

August 5 Primary Will Feature Candidates for County Treasurer, Road Commission

County: From page 9

Candidate Joseph Durm, 65, a Democrat and St. Ignace business owner, who has had four years of college classes, has served on many boards, commissions, and state appointed committees. He and his wife, Sandy, have been married for 24 years.



Joseph Durm

A former Mackinac County commissioner and St. Ignace City councilman, Mr. Durm said he has the experience and knowledge to understand and handle the issues facing the road commission.

"This position deals with a very large budget," he said, "an enormous amount of necessary equipment, and employees. It requires someone with experience making decisions concerning the problems of a state with no money, a federal government with less, and tax paying citizens demanding and deserving well maintained and improved roads. A small community such as ours needs a strong infrastructure. This includes our current roads and the ability to look ahead to our future needs.

"Safe roads," said Mr. Durm, "are important for economic development and access to work and local services. Driving down our roads should be a safe and enjoyable experience.

"Another concern near and dear to my heart is open government. All of my career, I have been a watchdog, and in today's environment it is imperative to have someone responsibly representing your interests on the county road commission."

Candidate Frank Harness, a Republican, is retired after spending 34 years in the U.S. Navy. He also was a railroad consultant, a business owner, an underground contractor for



Frank Harness

telephone and cable television, and he worked in road construction, operating heavy equipment. He and his wife, Marti, have a son, Stuart, and a daughter-in-law, Marianna. The couple's son, Lieutenant Stuart Harness, is in the U.S. Marine Corps serving in Iraq. Mr. Harness holds a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial educa-

tion and technology from the University of Wisconsin - Platteville. He has served on the Clark Township Road Committee and the Luce, Mackinac, Chippewa Solid Waste Committee. He is a community recycling volunteer and a member of the Les Cheneaux Snowmobile Club.

"I led men and women, planned and executed budgets, and operated and maintained ships of the United States Navy for over 34 years, said Mr. Harness. "I enjoy working with people, think of myself as an honest, fair, and hard working person with integrity, and will convey these strengths to the job of road commissioner."

Leadership, planning, and communication, he said, are key to the road commission's future.

"In September, Mackinac County citizens will have a new engineer/manager. We need to put together a workable short- and long-term plan if we are to achieve our goals. Providing the new manager and his team the backing necessary to hit the road running is of utmost importance.

"I believe in total and open communications. I will commit myself to doing whatever is necessary to ensure our townships receive the best information possible so their resources are allocated properly and spent wisely and efficiently."

Candidate Richard Oliver, 58, a Democrat, is the owner of a service corporation, an assessor, building inspector, and zoning administrator. He and his wife, Cynthia, have three children and seven grandchildren. He has two years of college experience, was a business owner for 25 years, and for 15 years was the director of operations for a company where he oversaw 110 employees. He has experience in budgeting and scheduling.



Richard Oliver

"I get the opportunity to travel our county roads from the west end to the east," said Mr. Oliver, "and I can see the shape they are in. I also deal with townships and attend board meetings so I see firsthand the lack of communication between the road commission and the townships. I feel whenever a road agreement is sent to a township at least one member of the road commission board or the engineer manager should attend

the meeting."

Attending the meeting would provide the road commission an opportunity to explain the scope of a project, allowing the township to have a clear understanding of the project and price, he said.

He would like the road commission to work with the City of St. Ignace, and the Mackinac Island State Park Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation on Mackinac Island projects.

Reductions in road funding, he said, as well as future reductions, are being discussed in Lansing. The state, said Mr. Oliver, is considering a population-per-mile funding structure that would impact the entire Upper Peninsula.

"We must contact our representatives in Lansing now," he said, "to stop further reductions in the entire Upper Peninsula's funding formula by the state."

The road commission, said Mr. Oliver, needs to improve communications with townships and get road maintenance back in the road commission schedule.

"The county," he said, "is not a road building company, and it should always keep maintenance as its first priority."

Candidate Robert Smith, 56, a Republican, has run a private business for 38 years. He and his wife, Cynthia, have been married for 36 years. The couple has three children, Matthew, Jennifer, and Jessica, and two grandchildren. The former Clark Township supervisor is a Rudyard High School graduate and has been a resident of Cedarville for 48 years. He is a Level II assessor. As township supervisor he worked with the road commission on the selection of roads to be paved in the township and road tax funds.



Robert Smith

"During my time as supervisor, taxpayers would express their concerns to me about the condition of our roads. I would like to implement fair maintenance of roads county-wide. The money allotted for roads needs to be spent wisely and efficiently on our road, and not on expensive junkets."

