

November 2020 Election Candidate Questionnaire Responses *continued from page 8*

county residents while protecting livability. My vision has always been of a prosperous and productive Columbia County, utilizing our natural and citizen resources to create a thriving county serving all citizens.

Position 3

Casey Garrett – I have lived in Saint Helens for the past 14 years, and was raised outside of Scappoose in the heart of Chapman.

I have nearly 20 years of work experience in the private sector, plus 5 years working in government administration. For over 15 years I have managed complex operations, projects and schedules, and multimillion-dollar budgets. I have a track record of success and know how to navigate government processes. I have led efforts to make drastic changes within the county's General Services Department, proving we can do better. I take a hands-on approach, and am never afraid to get my boots dirty.

I take great pride in the history of our County and I want to do everything I can to make it an even better place for our residents, workers and visitors. I am active in our community and have volunteered thousands of hours of my time to support local causes. As your County Commissioner I will work tirelessly to manage public resources responsibly, and make the absolute most of what we have.

Alex Tardif – I live on a farm with my young family in Scappoose, where I was born and raised. I'm running for re-election to serve you. I will lead a government that is fiscally responsible, transparent, and accountable, in order to create a strong, vibrant, healthy community. Prior to being elected County Commissioner I was a tax accountant. I have years of accounting and financial experience with multi million dollar corporations, leading highly successful teams. I support business development and intentional growth by creating family wage jobs and attainable housing. I serve on local boards to gain insight and serve my community. Serving as Columbia County's budget officer for three years has provided the opportunity to dive deep into the county budget and develop a long term strategic financial plan that provides for a strong financial future. I am the financial leadership this county depends on. The people of this county deserve a respectful, approachable, and balanced commissioner that will make their needs a top priority, I am that candidate.

2. What do you think are some positive things, or things that are going well in Columbia County?

Position 1

Brandee Dudzic – I moved to Columbia County 15 years ago because it was a safe place to raise my family, a beautiful place to live, and provided me the community I yearned for since leaving the Midwest in the late 90s. I feel astoundingly grateful to be able to walk my husky along the Columbia River, waving good morning to friends and neighbors as I go. I love that I live

in an area that has strawberry pancake breakfasts at the grange and salmon and sauerkraut festivals.

Columbia County has an abundance of one of the most sought-after resources: natural beauty. Flanked by mountains on one side, and a river on the other, we sit in a kind of geographical cul-de-sac. As the surrounding metropolitan areas grow, Columbia County provides us a refuge. We must protect those aspects of our community so that it can continue to grow in a direction that protects our livability while still feeling warm and welcoming to new faces and families. A good leader doesn't just make decisions for today, but for generations to come.

Margaret Magruder – There are many positive things happening on the economic development front with Columbia County commissioners and staff, the various cities, State Senator Betsy Johnson, State Representative Brad Witt, the Port of Columbia County, the Columbia County Economic Team (CCET), business/industry leaders, and educational institutions working together to bring desirable jobs, training, and an increased tax base to our county.

The development of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center (OMIC) in Scappoose is continuing with Portland Community College (PCC) increasing its commitment with the construction of its new training center on the OMIC campus.

The NEXT Renewable Fuels proposal for Port Westward near Clatskanie will produce recycled green energy biofuels and will employ hundreds during the construction process and over 200 permanently.

The Columbia County Tourism Initiative has involved business people and public agency representatives in developing a plan to capture tourism dollars by improving and promoting our waterways, trails, parks, and other natural and cultural assets.

The pandemic has spurred the need for more robust Broadband for Columbia County residents for distance learning and working from home. There are now private/public partnerships working to improve this service.

Projects like these will make Columbia County thrive.

Position 3

Casey Garrett – Columbia County is a great place. We have vast natural resources, amazing outdoor spaces, people that take pride in living here, and huge potential for economic growth. We can enjoy Portland Metro from a distance, but have our own identity and can form our own destiny.

Columbia County has: over a quarter million acres of sustainable timber lands; vast aggregate resources; hundreds of miles of rivers and streams; thousands of acres of parks and public lands with lots of room to create new recreational opportunities; a growing workforce who would rather work here instead of elsewhere; numerous opportunities to bring in industry and increase our tax base;

great people and great history.

