

David: STPUD 6.5% rate hike was wrong

Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.



Kirk David is running for one of two open seats on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

Name: Kirk A David

Age: 48

Job/profession: General contractor

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Youth coach for last 17 years. AYSO and club soccer, ASA and high school softball, Pop Warner football, high school basketball (boys and girls), Little

League and Babe Ruth baseball.

Why are you running for the South Tahoe PUD board?: I want to be involved in our community and I feel this is a good opportunity to help and be a service by having a voice on the board. Life is full of challenges and learning experiences and I look forward to the opportunity.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: My wife, Jennifer, and I were very fortunate to raise our two children here. I have roots In Tahoe and I am invested in our community and our future. I care about Tahoe's unique environment and understand and appreciate what our community requires.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: My environmental studies degree and background in construction are two strong qualities in a board candidate. The skills I have acquired in owning and operating my business have given me the ability to develop efficient leadership skills that can motivate groups in a positive direction toward a common goal.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: I am honest and fair and I would work with the district to ensure the same values and clarency that I believe in.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: I agree that the budget should not be dependent or reliant on guaranteed property tax increases. I don't agree with the 6.5 percent annual rate hike.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: The ability to work well together, work through tough conflicts, and provide good service.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined

benefits?: Great for an employee. Paying for the benefits is costly.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: If contracting out is costing more money, I would like to find a way for the work to be done in house.

What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?: Continue to provide the great services they provide. Continue and improve upon the environmental commitment our district currently has. Provide an affordable service for our local community.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: The 6.5 percent annual rate hike. I understand the need for meters and improvements in our district, but I don't like the path of increased rates we are on.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: I have yet to attend a meeting; I regularly read the board minutes.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the district?: I've read the plan and I have seen their finances and goals online.

Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?: I work well with other people, and I have no doubt that I would work well with the board to serve our community.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Ensure the continued outstanding service our district provides, control our rate increases, work well with district staff.

How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?: The district must run as efficiently as possible to ensure rates stay

controlled.

STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?: STPUD is known as being a good workplace, if elected I would know more about this topic.

When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?: I feel the connection fees are high, as with water and sewer rates the connection fees increase each year.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I worked as a deckhand on a whale watching/snorkel boat in Kaanapali for six months.

**Collin: Collaborative,
positive and optimistic**

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Jason Collin is running for one of two seats open on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Name: Jason Collin

Age: 43

Job/profession: Administrative director of post-acute services at Barton Health, and owner/race director for Epic Tahoe Adventures

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Sustainability Commission for city of South Lake Tahoe (2010-2012); Leadership Lake Tahoe (2010); participant Tahoe Prosperity Plan (2010-2011); Athletes United (past president 2010-2015, current secretary); Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe (2010-2014), past president (2012-2013); Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce board member (2012-present), executive committee member (2014-present), past chair (2015).

Why are you running for City Council?: I want to be actively involved in the projects and initiatives that are moving, and will continue to move our city forward. We are very fortunate to live in such an amazing place and I want to see our city reflect that beauty rather than detract from it.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I'm extremely collaborative, positive and optimistic – three

things I think we need a heck of a lot more of in our community.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: A sincere interest in listening to all sides of issues and working collaboratively towards meaningful solutions.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: True accountability is a function of culture. We need to establish a culture of open, honest communication, where the officials, and the public, are held to a higher standard of conduct. I believe in adhering to the Brown Act and will hold myself, my fellow council members and the public responsible for conducting ourselves accordingly.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: I like the conservative budget approach and the mid-year reflection that allows for prioritized investment. I also support the commitment the city is making in infrastructure improvement. In the future, I would hope to see increased funding for housing programs and economic development. As a council member, bringing quality jobs and quality housing to South Lake Tahoe will be a top priority.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: Tough one. I'm definitely in favor of promoting living wages for employees. However, I am concerned that with this big jump we may see businesses cut positions or find ways to automate jobs that are currently performed by employees (e.g. ordering food). I need to do more research and talk to business owners and employees before I come to a conclusion on this one.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Another tough one. Although Prop. 55 isn't equitable and it's not fixing the

problem of why schools are broke, I do like the idea of increased funding for education and (potentially) health care for low-income families. If we're looking at legislation for the greater good, I think Prop. 55 has more upside than down.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: Thoughtfulness, respect, sincerity.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I support the tough decision our city and public employees made to decrease the unfunded liability of health care and public pensions. Very, very tough thing to do but definitely in the best interest of our community's economic well-being.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: I thrive on building teams so I strongly believe in the value of our staff. Contract work is very appropriate for certain circumstances (e.g., coverage for leaves of absence, temporary fulfillment of positions, variable need of services, specific skills that can't be found otherwise, etc.).

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: I hope that in 10 years, when my kids are coming back from college to start their careers in the vibrant economy we've established, and have quality options for affordable housing (so they don't move back in with me), they will say: "I can't believe how much progress has occurred! It's so easy to get around now – I may not even need a car. And Highway 50 is amazing. No more run down motels and buildings. People are really taking pride in the community. It still has that laid back Tahoe charm ... but now we've got class too. It finally feels like one community. We're so stoked to move back home."

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: I think the VHR decision may have been a bit hasty. We need to consistently enforce

code before we change our policies.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?:
4-5

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: The city's strategic plan establishes these priorities: economic development, fiscal sustainability, improve the built environment, partnership development, public trust and accountability, quality core services. The city's budget reflects these priorities within each department to the community's benefit. With regard to finance and debt, I am still reviewing the budget and developing an understanding of its many facets.

Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: It all comes back to respectful communication. We don't always need to agree, but we need to respect each other and each other's right to voice their opinions. We also need to avoid belaboring points, move conversations forward and be willing to make, and stand by, decisions.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?:
Housing, jobs, infrastructure.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: Learning more about people's needs, wants and concerns is one of the most important things I've been doing. I will also be meeting with key city staff and agency partners to become better informed on the issues I will address as a council member.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: We have an important role in being part of the solution. A good starting point is improving our existing house stock through enforcement of residential building codes. Too many properties have been allowed to become run down in our city. If there are grants or programs that are available to public agencies then

I feel we have an obligation to pursue those to create quality workforce housing like the Aspens project. The city can also have a profound impact by helping to lower barriers that prevent investors from building affordable housing.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: First, the graduation rates at STHS and Mt. Tallac are actually really good. In 2014-15, 97.1 percent of the senior class graduated. But, getting to the heart of your question, the city can be a better partner to Lake Tahoe USD and our community's families by creating a vibrant economy and affordable housing to reduce our issues of transiency, food insecurity and poverty. Our kids are a reflection of the values of the environment in which they live. We have an obligation to give the children in our community every opportunity we can for them to succeed.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: Let's start with supporting and growing the businesses that are already here by getting out of the way. Lowering barriers (i.e., permitting) will also attract new businesses, fill vacant commercial properties and create jobs. By supporting innovation and embracing the millennial mindset of the current workforce (e.g., Tahoe Mountain Lab), the city can help pave the way for entrepreneurs and capital workforce investment into our community.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: I absolutely believe we are one South Shore community. The us vs. them mentality has to stop. My friends in "the county" are just as much a part of South Lake Tahoe as my friends up on Kingsbury Grade. We all work together, shop together and play together. Let's keep the focus on what we have in common and how we can bolster the community as a whole and everybody wins.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: VHRs serve a critical role in our community. How many VHRs should be here needs to be figured out. We also need to keep the pressure on code enforcement.

b: Loop road: I think the project has the potential to have a very positive impact on the make-up of our community. I support the vision of a renewed state line area with improved housing, neighborhood parks, well-lit streets and improved walkability for locals and visitors alike.

c: City streets: The street, curb, gutter and sidewalk work that has been done has been great but it's a drop in the bucket. The council needs to make it a priority to find funding to complete the sidewalks and lighting along Highway 50 that Caltrans removed from its project. It is no coincidence that private investment has occurred in areas with complete streets. From the highway, we need to move the street investment into our neighborhoods, with an annualized paving program.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Partnerships with fellow agencies like El Dorado County, LTCC, LTUSD and STPUD are critical to making our city and surrounding areas a more vibrant place. Achieving that vibrancy requires active and good relationships with our regulatory and land partners at TRPA, TTD, Lahontan, the Tahoe Conservancy and Forest Service. Council needs to take a more hands-on approach to forging those relationships than has been done in the past. We are all incredibly interdependent.

e: Recreation: Recreation opportunities are at the core of our quality of life and also our economic sustainability. I'm excited about the Recreation Master Plan and the interest the community is showing in expanding and improving our infrastructure with projects like the renewal of Regan Beach and modernizing the recreational center complex.

f. TRPA defined commodities: I can't claim to understand the complexity of the TRPA commodities. With environmental safeguards in place, I am in favor of decreasing regulatory hurdles.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: Support.

h. Sales tax measure: Support

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?:
Roads

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My ears are totally uneven. Like a centimeter off.

Your quest to stop the loop road failed. Is litigation how you believe issues should be resolved?: No. My goal was to highlight the fact that the initiative was poorly worded. If the citizens of our city are voting on an issue, we have an obligation to provide clear and accurate information.

Dogs understand tone, meaning of words

By Nell Greenfieldboyce, NPR

When you praise a dog, it's listening not just to the words you say but also how you say them.

That might not be huge news to dog owners. But now scientists have explored this phenomenon by using an imaging machine to peek inside the brains of 13 dogs as they listened to their trainer's voice.

The reward pathway in the dogs' brains lit up when they heard both praising words and an approving intonation – but not when they heard random words spoken in a praising tone or praise words spoken in a flat tone, according to a report in the journal Science.

Read the whole story

Conner: Wants to be voice for average citizen

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JoAnn Conner is running for one of two seats open on the

South Lake Tahoe City
Council.

Name: JoAnn Conner

Age: 67

Job/profession: Small business owner

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Currently serve as City Council representative to the League of California Cities, City Council representative to the lodging association, council subcommittee representative for the Senior Center and the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless. Served on Airport Master Plan Committee, Recreation JPA, Solid Waste JPA, served on the fields subcommittee from the City Council, represented the City Council on the Bicycle Coalition. Currently serve on the board of directors for the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, regularly attend the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled, am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, member of the Tahoe Art League, member of Friends of the Library, a lifetime member of the Lake Tahoe Historical Society, past president of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, past board member of Tahoe Douglas Rotary, past Neighborhood Chairperson for Girl Scouts, past co-pack master of Boy Scout Pack 594. I have done fundraisers for the Lake Tahoe Humane Society, American Legion, VFW, and Christmas Cheer, and regularly help with the beach clean up on the 5th of July organized by the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

Why are you seeking re-election?: There are a lot of projects to complete and work to be done in our community; I have met with many community members and organizations that have initiated good beginnings for our town. Many citizens asked me to run again as they feel there needs to be at least one voice that speaks for the average citizen and business owner. Many are supporting me in this race.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have four years of diverse experience and a real understanding of the personalities involved in running the city. I would like to see the city revamp their fees and permit structure to benefit small businesses and simplify processes to encourage good growth and improvements.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I listen to the average citizen and business owner, as well as larger entities. I connect with the average citizen and respond to their needs. As a small business owner, I understand those concerns.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: I will continue to speak up for greater transparency and citizen voices to be heard.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: Not enough money allocated for roads. There are several areas where I would like to see the taxpayer money spent with more care and accountability.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: No, across the board mandates do not work. The biggest employers in our town and nation are small business owners. Requiring a small business owner to adhere to the same standards as multi-million dollar companies is not logical. If you force them to pay more when they cannot afford it, they will lay off workers or drop benefits. For example, an unintended consequence of mandatory health insurance resulted in a number of small businesses in our town dropping the health coverage they had previously given to their employees because the mandate created higher premiums for these businesses. They increased the wages, in many cases, but it still was not sufficient to allow the employee to buy insurance on their own. How did that help? It would be

interesting to explore incentives for the bigger businesses to provide housing and better wages. Bear in mind, many of the employees in our community who do not work for small business work for a government entity. That means the taxpayers fund the raise. Typically, when a mandate of this nature is issued, the prices for rent, food, goods, and services also go up, so that is not the answer to help people financially. We need to work on better wages in our community, but this is not the solution.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Our schools continue to need funding, and that is important. The sales tax portion is due to expire, so on the surface, it looks like those who make more will pay more. The battle may come in the form of people wanting their government to be more fiscally conservative instead of spending more. The issue of health care for lower income may also be muddled by the implementation of Obamacare.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: A willingness to work for the people, being willing to set personal differences aside and honor all views, dedication of time for all council members to share the responsibilities of council, without a concentration of power.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: This is a growing concern, as the system itself may be beginning to erode as far as stability. Public employees pay into this system, as do their employers. Many times this is a trade off in lieu of raises, just as it is in the private sector. However, since it does not appear to be sustainable in the long run, looking at options now would seem wise.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: That depends on the work and the staff available and qualified to do the work. If we don't have enough or qualified staff, it is necessary. Sometimes impartiality plays a role, and it is in the best interest of

the citizens to use an independent firm.

