

**By Tim Linscott**

*Managing Editor*

*The primary election for Perkins County will be May 13. The following candidates filled out questionnaires regarding the upcoming election and are presented in alphabetical order.*

**Perkins County treasurer, Patsy Kroeker (incumbent), Julie Sestak**

Patsy Kroeker

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

I am running for re-election because I want to continue serving the people of Perkins County. It is a job I truly love to do each day. Serving the hundreds and hundreds of awesome people that I have met at the office is a privilege I enjoy.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

I have worked in the treasurer's office since October 2000, starting out as an office clerk. I was appointed deputy treasurer in January 2003, then appointed treasurer in December 2007. In 2011, I ran for the office and was elected.

I am a certified county treasurer through the Nebraska County Treasurer's Association.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this office?

My years of experience serving Perkins County gives me the ability to personalize the service to the taxpayers.

I work to stay on top of the issues in the legislature that affect Perkins County and have contacted senators to keep the interests of the county in the picture.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

I want to continue running the office smoothly and in a friendly, professional manner. I will continue to follow all state statutes in our progressive, changing environment.

I will strive to continue operating the treasurer's office under budget and to make decisions that benefit the taxpayers of Perkins County.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

I would like to see a change through the legislature that county officials are elected as nonpartisan. County officials serve everyone and being Republican, Democrat or Independent should not be an issue in a county office. The office is here to serve all taxpayers.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?

I am the current Perkins County Treasurer, elected in 2011 and have served in the office since 2000.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

My husband Bryan and I have been married for 29 years. He is a third generation Perkins County farmer.

We have two adult children: Travis and his wife Kristin of Adams, Neb., and Laurie of Kearney, Neb.

Julie Sestak

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

I have worked in county government since 1995 and find it both challenging and rewarding. From 1995 through 2012, I was Deputy Clerk in Keith County District Court. I assisted with the yearly budget preparation, quarterly financial reports and disbursement of fines and fees to the state and the county.

I was a certified passport acceptance agent and a trained mental health board member. I also assisted the jury commissioner. I enjoyed working with the public and would like to continue that service.

In 2012, I decided to take a job at the Perkins County Treasurer's office.

Working in Grant allowed me to drive less and attend more of my children's activities.

I enjoyed my new position and working with the public. I assisted with vehicle title and registrations.

Other duties included preparation of real estate tax statements and receipts and assisting with month end procedures such as disbursements and balancing accounts.

Due to a disagreement over state approved accounting procedures, my position was terminated. I would like the opportunity to serve the people of Perkins County again.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

Since January 2014, I have been employed at the Keith County Treasurer's Office in Ogallala. I am responsible for vehicle titles and registrations, real estate tax statements and receipts including daily and monthly balancing.

While employed in Keith County, I have gained valuable knowledge of current practices that streamline procedures in the office.

For example, I have seen the financial portion of the state provided software used to issue checks and reconcile the bank statement without having to use additional software i.e. Quicken.

This software already in place in Perkins County merely needs to be utilized to its full capabilities and could be implemented without financial burden to the taxpayers.

A combination of my experience, the latest technology and an eagerness to serve make me the best candidate for Perkins County Treasurer. In addition, I have an Associates of Applied Science in Office Procedures from Southeast Community College, Lincoln.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

Desire to serve and to improve the office are crucial elements for any elected position. I am dedicated and I am committed to serve the people of Perkins County and to improve the functions of the treasurer's office. My experience in county government and education in accounting and computer applications are the foundation necessary to make these changes.

I am proficient in Microsoft Office applications including Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint. I work daily with MIPS software, the state approved software for county treasurers. I am certain I have the ability to improve your experience in the Perkins County Treasurer's Office.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Customer service is high on my list. In the Perkins County Treasurer's office, I dealt with various companies registering a fleet of vehicles and trailers. It was confusing for them because often the vehicle or trailer had the same year, make and model number as others in

the fleet.

It was suggested by one of these companies to engage a numbering system wherein a number would be assigned to each vehicle and trailer.

The number would only appear on the registration kept in the vehicle and would simplify the registration process for both the company and the treasurer's office.

It is something that could be accomplished with a little time and effort without any cost to the taxpayer. Listening to the public and initiating small changes will make visits to the office quicker and easier for everyone.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

Transparency in government is essential.

