

Wood County County-Wide Candidates for November 8, 2016 General Election

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Wood County Commissioner Candidates

Office County Commissioner

Name James E. Colombo

Party Democrat

Biography

FAMILY: Married 54 years to Sharon Mellinger Colombo, Four Children, Seven Grandchildren

EDUCATION: Parkersburg Catholic HS, AA Degree-WVU-P, Honorary BA Degree-WVU, BA Degree-Marietta College

EMPLOYMENT: Colombo's Restaurant-Family business since 1954, WV Parole Board, 6 years, by Governor Mancin 2009, City of Parkersburg; January 1998-December 2005, nominated unexpired term began June 19, 2015

1. What do you believe is the most important issue facing the Wood County Commission today?

We must broaden our tax base through growth and development in order to combat the rising county cost as well as the housing cost burden of the Jail Bill.

2. Are there any changes in state laws regarding county government that you feel would benefit Wood County? Please explain.

The State must change the Law to find an alternate funding source for the Jail Bill. The counties cost for housing prisoners continues to rise. Wood County has been struggling to find funding sources. Other counties have resorted to not making minor arrests, and as we have, used day report centers or home confinement to reduce costs.

3. What is the best way to attract new businesses to Wood County?

Being Mayor kept me on the front lines for growth and development. I've been involved with developers, for businesses like Cold water Creek, Bureau of Public Debt, Sheetz and several large box stores. We must sell the quality of our community. I have spoken with representatives from area counties, stressing we are a team, must work together for our future

Office County Commissioner

Name Rick Modesitt

Party Republican

Biography

Life long resident of Parkersburg; Attended PHS, WVU-P; Served as Police Officer 1975 - 1997; Chief of Police 1994-1997; Twice elected WV House of Delegates; Twice served as Acting Mayor of Parkersburg; Served as County Commissioner 2000-2010; Former Chairman of Athletic Commission. Licensed Realtor; President Rick Modesitt & Associates.

facebook.com/rickmodesittforcountycommission or rickmodesitt.com

1. What do you believe is the most important issue facing the Wood County Commission today?

The looming fiscal crisis over the increasing jail bill is at a critical state. I believe my experience with conservative budgeting will be of value in managing this situation. Secondary is the heroin and illicit drug epidemic in our area. The two issues go hand in hand. A concentrated effort to rid our community of this problem is a must.

2. Are there any changes in state laws regarding county government that you feel would benefit Wood County? Please explain.

The manner in which prisoners are held by the state and billed to the counties must be reviewed. Some counties are going broke under this burden. Secondly, County Commissions should be given the same home rule rights as cities. Local officials tend to manage their communities better than dictated by Charleston. Finally, to provide additional substance abuse programs.

3. What is the best way to attract new businesses to Wood County?

Commissioners need to be salesmen for the County. We need to provide potential businesses an area where the quality of life is good; housing is reasonably price; infrastructure is available; a solid education system; so we can provide a well educated, stable, hard working work force. We must be prepared to market ourselves against other counties and other states.

Office County Commissioner

Name Stephen Smith

Party Libertarian

Biography

I am in my tenth year as a Professor of Business and Accounting at WVU-Parkersburg. Prior to joining WVU-P I had a thirty year career as an accounting and financial manager in private business. I graduated from PHS, WVU (MBA) and Stetson University (Master of Accounting). My wife Paige and I have one daughter, a sophomore at PHS.

Facebook.com/stslibertarian.

1. What do you believe is the most important issue facing the Wood County Commission today?

Charges for incarceration of prisoners at the Regional Jail are the top issue facing Wood County. These fees are approaching \$250,000 per month. The Commission has virtually no control over any of the factors that affect this amount. We must work with all entities involved to get this growing burden on the budget of Wood County under control.

2. Are there any changes in state laws regarding county government that you feel would benefit Wood County? Please explain.

The State mandates a wide variety of tasks that the County government must perform. The State needs to grant authority to the County to determine how funds are raised (what types of taxes and fees are implemented) and how the required tasks are accomplished. This authority should include the option to put changes before the citizens in a referendum vote.

3. What is the best way to attract new businesses to Wood County?

Business looks for an efficient service structure in making location decisions. The County needs to provide needed services such as law enforcement, fire protection and emergency response in the most cost efficient manner possible. Whenever possible the County should cooperate with the State and the local business community, however, the role of marketing must be left with private business groups.

Wood County Assessor Candidate

Office Assessor
Name David C. Nohe
Party Republican

Because this candidate is unopposed in the general election, we asked for a biography and statement to the voters.

