

The League of Women Voters of Emporia

2009 VOTERS GUIDE

SPRING ELECTION

INTRODUCTION:

To help voters become familiar with the candidates, the League of Women Voters of Emporia prepared this Voters Guide. The League developed the questions, which were sent to all candidates. For some questions the candidates were asked to limit their responses. Answers were edited only for length.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, grassroots organization that believes in informed citizen participation in government. The League doesn't support or oppose any candidate or political party, but after careful study, does adopt positions on certain issues.

Kansas voters may register to vote for this election until March 20 and may begin advance voting on March 18 at the County Clerk's office in the Lyon County Courthouse. Election Day is April 7 when polls will be open from 7 am until 7 pm. If you are not sure where you should vote call the County Clerk's office at 341-3243.

EMPORIA CITY COMMISSION

Vote for 3

Questions:

- 1) How long have you been on the City Commission?
- 2) Why are you a candidate for reelection as a city commissioner?
- 3) What is your vision for Emporia in the future? (150 word limit)

Julia A. Johnson

- 1) I have served on the Commission ten years.
- 2) I have enjoyed serving the residents of Emporia on the Commission and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the community. I believe that the best decisions are reached when we examine issues from a variety of viewpoints. My background in education, service on appointed boards, and experience on the commission are assets that I bring to the decision-making process.
- 3) My vision for Emporia includes:
 - A vibrant downtown with residential opportunities, restaurants, and specialty retail shops. Using our neighborhood revitalization plan to partner with private enterprise, we can build on such assets as the Granada Theatre and proposed Emporia Arts Center to accomplish this.

- A bustling tourist center. By capitalizing on our distinction as “The Front Porch of the Flint Hills,” we should make the David Traylor Zoo and the William Allen White House two of the most visited tourist sites in the state.
- A greener community, because our future requires that we take better care of our resources. Aspects of a greener community include curbside recycling, storm water issues, and work on our housing problems.
- A diversified job base. We must become a city with not only agriculture based jobs, but also careers in health-related, high-tech, and other areas that will carry us into the future.

Jim Kessler

- 1) I am completing my 4th year as a city commissioner.
- 2) We have made some good progress in several areas over the past four years, but there is always room for improvement and I would like to continue to be involved in that progress. Over the past four years we have improved our financial condition from an actual deficit in the general fund to a cash reserve of over one million dollars and I would like to continue to improve that position. We have worked on improving the organization of our city by developing and implementing an organization chart, adopted a wage and classification plan, and hopefully improved the morale of our employees. We completed the comprehensive plan for future land development, completed the Buxton study for future retail development, and cooperated with the County to form a task force for law enforcement consolidation possibilities. These plus several other improvements encourage me to want to continue to help make Emporia an even greater community to live, work and raise a family.
- 3) I hope we can continue to build on our reputation, our location, and our people. We have so many positive things going on in Emporia. The “Building Futures” campaign is the best thing we as a community have developed in a long time. The city along with the Chamber of Commerce, Emporia State University, Emporia Main Street, Flinthills Technical College, USD #253 and many others have teamed up to summarize what’s right about Emporia and we can work together to make it even better. I see a future Emporia with more industry (both white and blue collar), more retail opportunities for shopping and dining with art and cultural venues, more inclusiveness and realization of our diversity, a more beautiful city with better parks and aesthetic visualization, and many other ideas that will continue to give Emporia that positive reputation we enjoy across the state.

Kevin R. Nelson

- 1) Finishing second year.
- 2) I have a sincere desire to see Emporia continue to grow and move forward in positive way. I believe I have helped make some very sound decisions the past two years on a variety of issues. I believe my overall business skills will continue to help move the community forward in all aspects.
- 3) I believe with sound budget practices and a vision to provide the services the community needs will be the overall vision. Continuing to find new ways to attract jobs is

vital for future growth. It will be important to keep open lines of communication with the many organizations that the community has in order that feed back can continue to provide a community wide impact into building Emporia stronger in the years to come. There is always a concern not to keep raising taxes and spending funds without getting a sound return for the money being spent. I believe Emporia can move forward while these areas are kept in control in order that our local government does not become over loading on tax paying citizen These may be harder economic times but with good decision making input I believe Emporia can and will be stronger in the years to come.

SCHOOL BOARD U.S.D. #253

Vote for 3

Questions:

- 1) Why are you a candidate for election to the USD #253 School Board?
- 2) What special talents or experiences would you bring to the Board? (150 word limit)

Michael L. Crouch

1) I have been a member of the USD #253 Board of Education, for the past four years. I believe as a school district we have made significant strides in the education we are providing the children of Emporia. I have children that attend the Emporia schools and I feel like this is an opportunity to ensure that not only my children, but all children in Emporia receive the best possible education we can offer.

2) My children attend school here in Emporia and I feel this gives me a very relevant perspective on the needs of our children in Emporia. The fact that I am a parent of school age children allows me to understand the needs of parents, children, teachers and staff.

We are entering challenging times for our school district with the struggling economy and experience on the board will be very important. If re-elected I will be the 2nd most senior member of the Board of Education. I feel like my past record over the last four years serves as an example of what I feel is important to our school district. I have made it a priority to think about how every decision will affect the students of Emporia, before making a final decision. Our number one goal is to provide the best education we can to all children in Emporia.

