

The Bandera PROPHEET

February 13, 2022

Candidates' Q&A

The Bandera Prophet invited the candidates for Bandera County Judge, Justice of the Peace Pct. 4 and County Commissioner Pct. 2 to participate in a Q&A. Each candidate's response is published in alphabetical order by their last name, per office.

Bandera County Judge

The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you running for Bandera County Judge?
2. What do you believe the county's greatest challenges are?
3. If the county received a \$1 million grant, how would you like to see the money spent?
4. If elected, what changes would you like to implement? Likewise, what would you like to keep in place?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera County Judge?

Richard A. Evans:

1. a) To continue to provide fiscally responsible leadership for the citizens of Bandera County.
b) To complete the construction of a County Annex to consolidate offices located in the County Seat, while still maintaining operation of the current annexes in Lakehills and Medina. This will reduce operating costs, provide security to county employees and facilitate access to services in a central location.
c) To renovate the 1881 Jail and adjoining Courthouse for a tourist center, as well as an historic attraction for visitors.
2. a) To provide services to a growing population without taxing citizens out of their homes.

b) Assure that development is responsible and sustainable and does not deplete our water resources.

c) The Texas Legislature - unfunded mandates imposed by the Legislature and funded by local property taxes have created a huge financial strain on counties. The State should pay their bill for mandated county services.

3. The grant should be spent on capital projects such as Road and Bridge improvements, communications and emergency services. The money should be spent on projects that would provide long-term savings for taxpayers.

4. a) Pass legislation in Austin that gives counties the ability to provide safeguards against irresponsible development and assure our surface and groundwater is conserved and not contaminated.

b) I want to maintain our county as a unique destination for tourism and protect the attributes that set us apart from any other county in the state.

5. I have a 25-plus-year track record of conservative leadership and commitment to fulfilling my job duties daily. I am a sixth-generation resident of this county and I want it to remain the best place in the world to live, raise a family, and educate your children.

Dennis Fitzgerald:

1: So I can have the greatest impact on services, Public Safety, County Government, and improve the quality of life for residents in this county.

2: a) Mental Health crisis & stopping rampant drug use

b) Trash, excessive dumping is a pervasive problem in the county, it's an eyesore, creates rodent infestations and is polluting our watershed with toxic chemicals, we can fix this!

c) Infrastructure and preparation for inevitable growth: Planning is critical as is upgrading our systems before they are subject to failure

from expanded demands.

3: Addressing infrastructure issues and public safety in the county.

4: a) Develop a comprehensive plan for stopping drug abuse and mental health

What would I keep?

b) I will keep Bandera Cowboy and maintain our true Texas heritage as did our ancestors.

5: My profound ambition to have an impact in the world, my extensive experience in Texas law and judicial experience, four decades of small businesses operations and knowledge of how to help the community prosper. My goal will be to attract clean businesses into the county which will provide higher paying jobs for the younger generation so that they too can afford to live here and raise a family, right here without having to leave the county.

Susan Junker

1. I was honored to be asked to run for County Judge by a variety of concerned citizens. I hadn't considered it before: the position requirements aligned very well with my background, experience and conservative Republican values. I am running to serve you from 25 years in the U.S. Army, 10 in industry and most recently, eight years as a volunteer leader in local nonprofit organizations. I could serve my "forever" home in Bandera County very well. When I spoke to Judge Evans last spring, his reasons for running again included the wishes of his family and the Commissioners Court and his desire to build an annex to the courthouse. I am running for the Citizens of Bandera County: to make their lives safer and better.

2. There are four top challenges: Law enforcement, economic growth, unchecked development and education. Our county needs strong law enforcement that is paid a comparable wage and provided with the best

technology and training available. Right now, we have recurring retention and recruiting shortfalls and aged equipment. An aggressive campaign to bring clean jobs to our county is necessary to provide local work, especially for young families. Think “call center or IT or medical.” Large tracts of land have already been purchased for development. Water permit requests in 2021 were double those in 2020: only five acres are required for a well. Why? We must strengthen regulations and draft legislation to preserve our heritage while addressing the impact of land development: solar and wind farms not welcome. Quality education with a variety of options must be maintained and constantly improved working closely with the districts and home schoolers. Planning and strategies are required to remain ahead of these challenges. We cannot address these issues utilizing the same approach of the past 25 years.

3. A grant with no strings attached is assumed, right? We would conduct a review of Law Enforcement, Emergency Management Services and our Volunteer Fire Departments to identify and prioritize their needs to upgrade equipment, information technology, training and communications. Population growth and too many years of underfunding have put our citizens at risk. For example, standardization of communication and information technology ensuring coverage for all areas of the county. Is there automation in every vehicle? Do all personnel have the necessary certifications they require? What salary and benefit adjustments are required to ensure our personnel are competitive in the Hill Country and apply part of the grant there. Should Emergency Services District(s) be established? Long term coverage of these improvements after the grant must also be addressed – is it worth the investment in safety and security to utilize a small portion of the \$10 million dollar fund balance set aside now to keep it going?

