

Name: Michelle Hazekamp
Office Sought: County Commissioner
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1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

Yes. I am currently a Muskegon County Commissioner for district 3; Fruitport, Sullivan Twp. & Norton Shores.

2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe.

My husband and I currently own Lakes, Inc., a small trucking company here in Muskegon County. We have owned this company for almost 21 years and transport refrigerated products.

3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.

The qualifications I hold that make me the best candidate for this office is primarily the 20 years of successfully operating my company, which consists of the everyday duties of accounting, human resources, maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations, and problem solving. I have also had some community service & leadership experience with my time serving as a Boy Scout leader.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

The role of County Commissioner is to approve, maintain and keep county departments within budget. As a current County Commissioner, it is necessary to make conservative decisions when spending our tax payer dollars between necessities and opportunities that arise that may help improve and increase the financials of Muskegon County, or not.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

The top 3 issues I believe that face Muskegon County businesses today are:

1. Retaining Employees.
2. Taxes.
3. Wages.

Retaining employees is a huge issue for businesses, which the state of our current economy greatly factors into. Although record high inflation and increased tax rates are affecting everyone, many of our businesses in Muskegon County cannot afford to pay a livable wage and/or health benefits, therefore businesses tend to experience large turn-over rates with their employees. We also have a lack of businesses capable of providing desirable salaries. Many of our Muskegon County residents work in surrounding counties where higher salaries are available. Muskegon County is a unique county for many reasons, including our lakeshore, landscape, resources, ecology and environment which allows for a variety of business opportunities that are not best suited for inland counties. As a County Commissioner, these issues can be addressed by working with businesses and developers through tax incentives, available infrastructure and utilizing our county land bank to bring in new and innovative businesses that can offer the wages necessary and appeal to our residents, while at the same time trying to help struggling businesses with available resources.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

My personal values and beliefs play a large role in problem solving, and is why I was elected. I do not sway from my values and beliefs, but do listen to and consider both sides of a problem with an open mind and try to come up with a satisfactory solution for most, as long as it is lawful, moral and reasonable. Public input is also very important to me in determining a balance of personal values and beliefs.

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official?

First of all, I feel I can and do make a difference when helping out constituents with problems, even when it is not under county control or authority. I do my best to find answers and solutions for constituents when they reach out to me. Responding to our constituents' needs is a priority.

For Muskegon County as a whole, I feel I can make the most difference as a County Commissioner by controlling wasteful spending, and aid in acquiring new economic development opportunities to help Muskegon County grow financially and make Muskegon a place where people want to work, live and visit.

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected?

If re-elected, I will utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource by directing existing and future businesses as a go-to for concerns, needs, opportunities and information for problem solving and to make their businesses successful. I am committed to work alongside in any matter if necessary to help accomplish results, as I am committed to the success of Muskegon County.

9. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?

If re-elected, my top 3 priorities are:

1. Control wasteful spending
2. Serving the constituents of Muskegon County in any way I am able.
3. Help facilitate Economic & Affordable Housing development

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

I love Muskegon County and the people who live here. We are an amazing community! I am excited to be a part of helping Muskegon move forward to be a better place for our future generations to work and live.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
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Muskegon, MI 49440
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