What is your 10-year vision for the council?: I would like to see term limits on council service. The vision is too limited and the possibility to shut out new ideas is more likely when people have served more than two terms. Likewise, the mayor position should be rotated to allow for more diversity. Protocols should be adjusted to prohibit the concentration of power we currently have. The appearance is one or two council members are making major decisions for the majority of the council and the people. That is not healthy.

What as an elected official are the three things you are most proud of during your tenure?: Building, maintaining, and voting to keep the bike paths clear all year for our citizens who do not drive. Working with the Recreation JPA and surrounding entities to rebuild the fields at Al Tahoe School (adding one there as well) and Sierra House School, starting the new field at the LTCC site. Helping to complete the Harrison Avenue project.

Which votes would you change and why?: Paid Parking. The people did not want it.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the next council for the greater good of the community?: "Greater good of the community" should be defined by the majority of the citizens, and then the council should work for what the people want. The "power" on the council should be distributed more evenly to maximize the contributions and talents of all.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: Maintain the roads; be the catalyst for affordable and workforce housing; be fiscally responsible while addressing the three main points for forming the city: police, fire, snow removal.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: A

healthy town has a diverse workforce and housing is a huge issue. I believe there is some state money we could pursue for housing for veterans. We could offer incentives by decreasing fees for businesses that will add housing to their building projects. I believe we should open serious dialogue with the larger employers in the region and work to have them provide better employee housing. In other areas, they do this successfully.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: We could look at an apprentice type program to help students try out different jobs and careers. Not all students will excel at academics, some are gifted in arts, mechanics, recreation. My experience teaching at-risk students showed that you will not keep them if they are frustrated or feel what they are required to learn is irrelevant to their life. We have a variety of jobs and could offer sampling of work situations.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: Stop over regulating and decrease fees. The sign fee was a perfect example. The sign makers could do in two or three hours what it took city staff 10 or 12 hours to do because the city added more steps and repetition to reach the same end. Involve the business owners more to actually develop the most efficient program and policy, which would be better for business and save employee time.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: The one South Shore idea is great in theory, but too often, that has equated to the citizens and businesses in South Lake Tahoe and Meyers bearing more of the negative impact than the Stateline area. The conversation and planning needs to be fair and the "anti-Nevada" labels need to stop.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: Both sides of this issue are growing more agitated and want firm guidelines. I propose a moratorium on mega houses in residential neighborhoods. The danger in not taking this step is that the residents may very well push for residential zoning laws to be enforced, which would devastate the VHR community. There has to be a strong compromise in the near future.

b: Loop road: It is still full of uncertainty and unanswered questions. Would you start to build a house without a full set of plans? It does not appear to be fully thought out, for example, where is the funding for the affordable housing? That is a huge issue. It is also unfortunate that in the effort to get the area declared urban instead of rural, the funding for bus service to Carson City has been jeopardized.

c: City streets: The city needs to direct more of the budget to the repair and maintenance of our roads before they require the much more expensive mandate of complete replacement.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Often, it is an adversarial relationship aggravated by one of the agencies attempting power over another. Perfect example was the issue with STPUD. More communication would likely have been more effective. Everything isn't about who can gain the most money, it is about serving the people in the best manner possible.

e. TRPA defined commodities: In my opinion, this needs to be dissolved.

f. Transient occupancy tax measure: It seems like it would help fund a better recreation complex, at the expense of the visitors. I am concerned about securing the funding to build the center. If this passes, it could bring millions to the city to fund a new complex, but our debt ratio is already high.

g. Sales tax measure: If the people wish to pay a little more, it could be designated to fix the roads or help secure more workforce housing.

h. Where do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?: Where the citizens want it to go. I suspect that will be roads and/or affordable housing, but they need to decide, not the council.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My “mind matters” too.

You brought a lawsuit against your four colleagues and one of two employees you manage which cost the taxpayers about \$100,000, how do defend these actions? What did you get out of this action that you didn't have before the lawsuit?: I was not present to vote on that expenditure. The agreement answers the rest of the questions.

TY&FS partnering with Suicide Prevention Network

Tahoe Youth & Family Services this fall will begin contracting with Suicide Prevention Network of Douglas County to bring suicide prevention education and resources to residents of South Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Suicide Prevention Network will provide communitywide awareness programs and mental health stigma reduction outreach. Suicide survivor grief support groups will also begin at the Tahoe Youth & Family Services' counseling office in South Lake Tahoe.

Funding for the program comes from an El Dorado County Mental Health Services Act grant.

Suicide Prevention Network is a nonprofit agency that provides the resources for the community to receive help, hope, comfort, understanding, and support in a confidential environment. They will offer trainings and presentations to any agencies, groups, first responders and caregivers. They also offer a SOS (Survivors of Suicide) support group the first Thursday of every month at 6:30pm at 1625 Highway 88, Suite 203, Minden.

Jarrett: South Tahoe needs clear vision

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Patrick Jarrett is running
for one of two seats open on
the South Lake Tahoe City
Council.

