

NORTHEAST CANDIDATES FORUM

featuring candidates for the August 8 Democratic Primary

VOTERS GUIDE

Melrose United Methodist Church

June 29, 2006

Sponsored by
**Indian Mound, Scarritt Renaissance,
Pendleton Heights and Sheffield Neighborhood
Associations**

Candidates for State Representative - 40th District

For more information on John P. Burnett go to www.johnpburnett.com or call 816-699-5950.

For more information on John Joseph Rizzo go to www.johnrizzo.org or call 816-214-8822.



John P. Burnett

photograph unavailable



John Joseph Rizzo

If elected or reelected, what are the first three bills that you will submit to the House?

Payday loan reform. I have sponsored this bill for three years and it is getting closer. Payday loan and title loan operators are a plague on our community and should be regulated.

Debt Management services reform. Same as House Bill 1909 in 2005. This will regulate the debt counseling industry. It is a model act that has been adopted in other states to protect consumers.

Vietnamese flag resolution which will be same as 2005 HCR 6. It urges the State of Missouri to recognize the yellow with three red stripes heritage and freedom flag as the official flag of the Vietnamese-American community.

I am qualified for this office because of my experience in public service. I not only have served in the office for two terms I first gained experience by being elected to the Jackson County Legislature and performing public service in numerous boards and commissions.

I have been recognized as a leader in the Democrat caucus and given key committee assignments. I serve on the House rules committee that hears all legislation before it goes to the floor for debate and I have been chosen the Ranking Minority Member on the House Judiciary Committee. I had a large voice in the eminent domain legislation that passed this year as well as input into what issues are coming up for debate in the House.

I passed the law permitting neighborhood associations to sue absentee landlords in the name of the association rather than just as individuals.

Candidate declined to respond

I will work with local officials to draft a bill that requires a certain percentage of TIFs to be used in historic neighborhoods, areas that would benefit most from development incentives. This would mandate that our older neighborhoods get their fair share of development and redevelopment projects.

I will introduce legislation that calls for maximum sentencing for violent crimes against persons 65 years or older. I believe that people who commit bodily crimes against seniors deserve the maximum sentence.

I will introduce legislation that restores the eligibility requirements for Medicaid to the levels they were prior to the recent Republican-led cuts mandated by the Blunt Administration.

Candidate declined to respond

I think I can do a better job than the current State Representative. I have the energy, enthusiasm, and responsiveness to better serve the people of this community.

I am a lifelong resident of the Northeast. This community is my home and will continue to be my home. I want to make Northeast/East a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

My family has a long tradition and commitment to public service. I understand government because it has been an integral part of my family for decades. I have a dual degree from Rockhurst University, in political science and English.

I am a member of the Board of Directors at Truman Medical Center. I also sit on the Finance Committee, so I have experience managing large and complicated budgets.

I am an active member of the Board of Directors of Old Northeast, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring blighted and distressed areas in our community.

What qualifies you to run for this position? If you are running for reelection, what achievements during your term have you had that compels you to run again?

Candidates for State Representative - 40th District



John P. Burnett

photograph unavailable



John Joseph Rizzo

Christopher Hanf

This year an effort was made to allow Missourians to receive tax breaks for paying the tuition of students unrelated to them. Although this effort failed how would you have voted? If a current legislator, how and why did you vote as you did?

I voted against the bill. It was a thinly disguised voucher scheme that would only have applied to Kansas City and St. Louis and would have drained our public schools of much needed dollars.

Since 2000, the amount of the Missouri budget devoted to elementary and secondary education has gone down dramatically. Assuming that there will still be a Republican majority in the legislature, how would you restore the funding to our schools to their past levels?

It is unrealistic to think it can be done. Republican leadership will not permit it. The only way to restore both education and Medicaid cuts is to change the control of the Legislature.

Illegal immigration has risen to become an important topic nationally. With the increasing number of immigrants that have made the Northeast their home the topic is even more relevant. What, if anything, should the state of Missouri do to address this issue?

Missouri should pass legislation to address employers who do not check their own employees for citizenship. It is hard to believe that employers who have multiple people on the same Social Security number are playing fair.

Candidate declined to respond

Candidate declined to respond

Candidate declined to respond

I do not have a problem with the legislation, as long as certain requirements and limitations are set. However, I must say that I believe there are higher priorities, such as increasing funding for Higher Education across the board.

I am committed to working with my colleagues in the House, Republican or otherwise, to achieve the best funding formula for our public schools. Other Democratic Legislators have succeeded in passing legislation during the past few years and I believe I can as well.

I believe illegal immigration is a major issue that needs to be addressed, primarily by the federal government.

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John P. Burnett

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unavailable**



John Joseph Rizzo

Missourians will vote on a measure in November that would increase the minimum wage in Missouri from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.50 an hour. Do you believe the minimum wage should be increased and why?

YES. It is a question of basic fairness. The federal government does not seem to be able to pass it. Other states have stepped up on this issue and Missouri should as well.

Candidate declined to respond

Yes. I fully support increasing the minimum wage to \$6.15 an hour. It is practically impossible for someone to live on \$5.15 an hour. Before taxes that is slightly more than \$200 per 40 hour week, virtually below the poverty line.

Last year Missouri cut over 90,000 people from Medicaid. How would you restore Medicaid services back to those who lost it?

It is apparent to me that the Republican leadership will never restore the cuts. Only lip service is paid to giving adequate medical care to the poor.

Candidate declined to respond

The Missouri budget is growing. In 2004, for example, the State of Missouri experienced a remarkable 6.7% increase in revenue. While this alone is not enough to fund all of the cutbacks in Medicaid, I believe revenue exists to fund much of what was eliminated. It is a question of priorities in the budgeting process. I will work with members of the General Assembly to realign our priorities so that adequate funding of Medicaid is accomplished.

Crime, especially gang activity, is an ever present problem in the Northeast. As a state legislator what could/would you do to help our local police, courts and citizens deal with this problem?

Legislators cannot stop crime. Legislators must be responsive to the criminal justice system to give them the tools to stop crime. For example two years ago I worked on the DNA legislation that is now turning out to be an excellent tool for law enforcement. I will continue to listen to law enforcement needs and advocate effectively for them.

Candidate declined to respond

I will work to reestablish a positive relationship with the local police. I believe our connection with city government has been lost and we need to restore it. We deserve more money from the City in our community and I will make sure our requests and needs are heard. Second, I will work with local businesses to help combat this problem. I believe our businesses have a vested interest in, and a responsibility to our community and I will ask them to help. It may sound minor, but one thing businesses could do to help is monitor the sale of spray paint and other supplies used to vandalize our neighborhoods. This monitoring will help our police in their investigations of who is creating graffiti in Northeast.

As it is anticipated that Republicans will hold the majority in the Legislature, how do you intend to move forward legislation as a member of the minority party?

I have been successful in moving issues rather than bills. For example I passed the issue contained in House Bill 46, the neighborhood association issue, by getting it into another larger bill. As a now well respected member of the minority I have the skills to move issues inside the process. As a member of a 97-66 minority my name will never be listed at the top of the bill but issues can be crafted by skillful legislators.

Candidate declined to respond

The same way other local Democrats have done it: by working to form positive working relationships in the General Assembly. It may not be an easy task, but many of our local Democrats have shown that it is possible.

Candidates for State Representative - 40th District



John P. Burnett

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John Joseph Rizzo

Christopher Hanf

With assets like the Kansas City Museum and the Cliff Drive Scenic Byway, tourism has been identified as an area of growth for the Northeast. How would you help enhance the Northeast's position as a tourist destination?

I will advocate for plans that are brought forth by the City or State Tourism agencies as well as local initiatives.

