

Name:

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Page 1: Business Climate / Regulations Issues

Q1 Rate the regulatory climate for business in Escambia County. Is it Good/Fair/Bad? Explain your answer.

I would rate the climate as fair. Better than previous years but with much room for improvement. The new federal tax cuts that have spurred our recent economic boom nationally is proof that economic growth happens when government gets out of the way of the private sector. Locally we need to follow this example and make it easier to grow existing businesses as well as attract new by cutting any burdensome regulation that hinders business activity.

Q2 Please provide any examples of how regulations have affected the life of county residents in a positive or negative way.

One example is burdensome Land Development Codes. A code required a property owner who wanted to build on their land to hire an engineer to do an onsite storm water management plan which could include swales or ponds.

This was required in an unplatted subdivision on an acre or under and if the house, other dwellings like garages, driveways etc. had an impervious surface of 2,000 square feet or more.

This added additional cost to the property owner and limited the size of home that could be built on their land.

Q3 Name the top 3 specific county ordinances/regulations you would like to see eliminated. Explain why they should be eliminated.

Ordinances and regulations can either hinder or promote economic stimulus. Any regulation or ordinance that suppresses the starting of a business, the expansion of a business or promoting business activity needs to be evaluated.

We need to create an atmosphere where new businesses are excited about relocating here and existing businesses feel encouraged to grow.

An example of encouraging and partnering with existing businesses would be The Pensacola Beach open container law otherwise known as the Sunset Provision which commenced on March 1, 2016. (This ordinance did not impact or change the legal ability to have open container on the beach itself.)

There were approximately 20 stakeholders who spoke at a Board of County Commissioners meeting to keep the Sunset Provision and also to make it permanent with no one present representing an opposing view. They testified of the economic benefit to the county by having this ordinance in place.

However it was recently repealed and open container is now in effective in the commercial district of Pensacola Beach which includes The Boardwalk. I would like to re-evaluate that decision.

Page 2: Operations / Infrastructure Issues

2018 Chamber County Commission Candidate Survey

Q4 Do you see any overlap or duplication of services between the county and the city? If so, what services, and how could these services be consolidated?

Consolidation of services between the county and the city are often debated. The attractiveness of possible savings is overshadowed most of the time by the lack of political will from either side.

Escambia County Natural Resource Management interlocal agreement with The City of Pensacola is an example of working consolidation.

The city does not have a Natural Resource Department, laboratory services or an Arborist and it is more cost productive to work with the county.

The county makes use of its assets and it's a win-win.

Can this be duplicated with other departments, services and or assets?

I believe we should always look for ways to maximize the return on the investment of tax dollars.

Q5 There have been a number of joint government meetings over the past few years. What is your opinion of these meetings? What types of cooperative meetings would you like to see moving forward?

I have found in my 20 plus years of management that the sharing of information always leads to discovery.

However to have meetings just to fill a space of time is unproductive.

I would like to have joint meetings with local business leaders to get their input on how the county could improve services so their businesses can become more productive and profitable.

I also would like to have monthly listening sessions with citizens to find out what services they feel are working and what they think the county could do to make their lives better.

I would like to see more joint meetings between the county and the city, perhaps schedule quarterly meetings.

In addition I would like to see more cooperation and collaboration between Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

Q6 Do you believe the county allocates sufficient resources for infrastructure projects? How would you prioritize these projects and fund them?

I believe we have to be proactive in our budgeting and we will need to budget more for our future infrastructure needs.

The below is an excerpt from the Escambia County Comprehensive Financial Report end of Fiscal year 2017.

Between 2008 and 2018, the County will have invested more than \$378 million in infrastructure with current allocations of the One Cent Local Option Sales Tax (LOST). Proceeds of this tax are scheduled to fund road reconstruction, dirt road paving, drainage improvements and vehicle replacements for Emergency Medical Service, the Fire Department and Sheriff's Office. LOST funding was scheduled to expire December 2017. In November 2014, a 10 year extension was approved by public referendum; this vote extends the tax to December 2028. Approximately \$50.4 million of future LOST xii proceeds will be used towards the construction of the new Escambia County Jail Facility.

If in a 10 year period we spent \$378 million and we are now committing 14.28% of that to the jail we are starting the next 10 years in a deficit.

Navy Federal Credit Union continues to add jobs. Their expansion at the Pensacola campus will bring the total number of jobs to 10,000 by the year 2026.

With that alone we will see another three to four thousand cars in that corridor.

If you review The Citizens Guide to the Budget found on myescambia.com you will see in year 2017 and 2018 under #2 Our Goals section it states "Maintain Infrastructure".

I feel we need to change that goal to "Improve Infrastructure" based on expected growth.

Priority should be given to where our growth and development sectors are. We need to make these improvements as non-intrusive to citizenry as possible.

Funding sources should be looked for from every sector of the budget.

Q7 What is your opinion of the beach congestion plans that have been proposed? What is your vision for solving this problem?

The Beach Congestion as it is called is simply a problem of more cars than spaces to place those cars.