Name: Patrick Jarrett

Age: 45

Job/profession: retail sales

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: 2016 South Lake Tahoe Citizens Academy participant

Why are you running for City Council?: I care about this city, and the current council doesn't seem to have any clear direction. They are too busy with all the infighting to listen to the people's wants and needs.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have a vested interest in this city. I attended school here from third grade at Tahoe Valley Elementary all the way to STHS graduation in 1989. My son is currently in eighth grade at STMS. I care about this city and its people and I want us all to succeed and be happy and prosperous. This city needs to accept change and adapt, not just stick our heads in the sand and keep the "old guard" in place.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I served in the U.S. Army during Operation Desert Shield/Storm where I learned responsibility, teamwork and leadership skills and I have also been assistant manager and store manager at a few businesses here in town.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: A lot of people know me in this town. I tell

it like it is, shoot straight and don't pull punches. I'm not afraid to tell the truth or to speak up when things are out of line.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: We as a city are spending too much and seeing very little return. We need to find a dedicated way to fix and support our infrastructure.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: No – \$15 an hour not only cuts full-time employment in favor of part time, it eliminates employers' desire to reward hard working employees with bonuses.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: *(Did not respond.)*

Describe three attributes for a successful council: Listening to the citizens, fair and just treatment of codes and laws, and clear, concise communication.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: If a person is capable of accomplishing their job, benefits are part of the reward.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: In this economy, you must ask why we are hiring someone to do a job that we have clearly been capable of doing in the past? Did all of the city employees quit working?

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: Tahoe needs to accept change. We need to grow together more. More community events with more community participation and involvement.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: The vote to censure Councilwoman [JoAnn] Conner. This whole matter has become so

convoluted, I wonder if the parties concerned even remember what started it. And we spent how much taxpayer money on this?

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: 2

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: I learned a lot on all these subjects at the Citizens Academy. I think more people should attend the academy and learn about the inner workings of this city we all call home.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: Through teamwork, communication with the council and the citizens, and fresh new ideas.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: Repairing our infrastructure, finding some affordable housing solutions and bringing in more business to create more jobs.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: I've spoken with a lot of people in town who both agree and disagree with me. One of the traits I've been recognized for is that I am a good listener.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: Almost none.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: We could have some incentives for good grades, attendance, and graduation.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: By lowering business fees and taxes in order to attract more businesses.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: We are two different townships with different laws and regulations. Stateline is a

24-hour party community with their own interests. South Lake Tahoe should be more family friendly and family oriented.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: If we were to enforce the laws already on the books, we wouldn't need to debate this.

b: Loop road: It was unsuccessful back in the late '70s/early '80s and it's really not necessary now. If you want to fix the traffic problem, do what myself and countless people have been saying for years: synchronize the stoplights.

c: City streets: We need to find a dedicated revenue stream for our streets and equipment.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: We can't have this us vs. them attitude. We need more communication on all sides.

e: Recreation: We can do so much more.

f. TRPA defined commodities: The TRPA is great at their original job, but they do take some things a little too far.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: We need TOT to support city services and other things the TOT pays for. Our TOT is a drop in the bucket when you look at TOT in places like San Francisco.

h. Sales tax measure: Everybody pays taxes one way or another. If the city needs more money, put it to the voters. Most people won't mind .0025 percent raise in sales tax if they feel they get an equal say in the matter.

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?: We badly need to fix our infrastructure (roads, equipment, facilities).

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I'm

proud to have been all around the world. From the time I was born in West Virginia, lived in Tucson, Ariz., for six years, grew up in Tahoe, joined the Army, lived in Germany for two years and came back to Tahoe only to meet the love of my life; and she's from New Zealand.

Road Beat: Kia Optima – a guilt free car



The 2016 Kia Optima LX Turbo combines incredible fuel economy with performance. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Kia has been in the United States market for just more than 20 years and it has come a long way from their little Sephia,

which in Kia's first commercials was shown chasing a Honda Civic throughout a city, to their now world class K900. When Kia brought out the third generation Optima as a 2011 model, its stunning good looks shook up the mid-size car world. I agree. If you wonder why Kia has had so many great designs, Kia's president is also its chief designer, Peter Schreyer, who in a prior life designed for VW.

For 2016, Optima enters its fourth generation. The new body is a bit tighter and sleeker, but the overall shape and influence of the third generation still remains in its DNA as there is a resemblance. Instead of being revolutionary, its evolutionary. In that evolution, Optima's wheelbase and length has grown by half an inch (110.4 and 191.1 inches, respectively) and width is up by a full inch to 73.2 inches. While it stands almost half an inch taller, it looks lower with the wider stance and taut sheet metal. Coefficient of drag is a slick 0.27.

But what makes this particular Optima of the new generation so unique is the small 1.6L turbocharged engine and its new super-efficient seven speed dual clutch automatic. Dual clutch automated manuals, introduced by Audi and VW in 2005 have no torque converter which even though are extremely efficient today, still have a hydraulic coupling torque converter. With a dual clutch, the tranny is always connected to the drive wheels, using electronically controlled clutches to perform the shifts and slippage during starting from a stop.



Specifications

Price \$23,990 to about \$30,000

Engine

1.6L DOHC, 16 valve turbocharged inline four cylinder 178 hp @ 5,500 rpm; 195 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,500-4,000 rpm

Transmission

Seven speed dual clutch automated manual

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 110.4 inches

Length 191.1 inches

Width 73.2 inches

Height 57.7 inches

Ground clearance 5.3 inches

Track (f/r) 63.5/63.8 inches

Weight 3,224 pounds

Fuel capacity 18.5 gallons

Trunk capacity 15.9 cubic feet

Passenger capacity 104.8 feet

Steering lock to lock 2.78

Turning circle 35.8 feet

Wheels 6.5X16 inch alloys

Tires 205/65X16

Co-efficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 7.28 seconds

50-70 mph 3.68 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 5.56 seconds

Top speed plenty fast
Fuel economy EPA rated
28/39/32 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Overall in rural country
driving expect 34 mpg. On
the highway at legal speeds
should net 44 mpg.

Knocking down 178 hp at a low 5,500 rpm and 195 pounds of twist which hits at an off idle 1,500 rpm and lasts to 4,000 rpm, this conventional gas powered passenger car returns amazing performance and incredible fuel economy. No batteries or electric motors here, just great design.

Zero-60 mph arrives in a scant 7.28 seconds which is about a half second quicker than the standard 185 hp normally aspirated 2.4L inline four. Passing performance clearly bests the 2.4L model with a 50-70 mph sprint lasting only 3.68 seconds and the same run up a six-seven percent grade only extending that time to 5.56 seconds. This is a high performance automobile. And with its high for a turbo compression ratio of 10:1, turbo lag is significantly reduced.

Shifts are almost imperceptible, almost like a CVT. It's a superb powertrain.

Now for the better news.