Candidate declined to respond

As our next State Representative, it will not take an editorial in the Kansas City Star to clean up our beautiful parks. I will work to get steady funding for the Byway. If the Byway has a steady and consistent stream of adequate funding then the park will remain clean and safe. There are plans now to create roads in the park so that we can get the existing debris out. I will work to put those plans into action. The Northeast has many unique assets that this City should utilize. I will work with the City to bring some of our annual city-wide events to the Northeast.

Other areas of Kansas City have benefited from the availability of economic development tools such as Enterprise Zones, TIFs, etc. As a state legislator or prospective state legislator, what state economic development opportunities do you see as available for the Northeast? What would you do to make them available?

All economic development tools such as TIF are available to Northeast, What we need is an effective leader in Jefferson City to make sure that Kansas City and in particular our part of it gets our piece of the pie. That has not happened in the past.

Candidate declined to respond

I will work with local officials to draft a bill that requires a certain percentage of TIFs to be applied in older areas. This would mandate that our older neighborhoods are getting a fair share of new development and redevelopment projects. The original intent of TIF was to help restore blighted and distressed areas in our community, but that intent has been lost. Developers will not chose to develop in areas like the Northeast unless they are required to do so and I plan to work with City and State officials to make TIF projects more equitable for neighborhoods like ours.

Would you vote to ban abortion in Missouri?

No.

Candidate declined to respond

No.

Would you vote to make marriages only between a man and woman in Missouri?

Yes.

Candidate declined to respond

This issue has already been legislated and decided by the voters when they approved an amendment to the state constitution in 2004.

In your own words, why should you be elected or re-elected to represent the Northeast?

Because I am an effective Representative. I have, over the past four years, risen rapidly within the ranks in Jefferson City. My committee assignments, the fact that I was chosen as the Chairman of the Democrat Lawyer Caucus are proof of that fact. My voting record is an open book and I am proud of it. There are no two identical voting records in the Legislature. There is no one I agree with on every issue and no one agreed with me 100% of the time. But I am proud that I have been a moderate Democrat that has been chosen by my peers to be a leader. I want to be in Jefferson City when the Democrats regain control of the House and we get to fix the mess that has been made. I look forward to it.

Candidate declined to respond

I believe I can do a better job. I have the qualifications, energy, and commitment to our area that is required to be an effective state legislator. Additionally, I will serve the community in a broader sense than just its representative in state government. I will work with all levels of government to help restore our neighborhoods, making our community a great place to live and work.

Candidates for State Senate - 10th District

For more information on Ingrid Burnett go to www.ingridburnett.com or call 816-231-4709.



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Ingrid Y. Burnett

Mike Flaherty

If elected, what are the first three bills that you will submit to the Senate?

- Include Early Childhood Education in the Foundation Formula
- Permit KCMSD to transport high school students by metro bus
- Enhance capacity for trails systems in KC Metro area

Candidate declined to respond

What qualifies you to run for this position?

I have served on the KC School Board for 4½ years with an emphasis in legislative issues. This has allowed me to establish a relationship with Majority and Minority Leadership based on my reputation as a credible and trustworthy source for urban education issues.

Candidate declined to respond

I have served with school board members from all over the State of Missouri as a board member of the Missouri School Boards Association. The work that we do focuses on understanding the impact of education legislation throughout the state – Rural, Urban and Suburban. These relationships allow me to speak knowledgeably and help me to understand where common ground exists across party lines and across geographic boundaries.

I have lived within the boundaries of this district for over 30 years as a student at UMKC; a homeowner/taxpayer; and community servant. I have strong ties to all areas of this district from St Thomas More School where I first taught to Holy Cross School and St Anthony Parish, and including St Francis Xavier School where I completed my School Counselor internship through Rockhurst University and Avila University.

Candidates for State Senate - 10th District

For more information on Jolie L. Justus go to www.justusforsenate.com or call 816-931-5655

For more information on Jason Klumb go to www.klumb2006.com or call 816-305-0303.



Jolie L. Justus



Jason Klumb

If elected, what are the first three bills that you will submit to the Senate?

- Reverse Governor Blunt's cruel Medicaid cuts
- Child care subsidies bill (increase amount single parent can earn without losing child care subsidies)
- Campaign finance and lobbying reform

What qualifies you to run for this position?

I have years of experience providing quality, professional leadership to the people and community organizations in the 10th District. In addition to making my home in the 10th District, I have also chosen to establish my career here. I am the Director of Pro Bono Services for the law firm, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. ("SHB"). The Director of Pro Bono Services is a position that I created to handle the day-to-day administration of SHB's nationwide pro bono legal services department. The firm is recognized as one of the top 100 pro bono firms in the nation and under my direction, SHB lawyers bill approximately 30,000 pro bono hours per year.

For the past decade, I have actively worked with children, women, the elderly and the disabled in some of Kansas City's poorest and most underserved communities. I am involved in numerous community organizations through volunteering and/or provision of free legal services.

I am also active in several national, state and local bar associations, including several leadership positions.

I have been a campaign volunteer for the past sixteen years. My efforts include large-scale field organization, speaking engagements, door knocking and phone banking. I have also spent a significant amount of time fundraising for progressive candidates and causes.

I bring to this seat a current and extensive knowledge of the interaction between individuals and the laws of this state. I have seen the power of laws that harm individuals and celebrated laws that help our community. This hands-on experience will play a key role as I help shape Missouri's laws and public policy. In addition, I will use the 10th District Senate Seat to improve the profile and legislative parity of Kansas City with other parts of the state. I will take an active role in party leadership and consistently vote in the best interests of the 10th District.

Among the first bills that I would sponsor would be a **health care reform** bill. Access to affordable health care must be available for Missouri's working families. Our seniors should never have to choose between getting medical care and putting food on the table. I will vote to **reverse cruel cuts to health services** and push to restore coverage for Missourians in need. I would also sponsor an education funding bill. As a new parent, I know that there is no issue more critical to our future. I will fight to **improve education** for children in our area - from pre-school through high school, as well as vocational/technical and college/university programs. We need to reduce unnecessary administrative waste and give more control of our schools to the communities they serve. I also will sponsor legislation to **support our local citizens serving overseas**. As a Captain in the Missouri National Guard JAG Corps, I understand the sacrifices of those Missourians going to battle for our country. In a new initiative, I will establish a low-interest loan program for Missouri's citizen-soldiers and their families to help make the return home a little bit easier.

The citizens of Kansas City deserve responsible leadership in the 10th District. I have lived a life built on responsible leadership. Shortly after after graduating from William Jewell, I was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives at the age of 24, becoming one of the youngest legislators in state history. Prior to my election, I worked for Congressman Ike Skelton and Governor Mel Carnahan. While in the House, I served as Vice-Chair of the Commerce Committee and was a member of the Kansas City Legislative Caucus, the Urban Affairs Committee, the Ways & Means Committee, and the Appropriations for General Administration Committee. I also put myself through law school at the University of Missouri while serving in Jefferson City. After two terms in the House, I then had the opportunity to earn a master's degree at the London School of Economics, where the emphasis of my studies was on the interaction between government and economic policies. Upon my return to Missouri, I worked as legal counsel to Lieutenant Governor Joe Maxwell and legal counsel to President Pro Tempore Ed Quick. I then worked as an Assistant Attorney General prosecuting sexually violent predators. I am currently a Captain in Missouri's Army National Guard JAG Corp, acting as trial counsel to a brigade in Kansas City, and am an attorney in private practice. As Senator, I will continue my work to improve education, increase health care coverage, and promote economic development and job creation in Kansas City and Jackson County. My experience, education and energy make me the most qualified candidate to serve the 10th District.

