GREATER EUREKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Spring 2024 Candidate Questionnaire Responses

In January 2024, the Greater Eureka Chamber sent out a survey to all individuals running for Humboldt County Supervisor and State Assemblymember who will appear on the Spring 2024 ballot in Humboldt County. The Chamber's Government Affairs Committee informed the survey questions. It went out via email three times to 13 candidates, of whom 11 responded. Responses were not edited in any way.

The survey included the following questions:

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber recently polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what are specific steps you will take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

    a. Attracting and retaining businesses
    b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents
    c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing
    d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all
    e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem
    f. Streamlining business processes with local government

Sincere thanks to all the respondents who completed the survey. We hope it will help inform voting decisions for people in Humboldt County.

Should you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Nancy Olson (nancy@eurekachamber.com). This report is the property of the Greater Eureka Chamber. If you are interested in utilizing this report, in part or in whole, please be sure to cite the Greater Eureka Chamber as the source.

Humboldt County Supervisor 1st District

Rex Bohn (Incumbent)

1. As your Supervisor, I will continue to support funding allocations that support local businesses such as the Economic Development Department, Chambers of Commerce, Arcata Economic Development Corporation, Redwood Region Economic Development Commission, and other nonprofits. In addition, as a person who has worked my entire life (prior to serving as your Supervisor) in small and family owned businesses, I understand the difficulties and challenges of running a business through changes in the market. I am a constant advocate to "buy local" which is a huge component for local success. I've pushed for our own county purchasing policies to support local goods.

2. As the longest serving Supervisor, I'm currently honored to be serving in leadership roles with both Rural Counties Representing California (RCRC) and the National Association of Counties Organization (NACO). Through NACO I currently serve as the Chair of the Rural Action Caucus. These positions allow me to participate and influence state and national legislation that looks out for Humboldt's rural interests, and particularly our rural economic development. More specifically, the Board of Supervisors, RCRC and NACO support or oppose various legislation that helps or harms small business.

3. My door is always open. If I am invited to a meeting, there is a safe bet that I am going to attend. If there are issues that you see on our agenda that are important to you, contact me, send an email, or make a phone call. Being available and out in my district is my highest priorty.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. Retaining our existing businesses is paramount. I'll continue advocating for and supporting access to financial assistance programs (RRDEC, AEDC, and others), offering a lifeline to businesses facing economic challenges. Working closely with county departments responsible for business licensure, I continue to champion efforts to streamline the licensure process. Keeping our infrastructure robust, I'll ensure the maintenance of county roads that provide crucial access to businesses. Investing in quality-of-life enhancements such as parks, ballfields, and community forests not only attracts residents but also contributes to the overall appeal of our region for businesses.

    Collaborating with CalPoly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods workforce development programs, I'll support initiatives that prepare our workforce for the evolving needs of businesses in the region. Businesses such as offshore wind, solar, fiber, fish, forest and agriculture. I am dedicated to supporting the development of fiber-optic lines to bring high-speed internet throughout rural Humboldt, essential for businesses to compete and innovate in a digital age. Supporting the efforts of Chambers and Main Street Associations is crucial; these organizations play a pivotal role in boosting community events that not only enrich our local culture but also attract visitors and customers.

    While recognizing the importance of attracting new businesses, my primary focus remains on nurturing and retaining existing businesses that form the backbone of our community. By fortifying the foundations, we ensure the sustained growth and prosperity of Humboldt County. I was instrumental in creating the position of Economic Development Director in Humboldt County government which has been charged with creating positive and innovative growth throughout the County. And I will continue to support and work with the Economic Development Department as needed.

b. Health care: Affordable healthcare are statewide and national issues. Locally, as your Supervisor, I work to ensure there are open lines of communication between our service providers at Providence, Mad River, and Open Door, as well as ensuring that county employees with the Department of Health and Human Services are able to provide for our community.

c. Affordable and Market Rate Housing: To expand our affordable and market rate housing, we need to ensure local contractors can build projects that will serve the community's needs. As was said, in the Field of Dreams, if you build it, they will come. We need to continually work to streamline housing development, while simultaneously working with our community to allow new housing near them.

d. Homelessness & Mental Health: Again, these are statewide and national issues. Even in more affluent communities, they are struggling with how to fund and provide services for the homeless, provide drug treatment centers, and appropriate mental health services. Our Department of Health and Human Services alone has close to 300 employees dedicated to adult mental health. The variety of programs implemented are making a difference in homelessness population. The community may not see the subtle small steps, but they are happening and will continue to happen.

e. Tourism: As your supervisor, I am committed to continuing our investment of the Transient Occupancy Tax dollars with our local tourism partners including the Chambers, County Destination Marketing Organization, and working with Humboldt Lodging Alliance to bolster local marketing efforts. In addition, by supporting local businesses that provide the experiences desired by visitors, ensuring our community is as clean and safe as possible, and that there is increased access to many of the tourism assets found in our community, we can support a healthy tourism ecosystem.

f. Streamlining business process: We live in California, which is not an easy place to do business in, and that trickles down to Humboldt. It seems that every year there are hundreds of new laws added, and very few are taken away. Within the county, we're working to develop sensible regulations that protect neighbors and the environment, without becoming overly cumbersome such that entrepreneurship is squashed.

