

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

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Mayor Dave Duran, Democrat Candidate did not return survey. Stan Leach, Republican Georgine Corby, Independent What are the three most pressing issues likely to fact your city during your term, and what specifically would you support to address them? Leach: Need for new I-74 bridge.

Maintaining infrastructure to acceptable levels.

Continuing the momentum of Riverfront development.

Corby: Growth of the private sector. Downsize city government.

Improve infrastructure. Water, sewer systems, and streets.

Work on efficiency in schools. They are like our city government, too top-heavy in administration. Our support staff needs the compensation.

Differentiate yourself from your opponents on three issues you think are important that you also expect your governmental body to consider during your term.

Leach: My opponent and I differ in many ways, ranging from our basic core beliefs on ethical issues and leadership style to our level of participation in city functions. Three areas that come to mind when considering this question are:

Development. My record speaks for itself when looking at development issues. During my first two terms as mayor, the City of Moline has realized more than \$180 million of new development on our riverfront including The Mark of the Quad Cities, Heart of America corporate headquarters, Radisson Hotel, John Deere Commons, Caxton Block Building, Historic Block, Heritage Building, and John Deere Health Insurance. This has been accomplished in part by our working hand-in-hand with our private-sector partners, Renew Moline. I participate in their meetings and serve as an active member of the Project Management Team.

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

The City has also seen more than one million square feet of new retail and commercial property constructed along the John Deere Expressway during my first two terms as mayor. This has resulted in a significant increase in our sales-tax revenues, which has allowed the city to lower our property-tax rate seven of the eight years I have been mayor. The property tax rate when I took office was \$2.39 per \$100 of assessment; today our rate is \$1.90. For a citizen with a \$100,000 home, that translates to a savings of \$161.70 each and every year.

My opponent's voting record, however, has been to oppose development projects, claiming that they are "wants, not needs." I differ greatly with that statement. We need a strong local economy!

Proactive versus knee-jerk. My approach to issues such as maintaining infrastructure and complying with federal mandates has been proactive. You can't ignore the fact that the federal government has mandated new stormwater regulations or the fact that our infrastructure needs attention. I have supported measures that will insure the future viability of our community, while my opponent has taken the political safe route and continues to ignore these issues. Perhaps they would prolong the inevitable until the U.S. EPA begins to fine the city for violation of our discharge permit and then, like Chicken Little, cry that the sky is falling.

Responsiveness to citizens. As mayor of Moline I serve as vice president of the Illinois Municipal League, the National League of Cities Energy and Environment Committee, chairman of the Bi-State Regional Commission, and Quad Cities Development Board of Directors. Most importantly, however, is my accessibility to the citizens of Moline. I literally attend any function that I am invited to attend. Some people question this practice, as it does take a toll on your energy. But on the other hand, to the groups that ask me to attend their function, it means a great deal to have a city representative present to answer questions and support their programs.

Corby: I have a better understanding of civil engineering – roads, infrastructure.

I am a manager. I own a business.

I am now and have always been a leader.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support increasing funding, even if it required reducing funding to other programs or projects.

Leach: I would support increased funding in the following three areas of the budget because I feel strongly about these matters:

Neighborhood-improvement projects. The neighborhoods of Moline are the backbone of the community, and we must continue to reinvest in this important asset. The Advance Moline Plan is a capital-improvement program that does just that. It includes funding for residential streets, parks, sidewalks, alleys, housing, and beautification, all important components in the preservation of our neighborhoods.

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

Police and public safety. Unless are city is safe and enjoys a low crime rate, our citizens cannot be excited about their community. I have always supported our police department and their programs such as DARE, Neighborhood Crime Watch, and The Police Academy, and will continue to do so during my third term as your mayor.

Fire department and EMS. As a former 20-year member of the Moline Second Alarmers, I understand the importance of having the best tools available for our firefighters and paramedics. I will continue to support funding for the department in the future.

Corby: Schools should get more, TIFs less.

Infrastructure more, city management less.

Support workers in schools more, administration less.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support decreasing funding, regardless of whether the budget required it.

Leach: Each year the city of Moline puts together a well-thought-out budget designed to meet the goals and objectives established by the city council. It is important to note that the goals are established through consensus of the city council and are designed for the betterment of the entire community and do not portray the agenda of one particular individual but rather the collective wishes of the entire council. Our budget is lean, and that accounts for the fact that we have been able to reduce the city share of the property-tax rate seven of the eight years I have served as mayor. I do not support decreasing the funding for any projects or programs that are included in the budget. The budget was developed and adopted by a broad consensus of the city council, and I believe they should be given the opportunity to implement the new budget as it was developed.

Corby: Tax incentives.

City administration.

The 20-year TIFs now in effect.

If it were clear that a large majority of people in your city and/or ward opposed a proposal that you strongly favored, what decision would you make and how would you justify it to your constituents?

Leach: This is a difficult question to answer primarily because it is a hypothetical question with no established criteria. I can say however, that I have been elected to represent the people of Moline, and I can assure everyone that I always have made decisions based on what I feel is for the greater good of the community.

