

2026 Maury County Candidate Guide

August 6, 2026 - Primary & General Election



**Early Voting Begins
July 17**

**Election Day
August 6**



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MAURY COUNTY
Chamber & Economic Alliance



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Important Dates & Info

July 7	<i>Last day to register to vote</i>
July 17	<i>Early voting begins</i>
July 27	<i>Last day to request absentee by mail ballot</i>
August 1	<i>Early voting ends</i>
August 6	<i>ELECTION DAY</i>

Not sure which district you're in? Find out [here](#).

Click [here](#) to view a sample ballot.

Note: we did not alter candidate responses in any way

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Note: we did not alter candidate responses in any way

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

Our family moved to Maury County 40 years ago. We came about the time that GM announced that Saturn would be locating here. We fell in love with the landscape, the agriculture community, the quaint rural communities, the municipalities, the school choices and the culture. We have watched Maury County go through many changes; some for the better, some not. It is my goal to protect all of the best things about Maury County for the next generation.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

Young people often ask me how they can get into politics. I tell them not to. I tell them to get a job, get married if they choose, raise a family, own a business, sign paychecks, and build a life first. The last thing we need are professional politicians. We need Statesmen, who have real world experience and have something to bring to the table before trying to govern others.

When I ran for State Representative in 2010, I had a B.S. Degree in English with a minor in History, was married, had three children in college, had been an Administrative Assistant, had owned and operated two small businesses, raised and shown cattle, and had been the Managing Editor for Tennessee Cattle Business.

I was elected to the Tennessee State House in 2010, and served as the District 64 State Representative until stepping down in 2018. I served as the Majority Floor Leader and worked hard representing Maury County, passing selective Legislation that benefitted Maury County and the State of Tennessee. However, my philosophy, generally, is the less government, the better. My goal was not to pass a lot of Legislation, but to pass good Legislation.

I have made many great relationships in State Government that give me access to the decision and policy makers. That has been a great benefit to Maury County and will continue to be.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Mayor, and if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the County Mayor is to build a team of people who want to see Maury County succeed and remain the best place to live, work and raise our families in Tennessee.

There cannot be self-aggrandizement or greed in good team members. Every team member needs to be committed to working together not caring who gets the credit. The best outcomes happen for everyone with that mindset!

A great TEAM MAURY includes the County Commission, the governing bodies of the cities, the County Department Heads, County Employees, City Employees, School Personnel and the people of Maury County.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Having served as County Mayor for the past four years, I see the top challenges in local government up and personal every day. When I was elected, we were behind the curve in these things due to our unprecedented and apparently unexpected growth.

a. Infrastructure.

We are behind the curve in road planning and maintenance and we have been addressing that since I was elected Mayor. As your State Representative, I worked with TDOT and our community to get the I-65 exchange upgrades at Bear Creek Pike. That project was finished shortly after I stepped down. And more recently, working with TDOT and our State Representatives, we have the widening of Bear Creek Pike on TDOT's ten year plan and TDOT is addressing the June Lake congestion with a widening project with engineering beginning this year.

Here is something else about roads that Maury County residents need to know: there are three entities who own the roads in Maury County:

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

- 1.State of Tennessee, who owns and maintains State Highways.
- 2.Maury County, who owns and maintains County Roads.
- 3.The Cities (municipalities) who own and maintain their own roads.

When requesting information about the roads, it is best that we contact the entity who owns the road. I know that can be confusing, however, the Maury County Highway Department can give you that information.

b. Water availability.

The first and foremost need is safe, clean drinking water. With the rapid growth of Maury County in the past 10 years, water has become an issue that must be addressed for the next 50 years.

It is not a quick fix nor is it an inexpensive one. However, several solutions are being studied right now through the Governor's Duck Water Planning Partnership that would protect the Duck River and bring water into the County for present and future growth. There are several options being studied including reservoirs, pipelines, (with different routes to the Tennessee River), raising Normandy Dam and others. Our Congressman is also proposing that the Federal Government revisit the possibility of the Columbia Dam and has requested a feasibility study.

It is my hope that those feasibility studies can be completed and addressed before any final decision is made on the solution for future generations. It would be foolish for rate payers to be paying a 30-40 year massive debt for an amount of water that will barely last 10-15 years.

c. Agriculture

I am a firm believer in supporting our Agriculture and rural Maury County. Agriculture is one of our biggest economic drivers in Maury County. We have about 1400 farms and close to 200,000 acres in farmland. We have a very large cattle population and produce tons of hay. The market value of farm products sold in Maury county is over \$50 million.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

If we want our Ag Economy to remain strong, we must be committed to supporting it. We need to do everything possible as a State and a County to incentivize families to keep their family farms active and vibrant. We can support them locally, through planning and zoning, and through legislation that will be coming next year.

d. Understanding Local Government

First, there is a clear disconnect of the public when it comes to governing bodies and Mayors in Maury County.

There are 4 Mayors in the County. There is a County Mayor and each City (Spring Hill, Mount Pleasant and Columbia) has a Mayor and its own governing body.

Mount Pleasant has a Mayor Bill White and a City Commission. Columbia has Mayor Chaz Molder and a City Council and Spring Hill has Mayor Matt Fitterer and a Board of Mayor and Alderman. Maury County has Mayor Sheila Butt and a County Commission.

These governing bodies act independently. This is important to understand: The County Mayor nor the County Commission has any authority over the other governing bodies. They each act independently.

As far as the governing bodies of our three cities, I have been working to build a “TEAM MAURY” mindset that will benefit Maury County well into the future.

There is no doubt in my mind that the most important role of the County Mayor is competent leadership in building a team of County Department Heads, County Commissioners, City Leadership, Competent Boards, and the people of Maury County, not ever caring who gets the credit.

Prior to being called County Mayor, the position in Maury County was titled, County Executive, and I believe that describes the work more appropriately.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

The County Mayor oversees County property, the various Department Heads, property contracts, and is generally the “Face” of Maury County in representing the county in all Boards, Mayors Associations and County Associations.

I do not have a vote on the County Commission, however, I do have VETO power, if ever deemed necessary.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County, at some point, got behind in defining its growth and controlling our own destiny. I have been taking on the challenge of charting our course from where we found ourselves. Since I have been in office, we have rewritten our Zoning Codes and Ordinances and now demand a higher quality of development in Maury County.

We are now also in the process of rewriting our Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Planning Commission to use in determining how we want Maury County to look in the next 30 years.

We will be meeting with our Cities and looking at the growth boundaries with them, hoping that we can agree on a plan for growth that is the best for all of Maury County. Williamson County has just completed that process and have a five year plan for working together on annexation and growth. That is my goal for Maury County as well.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies of Maury County, to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Over the past 4 years, I have built relationships that will strengthen our community. The County Commission has been very supportive of me and I am definitely a supporter of theirs. We all have a job to do for the people of Maury County. I also have good relationships with the City Mayors.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (i.e. schools, roads utilities, etc.). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancements?

The first thing to know is what the growth may look like and how to address particular problems that would arise with that growth. We are being told through studies that the age of the population that will be moving to Maury County in the future will be ages 55 and above.

That means we will need a great hospital, housing for Seniors, responsive EMS services, safe neighborhoods and fire protection.

It also means we may not be needing to build schools as often as we have in the past. Maury County has several good options in education including private schools, a large homeschool community, and public schools. We will keep a close eye on the school population. Also, I am a strong supporter of our Unit Schools.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Unfortunately, in the past few years, I don't believe we have had thoughtful, sustainable growth. I believe we just wanted growth. I look at the agreements we have made without making growth help pay for growth and the citizens of Maury County have borne much of the cost.

A person who has lived in their home for 30-40 years should not still be paying property taxes to cover the expenses of those who move here. Growth has come too fast because I believe we have been too eager to take whatever growth came our way. In order not to continue having infrastructure issues, more congested traffic, and loss of farmland, we are already putting the brakes on some types of development and planning more efficiently.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

I believe we are well on the way to improving our public education dramatically. Over the last 5 years, Maury County Schools have shown measurable improvement in graduation rates, student proficiency growth and accountability ratings. MCPS was recently recognized as a “District on the Rise” for growth and recovery following COVID.

There is also something very exciting on the table for our Public Schools that will be running in the General Assembly next year. The strongest schools across the Nation have gone back to textbooks and handwriting. There will be legislation to bring those things back into our public schools.

Maury Alliance has also been involved in encouraging quality education and diversity of employment with its ALIGN Program, aligning students with workforce needs and talents. They have also initiated a Work Ethics program that will benefit our young people for the rest of their lives.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I enjoy being available and communicating with the people of Maury County. We have upgraded our Maury County Government Website this year and are able to send meeting notice texts to those who wish to sign up for them.

We have also publicly announced our meetings on FB and Instagram and will continue to enhance our communication. We want the people of Maury County to be heard and be involved. I want to hear from you. This is your home as much as it is mine.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Sheila Butt

What does a successful term look like to you?

I believe I have had a successful first term in finding ways to meet the challenges that I inherited, and looking ahead to what we want Maury County to look like instead of just allowing growth to “happen” to us. We have done that for too long.

I have never intended to profit from serving the people of Maury County. However, I have profited. I have profited in experience, relationships and a genuine love for the community we have created. My goal now is to protect everything good about it.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I have had a great experience as Mayor working with the Maury County Chamber and Economic Alliance and serving on their Board. They are an outstanding asset and have built good relationships with the community, the state, and potential development prospects. I believe they have made some good decisions, especially in the past four years in understanding the needs of Maury County and recruiting with those needs in mind.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Gabe Howard. I am a husband, father of four boys, Marine Corps veteran, small business owner, and currently serve as a Maury County Commissioner.

My wife Rachael and I have built our life here. We have raised our family here, invested in businesses here, served here, and we care deeply about the future of Maury County.

I am running for County Mayor because I believe Maury County is at a crossroads. We are blessed to live in one of the most beautiful and desirable places in Tennessee, but growth without a real plan is putting pressure on our roads, schools, water, public safety, farmland, and quality of life.

This campaign is not about a title for me. It is about service. It is about protecting what makes Maury County special while preparing responsibly for the future. I believe we need a County Mayor who will lead with vision, listen to the people, work with all sides, and take action before problems become emergencies.

What specific experiences and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I bring a combination of military leadership, business experience, and county government experience.

As a United States Marine, I learned discipline, accountability, teamwork, and the importance of completing the mission. In business, I have had to build teams, solve problems, make payroll, manage budgets, serve customers, and make tough decisions. Those are real-world skills that matter in government.

As a County Commissioner, I have served as Chairman of the Building Committee, Chairman of the Audit Committee, a member of the Budget Committee, and a member of the Agricultural Committee. I have worked on capital budgets, county building projects, fiscal oversight, growth issues, EMS funding, and long-term planning.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

I helped renegotiate the EMS agreement with Maury Regional Medical Center, saving Maury County taxpayers over \$2 million per year. I chaired the Ad-Hoc Growth Committee and worked to help opt Maury County into the County Powers Relief Act, which allowed us to increase adequate facilities fees so growth contributes more toward the cost of growth. I have been a strong advocate for protecting the Duck River, regional water planning, rural preservation, responsible budgeting, and greater transparency.

I believe my experience is different because I have not just talked about the issues. I have been working on them.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Mayor, and if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The County Mayor is the chief executive officer of county government. That role requires leadership, communication, planning, and accountability.

The most important role of the County Mayor is to make sure county government is serving the people well. That means departments are supported, budgets are responsible, problems are identified early, and the county has a clear direction.

The County Mayor must also work with the County Commission, school system, municipalities, state leaders, constitutional officers, business community, farmers, residents, and taxpayers. Maury County cannot afford leadership that works in silos.

If elected, my most important role will be to help move Maury County from reactive government to proactive leadership. We need a long-term plan, clear priorities, and a county government that is transparent and responsive to the people.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County, and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The top challenges facing Maury County are growth, water, infrastructure, public safety, schools, housing affordability, and preserving our rural character. Growth is not just about rooftops. Growth affects everything: roads, schools, emergency services, utilities, taxes, farmland, traffic, and quality of life. For too long, Maury County has been reacting instead of planning.

My approach is simple: we need a plan before we make major decisions. That means updating our land-use vision, addressing Urban Growth Boundaries, coordinating with municipalities, strengthening infrastructure planning, and making sure growth pays a fair share of the burden it creates.

Water is one of the most important issues facing our county. The Duck River is not just a water source. It is part of our identity, our economy, our environment, and our future. We need regional water planning, real transparency, and all options on the table, including long-term solutions that protect the Duck River and serve the entire county.

Public safety is also critical. As we grow, we must support EMS, fire service, law enforcement, and emergency response in a way that is sustainable and fair to taxpayers.

The answer is not to simply raise taxes and hope for the best. The answer is leadership, planning, accountability, and making growth contribute to the infrastructure it requires.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has incredible opportunities.

We have a strong location, hardworking people, beautiful farmland, historic downtowns, talented students, entrepreneurs, tradesmen, farmers, manufacturers, and small business owners. We are close enough to opportunity but still have a character that people want to protect.

One of our biggest opportunities is to build an economy that is more diverse and resilient. We should support existing industries, but we also need to strengthen small businesses, skilled trades, agriculture, tourism, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

We also have an opportunity to be a model for smart growth. Maury County can show that you can grow without losing your identity. We can protect farmland, respect property rights, strengthen our towns, improve infrastructure, and plan for the next generation.

Our opportunity is not to become another bedroom community for Nashville. Our opportunity is to remain Maury County and move forward with purpose.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies of Maury County, to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Collaboration starts with communication and respect.

The County Mayor cannot lead effectively by working alone. I plan to meet regularly with County Commissioners, municipal leaders, school officials, state representatives, department heads, constitutional officers, emergency services, business leaders, farmers, and citizens.

We need to get people in the same room earlier, not after decisions have already been made.

Too many major issues in Maury County have been handled in a fragmented way. Growth, water, roads, schools, utilities, and annexation do not stop at city limits or district lines. We need a countywide approach.

That does not mean everyone will always agree. But it does mean we should be honest, transparent, respectful, and focused on what is best for Maury County as a whole.

The people deserve leaders who will sit down, work together, and solve problems.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (i.e. schools, roads, utilities, etc.). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancements?

First, we need a real plan. Infrastructure should not be an afterthought. We need to identify where growth is happening, what infrastructure is already strained, what capacity exists, what projects are needed, and how we pay for them responsibly.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

Second, growth must help pay for growth. I supported Maury County opting into the County Powers Relief Act because it allowed the county to increase adequate facilities fees. That was an important step, but we cannot stop there. We need to continue looking at every responsible tool available so the burden does not continue falling on existing taxpayers.

Third, we need better coordination with cities, utilities, the school system, TDOT, and regional partners. Infrastructure decisions must be connected. You cannot separate housing growth from roads, schools, water, sewer, fire protection, EMS, and law enforcement.

Fourth, we need disciplined budgeting. Maury County must prioritize core services, avoid waste, review major capital projects carefully, and make sure taxpayers are protected.

We cannot build our way out of bad planning. We need to plan first, prioritize wisely, and make sure new growth carries its fair share.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful growth protects what people love about Maury County while preparing for the future.

It means preserving farmland, rural communities, historic character, and the Duck River. It means directing growth where infrastructure can support it instead of scattering development across rural areas with no real plan.

It means respecting property rights, but also recognizing that decisions on one property can impact neighbors, roads, schools, water, and taxpayers.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

Sustainable growth means asking basic questions before approving major changes: Do we have the water? Do we have the roads? Do we have school capacity? Can fire and EMS respond? What does this do to traffic? What does it cost taxpayers? Does this fit the long-term vision for Maury County?

Maury County should not be Nashville's bedroom. We should be Tennessee's breadbasket, a place where families, farms, businesses, and communities can thrive together.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Education and workforce development are directly connected to the future of Maury County.

The County Mayor does not run the school system, but the County Mayor does play an important role in budgeting, planning, partnerships, and setting priorities. We need to make sure our schools have the facilities, safety, and support they need while also being responsible to taxpayers.

We also need to strengthen the connection between education and real opportunities. Not every student will take the same path, and that is okay. We should support college pathways, but we must also strongly support skilled trades, technical education, apprenticeships, agriculture, manufacturing, public safety careers, entrepreneurship, and military service.

Maury County needs welders, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, nurses, teachers, deputies, firefighters, engineers, entrepreneurs, and small business owners. We should be working with schools, TCAT, Columbia State, employers, trades, and local businesses to build a workforce pipeline that gives our young people a reason to stay, work, and raise their families here.

A strong workforce also helps recruit better jobs and strengthens the entire community.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I believe elected officials work for the people. We. Work. For. The. People.

Communication must be consistent, clear, and accessible. I plan to use public meetings, social media, email, website updates, town halls, community events, and direct conversations to keep people informed.

I also believe people should hear about major issues early, not after the decisions are already made. The public deserves transparency on growth, budgets, water, major projects, and county priorities.

I will continue showing up in the community, listening to citizens, answering questions, and being available. You may not always agree with every decision I make, but you will know where I stand, why I stand there, and that I am willing to have the conversation.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term means Maury County is better prepared for the future than it is today.

That means we have a real long-term plan for growth, infrastructure, water, public safety, and county facilities. It means we have improved transparency and communication. It means growth is contributing more toward the cost of growth. It means we are protecting the Duck River, preserving rural character, and strengthening our local economy.

It also means county departments are supported and held accountable. It means taxpayers know their money is being handled responsibly. It means the County Mayor's office is proactive, not reactive.

Success is not measured by ribbon cuttings or titles. It is measured by results.

At the end of a term, I want people to say that Maury County had leadership that listened, planned, acted, and put Maury County first.

County Mayor Candidate Responses

Gabe Howard

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

The Chamber and Economic Alliance are important partners in the future of Maury County. Economic development matters, but it must be balanced with infrastructure, workforce, quality of life, and the long-term interests of the people who already live here.

As County Mayor, I would work with the Chamber and Economic Alliance to support job creation, small business growth, workforce development, entrepreneurship, tourism, agriculture, and responsible investment.

I believe we should focus on quality jobs, not just growth for the sake of growth. We need a stronger and more diverse economy that can weather changes in national markets and provide real opportunities for local families.

I also believe economic development must be connected to planning. New investment should make sense for Maury County. It should consider water, roads, workforce, housing, schools, public safety, and community impact.

Maury County can be the best place to live and work, but only if we protect what makes it worth living and working here in the first place.

My commitment is simple: Maury First. Always.

County Commission Responses

Tim Holt - District 1

No response received

County Commission Responses

Jerry Strahan - District 1

No response received

County Commission Responses

Patti Hollinsworth - District 2



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position.

