

Brown: 'Promote tourism and clean industries'



Kevin Brown

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News asked the six El Dorado County supervisor candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order they were received by LTN. One candidate chose not to answer the questions.*

Name: Kevin Brown

Age: 50

Occupation: Business owner

Education: Graduated Del Mar High School, San Jose 1981, AS Degree in electronics, Condie Jr. College, Campbell 1989

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?:

- El Dorado Union High School District board of trustees, president 2013, 2014.
- El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce board 13 years, president 2006.
- El Dorado County Economic Development Advisory Committee,

2006-08.

- Pollock Pines Design and Review Committee 8 years, vice chair.
- MORE Board 2006-13.
- El Dorado County Child Abuse Prevention Council, vice chair.
- Placerville Economic Advisory Committee, chair.
- Cub Master Pack 104, 2002-06.
- Scout Master Troop 170, 2006-11.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteer.
- Prevention Works, volunteer.
- The Center for Violence Free Relationships, state certified volunteer.
- Kiwanis, Shriner.

* Partial list.

Traffic is horrible on Fridays and Sundays throughout the county. Will you commit to not voting for any big subdivisions unless there is a plan to widen Highway 50? Why or why not?: Highway 50 is a state highway and our TIM fees would be insufficient to cover such improvements. We'll need help from our state and federal officials, as well as regional governments to forge a solution for Highway 50. I would favor development plans that value businesses over rooftops and believe development must pay its share of traffic mitigation.

What is your opinion on a proposed November initiative to control growth?: I don't think a ballot-box moratorium is the right path. Instead we need to elect leaders with a commitment to support sensible policies that create jobs. The county needs revenue to provide the services our residents want and

deserve like public safety, snow removal. Those costs continue to rise, so it is essential that El Dorado County encourage job-creating economic development.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: I am not aware of a serious proposal to create a separate county and would not likely support a split. I recognize that SLT has been underrepresented by the county, but I would prefer to heal that divide rather than split the county. Many of the fiscal challenges facing counties are created by unfunded mandates from the state, and a big part of the county budget is spent administering state programs. Forming a separate county would result in diverting funds to pay for law enforcement (county jail), prosecution, fire, road maintenance, health and human services, and other services that would not be sustainable.

What entities would you not take money from?: I think everyone who gives money is a "special interest" and it is cynical to single out specific interests for political purposes. Instead, I have made my position clear – decisions will be based on my vision for El Dorado County. If you agree and want to contribute, you are investing in my vision; if you disagree, money won't change my mind.

What would you do to boost the economy?: We need to promote tourism and clean industries like programming, entertainment and medical records management. I will fight for more TOT dollars be spent in the basin to increase tourism. I would use my experience in economic development to find businesses that fit the environment and culture of the basin to bring jobs and tax revenue. We should be working with groups on infrastructure investments, like high-speed Internet that can spur technology investment in South Lake Tahoe.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: In the past, I would have said high unemployment. But after talking with many people I have found

the biggest concern is that South Lake Tahoe feels isolated by and from the county. Some feel that regardless of whom they elect, their needs are not heard or met in Placerville. "Resolve" makes it sound like a one-time fix; but I think it takes an ongoing commitment. I will use relationships I have built over the past 15 years to ensure SLT issues are heard, I will fight to unite our communities so we can work to solve problems that many of us share and I will maintain a supervisor's office in South Lake (even if I need to raise the funds to pay for it) and hold regular office hours. The basin will be heard and represented.

Supervisors meet only once a year in Lake Tahoe. Do you believe this is fair representation? Why or why not?: Absolutely not. I would fight for a more equitable arrangement – and would require hearings in SLT on issues that impact SLT.

Would you have voted for Red Hawk to be built and to divert Caltrans funds for interchanges? Those decisions are still negatively affecting the South Shore. Is there anything you would do to change the status quo?: The funding and the approval are separate issues. The county did not have the authority to block Red Hawk. The issue was whether to resist or work cooperatively with them to resolve as many concerns as possible. Either way the casino would have been built, so a no vote would have achieved nothing. In terms of the interchanges, money was not diverted, the casino dedicated about \$110 million over time to pay for the interchange and Highway 50 improvements, however if they were not built, traffic to the casino would have been forced onto Grassy Run Road, Rolling Rock Road and Reservation Road – narrow rural roads with many homes that would have been impacted. In terms of changing the status quo, we need to work better regionally to prioritize transportation funding, focus on job-creating business growth, and expanding tourism dollars.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the

basin than come back.: That is simply not fair, and I would work to for equitable distribution.

The county and city of South Lake Tahoe have a long history of not getting along. How would you propose to improve the relationship?: I have a record of bringing people together and working with others to solve problems. Part of better communication is “showing up” – that is why I will maintain a supervisor’s office in SLT and hold regular office hours. I will sit down with the city to forge plans to together, find our common ground and build a new, better relationship between South Lake Tahoe and the county.

What is your vision for Meyers and how will you make it a reality?: I believe Meyers residents want the current Area Plan reverted to be more like the '93 zoning plan. From what I have learned and heard, they oppose major developments in the Town Center area. They want more input into in the planning process and assurances that the Catalyst Project is dead. I will involve more people in the planning and implementation of the changes and final plan. I believe we can better inform the public of meetings and critical issues. As supervisor, I’ll push for better notification and efforts to engage the community.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I have spent the last 15 years helping solve problems. I have run a business, improved student performance as a school board member, helped create a better plan for creating jobs, and built a foundation of trust and respect throughout the entire West Slope. I will tap those relationships to ensure Tahoe gets the attention and respect it deserves. My relationships with the county, nonprofits and the private sector give me the best chance to unite our communities and bring South Lake Tahoe and the county together.

You have received financial assistance in your prior campaign from Serrano Construction. How do you like their two projects

that are before the county?: First, we should correct the perception – I was featured in joint mailer with another school board candidate paid for by Serrano and Associates Home Owners Association, not the construction company. There were a group of homeowners with children who went to school together from kindergarten to the 8th grade, they played in the same soccer and Little League games – they grew up together. An arbitrary boundary meant some of them would be forced to leave their friends and go to a high school well outside of their neighborhood. I don't care much about the politics – that is just wrong. I proposed a transfer policy that would allow these students to attend the same high school as their lifelong friends. Despite some misconceptions, the policy has no effect on development. The projects you refer to are proposed by Parker Development, who built Serrano. My priority for construction is to focus on long-term, good paying jobs over sprawling development in our rural lands that impacts not only our traffic but our beauty and existing residents.

What do you do for fun?: My wife and I love to hike. We take day hikes often throughout the area. Enjoying our beautiful scenic treasures we call home, El Dorado County.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: In March of 2007 I was invited by a friend to play in a Texas Hold'em Tournament at Harrah's Reno. Other than friendly games with my friends I had never played poker, much less in a tournament. Surprising everyone (including myself), I won and went on to play in the World Series of Poker Main Event in Las Vegas in July 2007. I outlasted poker legends like Daniel Negreanu, Mike Matusow, Phil Ivey and Men "The Master" Nguyen, but did not place in the money. It was exciting, and literally a once-in-a-lifetime experience.