

ORC Candidate Questionnaire

1. What role do you think Mesa County should take in economic development? What areas of focus for economic development would you direct staff to pursue?

District 1

John Justman: The County supports GJEP, the Business Incubator program, the “Jump Start Colorado” program is working and will be helpful to create jobs. We are working on broadband and have a personal property tax rebate program available to businesses.

Mel Mulder: Mesa County should take the lead role. We should go for high speed internet and the Grand Junction Economic Partnership. We need to support the Workforce Center and Business Incubator as well.

Jim Doody: Our role should be a leadership role when it comes to economic development. Any and all areas should be considered. We need to be open minded regarding economic development. I would like to have at least one dedicated employee attend all the different committees and coalitions meetings in Mesa County to help the Commissioner’s make educated decisions regarding economic development.

District 3

Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Mesa County should be an active participant in the efforts of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership. Mesa County should work with all the communities in its borders to coordinate their efforts into a seamless whole. I would ask the Board of Commissioners to commit our economic development efforts to diversifying our local economy; to creating sustainable industries and jobs; to focus on industries that utilize our comparative economic advantages, such as our public lands, that offer access to resources such as the landscapes in the Colorado National Monument, the Grand Mesa National Forest and the beauty of the Colorado River and its tributaries that transect all of our communities in Mesa County.

2. What is the appropriate role for Mesa County to play in promoting the outdoor recreation economy in our community?

District 1

John Justman: The County has worked with the BLM for three years trying to keep trails for all users open on BLM land, passed an ATV ordinance to use County roads to travel on, put in trail head parking on the Grand Mesa for Nordic skiing and snow mobiles. We will work to attract outdoor industries here though GJEP. The Arenas at the Fairgrounds attract many horse events at the Fairgrounds including the CMU rodeo team events here in Mesa County.

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Mel Mulder: We need to realize that it's important and we need to keep it in the forefront of our discussions.

Jim Doody: An appropriate role for Mesa County in promoting outdoor recreation is to partner up with the different municipalities as they brand their community. We are stronger if we work together and not duplicate efforts.

District 3

Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Mesa County should use its influence, and wherever possible, fundraising capacity with the state of Colorado and the federal government, to help promote outdoor recreation in Mesa County.

3. Should the County financially support the completion of the Riverfront Trail, the Palisade Plunge, and/or other trails in the community that improve connectivity between existing trails and community focal points such as neighborhoods and schools? Why or why not?

District 1

John Justman: I voted to complete the last section of the trail from Fruita to Grand Junction. The County applied for the grant for the Plunge and will make a loan to Palisade to complete this trail. We are involved with Highway 340 bicycle lanes right now and have put sidewalks with bridges along HWY. 340 several years ago for school children. There have been sidewalk projects completed around various schools since I took office

Mel Mulder: As a candidate I cannot hardly answer that question because I haven't seen the budget for 3017. If I am successful I will certainly be looking at those projects very hard.

Jim Doody: As a Council Member and Mayor of Grand Junction I supported Rob and Libby on several Conservation Easements. The Three Sister is a prime example where we worked on connecting the city to the Lunch Loop trail as well as the 1st Phase of Las Colonias Park. We can promote these types of projects to bring in tourism throughout the County where we all benefit from are joint efforts.

District 3

Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Yes. The Riverfront Trail and the Palisade Plunge, which I have consistently backed as a member of the Palisade Board of Trustees, will strengthen mountain biking and recreational biking tourism in Mesa County. We can make Mesa County one of the premier biking destinations in the world, with trails from the Grand Mesa National Forest to the

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Colorado National Monument (hopefully National Park), and strategically placed throughout the BLM public lands.

4. Do you think that outdoor recreation Tourism should or should not be an important focus for Mesa County? How would you direct Mesa County staff to support that opinion?

District 1

John Justman: The County works with the Visitors centers to promote tourism. Of course it's important to our economy.

Mel Mulder: I believe that it should be an important focus and the reality is that it is the only stable source of tax income that we have in Mesa County at this time.

Jim Doody: This question I believe was answered in the first question. I also would like to work toward making the National Monument a National Park. I believe we are leaving millions of dollars on the table by not capturing tourism that lands at GJ Regional and drives to Utah's National Parks.

District 3

Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Outdoor recreation tourism is a vital and hopefully permanent and growing part of Mesa County's economy. We should have our parks, economic development and roads and bridges staff work with other groups, for-profit, not-for-profit and governmental, to attract outdoor recreational industries and outdoor tourism related organizations to Mesa County. The Town of Palisade is sponsoring the Cameo Sports Shooting Range, which will develop into a worthy rival of the Ben Avery Range in Phoenix. This will bring thousands of sports hunters each year to Mesa County. We also expect to attract more outdoor recreational manufacturers to the vicinity of the Cameo Sports Shooting Range.