I'm a retired pediatric RN and I would like to continue to serve the public. I've lived here my entire life and my family all lives here. I want Maury county a place for my family and friends to continue to live and work here.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I am well known in Maury County and trusted. I have served for 4 years and have served on the health and environment committee, agricultural, health, financial management board, and am currently the library board advocate.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The continued overwhelming growth. I have and will continue to vote against the Developments that our infrastructure and schools are not prepared to support

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County, and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The unchecked development wrecking havoc on our infrastructure and land.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The Maury County Commission and the planning commission has worked tirelessly to change the zoning laws to protect our community and farm land and have increased the impact taxes on developers so they will pay their share for growth that the residents who have lived here our entire lives are not as responsible for financial growth.

County Commission Responses

Patti Hollinsworth - District 2

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County, to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I have served for 4 years and I have a great relationship with all department directors and employees and I attend most county meetings other than the county commission meetings to ensure that I am up to date on all the business in the county, even the city meetings.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (i.e. schools, roads, utilities, etc.). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancements?

I have to say it's not an easy job but it's one I've already been working on and doing so I take each situation as it comes and vote accordingly to what my constituents tell me they think and what is best for our county.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

More farm land saved for farm land and for the land in the county to stop being annexed into the city for extension building. It's as simple as that.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

We have an amazing Industrial development board and they are doing a great job recruiting new industries and bringing high quality high paying jobs for Maury County. Our schools and Columbia State Community College are both providing diverse job and educational opportunities in all areas for our residents

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I am available by phone, email, text and am always willing to meet in person with anyone for any reason. I'm a very flexible and friendly person and I know everyone in all districts because of my work experience as a nurse here and living here. Everyone knows me here except the new people that have moved here and I've made a point to get to know many of them as well. I also am a member various organizations in the county and have access to many people. I attend church and am an officer of the Elks lodge 686 here in Maury County and am a Master Gardener. I am transparent and I am out and about in the community at all times.

County Commission Responses

Patti Hollinsworth - District 2

What does a successful term look like to you?

In my opinion to finish what you started in the beginning or at least have plans to do what you set out to get passed. In my case it was important to take care of our animal shelter. We now have an on staff veterinarian. We are doing a major addition on our shelter that has been much needed for years. We are building a new library in Mount Pleasant and doing a renovation on the Columbia Library. We have finished the archives building. We have finished the judicial building and one of my favorites; We are renovating the Maury County courthouse, which is the diamond of Maury County. We have increased the fees developers have to pay and we have changed our zoning laws and made it easier to keep family farm land instead of selling out to out of town developers. This is the main reason why I ran the first term and I continue to feel this way after almost 4 years.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I've participated in many activities with Maury Alliance since I've been a commissioner and I know they have Maury County's best interest at heart. Maury Alliance is always active in promoting new businesses and other activities that are good for our county.. I always promote this amazing group we could not do without.

County Commission Responses



Wayne Romesburg - District 2

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I was on the commission thirty years ago. With Commissioner Prevati leaving I was asked by several people if I would run again.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I was on the commission thirty years ago, so I won't have as large learning curve as someone who hasn't been on the commission.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role to me maintain the counties identity. We must be able to provide services to the county residents, but also maintain a budget so no one is overtaxed.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County, and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Growth is the biggest issue I see. It must be managed, so the lifelong residence of the county are not paying more for services they already receive.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has many positives and we must do everything we can to promote them.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County, to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

All the commissioners must work for the betterment of the county. We may not always agree, but we don't need to disagree just because we don't like someone. The county must work with Columbia, Mt. Pleasant in Spring Hill for the betterment of everyone in the county.

County Commission Responses

Wayne Romesburg - District 2

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (i.e. schools, roads, utilities, etc.). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancements?

Growth is the biggest challenge we face in the county. Lifelong residents of the county don't need to be paying increased taxes for this growth. You have to find a way to balance the present residents with the new ones moving in without tax increases.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

It must be balanced to help preserve our identity that made others want to move here.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Education is our future. We do not need to educate everyone to go to college. When I was in school, we had many trade classes. We need to educate students to go to the trades if they're not wanting to go to college. This would provide a good stable workforce.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I would use social media and meetings to communicate.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would mean still having a balanced budget, no large tax increases and managed growth.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I was a supporter of the alliance when in my first term 30 years ago and I still plan on being a supporter.

County Commission Responses

Gary Stovall - District 3



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

At the end of the day, it's all about helping our community and making Maury County a truly great place to live. I'm running to be a strong, steady voice for the folks who feel like they aren't being heard. Serving is my primary focus.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I've had the honor of serving as your County Commissioner for 16 years. Over the years, our community has trusted me and re-elected me to this seat. I like to think that longevity shows the faith they have in my work, and I hope to keep earning that trust every single day.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Our ultimate job as a commission is to make sure our neighbors have the essentials for a good life: clean water, low property taxes, safe roads and bridges, and great schools with highly qualified teachers. As an individual board member, my job is to actively fight for those exact necessities.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County, and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

We are dealing with massive growth right now, especially in our inner-city areas. Our biggest challenges are securing the water supply in the eastern part of the county and making sure our infrastructure can actually handle all the new folks moving in. We also desperately need to build another school in both Columbia and Mt. Pleasant to support our kids.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

With all this growth comes opportunity. We need to focus on bringing in higher-paying, quality jobs right here at home. If we do that, our residents can stay and work in Maury County instead of having to commute long distances every single day.

County Commission Responses

Gary Stovall - District 3

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

It all comes down to communication. I believe in keeping an open, honest dialogue with the City Mayor, my fellow Commissioners, and all of our city and county officials. We are all on the same team, and we have to talk to each other to get things done.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (i.e. schools, roads, utilities, etc.). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancements?

We definitely need funding for our schools and roads, but my goal is always to find that money without raising your property taxes. While budget constraints sometimes make it incredibly tough, I will work to the absolute best of my ability to avoid tax hikes. The key is sitting down with our Superintendents of Schools and Roads to budget smartly and work together.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

To me, sustainable growth means that if someone builds 100 new houses, the county already has the water lines and roads ready to support them. It means managing growth so we don't end up with gridlock traffic—because gridlock isn't just frustrating, it can dangerously delay ambulances and fire trucks trying to save lives.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

By keeping the lines of communication wide open with our Superintendent of Schools. We need to ensure our classrooms have top-tier resources and that we are hiring high-quality teachers from diverse backgrounds who can connect with and support students of all ethnicities.

County Commission Responses

Gary Stovall - District 3

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I'm always available! You can call me, text me, or shoot me an email anytime. I am always open to one-on-one chats, and I look forward to hosting Town Hall meetings so we can talk as a community.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term means we checked off the big items on the community's honey-do list. It means we secured good roads, strengthened our infrastructure, and supported excellent teachers—all while keeping your taxes low.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I plan to work closely with Wil Evans, Travis Groth, and the Industrial Development Board (IDB). By collaborating with them, we can bring the right economic opportunities to town and make Maury County a thriving, prosperous place for our children and grandchildren to grow up.

County Commission Responses



Jennifer Garrard - District 3

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

Hi! My name is Jennifer (Reed) Garrard. My family moved to Maury County in 1997. While I was in law school, my family moved away. However, it did not take me long to know, Maury County was where I wanted to be and I moved back after completing school. Maury County is home and I want to see it flourish without sacrificing the what makes Maury County special.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

In addition to being a licensed attorney, I bring a diverse and unique work background.

Currently, I serve as the Chief Human Resources Officer for Maury County Public Schools. In this role, I oversee the HR department including its budget, the hiring process for employees, personnel matters, policy review and updates, and public records. Aside from the day-to-day functions, this role allows me to interact with amazing teachers and staff that are serving our students and community daily.

Prior to my time at the schools, I served as the Director of Administration, Finance, and Legal Affairs for Williams Funeral Home, Cremation Society of TN, Polk Memorial Gardens, and Pinecrest Memorial Gardens. In this position I oversaw human resources, payroll, accounts payable/receivable, and legal matters.

Outside of my work experience, I currently serve on the board for the United Way of Maury County and volunteer with my local church.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the county commission is to ensure Maury County can financially sustain the needed services for its community. As an individual board member, it is vital to understand what the community desires and be a voice for the people.

County Commission Responses

Jennifer Garrard - District 3

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County, and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Maury County is growing and with growth comes added necessary services that the county government needs to provide. The challenge is how to balance what is needed by a growing community without it impacting the residents in a negative way.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The top opportunities for Maury County are to continue to revitalize current vacant commercial properties. Thriving businesses are a win-win for the community as it opens up additional venues for citizens and brings in local revenue through sales tax.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I would work alongside the fellow commissioners during the public meetings ensuring TN state laws are followed for open public meetings (Sunshine Law). It is also important that elected officials are acting for the good of the community/its constituents and not for personal gain. It is important to remember that each different elected body serves different roles and to be aware that each elected official is acting on behalf of the constituents. Each body must act in accordance within its bounds as granted by law.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

I would propose a comprehensive look into how the current taxes dollars are being allocated to the different departments and if that aligns with what the community needs. Additionally, evaluate if and how new developments can help to support the funding for new needs in the county.

County Commission Responses

Jennifer Garrard - District 3

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

It requires planning and input from all the stakeholders. For a community to grow, it takes all vested members pulling in the same direction for success.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Again, it is important to remember that each different elected body serves different roles. The commission's role in quality education in Maury County is directly related to funding the public schools adequately.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

If elected, I would be available by the county issued email. Currently, anyone can email me at votegarrard@gmail.com.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would be to truly look at what our county brings in financially and how best to allocate funding so that our community can thrive into the future.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I would welcome the Alliance to continue to promote Maury County and what all we have to offer!

County Commission Responses

Winston B. Harlan - District 3

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position



My name is Winston B Harlan born and raised in Maury County. I am the proud son of the late Walter B Harlan and Annie Ruth Harlan. I have witnessed up close the legacy of my parents. My father being a former County Commissioner in the 3rd District and my mother being a Community Leader. I am married to LaSandra Renea Harlan which we have a blended family of five. I'm a graduate of Columbia State Community College with Associate's Degree in Sociology. I have been employed by General Motors for the last 10 years which I have the role of being a Team Leader. My strong Faith in God and family values that guide me in my daily life. I'm also a member and a Deacon of Fountain Creek United Primitive Baptist Church in Culleoka TN. I'm running for a 3rd District County Commissioner because I believe in transparency education and community development, I want to ensure that each person have a strong quality of life and to see that with the growth of Maury County that our District is not being left behind.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My experience and qualifications come with a different perspective of an outsider with fresh ideals. I was appointed to serve on the Maury County Board of Education in the 3rd district in 2021. From a combination of professional work experience and community involvement I have developed skills in problem solving and leadership to achieve common goals in the community and the county. There is one rule I am proud of in the community and that is being a coach in value various sports for the youth and Maury County.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the county commissioner is to be trustworthy in a fair and balanced way. If elected, I will listen and represent the district as it says Matthew 22:39, Love your neighbor as Yourself.

County Commission Responses

Winston B. Harlan - District 3

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

In Maury County it's about managing rapid growth with a growing economy that involves all the citizens of the county. We as a community will make sure no one is left behind.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The best opportunity for growth is to recruit the right industry that meets our needs as a county. There is one segment industry that we welcome is the corporate industry. But we also want to be able to maintain our quality of life.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Working together as a collective body is very vital in moving forward for the future. Each branch of government must have a vision plan and see it through. A 5-year plan and a 10-year plan on education infrastructure, jobs, residents and community development.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

With this rapid growth Maury County must be able to pay for this growth. In doing, this, communication and transparency must play a major role. We must inform our citizens of the increase or the decrease in spending.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

A thoughtful sustainable growth is still preserving our culture, character and not falling behind in our economic lifestyle.

County Commission Responses

Winston B. Harlan - District 3

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

A quality education and a strong diverse workforce to go hand and hand with moving forward a reasonable standard of life. Training is the common denominator in education and workforce. There are so many resources that the community is unaware. However, we should be able to spread the information much better.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I believe in transparency among the community and everyone has a voice. One goal of the community is to setup committees and to get a Clear update on business that will affect the community.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would be that the community be more engaged and the constituent's enthusiastic increases. This will also help us to be better prepared for the future.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

In partnering with the Maury County Alliance, I would love to understand the outlook of the Alliance and bring a support of public service and growth to the Alliance.

County Commission Responses

Mike Kuzawinski Jr. - District 4



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

Maury County has been my home for around 35 years. I've been here to witness the growth and the growing pains, I've seen the positives and negatives over the last 3 decades. I am running because I truly do care about Maury County and our future. I am running because I believe the constituents' voices matter, transparency matters, and servant leadership matters.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I have over 25 years of small business ownership experience. In those years I have developed the skills to address and solve problems that arise. I've hired and built team members who have grown with our businesses. I've had to let go of those who weren't a good fit. I believe I can handle conflict and criticism in a respectful, professional manner. I have worked hard to prove the naysayers wrong. I also understand the importance of the highest level of customer service. A seat on the Commission is all about the service, solving problems, conflict resolution, and negotiations in a respectful, transparent, constituent focused manner. I bring that same work ethic and drive that I have used to build our businesses to the commission to serve our constituents.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the commission is the first task it is charged with, and that is to pass a balanced budget. Everything centers around this. As an individual member of the board, it is my duty to be willing to debate, vote, negotiate and lead by example toward accomplishing that task. Furthermore, it **MUST** be done with respect for other board members, respect for Maury County, respect for our citizens. Decorum and transparency matter.

County Commission Responses

Mike Kuzawinski Jr. - District 4

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The top challenges are clearly water supply, protecting our agricultural landscape, and responsible growth. There are many other items that can continue to lengthen this list but I believe these 3 have been resoundly the most important to the residents of Maury County. The only way to address any of these is to be willing to see each issue from every side and negotiate a clear path that can be beneficial to all. We cannot just push an agenda through because we think our way is the only way. We have to remember that others are just as passionate about their perspective. Ultimately though we must ALWAYS keep the voice, interest, and respect for our citizens at the top of the list.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County is extremely diverse in what it offers. From manufacturing, and retail, to agricultural and small business ownership. We cannot lose this diversity. We are not a one size fits all community and that is important to remember, to protect, and to promote. We have a rich history that attracts tourism, and we need to continue to cultivate this resource. I want Maury County residents to be able to thrive in Maury County.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Cooperation, transparency, respect. I'm going to keep using the terms respect and transparency, because without the integrity these character traits bring, we won't be able to accomplish anything except self promotion, and I'm not for that. Every department, every board, every member has a part, an opinion, an idea, and a voice. With that many different inputs there will be times, many times even that we disagree on the how, but we should all, ALWAYS be focused on WHAT, and that's serving our community. Disagreements and conflicts are much better addressed when we leave out the snarky comments, underhand jabs, and personal egos. Iron sharpens iron. Someone's opposition to our position might be the answer, but if we are too arrogant to listen, then we do a disservice. If a vote goes against what we think it should, we cannot take it personally. Each board has its set of powers to balance, to override, to suggest, and to negotiate.

County Commission Responses

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County Commission Responses

Mike Kuzawinski Jr. - District 4

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Infrastructure is always a big issue in government. It seems like it's always a moving target. First we must identify what are needs and what are wants. What legally is required, then we look at our finances. We need to prioritize our needs based on a truly zero based, balanced budget. Oftentimes that means we will not get everything we want, and at times we may not get what we feel are needs. But we have to get the emotion out of the budget and let the numbers dictate what we do. Numbers are logical and trackable, not emotional. It might not be fun and exciting at first to reign in the finances where they need to be, but it will allow us to provide better service to Maury. We have an incredible budget director/office, and a budget chairman who understands numbers and budgets in a way like no other. If we utilize their expertise and wisdom, we can set Maury County to be financially able to prepare for the future needs better.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful and Sustainable growth to me looks much different than we have seen in the last 10 years. I haven't heard of any citizen that is happy with the way growth has happened. While many would like to stop growth altogether, (I at one time felt this way as well), that is unreasonable. Sustainability is the key, and with that comes the big issue of water supply. We cannot continue to build to capacity. We must have a buffer large enough for when a drought happens, because it will happen. We also must be mindful of our agricultural landscape. Just because there is an open field, it doesn't mean it needs to be developed.

County Commission Responses

Mike Kuzawinski Jr. - District 4

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Recently I was in one of the elementary schools. I was pleasantly surprised to see they were teaching the kids about hydroponic, vertical gardening. It's important for our children to be able to learn technological skills as well as agriculture and trades. Not everyone will go into a professional workplace setting and that's a good thing. We need a future who will know how to work the land and produce food. We need a future who will know how to weld, repair, construct; and we need doctors and nurses. All are equally important and all should be celebrated as such.

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Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

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County Commission Responses

Mike Kuzawinski Jr. - District 4

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I have made my phone number and email readily available. I am also very active on social media, and welcome the debate, the questions and ideas. I believe in reaching the constituents where they are.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term is one that promotes civil debate, produces true balanced budgets, changes the perception citizens have of their government, and is focused on respect, decorum, and transparency.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

In other elections, I've mentioned how I believe the Maury Alliance is an asset to our community, and I still do. I do think it's important that the governing body also interacts with MA to share what our constituents have let us know what is important to them going forward.

County Commission Responses

Connie B. Green - District 4



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I grew up in Columbia and my mother's Napier family came to the area in the 1800's. I want to protect our rural nature and work to preserve our farms. I am concerned about our growth without planning.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I have been serving on the Commission for 7 years and have served on the budget and building committees. I had served as Assistant Finance Director in a City for 8 years.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Our role is funding and we need to work toward a balanced budget and no new tax increases.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Our top challenge is growth and trying to provide services for the people moving here. We have limited revenue resources.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

We need more job opportunities and more businesses.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

We have to carefully weigh the needs of the Departments and the growth and the services the citizens expect.

County Commission Responses

Connie B. Green - District 4

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

The schools and the County roads are funded from taxes. State roads require the help from the State and TDOT to improve or add to. Maury County water is adding pipes. We have major concerns about pipelines, dams and feasibility studies to understand costs. Schools have been faced with many regulations by the State that have increased costs. Our State legislators need to review the need for many of those programs.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

We need to freeze home building until we have a plan for providing, roads, schools, water and waste management that can service the current home building. We need businesses to add to the economy.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

The County Commission is only a funding body for the School Board and we do not have any influence on education.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

Hopefully they will e-mail or call.

What does a successful term look like to you?

Balancing a budget, no new property taxes and working to maintain our current County property and assets.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

Encourage them to find new businesses and higher paying jobs. Encourage them to work with schools to develop skilled trades workers.

County Commission Responses

James Dallas - District 4



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a seventh-generation, native Tennessean. I grew up all over the United States but chose to move back to Tennessee because it has always been “home.” I have lived in Maury County for over 8 years and am a homeowner in Columbia. I work for a local non-profit hospital system.

