

My Commitment to Columbia County Roads, Accountability, and Good Decisions

As I prepare to begin serving as your Columbia County Commissioner, I want to make one commitment very clear: **I will work hard to make sure Columbia County gets the most value possible from every dollar we spend.**

Roads are one of the most important responsibilities of county government. Whether you live in Rainier, Clatskanie, Vernonia, St. Helens, or one of our rural communities, our roads connect families to work, businesses to customers, farmers and timber operators to markets, and emergency services to the people who need them.

Roads Need to Be a Priority

I believe we need a clear, public priority list for county road projects. We need to know which roads need attention, why they need it, what the estimated cost is, and what benefit the project provides to the community.

That doesn't mean every road can be fixed at once. It means we need to make smart decisions about **where limited resources will do the most good.**

My approach will be simple:

Get the most bang for the buck.

That means looking beyond the most visible project or the loudest request and asking:

- What is the condition of the road?
- How many people depend on it?
- Does it provide an important connection for schools, businesses, agriculture, forestry, or emergency services?
- Can we preserve a road now before it becomes far more expensive to rebuild later?
- Are there grants or other funding sources available?
- Can we complete the work more efficiently or at a lower cost?
- Are we spending money on the right project at the right time?

Responsible Spending Matters

I have spent much of my public service career dealing with budgets, emergencies, limited resources, and difficult decisions. One lesson has always stood out:

You can't spend the same dollar twice.

County government is no different.

Every dollar spent on one project is a dollar that cannot be spent somewhere else. That doesn't mean we should avoid investing in our county. It means we have a responsibility to make sure those investments are justified, sustainable, and provide a real benefit to the people who pay for them.

I will support investments that make sense for Columbia County, while asking the difficult questions when they need to be asked.

Transparency in County Decisions

I also believe the public deserves to understand **how and why decisions are made.**

People may not always agree with a decision. That's part of government. But they should be able to see the facts, understand the reasoning, and know what alternatives were considered.

I want county government to be more transparent about major projects, contracts, expenditures, fees, and long-term financial commitments.

Before committing taxpayer dollars, I believe we should be asking:

What are we getting for our money?

What will it cost in the future?

Is this the best option available?

Can we afford it without creating another problem somewhere else?

Those are not unreasonable questions. They are responsible questions.

Looking Beyond Today

Good government isn't just about getting through the current budget year. It is about thinking several years ahead.

When we repair a road, purchase equipment, build a facility, enter into a contract, or take on a new financial obligation, we need to consider the long-term impact.

I want Columbia County to avoid the cycle of putting off necessary maintenance until it becomes an expensive emergency.

Preventive maintenance is almost always cheaper than rebuilding something that has been allowed to fail.

That principle applies to roads, bridges, buildings, equipment, and infrastructure throughout the county.

Working for the Whole County

As Commissioner, I will represent the entire county.

That means listening to communities throughout Columbia County—not just the largest population centers and not just the people who happen to agree with me.

Our rural roads matter.

Our cities matter.

Our businesses matter.

Our farms and timber operations matter.

Our families matter.

And every taxpayer deserves to know that their county government is working to use their money wisely.

My Commitment

I will bring the same philosophy to the County Commission that I have brought to public service for decades:

Listen. Ask questions. Look at the facts. Spend responsibly. Be transparent. And make decisions based on what is best for Columbia County.

We may not always have enough money to do everything we want.

But I believe we can do a better job of making sure **the money we do have produces the greatest possible benefit for the people of Columbia County.**

That's my commitment to our roads, our infrastructure, our taxpayers, and the future of Columbia County.