

Howell presents game plan for Douglas County

To the community,

Because Douglas County is facing unprecedented challenges I am seeking election to the county commission District 4 seat. My experience, skills, and abilities best match the needs of our county.

During the past 20 years, I have had the pleasure of being a member of many local community boards and committees. The fact that I live in Stateline and operate a business in the Carson Valley has given me a unique perspective on our county. My action-oriented leadership has been proven as I have guided a private Douglas County company through some of the worst economic times and have maintained employment for over 800 staff. The company has grown, despite this unfortunate economy, due to the implementation of prudent business practices and accountability measures.

Like so many of you, I believe in an open, transparent, and accountable government. I believe government should not tax or assess the citizens to pay for unjustified growth. Furthermore government should operate like a business and be held accountable by the people. Past mistakes do not justify the current citizens being charged increased taxes and fees to pay off past debt.

During the most recent special state legislative session, \$265 million was taken from county budgets to make up the \$800 million state deficit. This created a shortfall in local revenues that ultimately led to reduced local services. Now the state is facing a \$3 billion deficit. What are they going to do? The truth of the matter is, the Legislature has already started reviewing what fees can be raised and what state

services can be cut and “pushed down” to the local level as unfunded mandates. The voters of Douglas County must ensure the Douglas County Commission is prepared to defend the needs of the county and to make sure our local government is as efficient and cost effective as possible.

Douglas County must improve communication with its constituents while adopting prudent business practices and accountability measures. Our local government must be seen by the citizens as approachable, easy to work with, and one that listens. To that end, a good leader doesn't use personal influence, they use collaboration. As a certified mediator, I have the communication skills needed for Douglas County to accomplish this.

In addition to completing the regular duties as your commissioner, I will accomplish the following during the first six months after the election:

November – I will meet with county management to share my expectations for department accountability. I will share goal setting and measurement techniques such as the Harvard Balanced Scorecard, SWOT Analysis, and benchmarking.

December – I will prepare for the upcoming legislative session. There are already bill drafts that propose pushing unfunded mandates down to the county level. We must meet with elected legislative officials and keep a pulse on the direction of the upcoming session. We need to prepare to defend Douglas County from the state, which if left unchecked, will take local revenues to make up for the state's deficit.

January – After officially being sworn in as commissioner, I will help find a long-term resolution to the county water problems. I will assist county management with the submission of USDA grant applications to fund the necessary community water system improvements that are currently driving up user rates. Also, alternative plans will be developed, which do not

include rate increases or unfair subsidies.

February – I will host a Town Hall meeting for Douglas County businesses. This meeting will be focused on listening to local business owners to find out what roadblocks currently exist and hear suggestions on how to overcome them. A public prioritized plan of action will be developed and put in place.

March – In an effort to bring new business to Douglas County, I will establish a private/public self-directed work group that will be tasked with creating a local “Business Incubator.” Success rates of businesses that begin in a business incubator is 87 percent, while the success rate of businesses started on their own is less than 50 percent.

April – To improve communication, I will work with staff to ensure April’s board meeting be scheduled outside of the business day (so more of the public can attend). This meeting’s agenda will focus on local government performance and accountability. This will be especially important since the 2011 legislative session should be nearing its end and we at the local level need to know how any new legislation will affect us.

In my opinion, a county commissioner has a greater influence on the direction of our local community than any other elected official in the state. I am grateful for this opportunity to be elected to such an important board. I respectfully ask that you vote for me, Lawrence Howell, when choosing who will represent you as the next District 4 County Commissioner.

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Howell, Stateline