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Candidates were all asked identical questions, and all answers were received prior to publishing, so other candidates did not know how others answered. Because there are 14 candidates for the four available seats on the Liberal City Commission, a primary election must be conducted Feb. 26 to narrow the field down to eight. Then the general election will be on April 2.

DALE HARROLD

Why did you decide to run for the Liberal City Commission? While serving in Vietnam many years ago, I had the opportunity to be with five of the best men possible. I felt extremely fortunate to be able to lead these experienced men. We were a team that did everything together. I have not seen that kind of camaraderie since I left Southeast Asia.

However, I went to several commissioners meetings in the past because I wanted to see how city government worked. What I saw was similar to the companionship I experienced with my team – people working together for a common interest. I have always had an enormous interest in city government and hoped that someday I would be a commissioner. After several years of watching my city commissioners work, I knew now was the right time to enter the race.

What do you believe is Liberal's greatest asset?

The citizens of Liberal. There are many ethnic groups that live in Liberal, and I would like to fairly represent everyone. We all work, play and shop together. Things are good in Liberal. The people make this part of the state a wonderful place to live.

What do you believe is Liberal's biggest challenge?

One of the biggest challenges is answering the question, "Who are we?" As noted in the Leader & Times, when asked what Garden City is known for, many people said retail. For Dodge City, many said entertainment.

When asked about Liberal, most could not really come up with an answer. That question needs to be answered. Do I have the magical solution? No, but I definitely feel that there is an answer and if elected, one of my main priorities will be to work with the other commissioners to find the answer.

Are you willing to review and follow the priorities set by the community for the 1-cent sales tax when it was renewed in 2010?

Yes! The city commission has outlined five categories that are to benefit from the 1-cent sales tax: streets, drainage and capital improvement, economic development, housing, crime prevention and beautification.

These are the areas that the voters chose years ago when a study was done to identify what people thought the most important things that they wanted to see their money utilized for.

We have seen many wonderful projects stated and completed since then, including Light Park, Eighth, 10th, 11th, 15th, 18th streets; Calvert Street, Tucker Road and the recent lighting project on Pine Street.

City commissioners need to think "outside the box" on other projects that will help our city grow.

What are your economic priorities for Liberal?

My priorities are same, I believe, as most of the community. I would like to see Liberal grow by having more industry, retail stores and restaurants. We have great stores in Liberal, but we need additional ones.

Many members of our community go out of town to shop which hurts Liberal's economy and, in turn, helps the economy in other cities. We need to maintain the businesses we have, but at the same time, we also need to bring in new retail and industry.

How have you been involved in the community (volunteerism, etc.)?

I have been involved in the community in several different ways. I have lived in several different places in Liberal, and I have always tried to be a good neighbor by assisting wherever I could.

I have also supported local organizations such as buying Girl Scout cookies and Boy Scout popcorn. I get involved in fun activities such as the Leader & Times Ozsome Races in the summer and playing Goofy Golf to support the United Way.

How would you utilize Liberal's existing assets to develop a more prosperous community?

We have so many wonderful things already in Liberal. We have good schools. We have Seward County Community College/Area Technical School. We have one of the best air museums in the country. Dorothy's House and the Coronado Museum are also excellent assets for our

community.

We have National Beef and whether one likes it or not, the economic boost is unarguable. Plus, the employees who work for National Beef give so much to our community. One only has to look at United Way to verify that point.

We have good doctors and a very nice hospital. My mother-in-law at Emeritus Liberal Springs, and I think that is one of the best assisted living facilities in the state.

Liberal has several reasons that stand out. We have a convenient transporting access – Highway 54 and 83 and the train system. We have a superior workforce.

We also get many people not only from Southwest Kansas, but also Oklahoma, Texas and Colorado. We have a neighbor that puts up a fantastic Christmas display, and it was very interesting to see how many people with different state tags came to view it.

Agriculture, of course, is an existing asset. Conestoga Energy produces more than one hundred million gallons of ethanol a year made from corn and other crops. This gives our farmers another place to market their products.

Anyone that lives in Southwest Kansas knows that we have another valuable asset, which is, of course, wind energy. This is a great existing asset. It's free, and Liberal and Seward County need to take advantage of this in the future.

Therefore, we have a wonderful base to begin with improving our community. Many people, including myself, feel new industry, retail stores and restaurants would be a big plus for our city. Liberal has an incentive program to help with businesses. Let's use it to get Liberal on a path of growth.

DARIO BELTRAN

Why did you decide to run for the Liberal City Commission? I am running for city commissioner because I want my community to grow together as a whole. Also because I want my kids to grow in a prosperous and unified community, and because I know I can be the bridge of communication between two cultures.

What do you believe is Liberal's greatest asset?

I believe Liberal's greatest asset is its growth potential. What do you believe is Liberal's biggest challenge? I believe Liberal's biggest challenge is getting out of the basics and try new things to make our city grow.

Are you willing to review and follow the priorities set by the community for the 1-cent sales tax when it was renewed in 2010?

Yes, I am willing to review and follow the priorities set by the community for the 1-cent sales tax.

What are your economic priorities for Liberal?

My economic priorities for Liberal are bringing more jobs and help local businesses be more successful.

How have you been involved in the community (volunteerism, etc.)?

In the community, I'm usually involved with kids and youth in my mixed martial arts, jiu-jitsu and ZUMBA studio.

How would you utilize Liberal's existing assets to develop a more prosperous community?

I would utilize Liberal's existing assets by giving local businesses the opportunity to expand so our money can stay in Liberal and by bringing more companies and retail stores to our area creating more jobs and growth.

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