



Introduction

The Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership (SCCDP) is the sole combined chamber of commerce and economic development organization in Seward County with a standing membership of approximately 280 public and private sector businesses. For the upcoming general election on November 8th, 2022, SCCDP wishes to give its business members and the general public relevant information on economic development-related issues. Candidates for Nebraska State Legislature, Seward County Commissioner, Seward City Mayor, Seward City Council, and Milford City Council were contacted by SCCDP to answer the following questions (modified for each race) regarding local business, economic development, and community growth:

- Why are you running for office?
- Why do you love District 24/Seward County/Seward/Milford?
- Why should a business person support your election to office?
- How will you plan to make District 24/Seward County/Seward/Milford a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?
- What is the number one issue currently facing District 24/Seward County/Seward/Milford?
- What should be District 24's/Seward County's/Seward's/Milford's top economic priorities?
- What is your perspective on District 24's/Seward County's/Seward's/Milford's growth? In other words, how would you ensure District 24/Seward County/Seward/Milford stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

In some races (Seward County Commissioner - Districts 1 and 5, Seward City Council - Ward 4, and Milford City Council - Wards 1 and 2), candidates are running unopposed. These candidates' responses are still featured to increase voter literacy.

Below are the candidates' responses:



Table of Contents

Office	Candidate	Party	Page
Nebraska State Legislature - District 24	Patrick Hotovy	Non-Partisan	3
	Jana Hughes	Non-Partisan	5
Seward County Commissioner - District 1	Misty Ahmic	Republican	8
Seward County Commissioner - District 3	Raegan Hain	Republican	10
	Craig Stava	Democrat	12
Seward County Commissioner - District 5	Ken Schmieding	Republican	14
Seward City Mayor	Josh Eickmeier	Non-Partisan	15
	Sid Kamprath	Non-Partisan	18
Seward City Council - Ward 1	Kristi Ideus	Non-Partisan	20
	Megan Kahler	Non-Partisan	23
Seward City Council - Ward 2	Dana Nottingham	Non-Partisan	25
	Tatum Tonniges	Non-Partisan	29
Seward City Council - Ward 3	Ann Underwood	Non-Partisan	31
	Rich Wergin	Non-Partisan	34
Seward City Council - Ward 4	Karl Miller	Non-Partisan	37
Milford City Council - Ward 1	Becky Freeman	Non-Partisan	39
Milford City Council - Ward 2	Tony DeLong	Non-Partisan	41



**Nebraska State Legislature – District 24
Patrick Hotovy**

Why are you running for office?

I am running for office because I have had a longstanding interest in the Legislature and have a strong desire to serve the residents of the 24th district. I have spent my life in service to District 24 as a physician, business owner and member of the York School Board, and would like to earn the trust of voters to serve as your 24th District Senator.

Why do you love District 24?

I love District 24 because it has been my home nearly all my life of my life. I grew up on our family farm in Bee and our family made a life in District 24. We raised our children here and we will continue to live in and enjoy life in District 24. This is our home and we have been fortunate to create a great life for our family and I want to take my love for District 24 to Lincoln to be your representative in the Legislature.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I believe it is important that we promote policies that help our businesses grow. We need to work for our local businesses, to develop policies, to help them flourish and to attract new business to our communities. The pandemic has taught us we need to focus and be creative as businesses and communities to grow our workforce. As a business owner for 30 years, I understand the changes we must make in order to compete locally for workforce and to help grow our communities. I will be that voice for businesses of the 24th District.

How will you plan to make District 24 a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

The communities of District 24 have much to offer as we work together to build and grow our workforce. We need to fix our tax system in order to make our district more welcoming for economic development, which in turn will help us attract new businesses. We need to generate a better inventory of workforce housing to attract new employees and businesses to the district. I will work with our communities to develop the resources necessary to train and

retain a quality workforce with the skills that our local businesses need. We need to assure adequate broadband access throughout our district to help local businesses compete in our global economy. This will allow local business to thrive and provide opportunities for people to work remotely for companies across the US and still live the good life in Nebraska and especially District 24.

What is the number one issue currently facing District 24?

In listening to residents of the district, the biggest issue facing people is taxes, especially property taxes. We as a state need to make sure our tax structure is one which will help grow local business, thus growing our district. This year the Legislature passed LB 873, cutting personal income tax rates, lowering the corporate tax rate and providing funding in the property tax credit relief fund. This was a great start and now we need to continue addressing our tax structure to help local business and communities thrive.

What should be District 24's top economic priorities?

Continued responsible growth. Working to attract new business and helping existing businesses grow. Ensuring a future where workforce housing will meet the demand and investing in workforce development helping local business grow.

What is your perspective on District 24's growth? In other words, how would you ensure District 24 stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of our communities?

We must first focus on addressing the needs of our communities and understand what the communities need for growth. We must advocate together as communities to recruit and retain talent to meet the needs of local business and our communities. Working together as communities for the future will allow us to continue to enjoy the quality of life which has helped us grow and retain our close-knit communities



**Nebraska State Legislature – District 24
Jana Hughes**

Why are you running for office?

I am not a politician and had no inclination to do something like this. I am currently a member of the Seward Public School board and the superintendent suggested I run. My husband and I thought about it and spoke with a lot of people and decided that it should be people like us in there. I grew up on a farm near Goehner. My brother is 4th generation farmer of Luebbe farms, my husband's family owns Hughes Brothers Inc Manufacturing which just celebrated 101 years in business. He, his brother and cousin are 3rd generation owners. We have a longevity in our district and hopefully will have many generations to come and truly want to keep our district and Nebraska the great place that it is.

I have an engineering degree and before I became a stay-at-home mom I worked as an engineering consultant. Working as a consultant meant that I had to work with many different people in every business we went into. I learned how to develop those relationships and work together to come up with solutions that we implemented on the various projects. I am analytical and will use that to see all sides of an issue before making a decision.

My strategy is to develop relationships and I am working on meeting with many groups/boards/organizations and businesses so I can have those relationships made in Dist. 24 so that when legislation passes my desk I know who to reach out to and see how it affects our district. Once elected I aim to develop relationships with my fellow senators so we can collaborate our efforts to pass good legislation for our state.

Why do you love District 24?

When John and I first were married we lived in Lincoln because that was a “halfway” point for us – he worked in Seward and I would fly out of Omaha. Once our daughter Lena was born and I started staying at home we knew that we would be moving to Seward County because that is where we wanted to raise our family. It's a place with a strong community and good values that would surround our children and family.