4. There is an immediate need for transparency and new communication tools – a new level of openness and access to what is happening in county government. Review of law enforcement, emergency medical

and emergency management statistics, compensation, equipment, and issues to determine how we can attract and retain the right number and quality of each. The growth in our county demands it. Develop plans to address economic development (e.g., preserve tourism base and seek diversity), roads and bridges and information technology. Review the justification for a new Courthouse annex: cost/benefit of consolidation of county offices, the location, timing, and requirements to build given other pressing needs.

Bandera's heritage is strong. Its beautiful land and water and special "Cowboy Capital" designation provide the economic engine for a way of life many envy. This and our historic sites must be preserved and serve as a source of pride and education for not only tourists, but the next generation. Our children should have the opportunity for a safe, secure rural upbringing. Parents should be confident that a quality education and employment are within reach. Conservative values such as accountability personal freedom, and limited government must remain.

5. I possess the required capabilities and am committed to the 24/7 responsibilities. I have a lifetime of demonstrated uncompromising high standards of conduct and character. I have strong interpersonal skills, seeking expertise, listening to taxpayers, bringing groups together to solve issues. I genuinely care about the welfare of families in Bandera County. I do not believe this position should be a career. Selfless service is the only form of leadership I know.

This is my "forever" home after multiple military and civilian moves. We purchased our Lakehills property in 2000 praying we could someday move here: it has been nearly 13 years in the county. I believe that I am here at this place at this time with the faith, leadership skills and experience to make positive and lasting impact for our community. I invite you to visit the Junker for Judge website or on Facebook to learn more.

We absolutely cannot address the speed of tomorrow at yesterday's pace. It would be an honor to serve and the make Bandera the very best it can be.

Bandera County Commissioner, Precinct 2

The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you running for Bandera County Commissioner?
2. What are the greatest challenges Precinct 2 faces?
3. If the county received a \$1 million grant, how would you like to see the money spent?
4. If elected, what changes would you like to implement? Likewise, what would you like to keep in place?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera County Commissioner?

Greg Grothues

1. I have a long history of service beginning with the Texas Army National Guard. I have served with the Medina Lake Volunteer Fire Department for the last 16 years as a firefighter, EMT, Assistant Chief and Chief, also as an assistant coach for youth softball, football, soccer and archery. I have also served on the Bandera County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Service is in my blood. The best County Commissioner is one with a servant mentality, who works for the people!

I want to keep our county government accountable to the residents of Lakehills and Bandera County as a whole. I believe in transparency, integrity, and fairness. I have a vested interest in this community, as I am a local business owner and have raised two children in BISD. This is an opportunity to serve in another way to benefit all residents of Precinct 2 and Bandera County.

2. The encroachment of San Antonio is one of the biggest challenges to Precinct 2. We must come together as a community to determine which

direction and what steps we can take to best benefit and protect our area. The fluctuating lake level also places stress on our local businesses as many local businesses depend on visitors to the lake. Lakehills is a great place to live and visit regardless of the water level. Ensuring that Precinct 2 residents have convenient access to county services is a priority.

3. I would like to update the Bandera County Park with new restroom facilities, park entrance, and increased security. Also, update the Precinct 2 garbage facility with the addition of a scale to ensure uniformity of charges and collections.

4. I would like to upgrade the County Park, regulate and improve the Precinct 2 garbage facility and of course, ensure that our roads are safe and accessible. I would like to encourage a Precinct 2 Reserve Constable program to increase law enforcement presence and support our law enforcement.

I would ensure that all services remain in Lakehills. EMS Station, Bandera County Tax Office, Sheriff's Office, Constable, and Justice of the Peace should all be accessible to residents of Precinct 2 and our neighbors in Precinct 1.

David Speicher

1. I have been in public service for over 30 years and after coming to Lakehills, getting settled in, my wife and I decided this would be our retirement home. We have met many people from various demographics here in Lakehills and we love the charm and environment and the potential here.

Seven months ago, I decided to run when talking with some of our new friends they were commenting on the roads, the Garbage Dump, the lake level and new development and drugs. These are major issues that need to be addressed and are not. My wife and I talked about it and decided to

put my experience, my education, and my leadership to use to help our community reach it's potential.

2. There are the top four issues I want to address during my potential tenure as County Commissioner - roads, trash/recycle, new development and drugs.

Roads - The citizens in my Precinct are most concerned about their roads. The county imposes two road taxes for repairing our roads. The residents in Lakehills are seeing very little road work by the county.

Trash/Recycle - We have a dump that many residents use including myself. But it is very inconsistent with cost. One time a truck load is \$20 and the next \$40. In addition, many residents have expressed concerns that there are many homes that extensive trash within the property. We need to investigate how to clean up our community with a cost-effective solution that may include community clean up and bulk trash days. At the last Commissioners Court, it was concluded that we cannot do it because of COVID-19 and the low number of inmates. There must be a better answer even if it means the county must spend money on it.

Development - Many citizens are worried about development.

Residential developments are and will continue to move into our county causing increased traffic and flooding. Our local streets are already failing and cannot handle the additional wear and tear. Some residents in Bandera County are already experiencing flooding caused by new development upstream from them. We need tougher ordinances that will protect our citizens, protect our infrastructure and most of all our charm.