EPA rates this 1.6 turbo Optima at 28/39/32 mpg city/highway/combined. On the highway in a two-way run at 70 mph on cruise control it recorded an average fuel economy of 44 mpg. That's getting close to many hybrids. Overall this Optima returned 34 mpg even though it was hard not to dip into its delicious throttle. A 140-mile round trip to South Lake Tahoe on Highway 50 averaged 37.1 mpg and that includes several full throttle passes made in the passing zones. One nice feature of a turbo is the altitude doesn't reduce engine

hp as in a normally aspirated engine. With its large 18.5 gallon fuel tank, highway range extends out to an easy 700 miles, longer than most single engine light airplanes.

Changing directions is not quite like the performance minded 2.0T SXL model, but it is still quite adept. All models get the same MacPherson struts up front and a multilink independent system holding up the rear with stab bars at both ends. The electric rack steering is quick at 2.78 turns and the turning circle is good at 35.8 feet. But it comes with just 6.5X16 inch wheels which are shod with taller 205/65 series tires. While ordinary handling is excellent, three other Optima's get standard bigger wheels and tires, either 7X17 inch alloys (EX) or 7.5X18 inch alloys (SX & SXL) with the SX getting some serious 235/45 series tires. They (EX, SX) probably get some recalibrate the spring and damping rates as well to sharpen up the handling. But understand the LX as all fourth generation Optima's handle better as a result of a much stiffer (58 percent more torsional rigidity) and lighter chassis so from generation to generation handling is improved from good to even better. And to further emphasize the point, track is a wide 64 inches front and rear. As a result, this LX is still a credible handler and it will satisfy 99 percent of drivers, me included, it's just not ready for the track, although with a couple of tweaks, it might surprise someone.

Kias have a new found quiet and this new LX turbo is no exception. It is quiet. On the highway the engine spins about 2,050 rpm at 70 mph and is totally inaudible. Wind and road noise is obviously subdued. It also has an extremely supple ride with no float, able to handle the biggest bumps like Superman, in a single well damped bound.

Braking is by four wheel discs (front are one foot in diameter and ventilated) with ABS and other acronyms. Electronic stability control, traction control, seven airbags and more are standard. Brakes are strong, stopping the Optima in 41 feet from 40 mph under perfect control. My tester had the Tech

Package which added blind spot monitoring, Nav, rear cross traffic and a lot more (\$2,600).

Inside is a cloth interior and soft touch materials everywhere. Seats are very comfortable. The IP contains a full complement of instrumentation and a complete trip meter so you can keep track of your fuel economy. The center stack is easy to use, no college degree required and that's a blessing. It is also non-distracting. Rear seating can handle three adults with ease and the trunk now holds 16 cubic feet of baggage and overall with 105 cubic feet of interior space, the Optima is considered a large car by the EPA.

OK, here's the deal, the LX 1.6 turbo stickers for just \$23,990. Add the Tech Package and \$825 for shipping from West Point, Ga. That totals \$27,415. If you are thinking of buying an expensive hybrid, you must check out this Optima. It costs thousands less, performs as well if not better (actually much better than the smaller hybrids) and almost gets the same fuel economy. This Kia Optima is a guilt free car. You can stick your foot into it and go like a slightly scalded dog and still achieve astonishing fuel economy. If you get on the Interstate for a road trip, the fuel tank will easily out last your personal tank unless you and your passengers all are equipped with a "Motorman's Friend."

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Laine: Banking on experience

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.*



Brooke Laine is running for one of two seats open on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Name: Brooke Laine

Age: 52

Job/profession: Branch manager, US Bank

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:

Current: Treasurer, South Tahoe High School Alumni Association, 2004-present

Past president, current parliamentarian, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, 1990-present

Chair, Citizen's Oversight Committee, Lake Tahoe Community College, 2015-present

Past: Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, California Tahoe Conservancy, Waste Management

JPA, Clean Tahoe Program, Tahoe Transportation District, Local Area Formation Committee,

South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, South Tahoe National Little League, American

Youth Soccer Organization, South Tahoe Babe Ruth.

Why are you running for City Council?: I am and have always been passionate about our community. I want to help bring professional and respectful discourse back to the public process so that we can work together and focus on moving our community forward.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have six years experience as a council member. I fully understand the responsibilities and the time commitment. I will listen to all sides of an issue. While I may believe strongly in my position, I am willing to compromise when necessary for the good of the residents and city.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I served on the City Council from 1998-2002. During this time, the council oversaw the successful completion of the redevelopment project at Stateline and the creation of the ice arena. The experience that I gained during this term in office was exceptional as we negotiated complex contracts and funding strategies.

I was appointed to serve on the City Council from 2012-14.

During this term, we addressed the unfunded liabilities. Working with our current and former employees, we were able to negotiate a settlement thereby eliminating a huge financial burden that caused many cities throughout our country to file bankruptcy.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: I would recommend that all public agencies videotape their meetings and make their public meetings available on the government channel just like what the city has been doing for years.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: During my recent service on the budget subcommittee we altered how we project our revenues which have improved the city's ability to accurately balance our budget. We lay down a baseline, conservative figure for revenues. Then at the midway mark of our fiscal year, we look at our actual revenue and adjust our revenues accordingly. This has allowed us to budget for one-time projects, knowing we have the revenue to support it or not. I would like to see the budget reflect actual projects. Currently, the budget is simply broken down by department. It is impossible to see the current expenses of an actual project. Being able to see these projects reflected in the budget will allow for even greater transparency and will also help to identify the costs of maintenance and operations.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: The average household income for a family in Tahoe is \$36,000. An increase in the minimum wage will greatly assist the average family struggling to keep their head above water. I support an increase to the minimum wage. However, having been a small business owner myself, I understand that this increase has to benefit the employee as well as be affordable to the business owner. If this mandate is too large, businesses will most likely reduce their work force,

which defeats the purpose.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: I do not like this ballot measure. Prop. 30 was to be a temporary tax increase on the wealthiest. Prop 30. included a one-quarter cent sales tax that went toward transportation improvements for the state of California. Prop. 55 proposes to keep the tax on the wealthiest for another 12 years, but does not renew the one-quarter cent sales tax. Prop. 30 was to be a temporary tax and I feel we should honor that.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: Professionalism, respect for the process, and each other, listen and have an open mind

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Our defined benefits are appropriate to attract the quality work force, which the city needs in order to fully serve the public.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: The city is proud of the work it provides in order to serve our residents. There are times that some labor needs to be contracted out due to understaffing or unexpected increase in demand. Occasionally, the city needs to contract out legal services due to the special nature of a case. These circumstances should not be routine but rather the exception.