Humboldt County Supervisor 1st District

Gordon Clatworthy

1. The current local recession is challenging, but collaborative efforts can help businesses thrive. One major aspect of my plan involves the construction of more low-income housing. Many individuals in our area qualify for such housing, enabling them to allocate more funds monthly to support local businesses.

2. Connectivity is a significant issue, and to remain competitive, we must establish high-speed internet access. Constructing the next generation of universally accessible high-speed internet is crucial. Additionally, considering the future, there are grants and incentives available for areas affected by climate change. As a coastal community, we need advocates in local government to champion the interests of our businesses and communities.

3. Effective communication is vital in any work environment. Advocating for issues requires more avenues beyond a passive "my door is always open" approach. Personally engaging with individuals has given me insight into the challenges faced by business owners, enabling me to advocate for local businesses at both the local and state levels.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. To facilitate business initiation, we must reduce start-up costs. Moreover, emphasizing the utilization of local businesses for government contracts is essential to help maintain and grow our local economy.

    b. Prioritizing healthcare, I aim to expedite the recruitment of qualified professionals, reinvest in local nonprofit healthcare services, and reduce costs through shelter provisions.

    c. While focusing on housing, I believe that non-market housing is the long-term strategy to benefit the majority. Government involvement should complement rather than compete with the market.

    d. Combatting homelessness requires a multifaceted approach involving shelter provision, low-income housing, and safe parking options as top priorities.

    e. Our picturesque locale attracts global visitors, contributing millions to our economy. We must strategically allocate county tax dollars to maximize the impact of tourism promotion.

    f. Simplifying business procedures is crucial for success. Encouraging aspiring entrepreneurs to start with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a proactive step toward overcoming obstacles.

Humboldt County Supervisor 2nd District

Michelle Bushnell (Incumbent)

1. As a local small based business owner myself, I can relate to the struggles of our local economy. My lines of communication are open and I encourage my constituents to bring forth the issues so that I can present them to the proper channels or help them find a collaborative solution.

2. Being a voting member for CSAC, voting member on workforce development and an alternate for RCRC, this allows me to be involved with the state and federal environment and know about the initiatives as they are available. It's easy for me to identify these initiatives and direct them appropriately.

3. Being involved with the local chambers and keeping open lines of communication. Fostering that relationship with the local chamber members and businesses so that they feel comfortable to pick up the phone and contact me. In my position as supervisor, recognizing when I need to connect state government with local business and making that happen. (Example meeting with senator, assembly representative,congressman).

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. Making the area more desirable: curb appeal, advertising

    b. Advocation on the board of Supervisors part, this takes an entire community to come together.

    c. Streamlining the permitting process for construction in unincorporated areas. Eureka planning Dept. is really the lead on this in the Eureka area

    d. This is not a solution that can be printed out in a paragraph, there is not one solution for all, it takes the work of many agencies and communities working towards a common goal for solutions. Advocating for the funds to be able to do this work is my job. Connecting those funds to the right organization to be effective is also my job.This is a daily priority on my part and will be until I choose to no longer be in office.

    e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem involves promoting sustainable practices, preserving natural and cultural resources, and ensuring the well-being of local communities. In essence getting our entire county to row the boat in the same direction.

f. This takes the businesses recognizing the processes that are not working, having a conversation with their elected officials. And moving the local process from there.

Humboldt County Supervisor 2nd District

Jeana Christina McClendon

1. As a Supervisor I would focus on being a voice and a partner that is pro-business. I would support local businesses by connecting them with organizations offering financial support and counseling services. I would not only encourage residents to back local businesses through shop local initiatives, I would implore we all do our part to further brand Humboldt as a community that supports one another. I would also advocate against **unnecessary** regulations that could burden businesses, particularly during economic challenges.

2. I will assess and harness State and Federal initiatives by staying informed on relevant legislation. Through active engagement, I'll advocate for policies benefiting our local businesses and economy, ensuring alignment with the community's needs. A key component is making sure that we are collaborating with our economic development department to be sure we are all working in the same direction and not competing against each other.

3. For me, the core pillars of effective engagement revolve around active listening, building meaningful relationships, fostering in-person communications, and taking the time to celebrate successes. These components are central to my approach in fostering connections and achieving shared goals.