Lastly Drugs – I have heard from many of our citizens about their concern about the manufacturing, and distribution of Meth and other drugs in our Precinct. For the safety and welfare of our citizens and children this should not happen. In addition, we will never reach our potential as a community if we have a strong drug use/manufacturing presence. This really isn't exclusively a Precinct 2 issue. If drugs are being manufactured in Precinct 2, they are being sold throughout Bandera County. And for the safety and welfare of our community it must stop it. Therefore, I plan to work with precinct, county, and state

officials to come up with a solution that focuses not only on the manufacturing but the overarching drug addiction epidemic.

3. Towards the greatest needs that we have at the time. Most likely, today I would spend the monies towards our roads.

4. Along with working on the four issues, I will also create more transparency for our citizens. Our website is not user friendly. I have attended several Commissioner's Court. While in attendance, the judge and the commissioners are discussing items on the agenda. However, there are no monitors in the Commission's Court. No way for the audience to follow along with what is being discussed.

I've gone through the 2021-2022 budget. The table of contents needs work including adding page numbers. The expenditure section is one continues page. There are no blank pages or bold lettering to help indicate the next department. I could go on about this issue but for brevity, I will stop here.

I will be transparent. I plan on furthering my Facebook page to provide more information to our citizens, my cell number and email address will be readily available. I will provide up updates via social media, and our organizations, and other avenues as requested by our precinct. I have the support of my wife and company to attend meetings and functions as requested or needed.

What I would keep?

Our way of life, our charm, our community. In the Army and throughout our careers, my wife and I have lived in many communities. We both agree that we love it here and do not plan to move as we have purchased our retirement home. In the short almost three years that we have lived here, we have made so many friends that we cherish. The folks here come from many walks of life, and more are coming in. I want to help Bandera County to grow, but grow sustainably, all while protecting our community.

5. My experience, education including that I am a Gulf War Veteran. As I have mentioned in previous questions, I have worked for and with local governments. I know how they should function.

I have developed ordinances that protect communities from sporadic growth, develop review process to ensure development codes are adhered too. In addition, I have worked with many trash companies to establish rates and special services like bulk trash pickup, ensured funding for our police and fire/EMS, developed and funded new parks, budgeted maintenance and operation funds for library, animal control, and worked with economic development corporations. I have also established capital improvement plans, budgets and I have even assisted in establishing bonds for communities. I was an officer in the U.S. Army. I am a Veteran, Member of the American Legion Post 410 and a lifetime member of the VFW.

So, if you are looking for someone that can get started on the first day with no learning curve. I'm your guy.

Bandera County Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4

The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you running for Bandera County Justice of the Peace?
2. What are the greatest challenges Precinct 4 faces?
3. If the county received a \$1 million grant, how would you like to see the money spent?
4. If elected, what changes would you like to implement? Likewise, what would you like to keep in place?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera County Justice of the Peace?

Ben Condry

1. Too many local elections are without choices for the voters. Elections that are without choices, that is no opposing candidate, are not elections at all; they are basically appointments. No office should be held by any single candidate for a significantly long period of time. Also, from

discussions with people, there are too many complaints of cases not being heard.

2. The greatest challenge of Precinct 4 is it being by far the largest precinct by geographic area.

3. It's not really a JP issue to determine how funds are allocated. But I would fight for and submit a budget for support of infrastructure and necessary office equipment.

4. I wouldn't want to change things for the sake of changing things. I would like to focus on courtesy and getting things done. I would continue with the rotation schedule, which is very innovative and helpful to all the county JPs.

5. I feel confident, due to my age, I can put in more time and energy than my opponent. I have considerable self-motivation and drive.

Lynn D. Holt

1. I have lived in Bandera County over 41 years. I worked in law enforcement for many years, as a Bandera County Deputy Sheriff, criminal investigator, Bexar County District Attorney investigator and served as Chief of Police for the City of Bandera. I haven been serving as Justice of the Peace, Pct. 4 going on 18 years. I would like to continue my service to the citizens of Pct. 4 for another four years.

2. Commissioners' Court has always provided the necessary personnel and equipment to do our job. COVID has really disrupted the courts way of doing things. Returning to normal operations would be a great help.

3. Commissioners' Court decides how all funds are spent. But I would request an upgrade of our computer system for the court system.

4. Again, upgrading the computer program for the court system would greatly improve our ability to serve the public.

All four Justices of the Peace have worked really hard to standardize the Court system. If a person comes into a JP office they will receive the same forms in all four prescient. People can handle a traffic citation online including payment without having to come into the office.

5. Experience, both direct and indirect is my best asset. Indirect being my years in Bandera County, my education, my background in the law, my service as a veteran and community involvement. Direct experience being 17 years of service to the citizens of Precinct 4.

Early voting will begin Monday, Feb. 14 and continue until Friday, Feb. 25, at the Bandera County Election Office in the Ray F. Mauer Building at 403 12th Street in Bandera; the Lakehills Area Library at 7200 FM 1283 in Lakehills; and the Medina Annex at 161 East Parker Street in Medina.

Election Day is Tuesday, March 1.