I am running for county commissioner because I believe in the potential of this county to be a wonderful place to raise a family or start a business. I want our county government to be inclusive and be part of a local culture that welcomes people of all sorts. I also hope to inspire others to run for office in the future.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I am an IT professional and am a non-practicing attorney. I am a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Houston Law Center. I have served as Chair of the Maury County Democratic Party since 2021 and have been active in the community through groups such as Kiwanis.

The experience though that means the most to me is as a church member and volunteer. I have been deeply involved with our congregation’s children’s church program, and I have learned so much from our youth, particularly about their hopes and dreams for their future.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Commissioners must listen to the whole community, make tough decisions, and be able to explain their decisions rationally.

Many of the choices made by our county commission cannot satisfy everyone. State law and economic reality (e.g., the need to run a balanced budget and keep taxes affordable) requires that the county commission often make tough decisions.

County Commission Responses

James Dallas - District 4

My role will be to provide an alternative perspective on the issues facing my district, and to encourage compromise. Conservative voices tend to dominate discussions during our county commission meetings, but not every voter in our county is a conservative. All members of our community should be represented.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Both nationally and locally, the biggest problem facing Maury County today is that people who work for a living can't seem to get ahead, and because of that, many people view our leaders as being either indifferent to our needs, or outright hostile/corrupt.

That pessimism often colors discussions related to county politics, particularly regarding growth and development in Maury County. Balancing growth in a way that keeps our county both affordable and beautiful is the biggest specific challenge for local policymakers.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County is rooted to our history without being chained to the past; in a world of AI deepfakes, potential new residents, businesses, and tourists crave authenticity and real hospitality. My hope is to help nurture that opportunity.

Our county's residential growth has created new demand for commercial expansion, particularly for retail and services, which may result in jobs and higher tax revenue. We must have an "open for business" attitude and ensure that we have enough zoned-commercial land here in our county.

County Commission Responses

James Dallas - District 4

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

It is important for county commissioners to respect the unique roles of other bodies as well as the talents and good intentions of other elected and appointed officials. Moreover, regular communication, and (as much as practical) attendance at their meetings helps build essential trust.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

School construction is a major concern for me, because there are fewer schools inside Columbia city limits today than there were when I moved here – and those schools are only getting older. The cost of building new schools falls on the county taxpayers, and schools are shockingly expensive (a new school can cost tens of millions of dollars). We must be careful with the county finances to afford the schools we need; there also must be effective communication between the school board and the county commission about priorities.

We should take a careful look at the funding mechanism for road construction and maintenance (i.e., the wheel tax) to see if changes may be due. The county government also must proactively acquire rights-of-way.

On a more general level, everyone must understand that infrastructure projects can take many months or years to complete, and the planning and construction processes are incredibly byzantine. Our county commissioners must avoid drama that increases costs and delays.

County Commission Responses

James Dallas - District 4

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

In a free country, landowners and developers are going to be the primary drivers of growth. The county government only has a limited toolkit for controlling growth and must therefore, first, be strategic with those tools, and second, continue to zealously advocate for legislative reforms that will help us regulate development, and ensure that “growth pays for growth.”

We need to diversify our economy and bring in higher-paying jobs. We also need to be careful about how we handle potential high-impact industries (such as data centers).

In the long run, the only way that we are going to maintain a good quality-of-life for most residents, low taxes, and preservation of our rural spaces and natural environment, is to encourage higher residential and commercial density in a few appropriate places (particularly, inside or near city limits).

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

The Maury County Commission sets the “bottom line” budget for the Maury County Public Schools. I am a graduate of a public high school in Texas (also purple and gold) and strongly believe that we should fund our public schools at the highest level that we can legally, responsibly, and sustainably, afford. Our county budget is a moral document, and what we prioritize reflects our values. Additionally, our county librarians deserve to be treated with respect as valued professionals, and that our library board needs to be politically independent.

County Commission Responses

James Dallas - District 4

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

Through my involvement in politics over the years, I have learned the importance of showing up to as many events as possible. I intend to continue these habits to the best of my ability (I do work 40 hours a week and try to go to church every Sunday morning).

I have been impressed by several local leaders' use of social media to share updates on local affairs (for example, Spring Hill Mayor Matt Fitterer) and will work to follow their lead. I will do my best to answer every e-mail in a prompt and responsive way.

What does a successful term look like to you?

I hope that the residents of my district will be better off than when I started.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I tremendously value Maury Alliance's efforts to educate and inform the public about state and local government (through events such as the Farm City Breakfast and the Education Lunch) and will enthusiastically participate as often as I am able. I also will look forward to Maury Alliance's regular reports to the county commission on the state of our local economy.

County Commission Responses

Brandon K. Nutt - District 5

No response received

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a father, husband to Lori Barnes, Christian, and public servant. My family, my faith, and my community have shaped who I am and how I try to serve others. I attend First Baptist Church in Columbia, and I believe service is something you live out — not just something you talk about.

For the past 31 years, my life has been rooted in law enforcement and public service. That career has given me the opportunity to work with people from all walks of life, often during difficult moments, and it has taught me the importance of listening, being steady, and doing what is right even when it is not easy.

I am running for Maury County Commission because I care deeply about the future of this county. I do not see this as a politics. I see it as another way to serve. I believe elected officials should remember that they are chosen to represent the people, listen to them, and be their voice in decisions that affect their families, their property, their taxes, and their way of life.

Maury County is growing, and with that growth comes real concerns about roads, schools, infrastructure, public safety, and the cost placed on taxpayers. I believe District 5 deserves commissioners who will listen, ask common-sense questions, and work to make sure county government serves the people well.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My experience comes from a lifetime of public service, leadership, and responsibility. I have spent 31 years in law enforcement in Maury and surrounding counties, and I currently serve as a Chief of Police in Giles County. That work has taught me how to lead, how to listen, how to make difficult decisions, and how to stay focused on the people being served.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

I am also an FBI-LEEDA Leadership, Administration, and Command Academy graduate, which has helped strengthen my leadership, management, and decision-making skills. This training is built around accountability, professionalism, communication, and leading organizations through real challenges.

In addition to my law enforcement background, I currently serve as Chief of Staff for one of the fastest-growing security and threat group companies in Tennessee. In that role, I help manage people, operations, scheduling, client needs, compliance, and business growth. That experience has given me a strong understanding of both public service and private-sector responsibility. Along with strong budget understanding, and cost analysis abilities.

I believe county government needs people who can listen, study the issues, manage responsibility, and make practical decisions. My background has prepared me to serve District 5 with honesty, steadiness, and common sense.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

I believe the most important role of the County Commission is to be the voice of the citizens. County commissioners are elected to represent the people, listen to their concerns, and make decisions with the citizens' best interests and stance in mind.

A very close second is being a responsible steward of taxpayer money. The commission makes decisions that affect roads, schools, public safety, land use, infrastructure, budgets, and the future direction of the county. Those decisions should be made carefully and with respect for the people who pay the bills.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

As an individual commissioner, my most important role would be to listen to the people of District 5, asking them what they want, stay available to them, and represent them honestly. I do not believe public office should be about governing over people. I believe it should be about serving people.

That means being prepared, asking hard questions, and making decisions based on what is right for the citizens and the long-term future of Maury County.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

One of the greatest challenges facing Maury County is growth. Growth is not going to stop, and we have to be honest about that. The concern is not families moving here or small neighborhood growth. The bigger concern is large-scale development and high-density housing being approved without enough thought about whether the infrastructure can truly support it.

When growth moves faster than planning, the burden falls on everyone. Roads become crowded, schools become strained, utilities are pushed harder, public safety needs increase, and taxpayers are often left trying to catch up.

Before major growth is approved, we need to ask practical questions. Can the roads handle it? Can the schools absorb it? Can utilities support it? Can law enforcement, fire, and EMS keep up? And what will the long-term cost be to the people already living here?

I want to contribute by being a commissioner who asks those questions early, listens to citizens, and supports growth that is responsible and sustainable. Maury County can grow, but it should grow in a way that protects quality of life and respects the people who already call this county home.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has tremendous opportunity. Our location, our workforce, our communities, and our major transportation corridors give us a strong position for the future. The I-65 corridor, Highway 43, Hwy 50, Hwy 31, Hwy 412 and Highway 7 corridors all provide opportunities for responsible economic growth, better jobs, and long-term planning.

The challenge is making sure those opportunities truly benefit the people of Maury County. Growth should strengthen our county, not overwhelm it. Economic development should bring good jobs, support local businesses, and improve the tax base, but it should also be balanced with roads, schools, utilities, public safety, and quality of life.

I believe we can move Maury County forward by being thoughtful about where growth occurs, what kind of growth we encourage, and how it affects the citizens who live here. Opportunity is a good thing, but it has to be managed with wisdom and long-term planning.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I believe collaboration is important, and I believe it starts with respect. County government, city governments, the school board, utilities, emergency services, and other elected officials all have responsibilities that affect the future of Maury County. We should be willing to sit down, communicate, and work through issues in a professional way. Hearing the different viewpoints from commissioners is extremely important in understanding the view of the citizens and learning how the county works together as a whole through the commission to serve all.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

I also believe the county and the cities are in desperate need of a better working relationship. So many of the issues we face — growth, roads, utilities, schools, emergency services, and quality of life — do not stop at a city limit sign. Decisions made by one government body can have a real impact on citizens who may not have had a voice in that decision.

I do believe some of our cities are experiencing a level of political detachment from their constituents. When citizens feel like decisions are being made without truly hearing them, trust begins to suffer. That is why communication, transparency, and public input matter so much.

At the same time, working together does not mean saying yes to everything. I believe too many people in government have forgotten that sometimes the responsible answer is no. If something is not good for the citizens, if it places too much burden on taxpayers, or if the infrastructure is not ready, elected officials should have the courage to say so.

My goal would be to work respectfully with others while keeping my first responsibility clear: the people I represent. Good decisions require cooperation, but they also require honesty, backbone, and a willingness to ask difficult questions.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

I believe infrastructure planning has to come before growth, not after it. Too often, government approves growth and then later asks taxpayers to pay for the roads, schools, utilities, and public safety needs that follow.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

I am not a fan of tax increases. I believe in low taxes, and I cringe at the thought of more taxes or increased taxes being treated as the first answer to every problem. Before taxpayers are asked for more money, we need to ask whether we can afford the growth being approved in the first place.

Can our roads handle it? Do our schools have the capacity? Are utilities ready? Can law enforcement, fire, and EMS sustain the added demand? Those questions should be answered before major development moves forward.

Maury County should pursue available state and federal funding, work closely with cities and utility providers, review spending priorities, and look carefully at the true cost of growth. Most importantly, we need long-term infrastructure planning that protects taxpayers and keeps the county from constantly reacting after problems have already developed.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful and sustainable growth means growth that is planned, balanced, and respectful of the people already living here. It means we do not simply ask whether something can be built. We ask whether it should be built, whether the county can support it, and whether it improves the community.

Sustainable growth means roads, schools, utilities, public safety, and quality of life are considered before decisions are made. It means not allowing high-density development to move forward without understanding the long-term impact.

It also means protecting the character of Maury County. People value this county because of its communities, rural areas, small-town feel, and way of life. Growth should not destroy the very things that made people want to live here.

I believe Maury County can grow, but it must grow with common sense, careful planning, and respect for citizens and taxpayers.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Quality education and workforce development are very important to the future of Maury County. Strong schools help prepare our children for the future, and a strong workforce helps attract good jobs and support local families.

I believe we should support students, teachers, school safety, career and technical education, and workforce readiness. Not every student will take the same path, and we need to value college, trades, military service, public safety careers, and direct entry into the workforce.

At the same time, improving education and workforce development is not only about spending more money. It is also about spending money wisely. We need to be willing to identify and cut wasteful spending in schools and across county departments so taxpayer dollars are used where they make the greatest difference.

Quality of life also matters. Lower crime rates, safe neighborhoods, responsible growth, good schools, and strong public safety all help make Maury County a place where people want to live, work, raise families, and build a future.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I plan to be available, responsive, and honest with the people of District 5. Citizens should not only hear from their elected officials during election season. They should feel like they have someone they can reach when they have concerns, questions, or ideas.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

I want to ask District 5 residents and Maury County citizens for their opinions on important issues so I can better understand what the people want. Everyone may not agree on every matter, but their voices should be heard and respected.

I believe public office should be restored to the voice of the people, not the governance of the people. I will use phone calls, email, social media polls and dialogue, public meetings, and direct conversations to stay connected. I will be accessible.

Most importantly, I will listen. People deserve a commissioner who is reachable, who explains where he/she stands, and who remembers that he/she works for the citizens.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would mean that I served with honesty, accountability, and common sense. It would mean I listened to citizens, studied the issues, asked hard questions, and made decisions based on what I believed taxpayers want and is best for the people of Maury County.

Success would include better conversations about growth, stronger infrastructure planning, responsible budgeting, support for public safety, and a willingness to challenge wasteful spending.

I would also consider it a successful term if citizens felt they had a commissioner who was available to them and willing to stand up for them.

At the end of a term, I would hope people could say that I worked hard, told the truth, stayed accessible, and remembered that public office is about service.

County Commission Responses

Sam Barnes - District 5

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

The Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance plays an important role in economic development, business growth, and promoting Maury County. If elected, I would be willing to work with the Chamber on opportunities that are responsible and beneficial to the county.

I support economic growth that brings good jobs, strengthens local businesses, and improves the tax base. At the same time, growth must be balanced with infrastructure, schools, utilities, public safety, housing pressures, and taxpayer impact.

Maury County can be one of the best places to live and work, but we need to protect the quality of life that makes it special. I would support partnerships that move the county forward while making sure citizens, taxpayers, and local communities are not left behind. Keeping Maury rural is important to most that live here... This must be protected.

County Commission Responses

Scott Sumners - District 5



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

Born and raised in Southern Middle Tennessee and have lived in Maury County for 26 years. I'm running because I know the issues that we are facing as a county and I can continue to provide common sense solutions for those issues.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I was first elected in 2014 and again in 2018. After a 1.5-year hiatus, I was appointed to the Commission in 2024 and elected later that year to fill an unexpired term in my district. I offer those years of experience and dedication to my constituents. I have served on the Budget Committee for 8 years and as Chairman for 6.5 years. I know how our budget process works and how to get a budget approved.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

3 things

1. Be the voice of the people
2. To pass a fiscally responsible budget.
3. Protect personal property rights.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

1. Water availability – Use the Duck River Planning Partnership's recommendations to the Governor and support the feasibility study for a dam on the Duck River. The report to the governor will be completed in September 2026 but until then we need to know if the dam is still a viable option for Maury County. The feasibility study will answer all of the community's questions and will give an estimate to how much the construction of the dam will cost.

County Commission Responses

Scott Sumners - District 5

2. Growth – Our growth has been exponential in our cities. The County Commission has recently updated our Zoning Ordinance, and we are currently working on updating our Comprehensive Land Use Plan. While the Land Use plan is being developed the County Commission has imposed a moratorium on large subdivisions only in the jurisdiction of the county. After the plan is approved, we will start working with our municipalities on the Urban Growth Plan for the whole county. This will allow us to determine the land in which the cities would like to grow. I'm of the opinion that the cities need to revisit and shrink their current UGB boundaries.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Not answered

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

The Commission and County Mayor must continue to work together with our municipalities. Always be open for communication and not disrespectful and find common ground and go from there. We should not be afraid to have tough conversations with our colleagues because we all need to work for the betterment of the citizens of Maury County.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

2 words: Strategic Planning

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Keeping rural Maury rural is one of my main goals with our Comprehensive Land Use Plan that we are currently working on. I think the farther you get out of the city limits, the more rural the county should stay.

County Commission Responses

Scott Sumners - District 5

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

I'll leave the education part to my colleagues on the school board but I would like Maury County to have a vocational school campus for high schoolers. This would provide much needed technical training for those students and put them in the workforce right out after graduation.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I'm available on social media, email and phone/text. This is my current form of communication with my constituents.

What does a successful term look like to you?

Leaving the county in a better condition than when you first got elected.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

By continuing to support their mission to bring high quality and diverse jobs to our community.

County Commission Responses



Rebecca Haines - District 6

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am Rebecca Haines, wife to Bryant, mom to seven, and a member of Radnor Primitive Baptist Church. As the daughter of pastor and evangelist Herb Hatfield, my faith is the foundation of everything I do. My path to this race began when I responded to a post by Commissioner Kathey Grodi, who was looking for a dedicated replacement for her seat. After meeting with Kathey to understand the responsibilities of the role, I prayed for the Lord to open the door if it was His will. I was incredibly honored to subsequently be nominated at the Republican Caucus. My family chose Spring Hill in December of 2020, drawn by the respect for personal liberties and the strong community values here. We stayed because we fell in love with this area and the people who make it special. My main reasons for running are simple: to honor God, to protect the personal liberties and traditional values that make Maury County an amazing place to live, and to faithfully serve my community and neighbors as your next County Commissioner.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

As the co-owner of a consulting firm (Si3, Inc.) and a professional network director, my daily life centers on structural workflow analysis, rigorous budget management, schedule management, and consensus-building. My corporate and small business background has trained me to meticulously examine financial audits, look for operational efficiencies, and ensure transparency. I know how to bring diverse groups of people together to solve complex problems, a skill set that translates directly into effective committee work and responsible governance on the Commission.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The single greatest responsibility of the County Commissioner is fiscal stewardship. As a member of the County Commission, my most important role will be making my vote represent my constituents and being a dedicated collaborator with the other members.

County Commission Responses

Rebecca Haines - District 6

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The top challenges for Maury County are the same ones the current commission has been dealing with in the last four years. How to catch up the existing infrastructure with the sudden, rapid pace of growth. These issues must be dealt with in a responsible and regulated approach, interspersed with wisdom. No one person can hold the answers to each of these problems, but together we can arrive at the best possible solution.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County is an incredibly attractive destination for business investments, families, and skilled professionals. Our greatest opportunity lies in expanding our commercial and industrial tax base. By creating an environment where high-paying, high-quality companies want to relocate, we can give our residents the opportunity to both live and work within the county rather than having to drive outside of our county for work and school. This commercial growth boosts local revenue and helps insulate our citizens from over-burdening residential property taxes, allowing us to fund vital services sustainably.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

District 6 spans across vital municipal lines, meaning collaboration isn't optional—it is mandatory. I plan to build strong relationships with municipal leadership, including the Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Aldermen, to ensure county and city goals are aligned. On the Commission, I will leave personal and partisan bickering at the door, treating fellow commissioners with professional respect. My focus will always be on policy data and community results, actively participating in joint work sessions to find regional solutions that benefit Maury County as a whole.