4. Priorities for Chamber members:

    a. Advocate for more money spent on infrastructure. We can't welcome new growth until we have roads and utilities that can handle more. Make building housing easier through incentives and streamlined permit processes. Use rezoning of underutilized areas to create more opportunity for new business

    b. Enhance transportation infrastructure connecting rural areas to existing medical services, ensuring accessibility for all. Maintain robust relationships and communication with existing health facilities. Encourage smaller local healthcare providers to seize opportunities in addressing our medical gaps. Actively seek and identify new healthcare companies through economic development initiatives to contribute to the growth of our community. Use a toolbox of incentives to encourage them to choose Humboldt.

    c. Here are four steps I will take as a Supervisor. Support sensible land use regulations/policy reform. Reduce regulatory barriers for local builders. Encourage the construction of affordable, energy efficient housing by utilizing incentives. Encourage/ embrace tiny homes, PUD's and other innovated options.

    d. Humboldt offers so many services currently, the challenge is connecting people to those services. We need to improve this. The key to improving homelessness, mental health and addiction issues in the long term is making sure individuals have all the services required

for success simultaneously. We need a wrap around approach that includes early intervention, services, support and housing. That is the recipe for success.

e. Starting with a shared and cohesive vision, we are guided in our efforts to nurture a resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem by an agency or group capable of aiding us in reaching our objectives. This initiative involves implementing strategies that prioritize environmental conservation, community well-being, and economic vitality.

f. This is done by collaboration, feedback and being willing and committed to improving the process. Embracing technology is KEY!

Humboldt County Supervisor 2nd District

Brian Roberts

1. Hello and thank you for taking the time to engage. In Southern Humboldt there has been an exodus of retail stores in the past year. The first thing I would do is compile lists of State and Federal grants available. Sometimes all a business needs is that little extra help to get past some hurdles. As a Supervisor staying on top of State and Federal mandates to ensure businesses stay compliant. I have always liked a directory of businesses. It lets people know what other resources are in the community.

2. Humboldt County needs to hire a full time grant writer to take advantage of all the State grants available to Counties and Cities. The key to State and Federal mandates on business is knowledge. The community needs to be made aware of any Government legislation that would affect a local business. Your job is to stay in business and a Supervisors job is to stay on top of new laws and regulations.

3. Well unfortunately I would be representing District 2 and not Eureka. If I was your District Supervisor, I would set up a way to communicate among community members. Facebook group pages is an excellent open platform that allows members of groups to post and comment. It would be a great place for businesses to communicate their needs directly to an elected official.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. I notice in Southern Humboldt and Eureka is our homeless problem. There is a really nice hotel set up across from the Co-Op and I always see strung out homeless lining the street a block away. We need to solve this problem. Tiny home community, increased funding to HC Drug Task Force, neighborhood watch programs and more.

    b. California just passed a health care for everyone including illegal immigrants. If the State can afford health care for an undocumented citizen then we need to stand up and fight for better access for all in Humboldt.

    c. This is an issue in cities and counties. The price of rents have gone up and up when wages have stayed the same basically. The county could allow tax incentives for development of tiny home communities.The problem is only going to get worse over the next few years. The aqua farm and wind farm may have added a $1 billion to Humboldt County economy. There will be the need to house all these workers over the next five years.

    d. California was awarding $650+ million in grants to other counties and cities to tackle the homeless issue. Here is where Humboldt loses without a grant writer. State funding when available is applied for by as many cities and counties as possible. The state then allocates the funds based on applications of these grants. We already have mandates for spending on mental health.

    e. Marketing and branding are my specialty. The internet is our cheapest form of advertisement for Humboldt County. Humboldt needs to sponsor more lifestyle events that highlight our great community. It is only 4.5 hour drive from the Bay Area to Humboldt. We should have cook offs and highlight our local farmers meats. We have the oyster festival. Expanding these types of entertainment for the community will bring tourists. The

port is getting a major makeover in the future with all this wind farm money. Hopefully we can keep encouraging cruise ships to stop on by for the day.

f. First communication channels need to be set up for dialogue. Second, the permit process at the planning department started taking online applications on Jan 10, 2024. More automation and less human interaction does two things besides saving time and money. The Planning department can run more efficiently with less employees.

Humboldt County Supervisor 3rd District

Roy Gomez

1. As a local business owner myself, I will exhaust my efforts to help our business owners by championing small business assistance programs, streamlining access to resources, fostering collaboration, advocating for regulatory relief, supporting local economic development initiatives, actively participating in business associations like the Greater Eureka & Arcata Chambers, and promoting 'buy local' campaigns.

2. By staying informed, building consensus within our community, assessing local needs, aligning priorities, advocating for local interest, collaborating with other Supervisors, leveraging funding opportunities, and monitoring implementation and impact. As Supervisor, I will effectively evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation by keeping a pulse on the needs of our businesses as my priority.