From a county administrative and operational perspective, we are at a pivotal moment. Many of our long-term directors and managers have recently retired, or are soon to do so. Columbia County is an attractive place to move to, which makes us more competitive in recruiting a talented workforce. The stage is set for us to hire smart, improve how we operate, and make our county a better place to live, work and visit.

Alex Tardif – I believe that the county's investment in technology and system improvements has been good. Prior to taking office the county was operating on obsolete and outdated technology. I led an effort to improve technology, allowing departments to better interact with the community and work more efficiently. I think the roads department is doing amazing. After reviewing the budget, and identifying the amount of money the county spent on buying rock, I encouraged the Public Works director to look at crushing rock in our own pit. This move allowed the county to have twice as much rock for the same price. The roads department has also realigned its organization to create efficiency and produce more work. They now have a 5 year plan and are prioritizing the worst roads for maintenance and updates. The county has created a financial plan. When coupled with community input and the strategic plan, the county will be positioned to create a path forward for a strong financially stable county that meets the community's needs. I'm proud of the work we've done to build out and enhance our parks system and I look forward to working with community partners and residents to improve what we have.

3. What are some specific issues or concerns you would like to try to address if you are elected and what would you try to do.

Position 1

Brandee Dudzic – Columbia County is growing; we can resist that growth and be forced to adapt in reactionary ways that limit our choices, or we can elect leaders that will responsibly step into this role in order to prioritize our community's values. I am worried that we lack many of the resources necessary to sustain a growing population. We are in jeopardy of losing what little farmland we have left, we don't have enough childcare for the influx of families joining our community, and we lack adequate resources to support our teens as they plan for their futures. I support efforts to bring a drop-in center to Columbia County so that our teens have a safe place to access peer support and vital life skills and I will partner with agencies that provide expanded access to childcare and preschool.

I am also concerned about barriers to civic participation. To solve this, I support rotating our weekly commissioner board meetings to ensure that every single person has the chance to be heard in their own town. I will also make

my work calendar a public document, so you know exactly where I am, what I am working on, and how I am fighting for you. This is transparency in action.

Margaret Magruder – Columbia County has an extremely high percentage of residents who must commute outside the county to their jobs, robbing us of the community involvement of active, healthy families. I am dedicated to expanding existing businesses and to bringing in new enterprises to provide the jobs we need and the tax revenue that runs our county.

During the last year there has been a nationwide effort to expand internet connection to every region. The National Association of Counties developed the TestIT app which evaluates internet connection speed. This data will provide a specific and detailed picture of the areas lacking in broadband connection, and will highlight the need for federal and state funding to address it. We can see, in the current pandemic, the need for better connections for students to engage in online learning and for job-holders to work efficiently from home.

While we remain rooted in our natural resource base, Columbia County is changing and growing in exciting ways with new families, fresh ideas, exciting businesses. With that growth come complex problems. Every day I bring my experience and commitment to solve the issues that impact the livability of our County: jobs, safety, transportation, and the environment.

Position 3

Casey Garrett – I will focus on strengthening the county's relationships with local businesses and agency partners. I believe we can do a better job working together. All too often, progress is held up by a lack of effective collaboration.

For Columbia County to thrive, we need to continuously build and maintain positive relationships with representatives from our cities, port, tax districts, state and federal agencies, and private industry partners. The more effectively our county leverages these relationships, the better results we can provide to our residents.

As with any organization, there is always room for improvement. I believe our county can operate more efficiently and improve customer service. I will work tirelessly to manage your tax dollars and public assets responsibly, while always pushing to make customer service our top priority.

Alex Tardif – I will continue the work that we started to bring innovative family wage jobs to our community. I am concerned about the county's ability to operate long term without a diverse tax base. Columbia County has the second worst road system in the state and I will pursue advocating for our residents to have safer, passable roads that are well maintained. I believe that public safety is extremely important and I will continue to advocate for public safety funding. We recently did a parks survey and we

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