

**Champaign County's
Business Empowered PAC
Candidate Survey**

Candidate Name: _____ Patricia D. Petrie (Pattsi) _____

Office Sought (district): ___ County Board member district 6 _____

Campaign Committee Name: _____ Pattsi Petrie Campaign Fund _____

Champaign Committee Address: _____ 503 S. Chicago Ave. _____

City: _____ Champaign _____ Zip Code: _____ 61821 _____

Telephone: _____ 217.369.5656 _____ Fax: _____

E-mail/Website: _____ pattst2@gmail.com _____

Are you seeking an endorsement from the Business Empowered PAC? Yes: ___X___ No: _____

Are you the owner of a business? Yes: _____ No: _____X_____

If yes, type of business and total number of employees: _____

Please Include a Brief Biography or Resume Along With Your Survey Responses. You May Also Include a Piece of Campaign Literature if You Like.

Return by December 18, 2009

Andrew Proctor, Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, 1817 S. Neil Street, Suite 201, Champaign, IL 61820
AndrewP@champaigncounty.org, phone: 217-359-1791, fax: 217-359-1809

Candidate Survey

Candidate name:

Please limit your responses to 150 words per question. Use additional pages as necessary. Please hand deliver or mail your completed survey to: Champaign County's **Business Empowered PAC**, 1817 S. Neil Street, Suite 201, Champaign, IL 61820.7269. Surveys must be received no later than 5 p.m. on December 18, 2009.

If you would prefer to complete this survey electronically, please contact Andrew Proctor at 217.359.1791 or AndrewP@champaigncounty.org.

1. If you are an incumbent, what are your top three accomplishments during your tenure in this office?

I am not an incumbent. Nonetheless, I consider the major county issue as sustainability—economic, environmental, and social.

- Economic sustainability—support fiscal efficiency, economic development, stabilization of county taxes
- Environment sustainability—preserve and conserve farm land, highest and best use of non-farm land, water quality and quantity, trails for hiking and biking, energy resources
- Social sustainability— access to health care, locally grown food, housing to meet county population needs, diversified jury selection

2. What are your top three priorities for improving the business climate in Champaign County?

View economic development from a regional perspective.

Make certain that economic development being considered will have a lasting effect on the county. Analyze economic impact of any development related to taxing bodies, long-term costs, not just the short-term perceived gain, and local employment.

3. In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing local businesses?

Not taking into account the long-term costs generated by short-term gains along with a greater need to determine the gap between the economic curve and the ability to spend curve. Economic development is necessary, but the decision-making bodies must be certain that there is a long-term gain to the health, safety, and welfare of the county.

4. Please explain your perception of how the position you are seeking currently affects local businesses?

As mentioned in the response to question #7, the county board needs to plan regionally—this includes economic development. As a county we are isolated related to additional population, meaning spending patterns—we can not depend on monies from other entities other than what is within the county. One can see this all the time when one looks at the economic/business curve adjusting to the local/county spending curve as new businesses open, others close. This is a huge cost. Further, the county population is skewed toward C-U. In addition, C-U is basically a false

economy generated and dependent on the student population, which comes and goes. All one has to do is compare the number of yellow pages in the phone book to those of the white pages.

5. Under what circumstances would you vote to raise taxes and/or fees?

I would give such consideration only after the county auditor, treasurer, and administrator had reviewed every aspect of county spending and proven to me that there is no undo spending occurring. This includes having put in place means and ways to make the county more sustainable and began the process of saving on energy expenditures, which are huge.

6. In your opinion should the Champaign County Auditor be appointed or elected?

But for the issues related to the performance of Tony Fabri, this would not even be a topic of discussion. So the important aspect of any argument is to separate the two. Fiscal reliability, transparency, and ethics are of prime importance. How can this be accomplished? In theory this can be done by an individual who is elected and must answer to the electorate, not the county board or county administrator. Presently, the check and balance does not appear to be maximized. One major issue is that the state statute does not offer recourse to correct a poorly performing elected official until the next election. Potentially what ought to be corrected is the state statute, not throw out the possibility of an elected auditor. Another change that ought to be considered for the state statute is professional criteria for the auditor.

7. Do you agree or disagree that it is important to have a cooperative intergovernmental relationship with other local units of government.

This is a given. And in the spirit of transparency, I worked for and on the last referendum to merge the two communities. Redundancy is costly. There is extensive urban planning research literature supporting the importance of regional planning rather than just within a community's borders, even at times across state lines. What is happening within this area—Champaign, Urbana, Savoy, St. Joseph, Mahomet, and Monticello--is the perfect land use and economic development set up for regional planning.

What areas of cooperation will you pursue?

Land use, economic development, meeting housing needs, preservation of water and water quality, greenways, mass transit, sustainability

8. Do you support or oppose the Olympian Drive extension north of Urbana and northwest of Champaign and as a county board member would you vote for financial support for the project?

The extension of Olympian Drive is a conundrum. If this is extended along with the extension of 4th street in Champaign and in the future Lincoln, this opens the door for such rapid sprawl that will happen in 5-10 years. On the counter side, the master plan states the importance of decreasing traffic, building compactly, infill, improving mass transit. Opening up the potential for sprawl, undoes the master planning along with the fact that sprawl just does not pay for itself. The projections for this community are not a huge increase in population. And if we look at the present pattern of covering land 4-5 fold population increase, the decrease of valuable farm land is just over the horizon. Besides these aspects, the expansion of Olympian Drive is cost heavy and the project is not presently a county issue.

