

Cory Schnacky

1. Why are you seeking the position of Rice Lake City Council member?

I am running for city council on the platform of positive, sensible, progression. As elected officials, it is our responsibility to make decisions for our constituents that positively and noticeably affect their daily lives. Not all of these decisions are easy, so compromise will be needed. I believe there is currently a lack of compromise in our city politics. Too many times, not compromising has led to a negative impact for the taxpayers within our city. If we are able to compromise and make common sense decisions, this will have a positive impact on our city and our citizens as a whole. Sensibility is also needed. We need to look at every dollar we spend and make sure it is going to work for the city, not just special interest groups. It is not the job of a council member to protect a certain department or individual. R.O.I. Return on investment. There are basic services that need to be provided, infrastructure, park maintenance, safety (police and fire departments), etc. Taxpayers expect to be provided these services and for these services to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. After we have budgeted for these expected services, we need to look at the money remaining and invest it in areas that will bring the most money back into the community. This leads me to progression. In order to progress, we need to find new ways to grow the tax base while also caring for existing businesses and citizens. This will increase revenue, which will continually allow us to make improvements and positively progress our city.

2. What can the City of Rice Lake do to attract a viable new workforce?

To attract a viable workforce, we need to speak with those that are struggling to find workers. We need to listen to their concerns and their ideas. Oftentimes, they will have their finger on the pulse of their employees and the needs and services they expect. We need to take time to sit down and ask those questions. Obviously, we need to do everything possible to attract and retain individuals into our city, we don't need to reinvent the wheel. Many communities around our area have been successful in growing their workforce. Whether it's a more vibrant, attractive downtown, more activities, more housing, just more things to do, etc, we need to ask in order to find answers. I understand what has worked for other communities may not for ours, but we can pick and choose from their successes and add to those ideas as we see fit for our community.

3. What will be your top 3 priorities for the City of Rice Lake this year?

My top three priorities will be growing the tax base, improving R.O.I., and caring for our existing businesses and citizens while inviting new business and residents into the community. We need to make our city more attractive through responsible, positive, progression. We need to remove unnecessary politics that prohibit new business and existing businesses from expanding. We need to make our community more vibrant by adding activities and amenities, while maintaining all of the great traditions our community enjoys. Improving the aesthetics and infrastructure of our community will help to attract new citizens, grow the tax base, and add to city pride. Again, we do not

necessarily need to reinvent the wheel. Cities large and small have faced similar challenges and found resolve. Looking at surrounding communities will help us address our concerns. All of this can be done while responsibly and thoughtfully spending the hard earned dollars of our citizens.

**4. Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?**

First off, hats off to our Main Street Association Director DeAnna Westphal. She has done more for downtown in her first year than I have seen in my lifetime as a resident of this city.

I think our downtown has the right foundation, some great businesses and great people, but it lacks a lot of characteristics we all would like to see. Our downtown needs a complete revitalization to make it more attractive to outsiders, new businesses and our own citizens. I will support every effort to see our main street become a destination and the heart of our community once again. I would like to see the city do everything they can in order to see the revitalization happen by potential borrowing, grant writing, etc. In addition, I would like to place more emphasis on incorporating our beautiful Lake Shore Drive into our downtown. So few communities have the waterfront we enjoy. This area is under utilized and could be a key tool in attracting more tourism and business.

**5. If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?**

First off, I think it is necessary to do a city wide audit of all departments. In doing so, I truly believe we will find inefficiencies that could potentially have a large impact on the city's expenditures and budget.

Second, changes that are implemented need to be structural. Structural changes equal continual cost savings year after year. No more balancing budgets by making cuts then circling back around and re-implementing what was cut. Also, we need to be sure to allow the private sector to operate without competition. No more trying to make revenue by stepping on the private sector's toes. This type of policy can cause a loss of revenue and causes animosity between the city and private sector. The mission of this city is to "provide services to its citizens, which are necessary to promote and protect their health, safety, and quality of life needs, which are not deemed to be feasible or viable for the private sector to provide", and we should stand by this mission. Moreover, we need to stop balancing budgets by passing the cost onto the taxpayers. For example, the implementation of the wheel tax is just one policy I do not support. My goal is to repeal this tax during my next term.

Third, and to me, the most important is ROI. Return on Investment. If we are going to spend a dollar on something, beyond what is already budgeted and expected by the taxpayers, it better return that dollar or more. Some good examples are the Moon Lake Estates development, the new City Center next to Marketplace, the Village Square development, etc. All of the taxpayer dollars that were spent have and will continue to

grow the city's tax base. These investments created more jobs in our city and more destinations for others to come and spend money within our city.

6. If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?

Downtown...start the revitalization process. I think we can all agree that downtowns are truly the heart of a city. Vibrant downtowns attract citizens and outsiders alike. We all know when we visit another city, it is usually to go visit their downtown. Stillwater, Hayward, Eau Claire to Nashville, Miami and LA are all examples of this. If we want to attract a viable workforce, businesses and have a great ROI, invest in the downtown. Take a look at cities all over the country and you will see they are all investing in their downtowns.