3. As in all healthy relationships, communication and transparency are key to maintaining the short and long term priorities of our business community. I will improve on this by fostering collaboration, establishing clear communication channels, engaging in regular dialogue, acting as an intermediary, advocate for business interest, supporting business associations, facilitating networking opportunities, staying informed, utilizing technology, and monitoring and evaluating the communication efforts all around.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. I feel that the best way to achieve this goal is to develop a Business-Friendly Environment. This can be achieved by simplifying bureaucratic procedures and reducing red tape to make it easier for businesses to start and operate. I would advocate to provide incentives to attract businesses, such as tax breaks, grants, subsidies and fee waivers. These types of incentives can help offset costs and encourage businesses to choose our community. Retaining those businesses can be achieved by creating programs and initiatives that specifically support them, such as incubators, co-working spaces, or mentoring programs. Small businesses play a crucial role in the local economy and we need to ensure a strategic approach that makes business owners feel heard and supported.

    b. As Supervisor, I will work to allocate more funds towards healthcare programs and services. This will include increasing funding for our hospitals, clinics and community health centers, as well as supporting initiatives to expand healthcare coverage for low-income residents. I will use my influence to advocate for increased Federal and State funding for healthcare by lobbying legislators and policymakers to prioritize healthcare funding and support policies that expand access to health care in our community.

    c. I will help to develop and implement housing policies that are considerate of our entire community by recognizing that this issue and solutions are not a 'one size fits all' in the State of California. We live in a very rural area with a population that does not require certain exemptions related to 'density.' I will ensure that affordable housing is built in consideration of business owners, employees, consumers looking to shop locally, handicap & elderly citizens, tourist, residents and all demographics of residents that will require adequate parking in those developments. I will encourage mixed-income housing projects, which incorporate both affordable and market-rate units. This can help create diverse and inclusive neighborhoods while increasing the availability of affordable housing options for residents. I will also collaborate with local financial institutions

and housing agencies to provide assistance and resources for individuals and families seeking affordable housing. This will include down payment assistance programs, low-interest loans, and access to affordable rental units through housing voucher programs.

d. As Supervisor, I will advocate and promote that our County build partnerships with local service providers, such as homeless shelters, mental health clinics, and substance abuse treatments centers. Support their efforts in providing essential services to individuals experiencing homelessness, including access to drug treatment programs, mental health services and job training. I will advocate for the allocation of resources to support outreach teams that can connect with individuals experiencing homelessness and provide them with information on available services. I will encourage collaboration between outreach workers, law enforcement, and community organizations to address the specific needs of each individual and offer appropriate assistance.

e. As a business owner that has established several businesses in our community, I have always promoted our beautiful region as part of our marketing strategy in hopes to bolster the tourism industry by showing relativity to the quality of goods and services our businesses provide. Humboldt County is unique and we should all be proud to live here and promote our region. I will continue to advocate for sustainable tourism practices that minimize negative environmental, social and cultural impacts. I strongly encourage businesses and attractions to adopt sustainable measures that help promote reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting our local communities, and preserving natural resources. As Supervisor, I will promote and support local businesses within the tourism industry, including hotels, restaurant, tour operators, and visitor centers that celebrate our history. I will encourage partnerships between local businesses and tourism organizations to create unique experiences for visitors and help boost the local economy.

f. Streamlining processes with local government requires a collaborative and proactive approach. As Supervisor, I will identify inefficiencies, promote collaboration, embrace technology, and engage with my community to contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of local government operations.

Humboldt County Supervisor 3rd District

Mike Wilson (Incumbent)

1. I will continue to advocate for local business by the promotion of housing, heath care and climate ready infrastructure. I support or network of economic development organizations and their efforts to retain and build local business enterprises.

2. I will continue to work with our state legislature and governor's office for funding and programs for improved energy and transportation infrastructure.

3. I have found that the needs of local businesses are not much different than everyone else. So many of the challenges I hear about related to employee retention and attraction. Especially around housing and healthcare.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. I have found that the needs of local businesses are not much different than everyone else. So many of the challenges I hear about related to employee retention and attraction. Especially around housing and healthcare. I will continue to make those my priorities.

    b. My focus now is on moving forward with the proposed juvenile and triage mental health projects. Our mental health crisis is having such an impact on our emergency rooms that it is impacting the entire system. And we need housing for medical health professionals.

    c. This is a problem many decades in the making. I strongly advocate for short term solutions, such as a Housing Trust Fund, as well as long term solutions including more building entitlements in areas with services and community.

    d. I strongly support all of the Arcata House programs including direct services to the homeless population as well as projects like The Grove and the safe parking program.

    e. I believe that supporting vibrant arts and recreation programs and infrastructure for our local population creates the most authentic and memorable experience for our visitors. And housing for our workforce.

    f. Yes, more of that. That is an iterative process that requires reduction of duplication as well as funding the administrative and inspection workforce that needs to get things done.