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: I can see a unified Tahoe with lines that used to define us, now joining us. I would like to explore the idea of a Tahoe County with other agencies who could benefit from this realignment. A Tahoe County that could include the city, all of the unincorporated areas perhaps as far up the West Shore to Tahoma, and across the state line to Glenbrook, and why not include Incline. All residents would be eligible to run for election to the county board. We would no longer have a

situation where residents who live in the unincorporated portion of our community feel they do not have a say or a voice. With a Tahoe County in place, we can maintain our fiscal resources for our direct benefit. I believe this is an option worth considering.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: I regret that the current council chose to not enforce the faded in ban on plastic bags as it relates to our restaurant industry.

Regulating plastic bags can mitigate harmful impacts to oceans, rivers, lakes, forests and the wildlife that inhabit them. Reducing bag use can also relieve pressure on landfills and waste management.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: I have attended, in person, two council meetings this year. However, I watch them on TV regularly and fully support continuing the broadcast of meetings as a means to keeping the public involved.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: As a council member I participated in the development and review of all of these matters. It is important to regularly review and update strategic plans and goals with community input to make sure they keep up with changing times and challenges. Finance and budgets reflect our values, goals, and execution of the strategic plan. We must constantly work on reducing any city debt and unfunded liabilities so we can focus more on planning for the future rather than trying to take care of the past. The city has made excellent progress in these areas over the past few years and my goal is to continue in that positive direction.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: My past years on council have demonstrated that

under unusual circumstances, I will remain professional and respectful to my fellow council members and to our staff and residents. Any other working environment is detrimental to the progress and growth of our city.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: A well thought out strategic plan. A budget that allows for the implementation of the strategic plan. Most important, we need to build the public's confidence that the City council is capable of making decisions that are always in the best interest of protecting our natural resources and growing our economy such that all residents can prosper.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: I have served as a council member for six years. I have stayed very active in city politics and events and continue to volunteer when asked.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: Our city should have a strong and supportive role in helping to resolve our current housing dilemma. (See below.)

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: I believe students are more successful when they can relate their education to the real world, not just as mandatory time spent with no perceived relevance. The city, the school district, and possibly the community college should consider partnering in community service projects that will give students the opportunity, possibly for credit, to be more involved in their surrounding environment.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: Government must support small businesses that then expand job creation by tearing down the barriers that discourage this growth. We must be open and supportive of new concepts; like turning a single-family residence into a fully-fledged business office. Our sign

ordinance needs to be adjusted to allow temporary signage for start-up businesses that are waiting for permanent signage. Examples like these will encourage business creation and will thereby create better job opportunities for our residents. We must look at everything we do and see if we can do it better.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: I believe strongly in blurring the state line. In fact, my idea would be to support a new county: Tahoe County. Perhaps we could join with the lake portion of Douglas County, and create a bi-state county that would include from Echo Summit, down through the unincorporated portion of the city, the city of South Lake Tahoe up to Tahoma, and finally across the state line to Glenbrook. This is an example of the "outside the box thinking" I hope to bring to our discussions

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: I believe there needs to be much stronger enforcement of the VHR ordinance that relieves our residents from the current complaint driven process. I would propose a full time staff of enforcement officers that could be funded from an increase in the fees that VHR's currently pay. If all VHRs paid the same TOT tax as hotels and motels in the redevelopment area, this increase could fund multiple officers working to ensure that garbage is being properly managed in addition to all of the other issues including parking, noise, etc.

b: Loop road: The real value of this project is that new affordable housing would replace old and tired housing in the Stateline corridor where many of our residents reside and work. If the loop road project proceeds, it is mandatory that work force housing must be in place prior to the start of the project. I understand that the community wants to have a voice in this process. I look forward to hearing the results of the

November ballot measure.

c: City streets: Many of our streets are in very poor condition. I strongly support the one-half percent increase in sales tax as long as it is specifically directed to fund street replacement. The city's current process of simply repairing cracks, etc. is no longer an option.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: We must all work together. I will listen. I will be respectful and professional. I have experience working with other agencies and have a proven record of moving projects forward.

e: Recreation: This is currently a top priority for the city and I support this position. The city has made some important investments in our recreation infrastructure including Lakeview Commons, the bike park, bike paths, and now the recreation complex. We are moving in the right direction and I will be supportive of the maintenance and expansion of our recreational opportunities.

f. TRPA defined commodities: I would love to do away with them. I understand that they are a tool that helps us control growth. However, they have created an enormous financial investment before you can put a shovel in the ground. We must move away from seeing things as "yes" or "no" and, rather, figure out "how" to get things done

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: I fully support the TOT tax measure.

h. Sales tax measure: I fully support the sales tax measure as long as it is dedicated to street replacement.

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?:
Street replacement

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I was born at Barton Memorial Hospital just three months after

the hospital opened for business.

Voters said no to you two years ago, why should they say yes this year?: Times change and issues change. I would like to contribute to a professional, respectful council and work together to move our city forward. I am passionate, experienced, professional, and respectful. I enjoy the political process and will take the steps necessary to reach the best possible outcome through collaboration and compromise. Our residents deserve no less and I believe I am up to the task.

Gratitude – a drug with positive side effects

By Linda Fine Conaboy

INCLINE VILLAGE – Gratitude. The word slides easily off of our tongues. But have you ever thought about what it really means? According to Webster's New World Dictionary, gratitude is a feeling of thankful appreciation for favors or benefits received; thankfulness.

Easy enough definition to digest, but Bob Emmons, a scientific expert on the subject, isn't satisfied to simply feel grateful and move on. Emmons has made gratitude his life's work.



Bob Emmons

During his lecture to a packed house at Sierra Nevada College last week, the psychology professor at UC Davis, passionately explained his take on gratitude, how it works, why it matters, what it means in the scheme of worldly things and how it can have a most favorable impact on those who practice it daily.

Gratitude, he said, requires a benefactor, a beneficiary, intentionality and appreciation. "There's a moral face to gratitude," he said. "It's very complex. But it's available to anyone from kids to oldsters." He recommends keeping a gratitude journal. "It's a good thing to do, almost like a spiritual exercise."