9. Would you support measures that would give businesses relief such as property tax credits and tax increment financing (TIF) assistance when municipal mandated costs are imposed? If yes, how?

Again in the spirit of transparency, my urban planning masters thesis was an analysis of TIF districts and the cost to communities, which is never recovered unless the community is East St. Louis, and causes economic difficulties for other taxing bodies in a community. Further, I brought Greg Leroy, who wrote the *Great American Jobs Scam* <http://www.greatamericanjobsscam.com/> and founder of Good Jobs First <http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/> to speak at one of the Planning Institutes, sponsored by the UIUC Department of Urban and Regional Planning. I planned these institutes. The reason for including Greg Leroy, an economist, as one of the institute speakers had to do with his recent book and how he shows many approaches for economic development that ensure longevity of the business and at the same time does not put a burden on other taxing bodies. An example, I often use is the relatively recent departure of Delta Airlines and what it cost entities within the community.

With this caveat, indeed, I support county and regional economic development within the above described framework. In other words if monies are being spent to encourage development, I would be certain this is a business that is here to stay, contributes to the area, employees locally, treats employees appropriately, maintains the promised number of employees when originally being brought to the community (this aspect is rarely confirmed after a year or two)

10. Do you believe government should continue to legislate restrictions and unfunded mandates on businesses or let the marketplace determine the activity? Why?

Building on my response to question #9, free marketplace just does not exist. And to create such an environment would mean changing state statutes and federal laws—this would not happen completely. (I have two economists in my family who argue strongly that the market ought to be allowed to work. I always counter that this is an impossibility as laws presently stand. ☺) So how does a county decision making body.

The county ought to work to encourage means and ways to enhance economic development and minimize restrictions and mandates. I am pleased that the county board appears to be moving forward, at last, toward wind energy. This is a win-win all the way around. This provides income for the county, the land owner, the taxing bodies overlaying the wind turbine, and most importantly, as I have been arguing for more than five years, the perfect way to save our farm land and give us a window of 20-25 years—the life of a wind turbine—to figure out other means to continue to protect farm land to the best and highest use.

11. In this current economic situation, sales tax revenues are declining. How would you propose to address declining municipal revenues?

As mentioned in several previous responses, I would work hard to make certain that any economic development within the county adds to the county and does not add a burden. Second, I will work to make certain that county monies spent are done so in a fiscally responsible manner. Third, I will work toward ways and means to curtail energy use expenditures on all county properties and lands. Fourth, I will work toward making the county much more sustainable.

Examples, I worked hard at trying to turn around the financial situation at the Champaign County Nursing Home. The CB decisions have increased the financial burden rather than contain and improve this. The previous building could have been renovated sustainably; the mold situation could have been mitigated by the national authority who is here locally; and the downward spiraling financial situation could have been stayed had the county board chosen to make hard decisions.

Another example, I sent the CB and Champaign County Nursing Home Board a proposal as to means and ways to make the land around the home and other county land in the complex into sustainable gardens to produce food for the nursing home, detention center, and jail. This would not only save on food costs, improve nutrition of food provided, decrease costs of maintenance, and improve look of area. I even included in the proposal many groups that could be involved along with university studios that could be engaged to set in motion original designs.

12. Do you support or oppose proposed reforms of the county board to single member districts?

Historically, the CB has made decisions more in a partisan framework, rather than for the health, safety, and welfare of the county. Again historically, this pattern has created some of the present budget shortfalls and fractious policies. So my interest is how can this decision-making process be improved so decisions will be made in the light of the health, safety, and welfare of the county. Some of the discussion has been toward two approaches—down-sizing and single member districts. Down-sizing has a major shortcoming that already exists with the present district structure—that is, very few people know who their CB district members are and the members spend very little time with constituents basically because of the size and shape of the districts. This draw back then leads one to consider single member districts that would mitigate the size issue and might enhance board diversity. It appears as if this topic will be on the CB agenda before the November election and might even be settled. If the decision is one to change the structure of the board, I strongly support a sunset clause and formative evaluations be done to judge and improve any changes.

13. Is there any other information you would like to provide?

As far as I can determine historically, there has never been an urban planner elected to the county board. My training and academic background along with the various community issues on which I have worked over the years ought to be a very positive addition to the county board decision-making process for the health, safety, and welfare of the county. In addition, as an urban planner who has AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners) after my name, I am bound to function within our Code of Ethics. A major tenet of this code is that a planner must work in the interests of the health, safety, and welfare of the community or client employing the planner.

I have argued for years that the potential of the county and the communities within the county exists; however, when one looks at the community demographics overlaid with the knowledge base at UIUC, we have a pattern of under achievement. Factors are merging toward a paradigm shift right now.

Surveys must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 18, 2009

Support may only be provided to candidates who complete and return this questionnaire.

Return of this survey implies permission for your answers to be posted on the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce website and/or *Commerce Connection* newsletter. The PAC board reserves the right to edit all responses which exceed the 150 word restriction for the purpose of print space constraints in our publications.