State Assembly District 2

michael greer

1. I will use the position of an assemblyman I will strive to reduce the regulations that are being imposed by a state government that does not like local and small businesses. The forced mandates of employee leave, wages, health care and increased unemployment insurance, workmen compensation, and other statutory fees and taxes. I would work to have all government agencies buy local products even if the cost is a little more, that way the money stays in community.

2. When state or federal agencies hands out money it goes to big companies first leaving little help for small businesses. I would propose that a certain amount of the money be given out to smaal local businesses to help them with their business plans and expansion of the market place. To many grants have qualifications for the money according to race or gender. I believe all business owners should an equal right to available money.

3. The chamber needs a pipeline to their representative and not through the California Chamber. Each community is different and has issues and concerns depending on it's size and location. I would propose that each chamber has a dedicate staff member that communicates monthly or more if necessary to indure that local chambers are aware of current bills or laws that will affect them.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. Businesses stay in a community where it is safe and they can operate profitably and make a living. First ensure the the location and customers are safe from crime. It is the community agencies that need to be involved so the state needs to be sure that they receive the necessary funding for safety.

    b. California has a critical lack of health care workers and until the state finds a method to increase the number of workers it will continue to be difficult but I don't believe small businesses should be required to pay employees health care. In order to retain good employees they should work with them to see how they can help but mandating causes the loss of jobs.

    c. For the last 5 years state government has been throwing a round millions of dollars and what has happened, affordable housing is disappearing and part of the problem are the regulations that are imposed on home builders and the insurance costs that are going up because of the current administration regulations, fees, and taxes. There are current plans in Eureka to increase higher density housing but in order to build you need land and that land is generally not in the city . I would support housing plans that the community wants not necessarily what the government wants.

    d. We have spent billions of dollars on these issues and what we see is increased homeless populations, more individuals with mental health and drug issues. We need to go a different direction because it is obivious that what we are doing isn't working. We need to look at programs that are effective and take away the money from ineffective programs. I believe that money needs to go local programs becuse state government is ineffective and too far removed the local problems'them according to locations and needs. Evaluate what

e. Communities need to be safe, clean, and inviting to tourists. Do Do want to spend money somewhere that has people lying in front of the businesses, city streets that are dirty and uninviting accommodations. We have the forests and the beaches, beautiful locations but people have to be aware of them, so I support a proposal that would help fund local tourism instead of state tourism. Tourists go to specific locations not states so local locations like the Zoo and beaches in the area need to be targeted.

f. There needs to be semiannual meetings between stae and local businesses to get things done, Talking is good but action is essential so following up and making sure4 plans are carried out.

State Assembly District 2

Rusty Hicks

1. If elected, I look forward to engaging with local business communities to understand their specific needs and challenges. I support policies that provide financial relief, such as incentives, grants, or low-interest loans for small businesses. I look forward to working with the Eureka Chamber of Commerce to identify financial challenges and opportunities for our local businesses.

2. I will stay informed about existing and proposed initiatives at both the state and federal levels including regular communication with relevant agencies, attending briefings, and staying engaged with legislative updates that affect the business community. Additionally, I will be a vocal voice for our local businesses and leverage my relationships with state and federal legislators to implement changes or garner support for policies that support the broader business community.

3. I will be accessible to my constituents whether it is through town halls, office hours, or direct communication. During my campaign for Chair of the California Democratic Party, I visited all 58 counties in 58 days and committed to returning to each County every year I was Chair - a commitment I've been proud to honor. I have continued to visit all corners of California during my term and I plan to have the same approach - regularly engage with every corner of all 13,700 square miles of the 2nd Assembly District, if elected to the State Legislature. I will regularly engage and collaborate with the Eureka Chamber of Commerce and business advocates both in Sacramento and across the 2nd Assembly District to ensure (1) I am fully aware of their priorities and (2) I am best positioned to share the latest on relevant pending legislation. Finally, given the importance of local businesses to both the 2nd Assembly District and California, I intend to hire a staff member who holds a knowledge of the challenges and opportunities in the business community and who will serve as a direct liaison between my office and members of the local business community.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. In order for local businesses to thrive in the North Coast we must support data-driven incentives, promote workforce development programs, and collaborate with local agencies and chambers of commerce. Special attention should be given to supporting small businesses, enhancing overall quality of life, emphasizing environmental sustainability, and incentivizing innovation and research. Engaging with local stakeholders, including businesses and community leaders, will help tailor policies to the specific needs and challenges of the region, ultimately fostering a business-friendly environment.