Emmons described gratitude as a drug without side effects, saying there's a significant difference for those who actually practice it and those who don't. People feel alive and alert; they get along well with others and they notice the good things. Additionally, he said grateful people feel alive—they comprehend what it means to be more connected with others and to life. "You don't want to keep in the good, you want to give it back," he said.

It's hard to believe that a "drug" like gratitude isn't used by everyone. Emmons said there's an impact on physical function. Threatening situations suddenly become less bothersome. Exercise becomes important; leading to lower levels of cortisol, which can lead to less depression.

There definitely is something going on in the grateful brain, there's a pattern of activity, but it's hard to track. To get a handle on the subject, researchers turned to Holocaust survivors, tracking their memories to see what impact gratitude had.

While not conclusive, they found that in the brain gratitude is more than just a pleasant experience. The social impact is

tremendous. People began to recognize what others did for them; that the good deeds were amplified. “We begin to notice the good in ourselves and others,” Emmons said. “Gratitude connects. It’s the moral memory of mankind.”

He described gratitude as the new willpower. “If you’re depressed, you take it now. There’s no gratification delay. If you’re in a grateful mood, you can accept delayed gratification.”

But why, you may ask? And that is what scientists are attempting to determine. How does gratitude “get under your skin?”

Emmons’ website discusses the long-term research he and others are now engaged in. According to his website, his project is “designed to create and disseminate a large body of novel scientific data on the nature of gratitude, its causes and its potential consequences for human health and well-being.”

Emmons said that much of his team’s recent work focuses on the development of gratitude in children.

Children, he said, are notoriously ungrateful. Gratitude does not emerge early in life, rather it seems to kick in between ages 7 and 10. He said kids can easily be taught the concept. He listed a few ways to heighten grateful attitudes in children:

- Link gratitude to philanthropy. Giving not receiving mobilizes gratitude and establishes your identity.
- Teach that gratitude isn’t something you can just go out and get. It’s the everyday good things that happen to you.

And finally. “Being thankful isn’t just saying thanks, it’s a divine feeling that can’t be hidden. It’s the everyday things that happen to you. It’s an operating system; a way of looking at life.”

Exline: Renewable energy is the future

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Nick Exline is running for one of two open seats on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

Name: Nick D. Exline

Age: 35

Job/profession: AICP, senior land use planner, Midkiff and Associates Inc.

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Master's of science degree in land use planning, bachelor's of science degree in geography,

American Institute of Certified Planners, American Planning Association, Tahoe Chamber Government Affairs Committee, Tahoe Drug Free Coalition board member, Leadership Lake Tahoe. I began a non-partisan, market driven climate change group.

Why are you running for the South Tahoe PUD board?: I believe in developing innovative ideas that support the economy and our community. Through the installation of renewable energy we can stabilize rates and improve/expand fire safety infrastructure. I would also like to create a fair construction fee system.

High construction fees put an undue hardship on middle and lower income households. When a project is halted due to high fees this puts our community members out of work and hurts our economy. I would like to introduce a sliding scale on fees that will ensure everyone in the community has the opportunity to improve their businesses and homes. I would also like to improve community participation in STPUD board decisions. The STPUD board meetings start at 2pm, which means if you work during the day, you can't participate.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: Every candidate talks about rates and fees, some talk about health and safety and too few talk about how renewable energy is the future. We need to take action on those issues and start making the future happen now. In my role as a solution orientated planner I succeed everyday in getting government, private business and community members working together so that innovative projects become reality. Using my experience and determination I will work extremely hard to ensure my plan to stabilize rates is given top priority, that there is fairness in the fee system and to make certain our homes, businesses and most importantly our families are safe.

Through the installation of renewable energy we can lower STPUD's energy bills and fight climate change. Those savings would be used to improve/expand fire safety infrastructure. As

we are all aware fire is the single greatest threat we face and we need to make sure our fire department have the tools they need to ensure our safety.

I'd push for the introduction of a sliding scale for construction fees so lower and middle-income homeowners and businesses are not stopped from improving our community and creating jobs, but are encouraged to do so.

Finally, I understand our community's concerns. My family is a single income household so I can sympathize with anyone that has stayed up at night worrying about money. Our town's thoughts and worries will be with me at all times whenever I am faced with a tough decision.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I am currently a solution oriented AICP, senior land use planner with Midkiff & Associates. In this role I work with local businesses, homeowners and with every level of government from the federal to the local level to get innovative projects completed on time and under budget. These projects benefit the economy, create jobs and help the environment. Recently the \$18.7 million state loan to complete phases 2-5 of meter installation was changed by the state. This resulted in higher annual debt payments, which negatively impacted the future borrowing capacity of STPUD. My experience will allow me to assist STPUD with any regulatory processes and to negotiate with governmental agencies ensuring the best deal for us as consumers.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: First, I will work to change the board meeting time from 2pm to a time that works for more people. If someone plans a party when they know you can't attend, you would think they don't want you there and that is how the community feels now. Secondly, I would make myself available.

I have publically posted my phone number, address, email and have a Facebook page on which I invite everyone to discuss their thoughts on our water. This level of openness will enable me to be accountable to the community and transparent in all my actions.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: I fully support and would like to see increased investment into our fire safety infrastructure. A percentage of the water distribution system is undersized and does not provide appropriate fire protection. Fire is the single greatest threat we face and we need to ensure that when fire comes our fire departments have the correct tools and are fully prepared to fight it.

STPUD's energy costs are huge. With so much of STPUD's budget being fixed, we need to find areas in which we can lower costs without sacrificing service. With innovation and technology, and through the installation of renewable energy on STPUD properties we could lower our energy costs, which would allow us to reinvest those savings into fire safety infrastructure, rate stabilization and improved conservation efforts. We need to start looking at how we can make money instead of just spending it.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain.: I would prefer we ask the question, how do we create good paying jobs in our community? We need to begin to diversify our economy because a diversified economy is far more stable. I am very aware that small businesses are concerned about the additional cost a \$15 minimum wage would result in, but those costs would be outweighed by more members of our community having money in their pockets to spend locally. We are a community and with so many living in poverty we need to start working to create a brighter future for all.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: I do support proposition 55. In a globally competitive world, education is

only going to become increasingly important for both personal and community success. We need to support education, which will ensure our economic survivability.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: Rational: In my experience with boards (from every level of government and regulatory agency) I see decisions being made, not on a rational review of the information provided, but rather to check a bureaucratic box. Often times this box checking poses significant hardships to the people. A board should be a reflection of the people and decisions should be made rationally to the benefit of all of us.