Attention to cost of services, value of product and efficiency such as disbursements and balancing accounts.

Due to a disagreement over state approved accounting procedures, my position was terminated. I would like the opportunity to serve the people of Perkins County again.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

Since January 2014, I have been employed at the Keith County Treasurer's Office in Ogallala. I am responsible for vehicle titles and registrations, real estate tax statements and receipts including daily and monthly balancing.

While employed in Keith County, I have gained valuable knowledge of current practices that streamline procedures in the office.

For example, I have seen the financial portion of the state provided software used to issue checks and reconcile the bank statement without having to use additional software i.e. Quicken.

This software already in place in Perkins County merely needs to be utilized to its full capabilities and could be implemented without financial burden to the taxpayers.

A combination of my experience, the latest technology and an eagerness to serve make me the best candidate for Perkins County Treasurer. In addition, I have an Associates of Applied Science in Office Procedures from Southeast Community College, Lincoln.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

Desire to serve and to improve the office are crucial elements for any elected position. I am dedicated and I am committed to serve the people of Perkins County and to improve the functions of the treasurer's office. My experience in county government and education in accounting and computer applications are the foundation necessary to make these changes.

I am proficient in Microsoft Office applications including Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint. I work daily with MIPS software, the state approved software for county treasurers. I am certain I have the ability to improve your experience in the Perkins County Treasurer's Office.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Customer service is high on my list. In the Perkins County Treasurer's office, I dealt with various companies registering a fleet of vehicles and trailers. It was confusing for them because often the vehicle or trailer had the same year, make and model number as others in the fleet.

It was suggested by one of these companies to engage a numbering system wherein a number would be assigned to each vehicle and trailer.

The number would only appear on the registration kept in the vehicle and would simplify the registration process for both the company and the treasurer's office.

It is something that could be accomplished with a little time and effort without any cost to the

taxpayer. Listening to the public and initiating small changes will make visits to the office quicker and easier for everyone.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

Transparency in government is essential.

Attention to cost of services, value of product and efficiency gained will be first and foremost if I am elected.

I will keep a watchful eye on the budget and use tax dollars wisely.

While doing so, I will improve the productivity of the office by implementing commonly used practices without additional cost to my constituents. Using the MIPS software I mentioned is one example. Improved identification of vehicles is another.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?

I wanted to continue my employment in county government. There was a position open in the Keith County Treasurer's Office in Ogallala. I took the position to further my knowledge and have been employed there since January, 2014.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

Bryan and I have been married for 20 years. Bryan is an insurance agent and owns Countryside Insurance Agency. We are both active in our community.

I currently belong to the Madrid American Legion Auxiliary, Mother of Sorrows Altar Society, Magnificat and teach youth formation class at our church. Bryan is involved with Perkins County Youth Development Club, Rotary and Knights of Columbus.

We have three sons, Matthew 18, Mitchell 16 and Evan 12. We stay very busy with their activities. Matt will graduate in May.

My extended family includes my parents, Butch and Donna Burge from Madrid and grandparents, Ted Heinemann and LaVene Burge, both from Grant.

### **County Commissioner, District 3**

**Ted Deaver, Steve Tucker (incumbent)**

Ted Deaver

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

I became interested in this position because I believe that the people of Perkins County need to have someone that will represent them and listen to them at all times.

I will not forget who I work for. I will listen to the people for any ideas that they suggest that may be better for the county. I will fight to lower taxes. I will scrutinize every dollar that is spent while still keeping the county running properly.

I feel that we can be better represented than we are right now.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

My qualifications and background: I have been self-employed and in business for 15 years. I am a fourth generation Perkins County resident, and I have a better understanding of what our

constituents need and want.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this office?

I can contribute to this office because I will bring common sense, fairness, and a concern about how your hard earned money is spent.

I believe that there is not enough discussion or investigation into what may be best for the county. Being in agreement all of the time is not always the solution or may not be what is best for the constituents of Perkins County. I promise to thoroughly review each and every issue before I vote.

I will stand up and fight for what is fair and what is best for the people and the county alike. I believe that elected officials typically forget that they work for the people.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Goals that I will address: I will fight to lower taxes and reduce spending.