- The sense of community

- Strong Christian presence and influence as can be seen by the number of churches of worship and parochial schools that are available, including a Christian university.
- The strong education system from our public schools, private schools and then the universities and community colleges all located in Dist 24. We are very fortunate for the good options that we have access to.
- The generosity of our people – this can be seen whenever you pick up a local paper. The fundraisers and galas that support churches, schools, non-profits, etc. Also – when a person/family experiences a traumatic event it is great to see the community rally and show support for that family/individual.
- All the civic and community organizations that one can get involved with (Kiwanis, Rotary, Ducks Unlimited, GFWC, 4-H, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts, Young Professionals, etc.)
- Community amenities available - ballfields, libraries, walking/biking trails, swimming pools, tennis & pickleball courts, parks, golf courses, etc.
- Strong work ethic. I think this stems from being a “rural” area. Our forefathers worked hard to establish themselves and that work ethic has been passed from generation to generation.
- We are a community with strong morals and ethics where a handshake counts!

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I understand how important businesses are to our District. We need to focus on keeping our existing businesses strong as well as attracting new businesses and encouraging entrepreneurs. I will also try to make sure legislation doesn't create more burdens and barriers to a business. I believe that capitalism works and that we have to let the private sector enjoy the freedom they need to be successful and not burdened with unnecessary government red tape.

How will you plan to make District 24 a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Work on good legislation that ensures businesses can prosper and grow. In addition ensure that legislation doesn't become a burden or barrier for communities or businesses to be in Nebraska. Over regulation can do that and prevent entrepreneurship from blossoming.

I think there can be creative approaches to making this happen. Encouraging public/private partnerships can help achieve goals and bring some private funding to help with affordable housing or infrastructure, for example.

Encourage communities to work on plans that help encourage growth of amenities. We need to have these in place to keep employees and residents in our communities. I can support legislation that provides incentives toward these kinds of projects. Personally speaking I am part of a committee working on getting a Wellness Center built for the Seward Community and that amenity will be a huge advantage for attracting and keeping people/businesses in that area. The wellness center project is taking advantage of matching grants that are out there for communities to use to bring such amenities to communities.

What is the number one issue currently facing District 24?

The number one issue I keep hearing about at my meet and greets from constituents is the high property taxes we have. I do not believe this is a property tax issue but rather a school funding issue. If we as a state truly value education then every student across the state should get some state funding. We need to change how we fund our schools in Nebraska so that those funds come from a variety of sources and not just property taxes for all schools.

What should be District 24's top economic priorities?

Addressing the property tax issue.

Accessible childcare – women in the workforce are at the lowest level since 1986. This is directly tied to lack of childcare. According the York County Development Corp there is a 60 child service gap in York alone.

Accessible, affordable, quality high speed broadband. This is a necessity (not a nice to have). A USDA study found that 39% of rural areas lack good broadband access. We cannot compete with other states or communities if this is not available. We are also at a unique time because people have realized that they don't have to live where they work, so we can attract people to move to our district and work from here. Again – have to have high speed broadband to do this.

Retaining the people we already have here to help address the worker shortage. The above things will help as well as looking at keeping our kids here. This can start in the schools (high schools and colleges and universities) by expanding apprenticeship opportunities.

What is your perspective on District 24's growth? In other words, how would you ensure District 24 stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of our communities?

District 24 is fortunate in where we are situated in the state. The bulk of the district runs along the Interstate and we are fairly close to sizable metro areas (Omaha, Lincoln and Columbus). If you look at the census numbers across the state the communities that grew or at least stayed the same size have strong infrastructure in terms of roads. Our district is growing at a very supportable rate. To keep that “small town or close” feel in our communities we need to maintain the community in terms of keeping it unique. Not a bedroom community but something that draws people to it. Examples of this are festivals or unique experiences that our different communities have and therefore attract visitors: Seward 4th of July and Christmas celebration, Stromsburg Swedish festival, county fairs, Wessels living history farm, community celebrations, etc. You also need places/amenities to keep their own community members in town such as restaurants, libraries, recreational activities, etc.



**Seward County Commissioner – District 1
Misty Ahmic, Republican**

Why are you running for office?

I think like many others who become public servants, I had a challenge and went through the motions of figuring it out. It sparked my desire to make processes easier for others. From budgets to roads, learning how we can better advocate for our veterans to how we approach valuations – I am always interested and available to learn more. It's my belief that District 1 is its own slice of Seward County "heaven" and I want to have all the knowledge possible to help us make it (and the rest of the county!) the best it can be. It's why I work to solve our issues as quickly as possible and utilize all the resources I find available to be sure we are making every connection, advocating for funding, and working together to create opportunity.

Why do you love Seward County?

I love the heart this community holds (yes, we are one big community) – for anyone or anything that needs to happen. Whether it's a stranger helping a stranger or civic group improving a park, pretty special things happen here, and we should be proud that we are all a part of it. Beyond that I find the diversity of our cities and villages to be one of the things I rave most about to my friends and to officials from other counties. I am grateful for all our small businesses and other enterprise that we hold right in our back yard.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I believe in supporting and promoting the businesses that we already have (shop local!) and that growth in right way and at the right speed is valuable to us all.

How will you plan to make Seward County a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

First and foremost, we have to continue to encourage competitive wages. Additionally, supporting initiatives that include more access to affordable housing, childcare, broadband, etc. is at the top of my list.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward County?

We don't have all of the basic infrastructure in place that we should have in 2022 (almost 2023!). The infrastructure we do have in place needs to be better managed and maintained.

What should be Seward County's top economic priorities?

We should continue to be a partner in the development of more affordable housing, rural broadband, and ensuring our county infrastructure is safe and properly maintained. If we invest in these, we can assist our communities in welcoming new employees and businesses.

What is your perspective on Seward County's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward County stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Each of our cities and villages are located far enough apart, but close enough to tie us all together. I will do my best to get the word out more about things happening county wide and promoting them to bring us all together. For example, being from the Milford area but knowing what is going on in Utica has value and helps keep our 17,000-person population feeling pretty small. This combined with supporting the visions each community and the county has for the future (downtown revitalizations, water and sewer upgrades, affordable housing, parks, etc.) will make us attractive to potential broadband providers and other new businesses. If done correctly overtime, we will attract young people that will plant seeds here in Seward County.



**Seward County Commissioner – District 3
Raegan Hain, Republican**

Why are you running for office?

I am running for Seward County Commissioner to ensure the voter's of District 3 are being represented within our county. This is a large area with many communities and I intend to be a representative for all of them. The number one priority of a County Commissioner is county roads. It would be my responsibility as Commissioner to ensure that we are funding projects for county roads and maintaining them. It is necessary to work as a team with other Commissioners and the road department to see this happen. Open communication is key. I welcome contact from voters and will address their needs and concerns. I will be a County Commissioner who is not only present, but active within the entire district and engaging with the communities. It is important for people to know that being a Commissioner requires so much more than just attending Tuesday morning meetings. To be a true representative, we need to be out in our communities and working with them to ensure we are hearing from them and addressing their concerns. It also requires networking with other service providers within the community and hearing from them about what issues they are facing so they can be addressed. It is necessary to build relationships with businesses and community agencies so we can better understand the issues they are facing in order to support Seward County.