Danny J. Giefer

1) As a resident of Emporia for the past 39 years and also a parent of two children that have went through the Emporia School system, I am interested continuing to maintaining a quality school system for Emporia. Although student achievement results have been in an upward trend over the past few years we still need to strive for continued improvement. I also believe with my strong business background that I can help with the challenges in the upcoming years with school budget.

2) I have been a resident and lived in the City of Emporia for the past 39 years. I am a parent of two children that have gone through the Emporia school system. I have been a successful business man in Emporia for the past 27 years. Some of the more challenging issues in the upcoming years will be working to live within the budget that we are presented with. I do believe in living within ones means concerning budget. I am currently a member of the Emporia Chamber of Commerce. I am also past President of the Wolfcreek Employee Association. I am a retired supervisor from Wolfcreek. I am a very good listener and always open to new ways or processes in doing things.

Amy Scheller

1) I am a lifelong resident of Emporia. My husband, Dan, and I are honors graduates of EHS as well as ESU. We thoroughly researched our community to make an active choice as to whether we would stay in Emporia and raise our family here. We are fully committed to Emporia, and feel that it – like any other community – has its blessings and its burdens. The only way a community continues to thrive is through the active participation of its citizens.

We have the privilege of being the parents of four uniquely wonderfully children. As their first teachers, we have had a primary focus on their education from the moment we became parents. I believe that a child’s education is so much more than the content taught from a curriculum. The school district has the awesome opportunity and responsibility of working with parents and guardians in forming these children.

Our children are currently in 8th, 6th and 3rd grades. I have the unique perspective of having children at the elementary, intermediate and secondary education levels. Our younger children are finishing their faith-based education at Sacred Heart School. Our family is committed to our faith, and felt this a necessary part of their early childhood. I have been continually monitoring the progress of the public elementary schools to ensure that the students at Sacred Heart will be able to keep up once transitioning to the public school system.

I am passionate about excellent education for the whole child – not just about schools that have excellent test scores. Our community is so fortunate to have many educators, administrators, counselors, nurses, and support professionals who are dedicated to the children, their education, well-being and development.

Over the past few years I have had the opportunity to participate in the USD 253 Strategic Planning and Performance Based Budgeting Processes. During these opportunities I have developed a growing desire to serve the children of our community in a more committed capacity with others who share a common vision for continued excellence in our schools. I felt that it was the right time for our family to offer my candidacy for USD 253 School Board.

2) I have a B.S.N. from E.S.U. During my education and practice as an RN, I studied the wellness of our community. My focus as a nurse is to ask not only how well are our children learning, but how are they adapting to their learning environment? What other focal and residual stimuli are in their lives that either enhance or detract from learning, growth, development and well-being?

As a nurse, I understand the confidentiality of sensitive information, the necessity of abiding by set policy for decision-making, and following appropriate channels of communication. I also appreciate the challenges of working to meet the needs of people with limited resources.

Through participation in the USD 253 Instructional Council, EMS Site Council, PBB and Strategic Planning, I have gained a new understanding of many of the current issues the district is working with.

I am committed to researching issues, healthy deliberation, active listening, fiscal responsibility, . . .

Brent H. Windsor

1) Serving on the School Board for the past several months has been an amazing experience that I am committed to continuing. I believe community involvement is a requirement of all Emporia citizens. It is our civic duty to willingly serve in ways that will improve the lives of others.

I truly believe I can contribute to the success of our school district. I am confident I can make a difference in our community, our educational system and the success of our students.

Our education system is on the forefront of challenges that we have not seen for many years. Losses in funding due to economic hardships and a potential decline in student population will strain our financial resources. Tough decisions will require that we focus our energies on ensuring that our students have the opportunity to be educated using the most advanced techniques, by the best teachers in an environment conducive for learning.

This will not be an easy task. I am a candidate whose main focus will be to ensure that Emporia USD 253 continues to excel and move forward. Our community, teachers, administrators and students can be assured that education will come first. And not just a mediocre education – but an outstanding education that puts our students above all others as they become our leaders of tomorrow.

2) I have served on many community organizations that offered leadership opportunities, including (USD Instructional Council, USD 253 Performance Based Budgeting Committee, Building Futures Recreation Committee, Emporia Recreation Commission Board Member, Emporia Sports Promotion, President, various Emporia Chamber of Commerce Committees, Grace United Methodist Church Trustee, Finance Chair, Church Council).

My work experience has provided a broad realm of tools required of a School Board member. I have vast experience in managing multi-million dollar budgets and strategically managing multiple business units through various economies and difficult situations.

Through my international travels I have experienced how other cultures put more emphasis on “worldly” knowledge, while arming their students with tools that improve their abilities to be successful in the global market. I am dedicated to bringing these tools to our youth.

As your school board member you will find that I always put the best interest of our students first.

BALLOT QUESTION: The Smoking Ordinance

Should the following ordinance or resolution become effective?

Ordinance #08-44

An ordinance amending section 16-218 of the code of the city of Emporia, Kansas, 1983, prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment within the city of Emporia, Kansas and repealing said section as it existed prior to the adoption of this ordinance.

A Yes Vote: A yes vote means the ban will go into effect.

A No Vote: A no vote means the ordinance is overturned and the ban will not go into effect.