Unlike Olive Road and Davis Hwy or Hwy 29 and Nine Mile Rd, where congestion is from cars trying to get to different destinations, at the beach it's the same destination.

So when we add new parking garages, more parking spaces and even more Ferries we will probably still have more cars and people than space. They will all be trying to get to that same beautiful destination in our backyards.

In the mean time I am not a proponent or an opponent of a new beautification project however there are many other needs in the county at this time.

So let's put more parking, consider the garages and use technology to let people know if all the spaces are full.

This could be done by having notification lights prior to the three mile bridge on the Pensacola side and on the East and West sides of the entrance to the beach from Gulf Breeze. We could also have an App made so we could check, before we even leave the house, to know the time delay. We need to think more economically and creatively.

Q8 There is a proposal for a new sports/meeting facility. Do you approve of this project and how would you propose to pay for this type of facility?

It is my understanding that the proposal as it stood is off the table.

I am thankful the County Commissioners voted against spending the \$50 thousand non-refundable tax dollars on a feasibility study.

Based on the percentage of New Market Tax Credit rewards received from the 2017 applicants there was only a 31% chance of receiving the \$ 20million which was needed for the building of the facility.

<http://nmtccoalition.org/2018/02/13/treasurys-cdfi-fund-announces-2017-nmtc-awards/>

Also we have to consider what percentage of the sports tourism market is available currently. The percentage of divisible pie is an important consideration especially with all the new facilities already being built in neighboring counties who have the same amenities too offer prospects as we do.

I would not want to add any additional cost to our tax payers without their approval.

Q9 What would your Five Year Plan for Escambia County look like?

My Five year plan doesn't start without input from constituents first. I have been talking to a lot of people and the one thing I hear more than any other is good paying jobs.

So I would want to develop a strategic planning process by gathering more information from across the district and county from citizens.

With questions like:

What do you feel the county could do to improve your quality of life?

What improvements would you like to see within the county?

Where do you see the county wasting money?

I would do similar questions to business owners within our county.

With questions like:

What local regulations could the county change or improve to increase your business productivity?

What do you feel the county could do to improve relationships with local businesses?

If you could change one thing that you went through in the process of starting your business here in the county what would it be?

To me we have to engage our neighbors and let them in on the decision making process.

We all live here together and we all want to thrive and grow together.

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Q10 What role should county government take in attracting new businesses to the area? What types of jobs would you like to see growing in Escambia County? Be specific.

The county should take an active role in creating an environment that is conducive to business development and growth. This applies to potential new business development as well as existing businesses within our community.

This includes doing all we can to assist our school system to excel, keeping taxes low, keeping our grass mowed, streets clean and maintain a vibrant community through relationships with each other. All these things work together in the economic decisions business owners make to move here or stay here.

I would like to see more tech companies' move into our area, more companies like Navy Federal who would want to move their central headquarters here.

For example AllianceBernstein is bringing their headquarters and 1,000 jobs to Nashville. The CEO said that city was chosen for its cost of living, affordability and quality of life, I say why not here.

Q11 What is your vision for the various commerce parks or potential sites throughout Escambia County?

Job creation is one of the biggest topics when I am out knocking on doors and listening to people.

We have several commerce parks in existence that have available space; I mean a lot of space!

So coming from 20 plus years of managing performance based businesses I want to see real numbers.

We cannot wait for the phone to ring, wait for an email or for companies to knock on our door. We have to be assertive not aggressive and go after these companies. Persistence and hard work will beat skill every day.

The bottom line is we have to fill the spaces immediately with job creating companies.

Q12 What should the county do with excess properties that it owns? Be specific.

First the county needs to determine if there is an immediate or future need for the parcel and if keeping it is in the best interest of the taxpayer. If the county feels there is a need to keep the parcel they need to ask the question "Can that need be met by consolidating existing office space or properties already owned by the county?"

Then the county needs to immediately divest all parcels that do not fall within the above criteria.

Q13 Tourism is an integral part of Escambia County's economy. In what ways can the county commission support tourism in Escambia County? Be specific.

Tourism is a large portion of our economy and continues to grow every year. The County Commission can continue to support tourism by making common sense regulation and ordinances that foster growth within our entire county.

One way to keep a thriving tourism base is to keep our residents here by enticing companies with good paying jobs to move here.

Also we should continue to invest into our infrastructure that connects and allows us to enjoy our beautiful beaches.

Q14 What types of Triumph/RESTORE projects would you like to see funded? Be specific.

I would like to see companies like Fish 2.0 awarded. They are driving private investment and building a network to grow innovative Gulf Coast fisheries and aquaculture enterprises.

Aquaculture is in its infancy stages here in the U.S. and specifically we have a ground floor opportunity to lead that growth along the Gulf Coast.

Innovation, creativity and thinking outside of the box are what it's going to take to stay competitive and proactive leadership is required to move us forward as a county.

I feel my military training and 20 plus years of managing large organizations have prepared me for this challenge.