    b. Access to quality healthcare - especially in our rural communities - is a major challenge on the North Coast. Whether it's preventative, reproductive or specialty care, families and seniors are unable to get the care they need when they need it most. We must invest in programs that attract more doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals to our communities, work to lower the cost of prescription drugs for our seniors, and fight to ensure every community member has the quality healthcare they need.

    c. The costs of food, housing and gas on the North Coast continue to rise and a good job is getting harder and harder to find. We need leaders with a proven track record of delivering for working people. In the State Assembly, I'll fight to bring more good jobs to the North Coast. In addition, I'll ensure we take the necessary steps to incentivize the construction of all types of housing (affordable, market, and workforce), and streamline

approval processes where appropriate. Addressing the affordability challenges of the North Coast focus on both the construction of new housing and increasing the quality and quantity of good jobs.

d. Far too many of our fellow North Coast neighbors are experiencing homelessness. Some are chronically unhoused. Others - like students, families, veterans and seniors - become unhoused because of stagnant wages, rising rents, a debilitating illness, or economic hardship. To end the cycle of homelessness for so many, we must invest in a holistic, comprehensive approach that begins with collaboration between government agencies, the nonprofit community, and local stakeholders. We must then invest in proven solutions like quality shelter and supportive services like mental health and addiction treatment, job training, and employment opportunities. By building a safety net that uplifts those experiencing homelessness, we can ensure real pathways towards stability and self-sufficiency for all who call the North Coast home.

e. The beauty of the North Coast is unparalleled. Leveraging the unique resources of the North Coast, such as its natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and cultural attractions, is crucial. We must involve local communities in tourism planning and development to ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably and align with community values. Additionally, we can provide assistance and incentives for small businesses in the tourism sector, such as local restaurants, shops, and tour operators.

f. In order to streamline business processes with local government in the North Coast, I would support the regular review and simplification of regulations that may be burdensome for small businesses to ensure they are clear, concise, and easy to navigate. I support policies that encourage coordination among different local government agencies involved in business processes to avoid redundancies and delays and help maintain a business-friendly environment. Successful collaboration with local government, businesses, and community stakeholders is essential for the effective implementation of streamlined processes, fostering economic growth and entrepreneurship in the region.

State Assembly District 2

Ariel Kelley

1. As CEO of Pillar, I led a small business recovery organization and built a grant program that distributed $7 million in private philanthropic funds to small businesses in the Pacific Northwest. Through this work, we partnered with small business owners to help them navigate the COVID-related shut downs, better position themselves for loans and government assistance and provided technical resources to help them survive and thrive coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience shaped my knowledge and understanding of what it takes to navigate challenges as a small business owner and I bring that, along with my MBA and undergraduate degree in Business Administration to the role of policy maker and local business advocate. I believe that the state government needs to be doing more to advocate on behalf of our local small businesses. I am action-oriented by nature, but especially when working with local businesses my first step is to listen. As Assemblymember, I commit to sitting down with the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce, and other local chambers to understand the specific needs of the businesses in Humboldt County and beyond. There are a lot of challenges currently facing our business community: retention of staff, heightened regulatory environment, outdated permitting processes, and a housing crisis that makes it harder for us to attract talent in the first place, among other things. We need leadership that is going to cut through red tape to make it easier to start, operate, and grow a business. Prior to my work at Pillar, I led a nonprofit focused on cradle-to-career education programs. We focused on providing education, technical resources and financial training for small business owners and entrepreneurs throughout Sonoma County. Whether folks were looking to upskill for a career path they had already chosen or starting a new business, Corazón provided grants, classes, and other training resources like small business accounting and computer classes. I believe that addressing the housing shortage and affordability crisis is key to supporting our local business communities. The truth is that it becomes much harder to hire, retain staff, and to build a strong pipeline of employees if you do not have reasonable access to housing in the community. During my time as Mayor, we reduced homelessness in our community by over 60% and created the largest pipeline of market-rate and workforce housing in the last 20 years. We did this by simplifying permitting processes, promoting infill growth, leveraging development agreements and discussing needs of the community with the business community, advocates, and other local stakeholders to build the tent of vocal pro-housing advocates.

2. As the district's voice in the assembly, one of my most important jobs will be regularly monitoring the availability of State and Federal initiatives to better support the local business community. I will work tirelessly to establish open lines of communication with State and Federal government representatives, communicate the needs of our local businesses, and report back on conversations taking place in Sacramento and D.C. A full feedback loop has been missing and I commit to being a strong advocate and communicator both at home across the district and in Sacramento.

