

Doug Adams Responses

General Questions/ Prompts for All Candidates:

My name is Doug Adams and after more than 22 years as a member of the Sheriff's Office, including the last 4 years as your Undersheriff, I am running to be your Republican candidate for Pottawatomie County Sheriff. I understand the unique responsibilities that come with serving the citizens of Pottawatomie County. Past Sheriffs have laid an exceptional foundation for a great organization, and I want to continue to build on that success. I firmly believe that the role of the Sheriff is not just a job; it is a commitment to serving and protecting our community.

Since former Sheriff Greg Riat hired me as a Deputy full time in June of 2002, I have served Pottawatomie County in a number of different roles as a School Resource Officer, Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain before being honored to be selected by Sheriff Shane Jager to serve as his Undersheriff in November 2019. These positions have allowed me to gain a great deal of experience and insights into what makes a successful Sheriff's Office.

My wife, Michelle, and I are blessed with two fantastic kids, Ella and Noah. As a long-time resident of this amazing county, I have witnessed the growth and challenges we face. I understand the unique needs of our community and I am dedicated to making it a safer and more secure place for all.

- Why are you running for office?

After working for the citizens for the past 22 years with the Sheriff's Office, I have a deep love for our county and understand the unique responsibilities that come with serving the citizens of Pottawatomie County. I am very passionate about continuing to do things the right way and ensuring the safety and well being of our community. I have raised my family here and want to make sure it remains the amazing community that it is.

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

I believe the biggest challenge facing the Sheriff's Office today is maintaining the quality group of employees we currently have and finding ways to allow employees to grow and develop to better benefit our communities. Communication is the vital key to any successful organization and should always work to better improve how we communicate between ourselves and the people we serve.

- How long have you been a part of the Pottawatomie County community? To what extent have you been a part of local government in the county?

I have spent the past 43 plus years living in the Manhattan and Pottawatomie County area. In 2003, I married my wife, Michelle. We are blessed with two amazing children, Ella and

Noah, Michelle and I have lived in Onaga, Wamego and for the past 16 years in Eagles Landing in the southwest corner of Pottawatomie County.

I have been with the Pottawatomie County Sheriff's Office for 22 years and during the past 4 plus years, I have served as Sheriff Shane Jager's Undersheriff. During that time, I have had the opportunity to work with various Pottawatomie County Department, City and School District officials and attend numerous community meetings.

- Regarding your prospective position, what do you consider your greatest strengths?

I would consider my work ethic and organizational skills to be my greatest strengths.

As a Sheriff, you oversee not just a large group of Deputies, but also a county-wide communications center, the county jail and a records division. In total you are responsible for 65 plus employees at any given time. With 862 square miles in Pottawatomie County and all the unique communities that we serve, being organized is essential in keeping things on track. Being Sheriff is a 24/7 job that requires being open and available to the citizens you serve.

Weaknesses?

I would consider overextending myself in an effort to accomplish as much as possible as my biggest weakness. I want to focus on getting things done instead of talking about getting things done.

- It's no secret that Pottawatomie County has broad and diverse demographics and culture. Please describe how you intend to strike a balance and serve everyone in the county.

We often say, what works in one part of the county, say like Havensville, won't necessarily work in another part of the county such as St. George and vice versa. As Sheriff, I will continue to engage with our different communities whether it be through town festivals, increased school visits, or special events like our annual Cast with a Cop event. I will encourage our Deputies to do the same. We ask our Deputies "How do you get to know the wants and needs of the people" and the answer is always by getting out and talking to them. Every community in our county has unique needs and it is imperative that we work to find out those needs and do the best we can to help everyone in Pottawatomie County.

- What are your top priorities if you are elected?

As Sheriff, I have three main priorities:

Continue to work with our various communities to improve engagement with our citizens

Combat illegal drugs in our area through community education and proactive drug investigations

Address ongoing mental health issues within our community and provide as much support as we can to people in crisis through training and by working with our community stakeholders. We also must provide mental health resources for our own co-workers to ensure we are prepared to serve our citizens to the best of our ability.

Questions for County Sheriff and County Attorney Candidates:

- How would you describe your management style?

I believe in leading from the front and being adaptable. I have never asked any person I have worked with to do something that I wasn't prepared to do myself. I make clear what my expectations are for those working with me. I think that as a leader, you must find what type of management style works best for the people you work with. A more hands-on style may be needed with some people, some people may flourish when given free rein to accomplish their goals in the way they best see fit. Putting individuals in the best position for them to succeed leads to the overall success of any organization.

- How can we hire the best? How do we attract great candidates?

Nestled between two larger populations in Topeka and Manhattan, it will always be difficult to out-bid those cities for prospective employees, but we have tremendous benefits such as great equipment, county wide benefits like the 457 plan and take-home cars for our deputies. More than anything, people want to work for good organizations and striving to maintain a supportive and positive workplace culture can greatly enhance job satisfaction and keep good employees with us.

- People often wind up in the criminal legal system because they are struggling with substance use disorders and mental health issues. Is it appropriate for prosecutors, police and the courts to play a role in helping people with substance use disorders and mental health issues access care?

I think we need to work with the other stakeholders in our community to keep people suffering from substance abuse or mental health issues from re-offending and becoming a greater drain on our resources. Intervention programs and post-release follow-up are very helpful in reducing recidivism. I do believe strongly in accountability and have taught my kids that choices have consequences and bad choices can have bad consequences, so I believe there has to always be some level of accountability.

- Low-income people entering the legal system face barriers to getting out due to limited financial circumstances. Do you feel that high fines, fees, and financial assessments in the criminal and traffic court system have contributed to the "criminalization of poverty" Do poor people face harsher outcomes for the same conduct as others due to their poverty? Why or why not?

As a Sheriff's Office, we use the Kansas Uniform Fine Schedule when writing infractions such as speeding tickets. Contrary to what some people think, the Sheriff's Office does not receive any money directly from speeding tickets or other infractions. There is no financial benefit for Deputies to write a ticket. We expect Deputies to be fair and consistent when enforcing any traffic law, regardless of individual circumstances.

I know many low-income individuals have a harder time paying fines and fees and can fall into a cycle of missed payments, additional fees and eventually jail. But I do not believe that people should be treated differently based on an income level and that can become a very slippery slope. Alternative solutions such as monetary fines being switched to community service have merit but that is most certainly an issue the courts would have determined.

- What is the number one crime-related issue that needs a plan of action and how will you address it?

Pottawatomie County is a generally safe county and the recent release by the KBI 2023 Crime Index supports this, but we continue to see the tragic effects of illegal drug use in our community. The past few years we have seen the deadly effects of Fentanyl, which is often added to other drugs such as methamphetamine, pain killer pills, and even marijuana. This is sometimes done without the knowledge of the buyer leading to the unintentional ingestion of Fentanyl. Pottawatomie County has had multiple deaths related to Fentanyl poisoning and we will continue to fight against these threats to the safety and well-being of our citizens. As Sheriff, I will take a two-fold approach to the issue by continuing to engage with the community to help educate our citizens, particularly our children, on the dangers and current trends in illegal drug use and focus more resources on proactive drug investigations by the Sheriff's Office and in conjunction with area law enforcement agencies.