Mr. Smith said he will be available to hear taxpayers' concerns and communicate them to the commission. Also, chip and seal on roads,

he said, is not the answer for the county, and snowplowing needs better monitoring.

"One serious issue facing our community that I intend to address is winter snow removal and the lack of attention after a snowfall. The slush build-up causes roads to become dangerous for emergency vehicles and night driving.

"A second issue, chip and seal is a poor use of taxpayer's money. It is an expensive, short-term fix that breaks up, ends up with rough spots, and can cause water puddles. Roads in Mackinac County should be fixed in a manner that is more permanent."

County Treasurer Incumbent Nora Massey, 51, a Democrat, is a lifelong county resi-



Nora Massey

dent with three sons, David and his wife, Jasmina, of Sault Ste. Marie and Mark and Michael, both of St. Ignace.

Before working in the treasurer's office, she worked in the Michigan State University Extension office. She has taken college accounting classes and attended educational seminars about tax administration, bankruptcy, and foreclosures.

"I am a fiscal conservative," she said, "especially with public funds. I have full knowledge of the operations of county government, the county computer tax programs, the county investment policy, and the state law requirements of the county treasurer. There is nothing that is required of a county treasurer that I have not done in my 19 years as deputy and three months as your county treasurer. I look forward to handling and managing any tasks or challenges that may lie ahead."

Ms. Massey was appointed interim treasurer, replacing Jane Hampton, who retired in May.

"Serving as deputy treasurer for

the last 19 years and being county treasurer for the past three months, I feel I am the best qualified and experienced person to serve the citizens of Mackinac County as treasurer for at least the next four years," she said. "Over 20 years ago, while working in the MSU Extension office, I realized my passion was public service and working with numbers. The treasurer's office seemed like a perfect fit for me.

"In 1987," she said, "when Charlie Gustafson retired, I put in for the position, but it was given to Jane Hampton in 1988. In 1989, when Jane needed to hire a deputy, she hired me.

"My long term goal," said Ms. Massey, "at that time was if Jane ever left before me, I would like to be county treasurer. I served the county well over the last 19 years as deputy and have taken the appointment as county treasurer very seriously and look forward to achieving my ultimate goal and become the next elected Mackinac County treasurer.

"My plan is and has been to be very honest, accountable, and cooperative with the elected and appointed people I work with," she said, "and I will expect the same from them."

Candidate Patrick Fenlon, 49, a Democrat, is a vault supervisor at Kewadin Shores Casino. He has two sons, Jared, 11, and Jacob, 7, who attend St. Ignace Area Schools.



Patrick Fenlon

Mr. Fenlon is a 1977 graduate of LaSalle High School. He is a student at Lake Superior State University, studying accounting and economics. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Michigan State University and has studied computer science and business management at Davenport University. He also is a Level I assessor.

His community involvement includes substitute teaching at St. Ignace Area Schools. He is a religious education teacher, a Protecting God's Children facilitator and trainer, a team captain for Relay for Life, a Lions Club member, board secretary for Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), a 4-H camp counselor, and a Boy Scouts cub master.

"I chose to run for Mackinac County treasurer again," he said, "because I am very concerned about the state of our county. I have lived in many different communities, but none could match the beauty, serenity, and splendor of northern Michigan. I believe I can provide our county with a fresh voice and our treasurer's office with the direction necessary to research and the ability to implement and adhere to a strict checks and balances system."

A poor economy and high unemployment in the county, said Mr. Fenlon, are major issues that affect revenue.

"The dire economic condition of our state has rippled down to affect those of us who live in Mackinac County," he said. "A staggering unemployment rate, home foreclosures, and business closures have taken and will continue to take a financial, emotional, and physical toll on our community.

"Fewer homeowners and businesses mean a weaker tax base and therefore, less revenue for necessary countywide maintenance, special projects, and programs, not to mention payrolls and benefits for county employees. This phenomenon is only worsened by the lack of businesses that, for whatever reasons, choose not to locate and develop here in Mackinac County, or worse yet, do not even consider our county an amenable business environment."

Candidate Jerry Murray, 56, also is a Democrat. He holds a Master's in Business Administration with an accounting and taxation

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Jerry Murray

for
Mackinac County Treasurer

Changes I will make if I am elected:

- Work a full 40+ hours per week and attend all meetings
- Work with all township governments
- Create policies that hold the Treasurer's office accountable to the taxpayer's and officials.
- Improve relationships with all county departments and the Board of Commissioners.
- Return professionalism and customer service to the Treasurer's office.

EXPERIENCED & ACCOUNTABLE

JERRY MURRAY

FOR MACKINAC COUNTY TREASURER

Paid for by the committee to elect Jerry Murray for Mackinac County Treasurer