County Commission Responses

Rebecca Haines - District 6

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

We must ensure that new growth pays for its share of the infrastructure burden. I propose we look closely at development impact fees and smart tax structures so that new construction directly contributes to the expansion of schools, utilities, and roads. Concurrently, we need to protect our existing tax base by establishing strict, conservative spending priorities within the annual county budget—allocating our hard earned tax dollars to core public necessities like first responders and infrastructure before funding nonessential projects.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful, sustainable growth means that rooftops do not outpace our capacity to safely handle them. It looks like a Maury County where school classrooms are adequately sized, roads are safe and clear, and emergency services are fully staffed alongside new development. Sustainable growth respects individual property rights while firmly preserving our unique local character, historic charm, and green spaces. It is growth that is planned with foresight, ensuring our children inherit a structurally sound and financially stable county.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

While the School Board handles the daily administration of our education system, the County Commission holds the purse strings. I will advocate for strong, collaborative funding that prioritizes the classroom, supports our teachers and expands career-technical education (CTE). By strengthening vocational, trade, and STEM training programs within Maury County Schools, we can create a robust pipeline that prepares local graduates to step directly into high-demand, high-paying regional industries, fueling a diverse and self-sustaining local workforce.

County Commission Responses

Rebecca Haines - District 6

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

Accessibility is a cornerstone of my campaign. I plan to utilize regular digital updates, such as active community newsletter and social media transparency, to break down upcoming Commission votes and budget decisions. Furthermore, I want to host informal, quarterly constituent meetings right here in District 6—giving residents a consistent, casual environment to share their concerns directly with me. Whether through email, phone, or a local cup of coffee, my constituents will always have an open line of communication.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term means passing consecutive, balanced budgets that protect the taxpayer and keep county debt at a minimum. It looks like securing tangible, long-term funding solutions for the infrastructure bottlenecks impacting District 6 and Spring Hill. Most importantly, success means fostering an informed, engaged constituency where local citizens feel that their voices are genuinely valued and that their local government is operating with the highest level of professional transparency and efficiency.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I view the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance as a vital strategic partner in shaping our county's future. I plan to actively participate in Chamber roundtables and business forums to stay aligned with our local business community's needs. I will champion initiatives that cut through red tape for local entrepreneurs, small business owners, and large commercial employers alike. By working hand-in-hand with the Chamber, we can deploy smart economic policies that attract diverse, stable industries, making Maury County the premier standard for economic success in Middle Tennessee.

County Commission Responses

Cindy Hestla - District 6

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position



My name is Cindy Statham Hestla. I moved to Nashville from Atlanta GA in 1984 to get involved in the Christian music industry. I have been involved with music one way or another ever since as a performer, writer, piano teacher & vocal coach. I am married with three grown children, three step-children, & 11 grandchildren. I lived in Spring Hill for 16 years & was able to witness the endless building with seemingly little thought of the limited infrastructure & narrowness of Hwy 31. We moved to Columbia in 2015 because our neighborhood became too congested with new building. I had no desire nor the time to run for a political office until I witnessed the illegal mess that was the 2020 presidential election. I decided I could not sit on the sidelines & complain, watching our country go down the tubes for the next four years. So when I was asked to run for County Commission I said, "YES!"

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I served on the Safety Committee last term & my passion is the safety of our community. Over the last four years we funded the rebuilding of Hampshire Fire Hall, purchased property at Bear Creek Pike & 431 for the Pottsville Station, pushed for & voted for 6 fulltime paid fire fighters & plan to add more in the future, we're looking for property to build a new fire station in Santa Fe, after the May tornado ripped through Columbia we purchased 7 more tornado sirens. With increased growth we realize the need for more ambulances, also making sure their equipment is maintained & up to date to ensure short response times.

In conclusion, I like to be out & about meeting people, hearing about their concerns & helping them in any way I can. I know people are moving to Maury County in record numbers. I plan to do my part on Safety Committee to ensure our citizens have an adequate police force, safe (wide enough) highways & bridges, enough fire stations & trucks, fire fighters & ambulances to respond quickly when 911 calls come in, & to make sure the office of Emergency Management gets what it needs in the way of personnel, technology, & enough funding to expand their building & storm shelter.

County Commission Responses

Bradley Coutts - District 7



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Brad Coutts, I am a Critical Care Paramedic with the ambulance service. I have spent my entire adult life in public service, from law enforcement to emergency medical services and fire/rescue. I moved to Columbia for the College's Paramedic program in 2014 and found my place here in the community. Public service is something that is hardwired into my life. I believe that each and every one of us plays a part in how our communities are taken care of. I frequently tell my teammates and colleagues that sometimes, we have to make the decision to step up and lead when others won't. I feel like the time for me to take on this important role is now. Our county, and specifically, our district is growing and changing with each day. Protecting the land, the culture, and our residents is why I am seeking to election to represent the 7th district.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I have never served in elected office, but my professional career has provided me with experience making difficult decisions, managing resources, solving problems under pressure, and working collaboratively with agencies and community partners.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The County Commission's most important role is to responsibly represent the people of Maury County by making thoughtful decisions that balance growth, infrastructure, public safety, and fiscal responsibility.

As a commissioner, my role will be to listen to constituents, remain accessible, and make informed decisions based on facts, transparency, and long-term impact.

County Commission Responses

Bradley Coutts - District 7

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Maury County's biggest challenges include rapid growth, traffic and infrastructure demands, school capacity, and ensuring public services can keep pace with development. I believe we need proactive planning, responsible budgeting, and better coordination between county leadership, municipalities, and the community to address these issues before they become larger problems.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has strong opportunities for economic growth, workforce development, and improving quality of life while still preserving the character of our communities. I want to support a responsible growth plan that creates quality jobs, strengthens infrastructure, and ensures Maury County remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

This is a considerable challenge, especially because the County Commission must respect our municipalities autonomy, but I believe collaboration starts with communication, professionalism, and mutual respect. My career in healthcare and emergency services has taught me the importance of teamwork and focusing on solutions rather than politics. I plan to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and work collaboratively to make decisions that are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole.

County Commission Responses

Bradley Coutts - District 7

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Maury County must take a balanced approach that combines responsible budgeting, long-term planning, grant opportunities, and partnerships with municipalities and developers. We have to ensure that we are utilizing the full scope of our authority to demand that developers are actively engaged in improving the infrastructure that their projects will effect. Growth should help support the infrastructure demands it creates without burdening the county's taxpayer.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Specifically in areas of district 7, protecting our natural resources and preserving what makes Maury County special is incredibly important to sustainable growth. Growth should be supported by infrastructure, schools, utilities, and public services rather than outpacing them. It also means balancing economic opportunity with preserving our communities, rural character, and quality of life.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

I support strengthening partnerships between schools, technical programs, higher education, healthcare systems, and local businesses to better prepare students and workers for local career opportunities. Our board of education does an incredible job with keeping up with technical education opportunities and we are fortunate to have a robust community college and technical school program in our state, with one of the best schools right here in Columbia. Continuing to partner with these programs and continually looking for ways to promote formal and technical education will keep our workforce and future competitive.

County Commission Responses

Bradley Coutts - District 7

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I embrace technology and have incorporated it into my life in a way that makes me accessible but also allows me to balance the access that others have to me. I value personal interaction and connection and want to keep myself as available to those in my district as possible. Text me. Email me. Message me on social media. There are a ton of ways that I make myself accessible. I've even been sending out postcards! I'm still a fan of a handwritten note too.

What does a successful term look like to you?

Maury County is better positioned for the future through responsible growth, improved communication, stronger infrastructure planning, and transparent leadership. Most importantly, I want constituents to feel they had a representative who listened, worked hard, and genuinely served the community.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

Participating in advisory boards and councils and including our organizations in our meetings will be vital to measuring how successful our partnerships are. Growing these personal relationships and visiting with the representatives of these organizations, I look forward to working collaboratively with the Chamber & Economic Alliance.

County Commission Responses

Richard Baud - District 7



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Richard Baud and I am running for Maury County Commissioner for District #7.

To introduce myself. I have been married to my wife Ramona for 39 years, we have 4 children and 8 grandchildren. I gave my life to Jesus on December 15th 1996. I have been a member of Northside Baptist Church since October 1998. My family moved to Columbia in April of 1998. I transferred here with Walmart where I served as the store manager of the Columbia Walmart Super Center for 22 years. Since my last day at Walmart in November of 2020, I have spent the last 5 years making up for lost time with my family (as Store Manager you work a lot of hours).

The following concerns for our County have moved me to run for this office. First, this poorly planned growth has drastically cost our residents (including me and my family) precious time and frustration sitting in ridiculous and dangerous traffic. With the direction we're heading in this will only get far worse, if Elected I will do my very best to help stop high density housing projects from adding to our extremely busy commuter traffic highways.

Second, When my family moved to Maury County in 1998 our county had 67000 residents, we were then a county dependent on the Nashville area for good paying jobs, Quality dining options, a good variety of shopping options and entertainment venues. Now that Maury county has grown to 130000 residents and we now have doubled our population in the last 30 years, what has changed? Where are the opportunities for our young people? We are basically in the same position as we were in 1998, we just created more traffic and congestion.

County Commission Responses

Richard Baud - District 7

Our leaders have missed a big opportunity to improve Maury County. Like it or not with our county's physical location and in a State that has no State income tax our population will grow to 200000 people in the next several years. if elected I will work with other like minded leaders to leverage our population growth to encourage the following. First, Employers with good paying jobs of the future to come to Maury County. Without this, our children (including three of my 8 grandchildren that live in Maury County) will continue to have to make the choice between driving two hours a day to commute to work or moving out of our county for real opportunities. Second, Businesses to come to Maury county to provide us with Quality dining options, a variety of shopping options and entertainment venues, our residents should not be forced to sit in traffic to travel to Nashville instead let's make Maury County a place where people flock to instead of travel from.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I served as the Store manager of our Columbia Walmart Super center for 22 years ,every year we had retail sales of over 100 million dollars, I was responsible for supervising a great team of over 300 hourly Employees (associates) with over 30 hourly supervisors, 10 Assistant Managers and two Co-managers, this team efficiently operated a 24 hour operation for all 22 of those years (until Covid which of course limited the store's hours of operation). Although I realize that Government operations and Public Service is very different, I believe that my experiences have provided me the ability to deal with every conceivable situation and I will use my ability to work with so many people to help bring a unique perspective to the County Commission

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Since the Maury County Commission enacts all legislation and authorizes programs and expenditures within Maury County the most important role is prioritizing what is important and deserves our tax payers hard earned money. If I am elected my most important role will be to keep our commission focused on shaping our County for the future.

County Commission Responses

Richard Baud - District 7

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

1. unplanned unorganized growth.
2. the ability to sustain our water resource with the amount of high density housing projects that have been approved.
3. Sustaining our agricultural heritage.
4. taming the dangerous traffic on our commuter traffic highways.
5. missing the opportunity to leverage our population growth into opportunities for our long time residents.

I plan to focus committees I am on and the full Maury County Commission on what impact each decision will have not only now but in the future.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

We need to leverage our population growth to increase opportunities for our long time residents encouraging,

1. companies to locate in the heart of Maury County that will provide good paying jobs of the future for our youth allowing them to stay here instead of moving out of Maury County or commuting to work.
2. companies to locate in the heart of Maury County to provide our residents with more options for Quality dining, shopping, and entertainment.

This would flip the script and reverse the traffic from folks leaving Maury County to folks driving to Maury County.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I will utilize our very quickly awakening and mobilizing community to attend every Committee meeting and all other meetings where decisions about their futures are being decided and make their voices heard. only when our Community stands up will our Leaders know what is important to them.

County Commission Responses

Richard Baud - District 7

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

We have to make those that are benefiting from moving into our County pay for all additional expenses incurred because of this growth. We have to use every procedure and process available to our County to make this happen.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Simply put we have to leverage all population growth to create additional opportunities for our long time residents including, Good paying jobs of the future for our youth to look forward to. Additional shopping and dining options and entertainment venues.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

I will focus on making sure we have the best possible talent leading our schools including,

1. the Superintendent
2. Assistant Superintendents, operations and instruction
3. Chief of Human Resources
4. Principals of every School
5. Assistant Principals of every School

These leaders will be responsible for leading our schools to produce our workforce of the future.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

During my campaign events I will gather information from the voters in District #7 and I will use this information to communicate to them. Whenever an important vote that affects our district is scheduled either in committee or in full commission meetings, we will work together to make sure our voters are informed and heard.

County Commission Responses

Richard Baud - District 7

What does a successful term look like to you?

At the end of my term seeing Maury County changing from being on Defense to Offense.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I will help facilitate strategic planning between

1. Business Leaders
2. County Leaders
3. City Leaders
4. our elected representatives both State and federal

With the focus on leveraging our population growth to create opportunities for our long time residents, including good paying jobs of the future and Quality Dining and shopping options and entertainment venues working together we can change the entire situation for our County from being a place folks are forced to drive from into a place where folks flock to.

County Commission Responses

Kenny Morrow - District 7



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I was born and raised in Maury County and am a lifelong resident of the county. I was elected to the Commission in 2022 as a conservative candidate and ran with the intention of serving the community.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I have worked in a wide variety of fields during my career, from farming to manufacturing to quality control to technology and retail, so I have experience in many different areas and am familiar with how businesses should work. I believe government should be run like a business, as much as possible, with the idea toward spending the county's money wisely and obtaining maximum results for the expenditures.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

In my opinion, the primary role of the County Commission is to be the overseer of the county's business. We are responsible for appointing and overseeing county officials to ensure that the county's needs are met and the county's business is conducted in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

In my view, the top challenges for the county at this time are the water availability crisis and unrestrained growth. The water crisis is, at present, pretty much in the hands of CPWS, so I plan to work toward managing the growth and trying to ensure that it does not outpace our ability to provide infrastructure and services.

County Commission Responses

Kenny Morrow - District 7

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Not answered

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I have been working as a member of the County Commission for the last 4 years to ensure that the decisions being made are in the best interests of the county as a whole.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

We on the Commission are working to provide needed upgrades to infrastructure as we can. This process is something of a balancing act, as funds do not exist to allow us to do everything needed simultaneously. We have to prioritize the needs and work on the highest priority items first, then budget for the lower priorities and perform those when funds become available. We try to manage the funding in such a way as to minimize the need for tax increases, as we do not like to increase taxes.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

In my mind, sustainable growth is LIMITED growth. Unrestricted growth, which outpaces infrastructure and management, destroys the quality of life and rural character of the county. This rural character is what makes Maury County a great place to live. The recent zoning rewrite that we voted in will help with this. I think the county itself does a much better job of managing the runaway growth in the county than the cities within the county do.

County Commission Responses

Kenny Morrow - District 7

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

The Commission works with the public school system to make sure that educational standards are met and that adequate resources are available to the school system so that it can continue to improve student performance and achievement. Within the County workforce, employee pay and benefits have been upgraded to improve employee retention and performance, and employee job satisfaction is currently at a very good level, with turnover rates at an all-time low.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

My phone number and email address are posted on the Maury County Government website, and all of the County Commission's business is conducted in open meetings, so we on the Commission are easy to contact. Unlike most other Commissioners, I do not maintain a presence on social media.

What does a successful term look like to you?

In a nutshell, to me a successful term is one where we leave the county in better shape than we find it - one in which we meet most of our primary goals, leave the financial situation without a major deficit, and are able to conduct the county's business without increasing taxes. Depending on the specific needs at the time, these goals are not always achievable, but these are the things I strive for.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I plan to continue to work on upgrading infrastructure and services, work toward managing growth effectively, and to continue to try to keep taxes as low as possible while achieving those goals.

County Commission Responses

Andreas Eastep - District 8



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a proud member of the Maury County community, deeply invested in our local way of life. Whether that means participating in civic organizations like the Rotary Club or supporting our rich agricultural heritage. I am running for County Commissioner because Maury County is at a critical crossroads. The rapid pace of expansion requires leadership that is proactive rather than reactive. I want to ensure that as we move forward, we protect the unique, rural character of our communities, support our small businesses, and handle our county's budget with absolute transparency.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My professional background gives me a practical, ground-level understanding of infrastructure, utility operations, and project management. I know firsthand what it takes to keep a community running efficiently and safely. Beyond my professional technical knowledge, my active involvement in local civic life has trained me to listen to diverse perspectives and find common-sense solutions. This combination of infrastructure expertise, fiscal discipline, and community-first leadership qualifies me to look critically at development proposals and ensure our growth never outpaces our capabilities.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the County Commission is to act as a faithful steward of public funds and long-term community planning. My most important role as a board member will be to serve as an independent, accountable voice for the residents of District 8. I view it as my duty to ensure transparent budgeting, fight risky development deals that place an unfair burden on taxpayers, and be willing to say "no," when possible, if a proposal does not serve the best interest of our county.

County Commission Responses

Andreas Eastep - District 8

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Our primary challenge is that our current growth is stretching our infrastructure to its limits. My approach centers on an "Infrastructure First" policy. We must commit to fixing and maintaining our existing roads, bridges, and utility networks before giving the green light to massive new developments. To address water and road strain without draining the county budget, I will push to ensure that developers pay their fair share of impact costs, and focus heavily on proactive maintenance, which saves taxpayers significant money over the long term.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Not answered

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Collaboration begins with shared facts and open communication. My established relationships with municipal governments in the county will allow me to be able to do that on Day 1. By bringing data-driven insights to the table, we can move past political division and focus on regional solutions. I will advocate for fair, predictable permitting and uniform standards that protect property rights while ensuring every city and district grows in harmony with the county's overall capacity.

County Commission Responses

Andreas Eastep - District 8

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

We cannot build our way out of a deficit if we keep approving projects blindly. To properly enhance our infrastructure, we must be strategic.

- Smart Upgrades: Direct development exclusively toward areas where infrastructure and utilities already exist to avoid over-extension.
- Developer Accountability: Require builders to absorb the infrastructure costs associated with their footprints so that existing residents aren't footing the bill.
- Forward-Thinking Budgeting: Prevent sudden tax increases by mapping out school and emergency services funding years in advance, protecting classrooms from overcrowding and keeping response times low.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful and sustainable growth means balance. It looks like matching our growth rate strictly to our infrastructure capacity. It means protecting our rural spaces, farmlands, and established neighborhoods from suburban sprawl while giving local small businesses and farmers the room they need to thrive.

Sustainable growth means we don't sacrifice the history and beauty of Maury County for short-term revenue.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

A thriving school system and a robust workforce depend entirely on economic stability. By focusing on fiscal responsibility and avoiding risky development deals, we can safeguard the county's revenue to ensure our schools are funded reliably without resorting to sudden, reactionary tax spikes. Furthermore, by keeping things local and supporting our farmers, small business owners, and regional trade initiatives, we retain our homegrown talent and build a diverse, resilient workforce right here in Maury County.