I will be the voice of my constituents in the courthouse and will work to keep our roads in good condition. I will constantly strive to maintain the achievements and high standards of our previous leadership while carrying Perkins County forward with the times.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share? I love Perkins County and want to make sure that this continues to be the wonderful place that it is. I will do this by making the best use of their tax dollars while not breaking the constituents with high taxes that they cannot afford.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?

Currently, I am owner/operator of D & D Construction and have been in this business for 15 successful years. I have managed several crews and employees during this time so I have the experience of leadership and teamwork.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

I am not currently married but I have two step children; one in the Air Force and one in business in Grant.

Steve Tucker

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

I have been serving as an appointed commissioner for the past year. My interest in this position grew after I was asked by several citizens in District 3 to submit my name. It has been an honor to serve in this capacity and I hope to have the opportunity to continue.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

This position carries many responsibilities and foremost is the ability to research and ask questions. One of my favorite questions is, 'Why do we do it that way?' Is there a better way to achieve a better outcome? Government on any level has a hard time with that question.

In addition to serving as county commissioner, I serve as Venango Fire Chief, and as president of a non-profit organization.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this office?

My business philosophy can be applied to my approach to this office. Efficiency, effectiveness and evaluation. Government in and of itself is not very efficient, but, where we can be more efficient, we should make every effort to. When someone has an issue, my desire is to find a solution.

If county government isn't working for the people, then we are not very effective. Whether it's a job, farm or county government, we have to evaluate if we are being efficient and effective. That's what I want to bring to this position.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

A county commissioner is judged on many things. The main item is the county roads. I am proud of the staff of the District 3 roads department and their attitude in setting the standard for the region in the quality in our county roads. We will be continuing in our efforts to improve the roads that keep the western half of Perkins County moving. One goal we have this year is attempting to control rye in the ditches and puncturevine.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

One of the concerns many have shared with me is the rapidly rising property valuations in the county. It is good to see the value of property increase, but, it is important that tax rates be held in check. The county has been responsible in spending with only minor increases in budget requirements. I would like to see the county continue to see increased property values; however, the budgetary requirements for the county should not require any additional burden.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?

My wife Rachel and I live on the family farm near Brandon where I have been farming for 25 years.

7. Personal: Spouse, children.

Rachel and I have four children, Michael, who is a senior, Tyler, age 10; Kylie, age 9 and Trevyn, age 6.

#### **Legislature, District 44**

#### **Dennis Berry, Dan Hughes, Steve Stroup**

Dennis Berry

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

Our district needs a voice in the unicameral that already has governmental experience and has already developed personal and professional relationships with those in Lincoln.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

There is a difference between experience and service. I have both. I have nearly 40 years of experience working on promoting my chosen occupation, education. Although education is a service profession, I have long proven successful history of service outside my 'job.' My services includes, but is not limited to, 10 years as mayor of McCook.

In that position, I am in contact with a variety of federal, state, area and local government officials and agencies.

Although major improvements have been made in McCook, including the new \$5.2 million safety center and city office building, there has been no increase in the property tax levy and even a decrease in the occupation tax on phones. I have helped bring new jobs to the area, Valmont, Work Ethic Camp, building construction, etc.

I have served in various leadership positions including being past president of the McCook Chamber of Commerce, Tom Osborne's Team Mates mentoring program, SW Nebraska Child Advocacy Team and the county Nursing Home Foundation. Plus serving on the SW Nebraska and county emergency management boards, the state Workforce Development board and the state Babies from the Bench team; United Way drive chair, YMCA volunteer, McCook College Boosters; Heart Fund block chair; Special Olympics, Toy Box, Coat Closet and my more civic-type events.

Remember, this includes nothing of my education service and experience, as professional occupation efforts are just expected of all. I also have three different college university degrees plus I retire in June and would be able to work full-time serving the people of the third district.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this office?

I have a proven history of working with individuals and groups to reach goals. I have skills in defusing different situations and reaching compromises but also have made tough decisions that have angered others, so I know how to handle pressure. I understand rural Nebraska, agriculture, small schools, how to meet government regulations and fiscal restraint. I believe I have good interpersonal relationship skills.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Water issues, taxation, education, loss of population, improvement of infrastructure are all issues not only for District 44 but the state.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

If the three NRD's and surface and ground water users cannot find a peaceful, fair middle ground, including a plan for sustainability, I fear the state will get involved and senators from the east will decide this regional issue.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?