5. What role should the County play in helping recruit outdoor industry companies and jobs?

District 1

John Justman: I already answered this above. We work with GJEP and they are doing a great job of trying to recruit outdoor industry manufacturers to relocate here. It is a very competitive job to get this done and perhaps even harder to keep them here after they relocate. Rout County has some outdoor companies and Utah is always making them better deals to have them move to Utah.

Mel Mulder: We need to be an upfront player in high speed internet and establish a Foreign Trade Zone to be able to encourage the recreation and technology industries to locate in Mesa County.

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Jim Doody: If I am elected Commissioner I would make sure that we partner together as a team and actively recruit outdoor companies together. I would be willing to travel and be at the table with ORC to promote our County's many opportunities for tourism business.

District 3

Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Mesa County should participate actively with Grand Junction Economic Partnership in attracting outdoor industry companies and jobs. The City of Fruita recently went to trade shows in Germany to attract bike manufacturers to Fruita. There are creative ways to attract these companies if we welcome them to our community. John Justman last week stated that he didn't think outdoor recreation industry companies, even if they came to Mesa County, were worth pursuing, because ultimately he didn't think they would stay. Leitner Poma and Bonsai have stayed and they have no intention of leaving.

6. The ORC views public lands as critical to our outdoor recreation economy. However, at the same time that Mesa County cut funding for groups like the Colorado Riverfront Commission, the County was one of only a few in Colorado to provide funding to the Utah-based American Lands Council, which seeks to force the federal government to divest itself of public lands. For incumbents, why did you choose to spend tax payer funds in that manner? For non-incumbent candidates, do you support this vote? Why or why not?

District 1

John Justman: Of course the non-incumbent candidates will beat up the incumbent candidates on this issue! We spent a small amount of money to see what was going on in Utah. Sometimes if you're not at the table, you're on the menu! Utah feels that they could run the Federal Lands in Utah more efficiently than Washington D.C. In Utah, if they sold any of these Federal Lands, 95% of money would go to Washington, so there is no incentive to sell them. This issue is going nowhere in Colorado, so quit worrying about it.

Mel Mulder: If this is an accurate question, this is something that the public does not know enough about in the county. I realized that they cut money to the Riverfront Commission, but I didn't realize they sent money to the American Lands Council. I can state definitely that I would never support an action like this because public lands are for the public. The public pays for them and they deserve for them to be a public entity.

Jim Doody: Absolutely not. The current BOC cannot not even manage our County. I have worked with the USFS and BLM when we put together our Watershed Ordinance in partnership with the Town of Palisade. These agencies are extremely professional and competent. I do not agree with them all the time but I do believe they have the resources as well as the best interest of the people of the United States in mind.

District 3

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Rose Pugliese: Chose not to answer our survey

Dave Edwards: Non-incumbent – there are actually two votes cited in this question – first, the vote to cut funding for the Colorado Riverfront Commission and other groups. I am Mayor Pro-Tem of the Town of Palisade. The Town of Palisade has consistently contributed to the Colorado Riverfront Commission. I have consistently voted in favor of this funding allocation. I will continue to support the Colorado Riverfront Commission when I am on the Mesa County Board of Commissioners. Palisade is one of the leaders in sponsoring the planning and execution for the Palisade Plunge. We are planning and building bike trails from downtown Palisade up North River Road to I-70 exit 44, and along the west bank of the Colorado River to Cameo, Island Acres State Park, and hopefully from there up I-70 through the Town of Debeque to connect with Garfield County's trails along I-70 and Highway 6 through to Glenwood Canyon.

The Koch Brothers' backed American Lands Council (ALC), which Commissioner Pugliese brought to the attention of the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, is the organization which advocates for the de-federalization of public lands, including National forests, monuments, parks and BLM lands. Rose Pugliese at a recent forum tried to explain away her allegiance to this organization, and her getting Mesa County to pay for membership in ALC, by stating that all along her reasoning was to force federal agencies to pay more attention to County input in the use of public lands.

There is absolutely no reason, in my opinion, to find fault with the federal agencies procedures in seeking and evaluating public input into their rule making processes. The BLM, in its latest rounds of rulemaking regarding their holdings within Mesa County, bent over backwards attempting to listen to Mesa County Commissioners' late, incoherent and unreasonable commentaries. Their claims that mountain goat tracks in the desert constitute historical motor vehicle access roads are ludicrous. Nor are the random drunken wanderings of 4 wheel drive vehicles on public lands worthy of protection.