County Commission Responses

Andreas Eastep - District 8

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

True accountability requires direct accessibility. I am fully committed to hosting town hall meetings where residents can voice their concerns face-to-face. I will champion open meetings and ensure that public records remain easily accessible. My constituents will always have a direct line of communication with me, ensuring that the decisions I make on the commission accurately reflect the needs of District 8.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term means leaving Maury County more structurally and financially secure than it was when I took office. Success looks like completed road and bridge repairs, utility networks catching up to demand, fully protected historic farmlands, and a transparent county budget with healthy reserves. Ultimately, success means establishing a culture of trust where constituents know their voices were directly responsible for shaping our growth.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

Partnering with Maury Alliance means aligning economic recruitment with structural reality. I want to collaborate with the Alliance to champion our local small businesses and agricultural innovators. By ensuring our county offers fair, predictable permitting and a stable tax environment, we can work with Maury Alliance to attract high-quality jobs that match our workforce strengths, while ensuring that new corporate citizens are directed to zones where our utilities and roads can sustainably support them.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am from Birmingham Alabama and have also lived in Laurel Mississippi, Murray Kentucky, Pace Florida, and Paragould Arkansas. I moved to Spring Hill, in Maury County 3 years ago upon retiring from a career in healthcare administration. I chose Spring Hill to be near my daughter who lives here.

Since relocating to Maury County, I wanted to get involved in my new community. First, my wife and I sought a church to attend. I started attending Maury County Commission meetings and Spring Hill BOMA meetings. I introduced myself to my district commissioners and BOMA representatives and found they would actually talk with me. This encouraged me to attend meetings regularly and delve deeper by attending County Commission committee meetings and School Board meetings. I found I could get quite informed by attending meetings, actively listening, and speaking with our elected officials. I also meet and speak with other citizens who attend meetings.

Also, I volunteered to become a delegate with AMAC Action which is the political action arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC). Delegates are organized by US Congressional districts, mine being TN District 05. The role of an AMAC Delegate is to interface with the local congressional office on AMAC legislative initiatives. Having done so, I have gotten to know the TN 05 district staff and even was selected to intern at the Columbia office.

When I learned that both of District 8 Commissioners were not running for re-election in 2026 and no one was stepping up to serve in this role, I spoke with both commissioners and Maury Republican Party leadership. Having received their encouragement to seek office, and with the support of my family, I am now a candidate for my first, ever political office.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I believe the optimal candidate is one who will place the good of the community above any personal goals or ambitions; one who will objectively become informed on issues and honestly take action to best benefit the community.

To do so, one must have cognitive tools to work with. I acquired basic skills through my education having earned a BS in Education, a Masters of Business Administration, and a Masters in Healthcare Administration. I have worked on honing my skills with a progressively responsible career in healthcare administration serving in roles involving clinical duties, teaching, hospital administration, and medical group administration. These leadership roles demand competency in communication, relationship building, situational analysis, data analytics, financial acumen, and most importantly, listening to the counsel of people around me.

Even though retired from employment in healthcare administration, I continue to be involved with the American College of Healthcare Executives, Middle Tennessee, ACHE-MT, serving on the membership committee and have earned a Life Fellow with ACHE, the national credentialing body.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Drawing from the Hippocratic Oath in medicine, I propose that the primary duty of a commissioner is, "First, do no harm." Fallible humans do not always get things right, but if each of the 22 commissioners try their best, we have a good collective chance to get decisions right as a body.

The duties of the County Commission are laid out in the Tennessee county-government statutes. First, commissioners individually or collectively do not 'run' the county government. Those roles are reserved for county department heads with direct oversight of the County Mayor.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

The County Commission serves as the legislative body for the county, adopting resolutions and policies as allowed under state law. The commission sets a budget each year, appropriates funds to meet county needs and oversees compliance with the set budget. Perhaps the most important single role of the County Commission is its fiduciary responsibilities in managing expenses and revenue (taxes and fees) of the county.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

From listening to community residents and by my own observations, the top items to address in the next four years include the following items.

- Controlling unfettered, haphazard growth in the residential community.
- Preserving the agricultural nature of the county by supporting existing farmers as well as attracting additional farmers to the area.
- Protecting and preserving our water supply including the Duck River.
- Fiscal responsibility with county resources and balancing the budget without raising taxes on our residents or businesses.
- Supporting our county and city law enforcement and fire fighters to keep our community as safe as possible.
- Traffic – Traffic – Traffic.

As one of 22 commissioners, I can't do a lot of good or damage on my own. County governance is truly a 'team sport'.

- Individual commissioners develop ideas and bring them forward to the commission and discuss the merits of the ideas.
- Encourage commission leadership and the County Mayor to work with city mayors to develop ideas and initiatives that will benefit the entire community.
- Commission leadership and individual commissioners work with State officials to garner state support as needed.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The first near-term opportunity is the completion and adoption of the comprehensive development plan that is being developed as of this questionnaire. The expected completion is October 2026; the new commission will have to finalize the plan. This will guide how our county will develop as we grow over the next several years.

A related issue is the annexation of county property by cities within Maury County. Under current law, there is little the county can do to address annexation decisions by cities; however, county residents have to live with the fallout of annexations. I would like to see state legislation passed so counties can have some say in city annexation plans.

There needs to be more cooperation between cities and Maury County. I would like for city residents and city governments to participate in the land use development plan so it makes sense for all of us.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I would like to see the development of cities/county advisory committee to discuss development initiatives and how those initiatives may affect each body and areas where there may be cooperation and synergy. The goal would be to improve cooperation and minimize friction between local government bodies. We might work jointly on projects which would benefit all parties. Imagine that.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Water continues to be the “elephant in the room”. We are about to outgrow our water supply. We need to:

- Continue to work together with the cities in Maury County, adjacent counties, the State of TN and Federal representatives and officials for creative and affordable solutions. Somehow, we need to develop a sense of urgency on this topic.
- Bear Creek Pike and Highway 31 are moving up on the state widening schedule. As the eastern part of the county grows, there will be additional traffic pressure on Highway 431.
- If growth and development are planned, then we can plan infrastructure improvements in the planned growth areas. As long as development is haphazard and not controlled, infrastructure improvements will be reactive rather than proactive.
- Maury County Public Schools are not under the direct purview of the County Commission. The little influence the commission has on the schools is to exercise discretion with some of the revenue funding. The commission cannot set school policy, performance objectives, or planning. Even with the rapid growth in Maury County and municipalities, there is not corresponding growth in Maury County Public Schools student population. As much as possible, I would support changes in school policies and practices to improve community support of the schools and not just ‘throw money’ at the school system and hope it gets better.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

- Develop higher density housing within or around cities with suburban, rural, and agriculture communities located concentrically around the cities.
- Designate industrial areas of like industries, heavy to lighter types of industries rather than scattering industry among residential areas.
- Recruit businesses that are not heavily dependent on water use.
- Make Agriculture Great Again.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Many of these initiatives are in place in the public and private schools with the career and technical education and training programs. We should encourage the continued development of such programs targeting the needs of local businesses and industries. We should also seek partnerships with local businesses and industries to develop employment ready training and internships in specialized areas.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

My telephone number and email will be published. I will answer calls and respond to emails as soon as possible. I encourage all county constituents to express their opinion on county matters and understand the commission decisions affect people county wide and are not always limited to certain districts. I want to hear from residents. My philosophy is to be quick to listen and slow to speak. I intentionally do not post often on social media, but I do often read comments from those who do.

County Commission Responses

Steven Burford - District 8

What does a successful term look like to you?

- As stated in question 3, first, I will have done no harm.
- We will have completed a land use and development plan that makes sense and will have garnered municipalities and public support.
- We will have improved cooperation with municipalities in development efforts.
- We will have not raised taxes and constrained our county expenditures.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

- Maury County is already a great place to live and work; that is why we are experiencing such rapid growth.
- Maintain an environment to support locally owned and operated businesses.
- Foster a moral, ethical and friendly community supportive of one another.

County Commission Responses



Missy Smith Phillips - District 8

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Missy Smith Phillips. I was born in Maury County, raised in Maury County, attended school in Maury County and raised my children and attended church right here in Maury County. A 1987 graduate of Columbia Central High School and a 1991 graduate of David Lipscomb University with majors in Accounting and Finance/Economics. I have been working as the CFO of a private equity investment and development firm for 25 years following a 10 year career in public accounting. Widowed since 2018 I have two children, Cortland and Raeann and attend church at Spring Meadows Church of Christ. I am proud of my Maury County heritage and am running to preserve that heritage while encouraging sustainable growth.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

With my 10 years in public accounting, I am familiar with the way organizations are run, preparing budgets, reading financial statements, developing and improving internal controls. Added to that, my 25 years in private equity investments and development, I understand many of the challenges and the opportunities faced by public/private partnerships, how these partnerships can enhance the livability and sustainability of communities like ours here in Maury County. I understand that great ideas cost money and we must work collaboratively to fund those great ideas, but I also understand that there is just not one great idea that is going to do it all and that difficult decisions and compromises often must be made.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The County Commission helps form the policies that govern the way Maury County operates and my most important role should be to make sure that the County operates in such a manner that meets the needs of county residents in the most efficient and effective way possible -- Balancing wants, needs, funds, and individual property rights.

County Commission Responses

Missy Smith Phillips - District 8

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Balancing growth and development with the desire to keep things the way they are and preserving the fundamentals of personal property rights and ownership- “Old South Charm New South Progress” is both a challenge and opportunity. Many of those opportunities include costly infrastructure improvements and everyone seems to have an opinion, I plan to gather as much information about these issues as possible by listening to my constituents, reviewing the studies performed, meeting with other government officials and economic partners, using the expertise of other commissioners and the experts hired by the County to make the best decisions possible with the information available. We all know that economic development often butts up against the way things are, it’s a challenge to encourage growth, add jobs, housing and amenities as fast as we need it and want it, while juggling how to plan and pay for the infrastructure, manage the traffic, build facilities for education, provide enough water and utilities, find a place for the trash, and making sure our county employees are compensated fairly to provide those services to us.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Our country is truly beautiful and so well positioned for the future -- people want to come here, people want to live here, work here, and do things here. Companies want to build facilities here and provide jobs here. We need to expand on the groundwork that has already been laid, we need to be committed to attracting investment in our community and talent to help us navigate the challenges.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Attending meetings, seeking input from my constituents, listening to and actively partake in open and honest communication about our challenges and our opportunities, encourage networking activities to bring interested parties together.

County Commission Responses

Missy Smith Phillips - District 8

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Finalizing the comprehensive land plan to help formulate what the infrastructure “ask” might be, collaboration between the county and the municipalities to pool resources, and work to preserve personal property rights during the process.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Gradual and intentional while prioritizing stability, sustainability and personal property rights.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Encourage collaboration with the higher education facilities and trade schools that we have in our area, research ways the County can improve and provide financial resources for technology and workforce training, work with local community leaders and businesses to expand mentoring and work based learning opportunities.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I am available for meet and greets and community forums, utilize social media to provide updates and hear feedback, make my email and phone number available and work to provide timely responses

What does a successful term look like to you?

Getting elected would be a nice start, Ill be honest here, I have been working and raising a family for quite some time, this is new ground for me, and I am excited about what my personal and professional experience can bring to the table.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

Look forward to collaborating on economic development initiatives, engaging in network opportunities, and assisting in navigating public/private partnerships. 97
Most importantly I want to get involved.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position



I'm married 23 years to my wife and we have 7 children, 5 of which were born here in Maury county. We've been in Maury county since 2009 and District 9 (Culleoka) since the end of 2018. My wife homeschools and runs the Middle Tennessee Homeschool Cross Country team and I'm currently serving as a deacon at Hopewell ARP church and work in the customer experience and process improvement industry. I'm running for commissioner of District 9 as a conservative independent because I've become concerned, as a husband and father, that the trajectory of our county is one at odds with what drew us here and keeps us here: the smaller town feel, the rolling hills and green spaces, etc., and that we have yet to "crack the nut" on how to effectively plan for and balance growth with preserving the rural nature of the county. If that doesn't change, I'm concerned that Maury county will end up looking more like Williamson and Davidson counties, Coolsprings/Franklin/etc., which will surely result in many of my children eventually deciding to move away.

It's also important for me to emphasize the conservative part of my independent candidacy. I've voted conservatively for years, and anyone can pull my ballot history to confirm it. I can affirm each of the stated platform planks of the Maury County Republican Party. What I couldn't affirm was that a single-day event, held during working hours, is a sufficient way to vet and nominate candidates. I understand the desire to ensure candidates are genuinely conservative, but we all know politicians who've run and won as Republicans for years and governed as anything but. My hope is that District 9 residents will look beyond the party label and judge for themselves, based on actual interaction with me as a candidate, whether my conservative convictions are enough reason to consider an alternative to voting straight down the party line.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I bring an eclectic set of skills and experience. Years of ministry in the church have shaped how I care for others and how I engage with people in difficult situations.

I've had nearly two decades of work related to customer experience improvement, process improvement, auditing to a set of standards, and general data analysis to support problem solving. Each of those connects directly to the work of the commission, whether it's seeing through the smoke and mirrors that can be used to push things through, to helping craft amendments and resolutions that have real data as the foundation.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important (but not sole) role is legislative, ensuring amendments and changes are supportive of the goals of the county and the will of the people. This includes, then, being a voice for the citizens of the respective district to ensure their thoughts and concerns are not only voiced, but considered in the process. That means, for me, it's ensuring that my constituents know what is being considered, and why, and that I'm equipped to help answer their questions and bring their concerns back to the commission for consideration.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Maury County is growing faster than it has in generations, and the challenge is keeping up without losing what makes this place worth living in. Roads and infrastructure are under real strain. Property values are rising in ways that put pressure on longtime residents. And there's a growing trust deficit between the community and the people making decisions on their behalf. I've watched that play out in commission meetings, in conversations with neighbors in District 9, and in the way major decisions sometimes get made before the public knows to show up. So, if elected, my primary contribution is going to be ensuring that real data is always being presented to the commission supporting (or opposing) any particular action/amendment and helping the other commissioners think critically about the data in order to ask the right questions and come to solid conclusions and decisions.

I'll also be putting together a regular District 9 communications update to keep residents informed on what's happening and why. I'll be pushing to have the county develop an AI powered agent that sits on the county website that can answer questions from plain language queries so that anyone can get answers quickly without having to watch hours of videos, read pages of minutes and agenda items, just to know the what and the why behind a particular item.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has real assets: a central location between Nashville and Huntsville, affordable land compared to both metros, a strong agricultural heritage, and a community that still generally knows its neighbors. The economic development momentum is real. We've been decent at attracting companies. Where we've been less intentional is making sure the people already here have the skills to fill the roles those companies bring.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

That's the opportunity I'm most focused on. Our educational systems and workforce pipelines need to be developing a much broader segment of residents in the trades. We have unfilled roles in healthcare and skilled trades, and especially on the trades side, very little in the way of promoted education and training to help young people (and not so young people) build those skills and move into those roles.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I'm running as an independent (a conservative one), which means I don't owe allegiance to a party caucus or a leadership bloc. That actually makes collaboration easier in some ways. I'll vote on the merits, work with whoever is bringing good ideas to the table, and focus on building consensus around those good ideas and outcomes rather than what we see frequently (especially during election season) which is political posturing.

The county commission, the school board, the utility districts, and the municipalities all touch the same residents. When those bodies work in silos, the public pays for it. I plan to stay engaged across those relationships, ask questions before votes rather than just reacting to them, and use committee assignments to build working knowledge of the areas where cross-body coordination matters most. I'd also push to improve how information is shared across these bodies so the right hand actually knows what the left hand is doing.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

There's no single answer, but there are a few principles I'd apply consistently. First, any development agreement should include financial offsets, and those agreements should carry more of the infrastructure load than they currently do. When a subdivision or industrial project generates the need for infrastructure, the project should fund a proportionate share of it. Second, the county needs to plan proactively rather than reactively. That means honest capital planning with real cost estimates and timelines, not aspirational lists that stay unfunded or kicked down the road. As an example, the issues around water usage have been a known issue since 2007 (or thereabouts) and potential solutions have been pushed off repeatedly, and now we're at a critical point on water availability.

I'm also a believer in pursuing every appropriate federal and state funding source. Tennessee has passed significant infrastructure appropriations, and there's federal money available for rural broadband, roads, and water systems. We should have people whose job it is to find and pursue those opportunities. The money is public money, so it should be used appropriately and wisely.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

It looks like a county that, twenty years from now, residents are still happy to be living in. That means new growth that's compatible with existing neighborhoods and land use patterns. It means protecting farmland and rural character in areas like southern Maury where that's what residents moved to be near. It means schools that aren't perpetually over capacity. And it means being very real that not all growth is good growth.

Thoughtful growth also means community input before decisions are made, and truly pushing to drive out all appearances of ethics issues. And yes, ethics issues include the appearance of impropriety. Zoning and planning processes should be legible to ordinary residents, not just to consultants and developers who know how to navigate them. Conversations by county officials, in the capacity of their roles, should be captured and public record whether in or out of "formal" meetings.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

The county commission doesn't run the schools, but it funds them, and that funding relationship is one of the most consequential decisions commissioners make. I'd advocate for adequate and consistent school funding and for the county to take seriously its obligation to provide schools that can absorb growth without degrading quality. But I'd also be very vocal on the benefits of homeschooling and how that also is a good and viable option for the education of our children.

On workforce, the opportunity I see is strengthening the connection between Columbia State, the high schools, and the industries that have located here. We have major employers in manufacturing and logistics who need skilled workers, and we have young people who need viable career paths that don't require a four-year degree. The county has a role in supporting those pipelines, whether through backing apprenticeship programs, supporting the CTE infrastructure at the high schools, or making sure local employers are at the table in education planning conversations.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

Regularly and directly. I have a Facebook presence for the campaign that I plan to continue as a constituent communication tool after the election. I'll use it to share what's on the agenda before commission meetings and to report back on how I voted and why. That said, I live in this district and I intend to stay accessible in person, not just online.

To that end, I think a lot of constituent communication happens by showing up to community events, attending local meetings, and being reachable when people have a problem. I'll keep a public contact point for anyone in District 9 who needs to reach me. The Mynders Community Club and the Culleoka Community Club are both regular gatherings where I'd be giving in-person updates and hearing feedback directly.

County Commission Responses

Jordan Rouden - District 9

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term is one where the people of District 9 feel like they had a voice in the issues being discussed and that I used mine responsibly. Specifically, I'd measure it against a few things: whether I showed up prepared and voted consistently with my stated platform; whether I helped move the conversation on infrastructure planning and development accountability in a more substantive direction; and whether my fellow District 9 folks feel like their commissioner actually knew them and their concerns.