Corby: First, I would let my opposition try their hardest to sway me! But if I knew I was right, I would decide my way then give them the facts to back up my decision.

What specific proposals would you support to bring genuine economic growth – new jobs that pay well, companies committed to the community – to your city? What do you think are the most effective tools available to city government to spur economic development?

Leach: I will continue to work with existing companies and employers in Moline to assist them with expanding their businesses and employment base. It is a fact that seven out of every 10 new jobs created in the U.S. are from expansion of existing businesses. We need to continue to show the businesses in Moline that we care about their well-being and want them to stay and grow in our community. I believe that the best program for assisting business growth in our city is to provide them with an environment that creates the confidence to invest. Incentives that are earned by the businesses and do not cost the taxpayer are also effective in attracting investment and job creation and I support those types of programs.

Corby: Short-term TIFs.

Short-term tax incentives.

Play each negotiation by ear.

Help the small-business owner.

Infrastructure support.

Government should do only a little to spur growth.

What specific proposals or policies would your support to ensure that economic development in your city does not come at the expense of other parts of your town or the other Quad Cities?

Leach: Economic development is more often than not driven by the private sector with little or minimum involvement by the city. The only policies or proposals that I would support to guide development would be our zoning ordinances, land-use policies, and other planning documents and tools. To attempt to steer, restrict, or further guide development within a city is a very dangerous practice and can lead to creating a negative business climate in the community.

Corby: See answer to previous question.

List specific concepts, proposals, and projects that you think will ensure a vital and sustainable downtown in your city.

Leach: Development of the Bass Street Landing mixed-use project to include additional retail and commercial space, waterfront condominiums, and brownstone townhouses.

Carefully planned location of the on and off ramps for the new I-74 bridge project. An efficient traffic flow is vital to the continued success and redevelopment of Downtown Moline.

Moline Election Guide

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Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

Promotion and recruitment of good-paying high-tech jobs that will enable us to retain our youngest and brightest citizens. We must reverse the “brain drain.”

Continue to expand the riverfront redevelopment that was initiated during my first two terms as a mayor of Moline.

Constantly strive to enhance the productivity and efficiency of our very talented workforce. Our employees are our most valuable resource. We must continue to reward our employees with sustainable wages and benefits at a level where they can comfortably provide for their families. Our employees have adopted the theme and now live by the motto: “The Moline Way – Improving Every Day.”

Corby: Meet with downtown merchants to help them market themselves.

TIF sections of downtown for no more than five years. (We now have a 20-year TIF.)

Moline, 2nd Ward Alderman

Julie Laird, Republican

Candidate did not return survey.

Pat C. O’Brien, Democrat

What are the three most pressing issues likely to face your city during your term, and what specifically would you support to address them?

O’Brien: Infrastructure. If we fix the infrastructure in the older parts of town, renewal will follow. A code-enforcement officer will also help to improve the condition of buildings in our city.

High-paying jobs. We don’t seem to be able to draw decent-paying jobs. We could encourage higher-paying jobs by taking care of our fiber-optic cable downtown. Also, if you have a reputation for having a nice, clean city, that will create a demand for space.

Affordable housing. Moline used to be the favorite place for people to go, but with weak code-enforcement and some other things, we’ve fallen off the map.

Differentiate yourself from your opponent on three issues you think are important that you also expect your governmental body to consider during your term.

O’Brien: My opponent says she agrees with me on everything, so I don’t know why she’s running.

I voted against the stormwater utility; she supports it. I wrestled with that vote, but when you add a new tax, it never gets smaller and it never goes away. Moline’s the only city in Illinois with a stormwater utility, and we should have used other sources of revenue instead of a new tax.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support increasing funding, even if it required reducing funding to other programs or projects.

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

O'Brien: Streets and infrastructure.

I would put more money into housing rehab; we should just open it up to everybody. Right now there's an income requirement.

Recycling and renewable energy are things that are just alien to us.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support decreasing funding, regardless of whether the budget required it.

O'Brien: I did not support the new mausoleum.

I did not support the new city-hall annex.

And I'm really having a new problem with new \$3 million library.

If it were clear that a large majority of people in your city and/or ward opposed a proposal that you strongly favored, what decision would you make and how would you justify it to your constituents?

O'Brien: I will generally vote my conscience. When Walgreens basically wanted to move across the street, it would have some displaced some nice homes and elderly people. I didn't want to make it worse than it already is for the elderly. I've gotten phone calls from both sides, about 50-50, but I don't support the move.

What specific proposals would you support to bring genuine economic growth – new jobs that pay well, companies committed to the community – to your city? What do you think are the most effective tools available to city government to spur economic development?

O'Brien: Without the TIF, you've got nothing downtown. Zilch. I'm not necessarily against economic incentives. But if we do give economic incentives to somebody, they need to give back to the community at least what they take out. We can put requirements – such as the number and types of jobs created – into incentive agreements. And we need to make sure our city is clean and attractive to draw workers and businesses.