Why do you love Seward County?

I love Seward County for a number of reasons! First and foremost, I love the people here. I love that we are surrounded by agriculture and we support farmers and ranchers. I love that our county is growing and yet we continue to maintain a small town atmosphere throughout our county. I also love that the people in our County are active. There are several groups and organizations that lift up our residents and our small businesses. I also am extremely grateful that we get to raise our children here, in an environment where they are supported and invested in.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I am an open and approachable individual who believes in the value of supporting businesses in our community to see our communities prosper. I am also very interested in hearing from businesses about plans they have for growth, how they support their community, and what if any help they need. I want to see our county thrive.

How will you plan to make Seward County a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

We need to start by increasing wages for county employees so they are competitive with other counties. If there is a significant difference in wages, we lose valuable employees. A lot of time and money are invested into training and we don't want to lose good people to surrounding counties. We also need to look at housing. I love seeing and hearing about projected new plans and developments for economic growth but we have to have housing in order to bring businesses in and keep people living and working in Seward County. If we don't have adequate housing, people will either have to commute or they will find employment elsewhere. This is a trend already in our county.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward County?

The number one concern I hear about from community members is our county roads. We are surrounded by agriculture and our farmers need to be able to access these roads and bridges safely. When our county roads, ditches, and bridges are in need of improvement and repair, farmers and residents are damaging equipment and vehicles which increases their cost to repair and maintain vehicles and equipment. With that being said, in order to be competitive and retain and employ individuals, we need to ensure that wages are in line with surrounding communities.

What should be Seward County's top economic priorities?

- Improving our county roads and bridges and ensuring they are maintained and safe to travel
- Improved wages to retain and attract employees
- Access to affordable housing
- Access to clean drinking water
- Access to county wide internet service

What is your perspective on Seward County's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward County stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Seward County is growing, however we don't have enough housing currently to bring in more jobs. I would like to see more access to affordable housing to keep people working and living in Seward County. Seward County has so many activities throughout the different communities that promote community engagement and allow people to participate in small town events and I would like to continue to see these activities promoted so they continue. I also feel that it is very important to support our small businesses in order for our communities to grow and allow citizens within these communities to get to know their business owners.



**Seward County Commissioner – District 3
Craig Stava, Democrat**

Why are you running for office?

I am running for Seward County Commissioner because I have been an employee for Seward County Roads Department for 20 years and I am aware of what works within the county and what doesn't. As an employee I gained experience in road maintenance, bridge construction, sign maintenance, and grade crew (building roads). I feel I can help the county from this perspective to address issues such as employee retention, sufficient wages, and issues with roads (especially maintaining our blacktop roads within the county). Other areas I feel need addressed as commissioner include supporting our Sherriff's Office and local law enforcement, addressing the constantly changing broadband services, and supporting the issues of our villages and local businesses within the county. I am currently serving as a board member for the Village of Staplehurst. I have assisted in working on water issues within the village, upkeep of the roads, and worked with the local church and school in an effort to get the new school building completed. I do not consider myself to be a politician, but the type of person to get things done.

Why do you love Seward County?

Seward County is where I have lived my entire life! I have watched the county grow and evolve all these years because of the great people that call Seward County home. This is where my wife and I chose to raise our children as we were raised, and we wouldn't change a thing. We have a business in Staplehurst and relish the smalltown atmosphere and visiting with all the customers from the surrounding area everyday.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

My wife and I own and operate a business in Staplehurst. I understand the struggles that come along with this challenge and would do anything I could to support local businesses in the area.

How will you plan to make Seward County a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

I think it's important to have a collective goal as a county to decide what best fits each village and town within the county. This is done by talking to the people of each of these communities and get a sense for what type of growth they are looking for so we can address it together.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward County?

- Budget
- County-wide (all departments) employee retention

What should be Seward County's top economic priorities?

- Maintenance and safety of county roads
- County employee retention

What is your perspective on Seward County's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward County stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

This is dependent on the goal of the people of Seward County and each individual community. I would want to visit with the people of each area and talk about their goals for growth so I could support that. As areas grow it becomes more difficult to maintain the smalltown feel, however, I believe Seward County holds many community events that support the close feel of community and as commissioner I would continue to attend and support these types of events.



**Seward County Commissioner – District 5
Ken Schmieding, Republican**

Why are you running for office?

Seeking re-election to Seward County Commissioner.

Why do you love Seward County?

I love the people of Seward County and the opportunities Seward County offers.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

As a businessman for over 50 years in Seward, I understand the problems and issues businesses face in our County.

How will you plan to make Seward County a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

I will be focusing on the expansion of broadband communications and welcoming opportunities that will benefit existing and young professionals.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward County?

The number one issue currently facing Seward County is inflation.

What should be Seward County's top economic priorities?

One of our top economic priorities is housing.

What is your perspective on Seward County's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward County stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

We should remain on the current course, that will ensure future success.



**Seward City Mayor
Josh Eickmeier**

Why are you running for office?

I love Seward. I first ran for Mayor because I know what a special community Seward is and want to work to keep it that way for future generations. Many of my friends that I grew up with are now raising their children in Seward and I want to ensure that they have at least the same opportunities that I had growing up here. I can't think of a greater honor and privilege than to continue serving as Mayor of my hometown.

Why do you love Seward?

I'm proud to have been born and raised in Seward and graduated from St. John Lutheran School and Seward High School. After living in Lincoln for college and then spending the next couple years traveling around the country for my job, I gained a greater appreciation for how truly special Seward is and how lucky I am to have grown up here. It's the people that make Seward such an amazing community. We are fortunate to have so many civic organizations that are continuously working to improve Seward. It's that great spirit of volunteerism that makes our Fourth of July celebration one of the best in the country. I love Seward and the fact that so many people care about our community and its future.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

It's important that we support our local businesses. Often when people discuss economic development, they focus on attracting new businesses to our community. However, I believe it is just as, if not more important to support the businesses that are already here and have already invested in our community. Local business owners often take huge financial risks and even go into debt to start their businesses because they believe in this community and are committed to making their businesses a success. As Mayor, I made it a priority to implement and expand our two main economic development tools – Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and LB 840 Economic Development Plan (LB 840). These programs have made available to Seward business owners hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial support to improve and expand their businesses. I am especially proud of our support of businesses around the Courthouse Square and the broader downtown business district. For example, we are in the third phase of our downtown

revitalization program, which allows us to leverage additional State tax dollars for downtown businesses improve their buildings' exteriors and return them to their historic beauty.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