I won't claim I'll win every vote or pass every initiative I (and the people of District 9) care about. But the job is to show up, do the work, and represent the district honestly. That I can commit to.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

The Chamber represents a cross-section of the business community that I want to stay connected to as a commissioner. Strong local businesses mean jobs, tax base, and a community that can support itself. I'd look to the Chamber as a resource on workforce needs, on the real-world effects of county policy on business operations, and on what's needed to help local businesses compete alongside the larger employers who have come to the county.

At the same time, my primary obligation is to the residents of District 9 and Maury County broadly. The best partnership with the Chamber is one where we're honest with each other, including when community interests and business interests don't fully align. Those conversations are hard, but I'm of the belief that hard conversations, when handled well, tend to produce some of the biggest positive impacts.

County Commission Responses

Jacquelyn Marshall - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a native of Maury County. I grew up here, attended our public schools and my family has longstanding ties in this community. Maury County has shaped who I am, and I believe strongly in giving back to the place that raised me.

Service has always been a part of my life. Both of my parents were MCPS educators and my father served as Mayor of Mt. Pleasant. My parents engrained in our family the importance of integrity, responsibility and putting the needs of our community first.

I am running for County Commission because Maury County is growing quickly and we need leadership that plans responsibly, supports strong schools and infrastructure and protects the quality of life that makes this such a special place to live and raise a family.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My qualifications come from my deep roots in Maury County, my work serving the public and my experience as a small business owner. Because I have lived here most of my life, I have seen and experienced first hand the strengths of our community and the pressures of rapid growth. In my daily work, I speak regularly with residents from all backgrounds, address multiple concerns and connect them with needed resources. That experience has strengthened my communication skills and given me practical understanding of how local decisions affect families, seniors, students and businesses.

As a former small business owner, I also understand budgeting, responsibility and long-term planning. These experiences have prepared me to listen carefully, make informed decisions and serve the people of Maury County responsibly.

County Commission Responses

Jacquelyn Marshall - District 9

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the County Commission to me, is the school budget. Considering the state's lack of interest in our public schools, the county must insure we invest as much as possible into our students, teachers & administrators. If elected, my most important role would be to take a careful, responsible approach to the budgeting process-asking the right questions, prioritizing core services and ensuring taxpayer dollars are used wisely and transparently. That includes consistently advocating for strong public schools as one of the most important investments in Maury County's future.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Maury County's top challenge is the rapid growth. I will vote against anymore large developments, while considering the reputation & integrity of local builders. We need to keep money within Maury County. Representing the rural community of Culleoka, I promise to vote against anything that may hinder its natural beauty.

One area where we must find common ground is protecting the Duck River, our region's primary water source. Preserving this resource is essential to sustaining both our quality of life and long-term growth. Development must be thoughtful and well-planned, ensuring infrastructure and natural resources are not overwhelmed as we continue to grow.

In addition to resource preservation, I will prioritize strong public schools. As enrollment increases, we must ensure our schools have the facilities and budget needed for every student to succeed. Investing in education is one of the most important commitments we can make to both our children and future workforce.

I believe local leadership should focus on bringing people together around shared values and practical solutions rather than division. Decisions should reflect the needs of current residents while also planning responsibly for future generations, ensuring that growth strengthens our community instead of straining it.

County Commission Responses

Jacquelyn Marshall - District 9

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

For me, the top opportunities for Maury County pertain to MCPS, the preservation of our parks & scenic areas & our infrastructure. If we continue to fund and support our public schools our community will only improve. Preserving our scenic areas is key to the happiness of our citizens and for tourism. Infrastructure isn't only better traffic and safety, it's also beautification. We need to clean up the areas in need and maintain the areas not needing improvement.

Another opportunity is continued economic development. As more people and businesses choose Maury County, we can expand our tax base, support local employers and create better-paying jobs close to home.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Being openminded is the best way to work with other elected officials and boards. I would find similarities in ideas and try to work together in order to find a compromise that benefits all of us. Even if I disagree with a position, idea or plan, I promise to never vilify any group or person. Diversity of ideas is something the County Commission currently lacks. It is important to keep focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. Local government works best when we stay centered on the shared goals of strong schools, safe communities, responsible growth and high quality of life for our residents. Even when there are differences of opinion, those shared priorities give us a common foundation to work from.

County Commission Responses

Jacquelyn Marshall - District 9

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Enhancing our infrastructure by listening to the experts is important. I will use educated judgement when it comes to proposals for our improvement. Heeding advice from the planning commission etc. is something our county desperately needs. Also, responsible growth aids in not overwhelming our schools, roads and utilities.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

The growth Maury is experiencing now is neither thoughtful nor sustainable. A massive pause on growth is the only way to catch up and make Maury County a comfortable and self-sustaining community. Then we can begin to practice responsible growth.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

As I mentioned above, MCPS is my top priority. I would ensure that they are appropriately budgeted to ensure their success. Encouraging our community to be kind and accepting of different ideas and people is key to a thriving workforce, let's be open to new concepts. Our creative boards should represent who we ALL are, not just reflective of our current commission. The best insurance for a quality workforce is our school system.

County Commission Responses

Jacquelyn Marshall - District 9

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

The citizens of Maury County can always trust me to show up and be present. I enjoy talking with others and listening. I will always be available by phone, text or email. No one should ever hesitate or be afraid to approach me, they will be taken seriously.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term to me would be that my district and all of Maury County would be happier and would agree that I truly have our community's best interest at heart.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I will always be at events hosted by the Alliance. I will be approachable and willing to work with the Alliance and their staff. Working alongside partners like the Maury Alliance, we can attract responsible investments while supporting businesses already here. When the government and the Alliance work together, great things happen and for that, I am grateful.

County Commission Responses

Adam Southern - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I'm a native of Maury County and a product of the Maury County School System. Since then, I've earned degrees from Columbia State Community College (AS), Middle Tennessee State University (BS), and a master's degree from the University of Kentucky School of Library & Information Science. My wife and I live in Culleoka, Tennessee. Through our non-profit service and interests, we are both involved with local history, historic preservation, and tourism.

I believe in giving back to the community, and I think one of the best ways a person can give of themselves is to run for public office. If elected, I will do my best and give my all for the betterment of Maury County and the 9th District.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I worked in local government for seventeen years, five of those as head of a department within Maury County Government (Maury County Library Director). Those years of government service have given me valuable input that I can put to use as a County Commissioner. Over the years, I have served on a number of boards, including the Maury County Historical Society, the Maury County Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, the Rose Hill Cemetery Association, Leadership Maury Board (of which I am a 2009 graduate), and I also served a term on Columbia's Historic Zoning Commission. Serving on boards such as these was not just volunteer work, but experience that makes me a better team player, someone that can work with a team to accomplish a common goal, and see a project from inception to completion while following the proper channels and the order of business.

All of this experience I will bring with me to the County Commission if elected to serve the 9th District.

County Commission Responses

Adam Southern - District 9

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of a County Commissioner, I think, is that you are a representative of your district, meaning your votes are based on, not only your thoughts and opinions, but those of your constituents. You have to be able to reconcile your thoughts with those you represent, and make sure you vote the conscience of the people.

As an individual board member, my goal is to never lose sight of the fact that I'm one member of a much larger team. I'm sure all twenty-two board members will have different points of view, and several issues will be debated back and forth, and that's fine. However, all twenty-two members of the Commission never need to lose sight of that fact that we're all playing for the same team.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Growth is one of the greatest challenges facing Maury County. With growth comes many underlying issues, including infrastructure, schools, water, access to care, jobs, etc. Infrastructure—can our roads handle the growth? Can the grid maintain powering new homes and industries? Schools—do we have enough teachers and classrooms for the growing number of students? Water—do we have enough water for our current population? What about projected growth? Access to care—call and try to make an appointment at any dentist's or doctor's office in Columbia. Chances are, you'll be placed on a six-month to a year waiting list. Our population and demand are far exceeding the supply in regards to medical care in Maury County. Jobs—are new residents working locally or commuting? Are there enough jobs for our local graduates to return home to?

I'm smart enough to know I don't know all the answers. When I don't know the answer to something, I study to learn more. We need to hit the brakes and slow down the growth until we've learned the answers to some of these questions. That's the first step to addressing this issue.

County Commission Responses

Adam Southern - District 9

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

I see Maury County at a fork in the road. If we turn north, Maury County becomes a sterile suburb of the greater Nashville area. If we take the south fork, we protect the rural character of Maury County, while keeping our identity and sense of place. My goal will also be to preserve and protect Maury County.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Past partnerships between the City of Columbia and the Maury County Commission have been rocky. There needs to be more communication between the municipalities if they are going to work together effectively. I would hate to see more bureaucracy, but it might be a good idea to form a joint committee with members from County Government and the various city governments operating within the county. This committee could at least open the discussions between the bodies about future projects and joint efforts.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

I propose to slow growth until we have a well-thought-out plan in place. In the meantime, I know the county's Budget & Finance Department has done a good job of identifying and applying for grants. I would recommend the county continue to search out all community improvement and infrastructure grants to help us with current growing pains.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Having a plan and sticking to it. If Maury County is going to keep its identity—what makes it so special—this plan should help to regulate growth within our rural districts to keep Maury County rural.

County Commission Responses

Adam Southern - District 9

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

In my opinion, I think public education is more about test preparation than it is about training our students to become successful in the real world. One issue I feel very strongly about is vocational training and helping our students get into post-graduation trade programs.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

My phone number and email address are always available and I'm no stranger to the community. I'm not someone that will campaign for six months and hide for four years. You'll see me in Maury County, especially in the 9th District, elected to office or not.

What does a successful term look like to you?

If we have addressed growth, lowered the county's unemployment rate, and improved schools, it will be a successful term.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

The Chamber has long performed admirably on behalf of Maury County. I'm willing to help do whatever we can to bring more diversified jobs to Maury County —industries that are willing to hire the current residents, the existing workforce within Maury County.

County Commission Responses

Brent Coen - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I'm retired now, but I spent much of my career working in city departments, where I learned the importance of responsibility, accountability, and serving the public. At the same time, I owned and operated my own business while working full time, which taught me the value of hard work, budgeting, and balancing competing priorities. My wife and I have been married for 21 years, and together we've raised two children. Family, faith, and community are at the center of my life. I decided to run for County Commission because I believe Maury County is at an important point in its growth, and I want to help make sure we grow in a way that protects our community values while creating opportunities for future generations. I believe in honest leadership, common-sense decision-making, and being accessible to the people I represent.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My professional background in government gave me firsthand experience with how public services operate and how decisions at the county level affect everyday citizens. I worked in positions that required problem-solving, teamwork, and accountability to the public. In addition, owning my own business taught me financial responsibility, customer service, and how to make practical decisions under pressure. I also understand the importance of listening to people and treating everyone fairly. I believe my combination of government experience, business experience, and commitment to family and community gives me a balanced perspective that will help me serve District 9 effectively.

County Commission Responses

Brent Coen - District 9

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the County Commission is to responsibly manage growth, taxpayer resources, and county services while representing the interests of the people. Commissioners should make decisions that are thoughtful, transparent, and focused on the long-term well-being of Maury County. As an individual board member, my most important role will be to listen to the people of District 9, represent their concerns honestly, and work collaboratively to find practical solutions. I want to be a voice for the community and ensure citizens feel heard and respected throughout the decision-making process.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

One of the biggest challenges facing Maury County is managing rapid growth while maintaining the character and quality of life that make this community special. Growth brings opportunities, but it also creates pressure on roads, schools, emergency services, and infrastructure. I believe we need thoughtful planning and responsible budgeting to stay ahead of these challenges. I will work to support infrastructure improvements, encourage smart development, and make sure growth decisions are made with input from the community. I also believe we must focus on long-term solutions instead of short-term fixes.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County has tremendous opportunities because of its location, strong workforce, and sense of community. We are attracting new businesses and families, which can strengthen our local economy and create new opportunities for residents. I believe we can move our community forward by encouraging responsible economic growth while protecting our rural character and community values. We should continue investing in infrastructure, schools, and workforce development so that current and future residents can benefit from the county's success. My goal is to help create a balanced approach that supports both progress and preservation.

County Commission Responses

Brent Coen - District 9

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I believe collaboration starts with respect, communication, and a willingness to listen. No one person has all the answers, and good government requires people to work together even when they may not always agree. I plan to build strong working relationships with fellow commissioners, city leaders, school officials, and other elected representatives so we can focus on solutions that benefit the entire county. My approach will always be professional, respectful, and centered on doing what is best for the people of Maury County.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Infrastructure improvements must be approached responsibly and strategically. We need to prioritize projects based on the greatest needs and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. I believe the county should continue pursuing partnerships with state and local agencies, carefully manage budgets, and make sure new development contributes fairly to the infrastructure demands it creates. We also need long-term planning so we are preparing for future growth instead of constantly reacting to it after the fact.

County Commission Responses

Brent Coen - District 9

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful and sustainable growth means balancing progress with preservation. It means improving roads, schools, and services while still protecting the rural character and quality of life that residents value. To me, sustainable growth includes smart planning, controlled development, responsible land use, and listening to the concerns of local communities before major decisions are made. Growth should improve the county without overwhelming the infrastructure or changing the identity of our communities.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Strong schools and workforce opportunities are essential to the future of Maury County. I support continued investment in education, school infrastructure, and programs that prepare students for both college and skilled trades. I also believe in supporting partnerships between schools, local businesses, and workforce development organizations so students and workers have opportunities to succeed right here in our community. By supporting education and job growth together, we can strengthen the local economy and improve quality of life for families across Maury County.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I believe you cannot represent people effectively if you are not present and listening. I plan to stay active in the community, attend local events, and make myself available to hear concerns firsthand. I also plan to maintain open communication through phone calls, email, social media, and community meetings so residents know they can reach me when they have questions or concerns. My goal is to be accessible, transparent, and responsive to the people of District 9.

County Commission Responses

Brent Coen - District 9

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term means the people of District 9 feel represented, heard, and respected. It means making responsible decisions that improve infrastructure, support public services, and help guide growth in a thoughtful way. Success also means building trust with the community by being honest, accessible, and focused on the long-term future of Maury County. If, at the end of my term, residents believe I worked hard, listened well, and always put the community first, I would consider that a success.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I believe strong partnerships are essential for the future of Maury County. I would work closely with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to encourage responsible economic growth, support local businesses, and attract opportunities that benefit our residents. I also believe we must make sure growth is balanced with infrastructure, education, and quality-of-life improvements so Maury County remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

County Commission Responses

T. Kevin Markham - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a native Maury Countian, born in 1964. In 1967, I moved to the farm where I live today. It was my great-grandfather's place. I am married to Nancy (41 years). I have two adult children who are married and have given us four grandsons. I am running for this position to give back to this community that has given so much to me and preserve the values for my children and their children.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I have served in this role for eight years. I know that not every issue is black and white and common sense must be used to make the best-informed decision. I am fiscally conservative.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

First and foremost, the job is to represent your constituents, however, not every constituent sees things the same way. When that happens, you must get informed and use your best common sense.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Growth and Water. Growth must be controlled by planning. Water is precious for life. Simply put, we need a reservoir.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County needs to continue to improve in our education scores. If we have good results there, we will have jobs and opportunities.

County Commission Responses

T. Kevin Markham - District 9

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I have a great relationship with the municipalities of Maury County. Communication and understanding are the key.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

The two commissions I have been a part of have been very conservative when it comes to property taxes. I want to continue that trend. We have a small portion of the Sales Tax and as long as we are growing, that should continue to increase. We must continue to push our state legislature to allow us to collect more development fees. With a completed reservoir, we could use an expected \$400,000,000 in revenue from those recreational activities and growth.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Thoughtful and sustainable growth consists of our citizens, businesses, industry and government putting our heads together and doing what is best for most all Maury Countians.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

We need to encourage our students and young adults to consider multiple education paths. Trade schools (we have a new one here now at CSCC) prepare our citizens for good paying, highly rewarding careers. Universities are good for some, but not for all.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I am always available for my constituents. I can't recall anytime that I have not responded as quickly as possible to a request. My cell phone is publicly known, and my email is as well.

County Commission Responses

T. Kevin Markham - District 9

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would be a group of commissioners representing all areas of Maury County working together for the good of all Maury County and leaving personal wants and pettiness behind.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I will always work with the MCCEA staff to promote this county. Maury County is the best place to live, work and raise your family – but don't tell too many people.

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County Commission Responses

Thomas Wolaver - District 10

No response received.

County Commission Responses

Diane Davis - District 10



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Diane M. Davis and I have been a resident of Maury County since I was one year old. I attended Maury County Public Schools and graduated from Central High. My higher education degrees are from Columbia State Community College and Trevecca Nazarene University. I am a retired employee from South Central Bell, Bell South, and AT&T for 35 years. Now I am a current employee of Columbia State Community College for over 15 years. I have been on several boards and committees in Maury County as a community volunteer. I completed Leadership Maury, served on Maury Alliance board, I am a member of Legal Aid of the Cumberland's Board of Directors and active member of the Hopewell AME Church. A mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and a lover of people. My greatest joy is be a servant leader. I am running for this position because of my engagement in the community, my love of this area, the opportunity to study the issues and help make a positive difference.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

Serving on the Maury Alliance Board of Directors, completing Leadership Maury, volunteering across the entire county, attending many community events, training sessions and working at a community college.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Providing a budget to fund the services of the county, working with other governmental agencies, listen to the residents, businesses. Making decisions and policies that will guide the operation and administration of the county government.

County Commission Responses

Diane Davis - District 10

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Growth, availability of water resources, housing for all levels of society, public education, upgrades to county infrastructure, services, traffic, financial challenges, policy and others . Researching and studying the issues, soliciting input from residents, subject experts, business and other organizations.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Educations (public, private, home schools, technology and higher education), County employees, careers, park & recreation, industrial park, Duck River, jobs, retail outlets, religious options, Maury Alliance, financial planning, enhanced downtowns in our larger cities, and other advancements. The work for Maury County will be progressive if we work together across the county, connecting residents, reviewing opportunities, and presenting a positive joint strategy.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

I plan to get to know the other districts of Maury County, statistics of the County, communicate, research, study, review and read, read, read and collaborate.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Put together a real plan as a living document with input from the residents, businesses and organizations, review economic statistics and use real data and details with a priority for funding. This document must be based on a strategic plan.

County Commission Responses

Diane Davis - District 10

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

We must realize that Maury County has 11 districts and each may have different needs and current status. Consideration for each district and Maury County as a whole is key to growth and where is happens.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

Maury Counties history of attention to education is important. We need teachers, technology, job analysis and a concerted effort to plan for the future so that these two community issues with co-exist for current and future needs.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

My access points will be email, phone, text, and listening to presentation at the county government meeting and committee meetings.

