

Re-elect Rich Piazza Kootenai County Commissioner

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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KOOTENAI COUNTY COMMISSIONER RICH PIAZZA SEEKING NEW TERM

Kootenai County Commissioner Rich Piazza announced his candidacy for a second term of office today, pledging close scrutiny in holding down expenses and taxes, maintaining infrastructure, promoting job creation and addressing county growth issues.

“I’m a Reagan conservative,” he said, “but I serve ALL the people. In these difficult economic times, we have to watch every dollar we spend. We still have to maintain county infrastructure and we have to find ways to do it without raising taxes.

“I’m a fiscal conservative. We have to be wise in spending the people’s money.

“Runaway spending may be what they want to do back in Washington, but not here. Not on my watch! Now’s the time to be creative in bringing new businesses and jobs into the community,” he said.

Piazza wants to promote stronger ties with chambers of commerce in the county to boost tourism and new businesses. He noted, “The chamber can do things that by law the county government cannot. But we can help push the ball down the field.

“I have a special concern for the growing population of seniors who have found our area a great place to retire. We are also blessed with some 15,000 military veterans. We owe them a lot. I want to make sure that our services are fine-tuned to help them and all of our retirees.

“Kootenai County is growing,” Piazza continued. “That’s a fact of life. I’ve watched that growth for 37 years. Some people like it, some want things to remain the same. I have to consider all sides when facing issues that concern us all, and that isn’t easy.

“We can’t stop growth—and shouldn’t. But we must plan it carefully. I want to talk with folks who are against growth, as well as pro, and hear their ideas on how we can do it where the concerns of both sides are part of the long-term plan.

“Zoning is always a hot-button issue. I was in the middle of it for 18 years as a Certified County Appraiser. We need to identify the best places for new homes for our work force as well as retirees. I’m particularly in favor of affordable housing.”

The comprehensive plan now being developed is too complex and too long, Piazza said. “We need to edit it and get it implemented quickly, but we’ve got to get it right. It will affect the county for generations to come. I want it done by the end of the year.”

Piazza affirms strong support for the county sheriff and fire departments. “They keep us safe, and they must have the resources necessary to do the job. This is one area that we can’t short-change. We can’t live with crime or fire.”

A hot-button issue with Piazza is integrity in government. “We the People have the most control over government here at the local level,” he said. “It’s tough to do much about Washington, but we can do things here.”

He voted against the 23 percent pay raise voted in by the other commissioners. “How can we justify a pay raise, when others are taking pay cuts or losing their jobs altogether? We must have integrity in government. At all levels.”

As a board member of the new Kootenai Education Technical Council, Piazza is looking forward to developing a trade school on the Rathdrum Prairie. “A vocational training center is a great adjunct to the three academic colleges in the county.”

Piazza noted what he considers the most important achievements of his first term as commissioner:

“I’m proud to have helped in the fight to rename our airport after Pappy Boyington, a great World War II hero, born in Coeur d’Alene,” he said. “It wasn’t easy, but we got it done.

“I’m also happy we built the new Prairie waste transfer station in Post Falls. It shows long-term thinking, which will accommodate the county’s growth. But there’s still a lot more to do.”

Piazza praised the Commission’s success in acquiring a waterfront property for public enjoyment at Carlin Bay on Lake Coeur d’Alene.

“One of things I enjoy the most in this job are the townhall meetings,” Pizza said. “It’s great meeting the folks and hearing their concerns. We need citizen input for us to do our jobs effectively.”

Piazza is a life member of the National Rifle Association, past vice president and board member of North Idaho Pachyderms, board member of Kootenai County Perspectives (branch of Jobs Plus), GOP precinct committeeman, Hayden Chamber of Commerce member, Basin Commission, North Idaho Classic Car Club, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, and associate member of Kootenai County Republican Women’s Federation. He attends St. Pius Catholic Church.

Commissioner Rich Piazza's Position on Major County Issues

- **County Comprehensive Plan:** “In its present form, it’s too long and complex. We’re working on editing and finalizing it. I want this done before the end of the year.”
- **User Fees:** “I’m opposed to new taxes, but the county is growing and needs funds to provide increasing public services. User fees are one way to do it. This places the burden on those receiving the services. But those fees must be reasonable. We don’t want any ‘deal-killers.’ This is part of our county being business-friendly.”
- **Sheriff’s Department Needs:** “Our Sheriffs Department is doing a great job, but they need help. We badly need more jail space. Defendants awaiting trial must be close to public defender lawyers and the court. The Department also needs to offer competitive salaries in order to keep experienced personnel. That too takes money. I will continue to focus on these problems.”
- **County Administrator:** “We don’t need a county administrator. I believe in the maxim ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.’ The county government is working fine. We don’t need the burden and cost of another layer of bureaucracy.”
- **Rural Garbage Collection:** “I support continuation of this service, until county growth warrants individual property trash containers in rural areas. Long-term, we may also need additional waste transfer stations.”
- **County Department Consolidation:** “It’s a good idea. We’ve already done some of it by combining the adult and juvenile probation departments, as well as the noxious weed, parks and waterways departments. This is more efficient and cuts down on costs.”
- **Airport Area Development:** “The areas surrounding the airport are excellent for industry and business, but not for residential. There’s always noise at an airport. It can’t be avoided. People need to be able to live and raise their families in a quiet residential area. The county can’t expose itself to noise law suits down the line.”
- **Moving the Fair Grounds:** “The fair grounds should stay right where they are, near hotels, restaurants and shopping.”
- **Qualifications:** “After running my own business for 12 years before becoming commissioner, I know what it’s like working within a budget and meeting a payroll. I think every elected official should have experience in the private sector before serving in public office. Then they know what the real world’s like.”