When it comes to attracting new businesses to our community, the two main financial incentives the City has available are Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and LB 840 Economic Development Plan (LB 840). Since I've been Mayor, these programs have attracted more than 20 new businesses to Seward. Another factor for attracting businesses is that we have one of the lowest property tax rates in Nebraska. As Mayor, not only has the City never raised property taxes, under my leadership we have lowered Seward's property taxes. In fact, when you include all property taxes that Seward residents pay (City, County, School District, etc.), we have the lowest property tax rate of any city our size or larger. As for attracting employees to our area, it is important that Seward continues to have a great reputation when it comes to schools, amenities, and overall quality of life.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

We are fortunate that Seward doesn't have a lot of the issues that other communities face. Many of Seward's issues are actually good problems to have. Many of the challenges we face are the result of our community growing because people want to live here and residents expect a high quality of life. Therefore, I would say our number one issue is making sure that we don't get complacent and continue to work towards making Seward the best community it can be. For example, one quality of life expectation that many residents have is access to reliable high-speed internet. Much of Nebraska lacks broadband internet access. While we do have internet providers in Seward, what we don't have is a reliable high-speed fiber internet service like ALLO Communications, which will begin building out Seward yet this year. This is exciting news that will benefit Seward residents, businesses, and industries now and for years to come.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

Seward's top economic priority is addressing our housing shortage. In a sense, having a housing shortage is a good problem to have because it means people want to live in Seward. Therefore, we have a strategic and comprehensive plan to identify where future developments should be in Seward and then work with landowners and developers to plan smart growth, so we have lots available for people to build new homes. An added benefit to Seward residents building new homes in Seward is that their current homes are then for sale which improves our overall housing market. Having a robust housing market is essential for promoting economic development and attracting employees to Seward.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Seward's growth must continue to be smart and strategic. Growing too fast can create growing pains and cause a community to be stretched too far too quickly and risk losing its identity.

Since I've been Mayor, Seward has grown consistently at one percent per year which has allowed us to maintain the feeling of community that we all value while attracting people, businesses, and industries to Seward.



**Seward City Mayor
Sid Kamprath**

Why are you running for office?

I have served on the Seward city council since 2006, and believe the time is right to bring an experienced, yet fresh approach to the office of mayor. My experience on the city council has allowed me to be an integral part of the policy-making decisions that have positively impacted the citizens of Seward for years. As Mayor, I believe I can build on those accomplishments from the administration side by providing clear, thoughtful, and balanced leadership. I am excited to explore ways in which the city can improve its services to the citizens, operate efficiently, and control rising utility rates. Seward is in a very good position right now and is on the verge of some very exciting things going forward. It is key that the city's growth happen in a well-planned, deliberate manner while minimizing the tax burden on the citizens.

Why do you love Seward?

I have lived in Seward my whole life and have raised four children here. Seward has a long history of being a city where many caring, generous, community minded people live. It is a place where traditional midwestern values, common sense and personal responsibility are alive and well. All these things make Seward a very safe and wholesome community where human kindness flourishes.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

Many years in the corporate world, and as a small business owner, have taught me real-world lessons that can work in local government if implemented properly. I have always supported the many economic development programs that are available to help new and established businesses grow. I believe collaboration between local and state economic development efforts is essential and the city plays a key role in implementing these programs.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Seward has a good balance of retail, commercial, service and industrial businesses, as well as Concordia University. Maintaining this balance while encouraging more opportunities for high-tech businesses is key. Continuing to promote the smart use of programs such as TIF and LB840 are essential to these efforts.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

Smart growth. The city needs to be one step ahead of future anticipated expansion in housing development, roads, utilities and services by strategically planning ahead and not just reacting to the growth.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

Maintaining affordable living costs in the city is key to all economic development efforts. In addition to the economic development efforts previously mentioned, controlling increases in property taxes and utility rates is a key factor in attracting businesses and families to Seward.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

For the last several decades, Seward's annual growth rate has been around 1% per year. This is a sustainable rate that allows for the tax base to expand while building our infrastructure out to meet current and future needs. When city's grow at a slower pace (like Seward's) it allows for the community grow "together" and feel closer. Regardless of where future expansion takes place, I believe we need to maintain a strong, vibrant downtown square by continuing to incentivize businesses to stay.



**Seward City Council – Ward 1
Kristi Ideus**

Why are you running for office?

To be a voice for the citizens of Seward on our city council. I spent 15 years volunteering in the Seward Public Schools, 4H and other community and county organizations while my sons were in school. Now that my sons are out of the public schools, I now have the time to serve the community of Seward and I feel this is a good way to serve my community.

Why do you love Seward?

Seward has been a great place to raise our family. Over the years we have made many friends in the Seward community, and a lot of that is because of Seward's friendly, hometown atmosphere that you don't find in larger towns. We especially enjoy the variety of stores for shopping and nice restaurants that offer many different cuisines which you don't always find in smaller towns and our parks are well cared for and offer different types of recreation for people of all ages.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I've been a small business owner for 20 years, and I understand how hard it can be to keep a business going in a small town. I'm eager to listen to business owners with their concerns and suggestions. Our business owners need to feel like they can come to our city council with any concerns whether it's the cost of utilities, property taxes, infrastructure issues, etc and feel like they're being listened to and not ignored or brushed aside.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

I'll work to communicate with potential new businesses in person, social media, etc, how nice Seward is and work to promote Seward as a town that will gladly welcome new businesses. When new businesses come to town, it's important that our city leaders do everything possible to help welcome and promote these new businesses. I'll do this for any type of business whether it be shopping, dining, or industry. Unfortunately right now we see a lot of

help wanted signs around town and in social media posts. When I see these signs and posts I pass the word along to someone I know that is looking for employment and I will continue to do this.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

I'm finding it hard to list just one so I'll list the biggest ones that come to mind. One of the biggest issues our town is currently dealing with is a large childcare shortage and a shortage of childcare workers in the childcare centers in town. This isn't just affecting families that need childcare, it's affecting businesses that have employees that are affected by this shortage. We have people that live here in Seward or are looking to move to Seward, and they can't find childcare in our town. This is a big problem because when they can't find childcare here, they find it in other towns which can cause them to move to those other towns so they don't have to commute so far for childcare and their employment. This is an issue that current childcare providers and the SCCDP are working on finding solutions.

Our high utility costs is an issue that is continuously affecting citizens. We need to work to find a way to bring our utility costs down and make them more affordable and not a burden for the citizens of Seward. Some people are struggling to make a living, especially the last couple of years when people have lost their jobs or have had their hours cut and have to work 2-3 jobs just to make ends meet. This is one of the biggest issues I hear from people that move here from other towns is that our utilities are a lot higher here than where they lived previously.