Candidates for State Senate - 10th District

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Ingrid Y. Burnett

Mike Flaherty

This year an effort was made to allow Missourians to receive tax breaks for paying the tuition of students unrelated to them. Although this effort failed how would you have voted? If a current legislator, how and why did you vote as you did?

I strongly lobbied the Missouri General Assembly to defeat this legislation. Further fracturing of our Public School District will not address the problems we face in terms of directing our resources to a higher level of accountability.

Candidate declined to respond

Since 2000, the amount of the Missouri budget devoted to elementary and secondary education has gone down dramatically. Assuming that there will still be a Republican majority in the legislature, how would you restore the funding to our schools to their past levels?

I would work to elect more Democrats. Failing that, I would strive to develop coalitions based on issues rather than personalities.

Candidate declined to respond

Illegal immigration has risen to become an important topic nationally. With the increasing number of immigrants that have made the Northeast their home the topic is even more relevant. What, if anything, should the state of Missouri do to address this issue?

I think we need to be more informed, first. Before we enact legislation that could be very costly and impractical for our local public service agencies, we should gather data that would inform us of the economic and cultural impact this issue currently has. There may be more cost efficient avenues than simply tightening and enforcing current immigration policies.

Candidate declined to respond

Missourians will vote on a measure in November that would increase the minimum wage in Missouri from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.50 an hour. Do you believe the minimum wage should be increased and why?

Yes. I think this is a quality of life issue for our children and their well-being.

Candidate declined to respond

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Jolie L. Justus



Jason Klumb

This year an effort was made to allow Missourians to receive tax breaks for paying the tuition of students unrelated to them. Although this effort failed how would you have voted? If a current legislator, how and why did you vote as you did?

Since 2000, the amount of the Missouri budget devoted to elementary and secondary education has gone down dramatically. Assuming that there will still be a Republican majority in the legislature, how would you restore the funding to our schools to their past levels?

Illegal immigration has risen to become an important topic nationally. With the increasing number of immigrants that have made the Northeast their home the topic is even more relevant. What, if anything, should the state of Missouri do to address this issue?

Missourians will vote on a measure in November that would increase the minimum wage in Missouri from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.50 an hour. Do you believe the minimum wage should be increased and why?

I would have to look at the specific bill before I can make an informed judgment regarding this question. I can state that I oppose any attempt, in any form, to funnel taxpayer dollars to K-12 private and parochial schools.

I will work with all of public education's stakeholders to ensure that our schools receive top funding priority.

The state of Missouri should not fall for the Republican and conservative Democrats' attempts to use immigration as a wedge issue. Immigration enforcement should be handled by federal officers and not local law authorities. At the same time, more must be done to hold private employers accountable when they violate the law. I will block attempts to take away basic human rights from anyone in this state. I do not support any attempt to create "English-only" or similar legislation meant to disenfranchise any portion of our state.

The minimum wage should be increased. This is a moral issue – it affects the basic human rights of all Missourians. Federal legislators have chosen to ignore the most vulnerable people in this country by once again rejecting a raise in the national minimum wage. Missouri must, therefore, join the growing number of states that recognize the need for a change. The current proposed increase is a move in the right direction.

Our state universities must be able to provide affordable, accessible education to all our citizens, but the fiscal reality is that costs are rising. Universities cannot avoid increases in the cost of insurance, employee benefits, utilities, and increases in salaries to retain top faculty and staff. We must find ways to keep higher education affordable. We allow tax breaks for donations to charity, and we should allow tax breaks for paying the tuition of students unrelated to them. I can think of no greater charity than the gift of education to someone who otherwise might not be able to afford one.

K-12 education is now approximately \$800 million below full funding under the current formula. Our schools are funded primarily at the local level through property taxes, then through state taxes with some support from federal funding. The current administration has made cuts to the program and funds it only at minimal levels. Those cuts need to be restored. The state should actually increase its share to take the burden off of our poorer areas in the state. After winning this primary, I promise to travel the state to help other Democrats win tight races. I also will reach out to moderate Republicans to build a bi-partisan coalition that will work to improve our schools.

Our current immigration laws need to be enforced, our borders need to be protected, and employers held accountable for hiring illegal immigrants. I believe that people who break the law should be held accountable, both illegal immigrants and the employers who exploit them for cheap labor. That said, we also need to ensure that our immigration laws are fair, ethical, and not too rigid.

I support the increase in the minimum wage. 42,000 Missourians currently work for minimum wage. It is just wrong that hard-working Missourians cannot get ahead because their paycheck isn't enough to live on. We need to reward that work with a wage that they can support their families on.

Candidates for State Senate - 10th District

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Ingrid Y. Burnett

Mike Flaherty

Last year Missouri cut over 90,000 people from Medicaid. How would you restore Medicaid services back to those who lost it?

This is a very partisan issue. If there is a way to address this in a non-partisan way I would welcome and embrace the opportunity.

Candidate declined to respond

Crime, especially gang activity, is an ever present problem in the Northeast. As a state legislator what could/would you do to help our local police, courts and citizens deal with this problem?

I would listen to what they tell me they need to support their efforts. I would then do all that is within my power to broker the necessary relationships that would allow them to advance their legislative priorities.

Candidate declined to respond

As it is anticipated that Republicans will hold the majority in the Legislature, how do you intend to move forward legislation as a member of the minority party?

I will find common ground and work from there. Education, crime and healthy living are issues that everyone is interested in.

Candidate declined to respond

With assets like the Kansas City Museum and the Cliff Drive Scenic Byway, tourism has been identified as an area of growth for the Northeast. How would you help enhance the Northeast's position as a tourist destination?

I will support and advocate for local initiatives that capitalize on the KC Museum, the Cliff Drive Scenic Byway, and the rich cultural and ethnic diversity. I will work with the city to include Northeast in its development efforts.

Candidate declined to respond

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Jolie L. Justus



Jason Klumb

Last year Missouri cut over 90,000 people from Medicaid. How would you restore Medicaid services back to those who lost it?

I will introduce legislation to reverse the cruel and shortsighted Medicaid cuts made by the Missouri legislature in 2005.

Crime, especially gang activity, is an ever present problem in the Northeast. As a state legislator what could/would you do to help our local police, courts and citizens deal with this problem?

As a representative of the 10th District, I will work with all community stakeholders to make sure we maximize all state resources available for crime prevention. I will hold in-district meetings to ensure that all of Kansas City's neighborhoods are safe, clean, diverse and sustainable.

As it is anticipated that Republicans will hold the majority in the Legislature, how do you intend to move forward legislation as a member of the minority party?

I will work with the Democratic leadership to ensure that progressive legislation is passed. This will be accomplished through coordination and leadership – not compromise.

With assets like the Kansas City Museum and the Cliff Drive Scenic Byway, tourism has been identified as an area of growth for the Northeast. How would you help enhance the Northeast's position as a tourist destination?

I will work to make sure that all Kansas City neighborhoods receive every support and tool available at the state level to enhance the entire district as a tourist destination.

Recent cuts in Medicaid have been disastrous for Missourians. The top priorities of the legislature must be healthcare and education for all of our citizens. I am in favor of reform - our Medicaid system can and must work better, cheaper, and more efficiently, and it will require a long-term studied approach. But we cannot allow our neediest citizens to be buried by government ignorance.

The city must do a better job in crime prevention, and it is going to require a concerted effort between the city and the state to ensure that is accomplished. We need to increase our police budget and police salaries. We need more police stations in high crime areas and increased police patrolling in high crime areas. On a broader scale, we must improve education and social services provided to young people in the Northeast. Our dropout rate is way too high, and we must do a better job of catching at-risk young people before they turn to crime. We also must encourage economic development and investment in the Northeast. Young people need to know that they have options beside a life on the streets.

