that we attract and grow companies that hire their graduates in science, technology and engineering. In Ohio, my economic development task was to reduce brain drain – college graduates leaving the state. In our region, we have the opportunity to prevent brain drain.