Infrastructure is another big issue that keeps coming up. We have traffic flow issues that need to be addressed, find solutions and implement the solutions rather than keep pushing them off year to year. With the infrastructure issues, we need to find solutions that won't put large financial burdens on our citizens.

We are in need of affordable workforce development housing for people who are moving here, or currently live here, and are first time home buyers. Yes, there are new housing developments that are in the process of building new homes but these homes may not fit the financial needs of every first time home buyer. If I'm elected to office I'm willing to help find solutions to these various issues.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

Helping local businesses find the employment help they need so they can remain open. Businesses that can't get employees to work the hours they're open hurts all of us.

Infrastructure such as roads/streets to get traffic from the south side of town to the north side of town where the different amenities are. We need to try and find a solution for this without it being a huge financial burden to our citizens.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

I feel Seward is doing well on growth as we're growing approximately 1% per year. We're a smaller town, and that's a big reason a lot of people move here from the larger towns. They don't want the large 10,000 - 15,000+ population size. We're a nice, small town that's close enough to some larger towns for when people need to go there for various reasons. Seward is a great town to raise a family in. People who live here or moved here chose Seward because they want a nice community where their children can safely play with their friends, ride their bikes around town, and parents don't have to worry about them being in danger. We're a town where we look out for each other and help each other when needed.

I feel even though we are a community that isn't as big as Lincoln, we can still be competitive in bringing businesses to town. We can promote Seward's location of being close to I-80 and having Highway 34 going through our downtown can make commuting from other towns easy. We can promote our town as business friendly, family friendly and welcoming to everyone.



**Seward City Council – Ward 1
Megan Kahler**

Why are you running for office?

I simply have a willing spirit to serve this community. I learned so much working for the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership (SCCDP), and since I left for a professional opportunity elsewhere, I have missed being involved with the community in many different ways. I'd love the opportunity to serve Seward as a city council representative.

Why do you love Seward?

Seward holds a special place in my heart. I am originally from Phoenix and came to Seward to attend Concordia University. I chose Seward and, in turn, Seward chose me. My husband, Dan and I chose to continue our lives here and grow our family. Our friends here in Seward became our new family as well. We have many amenities of a larger community with small town values, a thriving downtown, and excellent schools. I'm proud to be a part of Seward.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I worked with the business community during my time with the SCCDP. It is important for business owners to have an advocate, whether it is simply asking how things are going or making time to discuss pressing issues. I am ready and willing to have a listening ear and open mind to important matters in our community.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Seward is already doing very well in these areas. Our business community is growing with current and new businesses. That isn't to say we don't have growing pains. We have jobs available on a consistent basis and talent recruitment is getting harder all the time. This can start in our schools, sharing next step professional opportunities available in Seward.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

I see housing as a challenge in Seward. We have made great strides in the past several years with the addition of apartment complexes and market-rate housing, but there is a gap. It is extremely difficult to find a home in the \$175,000-\$250,000 range, let alone build a home for less than \$350,000. Unfortunately, the state of our economy in recent years has not helped costs in this industry. However, there are available grants and programs to help subsidize housing efforts to bridge that gap. I would like to learn more about these programs to see if it would be a good fit for Seward.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

Quality growth is an all-encompassing priority for Seward as so many facets of our economy are brought together. Seward is fortunate to have forward-thinking leaders who explore the possibilities of the impact of projects down the line. Projects like the potential Seward Wellness Center and the Seward Rail Campus do not happen overnight. These projects take years of planning, research, and meetings with key leaders from the business community and education sector to gauge the potential impact on the community in the long term.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

I believe we are growing at a decent rate. We have much to offer the business community and residents alike. As previously mentioned, our community leaders look to the future to ensure the values of Seward are not compromised with potential change.



**Seward City Council – Ward 2
Dana Nottingham**

Why are you running for office?

It is time for a change. It is time that our city (and cities everywhere) stops depending on federal funding for projects we would otherwise not fund. It is time to stop accepting money with conditions imposing terms and requirements not in the best interest of our community, just for the sake of accepting money. Accepting such funding leads to construction of a “road to nowhere” when actual city streets are full of dangerous and harmful potholes and asphalt bumps (just one example). Many taxpayers complain that the federal government takes too much money, then borrows, prints and spends our nation into increasingly outrageous annual deficits and an unbearable national debt of over \$30 trillion, but then gladly accept any and all funding from that very same government being complained about.

Our federal government has taken control of this entire nation, virtually eliminating local control of any issues. The creature has become greater than the creator. It is time that the creator (we, the people) remembers and takes back control of our lives, our communities and our governance. The federal government has its place, as outlined in the United States Constitution, but its place is not in local matters and issues. Locally, we should control our own schools, our police and fire departments, our courts, our land use, our growth and so much more, without unnecessary intrusion and demands by others.

It is time to remember that “all politics is local” and act accordingly. The most basic and important unit of government should be our families. From there, our cities, our counties and our states. Then, and only then, should the federal government be looked to for those things our states, our cities and counties and our families cannot do.

We have it backwards. It’s time to turn it around to how it should be. We the people of Seward should have a much more significant say in our local issues. This is why I am running for city council. I will listen. I will act reasonably and prudently. I will work to maintain the self-sufficiency that has made Seward one of the best and safest cities in Nebraska!

It is also time for our city and our county to work collaboratively in governing responsibly. I think often counties forget that they represent city residents just as equally as they represent

residents of unincorporated areas. We need better cooperation between our city and those other governments that both tax and represent our city residents.

Why do you love Seward?

Seward is an amazing city and community. What a history we have! Seward's history of community and cooperation has become Seward's present. As the "Fourth of July City" we recognize and celebrate our freedom and independence to live and act how we see fit. In Seward, in all our differences, we do just this. We come from different backgrounds, we attend different churches, we study at different schools, we have varying careers, we farm, we ranch, we teach, we build, we sell, we buy. But in all this, we come together in freedom. We love our freedom. We love our independence.

What a future we look forward to. Seward's present can become an amazing future if we all continue to work together to preserve and maintain the culture of kindness and friendliness, cooperation and coordination to better ourselves and support our community. We live in a close-knit community where friends help friends, neighbors help neighbors and businesses help businesses.

Seward is a fun place to live. I cannot go anywhere without seeing people smiling, laughing and enjoying the company of each other.

Seward has been well-maintained. It is an old city with a historic, clean, updated look. It is an amazing place to live and a great place to visit!

We are amazing educators; we are hard-working students; we are dedicated public servants; we are faithful God-fearing families; we are wonderful neighbors; we are strong families.

In hard times and in times of ease, we come together in support of each other.