I served in the legislature when the Democrats were the majority party, and worked closely with Mel Carnahan when he was governor. I learned a lot from Mel in dealing with Republicans and in boosting our own party. I will be a leader for Kansas City and for the party in the Senate. After winning this primary, I promise to travel the state to help other Democrats win tight races. I have strong relationships with Democrats throughout the state. Although we might not win the legislature back in this election, we do have an opportunity to make up ground. I also will reach out to moderate Republicans to build a bi-partisan coalition that might have the opportunity to swing votes to achieve our priorities.

I will work with the Missouri Division of Tourism to ensure that the 10th District's historic sites and other tourist draws are publicized and included in state sponsored guides. We have a number of great tourist sites in the 10th District from Santa Fe Trail tracks to the Thomas Hart Benton home to the new Liberty Memorial museum to Union Station to the Steamboat Arabia museum to the River Market to Cliff Drive and the Kansas City Museum here in the Northeast. We have a number of citywide festivals at the Liberty Memorial, Union Station and in the River Market area. We need to raise people's awareness of the Cliff Drive area, and need to develop some signature events for Cliff Drive as with other tourist sites. The Kansas City Museum tells the story of our area, and we need to make sure that every child of school age visits as part of the curriculum.

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Ingrid Y. Burnett

photograph unavailable

Mike Flaherty

Other areas of Kansas City have benefited from the availability of economic development tools such as Enterprise Zones, TIFs, etc. As a state legislator or prospective state legislator, what state economic development opportunities do you see as available for the Northeast? What would you do to make them available?

I think that Northeast has many of the same frustrations that other neighborhoods in the 10th district are struggling with. Many of them have to do with inadequate delivery of city services such as codes enforcement, street and sidewalk maintenance, etc. With the large number of small businesses in the outer perimeter areas of downtown, this is a good opportunity for Northeast to take a leadership position and host a summit to form alliances with other such neighborhoods with the goal of developing potential legislation that a KC delegation of lawmakers could advocate for. As a State Senator for this district I would not only encourage such a coalition, I would commit resources to help accomplish it.

Candidate declined to respond

Would you vote to ban abortion in Missouri?

No.

Candidate declined to respond

Would you vote to make marriages only between a man and woman in Missouri?

This is already a law of Missouri.

Candidate declined to respond

In your own words, why should you be elected or reelected to represent the Northeast?

I have proven that I can be a trusted political servant to Northeast, and to the 10th District. I have lived and worked in the boundaries of the district for over 30 years. My husband and I have invested in and improved each piece of property we have purchased, and sold them to homeowners who have stabilized their respective neighborhoods. Through my career as an educator I have enjoyed the trust and confidence of many families in Northeast and in the 10th District, which only comes with the delightful relationships that teachers enjoy with their students and their families. I know the hardships we face, and I know where our assets are.

Candidate declined to respond

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Other areas of Kansas City have benefited from the availability of economic development tools such as Enterprise Zones, TIFs, etc. As a state legislator or prospective state legislator, what state economic development opportunities do you see as available for the Northeast? What would you do to make them available?

I will work with Kansas City's Northeast neighborhoods to maximize all available tools for economic development.

I will be a crusader for Kansas City and the Northeast in the legislature. There has been a definite impression that Kansas City has not gotten a fair shake in Jefferson City in recent years. With my law degree and my master's degree from the London School of Economics, I am ready to advocate for our economic interests. While working for Attorney General Jay Nixon, I served as the office's representative on the Missouri Housing Development Commission, and I am tuned in to the development issues facing our area. I am committed to the continued revitalization of downtown and the surrounding urban core as a key to Kansas City's future growth. The Northeast has to be a part of this economic investment. TIFs and Enterprise Zones have been abused by some, but they were designed for areas like the Northeast. I will fight to ensure that the Northeast is able to take advantage of these tax credits. If necessary, I will tighten the laws on the books to ensure that we are able to take advantage of them. We need to work to ensure that historic and architecturally significant buildings are restored, and that blighted areas are replaced with new construction. We must ensure that jobs are created, and that investors know that this is a vital area rife with economic opportunity.

Would you vote to ban abortion in Missouri?

I would not vote to ban abortion in Missouri.

No.

Would you vote to make marriages only between a man and woman in Missouri?

I would not vote to make marriages only between a man and a woman in Missouri. This is currently a moot issue for the Missouri legislature because of the wrongheaded and bigoted constitutional amendment that was passed in 2004. I worked hard to defeat the amendment in 2004, and look forward to the day when we will remove discrimination from our state's most important document.

No.

In your own words, why should you be elected or reelected to represent the Northeast?

See answer to question #2, above.

Experience. Education. Energy. I am the only candidate in this race with legislative experience, and I know how to get things done. While in the Missouri House of Representatives, I worked to solve economic issues facing the people of Missouri as Vice-Chair of the Commerce Committee, and as a member of the Ways & Means and Appropriations for General Administration Committees. I also supported funding for education, protections for workers, and individual liberties. I know how to get things done in Jefferson City - I won't need any on-the-job training. As Senator, I will continue my work to improve education, increase health care coverage, and promote economic development and job creation in the Northeast and throughout Jackson County.

Candidates for 1st District (In - District) Jackson County Legislator

For more information on Scott Burnett go to www.friendsofscottburnett.com or call 816-561-4141.

For more information on Patrick Dobson go to www.patrickdobson.com or call 816-896-4746.



Scott Burnett



Patrick Dobson

If elected or reelected, what are your legislative priorities that will have an effect on the Northeast?

I will continue to work to keep county government as efficient as possible, so that basic services can be maintained without any increase in county taxes. Also, see COMBAT and tax discussion below.

I will demand a fairer and more transparent appeals process for property taxes. I want to bring taxpayers, assessors, real estate professionals, county employees, and officials from taxing jurisdictions to the table to discuss how we can make property tax assessment fair. I believe bad and corrupt government hurts everyone, particularly those in the working and lower middle class. All lobbying activity must be carefully documented so that these activities can be compared to ethical guidelines—perhaps by a part-time employee attached to the Jackson County Ethics Commission, a body that doesn't get enough credit or work. Ethical guidelines must have the force of law and/or censure. While we can make law demanding compliance with ethics standards, monitoring this, I believe, is everyone's job. COMBAT funds should be audited separate from the county audit that includes specific performance criteria based on these questions: Have the contracts need been awarded properly? Are the contractors providing the services spelled out in the contracts? Did we get our dollar's worth? The results of such services as drug rehabilitation are much harder to gage and need to be assessed separately. I believe the county can and should demand better education and schools from the Kansas City School District. The public and elected officials must demand that the entire process be transparent, from tax collection to contract bidding and monitoring, to all legislative deliberations. There is nothing more cleansing, as we journalists say, by the disinfectant of the light of day.

What qualifies you to run for this position? If you are running for reelection, what achievements during your term have you had that compels you to run again?

I have eight years of experience in helping to keep County government as much as possible on an even keel. One of the first things you must learn when elected is that actually governing requires a lot of work and making hard choices. Experience in government really does make a difference in what you can do for the people in your District.

I have been a long-time neighborhood activist. I am active in the Westside Steering and Planning Committees and in our larger neighborhood organization. Most recently, we went through an extensive and extraordinarily democratic process to downzone first the north and then the south end of the Westside. We have worked with developers to craft development that benefits the existing neighborhood, those investors who now see the Westside as a good investment, and the city at large.