Administration at McCook Public Schools since 1987 and mayor of McCook for the past 10 years.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

Wife, Cora, counselor in private practice; daughter, Susan, age 30; two grandchildren.

Dan Hughes

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

I have been involved in public service since I got back from college. I want to continue serving the public.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

I have been a member of the Nebraska Wheat Board, appointed by Gov. Dave Heineman, chairman of the U.S. Wheat Associates, member of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, member of the Nebraska Ag Builders Club, member of the Venango Lions Club, member and former president of the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association; former member of the Grant/Perkins County School Board (12 years), former member of the Nebraska Ethanol Board, appointed by Gov. Ben Nelson; and a former member of the USDA Chase County Farm Service Agency Committee.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this office?

Common sense, a great work ethic, an ag background. I understand spending tax dollars, they are my dollars as well. So I am very conservative with them.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Property taxes and water in the 44th District, as well as education, are very important issues. Property taxes are the one major issue on the minds of all Nebraskans and it is important to monitor the discussions of the Tax Modernization Committee to fully understand the Nebraska tax system and the effects of potential changes.

Water has a huge impact on the entire district. We need to have access to water and use it wisely. We have to be good stewards of our resources.

Gaining access to quality education, from kindergarten to twelfth grade, is important in the district. We also need access to higher educational opportunities at Nebraska's College of

Technical Agriculture in Curtis and McCook Community College.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share? I want to get through the primary first before going on to other issues.

6. What is your current occupation? How long have you been at that occupation?  
I have been involved with farming for over 35 years.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

Wife, Josie, and I have been married for 36 years and we have two adult children: Tyler and Ellen Hughes and Ashley and Tim Colglazier.

Steve Stroup

1. Why did you become interested in this position for the election?

Beginning farming and ranching in my twenties I experienced the after effects of the Russian Grain embargo.

I felt the decisions that were made lacked foresight. Informed decision making was lacking and that if given the opportunity I could make better decisions. My goal was to then become a Legislative Senator. Thirty plus years later and several requests to run, this desire to serve has been reignited.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

As a fifth-generation farmer and livestock producer, I have experienced both the upsides and downsides of the profession.

My degree in Health Information Management, as well as my contract medical coding business, complement and enhance those agricultural experiences. This diverse expertise leads me to believe I am qualified. I am eager to put my skills to use and turn words into action—I want to prove that the “flame of service” fervently burns within me.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

As current graduate of the Nebraska LEAD program we are taught to understand both sides of every issue before making a decision, this is a valuable tool. I believe I have the ability to unite people to work for the common good, to seek a logical solution not an emotional one. I will bring the same business approach to the office as I apply to my own business.

I am the working man’s representative entering this race without prejudice or predisposition.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

First, the voters I meet with have a grave concern over the longevity of the supply of water.

This issue demands our utmost attention. The continued supply of water affects everyone in the district and will have a direct effect on the economy. Secondly, I would like to see the school funding formula changed to allow all schools to participate in school aid.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

I will defend the First and Second Amendment as well as pro-life issues. I have been endorsed by the Nebraskans United for Life. I would also like to address issues concerning veterans and make it more attractive for them to return to the state.

6. What is your current occupation? How long?

I have been raised on a farm -ranch/feedlot all my life and continue that today.



I purchased my first place in 1978 just prior to Julie and I getting married.

In 2006 I received a degree in Health Information Management from Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff. While pursuing this degree I started a contract medical coding business in 2004 and continue that business today.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

I have been married to Julie Schrader for 34 years.

Julie is an LPN, however she has been employed the past 14 years with the United States Postal Service as a rural route carrier.

We have raised four sons, Zachariah- 33, Jeremiah-31, Nathaniel-29 and Jordan-25. We also have six grandchildren, three kings and three queens.

### **Perkins County Hospital District Board**

#### **Bonnie Taubenheim, Michael Mosel (incumbents)**

Bonnie Taubenheim

1. Why did you become interested in the position for the election?

Several years ago I had some health issues and it became very clear to me how important our hospital and the entire staff was to our community.

