

Dear Editor,

I want to thank the Chronicle Editorial Board for giving me the opportunity to address the issues of this campaign. I am disappointed, but not surprised, by your endorsement of the incumbent in this campaign for Sheriff. In your endorsement you cited numerous accomplishments by our Sheriff that have supposedly improved the safety of our citizens. One has to wonder how much safer are we? Are we safer because of the "Cadillac" spending of the incumbent or because we are a rural lightly populated (mostly retired) county? Could we be just as safe if the Sheriff bought the "Chevrolet" version as opposed to the top of the line "Cadillac" version?

Why isn't our Sheriff using alternative funding sources, such as drug money, confiscations and criminal investigative cost recoveries funds to pay for enhancements to his agency? Other sheriff's offices and police departments around the state and country use these funds to bring improvements to their agency without burdening the taxpayer. Why is that whenever he needs a new top of the line crime fighting tool, he always goes to the taxpayer?

Finally, how much safer are we when he spends \$120,054 to fund the salary, benefits and operating expenses of media relations specialist? How much safer are we when he spends over \$350,000 a year to have deputies dictate their reports rather than write them? How much safer are we now that we have an in-house attorney who's salary and benefits exceed \$133,000? How much safer are we when numerous deputies are on extended sick leave and light duty due to injuries sustained in his new obstacle course?

These are just a few of the many examples of wasteful spending by the Sheriff that actually detracts from our safety, because these funds are not used to put additional deputies on the street. And what has been our Sheriff's response when he was questioned about his budget? He has been arrogant, used double talk, and misquoted the law to keep people from seeing his budget.

As I outlined in my presentation to the board, here is my platform for this campaign. I will stop the out of control spending of this sheriff. I will redirect some of these savings into improving our delivery of basic law enforcement services to our citizens, while maintaining many of the successful programs of the incumbent sheriff.

In addition, I will bring a new level of integrity to the office. My budgets will be published and open to the public and county commissioners. I will also work to develop alternative funding sources to fund enhancements to the Sheriff's Office, without going to the taxpayer.

Disciplinary decisions will no longer be based on whose buddy you are, but on the facts of the allegations. I can assure you that under my administration we will not see deputies terminated for allegedly making disparaging remarks about the color of my house. Nor will deputies be allowed to commit misdemeanor crimes and not face internal discipline.

To accomplish these tasks I will surround myself with experienced law enforcement leaders who are dedicated to giving the best law enforcement protection, while respecting the tax payer's checkbook.

Thank you,
Hank Hemrick
Candidate for Sheriff