Despite some controversy, we have actually achieved a great deal. County government has been made a lot more efficient and responsive. When tax money comes in, it now goes to the school districts and other taxing entities within days, not the weeks or months it took a decade ago. That gives them the opportunity to be more efficient. Development of Internet services have made it easier to deal with the County, and virtually eliminated long lines at the Courthouse. Our County Parks system has expanded the recreational opportunities for our citizens.

Recently, we rezoned the entire Westside to single family residential and duplex from multifamily, commercial and manufacturing.

Harsh words or a flare of tempers may catch the headlines, but the real news is the vastly improved County government that has resulted from long hours of work by the Executive and the Legislature. It's not perfect, but we have come a long way.

I have worked as a journalist for over a decade in Kansas City, writing and commenting on Jackson County government. I have written extensively on government at all levels, exposing not only government and business corruption, but also where government and business can work to the betterment of community. I come to this position knowing our district, understanding how to work with others, and with a moral core that has carried me, directed me, through career, family, and life.

Candidates for 1st District (In - District) Jackson County Legislator



Scott Burnett



Patrick Dobson

The City of Kansas City and Jackson County more generally, has an aging infrastructure, especially as it relates to the western part of the county. What improvements or enhancements are/would you push for as a County Legislator and how would you pay for them?

Of necessity – and by law — most of that burden is a City responsibility. Much of the County’s funds are restricted in the manner they can be spent. Where the County can help, it should and must. The City is the engine that makes the rest of the metropolitan area work, and maintaining the City’s basic infrastructure is important to keeping our County economy viable

Much of the infrastructure is city-owned and maintained. I would first press the Kansas City city government to pay greater attention to its responsibility to its citizens. At the same time, I would need to see what part of the infrastructure belongs to Jackson County and what the county needs to do to update/maintain it. I need to see exactly where we can create greater efficiency in government first. Then I would consider all options for paying for infrastructure repair short of tax increases.

I’m sorry if this answer is a little shy. Honestly, I am still learning the intricacies of county government. County infrastructure and what the county can do to insure that aging infrastructure is updated and maintained is something I have much to learn about.

In 2005, the appraised value of many homes in the Northeast, as throughout Jackson County, went up noticeably and in some cases dramatically. Do you feel that further increases are necessary in the future?

No. Northeast does not need higher taxes. Period. Taxes are too high now.

Reassessment is mandated by State law every two years. Until 2005, Jackson County increased assessments of residential real estate very conservatively. In 2005, the State Tax Commission intervened to require higher assessment.

This was particularly hard on those who live in the Kansas City School District. Most tax money goes to the school district you live in. That is the bulk of your actual tax bill. In most districts, a big jump in assessed value doesn’t have to mean a big jump in your taxes, since there is a requirement to roll back the levy to limit the tax increase – except for the Kansas City School District. The KCSD claims to be exempt from that rollback requirement – and refused to voluntarily roll back its levy as other district are required to do. The District got a big windfall, but the residents got a bigger tax bill.

Frankly, we need some relief at the State level. There needs to be some flexibility for older residents – and there needs to be some recognition of the expenses involved in maintaining older homes. Right now, the County’s hands are tied by State laws that keep us from offering much meaningful help, other than lobbying for changes in State law.

No. I believe that the present reassessment method should bring in enough revenue for some time to come. If this method significantly increases county revenue, however, I will advocate for stronger support for mental health, health care for the working poor and indigent, increased infrastructure development, and professional and career development for county employees. At the same time, I will also demand that we look for ways to decrease levies from all taxing jurisdictions to keep from creating an overburdening and obtrusive county government. Just because the county gets a lot of money does not mean that it should be able to spend it all without regard for the financial wherewithal of its taxpayers.

Candidates for 1st District (In - District) Jackson County Legislator

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Scott Burnett



Patrick Dobson

Crime is a continuing issue for the Northeast and the number of criminals who are caught and then released is of special concern. What as a Legislator would/are you doing to deal with this problem?

The Legislature funds the jail to its full capacity under the Federal court order, and funds the Prosecutor's office at the highest level possible. Often a bottleneck results from a limited number of judges – a number set by the State. So the Prosecutor of necessity must prioritize keeping the most dangerous criminals off the streets.

In the short run, increased police presence and community involvement can make a big difference. In the long term, we must do more to offer our young people better options – as in jobs – and (with non-violent offenders) help resisting the slide into a life of crime.

Very few serious crimes are committed by people with a good education and a good job.

The jail operations fall under the executive. But the legislature and the executive, working together, can find solutions both to the management of the jail and the possibility of building a new facility. The overcrowding issue cannot be ignored or theorized away. Building a new facility, contracting out prisoners to private facilities, and the use of halfway houses and release facilities are both expensive and fraught with difficulty. But the reality presses us to find a solution rather than conducting business as we have. Arresting and letting criminal defendants go provides for neither justice nor the public safety.

Secondly, we must take a close look at where the county's law enforcement budget stands. I see no conflict with using the Sheriff's Department to help the KCMO police deal with such issues as the loud and obtrusive cruising Gladstone Boulevard, dealing with public nuisances, and drug-related crime—particularly at specifically targeted times.

At the same time, slack police patrols followed by periods almost military-style police presence is not working. In fact, it seems to erode resident's confidence and the perception of public safety in the Northeast. I believe a constant but unobtrusive police presence does more to control crime and increase public confidence than shows of police power.

Moreover, making sure that drug-rehab programs continue functioning and providing services to addicts is of utmost importance. The steps leading to effective prevention of drug abuse and related crime, domestic violence, and alcoholism lie not in interdiction only, but in effective programs dealing with the social, personal, and mental aspects of these heartbreaking problems.

Meth, of course, has changed all the formulas for rehab and prevention because of the potentially addictive nature of the drug. I believe we must, as a community, understand the deadly nature of the drug and do everything in our power, from community improvement to law enforcement and approaching the difficult issues surrounding poverty to prevent meth use.

Candidates for 1st District (In - District) Jackson County Legislator



Scott Burnett



Patrick Dobson

Recently COMBAT was extended by the voters of Jackson County. The Northeast neighborhoods reside in the Kansas City Police Department's East and Center Zones. Would you be in favor of reallocating COMBAT funds to assist law enforcement efforts in these two zones?

Kansas City Parks & Recreation has some unparalleled parks but unfortunately has seen its budget continue to dwindle. As a Legislator what possibilities do you see for partnering with KC Parks & Recreation for such areas like Cliff Drive and other KC parks in the Northeast?

Of course, the KCPD controls where it's resources are committed within the City. That being said, I believe it is important to allocate resources to the Northeast – and especially where active neighborhood organizations are willing to commit the time and energy to be real partners. We can't have a police officer on every corner. But where residents are willing to help in an organized way, it increased the effectiveness of law enforcement ten-fold – and that commitment should be supported.

Jackson County partners with Kansas City on many matters. If the Park Board is willing, I am sure the County would be willing to share any possible resources – within the limits that are imposed on County funding.

I would insure that COMBAT's funding structure is flexible enough to respond to spikes and trends in crime activity. This means that those areas or regions that have enjoyed a relatively low crime rate will have to do with less funding—the money should always flow where the work needs to be done. At the same time, prevention is an important element in fighting crime. We must realize that prevention has neither the weighable or splashy results of drug raids or drug house closures. Therefore, we must maintain our commitment to rehabilitation programs while being able to respond to problem areas.

Insuring that COMBAT funds are doing their job is the first step in eliminating waste. This kind of scrutiny will lead to greater efficiency in the use of those funds, allowing the county to accomplish more.

Funding is an issue for both parks departments. Each addresses needs and amenities special to their constituency. This does not mean that we can't look for ways to find efficiencies and synergies that join the two departments in a common effort.

