

County commissioner candidates

Omlid: unemployment the main problem

To Kenneth Omlid, Republican Lane County commissioner seeking re-election, the issues the county is currently dealing with are the main issues in the election. These include unemployment and economic development, solid waste disposal, sewage disposal and social services programs.

Unemployment is the most serious problem facing the county, according to Omlid. "We must look at meeting the need for more jobs in the county, we must get the unemployed employed in new areas and reduce the welfare rolls," he said.

To provide more jobs, Omlid favors seeking new industries to locate in the county. "I don't believe in putting a fence around our community," he said.

"Planned growth is healthy." He said the county is currently looking at ways to attract industries that fit into the 1990 plan for county growth. "A community in which industry plans with us, rather than dictates to us, would be a better community."

The second main issue facing the county is the solid waste disposal problem. Omlid favors passage of the \$3.5 million bond issue to fund a resource recovery and recycling plant to solve the long range problem and use of the interim land fill site recently acquired in the Bethel-Danebo area to deal with the current problem. He also favors switching from a system of fees and serial levies to finance solid waste

disposal to a slight increase in the property tax.

The problem of sewage disposal is another important issue facing the county, said Omlid. "I've probably been pushing harder than anybody for a solution to this." He said the county must negotiate with cities with sewage treatment facilities in order to lease use of these facilities to suburban and outlying areas. By setting up county service districts for administration, the people in the district would pay the additional cost.

Because of the federal revenue sharing plan, the county government must now assume the responsibility of providing social services. "We've done a lot already, but we must continue to gear up to be able to fulfill our responsibility," Omlid said. His main job in this area is to help decide which programs are needed and to ensure the county receives all the money it needs from the federal and state government to fund these programs. He feels that dental health and mental health

programs especially need to be enhanced.

Other issues the county needs to consider, according to Omlid, are extending mass transit to rural areas and building a new county jail.

"There is a desperate need for extended bus service as soon as possible," he said. The fairest way

to fund this would be to obtain more money from the State Highway Fund and from income tax money.

A new county jail should be high on the county's priority list, said Omlid. "The current jail is not up to standards and putting money into it would be paying for a dead horse." Paying for the jail, Omlid said, is a matter of setting priorities within the funding stream we now have.

In addition to continuing to work on current projects, Omlid said there is a long list of areas the county could get involved in. He said passage of a noise pollution ordinance and meeting the recreational needs of equestrians and motor-cyclists will be among those next on the list.

Responding to criticism from his opponents that he maintains a "closed door" to citizens, Omlid said, "Since I've been in office, we've had a strict open meeting policy, conducting all of our business in public. I encourage citizen participation in all areas of county government."

Judy Hucka



Ken Omlid

Courtright: mass transit over metro

Darwin Courtright, Mayor of Springfield and Democratic candidate for County Commissioner, expressed strong interest in mass transit for Lane County, more control for elected officials, opposition to taking of the Ayre's property, the need for recycling, and the need for a new budget for Lane County, in a recent *Emerald* interview.

We now have metropolitan transit, not mass transit in Lane

Sometimes bureaucratic committees are appointed by county commissioners that don't answer the people's wants, he said. He feels a county commissioner should be well informed by citizens of their needs and wants, and he should follow through in fulfilling them.

We should be looking to the future for a plan that would provide the county with a library that served the community, as well as the school, said Courtright. There is no such plan available now, but the school district and the county should work together to see if such a library is feasible, he said.

A long range approach to a means of solid waste disposal is needed now, said Courtright. Recycling a portion of our waste is part of the answer, he said. The taxpayer must be shown the value of recycling and the lowered cost to him in the long run, he said.

"I don't believe we should relax our institutions on ecology," said Courtright. Industries have been cooperative, because they realized the government would shut them down if they didn't, he said. Now the community people must realize that they must do their share in protecting and improving the environment, he added.

Courtright believes that there is a need for a better approach to the budget for Lane County. A full program budget instead of the current line item budget would assure that any transfer of funds from one area to another comes to the attention of a county commissioner and the public. The full program budget also shows up any weaknesses in a department.

Courtright is hoping to bring improvements to the county and more voice to its people, if elected as county commissioner. Courtright has always lived in Oregon, where he spent 28 years working in his own business, Courtright's Market. He's been active in politics for 10 years, serving as a councilman for seven years, and mayor of Springfield for the past three years.



Darwin Courtright

County, said Courtright. He suggested the use of "mini-express" busses, which are large passenger vans that would stop at appointed blocks during the off hours of the day and night. This would reduce the amount of gas it would take to run regular busses, and it would be more practical, he said.

An alternative means of funding mass transit should be considered, said Courtright. The funding spent on large super-highways would be better spent on mass transit, because of the shortage of available land and the expense, he said. He suggested that alternative funding could also be obtained from a utility bill or the tax program.

Courtright advocated that the control of county government be given back to the elected officials.

Wood: transit a concern

"There is an 'extreme need, especially among the elderly and handicapped, for bus service in rural areas."

With those words Bob Wood, Democratic candidate for county commissioner, pointed up two of his major concerns—transit and the disadvantaged.

"The county should subsidize LTD (Lane Transit District) operational expenses to meet these needs," Wood continued, "but unfortunately transportation now has a limited priority."

The real crunch for elderly and handicapped county residents comes when they can't get to regional shopping areas for the services they need, he said.

"We shouldn't force people to move into Eugene just because the services they need are here," Wood said. He suggested bi-weekly bus service as a possible solution.

"The county commissioners have the power to cooperate with any or all local governments with whom they have common interests," he stressed. As an example of where the county could help the city, Wood suggested extending a bike path through the West Eugene satellite area along Amazon Creek to Elmira.

Wood, presently a Eugene city council member, proposes more aggressive county government in the areas of utilities and housing as well.

In utilities, Wood has called for a county-wide sewer system, and expressed concern in the outcome of the \$3.5 million recycling program bond to be put before the voters at the primaries.

"It will be interesting to see if the voters will accept alternatives," Wood said. He thinks solid waste disposal has an extremely limited future.

As a candidate for commissioner, Wood said he feels his record on the City Council shows



Robert Wood

that he shared in a leadership role, establishing joint funding of city and county social agencies.

As an individual commissioner, Wood said he would bring the proposals to the people.

"I would be out talking to people and would try to change the

commissioners' meeting time (from 9 a.m. Wednesday mornings) so that more people could testify," he added.

Wood is also concerned with a countywide library system. Wood, 36, has been a resident of the Eugene area for 10 years. He manages a low-income housing project in Springfield called Rainbow Village and taught social studies and language arts at Spencer Butte Junior High School. Wood has a master's degree from the University in education. Before attending college, he was a fireman and truck driver.

Diane Kutsky

**If you don't vote
who will?**

Come listen to the man who can
send a message to Washington that
Washington will understand

WAYNE MORSE

democratic candidate for U.S. Senate

WILL SPEAK AT A RALLY

Wed., May 22

150 Sci.

12:30 p.m.