Biography

Mayor of the City of Vienna 1997 to 2012

WV State Senator 3RD. Dist. 2010 to 2015

Chairman of The Senate Banking and Insurance Committee

Vice-Chair of The Senate Judiciary Committee

Vice-Chairman of The Senate Energy, Industry and Mining Committee.

Former Chief of Detectives W.C.S.D. trained by the United States Justice Department in narcotics and dangerous drug law enforcement

Statement to Voters

My campaign for Wood County Assessor was successfully concluded in the May primary. I am very grateful and humbled by your confidence in me.

As in the past, you can expect to find the friendliest, most informative, and helpful office and staff available and I will provide you nothing less. I am honored to serve you again!

Wood County Clerk Candidates

Office Wood County Clerk
Name Bob Buchanan
Party Republican

Biography

For the past thirty years I owned and operated an accounting/financial planning practice here in Parkersburg, serving clients in West Virginia, Ohio and Florida, managing millions of dollars for individuals and businesses. I am married to my wife of thirty two years, Crystle and we have three boys, Curtis, Brandon and Austin.

1. With low voter participation in recent elections, what should be done to encourage more voters to participate in elections?

The last election I saw first hand the need to get voters out to vote losing by five votes. I plan to schedule classes with fifth and sixth grades to install patriotism. Providing a major effort to make sure every individual has a ride to the poll and that we react to expected voter turnout with adequate polling equipment.

2. With the many functions delegated to the County Clerk's office, what changes would you like to see to facilitate its operations?

I believe we are fortunate to have tremendous staff however I would want to add an accountant on staff, able to assist in providing necessary financial data to each

department. I would like to expand the office to assist in securing leads for additional industry and business to locate in Wood County.

3. What experience, training or education do you have that makes you the best qualified candidate for this office?

Over thirty years of financial experience with business. Leading several Boards in turning around troubled organizations. Wood County Parks and Recreation Commission, Mountwood Park. Board member for Little Kanawha Conservation District able to lead restoration for Belleville after tornado. Board member Selby General Hospital, Chairman West Virginia Envirothon, Team member Wood County Juvenile Drug Court. Wood County 4H Leaders.

Office Wood County Clerk

Name Mark Rhodes

Party Democrat

Biography

I began working for Wood County in November 1984 as a Correctional Officer, 2001 as Chief Tax Deputy and 2005 as a Deputy Clerk. I was appointed by the County Commission August 1, 2013 to replace retiring Clerk Jamie Six. I have worked in all aspects of the County Clerk's Office, including Record Room, Recording Office, Probate, Elections and Finance

1. With low voter participation in recent elections, what should be done to encourage more voters to participate in elections?

I have no solution to this long standing problem.

2. With the many functions delegated to the County Clerk's office, what changes would you like to see to facilitate its operations?

The Probate Office needs to be moved to a larger area to permit a third deputy clerk and to provide more privacy to the Personal Representative handling the estate. Current staff is cross trained and can be shifted to cover whichever office is the busiest to better serve the public.

3. What experience, training or education do you have that makes you the best qualified candidate for this office?

I have worked in the Clerk's Office since 2005. I know elections, probate, finance and document recording and the laws that govern each department.

Wood County Surveyor Candidate

Office Surveyor

Name Paul K. (Kim) Marshall

Party Republican

Because this candidate is unopposed in the general election, we asked for a biography and statement to the voters.

Biography

Professional Licensed Land Surveyor, licensed since 1976, BS in Civil Engineering-WV Institute of Technology, WV Society of Professional Surveyors-Board of Directors, 2010-11, Wood County Surveyor 1980-92, Member of Wood County Farm Bureau, Past President of the Wood County Planning Commission, Member of the Little Kanawha Regional Chapter of the WV Association of

Land Surveyors.

Statement to Voters

I would like to thank the voters of Wood County for their continued support in allowing me the opportunity to once again serve them as County Surveyor. With 40 years of experience and being involved in every facet of surveying from boundary surveying to GPS surveying, I am once again grateful for the privilege to hold the office of County Surveyor. At the end of this 4 year term, between myself and my Dad, we will have served the citizens of Wood County in the office of County Surveyor for 40 years spanning seven decades and in two separate centuries. Our property is a blessing from God to each of us. Thank you, Paul K. (Kim) Marshall

Wood County Circuit Clerk Candidate

Office Circuit Clerk

Name Carole Jones

Party Republican

Because this candidate is unopposed in the general election, we asked for a biography and statement to the voters.