It was so helpful to be able to do testing and see specialists here in Grant. Until that time, I was not aware how many different doctors serve at our hospital. So when a position on the board became vacant, I volunteered for the position.

2. What background or qualification do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?

I worked for Farm Service Agency for 32 years, so I had a pretty good understanding of working with government rules and regulations. Being a government office, all people were treated equally.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

After serving on the board for a little over a year, I feel I understand more about the hospital's importance to this community. The hospital is the biggest employer in the county and brings a lot of people to the community.

I will make decisions keeping that in mind and use good judgment in planning for its future.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

The first goal will be to get moving on the renovation of the hospital. It has been a slow process, but hopefully will begin construction soon.

It is always important to look for doctors, both those that would live here and those for the outpatient clinic. Also, keeping the hospital financially sound is extremely important, especially with the new issues raised by our new health care system.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

I feel the condition of the rest home needs to be addressed. We are starting to look at ideas that will work for Golden Ours.

Hopefully, we can start on some soon. For the residents and staff, it needs to be safe and comfortable.

6. What is your current occupation? How long?

Retired for almost three years.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

Husband, Glenn, manages Sargent Irrigation. Son Clint is married to Nancy, five children, Regan, Tyler, Lauren, Luke, Zach. Daughter Shannon is married to Justin Vaughn, two

children, Owen, Max.

## **Perkins County**

### **Commissioner, District 2**

#### **Bernard Deaver, Leon Pankonin (incumbent)**

Bernard Deaver

1. Why did you become interested in this position?

I have always been interested in local government and the welfare of our county, and thought about this position for some time.

In expressing this interest to others, several people encouraged me to file as a candidate.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel make you a good candidate?

I have a 20 year history of serving on local boards and committees, and am experienced at working as a team with other members of such. Being self employed my entire adult life, I know about living within a budget.

I have had full time employees for over 20 years whom I dealt with firsthand on a daily basis. Through having a family member in this position previously, I am fully aware of the time it takes and am willing to devote that time.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

I will be engaged in all aspects of the office. I expect to have a good relationship with other officials and be responsive when questioned by constituents.

I can't promise always having the answer someone wants to hear, but I do believe it is my duty to have an answer. I will strive to get value for our tax dollars and know where they are going.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Two things people have voiced concerns to me about are the roads in District 2, and the budgets of other elected officials.

Most people also know improvement in the roads will take time. Time that I believe they are willing to give someone if they see an effort. My strategy, as much as the position allows, will be to compare what is working (or not) in other road districts, with how money is allotted in budgets, what equipment, techniques and plans are used. Then try to apply that to District 2.

The county commissioners annually review and approve the budgets submitted by the other elected county officials, as well as their own. Individually and altogether, it is a lot of money. It might be too much, then again, it might be a bargain.

There is no way for me to know until I am involved in the process and sit down with each of those officials in turn through the budgeting process- something I promise to do. Once I am involved in the process, I will respond when there are specific questions about budget items.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

As most residents of Perkins County know, I have been a long time proponent of, and involved in economic development. One way a tax supported entity can support its local economy is by making sure that when possible and cost efficient, tax dollars for necessary purchases are spent locally.

6. What is your current occupation? How long?

I have been a life long farmer. For the last 16 years, I have also owned and operated Deaver Computer Service in Grant, which I am transitioning away from through the course of 2014 which will give me more flexible time to assume the duties of this office if elected.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

My wife, Missy, is employed at Regier Equipment in Madrid. We have five children and five

grandsons. Richard and wife Tarra Terry have sons Christopher and Ethan; James and wife Molly Deaver have a son Everett; Hallie and husband Steven Pflum have sons Andrew and Brody; Matt Deaver and Brent Deaver.

Leon Pankonin

1. Why did you become interested in this position?

Being a commissioner for two terms.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel make you a good candidate?

I have served two terms.

3. What do you think you can contribute to this board or office?

I do have experience.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address at this time?

Try to keep the levy where we don't have to raise taxes.

5. Are there other issues or ideas you wish to share?

The landfill issue and water for irrigation.

6. What is your current occupation? How long?

Farming for 50 years.

7. Personal: Spouse and their occupation, children.

Wife, Lisa; children, Amy and husband Marty, Tad, CJ, Ben, Max; grandchildren, Cole, Brody, Haley, Heidi.