
Page 1: Rock Island County Board of Supervisors Candidate Survey 2018

Q1 Name: First and Last

Paul Gende

Q2 BIOGRAPHY: Please provide a brief bio that describes your background and the particular skills you would bring to the County Board of Supervisors.

I am a Professional Engineer having graduated from the University of Illinois. I have worked as a consulting engineer and in the construction field for the last 20+ years. I recently became an owner of a small business in Rock Island named Midwest Placing that provides concrete pumping services to contractors around the Quad Cities regional area.

Q3 What are the most pressing issues or opportunities for Rock Island County in the next several years and why?

The biggest issue facing Rock Island County over the next several years is simply defined as increasing its tax base. We have continued arguments about funding for schools, the court house, sheriffs department, Hope Creek, and the list goes on. If we were able to increase our tax base many of these issues would go away. To do this we face many hurdles. We can easily see how the Iowa Quad Cities has been growing steadily over the years and the Illinois side has remained stagnant.

Q4 What changes or reforms to Rock Island County government would you like to implement in the next several years?

One change would be to reduce the size of the county board. I believe it is too large to function effectively.

Q5 Would you support Rock Island County investing in regional marketing/economic development with other local governments and the business community through Quad Cities First, which is the economic development division of the Quad Cities Chamber?

Yes- We must work with our local partners to bring investment to the area.

Q6 Describe your general philosophy on annexation and partnering with other local governments to develop industrial sites.

We, in considering Rock Island County, are not regionally alone and should not act that way. If we can work other local governments to bring development to the area, Rock Island County would also benefit. But we should focus as a County Board on Rock Island County first.

Q7 Name two areas of government consolidation/shared services you would support, and how these would be beneficial to taxpayers.

At this time I do not have enough background to comment on this issue.

Q8 What do you see as the best long-term plan for Hope Creek - to sell; to contract with a private provider to operate; to continue owning/operating? Please elaborate.

With Hope Creek continuing to lose money, the County cannot continue to operate the facility. My thoughts are to own the facility but pass management on to a private operator with stipulations on how the must provide service for Rock Island County residents who may not be able to afford paying for direct care. I would be open to hearing all viable options.

Q9 Do you support sale, renovation, demolition or some other definitive plan for the Courthouse?

I believe the entire process for building the annex to the jail to provided the needed upgrade in services was a disaster from the very beginning. That being said we are at the point we are today.

I think the Courthouse should be saved and either renovated by the county and used for some defined purpose or sold to a private developer after having an open discussion about its purpose. It would be a shame to demolish such a beautiful building.

Q10 What is the best model for the long-term success of Niabi Zoo - public; public-private partnership; other? Please explain.

I believe the public/private partnership works well. But we must keep political motivations out of the decision making for the zoo. The care and life of the animals must come first and we should always have a director that understands that.

Q11 Where would you like the County Board to concentrate its regional efforts? Check all that apply.

Rock Island Arsenal/Strategic Defense Alliance ,

Implementation of Q2030 Regional Action Plan ,

Air Service/Quad Cities International Airport ,

Regional Economic Development ,

Tourism,

Other (please describe):

ALL OF THE ABOVE. Most importantly we must work together as a region to best support the growth of all our communities.