



OUT!

sheriff candidates answer questions



“I have spent the last few years teaching our youth to run toward me not away from me. Doing so I have brought back trust and approachability to my profession, humanizing the badge. I believe this same approach can be applied to the role of sheriff on a bigger scale throughout all of our communities.”

— **Cody Bowen**



“I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution and I will do everything in my power as sheriff to ensure your rights are protected. The people need someone to listen to them, to ensure their livelihood and interests are being protected.”

— **Shane Rollins**

If you win, what is the first change you plan to implement in the sheriff’s office and why?

Rasmussen

A few accomplishments achieved since serving as sheriff:

1) Started K-9 program. Molly and deputy Dane Jensen captured a most wanted criminal out of Washington state who was living in Union.

2) Started School Resource Deputy Program. Worked with school officials at the education service district, La Grande, Union, North Powder and Cove schools to achieve this.

3) Instituted Deputy Fielding Training Program. Deputies now all receive standardized training.

4) Increased staffing of the drug task force. It is critical to have strong drug enforcement in the county so I assigned a second deputy to make the team effective and operational.

5) Increased funding and support for Search and Rescue. Increased funding \$6,500 per year and gave \$15,000 to new building.

6) Began yearly leadership training for deputies.

7) Elgin contract. Worked with Elgin city council and mayor to have three deputies assigned to patrol and protect the city.

8) Updated all vehicles and deputy equipment.

Miller

I have larger priorities but they will take time. The first thing I can and will do is focus on patrolling all of our towns and outlying areas. I will make sure this is a focus year-round not just during an election year. More important, it’s about you, the taxpayer. You deserve great service and a safer community. I will also ensure I have more, well-trained reserves to supplement this goal. More boots on the ground, focusing

on keeping the peace, ensuring public safety while fostering great relationships/interaction with the citizenry will be an improvement I will insist on. This equates to better service, faster response times, availability and visibility. I want our deputies to talk to people, get out of their vehicles and find out what your concerns are. I want to hear what you have to say. I loved that part of my job when I was on patrol.

Bowen

As the sheriff, I will be present in the daily functions of the office. I will be available to the citizens and involved in community functions and events. From day one I will begin leading by example and working to rebuild trust within our team and our community.

Rollins

I will go through the budget and personnel to see how we can best serve our community in the most efficient way. Tapping into resources available to law enforcement to hire more deputies or get needed gear. Looking at where over-expenditures may be in the budget and seeing if cuts can be made. Bringing back the reserve program for additional support to our community and provide a hiring pool for when deputy positions open up.

I want to start a youth explorer program to give them an opportunity to build interest and respect for law enforcement. This would be a great resource for our youth here and give them another career opportunity to pursue. This would also build a hiring pool for law enforcement. State troopers used to have this and it was a great program for youth and the department for hiring.

Some candidates have said that other candidates are relying on misinformation, obfuscation or rumor to persuade voters. What do you have to say about that?

Bowen

I believe our voters should have accurate information about who I am as a person and what I bring to the table to make an informed decision about me or any other candidate.

The only rumor I’ve heard in the community is that Sheriff Rasmussen is under investigation by the Oregon Department of Justice. I know this is not a rumor and in fact the truth. I know this because he himself told me the details of the ongoing investigation. Before I made the final decision to run for this position, I had the opportunity to sit down with Sheriff Rasmussen. After multiple conversations with him, it was clear to me I could no longer support him as sheriff. I decided I could no longer be loyal to him and the path he had chosen. I made a decision to remain loyal to the citizens and fellow deputies and uphold the honor that comes with being part of this profession.

Rollins

As a candidate, when I went out to canvas the public and campaign, I was out there to sell myself. If another candidate was brought up I would say I am here to talk about myself as a candidate and what I have to offer.

I personally experienced being on the receiving end of rumors. Citizens I visited informed me I was being put down because my “training is only from the military” and therefore “not qualified for the position of sheriff.”

I can assure you, if you go to shanerollinsforsheriff.com, you will see all my training transcripts from my years of service and see I am more than qualified. I have Top Secret security clearance and have undergone background checks, training and on-the-job experience, which was all cleared federally and by the state of Oregon.

Rasmussen

I have experienced this coming toward me, particularly from one opponent’s campaign and especially so from his supporters. It is disheartening but simply politics in today’s age. I stand by my record and my integrity of always doing the right thing for citizens and my office. I welcome any scrutiny from the citizens or outside agencies into my office or inner workings. The truth will always prevail, and I have nothing to hide.

I am grateful to my staff and citizens who have remained solidly behind me and my administration during these challenging times we face. I look forward to putting contentious politics to rest so we all can focus on the needs of our community and the health and economic recovery that needs to take place in this community and country. Less spreading of rumors and more serving one another are what I think we all desire.

Miller

It all depends on what the facts are. If there is a complaint that someone is spreading rumors, maybe the man, stating the rumors about him are not true, should go before the public and address those rumors. He should put it to rest by being completely transparent with the citizens. I know if I tell someone something, there is a basis of fact behind it. People who know me in this business know I will tell it like I see it. If I am asked a direct question, or if a conversation leads to a certain topic, I will not lie to them even if I have done something wrong. I would be transparent. The only exception would be revealing information that may harm an investigation. I have nothing to hide, and if I make a mistake I will own it. This job demands integrity and transparency.

Which candidate (excluding yourself, of course) would you endorse for Union County sheriff and why?

Miller

I know that each candidate has certain qualities that may appeal to a certain group of voters. I went into this campaign baring my soul. I want to do this for the right reasons. I worked at the sheriff’s office for 15 years. My broad experience in corrections, patrol, management and now parole and probation gives me a great set of tools in my belt. I am a veteran, a former volunteer firefighter/ambulance driver and Union County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue member. I have 30-plus years serving my country and the citizens of Union County. Look at my endorsements, former leaders in their own right. They have watched my career develop. I would ask that you exam the qualifications, life experience and “boots on the ground experience” each candidate offers. In my opinion, it is not up to the candidates to choose who is best suited. It is up to you, the electorate.

Rollins

I feel this is an invalid question or I wouldn’t be running for sheriff. I wouldn’t endorse the other candidates. The reason for this answer comes from talking to so many people in the county. The answer I received from many people is “It’s time for a change.” The citizens want change. The three other candidates all come from the same department, or the same cut of cloth. You won’t get any big change or difference from them. You will get a different person in there, but no real change. The only way to gain this change is to completely look outside the box.

I want to be straightforward and honest. I’m not going to write something I don’t believe in, or write some-

thing I think people want to hear. I am doing this because I care about our community, want to share my knowledge to better our county.

Rasmussen

I would not endorse any of the others at this time. See the following:

- Shane: I don’t know Shane but he seems to be a good man. I believe he needs to be more acclimated to our office before he attempts to handle the complex job of sheriff.
- Bill: Relationships are crucial in the sheriff’s office and this is an area that Bill struggles with. The current staff would have a difficult time following him due to what many consider his intimidating style.
- Cody: He has a fun personality and gets along with others. Before I could hire him as a deputy, I told him he needed to complete his high school degree, which he then obtained online. I was proud of him for accomplishing this, but he needs additional education and training to be an effective sheriff. Leadership experiences and roles beyond being a school resource deputy are necessary.

Bowen

I feel my endorsement isn’t relevant. This is an election for the citizens to decide and should be left up to the voter without me trying to persuade them.

I would ask every voter to make an informed decision and vote for who they truly believe is the best person to lead our community. I would like people to know that no matter who becomes the next sheriff I will do everything I can to help that person succeed and improve the livability of our communities.