This, too, however, is an area that I look forward to learning more about.

Candidates for 1st District (At-Large) Jackson County Legislator

For more information on Garry J. Baker call 816-650-3030.

For more information on Theresa Garza go to www.theresain2006.com or call 816-365-6174.

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Garry J. Baker

Henry Carner

Theresa Garza

If elected, what are your legislative priorities that will have an effect on the Northeast?

Find ways to curb the substantial increases in taxes every two years because of re-assessment.
 Support competitive wages and benefits for Jackson County employees to maintain a qualified work force to serve taxpayers needs.
 Pursue maximum results from every tax dollar
 Represent the taxpayers in good-old-common sense government.

Candidate declined to respond

I am committed to keeping property taxes down by ensuring that they are conducted in a fair manner.

I will work with the other Legislators, Police Departments, and the City of Kansas City to increase police protection that helps promote school and neighborhood safety.

What qualifies you to run for this position?

I worked for Jackson County 33 years, retiring as senior residential appraiser in the assessment department. I know county government. I served as the mayor of Buckner for four years. I was a member of the Fort Osage School Board six years, serving as president twice. I have a B.S. Degree in Business Administration from CMSU.

Candidate declined to respond

I have numerous years of volunteer service including 5 years active duty in the United States Navy. I have worked as a legislative research aide in the past and have on several occasions provided elected officials with information that has helped them make informed decisions. I am currently completing a Masters Degree in Public Administration at Park University with two emphasis areas: *Government/Business Relations* and *Public Management*.

Candidates for 1st District (At-Large) Jackson County Legislator

<p>For more information on John W. Pennell call 816-461-6741.</p>	<p>photograph unavailable</p>	<p>photograph unavailable</p>
	<p>Larry Marshall</p>	<p>John W. Pennell</p>
<p>If elected, what are your legislative priorities that will have an effect on the Northeast?</p>	<p>Candidate declined to respond</p>	<p>Fair Property Tax - Inflation adjusted market appraisals combined with no levy rollback makes for a formula that will tax fixed income owners out of their homes.</p> <p>Fund the Sheriff's Department to serve the backlog of warrants and to staff the compliance officer position for the sex-offender registry.</p> <p>Support Legislation that targets employers that hire illegal workers.</p>
<p>What qualifies you to run for this position?</p>	<p>Candidate declined to respond</p>	<p>I have been asked to run by Robert A. Stringfield. I have served Mr. Stringfield for three years, therefore I am quite experienced in how the Legislature works. I am on a first name basis with many key people and entities.</p> <p>We have accomplished many things. We have served the taxpayers by stopping the illegal waivers of tax bills. We have exposed the illegal closed deal meetings of other Legislators. We have exposed the illegal misappropriation of \$1 million dollars of park property. We re-established the COMBAT treatment programs when other Legislators allowed the programs to lapse. And we fought for the fair share agreements in the stadium contracts. And much more.</p>

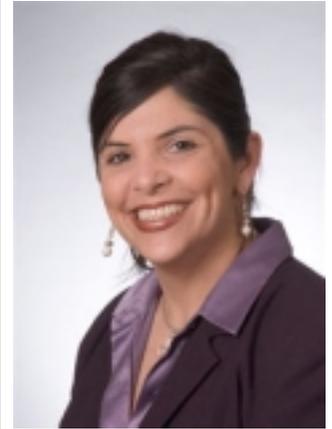
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Garry J. Baker

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Theresa Garza

The City of Kansas City and Jackson County more generally, has an aging infrastructure, especially as it relates to the western part of the county. What improvements or enhancements are/would you push for as a County Legislator and how would you pay for them?

In 2005, the appraised value of many homes in the Northeast, as throughout Jackson County, went up noticeably and in some cases dramatically. Do you feel that further increases are necessary in the future?

Crime is a continuing issue for the Northeast and the number of criminals who are caught and then released is of special concern. What as a Legislator would/are you doing to deal with this problem?

The County should more vigorously promote preventive maintenance, and upgrade of its infrastructure of county roads, bridges, and buildings. Pay for it by spending money wisely, and wasting non on less important things.

NO, I feel that a complete overhaul of the assessment process needs to be done. Beginning at the state level, where it is mandated that MO counties re-assess every two years. All of the government agencies, school districts, library districts, etc., that receive tax money from property taxes need to tighten their belts, hold expenditures close to the rate of inflation. If we did this there would be no need for double digit increases in property taxes, we could tie them to the rate of inflation. I want to find ways to ameliorate the effects of property tax increases on those least able to afford them.

I would encourage prosecutors and judges to enforce the law to its fullest extent.

Candidate declined to respond

Candidate declined to respond

Candidate declined to respond

I would be more than willing to cooperate with the City of Kansas City on public works projects. As for the means in which to pay for them, the City of Kansas City would have to establish the mechanism for this since it is a city function and falls under their jurisdiction.

I will pay special attention to balancing/relieving this problem by working with others who are also committed to making sure that higher valued residential property and commercial property is on the tax rolls and reassessed in a manner that allows for reassessment to relieve the tax burden for those in older districts.

I am committed to adding prosecutors that will assist in the growing caseloads; to making sure that drug crimes and violent crimes receive the highest possible priority; and as mentioned in question 1, increasing police protection.

Candidates for 1st District (At-Large) Jackson County Legislator

<p>For more information on John W. Pennell call 816-461-6741.</p>	<p>photograph unavailable</p>	<p>photograph unavailable</p>
<p>The City of Kansas City and Jackson County more generally, has an aging infrastructure, especially as it relates to the western part of the county. What improvements or enhancements are/would you push for as a County Legislator and how would you pay for them?</p> <p>In 2005, the appraised value of many homes in the Northeast, as throughout Jackson County, went up noticeably and in some cases dramatically. Do you feel that further increases are necessary in the future?</p> <p>Crime is a continuing issue for the Northeast and the number of criminals who are caught and then released is of special concern. What as a Legislator would/are you doing to deal with this problem?</p>	<p>Candidate declined to respond</p> <p>Candidate declined to respond</p> <p>Candidate declined to respond</p>	<p>Larry Marshall</p> <p>John W. Pennell</p> <p>Old infrastructure detracts from neighborhood desirability. The Jackson County Legislature can support the City of Kansas City to address the huge problems of deteriorating infrastructure. The time is upon us for a major bond package to reconstruct older Kansas City's sewers, water supply, and roads.</p> <p>Every dollar we spend in these areas will return to the community in terms of desirability and quality of life. Improving these factors will cause a return of families to our neighborhoods. And the presence of families will in time, stabilize our communities and our property values.</p> <p>The appraisal methods of Jackson County leave much to be desired. Cracks and loopholes in the system result in inequity. Properties in the older areas may be overvalued while new houses in suburbia are undervalued. I have observed instances of this disparity over many years of observation. I know where to look.</p> <p>As I stated in my answer to question #1, a greater problem for Northeast is the absence of a levy rollback provision in the Kansas City Public School District Levy. I feel that a property re-appraisal without a levy rollback is wrong.</p> <p>To answer your question about further increases...inflation dictates that future increases in property appraisals are inevitable. However, without a levy rollback, appraisal increases will tax people out of their homes.</p> <p>Although they are traditionally used for school districts, property taxes are a poor choice to fund the government.</p> <p>As you know, a couple of years ago, the Missouri Legislature passed a Senate bill that softened jail time for offenders. And so the revolving door to the jailhouse turns pretty fast.</p> <p>Combining that with the fact that the Kansas City Council and Police Department have not kept their commitment to put 20 new officers per year on the street, (see Funkhouser audit) and you have a formula for the highest murder rate in Kansas City for years. (see 2005).</p> <p>I would deal with the crime problem by pressuring Kansas City to follow through on their commitment and by lobbying the Missouri Legislature to revisit their relatively new law that releases prisoners.</p> <p>Be advised, the Jackson County prosecutor needs to take the lead in this area and has not.</p>

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Garry J. Baker

Henry Carner

Theresa Garza

Recently COMBAT was extended by the voters of Jackson County. The Northeast neighborhoods reside in the Kansas City Police Department's East and Center Zones. Would you be in favor of reallocating COMBAT funds to assist law enforcement efforts in these two zones?