3. Effective communication is at the cornerstone of everything that I have done in my time in the nonprofit world and in local government. During my time as Mayor, we noticed that a lot of our families and younger people were not making their voices heard at council meetings, so I went and asked members of the community what would be helpful to increase attendance. Their answers were the need for childcare at community meetings and translation services, so that is what we did. This allowed for more engagement from everyone in our community to make their voices heard. To improve two-way communication, I see a key part of my job as finding ways to improve access. Whether it is having my staff on the ground, or meeting with the chamber during times that are accessible for local business owners, I am open to what those creative solutions for communicating effectively are. During my time on council, we started a monthly councilmember report-out at our local chamber meeting and also have city staff attending monthly chamber subcommittee meetings.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

   a. Housing and high quality education tend to go hand-in-hand with a community's ability to attract new businesses. That said, appropriate land availability, zoning and ease of permitting can be limiting factors for manufacturing or industrial business types. I have worked in partnership with various municipalities and regional entities to ensure that land uses are in line with the types of businesses that a region is trying to attract. Or if you have businesses already in the community that are growing, how to best ensure there are properties zoned appropriately or incentives in place to retain them. As the real estate market fluctuates, leases that are favorable to the business community can be integral at ensuring that businesses can afford to stay. Or if leases need to be renegotiated with changed market conditions (i.e. during COVID), I have worked in partnership with small businesses to provide that technical assistance and it is critically important that rents are affordable in a given region.

   b. Access to healthcare is a huge problem across the state and in Humboldt County. Even during my time in Eureka and Arcata, I've consistently found myself talking to community members about the lack of access to healthcare and the increasing necessity of medevacs in the district. This is happening around the state and especially in our more rural communities in the district. I believe we need to increase incentives for medical practitioners to stay in our rural communities as well as incentivizing our local and state public colleges and universities to expand access to training programs for aspiring medical professionals.The physician shortage predicted for California by 2030, compounded by the current stressors on our healthcare system, including high living costs, rising workplace violence, and the aging physician population, are pressing issues that require immediate attention.

   c. The people that are living and working in our communities should be able to afford to live there. During my time as the Mayor of Healdsburg we've built the largest stock of affordable and market-rate housing than anytime in the last 20 years. We need to be working hard across the North Coast, in our more urban and our rural communities, to make housing and homeownership more accessible. My council and I drastically increased the number of available units by streamlining permitting processes and putting more dollars towards staff to process applications for new builds. We rezoned parcels, increased densities and prioritized the types of housing we needed. In the Assembly, I would work alongside local business leaders, and local government to identify housing goals and work with mayors, councilmembers, city staff and developers to better understand the needs of the community to build fast and build better.

   d. Some of the work that I am most proud of from my time on city council is the work that we have done to solve homelessness in our community. During my tenure, we built our city's first-ever homeless shelter. There was initial pushback from the local business community and a real concern about safety and a loss of business in the areas surrounding the shelter. We brought the business community to the table with advocates and government leaders to discuss rules that the shelter and its residents had to follow to retain shelter, and were able to craft specific policies to solve their concerns. We didn't just provide folks shelter. We also provided mental health resources and access to drug rehabilitation programs, as well as job skills training to help those that we're ready seek jobs and start to create a more stable financial future. We also created more permanent supportive housing units so that after leaving the shelter, members of our community had access to permanent housing of their own, still with those wraparound services to keep them on track.

   e. California is without a doubt one of the most beautiful places on Earth. To support a healthy tourism ecosystem we need to provide safe, clean communities for people to come visit with easy access and amenities that fit their needs. To do that we need to provide shelter for our unhoused and deal with chronic issues around lack of affordability. So much of this draws back to the needs of our local businesses. We need to create

environments where we can recruit and retain talented staff that can work and run our local coffee shops, tour groups, etc. Grants for roadway improvements, regional airport support and marketing dollars for local tourism efforts are critical to ensuring our healthy tourism economy can continue to grow for years to come.

f. I led an effort locally to digitize our business permit system, which historically was a paper process that was slow and cumbersome. Our city has implemented the new system and it provides for greater ease of use and for folks to pay for permits in a variety of ways. This type of process improvement can be cost prohibitive for some municipalities. State funds could be made available to help with permitting and streamlining to allow for easier access and modernization.

State Assembly District 2

Chris Rogers

1. Local businesses have been hit particularly hard over the last few years. Whether the pandemic, or impact from other disasters (wildfires, wildfire smoke, loss of road infrastructure), we've seen an accumulating impact that takes its toll on businesses. I have been on the Santa Rosa City Council for the last seven years – two as Mayor – and have developed a very good working relationship with our local businesses. I do a monthly "chamber check in" breakfast where business owners and members of the Chamber are welcome to join me to talk about their specific issues and how the City can work with them. Most commonly, I hear from folks about: low/no interest access to capital, addressing the impacts of homelessness, façade or tenant improvement assistance, and about programing our city in ways that fosters economic development. I also Chair the Economic Development subcommittee (four years) and worked with our businesses to write our economic development strategic plan. The state needs to continue to provide resources to struggling businesses, but even more so needs to be aware about how additional regulations build off one another – and while none of them think they will be the straw that broke the camel's back, taken in the aggregate become very difficult for businesses to manage. Not every problem needs a new law, and often times the legislature would do well to provide oversight of existing programs and agencies, rather than add new requirements for businesses.

