

The primary is where it's at

By AnJanette Brush
Apr 24, 2024

The signs you might be seeing out on the roadsides announce it:
We're in primary election season.

As your current county commissioner for District 4, I'd like to share why I'm running for re-election: It's because we've prioritized key community needs, and I'd be honored to keep building on that work. While I've been in office, Taos County was responsible for the transparent and thoughtful allocation of federal pandemic relief funds. Then we started tackling the housing crisis in both big-picture and immediate ways. We partnered with the Town of Taos to help to start the Taos Housing Partnership, which is now bringing focus to needed policy changes, as well as to homebuyer education and support. Additionally, we're creating a plan for workforce housing on 9 acres of our own county property.

The Taos County team also continues to seek innovative ways to improve and deliver other critical infrastructure, including detox, roads, recycling, animal care, and public health and safety. For example, as part of the commission I voted to put on the ballot a GRT (gross receipts tax) increase to support our county's first responders. This brings more resources to our fire department and EMTs —and we agreed to share the revenue with the municipalities in the county.

Another GRT issue we put on the ballot was to support Holy Cross, our hospital and the UNM-Taos nursing program. I'm grateful our community overwhelmingly voted in favor of both funding proposals after we put them before you.

Your county commissioners set policy priorities like all of these. But without good people to get work done, it matters little. Which is why we prioritized completing a compensation plan to pay county employees a fair (in other words, higher!) wage. Because we supported this effort to keep and recruit the team we need, we can better provide the services you need. After we did this, our vacancy rate dropped by double digits.

We've made progress, but of course there's more work to do—especially when it comes to protecting our lands, water, homes, and health in the face of the climate crisis. Some of the policy changes we'd like and some of the funding we need requires collaboration with others. Fortunately, your current county team has strong relationships at the local, state and federal level. We know and like these folks, we brainstorm and compromise with them, and we partner with them.

So let's keep the momentum going. I respectfully ask for your support and the privilege of continuing this work. Reach out to me with your questions, concerns and ideas. I might not always have

the answers you want or be able to make the fixes we'd like right away. But I will always listen and try. And I'll always be honest with you and accessible to you.

Regardless of where you stand, please vote and make your voice heard. Elections are often decided in the primary, and that's true for your democratic county commission candidates. The winners of the June primary will win that seat, as there are no Republican contenders in the November general election.

Early voting starts May 7 at the county complex on Albright Street. On May 18 it expands to El Prado, Peñasco and Questa. Election Day is June 4. Visit nmvote.org for detailed info — and then vote!

AnJanette Brush is a resident of Arroyo Seco and Taos County commissioner for District 4. Contact her at vote@anjanette4taoscounty.com or text/call 575-224-2034.