This is Seward. This is why my family and I love Seward.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

My position concerning government and business is that in most cases, government should get out of the way and allow business professionals and entrepreneurs to do what they do best – run their businesses. Burdensome regulation and taxation diminish the ability of businesses, large and small, to thrive, grow and succeed. As elected representatives, we are entrusted to make decisions that will benefit residents and businesses alike. Sometimes these decisions will be to work hand-in-hand with a business to provide necessary municipal services and incentives; sometimes these decisions will be to just move aside and allow business to thrive.

I will duly consider all proposals to help business and will act very cautiously and carefully when making decisions that could negatively affect, tax or regulate business (whether specific or more generally). We want our businesses to succeed and we want our residents to feel comfortable patronizing these businesses.

I will be friend, not just to residents, but to businesses that serve our residents.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Like my previous response, sometimes the best answer is to just get out of the way. But as to growth and job creation, I will make sure we do not overburden businesses with excessive and unnecessary requirements. I will make sure that businesses, new and old, are not hindered in their business objectives by city actions not in the best interest of commerce.

I support managed, safe growth. In order for our businesses to thrive, we need a resident base willing to live, work and shop in Seward. In order for our residents to thrive, we need businesses willing to employ locally and provide necessary, affordable products and services our residents are willing and able to patronize.

I will encourage and support efforts to do just this.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

One major issue facing Seward is uncertainty. What does the future hold? Emerging from the pandemic years, we wonder what lies ahead. Will COVID-19 continue to control our lives? Will some new virus take its place? Economic concerns weigh heavily on families these days. Inflation is reportedly at a 40-year high and continues growing with each monthly report. We know, even without such reports, as we shop, buy gasoline and pay our energy bills that we are paying a lot more than 8% more than last year for basic staples and necessities.

However, uncertainty does not have to create fear. If we are prepared for what is to come, we don't have to fear it. We will meet with the confidence any new trial, knowing our families, our churches and our community are strong enough to prevail in times of uncertainty.

I intend to show by example that we can be strong in the face of adversity and trials if we are prepared. I will also use my position on the city council to encourage prudence and self-sufficiency, not just for families, but in all municipal matters.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

The strength of our city lies first and foremost with the strength of our families and residents. We need to assure opportunities to live, work and shop close to home. Our businesses should provide products and services our community needs so more of our spending stays local. Certainly, this is not always possible, but we should work to encourage local offerings and local support. We have a very strong community and our economic priority should be to keep it that way.

A close second is the strength of our businesses. We have some amazing employers, old and new, in our town. For those here now, we need to support them. We should seek to bring

more industry and job-creating businesses to our city. The Rail Campus is open and ready for new investment. Let's fill it up! We should not have empty commercial and industrial buildings inside the city. If we have vacancies, a top economic priority should be to fill them.

We can bring new business while still protecting our current employers.

Providing a business-friendly atmosphere is a vital part of creating economic strength in and around Seward. Strong businesses make for a strong community.

Creating and maintaining business opportunities should be a major economic priority in Seward.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Growth is good. Managed growth is better. Maintaining a strong, unique community with this growth is best.

The best way to maintain the close feel of the community is to lead by example. If we like parades, we should participate in parades. If we love the culturally unique musical performances we enjoy each July 4, we should attend and even participate in them. If we enjoy the summer farmer's market, we should shop locally and encourage others to do the same. If we savor our local restaurants, we should support them as often as financially feasible.

When my family moved to Seward seven years ago, we were invited to participate in many cultural and religious events, helping us quickly come to consider Seward our home. It was by the example and invitation of others that we so quickly became a part of the Seward community.

This is how to maintain the close feel of our community, even as new residents continue to move our way.



**Seward City Council – Ward 2
Tatum Tonniges**

Why are you running for office?

I have enjoyed being a part of and leading various clubs and committees related to my sons' school and activities over the years, and am excited to extend this opportunity to our broader community. It is a great way to continue to give back, create a positive impact, and bring about change that will make a difference to our city and its people. I have a strong work ethic, and will be devoted to interacting with our city's residents and businesses, building relationships, and serving as their voice on the topics and issues that are most important to them and their families. A good, qualified candidate would assert that their personal views are immaterial, and just that - personal. I will serve with an open mind, stepping out of comfort zones, listening to other ideas and perspectives, and collaborating with fellow council members in order to make the best decisions for our community.

Why do you love Seward?

I was born and raised in Seward County, left for college, started a career, and later a family. I've lived in several different cities and states, and it did not matter how far away I got or how long I stayed, Seward was always "home". For the past 9 1/2 years, I have lived in the City of Seward with my 2 sons, Zac (19) and Alex (17). I am so glad to be back home, and together we have created a place that my sons can call home as well. This community and the people therein are important to me and I want to continue to see us all thrive and grow. My family and the people in this community have helped shape my life and have contributed to my successes both personally and professionally. I want to ensure future generations experience the same sense of community, and have a place they can call home, too. I am proud of where I came from, and believe in what this small-town Nebraska community has to offer.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I understand the commitment and associated stress that it takes to keep a business running (both personally and financially). My degree and work experience is in business management, and I have spent the last 20+ years of my professional career leading people and teams through change I will be there to support our businesses, listening and engaging with them

when they are concerned about issues or changes that could impact their livelihood, and ensuring that they have a voice in the decisions that we make for the City of Seward.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Focusing on our infrastructure is a great start as it prepares us for growth and assures potential businesses and employees that we are dedicated to our city, and have a vision for the future. That focus and development along with our location, great school system, friendly residents, small-town charm, amenities, activities, celebrations that bring us together, and an ongoing commitment to improve and change with our people and surroundings make us a very attractive city to call home.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

The city is growing and that is a great problem to have - if we are not growing, we are dying. We need to continue our focus on the infrastructure within our city, both new and improving the existing. We need a strategic approach to both short and long-term solutions, limiting the associated inconveniences and financial impacts, and ensure that the decisions that we make take into consideration our vision and future of the city versus just addressing the short-term need or issue.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

A strategic approach to short and long-term solutions to our city's infrastructure and development, opportunities to bring our community together, promoting businesses and organizations, affordable housing and daycare, and amenities that provide convenience and benefits to our overall well-being that allows us to continue to grow and thrive.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

It's imperative to understand what is important to our businesses and residents, and incorporate that into the decisions we make. With growth comes change, and we need to be transparent and share the "why" behind these decisions to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the overall vision and benefit (especially when it is not obvious). We must continue to offer the opportunity and platforms for residents and businesses to share their ideas and concerns that will help us drive growth and stay connected with one another.



**Seward City Council – Ward 3
Ann Underwood**

Why are you running for office?