What specific proposals or policies would your support to ensure that economic development in your city does not come at the expense of other parts of your town or the other Quad Cities?

O'Brien: I would only support TIFs in blighted areas. When people see it in a blighted area, they're more supportive of it. We want to TIF the areas that need it and look for businesses that don't necessarily exist in Moline, like renewable-energy services.

List specific concepts, proposals, and projects that you think will ensure a vital and sustainable downtown in your city.

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

O'Brien: The TIF itself has helped the John Deere Commons area, but sometimes economic development can be targeted to a few specific blocks. I'd like to see more foot traffic on 5th Avenue and more rounded-out growth downtown. We could also use better signage. We need to encourage people to stay in Moline when they're down here for a game or to shop.

Alderman At-Large

Joseph A. Maddelein, Democrat

Candidate did not return survey.

Donald P. Welvaert, Republican

Candidate did not return survey.

4th Ward Alderman

Bruce Peterson, Independent

Candidate did not return survey.

Dick Potter, Democrat

What are the three most pressing issues likely to fact your city during your term, and what specifically would you support to address them?

Potter: An aging and stagnant population, changing face of neighborhoods, and continued decline of the infrastructure. We need to attract new jobs and preserve present jobs based upon the premise that these jobs export a product, i.e. a service, tourism, durable goods, etc. We must protect and restore affordable housing and continue to rebuild our streets and sewers.

Differentiate yourself from your opponent on three issues you think are important that you also expect your governmental body to consider during your term.

Potter: Taxes. I don't support the storm water utility tax (rain tax) and I opposed the incentives for big-box retailers (Wal Mart, Target, etc.).

Neighborhoods. I oppose the demolition of affordable housing for drive-thru pharmacies (creeping commercialism).

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support increasing funding, even if it required reducing funding to other programs or projects.

Potter: More street repairs, more attention to older and/or decaying neighborhoods, sidewalk repairs.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support decreasing funding, regardless of whether the budget required it.

Potter: *Candidate did not respond to question.*

If it were clear that a large majority of people in your city and/or ward opposed a proposal that you strongly favored, what decision would you make and how would you

Moline Election Guide

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Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

justify it to your constituents?

Potter: I think that voters generally elect people who will act in the best interests of the community. We will not always agree, but voters will respond to honesty, conviction, and leadership. I won't vote based on polling.

What specific proposals would you support to bring genuine economic growth – new jobs that pay well, companies committed to the community – to your city? What do you think are the most effective tools available to city government to spur economic development?

Potter: Incentives to companies that export a product and providing infrastructure are the best tools.

What specific proposals or policies would your support to ensure that economic development in your city does not come at the expense of other parts of your town or the other Quad Cities?

Potter: We need a treaty to stop stealing jobs and business from each other! We need to cooperate more.

List specific concepts, proposals, and projects that you think will ensure a vital and sustainable downtown in your city.

Potter: Lure high-tech jobs downtown, provide better housing opportunities, and link the neighborhoods to the riverfront.

6th Ward Alderman

Jeffrey A. Stulir, Democrat

Candidate did not return survey.

Michael Crotty, Republican

What are the three most pressing issues likely to fact your city during your term, and what specifically would you support to address them?

Crotty: Small business incentives. Contact state and federal government for funding low-interest loans.

Neighborhood improvements. Incentive for homeowners.

Revisit recycling. Curbside and find a way to fund it.

Differentiate yourself from your opponent on three issues you think are important that you also expect your governmental body to consider during your term.

Moline Election Guide

Written by Jeff Ignatius
Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

Crotty: Recycling – curbside and funding issue.

Growth in Moline with some controls.

Incentives for small- and medium-sized businesses.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support increasing funding, even if it required reducing funding to other programs or projects.

Crotty: Small business incentives.

Recycling curbside.

Advance Moline.

List three specific programs or projects for which you would support decreasing funding, regardless of whether the budget required it.

Crotty: I am only a candidate for 6th Ward, and I have a lot to learn. Until I know all the programs, I cannot make any recommendations.

If it were clear that a large majority of people in your city and/or ward opposed a proposal that you strongly favored, what decision would you make and how would you justify it to your constituents?

Crotty: The city government is for the people, and I would share my ideas and listen to their concerns and agree to a middle-of-the-road compromise.

What specific proposals would you support to bring genuine economic growth – new jobs that pay well, companies committed to the community – to your city? What do you think are the most effective tools available to city government to spur economic development?

Crotty: Small-business incentives with state and federal funding. Generate an interest level in Moline and show how businesses can grow in Moline.

What specific proposals or policies would your support to ensure that economic development in your city does not come at the expense of other parts of your town or the other Quad Cities?

Crotty: Balance of business in the area. Work with the local chamber and other local groups to assure duplication is not happening.

List specific concepts, proposals, and projects that you think will ensure a vital and sustainable downtown in your city.

Crotty: Internet-access site in empty locations; convert locations for culture and learning displays to showcase the talent in the Moline area. Promote growth and interaction between the

Moline Election Guide

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Tuesday, 27 March 2001 18:00

John Deere Commons and downtown businesses.