2. A one-sized-fits-all approach to public policy does not work for the North Coast, and it doesn't work for our businesses. As a member of the legislature, I will work very closely with the local chamber of commerce (and the state chamber) to ensure that the voices of businesses owners are heard in Sacramento. The state needs to be a leader in economic development, and it has made that part of the American dream harder with the layering impact of regulations. We need smart, thoughtful approaches to policy. California's economy over relies on sales tax, which highlights the importance of furthering economic development, and we need to evaluate budget decisions through that lens of investment. Further, I will strongly support efforts and I will help coordinate outreach and opportunities with state agencies such as the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, California Association for Local Economic Development, Economic Development Administration within the Commerce Department to help Humboldt County and other North Coast communities. We need to bring the historic dollars from the Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act to our communities, such as transportation investments and renewable energy projects such as offshore wind energy.

3. As mentioned above, I have been very proud to meet with our local Chamber of Commerce "leaders and liaisons" every month for the last seven+ years. As a legislator, I would be happy to have a similar standing appointment with Chamber leaders. Additionally, my cell phone and email are both my personal (not answered by staff), and I would be pro-active in reaching out to ask for thoughts on legislation making its way through Sacramento. I am very proud to have the endorsement from the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber of Commerce, my local Chamber, as a reflection of my work with our local business community. During a campaign, it's easy for candidates to make promises on questionnaires, but I think that endorsement in particular reflects nearly a decade of delivering for our business community.

4. Top priorities for Chamber members:

    a. Create opportunities to assist local City Councils on designing and implementing their economic strategic plans, evaluating emerging markets and potential opportunities for development. We also need to help folks with some of the other issues that most impact our businesses, such as lack

of housing availability and homelessness. The state should prioritize infrastructure dollars to cities, and let them have the flexibility to use it as they need to best meet the character of their community.

b. I'm a supporter of universal healthcare. We see far too many small businesses struggling to handle their commitments (or risk not being able to attract workers) for healthcare. We also see too many homeless people using the emergency room as their primary care, and too many low income parents having to defer care for their children because they are worried about the cost. Universal healthcare would also allow us to locate resources and expand access by focusing on regional needs, rather than evaluating based on profit and populations. We need specific incentives designed for rural communities to better attract the healthcare workers we need to deliver these services.

c. When I first started on the Santa Rosa City Council, we were known for being a terrible location to try to add housing. By the time I was done as Mayor, we had received the second highest score in the state for the pro-housing designation. We focused on the time, certainty, and cost of development. We reduced fees, repurposed city-owned land, and created the Renewal Enterprise District to create regional partnerships, stack CEQA exemptions, and share financing resources. The state needs to reform our Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District laws so that they are usable for small communities (these were supposed to be redevelopment 2.0 and have fallen very short), and we need to continue to remove arbitrary barriers to housing. Creating pots of money that incentivize local governments to be more creative in advancing projects can advance good policy making at the local level as well.

d. I support Care courts and their expanded use, as well as increased investment in regional mental heath and drug rehab services. I think it is more humane to force someone into treatment than to allow them to degrade on the street. This is better for the individual, and better for the community and businesses being impacted. The state's efforts to realign mental health services at the local level has been a challenge in communities with fewer resources and have created a disproportionate impact on the communities already most impacted by these challenges. Dollars from Sacramento need to reflect that. As a councilmember and Mayor I supported and passed the inRESPONSE program - a mental health and crisis stabilization response unit. In Santa Rosa, when someone calls 911 with a mental health, substance abuse, or homeless services call, we now send trained mental health professionals better trained and equipped to provide adequate care, rather than a police officer. We need to support more crisis response teams like inRESPONSE. Also - we cannot ignore that the homelessness crisis is largely tied to the housing crisis. We need to provide safe housing and permanent supportive housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness.

e. We need tourism for the North Coast. Tourism should not be the only solution for economic development but tourists will spend dollars and inject activity into the local economy. The North Coast and Eureka specifically are amazing places to visit. We need to ensure we have local infrastructure in place to make Eureka and the surrounding areas an amazing place to recreate. This means supporting roads infrastructure, the Arcata-Eureka airport and our parks system. I look forward to working with the Chamber to make Eureka not only a good place to do business but a good place to visit.

f. We need to make it easier to start and maintain a business. That means streamlining and reforming our permitting and reporting requirements at the state and helping locals to do the same.