

El Dorado County Farm Trails – 2024 County Supervisor Candidate Questions

- With the County's on-going struggle to fund its budget, how would you propose to either reduce the County's expenditures and/or increase the County's revenues? What services could be reduced or cut, to reduce expenditures? Where and how might revenues be increased?

For starters, we can ensure we are abiding by the policies already in place with the General Plan and the Measures that followed. One example is collecting the TIM fees that are required of developers prior to a project commencing. That is money that is being left on the table.

I think we also need to establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of our county's programs. If a program is found to be ineffective based on these metrics, we need to reallocate the resources that deliver positive results for our county.

These are low-hanging fruit that can be implemented and have immediate impact.

Moving forward, I think there are a number of areas where we can increase revenue including:

- Encouraging and supporting the growth of local businesses with a focus on small, local owned businesses. Streamlining processes such as permitting and inspections to allow the ease of start-up for businesses.
 - Promoting pro-agricultural tourism to showcase our local farms. (community events, promotion/expansion of local farmers markets, showcasing local farmers)
 - Increasing the number of hotel rooms in the county to attract and incent visitors to stay overnight or for multiple days.
- What is your position on the proposed Costco development in EDH and why? What benefits & drawbacks do you see this project having on EDC?

I have spent a lot of time walking neighborhoods and getting feedback from residents on different projects. The Costco development has been a major point of discussion with many residents. The responses vary depending on where the resident lives. I certainly had some lively input from those neighbors whose neighborhood backs up to the proposed Costco/apartments site. From a general perspective, most residents support the Costco but do not want a Costco gas station.

Personally, I see a number of benefits including:

- Increased tax revenue staying within our county instead of Sacramento County
- Employment opportunities for local residents
- Enhancement of the local agricultural economy if Costco will source from local farmers and winemakers. (i.e. Crystal Basin offered at our Folsom Costco)

The drawbacks I see include:

- Traffic congestion and strain on infrastructure
- Environmental impacts, including wetlands
- Impacts to the local school, including traffic congestion, roadway improvements, and safety concerns
- Competitive threat to local businesses
- Competition with local agriculture

As I mentioned above, most residents I have spoken with support having Costco on the western slope. The bottom line is that people from all over our community are going to shop at Costco...why not shop and keep the revenue in El Dorado County?

- In the last couple of years, the Planning and Building Dept has come under scrutiny to the point of there even being a Grand Jury investigation. What are your thoughts on the results of this investigation, the current BOS' response to this, and what would you do to improve the shortcomings of this department?

I support many of the recommendations that the Grand Jury proposed including a single point of contact and consistent inspectors for a specific project, simple permits online and using feedback to continue to improve the process. Anything that can help streamline this process and simplify.

Weighing in retrospectively on the Board of Supervisors response does not yield productive results. Rather, I'd like to focus on what we can do to improve things moving forward. One thing I think that needs to be looked at is revamping the multiple agency approval process and improving the coordination effort between the different departments, including the fire department.

- Would you support the building of the proposed Alder Creek Dam? What are the benefits or deterrents of this project as you see it?

There is no doubt that we need to look at additional and alternative sources to address our water supply issue in the county and in the state. The last reservoir built was the New Melones Reservoir which was completed in 1979. Since then, our population has doubled.

The benefits of building the proposed Alder Creek Dam could include water quality, increased flood protection, hydroelectric power generation, increase in water storage, and availability of water for emergencies. On the flipside, the cost and economic feasibility of the project are potential drawbacks. A new reservoir in El Dorado County could yield an abundance of possibilities that could be very beneficial to our county.

- Wildfires are an ongoing concern for the citizens of EDC. CalFire has implemented what some might consider very restrictive and even intrusive regulations. The County is also looking at codifying its own set of fire prevention regulations. Do you feel this is appropriate, or not, and why?

Prior to responding to this question, I consulted with several fire officials. California law requires 100 ft of defensible space of all buildings per CA Public Resource Code 4291 and Gov. Code 51182. CA Civil Code 1102.19 also requires defensible space inspections during all real estate transactions prior to close of escrow. These laws have been adopted by El Dorado County Ordinance 5186. This ordinance was implemented in 2019 and is currently being amended to adopt the state's more restrictive requirements.

The county is required to comply with state law, and I believe the intent is on point to prevent massive wildfires and loss of property that we have experienced over the last 10 years. There are items of concern to me when I review these laws. Inspections of property, and the fees associated during each real estate transaction seem intrusive and could possibly have a negative impact on home sales. I also understand the concerns that members of the agriculture community may have. Their properties are massive in size with numerous buildings throughout the property. Per state law all of the buildings must comply with the defensible space requirements. This will incur more time and costs to the property owner in order to comply with the law.

This is kind of a double-edged sword, but I believe and hope the county is making a good faith effort to abide by state law while serving the public in the least intrusive manner possible.

- Do you support the concept of a 'constitutional' sheriff? Why or why not?

Our sheriff currently follows the concept of a constitutional officer, and I am supportive of this model. The advantages of a constitutional sheriff concept include:

- An emphasis on traditional law enforcement values
- An oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America
- Limited government and a resistance to state government overreach
- Emphasis on individual rights and freedoms

Our county has one of the lowest violent crime rates and homelessness rates in California and I believe our sheriff's office is key to our rates being so low.

- Recently, the Ranch Marketing Ordinance has been under scrutiny because of the accessory uses allowed to ranchers and farmers "by right" such as non-agriculture events. In some circumstances landowners were taking advantage of the fact that specific use definitions were not defined. Do you feel that the matter is covered appropriately now, or do you feel it needs to be explored more?

This new ordinance will help ranchers and farmers utilize their land in non-traditional ways to secure more income, especially during unfavorable crop years. Our county has so many beautiful landscapes that are now available for hosting events such as weddings, offering a chance for a broader audience to enjoy them and generating additional income for property owners. The property owners should have every right to utilize their property in the most profitable way possible, with some restrictions as outlined in the ordinance. Events are limited to 24 annually, including 3 non-profit events. And it is my understanding that noise related complaints are the primary issue.

The ordinance is in its infancy and needs to be explored more. As time passes there are going to be recommended changes as the ordinance matures. This is a good starting point but as we gain experience and face new challenges, amendments should be made to the ordinance.