I decided to run for City Council, Ward 3, because Seward has been good to my husband and me, and it is time for me to give back to my community. I believe the City of Seward taxpayers deserve more transparency and accountability from our city government. I think the City of Seward can do better planning and following through with developing infrastructure. And most importantly, the taxpayers in our community deserve to be acknowledged and heard.

As your council representative, I will look for ways to make Seward more efficient. I believe governments should run as a business, and elected officials should never forget who pays the bills. Working towards higher fiscal accountability will also help Seward become a more affordable place to live.

Why do you love Seward?

I believe Seward is unique in many ways. We are home to a fantastic university, excellent medical facilities, beautiful parks, and a historic and beautiful downtown square. We have a bike path, swimming pool, golf course, library, and many other amenities that may make other similar-sized communities should be jealous. We are blessed to live the small-town, rural life with many bigger city amenities at our fingertips.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I have 30 years of experience running and managing three businesses simultaneously and successfully with my husband. I am pro-growth regarding the Seward Community and protecting the downtown business district. However, I also believe a reasonable balance between the cost to implement and the benefit to the taxpayers must be measured and maintained. My business experiences have taught me how to review and analyze a budget and make projections based on historical income and expenses. I know how to look at what is in front of me today and apply it to long-term goals.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Seward is in an excellent position right now, and we have some fascinating things on the horizon. But the city's growth must happen in a well-planned, fiscally responsible manner that will benefit rather than burden its citizens for generations to come. I strongly support assisting the downtown business/property owners in enhancing the feel and the reality of a well-cared for and thriving community. As they say, it takes a village to raise a child, and I plan to get to know the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership staff, the City of Seward staff, the County Commissioners, and many others on a first-name basis. If a community is not growing, it is dying. I believe developing programs that support current and well-established businesses in their continued success is also vital to the success of a community.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

The number one immediate issue facing Seward is a lack of workforce. Due to the events that have taken place over the last two years, most all employers I've been in contact with are desperate to find employees who will show up for work once hired. This problem isn't unique to Seward, however. In 2021, both quitting rates and job openings hit record highs in the United States, and with technology and remote work giving people more options for opportunity than ever, businesses looking to hire have found they need to up their game. But that can cost money that the company does not have to spare. A very close second issue facing Seward is our residents' lack of daycare opportunities. There is a waiting list for all ages, but it seems the list is incredibly long for infants to 6-year-old age groups. I am aware of instances where a business hired someone from out of town, and the person had to decline the position due to not being able to find daycare for their children. I believe the lack of daycare opportunities is hurting Seward's growth.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

Seward's top economic priority needs to be solving the traffic issues on E. Seward Road, North Columbia Ave, East out of Seward on Hwy 34, Hwy 15 north and south through town, and getting traffic from Hwy 34 north to Waverly Road. And that includes figuring out how to pay for the vast majority of it without raising property taxes. And a very close second is working on the problem of having such a limited workforce to fill open positions in the community.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Supporting programs such as TIF, LB840, and downtown improvement projects, are essential. However, to continue to receive support from the community for these types of programs, the city needs to be more selective in granting funds while continuing to educate the community on how they benefit the community because people tend to forget. Job creation, productivity growth, income equality, and increasing the citizens' net income, which increases their quality of life, are all central factors in a competitive city. In today's world, cities of all sizes compete

for talent, investments, businesses, events, and tourists. I believe Seward needs to develop a second brand (in conjunction with 4th of July City and not in place of it) that promotes a strong link between the perceived image of Seward and our ability to rise above the competition.



**Seward City Council – Ward 3
Rich Wergin**

Why are you running for office?

I am a candidate for Seward City Council Ward 3 because as a conservative republican, I have the experience, the knowledge and problem-solving skills, and the ability to work with people to represent the citizens of this ward. My experience includes being elected by my peers to positions on several boards including being a treasurer managing the budget and overseeing spending for the group. As a member of the City Council, I will work for the community to hold the line on property taxes by working with the Council to consistently review its spending priorities. I have attended many of their meetings in the past several months to gain a perspective on how the mayor and the council operates. I observed the Council as they reviewed their 2023 budget approving the package in a subsequent meeting. During conversations with residents of Ward 3, we have shared ideas about civic leadership, the importance of controlled spending and good communication. If elected, I plan to work on these items and more.

Why do you love Seward?

Seward is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. I fell in love with Seward right away. I am lifelong resident of Seward County spending more than forty years in Ward 3 in Seward. I chose to teach and coach sports here with Seward Public Schools for thirty of those years. During that time, I assisted students and parents as they worked toward achieving their goals. I can do the same for the City Council. My wife Kelly and I have raised our two daughters with the support of the school and the businesses where they were employed. We often talked about how the decision to live in Seward has prepared each of us for our futures.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

My wife Kelly and I support the businesses in Seward and Seward County by choosing to spend our money locally. Investment in our business community using federal and state grants and outside funding sources has been a proven system of controlling spending and reducing taxes. Enhancing the economic possibilities for entrepreneurs already here and those interested in locating in Seward needs to be a priority for the City of Seward. If elected to the

Council, I will use my people skills in support of businesses already here while encouraging items in the economic development plan to attract new businesses to our community. While an employee at Tenneco for nine summers I worked at earning my bachelor's degree and continued into my early years of teaching here in Seward, I worked alongside many people from the area. I learned that there were a number of challenges in maintaining a work force that is well trained and invested in the success of the company. The City of Seward has just such a work force trained to maintain the infrastructure and providing the services that businesses and citizens have identified are important to them.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

If elected to the Seward City Council, I will encourage representatives from our local business partners, major employers, civic organizations, and interested citizens to participate as stakeholders in meeting together to develop a plan to accomplish the goal of making Seward more job-friendly. This effort will help to attract new businesses to Seward. City administrators and Chamber leaders will play important roles in getting the group going with the support of representatives of the Council and County Commissioners being present. Any plan that does not encourage positive changes to a community is doomed to struggle. Successful plans involve opportunities for as many different viewpoints and ideas as possible. Building a broad-based coalition will create an engaging environment for others to become involved in meeting these goals. Seward is a growing community. In its growth plan, we will monitor its impact by measuring the number of new families, new businesses, and contacts from others who may be interested in our community. Seward has a progressive plan in place to meet the demand for affordable housing and building opportunities for new businesses. Again, as Seward grows it will continue to place stresses on our infrastructure. We will have to commit to preparing to meet these challenges.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

The number one issue facing Seward is the lack of affordable housing. The Council must address spending priorities and reduce property taxes while demonstrating leadership through positive action. Promoting short term and long-term housing solutions in much the same way the Council has addressed the one- and six-year street improvement plan will work. Aligning developers, City Administration, members of the various committees, resources and interested citizens will generate new ideas and solutions. The Prairie View development is an important example of how we can meet this goal. We need to study other growing communities of similar size to see how they have met their housing needs. A study of the entire City in an attempt to find areas that Seward could target for new growth is needed. Seward needs a new progressive plan to meet the goal of making housing affordable, identifying building sites for new businesses at the same time. Seward is a growing community. While this is a good problem to have, we must decide how are we going to pay for it.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

