

## **Charles “Chuck” Depew Responses**

### **Why are you running for Pott. Co. Commissioner?**

I want to represent the North part of our county to make sure tax dollars are spread evenly. I understand the infrastructure of our county through past and present employment. This position will allow a voice to provide a budget that is equally distributed to achieve growth and prosperity throughout the county. I am a good listener and am willing to listen to anyone’s concerns and suggestions about what is best for our county.

### **What do you consider the biggest challenge of the position you are running for and what areas of the county government need improvement and why?**

The opportunity to have five commissioners working together to benefit all our communities may be a challenge. Our commissioners need to spend more time as a team with our county agencies to determine improvement needs and gaps in financial and program support.

### **How long have you been a part of the Pott. Co. community? To what extent have you been a part of the local government in the county?**

I have been a part of Pottawatomie County community for 58 years. I served in leadership roles with KDOT and am using this opportunity to be part of local government in the county.

### **Regarding your prospective position, what do you consider your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?**

I was employed by the KS Department of Transportation for 36 years and am currently employed by USD 320 for 12 years. During this time, I have been part of maintaining and driving roads in most of the county. From this, I understand traffic flow and how road maintenance is currently handled. I have worked with the public in these jobs, understanding needs and concerns. I am knowledgeable of the State processes. I need to learn more about county government.

### **What is Pott. Co.’s role in spurring job creation?**

Pottawatomie County is the fastest growing county in Kansas with employment in manufacturing, schools, hospital and utility businesses. In addition to maintaining this employment, it is important to look at business opportunities in our smaller towns to encourage residents to spend dollars locally without leaving the county. Our telecommunications service providers can help job opportunities here too.

### **It’s no secret that Pott. Co. has broad and diverse demographics and culture. Please describe how you intend to strike a balance and serve everyone in the county.**

Mentorship can be valuable to teach trades and skills needed for job retention in a diversified population. We are fortunate to be close to universities and technical colleges where resources can be available.

### **What should Pott. Co.’s relationship with other local government look like?**

We should strive to have cities, schools and State of KS working together to make Pottawatomie County a better place to live and grow. Communication regarding needs between these entities is crucial to these relationships.

**What are your plans for preserving farm ground while also creating development opportunities and jobs throughout the county?**

We need to maintain the rich agricultural grounds in the North part of the county. There is infrastructure in the Southern part to develop businesses on the Highway 24 corridor. This highway system can be used to transport agricultural and other commodities to build economic county growth.

**Given Manhattan's continued expansion eastward, what should Pott. Co.'s relationship with Manhattan look like?**

It is important to work together to develop a willingness to agree and accept plans for growth and development to benefit the city of Manhattan and Pottawatomie County.

**How would you approach the potential decommissioning of Jeffrey Energy Center?**

We need an understanding of Energy's plans so the facility can be utilized to provide county employment opportunities with an energy focus.

**Please share your approach to crafting a budget for Pott. Co.?**

First, let's review prior budget history to determine the impact of funds spent. My approach is to achieve diversity in spending, so all programs benefit. I would like to see where funds are most needed. A wish list can be used, but priorities should be addressed first.

**What are your takeaways from the Pott. County 2040 Plan? What stands out to you?**

As I was not aware of this plan; I feel it is important to make an effort to share aspects of the plan with our constituents for discussion and updating. My biggest takeaway was information about land use and development of preservation of open spaces.

**A two-day training session by the KS County Commissioners Association (KCCA) will take place in Topeka for newly elected county commissioners. What will you hope to accomplish at this training?**

I will use the training opportunity to gain knowledge on different forms of county government and learn more about other county's processes. I hope to come away with new insights for Pott. Co.

**What are your top priorities as County Commissioner?**

It is very important to take care of our county population. We have a community to re-build in Westmoreland. Wamego is addressing the loss of a major employer. Roads and bridges must be maintained to travel safely. In this position, I will be a commissioner that works to understand the county needs by representing the North part of the county and listening to the people. I will work with our county team to overcome challenges and seek opportunities to accomplish the best for all.