I am not sure about this. But if elected I would be willing to learn it it would be possible.

Candidate declined to respond

Yes

Kansas City Parks & Recreation has some unparalleled parks but unfortunately has seen its budget continue to dwindle. As a Legislator what possibilities do you see for partnering with KC Parks & Recreation for such areas like Cliff Drive and other KC parks in the Northeast?

Again, I am not sure it this is possible. But if it is and funds could be made available it sounds like it would be a good partnership.

Candidate declined to respond

I would consider collaborative partnerships and/or special funding for areas like Cliff Drive.

Candidates for 1st District (At-Large) Jackson County Legislator

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Candidates for Jackson County Executive

For more information on Mike Sanders go to www.sandersjacksoncounty.com or call 816-276-5688.

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Robert Eckhardt



Mike Sanders

If elected or reelected, what are your legislative priorities that will have an effect on the Northeast?

Candidate declined to respond

My overriding concern during my 12 years in the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office (the last four as the elected Prosecutor), and in this campaign, has been the central importance of safe and livable communities to our county's quality of life. That will not change if I am elected Jackson County Executive. I can pledge that issues such as preventing the early release of prisoners because of overcrowding at the county jail, maintaining firm financial and operational control of COMBAT programs, or ensuring that law enforcement has the resources it needs to function effectively, will continue to be as high on my priority list as County Executive as they have been as Prosecutor.

What qualifies you to run for this position?

Candidate declined to respond

In Question 4 I discuss issues of tax assessment and collections in more detail; for now, I'll just say that these issues, which are of particular concern in the Northeast, will also be high priorities for me as County Executive. Efficiency, transparency and accountability to the taxpayers should be the watchwords for county government, and I intend to take every necessary step to bring those qualities to our Finance Department.

Some of my accomplishments over my four years as Prosecutor include:

Developing a five-point plan to fight violent crime, featuring a countywide cooperative effort by law enforcement agencies, community groups and concerned citizens.

A plan to collect expenses owed by the federal government for the administration of federal programs, which will result in Jackson County recouping badly needed general revenues.

Tightening controls on the COMBAT anti-drug program – including my call for an independent audit that uncovered literally of millions of misspent dollars – to ensure that tax dollars are spent in the manner the voters approved.

Speeding up prosecutions to alleviate overcrowding in the county jail. This situation formerly led to the early release of as many as 115 inmates every month. We have had no such early releases since Dec. 31, 2002.

Drafting and working with the Missouri Legislature to pass landmark DNA legislation to help solve past and future violent offenses. With this technology we resolved dozens of "cold case" rapes and homicides, and identified several serial killers.

The common denominator in all these efforts is that they involved bringing people together to address real problems that directly affect our lives. Of course these efforts all came from my position as Prosecutor, but I feel that the approach I've taken in that post can be effectively applied to the issues facing the County Executive. I pledge to continue working with and listening to all points of view so that together we can build a better Jackson County.

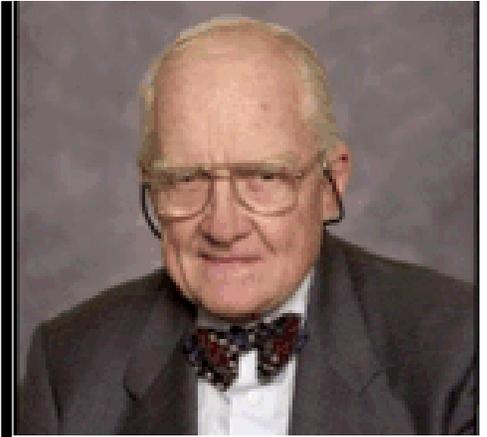
Candidates for Jackson County Executive

For more information on Richard Charles Tolbert call 816-808-2854.

For more information on Charles B. Wheeler go to www.wheelerintegrity.com or call 816-523-4995.



Richard Charles Tolbert



Charles B. Wheeler

If elected, what are your legislative priorities that will have an effect on the Northeast?

I will work as an ombudsman for the citizens. I will go to any and all levels of government to serve citizen needs.

My first priority will be to run an efficient County government, keep a balanced budget and an excellent bond rating, so that we can avoid any unnecessary tax increase. There are some excellent programs and initiatives that need to be continued and built upon.

One important priority is property tax relief.

What qualifies you to run for this position?

I have public, elective office experience, and I have a proven record of protecting the interests of the ordinary citizen.

I served as Western Judge in Jackson County, and helped establish our Home Rule Charter, as well as the important campaigns to build the Truman Sports Complex and the Truman Medical Centers.

I served two very successful terms as Mayor of Kansas City.

I am completing my fourth year in the Missouri Senate.

The City of Kansas City and Jackson County more generally, has an aging infrastructure, especially as it relates to the western part of the county. What improvements or enhancements would you push for as the County Executive and how would you pay for them?

KC does not get a fair share of Jackson County spending. I will work to correct that imbalance.

Kansas City's growing infrastructure crisis is something that can have a serious impact on the entire metropolitan area, because of the unique position of Kansas City as the driving economic and cultural force. The county cannot - financially or legally - take on the City's responsibilities, but we can (and in my view must) offer as much help, expertise and cooperation as possible.

Candidates for Jackson County Executive

For more information on Mike Sanders go to www.sandersjacksoncounty.com or call 816-276-5688.

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Robert Eckhardt



Mike Sanders

The City of Kansas City and Jackson County more generally, has an aging infrastructure, especially as it relates to the western part of the county. What improvements or enhancements would you push for as the County Executive and how would you pay for them?

Candidate declined to respond

In 2005, the appraised value of many homes in the Northeast, as throughout Jackson County, went up noticeably and in some cases dramatically. Do you feel that further increases are necessary in the future?

Candidate declined to respond

Most of the aging infrastructure in the western part of the county is outside the jurisdiction of Jackson County government. The sewer system, most notably, which is in dire need of upgrades and repairs, is within the purview of the City of Kansas City. The best thing that we in county government can do for Kansas City's infrastructure needs is to strengthen our key role in the overall economy of the area – by improving our efficiency and accountability in general, and in the Finance Department in particular (see Question 4), and by managing such crucial economic-development programs as the Truman Sports Complex renovations in an open, transparent and cost-effective manner.

A growing economy is a good thing in countless ways, and of course that implies a gradual increase in property values. It becomes a problem, though, when assessments are neglected for long periods of time, so that appraised values suddenly increase dramatically once a reassessment is finally accomplished.

As County Executive, one of my top priorities would be to improve the efficiency and accountability of our tax system, to make the process smoother, more predictable, and more transparent to the taxpayers. There also are possibilities of such ideas as "circuit-breakers" for the elderly, to ease the shock of sudden increases for those on fixed incomes. I would definitely be open to any ideas that can make county government's important revenue-generating functions more accountable to those who pay the taxes.

One of my top priorities as Prosecutor has been to continually strengthen the professionalism of my staff, in the belief that if I could staff the office with bright and dedicated attorneys who share my desire to protect our community, everything else would follow. As County Executive, I would continue that approach; you could expect to see an energetic focus on programs for staff development and training, which is the most effective way to improve the delivery of county services.