The Council's top priority needs to be cutting taxes by reducing spending. Property taxes and housing costs in the Seward area are too high. The City needs to be transparent about decisions involving spending and sharing its plans to reduce spending. Doing what we can to expand support for local businesses while attracting new businesses to our area is a top priority for Seward as well. If elected, I will work with the Council and its partners to explore ways to attract new businesses to our area. We all need to be reminded of the importance of supporting the businesses already here. It is important to take the time to acknowledge the challenges and concerns these businesses have in reaching their goals while investing in our community.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

I will encourage every member on the Council to work with all committees and available resources to make good decisions as we continue to grow. For example, members of the committees have done an excellent job of advising the City Council in developing its comprehensive plan. This cooperative effort has led to new developments for the benefit of everyone in the community. Each plan needs to be reviewed in light of what affects it may have on the goal of maintaining the neighborhood concept as well as other factors. By involving as many Seward residents as possible in the planning and decision-making process, citizens voices will be heard. This will lead to increased transparency and communication for the residents of Seward. It is the responsibility of each of us to do what we can to enhance the close feel of the community by supporting each other.



**Seward City Council – Ward 4
Karl Miller**

Why are you running for office?

I am running for the office of City Council for Ward 4 as an incumbent, so I am running to continue working for the betterment of the city as it continues to grow and maintain tremendous potential for future growth and investment for the people of the city.

Why do you love Seward?

I feel that the city is a great place, a great community, and holds tremendous opportunity for growth into the future.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I would like to think that during my time on the City Council and being a part of various committees such as LB840 has shown me to be a proponent for the opportunity of private enterprise with minimal interference from the governing body.

How will you plan to make Seward a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

To make the city as job-friendly and attractive to businesses it is my aim to see that we get the most efficient use from the tax dollars of the people and to work toward a balance between the maintenance of current programs of the city but also planned expansion in anticipated growth.

What is the number one issue currently facing Seward?

I feel the number one issue currently facing Seward is growth. In which growth is a good issue to be facing in the way of defining how we want to grow as a city and what that may look like in the future. But growth also provides challenges with the costs associated with the expansion of necessary infrastructure to sustain current growth while also providing the capacity of future growth for the city.

What should be Seward's top economic priorities?

As a city I believe that the top economic priorities of the city should be the consistency and efficiency in the services that it provides, as well as fostering an economic environment that positions the city for potential growth of businesses and attract new businesses.

What is your perspective on Seward's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Seward stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

My perspective on Seward's growth is that it should be considered a positive aspect of the city and that it truly is up to the people to maintain, develop, and foster the relationships that make Seward have the close feeling of a small community as the city continues to grow.



**Milford City Council – Ward 1
Becky Freeman**

Why are you running for office?

When I first applied to fill a vacancy on the Milford City Council, I wanted a way to be involved in this community. Over the course of the last several years, I've gained a greater appreciation for all of the work that goes into running this town. The old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child" can also be applied to running this community. It isn't just those in City Hall, or the City Council, or the Mayor that directs Milford. It also includes all of the volunteers on the numerous committees. I want to be a part of that – be part of something bigger than myself.

Why do you love Milford?

Milford is a small community. It's a safe place for my kids to grow up and go to school. Milford has opportunities for my kids that they wouldn't necessarily have in a larger community. I enjoy seeing people I know when run to get gas or stop in the post office.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

I support new businesses opening in this community and want to see the current businesses thrive. I will continue to vote for any programs available within the community that business can utilize to improve their existing infrastructure or to open a new business.

How will you plan to make Milford a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Allowing the community to grow through more housing opportunities will attract people to move to the community. People want to be able to live in the community where they open a business and work. If there is no place available to live in the community, they may go elsewhere to open that new business or take a new job.

What is the number one issue currently facing Milford?

In one word: water. Citizens have expressed concerns for a number of years regarding the quality of the water in this town. While our water is safe to drink, the color of the water can be displeasing. The Council has been working on improving this. Plans are in place to replace water lines in the town. It will be a good thing for the community when this project is complete.

What should be Milford's top economic priorities?

Businesses have moved into this community over the last several years. This provides tax revenue to the city. We need to continue to encourage businesses to move into the town. I try to buy in town when at all possible. Dollars spent in town mean more dollars to put into community programs, amenities, and improvements.

What is your perspective on Milford's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Milford stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Milford needs housing. The new development currently being built on the south side of town and the new apartments utilizing an existing building by the elementary will provide much needed housing opportunities to the community. This town can afford to grow some without losing the small-town feel.



**Milford City Council – Ward 2
Tony DeLong**

Why are you running for office?

I am vested in Milford with a passion for service. With purposeful action, I will work strategically to uncover, and to discover, a common vision to move us forward. I will focus on specific, measurable and achievable results to execute items needed for Milford’s strategic plan.

Why do you love Milford?

I wanted a place where my family could call home, a place where they could thrive and become the people they were meant to be. Milford made that a reality for me.

Why should a business person support your election to office?

Communities can grow by choice or chance. Abraham Lincoln used to say that “the best way to predict the future is to create it yourself.” A big part of this creation is supporting local businesses. I want to be a part of a team that works towards supporting local businesses, and diligently working to create opportunities for new businesses.

How will you plan to make Milford a more jobs-friendly community and attract businesses and employees to our area?

Simple recipe...

Step 1: Create opportunities for people to move to Milford.
Jobs follow people. A majority of business owners establish residence in a community first, and then start a business. Step one is to help create

Step 2: Help develop revitalization programs to improve the function and image of distressed, degraded or underutilized areas. The ultimate goal is to support economic resurgence and to catalyze new investment and economic activity. In selecting a location to live, the most highly

considered factor for business owners and community members is the overall quality of the community.

What is the number one issue currently facing Milford?

Infrastructural needs. From affordable housing to wireless internet.

What should be Milford's top economic priorities?

Continue to invest in Milford's infrastructure; physical infrastructure is an interconnected, intrinsic component of strong communities.

What is your perspective on Milford's growth? In other words, how would you ensure Milford stays competitive while maintaining the close feel of the community?

Over recent decades, cities have become job centers that attract people away from rural communities. However, Milford has many items working in its favor: Milford is close to job hubs, and people want to live in areas that provide green space. So how does Milford capitalize on its advantages, attract new residents, and retain community members? Provide a lifestyle and activities that people seek in communities; amenities are there to provide members of the neighborhood an overall sense of community.