Forward thinking: Boards need to be evaluating plans that extend 10, 50 and 100 years into the future.

Team work: Which not only includes other board members, but also extends to the STPUD staff, local businesses and our community.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Having employee defined benefits allows families to properly plan for the future and enables them to invest in the economy. Unfortunately these sorts of benefits are on the decline. I believe that the future of these plans is one that combines the best features of all those currently available including employer contributions, pooled investments and annuities along with the best parts of 401(k)s, including employee contributions and portability.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: I do not support contracting out work that would result in layoffs or a reduction of critically important staff. If the contracting work is needed to assist staff, to speed up projects or infrastructure improvements (specifically fire safety infrastructure projects) then I am supportive.

What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?: Throughout this questionnaire I have outlined my proposals and vision. Now I

want to explain how that vision affects our community. In 10 years we will have installed renewable energy both in Alpine County and up at the lake. This renewable energy will have created good jobs, stabilized our rates and resulted in savings while fighting climate change. These savings will be used to install fire protection infrastructure so that wherever you live, you and your family can feel safe knowing that in the event of a fire you have the proper protection.

As a result of the sliding scale for construction permit fees more of us in the community will be improving our homes and businesses. This will lead to more work for those in the construction field, engineers and landscapers, etc. This additional work will spur economic growth throughout the community as people begin to spend more money locally.

Finally, the board meetings will be held at a time when the community can attend and the transparency I am demonstrating throughout this campaign will become the norm and more people will be involved in the conversation about our water.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: STPUD has done many things well over previous years and has kept up with basic needs from a “business as usual” stance. For a time the rates were kept low because of the poorly performing economy but then eventually a rate increase was made. I am concerned that if the board continues working in the same vein we may reach a time when every decision is made from an emergency only perspective.

We should be building for tomorrow and not making decisions from a standpoint that leaves us constantly playing catch-up. I will bring progressive ideas to the board that will keep STPUD at the forefront of innovation and fire infrastructure. I will work to develop a fair construction permit fee system so more of us can improve our homes and businesses.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: The current STPUD board meeting schedule does not allow for participation. That is why I propose changing the meeting time to when more people can attend. I have always kept up with STPUD board decisions, as it is also a part of my role as a planner to do so. I am up to date with all staff reports and meeting minutes for the year and have been present at two meetings.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the district?: I have been the lead land use planner on projects with comparable budgets, strategic financing and debt mechanisms as STPUD deals with annually. In addition, I have done a thorough review and met with staff regarding all STPUD related plans and budget items.

What concerns me is that with aging infrastructure the speed at which rates will have to increase within the next 10-15 years will begin to accelerate. Today we need to begin to lower long term cost wherever possible. The area of energy is a large, non-fixed cost in which STPUD could begin to realize savings immediately. With the installation of renewable energy (specifically solar) we could lock in low energy rates and fight climate change. With California's cap and trade law all non-renewable energy will become more expensive. What this means is that as time goes on the savings made will only become greater. We can use those savings to ensure that we don't see the "business as usual" massive rate increases in the next decade.

In addition, construction permit fees only comprise 3 percent of STPUD's revenue, but these fees make it difficult for households and small business to redevelop. This has a negative impact throughout the community because when projects can't start, people can't work. We need to create a fee system that incentivizes redevelopment and creates more, good paying jobs.

Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?: I grew up in the world of sports and the idea of team is fundamental to my very core. Being part of a team means picking your teammates up when they are down, spending the extra time to get something right or running that extra mile. Although there will be disagreements on any board I will never let ego or arrogance get in the way of working with board members to accomplish what is best for the community. Because in the end the team's performance doesn't stop with the board, the team is all of us.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: 1. Water supply and quality: To provide reliable and safe water distribution, wastewater collection/treatment and recycled water systems.

2. Keeping infrastructure up-to-date and innovative: To make use of any appropriate technology to improve efficiency and ensure infrastructure and other assets are kept up to date/replaced. Renewable energy.

3. Health and safety of our community: To continue to ensure we have appropriate fire protection and the installation of fire hydrants at 500ft intervals.

How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?: As a community we have aging infrastructure and a high rate of people living at or below the poverty line. We simply cannot afford to keep raising rates because fewer and fewer people can afford to pay those increased rates. Nor can we simply put off infrastructure improvements or routine maintenance because that will leave a huge unfunded bill for our children resulting in rate increases in excess of 10 percent annually in years to come. If we don't install fire protection infrastructure, we could be putting lives at risk.

To solve these conflicting problems we need to fundamentally change the economic realities of the district. Where possible we need to lower cost and that is why I am proposing the installation of renewable energy on STPUD properties so we can lower our energy bill and use those savings to stabilize rates, accelerate the installation of badly needed fire infrastructure and improve conservation efforts. The business as usual model will eventually result in huge rate increases, but with innovation and forward thinking ideas we can stabilize rate growth, which will not only helps our pocket book, but the environment as well.

STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?: Currently \$16.4 million or 32 percent of STPUD's budget goes to employee pay and benefits. In the private sector you would want your payroll to be between 15-30 percent and as you can see STPUD is slightly above the high end of that threshold. I will work to keep payroll at a reasonable level while taking care to have great staff moral, which will minimize turnover and keep the high standard of service currently in place.

I work with government agencies from the federal to city level. Agencies with a high employee turnover are slower, less responsive and impose many unnecessary and expensive regulations onto a project. This is our water we are talking about and we need to ensure a high level of service.

When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?: The district fees have a disproportionate impact on middle and lower income individuals. These fees are only 3 percent of STPUD's revenue but pose a significant barrier to improvements. In my role as a land use planner I have seen projects halted or abandoned as a result of high fees. This has a ripple effect throughout the economy. It results in our neighbors who are in the trade fields being out of work, construction equipment not being sold, a reduction in our

property tax base and stops the ability for many of us to improve our homes and businesses. I would work to implement a sliding scale for fees so that every one of us in this community, regardless of income level has an opportunity to improve our home or business.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:

Besides the fact that I like to paddleboard at night with my dog, I love to read. It is enlightening to be able to see things from a different point of view and that really helps in the decision making process.