That dovetails with my overall goal of better accountability to the community. Along the same lines as my call for an independent audit of COMBAT funds, I plan to continue to advocate on behalf of accountability to taxpayers and open, transparent government, and to administer county government with those goals foremost in mind. To judge from the enormous number of taxpayer complaints I've heard, the assessment and collections functions of the Finance Department are an obvious example of an opportunity to work toward improved efficiency.

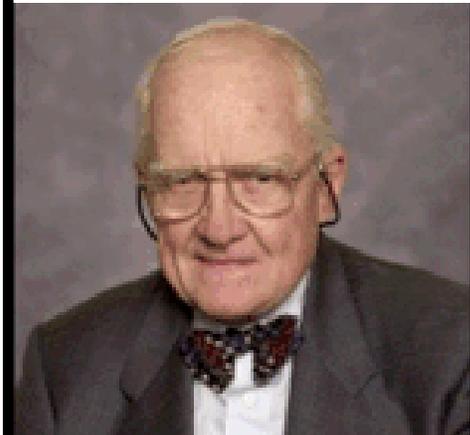
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In 2005, the appraised value of many homes in the Northeast, as throughout Jackson County, went up noticeably and in some cases dramatically. Do you feel that further increases are necessary in the future?

Crime is a continuing issue for the Northeast and the number of criminals who are caught and then released is of special concern. What as the County Executive would you do to deal with this problem?

Recently COMBAT was extended by the voters of Jackson County. The Northeast neighborhoods reside in the Kansas City Police Department's East and Center Zones. Would you be in favor of reallocating COMBAT funds to assist law enforcement efforts in these two zones?

No. Jackson County can operate within existing revenue.

Reduce the conditions that breed crime.

I will work to see that Northeast neighborhoods get their fair share.

NO.

We need to fully fund the jail, and we need to make sure that those who commit crimes - especially crimes of violence - are dealt with swiftly by the Prosecutor and the courts. We have limited resources, and must allocate them efficiently. Mr. Sanders has already agreed to an independent performance audit of his office after the August primary. I intend to hold him to that promise. I also will pledge to work with the Courts to speed the disposition of cases before them.

Ultimately, we must work to improve our economy, our educational and employment opportunities and our family structures to make a permanent difference in our public safety.

The County Executive cannot - and probably should not - have the authority to micromanage the funds given to the Kansas City Police. The last thing anyone needs is political interference in law enforcement.

On the other hand, Northeast has a significant share of the drug abuse problem - and it manifests itself in some particularly harmful ways, including drug houses and a concentration of street prostitution in some specific areas. There should be a way to recognize and aid local community efforts to help the police in addressing these problems.

Candidates for Jackson County Executive

For more information on Mike Sanders go to www.sandersjacksoncounty.com or call 816-276-5688.

photograph unavailable



Robert Eckhardt

Mike Sanders

Crime is a continuing issue for the Northeast and the number of criminals who are caught and then released is of special concern. What as the County Executive would you do to deal with this problem?

Candidate declined to respond

Several of the items I listed in Question 2 are relevant to this question. As I mentioned in both Questions 1 and 2, you can confidently expect that as County Executive, I would continue to emphasize the improvement of our law enforcement systems, and would stay in constant contact with the new Prosecutor, the Sheriff and all other relevant officials to ensure that they have the resources and support they need to deal with issues of crime.

Recently COMBAT was extended by the voters of Jackson County. The Northeast neighborhoods reside in the Kansas City Police Department's East and Center Zones. Would you be in favor of reallocating COMBAT funds to assist law enforcement efforts in these two zones?

Candidate declined to respond

I have a long-standing interest in the COMBAT anti-drug program, and place a high priority on ensuring that those tax dollars are spent in the manner the voters approved. I would certainly be open to any use of COMBAT programs, consistent with the will of the people, that could strengthen law enforcement efforts in the Northeast or any other area of the county.

Kansas City Parks & Recreation has some unparalleled parks but unfortunately has seen its budget continue to dwindle. As County Executive what possibilities do you see for partnering with KC Parks & Recreation for such areas like Cliff Drive and other KC parks in the Northeast?

Candidate declined to respond

We need to examine how current revenues are being allocated, with an eye toward finding efficiencies in operations. In fact, rather than seeking additional revenues for the county's infrastructure operations, I would be looking more in the direction of finding revenues that we could return to cities, which certainly have infrastructure issues of their own to address. That would be the sort of partnership in which Jackson County could provide assistance to KC Parks & Recreation.

Because the Northeast crosses many political jurisdictions, what do you feel will be the biggest challenge in working with the many representatives (County Legislators, State Legislators, KC City Council members) we have for the betterment of the Northeast?

Candidate declined to respond

I am a firm believer in bringing people together, across jurisdictional boundaries as needed, to work cooperatively on the issues that face all those jurisdictions alike. For just two examples of forming coalitions to seek solutions for problems facing the public: 1) As Prosecutor, I personally lobbied the Missouri Legislature for the authority to use DNA analysis, which has enabled us to solve a large number of cold cases, including the identification of several serial killers; and, 2) with our five-point plan for reducing violent crime, the Prosecutor's Office worked with agencies across the county to, among other things, create a "wolf pack" approach to serving outstanding criminal warrants.

So, to address the question of the "biggest challenge" directly, I find it completely natural and normal to work with representatives from various jurisdictions. By establishing an expectation that public officials, whatever their political base may be, can work together to seek the most effective solutions to issues, I have found that those solutions can indeed be addressed.

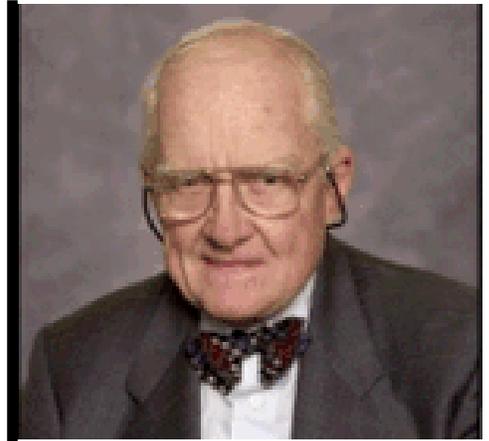
Candidates for Jackson County Executive

For more information on Richard Charles Tolbert call 816-808-2854.

For more information on Charles B. Wheeler go to www.wheelerintegrity.com or call 816-523-4995.



Richard Charles Tolbert



Charles B. Wheeler

Kansas City Parks & Recreation has some unparalleled parks but unfortunately has seen its budget continue to dwindle. As County Executive what possibilities do you see for partnering with KC Parks & Recreation for such areas like Cliff Drive and other KC parks in the Northeast?

This seems reasonable and wise.

Because the Northeast crosses many political jurisdictions, what do you feel will be the biggest challenge in working with the many representatives (County Legislators, State Legislators, KC City Council members) we have for the betterment of the Northeast?

All elected representatives should be respected and treated fairly.

No elected official should be stripped of his committee assignments as happened to R. Stringfield, as this does a disservice to the people he was elected to represent.

Every government has seen its revenue resources fail to grow at the rate of its needs. Jackson County is no different. But, if governments are willing to cooperate with each other and share certain resources, they can work more efficiently together than separately by avoiding unnecessary duplication. If there are ways that the Jackson County Parks Department can aid Kansas City - and the K.C. Parks Department wants the help - that cooperation will take place.

Since I have been involved in County, State and City government, I have insight into how to deal with each - and all - of these levels of government. Most elected officials really do want to do a good job for their constituents, and work hard for that purpose. I hope to put my experience to work in helping to coordinate their efforts.

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