

## **Kevin Brown – County Commission Candidate**

### **Business Climate / Regulations Issues**

- 1. Rate the regulatory climate for business in Escambia County. Is it Good/Fair/Bad? Explain your answer.**

Fairly Bad. I think we have a lot of opportunity to improve our regulatory climate in Escambia County. We have some areas where the county regulations are above and beyond what the state requires. I would work with the business community to identify certain regulations that are onerous or duplicative and eliminate them. We must also make sure the regulations we have are applied to everyone, and not allow for exceptions.

- 2. Please provide any examples of how regulations have affected the life of county residents in a positive or negative way.**

The regulations have not kept up with the growth and have hindered many business owners in District 2. Many businesses in Warrington and West Pensacola are negatively impacted by the fact they are still on septic tanks. Our inability to upgrade our infrastructure has a greater negative impact to businesses in District 2.

- 3. Name the top 3 specific county ordinances/regulations you would like to see eliminated. Explain why they should be eliminated.**

I would like to see that our ordinances and regulations are enforced across the board, to everyone. I would like to work with the business community and others to then identify what regulations could be eliminated. I think it is just as important to show consistency and making sure there are no exceptions to the regulations.

### **Operations / Infrastructure Issues**

- 4. Do you see any overlap or duplication of services between the county and the city? If so, what services, and how could these services be consolidated?**

I think we could work with the City to make planning and zoning more uniform. I also think we could work with the business community to find areas where we could streamline, or provide joint services to those trying to do business in the county.

- 5. Homelessness and panhandling continue to be a significant problem in Escambia County. What are your solutions to this pressing problem that impacts the business community?**

As far as homelessness, I think we should work with our partners in the community to address the issue from all sides. Working with organizations to help with re-entry programs for those out of prison, working to ensure children aging out of foster care aren't slipping through the cracks, and working to provide more affordable housing options in the community. We also need to be working with our law enforcement partners to ensure they have the resources needed to address public safety and enforce the law.

**6. Do you believe the county allocates sufficient resources for infrastructure projects? How would you prioritize these projects and fund them?**

Infrastructure should be a priority and I believe I can help the county do a better job leveraging the funds it has available to address our critical infrastructure needs. We have to present a unified message as to what our priorities are for the county. We can find much more funding for stormwater and septic to sewer projects by taking a more regional approach to these issues and working with our partners across the Panhandle and in Alabama, to draw down more dollars from sources like oil spill recovery funds, as well as the state and federal government.

**7. What is your opinion of the beach congestion plans that have been proposed? What is your vision for solving this problem?**

I think a significant amount of parking on the beach is used by those working on the beach. We could work with members of the service industry on the beach to try to find easier transportation on and off the island to work. We could also look to other beach communities and find new options to addressing these issues.

**8. A glaring need in our community is for a facility that has adequate meeting space for conventions and events. What is your position on such a facility?**

I love the convention center, but I don't think it will ever be as successful as it could be if it is run by the government. We should allow the private sector to lease the convention center, so it can compete with other venues in the region.

**9. What would your Five Year Plan for Escambia County look like?**

In five years, I would like to see our infrastructure hardened and upgraded to keep up with our growth. Additionally, I would ensure that Gulf Beach Highway and Sorrento Road are widened, well lit, and safe to travel. Over the next five years, we can transform District 2 into a more vibrant community by taking advantage of the opportunities we have available to us currently. Opportunities like the oil spill recovery funds, that would allow us to finally address these problems without raising taxes.

## **Economic Development Issues**

**10. What role should county government take in attracting new businesses to the area? What types of jobs would you like to see growing in Escambia County? Be specific.**

County government should work to address the road and infrastructure issues that would allow for the private sector to create jobs. We still have commercial areas in the county that are on septic tanks and hinder any new growth. If we can take care of the foundational issues like that, we can provide more opportunity for the private sector. We currently have the ability through federal dollars and oil spill recovery funds to address many of these issues, if we understand how to use them.

**11. What is your vision for the various commerce parks or potential sites throughout Escambia County?**

I would work with our educational partners, as well as the business community to support their mission and plan for the jobs we want in our community.

**12. What should the county do with excess properties that it owns? Be specific.**

We need a review of all of our properties to identify what can be sold and put back on the tax rolls for growth. The county doesn't need to be land rich, and job poor.

**13. Tourism is an integral part of Escambia County's economy. In what ways can the county commission support tourism in Escambia County? Be specific.**

By making sure we have clean water and a safe community. We should continue to work with the TDC and Visit Pensacola, but our responsibility has to be keeping our water clean to swim in and our community a safe place to visit. We improve our water quality by prioritizing septic to sewer and storm water mitigation. We keep our community safe by making public safety a priority.

**14. What are the top transportation projects needed to sustain the growth that we are experiencing in Escambia County?**

In District 2, the top transportation priority is Sorrento Road and Gulf Beach Highway. Until it is widened and made safe, it will only become a bigger hinderance to growth and safety.