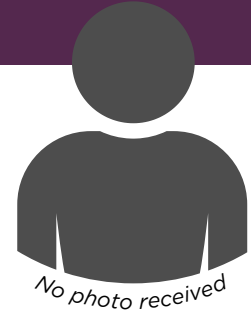
What does a successful term look like to you?

We have moved the county forward with a balanced budget, strategically provided the services of the residents and the businesses and provided collaborative interaction with government at all levels (city, county, region and federal).

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

As a former board member and community advocate, I am well versed to work with others with a strong sense of the positive results of quality of life and jobs.

County Commission Responses



Greg Combs - District 10

Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Greg Combs and I am 68 yrs old and retired. I am running because we have some very serious issues that we are facing that need commissioners to make good decisions about.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

My first job was working at Vanderbilt Medical Ctr and helping start the Life Flight program. Also worked in Washington D.C. under the Bush and Clinton Administrations. Retired from the State of Tenn. as an encryption and cyber security civil servant.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The Commission must make decisions that protect and allow our children and families to have a better community to live and work in.

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Water, property values, and improper land use appear to be the top issues right now. There are several others but too much to put here. The best way to contribute to any challenge as an elected official is to listen to your constituents that you are supposed to represent.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Right now, we really need a conservative and intelligent path to growth that is sustainable and not reckless or self-serving. Growth should be a win win for everyone as much as possible.

County Commission Responses

Greg Combs - District 10

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

If the issue is in the best interest of Maury County, then I will support and vote for it.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

That is a good question. The county is deep in debt and we need to take a look at retiring that debt so that the projects that people request can be implemented; But, the growth should pay for growth and not be burdened upon the existing population.

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Slow down. No system is any better than the people that are in it. We must make informed and careful decisions about which ways we grow and how fast would go a long way towards having a more desirable community... Traffic being one of those.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

One person does not have control over this, however; as a body, the Commission can explore the pros and cons and make informed decisions for the greater good of the folks that live here.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

It is my understanding that each Commissioner will be issued an email address and I am working on having Social Media page that constituents can send a message to.

County Commission Responses

Greg Combs - District 10

What does a successful term look like to you?

Citizens that are happy with the decisions that you made for their success.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

I plan to partner with everyone equally to make Maury County the best place to live and work.

County Commission Responses

Danny Grooms - District 10

No response received.

County Commission Responses

Tim Mullen - District 11

No response received

County Commission Responses

Chad Brothers - District 11



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a 15-year resident of Maury County and am honored to be one of the current commissioners for District #11. I always tell people that I'm not a politician- I'm a football coach who was asked to serve his neighbors. My wife Jennifer and I will celebrate our 20th year of marriage this year, and we have four great kids with us and one in Heaven. I am a United States Navy veteran and I'm continuing to serve as a business management teacher in the Maury County Public Schools. I believe in conservative principles; both socially and fiscally. I am a stakeholder at the Church of the City Spring Hill. I am asking to be re-elected to the county commission to build on the experience I gained in my first term and to continue to represent "We the People" of District #11.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the optimal candidate for this position?

I currently serve the county commission on the budget committee and my background in education and my MBA from the University of Lipscomb help me to be a contributing member to that committee and to the commission as a whole.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the County Commission and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

In my opinion, the main role of the county commission is to be good stewards of the people's tax contributions and to make governing decisions to contribute to the general welfare of all citizens of the county. The most important role of a commission member can provide is make sure that the people have a voice and are informed as they desire to be.

County Commission Responses

Chad Brothers - District 11

What do you see as the top challenges for Maury County and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The rapid growth of Maury County is presenting multiple challenges: Increased water needs, increased waste disposal needs, increased infrastructure needs, and increased educational costs. I believe these challenges are best met by having increased dialogue between city, county, and state government to ensure all options are explored and the best possible solution chosen and executed.

What do you see as the top opportunities for Maury County, and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Maury County remains a great place to live and coupled with the State's no state income tax policy it's no wonder that many people want to move here. I believe the state understands the challenges we are facing related to growth and this presents an excellent opportunity for a unique collaboration that can bring first-of-their kind solutions to our county.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the Maury County Commission, and other elected bodies in Maury County to ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of Maury County as a whole?

Elected officials need input from the people, to be able to make informed decisions on their behalf.

With the growth facing Maury County, there will be continued need to enhance our infrastructure (ie, schools, roads, utilities, etc). How do you propose Maury County provides these needed enhancement?

Our County is already blessed with great department heads working to solve these problems every day. The county commission needs to make sure that we remain fiscally sound while we accomplish those improvements and tackle challenges. I believe this primarily means we need to work together to balance the budget and live within our means.

County Commission Responses

Chad Brothers - District 11

What does thoughtful and sustainable growth in Maury County look like to you?

Growth has already come to Maury County. In my view, the Commission urgently needs to create and adopt a strategic plan. Without one, it is difficult to have inter-governmental planning conversations, and it creates an environment of reactive governing.

Quality education and a diverse workforce are vital for the successful growth of Maury County and its municipalities. If elected, how would you improve these areas?

The role of the County Commission is to support the Board of Education in regards to education and the Maury Alliance does an excellent job preparing and monitoring the county workforce and its capabilities.

How do you plan to communicate with, and be available to, your constituents?

I'm always willing to meet and be available to the people I am representing and I'm planning on having a quarterly email newsletter going forward.

What does a successful term look like to you?

I want to see

1. the commission balance the budget in the 2027-28 budget year
2. no additional debt
3. 10-year strategic plan in place, and
4. no property tax increase.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to make Maury County the best place to live and work?

The team at the chamber and Alliance are doing a great job! If y'all get us a Bucky's or Costco I'm putting you in the top 10 in the nation! Seriously though, I'm a big fan of the work being done by the Alliance. If I can be a help to you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

My name is Kristen Shull, and I am running for re-election for school board in District 1. I have lived in Columbia for 40 years and love this community. I graduated from Central High School and loved hanging out in the Fun Tunnel at the mall and the skating ring on Pulaski Pike on weekends. I attended Austin Peay State University where I received my nursing degree. I am currently a labor nurse where I have been working for the last 22 years. I am married and have 5 children and 3 years ago was given to opportunity to foster my grandchild. Four years ago, I was looking at my children's education, and I was not happy with how things were headed in this country. With lots of prayer and reflection, I made the decision that if I wanted to make sure our children in this county were to maintain their rights, good people needed to get involved. When no one else stepped up to fill the school board position that was being vacated in 2022, that was a call that I could not expect others to do what I was not willing to do myself. So, with lots of prayer I decided to run. With all the amazing support I received, I have represented District 1 for the last 3 and a half years.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I have been on the board for just over 3 and a half years. I now have experience on the board. I have sacrificed my time and moments in life to make sure that my district is represented at meetings. I use my nursing experience to speak to people of all ages and demographics, while keeping in mind that life is different and challenging for each individual.

I have two children that have graduated. One from SHHS and the other online due to covid. I have a child in school who is starting 12th grade in MCPS and another child I felt was not receiving the extra help he needed and is now attending a school for children with extra needs. My youngest is homeschooled and my grandbaby will begin preschool with MCPS. Due to the diversity of my family and the needs of each individual child, I can understand where parents from many walks of life are speaking from.

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the school board is to make policy to direct our superintendent and schools in a way that will follow the wishes and needs of our community and set our students up for success. It is my job as a school board member to talk to the community, principles, teachers, and others to make decisions I feel is best for our students and Maury County.

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Challenges to the board are addressing and preparing for the growth of our student population as the growth of Maury County continues. Addressing the needs of our students so that they can continue to push forward and increase proficiency in all subjects but especially in language and reading. Making sure our students have the tools and the resources they need to succeed. I would also say a challenge is getting parents back into the rhythm of being involved in their child's education. During lockdowns, parents were being turned away from our schools due to covid, we need to encourage our community to get reconnected to our schools and what is happening there. They need to be part of their children's education and feel the support of the school system. This will help build support of the community and a family atmosphere within each school.

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

I believe our top priority is to our students. As a board we need to connect our students to opportunities that will help them be successful. We can do this through two routes. One is to provide our students with opportunities though work-based growth. This can be done by connecting them to local businesses, government, and community programs. Some examples of this include internships with the local hospital, businesses, and even the jail.

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

Another way to support our students is with AP and All Access programs where students can be working toward a degree while attending MCPS. Though our collaboration with TCAT our students can even earn seat hours while at MCPS. These programs help give our children's opportunities and make success more obtainable for their future. It also provides them with the ability to grow this community economically in the future. All these programs are already in use in Maury County Public Schools. I support and encourage these programs and for our school system to continue to grow and add more of these programs.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

I feel communication is key to this plan. I am always willing to speak, to the best of my ability, with anyone who wishes to ask questions. If I do not have answers, I am willing to help find them. I also believe that communication with the community is important. That is how we can determine the effects of our policies and decisions on our community and students.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

The school board has a five-year plan for things we see as needs. For the last few years, a new elementary school in the north part of Maury County has been on that plan along with a second elementary to be determined. It also contains a new school/ redesign for Mt. Pleasant. It is my hope that new elementary schools will allow us to decrease class size and help with overcrowding at some of our smaller schools. It also allows for us to update our older schools that we have outgrown and to update facilities that were built before technology became a big part of life.

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

While on the board we have done several things to keep these schools updated and usable. This includes, new roofs, new safety controls, updating floors, windows, and doors, and new HVAC systems to name a few. It has long been a hope of mine that we would could bring back our 5th grade to the elementary school. Building new schools could possibly be a step in that direction. New schools also provide new jobs and will encourage and promote economic growth within Maury County. New facilities also encourage students to return to public schools due to opportunities and being able to use upgraded facilities. This helps build a strong community and provide for the needs of that community.

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School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

I feel that we all want to see Maury County succeed. This is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. As a board member, when I send a request or proposal to the county commission, I understand that they have to look at the entire county and the needs of this county. That is a huge responsibility and if other needs are more pressing that they will need to honor those needs first. As stated, I am always willing to speak to any of the commissioners in detail about our needs and to give them information that will help them to make the best and most informed decisions they can. I hope to work with any one of them to make Maury County successful.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

When I first got on the board, we took a field trip to each school on the school bus. It was informative and special. You forget what riding a bus is like. We saw most of our schools that day. I got to see some inside and others just the outside. This allowed me to see traffic flow, layout, and how the schools sat on each piece of land and how different they all are.

One of my favorite things to do is to visit the school during school hours. To see the kids, take a tour and see how everything is running. Maury County is very different from school to school. Each school and its children has its own culture and flow. I talk with the principals, teachers and students. I have asked to go to the school with the superintendent also. This gives me a unique perspective on the things I may not think to ask about. It helps to build relationships, see each school's highlights vs challenges and I always feel blessed that I got to see that part of the school culture when I leave each school.

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

Schools do not run without teachers and other staff. We have worked to support our teachers and provide the materials, resources and continued education to support them. We have purchased programs, textbooks, companion materials, and technology to give our students the best chance for success. We have worked to retain the best teachers and as a board member I value the hard work they do. I am so grateful and appreciative for every day they get up early and go in a building to make our students feel successful and build their knowledge.

As also stated, I think our work-based learning programs and the steps to further education and growth in this community are important. Working with these programs and with local business partners, government and the community put us above other counties in Tennessee who are just starting to implement work-based learning.

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

At MCPS we have tried to be proactive by meeting the state mandated threshold for teacher salaries a year early. We work to be competitive with our benefit package and pay salaries. We offer a job that makes you feel welcome and a culture that is supportive within each school where you can feel like a family.

What does a successful term look like to you?

I measure my success by seeing how the school system is functioning and the success of our students.

School Board Responses

Kristen Shull - District 1

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

The Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance does so much to partner with our students and teachers. Their programs, like Youth Leadership Maury, offer unique experiences for the children of Maury County and I plan to support them and work with them to continue to move our students forward to success here in Maury County.

School Board Responses

Kris Gulstine - District 2



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am a conservative Christian and patriotic American. While recent test scores show some improvement in student performance, I believe we still have unfulfilled potential for academic success among our students.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I've been an educator for forty years: twenty years in the public school system, and twenty years educating my four children.

I know what it takes to be a good educator and getting the most from students. I also know what a good curriculum looks like, and what teachers need to be successful.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

School board members need to understand the challenges we have in the classroom today. There are concerns for safety, the intrusion of 'woke' ideology, technology (eg, iPads, computers in general) that can hinder learning if not used carefully and in moderation. If elected, my most important role will be to work with the board members and superintendent to offer an excellent education for all students.

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

My top challenge is to increase reading scores and to make sure our teachers have the resources they need to make this happen. I will start out by talking with the teachers to find out what they feel is needed to achieve the reading goals. Specifically, what do you do with a student who is below their grade reading level: extra help, reading specialists, extra time?

School Board Responses

Kris Gulstine - District 2

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The School Board is there to give the students all the tools needed for academic success: excellent teachers, great curricula, and a safe learning environment. We need to ensure that the bulk of school hours are devoted to academic training. We also need to develop strategies to achieve high student attendance.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

First of all, I want to make sure that the other members of the school board and the superintendent know that I'm there to work with them to identify things we can do to help students achieve academic success. I also want to help make sure we have full accountability to the County Commission, ensuring that we are using the funds they approve in a manner consistent with their expectations.

It takes a lot of work to be informed on the many issues facing the Maury County schools and I intend to do that work.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

We have a need for feasibility studies. Each existing school needs to be examined for repairs and the potential for additions. When a new school is needed, a location of current and anticipated growth should drive the decision of where to build.

School Board Responses

Kris Gulstine - District 2

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

When coming before the commission, a detailed document of the need including cost should be provided. Once approved by the commission, the school board's responsibility is to make sure the funds are used for their intended purpose. Trust between the School Board and County Commission can be strengthened in this way.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

I plan on getting to know the administration and staff of my schools. I would like to schedule lunch time Q & A's to get to know the teachers and their needs. The staff and parents need to know I care, so as much as possible I'll attend special school functions.

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

I feel our #1 priority should be to improve our reading scores. An illiterate society is easily manipulated and controlled. We must make every effort to make sure that our students are literate and independent-minded. Hard decisions may have to be made when budgeting to ensure monies are focused on promoting academic success.

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

Offer competitive salaries to attract them, and let them know they are valued and needed to keep them.

School Board Responses

Kris Gulstine - District 2

What does a successful term look like to you?

I've done justice to Maury County and its students upon leaving, knowing I've done all I can do to raise reading scores.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

I plan to be alert to opportunities to take advantage of the programs that the organization provides - the #GrowMaury Initiative and Education Task Force.

My goal is for our schools to provide an excellent education which allows our students to become productive members of the community.

School Board Responses

Jamila Brown - District 3



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am running for re-election as the 3rd District School Board Representative because I believe every child deserves access to a high quality education and the opportunity to succeed. As a mother of a student who attends Maury County Public Schools, I understand firsthand the importance of strong schools, dedicated educators, and opportunities for all students. I am passionate about advocating for every child, supporting our teachers and staff, and ensuring that every decision made puts students first. I am committed to continuing to be a voice for our families and working to provide the best education possible for every student in MCPS.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I believe my combination of personal experience, community involvement, and commitment to public education has made me a strong candidate for the 3rd District School Board Representative. As a parent of a student in Maury County Public Schools, I understand the challenges and opportunities facing our students, families, and educators because I experience them firsthand.

During my time on the School Board, I have worked to be an accessible and responsive representative who listens to the concerns of parents, teachers, staff, and community members. I have advocated for student achievement, fiscal responsibility, school safety, and opportunities that help prepare students for success after graduation.

My involvement in the community has allowed me to build relationships with families from diverse backgrounds and gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our schools. I am passionate about ensuring that every student regardless of their background, school, or circumstances has access to a quality education and the resources needed to succeed.

School Board Responses

Jamila Brown - District 3

Most importantly, I bring a willingness to listen, ask questions, and make decisions based on what is best for students. I am committed to continuing to be a strong voice for the families of the 3rd District and an advocate for excellence in Maury County Public Schools.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

As an individual board member, my most important role is to serve as an advocate for students while representing the voices of the families, educators, and community members of the 3rd District. I believe effective board members must listen, ask thoughtful questions, make informed decisions, and focus on what is best for students rather than personal or political interests.

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

Maury County is experiencing tremendous growth, which brings both opportunities and challenges. One of the possible future challenges could be managing rapid student enrollment growth while ensuring our schools have the capacity, staffing, and resources necessary to maintain a high-quality learning environment. This includes planning for new school construction, facility improvements, and long-term infrastructure needs.

Another challenge is recruiting and retaining outstanding teachers, administrators, and support staff. Our educators are the foundation of student success, and we must remain competitive while providing the support and resources they need to thrive in the classroom.

School safety and student well-being also remain priorities. We must continue investing in measures that provide safe learning environments while addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students.

School Board Responses

Jamila Brown - District 3

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

Strengthening partnerships between our schools, local businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations. These partnerships can provide students with valuable career exploration, workforce development, dual enrollment, and vocational training opportunities that prepare them for success whether they choose college, the military, or a career after graduation.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

If re-elected, I will contribute by continuing to advocate for strategic planning, responsible fiscal management, and transparent decision-making. I will work collaboratively with fellow board members, district leadership, educators, parents, and community stakeholders to find practical solutions to any challenges. My focus will remain on ensuring that every decision support student success, strengthens our schools, and prepares Maury County Public Schools for continued growth and excellence.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

As new families and businesses continue to invest in Maury County, we have the chance to expand educational opportunities, improve facilities, build new schools and create innovative learning environments that meet the needs of a growing student population.

School Board Responses

Jamila Brown - District 3

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

I believe collaboration begins with open communication, transparency, and mutual respect. I will support regular joint workshops, planning sessions, and opportunities for meaningful dialogue between both bodies throughout the year rather than only during budget season. Building relationships and maintaining consistent communication can help ensure that concerns are addressed early and that both groups are working toward common goals.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

I will continue to be visible, accessible, and actively engaged with students, parents, educators, staff, and community members. I plan to continue to regularly visit schools, attend school events, and meet with principals, teachers, and staff to gain firsthand knowledge of both successes and challenges. I will continue to attend community meetings, extracurricular activities, and district events to stay connected with the families we serve and to hear their concerns and ideas directly.

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

Improving student achievement by investing in high-quality instruction, supporting our educators, and utilizing data driven strategies that help all students reach their full potential. I will advocate for policies and initiatives that support academic excellence, workforce readiness, and equitable opportunities for all students. By working together, we can continue moving Maury County forward and ensure that our schools remain a source of pride for our community while preparing the next generation of leaders, workers, and citizens.

