

Tony Paulson brings institutional knowledge reprinted in its entirety

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IVN Contributing Writer

How long have you lived in the Illinois Valley?

This was my wife's hometown growing up. We decided to move our family here in June 2000.

What's your previous involvement in civic affairs, whether on a paid basis or as a volunteer?

September 2002: Appointed City Council Seat #2, 2005-2008: elected mayor of Cave Junction, 2009-2012: volunteer firefighter/recruitment officer for Illinois Valley Rural Fire District, former member of I.V. Lions Club, I.V. Little League, assistant coach of boys' baseball and soccer at I.V. High and the last few years, you can find me at Jubilee Park, umpiring I.V. Little League and city softball games.

As a registered Republican, do you feel your politics will be relevant to your performance as mayor of CJ? If so, in what way?

No. The City Council does not create legislative law. Our responsibility, regardless of our own political party affiliation, is to make sure everyone operates by the same set of rules. Additionally, we are to provide a place for individuals to voice their personal opinions.

What do you see as the biggest issues facing CJ right now?

In the mid and late '90s, property tax legislation [Measure 50, passed in 1997] nullified growth for cities, counties and states. Our property taxes on existing buildings only can grow at 3 percent. Simply stated, there is more going out than coming in. The most recent example is our water/sewer bill. The costs incurred to operate our water and sewer plants are almost the same costs Grants Pass incurs. However, we have less residents to cover those costs, thus our services to the

residents is higher. Our growth is faster than the revenue produced.

So what's your solution?

The city is kind of strapped with one need in front of you and one hand strapped behind your back because you don't have the revenue to do all the ideas that may be out there ... We all have our own ideas of what the problem is.

Yes, but what's the solution to expenses being greater than revenue?

It's not just property taxes. I came from California. In Citrus Heights they wanted to do something, so the city council decided we're going to add a 5 percent sales tax on everything in the area. But we are not allowed to do that. We can't just vote in a tax. It has to be a district, like the I.V. Fire District. Or you can do a levy.

Recently, the Cave Junction City Council considered just such a tax on sales of gasoline and food and beverage service, although the council voted on July 23 to postpone consideration of the proposal.

The residents of Cave Junction have a legal option to impose sales tax on various situations. However, a sales tax has been on the ballot numerous times, and the people have consistently voted in opposition. We could do a levy and we would need to vote on that ... But as far as doing other things: If we wanted to improve the way our park looks or we want better roads, we would actually have to go to the state to create districts.

In fact, the state is not involved in formation of a special revenue district. A revenue district goes on the ballot either through a citizen petition with a required number of signatures, or through approval by the local governing body.

Forming a new district has more requirements than just "going to the state." Yes, new districts are

allowed to establish a new tax base, but many other steps are necessary before that could even be a viable option.

In 2004, I think, Evergreen Bank came to the city and they had an artist draw up three different storefront designs and they were going to give \$10,000 to every business that wanted to do it, because we were trying to get the town to have a unified look.

(The following is what we dropped last week.)

It was like a 1 percent loan that was payable back in 10 years. We're talking dirt nothing payments. The businesses said no.

Are you saying that the real problem is that people aren't willing to invest more money in their city?

It's not just money. They're not willing to invest themselves. That's not all of them. Taylor's has invested themselves in this community. My view of the problem is that we don't have enough revenue to do what everybody thinks is a good idea.

You're running to be mayor. What is your solution? Because if you don't have at least a tentative solution, why should we vote for you?

I don't really see that we have a problem. I see that we have a solution, where our neighbors don't know each other. People don't talk to each other. That's what I'll bring. Right now, our town is split. My solution to make the town run better is that I'm going to hold everybody equal.

The solution is not just one person. The solution is a lot of people sitting down and trying to figure it out ... But I need to figure out a way to make the revenue meet the expenditures to make it better.

Do you feel we need an

augmented police presence in CJ? And if so, what ideas do you have on how to accomplish that?

Yes, but this is not a new problem. When I was mayor in 2005, 2006 and 2007, many meetings were held to discuss this matter. Through researching old council meeting notes, this has been a "hot" topic since the early '50s. There are solutions. It requires the city and county citizens together to generate operating funds. A commitment to establish a new system needs to be made. If the people want to commit, it can be done.

What can the CJ City Council do to foster increased economic development within our city?

I believe it is NOT the responsibility of government to create growth. However, I believe it IS the responsibility for the government NOT to overregulate or constrict the growth of business. Government should encourage growth in our local businesses; NOT hinder it.

Cave Junction is only a very tiny part of the entire Illinois Valley, both in area and in population. But it's an economic center and driver for the entire Valley. What role do you see for the county in helping the city to foster economic development?

Both city and county are individual entities, separate and apart from each other. It is good business to work with each other on projects that benefit both our interests. But again, they should not be involved in regulating or directing our community.

What can the CJ City Council do to increase affordable housing opportunities in the city, in terms of zoning and building regulations, and also in terms of funding?

The city of Cave Junction has a comprehensive plan in place that

addresses this issue. Following and supporting the plan would benefit our community. As far as funding, that would be a state and federal solution.

Are you familiar with the city's comprehensive plan? What are its recommendations regarding affordable housing? Do you know if any of them have been implemented?

Details on the city's comprehensive plan would have to be directed to the current council, as well as any implementations they may have established.

What can the city do, over and above what it is doing now, to rid the city of abandoned and dilapidated housing that constitutes a fire hazard or harbors drug activity?

The Illinois Valley Fire District and the city of Cave Junction already have ordinances that determine the handling of abandonment and fire hazards. Those existing regulations need to be upheld and enforced. That goes for the unwanted drug activity as well. There are plenty of laws on the books. But people have to be willing to step up, make contact with city officials and hold each other accountable.

What's your stance on our local marijuana industry?

I personally am not a user, but have friends that do use marijuana. One positive thing I appreciate about our state... ELECTIONS. A group of citizens came together and were able to put a measure on the ballot. The people voted and a Yes decision was made. I support this process and will uphold the decisions of the people. I understand there is another measure being presented to the voters regarding taxation of marijuana. The voters' decision will be heard and followed.

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