Biography

Circuit Clerk 1991-Present. Graduate Marshall University with a degree in Business Administration. Completed West Virginia University Local Government Leadership Academy. Employed in Wood County Circuit Clerk's Office since 1968. Chief Deputy to former clerk, Juanita Coe. Appointed as Circuit Clerk in 1991 by then Chief Judge Arthur N. Gustke. Elected to office in 1992, 1998, 2004 and 2010.

Statement to Voters

I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve as Circuit Clerk of Wood County for many years, and I would like to thank all of you who have supported me and voted for me in the past. I do appreciate the trust that you have placed in me. I hope that you have found that I have lived up to your expectations, and have served you in an honorable and professional manner. Even though I am unopposed at the present time, I would truly appreciate your vote of confidence on November 8, or during early voting.

Wood County Prosecutor Candidate

Office Prosecutor

Name Pat Lefebure

Party Republican

Because this candidate is unopposed in the general election, we asked for a biography and statement to the voters.

Biography

Pat Lefebure is a veteran of the Wood County Prosecutor's Office and has successfully prosecuted felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile cases. He has worked extensively to combat the drug epidemic in our community. He and his wife have chosen to raise their family in Wood County. He obtained his law degree from Capital University and his undergraduate degree from Marshall University.

Statement to Voters

I will work tirelessly to fight the drug epidemic in Wood County. This problem affects everyone from the elderly to our children. In fighting this problem there is not a right or wrong answer, but it requires that we use all of our resources to better combat the drug problem. The Wood County Prosecutor's office will continue to provide treatment opportunities to those offenders that need help and fight for prison time for individuals that bring drugs into our community. I will also strive to provide opportunities to educate the public about ways that they can communicate their concerns within their communities and help law enforcement make Wood County a safer place to live and work.

Wood County Sheriff Candidates

Office Sheriff
Name Steve Stephens
Party Republican

Biography

28 years of law enforcement experience with Vienna PD. 9 years at Wood County Sheriff's Office as deputy and current Chief of Confinement Operations. Former Drug Task Force officer and commander. Former FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force Agent. Current chair of Governor's Law Enforcement Professional Standards Subcommittee. Current Vienna councilman. F.B.I. National Academy and WV State Police Academy graduate.

1. Do you feel the Sheriff's Department has adequate resources to address the increasing drug-related crime? Please explain.

No, I don't due to several factors. We only have 36 deputies to perform the various responsibilities of the sheriff's office. We need more manpower dedicated to drug interdiction and investigations. The county commission wants to help but the increasing jail bill costs are prohibiting this need. We have to ask for more assistance from the state and federal agencies.

2. Do you feel the public safety services to rural areas of Wood County are adequate? If not, what changes would you make as sheriff?

No. I would arrange community meetings to hear the needs of the residents and respond accordingly. I would like to set up sub-stations at the VFDs where deputies can access Wi-Fi to work on reports. This allows higher visibility and acts as a crime deterrent. Unfortunately, the high call volume and lack of manpower dictates our activity.

3. What changes would you like to see in the operation of the sheriff's office?

The sheriff's office will focus on becoming more community oriented. I am going to streamline administrative positions and improve upon the salaries of each employee from within our budget. We need to improve our training for both deputies and civilian staff in all divisions within the office. It is paramount to step up our priorities in drug education and enforcement.

Office Sheriff
Name Brent L. West
Party Libertarian

Biography

For over a decade I have been a small business owner and manager. I currently work in the mental health field utilizing my studies in criminal justice and psychology. As a manager, I surround myself with exceptional people that I can turn to when I need assistance or guidance - this is a key to effective leadership.

1. Do you feel the Sheriff's Department has adequate resources to address the increasing drug-related crime? Please explain.

No. As long as law enforcement continues following the policies of the failed "war on drugs", drug related crimes will continue to escalate, and thereby squandering resources to address other criminal activities. Substance abuse is a medical condition and should be treated by medical professionals (so long as the activity does not merge into violent or property crimes).

2. Do you feel the public safety services to rural areas of Wood County are adequate? If not, what changes would you make as sheriff?

No. There was an instance in my community of an assault with a deadly weapon, the response time was more than twenty minutes. The scheduling of deputies is most important to have adequate staffing and response time for all areas of the county. By reducing resources allocated to non-violent drug crimes, our deputies can more readily assist the community.

3. What changes would you like to see in the operation of the sheriff's office?

The Sheriff's Department needs to take an active, positive approach in the community. The focus should be on community relations and helping those struggling. The deputies should be held to a higher standard than in the past. The laws apply to all members, including police officers, of the community fairly. The militarization of the department should cease.