School Board Responses

Jamila Brown - District 3

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

One strategy is to continue advocating for competitive salaries and benefits that recognize the value of our teachers and staff. While compensation is important, retention also depends on creating a positive work environment where educators feel supported, respected, and empowered to succeed.

I believe we should focus on reducing unnecessary burdens on teachers, increasing opportunities for professional development and leadership growth, and ensuring that educators have the resources they need in the classroom. Supporting new teachers through mentorship programs and providing clear pathways for career advancement.

Also, strengthening partnerships with local colleges and universities can help create a pipeline for future educators who are interested in building their careers in Maury County. We should also continue recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of our teachers and staff, as appreciation and recognition contribute to a positive work environment.

What does a successful term look like to you?

For me, a successful term would include continued academic achievement, safe and supportive learning environments. It would mean making progress on facility needs, supporting and retaining high-quality teachers and staff, and ensuring that every student has access to the resources and opportunities needed to succeed. Ultimately, success means helping create a school system where every student can learn, grow, and reach their full potential.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

The Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance plays an important role in connecting education, workforce development, and economic growth. If elected, I look forward to continuing and strengthening the partnership between Maury County Public Schools and the Chamber to ensure our students are prepared for success in an ever-changing workforce.

School Board Responses

David R. Moore - District 5

No response received.

School Board Responses

John Lawson - District 7



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

Public education has always been an important part of my life. I was born and raised in Lewis County by parents who were both public-school teachers. I graduated from Lewis County High School and have been a resident of Maury County going on nine years. I have three school age children in a Maury County Public School and multiple family members and friends that work for MCPS. I am running for District 7 School Board because I want to equip our children with the tools that will help them thrive in our community.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

In my professional career, I've worked for small companies that experienced rapid growth and became leaders in their respective industries. During those times of growth, I learned firsthand how to effectively communicate, collaborate, and execute a plan in order to be successful. I've been the project lead on multimillion dollar facility expansions, equipment capital expenditures, and \$100+ million budgets. My professional background, coupled with my personal ties to MCPS, equip me to serve on the school board.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

Creating and upholding accountability is the most important role of the school board. The board is the governing body responsible for ensuring that education standards are met. As a member, I will strive to ensure that accountability is maintained.

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The obvious answer is managing Maury County's continued growth and the effect it is having on our schools. As a board member, I will look for creative ways to address the strain on our school's resources, while working to meet the needs of our community.

School Board Responses

John Lawson - District 7

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

MCPS was recently recognized as a “District on the Rise” for academic gains in Math and Reading. Building on this success by identifying what’s working and expanding those ideas to other areas of instruction will ensure positive trends moving forward.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

Communication is the key to successful collaboration. We all understand that there are limited financial resources in our community. Communicating the specific needs of our school district in a way that highlights the importance of financial responsibility is how I plan to approach this topic. It’s truly a team effort to oversee how funds are allocated and to ensure that the educational needs of our community are met.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

Step one is to ensure that our current schools have what they need to operate on a day-to-day basis. Good data is also essential to address the most critical items in a timely manner. A multi-year, phased approach is required to address the long-term need for new schools, but that approach must be meticulous and well thought out. Not rushed or simply reactive to what is happening in our current situation.

School Board Responses

John Lawson - District 7

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

The first word that comes to mind is partnership. The County Commission and the School Board have an obligation to the residents and students of Maury County. We can't let egos or alternative agendas get in the way of doing what is best for our community. This task is not an easy one. We have to be transparent in the budget process and establish relationships outside of formal interactions that show the value of where our money is being spent.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

I really enjoy meeting new people and learning about their experiences. With three children active in many local events, I often get the opportunity to engage with others about what is important in our schools. As a board member, I will welcome healthy conversations about the needs of our school system.

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

One place we can look to are local businesses in our area. Maury County is unique in the sense that we have many small-town businesses that started right here in our community. We also have large corporations that employ many residents in our area. Partnering with these businesses and learning about the needs of the workforce in our area can help shape our approach to education for our students. Utilizing technology in the appropriate way, while maintaining the personal touch of teaching is key to a quality education.

School Board Responses

John Lawson - District 7

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

Creating a work environment where teachers can teach is vital. Competitive pay and benefits are important in recruiting and retaining talented educators, but in reality, teachers are in this profession because of their desire to positively impact the lives of their students. Our policies and initiatives should foster an environment that supports that effort. Finally, administrative stability and accountability is critical in teacher retention.

What does a successful term look like to you?

I would define success by ensuring that academic performance continues to improve, support for teachers and staff remains strong, and community engagement is transparent and professional. All of these things can be accomplished by establishing measurable goals and working together with the Superintendent, the County Commission, and the general public towards a common purpose.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

The Maury County Chamber and Economic Alliance are excellent resources for community engagement. I would look to these organizations to assist with information about local opportunities for our students outside of school functions. I would also like to see some emphasis put on the economic impact of how rapid growth is affecting our school district. Both the good and the bad should be considered when thinking about what the future holds for our community.

School Board Responses

Steve McGee - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I'm a retired Radiation Therapist with 30+ years treating cancer patients with radiation. I have been married for 43 years. Currently, I'm currently working part-time job at Tripp's Ace Hardware. MCPS, for the first time in it's history, has earned an ADVANCING SCHOOL DISTRICT designation in TN. MCPS is one of four TN districts that is emerging as a DISTRICT ON THE RISE. Also, MCPS is ranked higher than 84% of districts nationwide in math growth and higher that 92% in average reading growth from 2022-2025. I'm running for reelection to help supply the teachers of MCPS with the materials necessary to continue this season of growth.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I'm a taxpayer for one. I've been in management and leadership positions through my work experiences in the following positions. I was manager of the Radiation Oncology Department at the former Nashville Memorial Hospital (now Skyline). I served as President of the former Mid-South Society of Radiation Therapist and served on the Board of Directors. I served as President of the Nashville Area Beekeeper's Association and served on the Board of Directors.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The role of a School Board member is to develop policy, promotion, and planning, management of school matters. Also, employment of director (the only employee of Board), authorize positions and set salaries, purchasing, expenditures, and budget preparation.

School Board Responses

Steve McGee - District 9

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

1. The retention of good quality teachers and improvement in proficiency scores, and
2. having the government out of education. A way to address the issues would be to have salaries and benefits competitive with districts similar in size, give teachers materials necessary to improve proficiency scores, and have the government not mandate so many test.

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

One top opportunity would be increasing student proficiency scores. This can be achieved by hiring quality teachers and giving them the materials needed to reach this goal. Another opportunity would be to remove devices and go back to using pencil, paper, and text books.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

Form relationships with other members, the Superintendent, and Commission. Student success: go back to proven strategies. Continue teaching to read by using phonics and teach math by going back to $2+2=4$. Community exceptions: provide a solid foundation for the students to succeed after graduation by offering dual enrollment classes, TCAT preparation, and have a resume prep day to include interviewing tips.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

Be proactive in finding and purchasing property for new schools. To improve existing facilities: have a strategic plan to address needs before they occur and apply the appropriate means to fix.

School Board Responses

Steve McGee - District 9

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

Work to improve communication with County Commissioners and the School Board.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

By attending community functions as well as school functions. Attend open house at the first of school to meet parents and teachers.

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

By making sure the teachers in the district have the materials necessary to teach their subjects.

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

Teacher recruitment is the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Board can use composite information of like sized school districts and develop a salary and benefit package that would entice quality teachers to come to our county.

School Board Responses

Steve McGee - District 9

What does a successful term look like to you?

As stated in question #1, MCPS is an ADVANCING SCHOOL DISTRICT designation and is one of four districts that is emerging as a DISTRICT ON THE RISE. A successful term would be to help supply the necessary means to improve in this growth.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

By attending some of the functions that the MCCEA has and to talk to businesses that I frequent to become members.

School Board Responses

David Sisk - District 9



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I was born and raised in Maury County and a product of the Maury County Public School system where I graduated from Columbia Central High School in 1996. After graduation, I attended and graduated from The University of Mississippi with a Bachelors of Business Management in 2000. I am a husband of 22 years to my wife Kim who we have three children, all of whom attend schools in Maury County (2 at Culleoka Unit School and 1 at Columbia Central). We have a horse farm where we raise Tennessee Walking Horses and operate a local dump trucking company, AABM. My motivation for running this position is very simple, Kids. I have “skin in the game” and believe that my experiences within different buildings in the system will help bring knowledge to the majority of the board members who don’t have children or grandchildren in the school system.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I am a rational thinker who can work well others in figuring out a solution to any problem. I feel those traits, combined with the ability to manage a small business and having children involved the MCPS make me the ideal candidate.

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

The most important role of the School Board is to ensure every child receives a strong education focused on reading, writing, math and essential skills that prepare them for success in life. The board must make decisions that support effective learning environments and use of resources. If elected, my most important role will be kid first accountability. I will focus on academic progress, clear budgets, and making sure every decision directly benefits students. I will ask questions about results to keep our schools focused on teaching and learning.

School Board Responses

David Sisk - District 9

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The top challenges include managing growth while maintaining quality classrooms, supporting teachers and addressing staffing needs and controlling costs while meeting student needs. I will contribute by supporting data driven decisions, prioritizing core classroom instruction, and ensuring resources are used efficiently to deliver the best outcomes for the students.

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

The success of Maury County Public Schools will attract families and also support local businesses. We can strengthen academics while expanding practical career and technical options. I will work to make our schools a source of pride by focusing on strong fundamentals, celebrate effective teaching, and preparing students for good careers or further education right here in Maury County.

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

I will bring a practical, solution focused approach. I will support the Superintendent on efforts that improve student outcomes and work respectfully with fellow board members. With the County Commission, I will emphasize clear communication, transparent budgets, and regular updates on results. Building trust through honest reporting and shared goals will help ensure stable funding for our schools.

School Board Responses

David Sisk - District 9

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

Growth requires careful planning. I support a common sense plan that includes modernizing current schools where possible and adding new capacity if needed. Priorities will be safe classrooms, good learning environments, and making sure every improvement directly helps students.

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

I will promote stronger collaboration through regular joint meetings, clear budget presentations, and honest discussions about needs and results. By showing responsible management of resources and focusing on measurable student progress, we can build a stronger partnership that supports necessary funding while respecting taxpayers.

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

I will and do stay connected by attending school events, parent meetings, and community gatherings in my district. I plan to hold regular listening sessions and visit classrooms to hear directly from the teachers and families. Being accessible will help me understand needs and will make sure board decisions reflect what is happening in our schools.

School Board Responses

David Sisk - District 9

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

I will support a strong focus on foundational skills like reading and math. We should track progress openly so families can see how schools are performing. I will also recognize that excellence means developing the whole child. This includes strong athletic programs. Sports teach discipline, teamwork, resilience and leadership. They keep many students engaged in school, improve physical health, and build community spirit. As a coach myself, I've seen firsthand how athletics help students stay motivated and develop skills that translate to the classroom and future careers. I will encourage recognition for schools that excel in both academics and athletics and expand opportunities so that more students can participate. When our schools produce well rounded graduates who are strong academically and athletically, it boosts school pride and promotes MCPS.

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

Teachers are essential to student success. We should prioritize competitive pay by focusing resources on classroom positions, reduce unnecessary administrative tasks so teachers can focus on teaching and build an environment where educators feel valued. Making Maury County a great place for teachers will help us attract and keep talented teachers.

School Board Responses

David Sisk - District 9

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term would mean improving student proficiency in core subjects, responsible planning for facilities and budgets, living in a district known for academic and athletic success, and most importantly preparing students well for the future.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

If elected, I plan to meet regularly with Chamber members to align school programs with the workforce needs of local businesses, support expanded career and technical education options so students can graduate with real skills for jobs available right here in Maury County, promote our schools as a key reason families and companies choose to move and invest here, and work together on initiatives that connect students with local employers through internships, job shadowing, and career exploration. Strong schools will help attract new families and businesses, which supports economic growth and brings more resources back to our students. I'm committed to open communication and practical collaboration that benefits both our kids and community.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11



Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this position

I am running as the incumbent candidate for Maury County school board district seat 11 because i care. I care about our country and community, our children and our future. Children are our heritage. We cannot afford to fail them. They will be the leaders of tomorrow. I desire to see them equipped with the foundational skills and character they need to be successful in life. Being a school board member is an incredible responsibility. It is a responsibility i do not take lightly.

What specific experience and qualifications do you have that make you the ideal candidate for this position?

I am a retired rn with 15 years experience working in the emergency department. Working in emergency health care gave me the opportunity to care for people in challenging situations. Nursing taught me critical thinking, work ethic, team work, flexibility, responsibility, honesty, respect and compassion. I also gained insight and perspective from working cross-culturally. These are qualities and values that help direct my life on a daily basis and help me with planning and problem solving. I believe my training and experience in nursing has developed skills, values, and qualifications in my life that make me the “ideal candidate” for this position. I possess common sense and critical thinking skills to make prudent decisions that will be in the best interest of both the students and taxpayers. If elected, i will continue to serve with diligence, accountability and transparency. I regard learning as a lifelong journey and being the current district 11 school board member has definitely been a learning process in my life. I am willing to continue this path and will work purposefully to help make learning a joy in the hearts and lives of Maury County students.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11

In your opinion, what is the most important role of the Maury County School Board and, if elected, what will be your most important role as an individual board member?

To me, the most important role of the school board is working toward achieving measurable outcomes for academic growth and character development in the students of Maury County, thus enabling every student the opportunity to succeed in life. Personally, as a school board member, i believe my most important role encompasses accountability. Accountability is an important foundational role of leadership. It is the willingness to accept responsibility and account for one's actions. Maury county students, parents and taxpayers look to school board representatives to make wise choices and to stand accountable regarding education in Maury County.

What do you see as the top challenges for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to contribute to addressing those?

The top challenge is improving student grade proficiency. I would like to see the school board review our current vision statement to better identify our mission and goals. Vision is about direction and results. Reviewing and revising our vision plan may give us the direction we need to achieve desired results. Other challenges and areas needing to be reviewed include: improving school letter grades on the tennessee state report card, decreasing chronic absenteeism, being fiscally accountable and bringing schools out of state priority identification.

What do you see as the top opportunities for the Maury County School Board and how do you plan to utilize those to move our community forward?

As the community elects new members to the school board, an excellent opportunity will arise for new thoughts and ideas to emerge and be incorporated. As i stated in my response to question #4, i would like to review our vision, mission and goals. Unity and clarity of vision empowers us to better understand where are we at, where are we going, and how do we get there? Vision points us in the paths and direction we need to take and can give us the results we hope to achieve.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11

How do you plan to work collaboratively with the School Board, the Superintendent, and the County Commission to ensure financial stability, student success, and alignment with community expectations?

I endeavor to establish good lines of communication by being open, transparent and respectful of the board, the superintendent and the county commission. Listening with intentionality and being respectful of each person's input is key to understanding and working together. With the commission we can and must ensure financial stability by working towards a balanced budget ensuring we are getting maximum potential from every dollar spent. Student success comes with strategic planning and implementing sound policy. Alignment with community begins with community interaction. Time for public comment has recently been implemented in school board meetings which will enable us to hear directly from the community in the public setting. To the best of my ability i intend to be present at required meetings and informed regarding topics to be discussed and voted on. Working together we can have a great educational system while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Maury County. Listening with respect is key to understanding and working together.

Maury County has experienced a great deal of growth over the last ten years, and we anticipate this to continue in some capacity. This tremendous growth has potential to strain our school system. How do you propose to provide new schools and improve existing facilities?

While Maury County has experienced extensive growth over the last 10 years, statistics have shown little growth in student enrollment. Possibly this is due to the increasing rise in alternative education such as home schooling and private schools, or it could be a result of Maury County's low proficiency scores resulting in parents locating to communities that have more robust academic outcomes. Without significant improvement in grade proficiency scores, i feel we may not see significant public school growth.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11

However, Maury County is growing and i would like to see a third party consultant evaluate our current school situation with recommendations for strategic planning going forward. Meanwhile, i feel we must do all we can to maintain our current buildings. I would like to see more funding in the budget allocated to building maintenance. Rezoning may be necessary to balance current classroom numbers.

Also, going forward we must carefully evaluate strategic planning and budgeting. It is the school board's job to present the anticipated needs to the county commission and the commission determines funding appropriations. It appears countywide growth and impact on the school system are a serious concern of both the school board and the county commission. This is an area where i would like to see more communication and collaborative planning.

Understanding that the Maury County Commission is ultimately responsible for providing funding to the board for both operations and school facilities, how do you propose to improve collaboration between the School Board and the County Commission to ensure appropriate funding is provided?

Accountability and trust are the two words that come to mind. The school board must be accountable to present to the commission a fiscally responsible budget that meets the needs of the district. It is the county commission's responsibility to determine the funding feasibility for the budget request and grant funding. Good planning and good stewardship of taxpayer funds creates trust between the governing bodies. It is imperative and beneficial to work together transparently and with trust in order to align our financial resources with our vision and goals.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11

How do you plan to interact with the community and the schools in your district in order to understand their specific needs and ensure those needs are being addressed?

Interaction takes availability and establishing personal relationships with schools and the community. It involves “presence” at various school and community functions. “presence”, in my opinion, could be attending an event or meeting, visiting a school, making a phone call, sending an email or text, writing a note of encouragement. It is building rapport with those around you. I intend to stay in touch and be open to communication with constituents and employees of Maury County. I will be listening, taking appropriate action and following up regarding school suggestions and concerns in a timely manner. I value the input of my community. Please feel free to reach out to me with suggestions, ideas, questions and concerns. Kmikula@mauryk12.org.

Quality education and a successful school district are top priorities for Economic & Community Development. How do you propose making excellence a priority for Maury County Public Schools?

Recently, i heard dr. Ben carson say, “people have so much potential if it is just cultivated in the right way”. Making excellence a priority entails assuring our students receive quality instruction which includes supporting and encouraging our teachers as they are the catalyst to cultivate potential in our students to succeed.

School Board Responses

Kathy Mikula - District 11

What initiatives or strategies would you propose to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in our district?

It is not the school board's direct responsibility to recruit, hire and retain teachers and staff. The school superintendent is tasked with this responsibility; however, the board can help facilitate this process by the policies they set forth. We can work to ensure our employee salaries and benefit packages are competitive statewide. We can work to provide a safe and pleasant work environment. We can encourage parental and community support and involvement. Recognizing and honoring our teachers is of utmost importance.

What does a successful term look like to you?

A successful term to me is knowing i have provided resources needed to give students the educational skills and character building they need to be successful in life, enabling them to fulfill their god-given destiny.

If elected, how do you plan to partner with the Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance to support the Maury County school district?

I will be looking to the county chamber & economic alliance for input and data that reflects current and future business trends in Maury County. Data on growth and career trends will help provide direction to the board for strategic planning. I look forward to partnering together with the Maury County chamber & economic alliance.