



League of Women Voters of Alpena County ***Voter Guide: Primary Election August 3, 2010***



About the Voter Guide: The League of Women Voters of Alpena County compiled the information on candidates. The League is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. Local candidates were contacted for answers to questions on their reason for seeking office and issues. All certified candidates for offices *with primary opposition* were contacted. Responses are in the candidates' own words and were edited for spelling, punctuation and adherence to the proscribed word limit. The League does not endorse or oppose candidates or parties, but it does obtain and distribute to the public, information about candidates and their views.

FOR INFORMATION ON U.S. AND STATE CANDIDATES:

See the voter guide on the LWVMi website: www.lwvmi.org/2010PrimaryVoterGuideIndex.htm

(Select U.S. District 1, State House District 106, and State Senate District 36)

Or go to www.publius.org/ and type in your name - will bring up your ballot and information links.

ALPENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The candidates answered these questions.

- 1. Why are you running for a seat on the Alpena County Commission?**
- 2. If elected as an Alpena County Commissioner what would be your priority?**

DISTRICT 1 (City Precincts 5 & 6)

JESSICA HATCH, Republican

1. I have always been interested in politics, and I feel that my experience with running a successful business for over 5 years would be an asset to the Board of Commissioners.
2. Fiscal responsibility! It's a very hard thing to cut spending, but it is also necessary to maintain a balanced budget for things to run properly. We must cut spending where we can, and try to balance our budget.

MARK HUNTER, Republican

1. Alpena needs commissioners who are involved in the community. Responsible persons in leadership positions are critical to good government - People who keep promises and keep obligations to the citizens; obligations to maintain buildings; obligations to keep a balanced budget. I was born here and have a strong sense of ownership and community improvement.
2. All issues are of interest to me, but budget and finance are stronger interests of mine. The hospital is a key asset, and its continued viability is a key priority.

DONALD DOWLING, JR, Democrat

1. I am a lifelong resident of Alpena County. I have practiced law in Alpena for over 25 years. The first twenty years I was in private practice. Then I worked for almost four years as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Alpena County. As an assistant prosecutor I attended commissioner meetings as legal counsel for the county. I reviewed contracts for the board and advised the county on real property issues and other county business. I am familiar with board issues and procedures and believe my experience as a lawyer will be an asset to the county if I am elected to the position.

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2. To appropriate funds which are reasonable and necessary for county services. Citizens want their tax dollars to be spent wisely, but also expect the departments of county government to be there for them when needed. I will use a common sense approach on spending issues and do my best not to waste the taxpayer's money.

JEFF KOWALSKI, Democrat

DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION.

JAMES STACHLEWITZ, Democrat

1. I am running for County Commissioner because I feel that I can further assist the community. I have been a member of this community for over 15 years working as a Fire Fighter/Paramedic for the City of Alpena. I have also worked for Alpena County as a 911 dispatcher. I feel that my work both for the City and for the County has given me a firm grasp on intergovernmental interaction.

2. If elected, my first priority would be to attempt to control spending. In this economy, everyone is watching their pennies. Why shouldn't government be expected to watch theirs too? Everyone has to pay their taxes and entrusts their elected leaders to spend them wisely. When spending money it should be kept locally. We should keep the taxpayers' money here in Alpena.

DISTRICT 2 (City Precincts 1 & 2)

KENNETH HUBBARD, Democrat

1. I am running to serve District 2 where I have lived for the last 35 years. I had to leave to serve the City as Fire Chief. In retirement I would like to apply the skills that I acquired as a County Commissioner for the seven years I served from 1994 - 2001. Without a coordinator, the County requires working Commissioners.

2. Priority (1) is communications with other government bodies to build good working relationships. Priority (2) is solid planning to provide the expected services cost effectively.

KATHY THOMAS, Democrat

DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION.

DISTRICT 8 (Ossineke and Sanborn Townships)

RANDY FAIRBANKS, Republican

1. I feel that active participation in government is not only a privilege but also more importantly a civic responsibility. I further feel that my life experiences have given me good people skills and other valuable attributes that would make me an excellent county commissioner.

2. My priority would be to maintain and advocate for a county commission that would be responsible to the welfare of the citizens of Alpena County.

RICHARD FORTIER, Republican

1. I am running for County Commissioner because as a lifelong resident of Ossineke Township, I am well aware of the issues residents face in both Ossineke and Sanborn Township. I have taken the opportunity to attend many of the County Commissioners meetings and have familiarized myself with the upcoming topics of discussion. I believe this knowledge will allow me to hit the ground running should I be elected. My 35 years business experience would also be very helpful when dealing with all the issues a commissioner will encounter. The love I have for this area would not allow me to seek this office if I did not feel I could contribute in a meaningful way.

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2. My top priority will be planning a balanced budget. We do this by prioritizing our needs over our wants. The ultimate goal should be providing the maximum amount of services for the tax dollars received from Alpena County residents. By doing this, we will be able to avoid layoffs to current employees and cuts in critical programs.

KEN BAKER, Democrat

DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION.

BALLOT PROPOSALS

The following section lists the wording of the four ballot proposals on the August 3rd Ballot (**in bold**), and a few sentences of clarification. The League of Women Voters may advocate on an issue if we have a relevant position that has been adopted after study; we do not, however, advocate for or against a ballot issue at a Candidates Forum or other Voter Service event.

1. Operating Millage Renewal Proposition for Activities and Services for Older Persons

Shall the limitations on the amount of taxes which shall be assessed against all property both real and personal in Alpena County, Michigan be renewed as provided in Section 6, Article 9 of the Michigan Constitution, and the Alpena County Board of Commissioners be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed 0.5394 of 1 mill (0.5394 on each \$1,000 of Equalized State Taxable Value) for a period of 4 years starting with the levy made December 1, 2010 for the sole purpose of providing "Activities and Services" for Older Persons (individuals 60 years of age or older) for social, legal, health, housing, educational, emotional, nutritional, recreational and mobility services and senior service facility improvements? (The estimate of the revenue the County of Alpena will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year (2010) is \$521,535.)

Renewal millage to support Activities and Services for Senior Citizens, approved in the election of 2006.

You are currently and would continue to pay \$20.23/year if you have a house valued at \$75,000.

2: Operating Millage Increase for Restoration Proposition for Activities and Services for Older Friends

(If Proposition 1 and Proposition 2 are both approved, the result would be to have renewed the same .55 of 1 mill (.55 on each \$1,000 of Equalized State Taxable Value) for operating purposes for the Activities and Services for Older Persons previously approved by the electors in 2006.)

In order to restore the full amount of the 0.55 of 1 mill which was levied in 2006 through 2009 and expires in 2010, shall the limitations on the amount of taxes which shall be assessed against all property both real and personal in Alpena County, Michigan be increased as provided in Section 6, Article 9 of the Michigan Constitution, and the Alpena County Board of Commissioners be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed 0.0106 of 1 mill (\$0.0106 on each \$1,000 of Equalized State Taxable Value) for a period of 4 years starting with the levy made December 1, 2010 for the sole purpose of providing Activities and Services for Older Persons (individuals 60 years of age or older) for social, legal, health, housing, educational, emotional, nutritional, recreational and mobility services and senior services facility improvements?

(Ballot proposal 2 continued on the next page.)

(Proposition 2 Continued)

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(The estimate of the revenue the County of Alpena will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year (2010) is \$10,249.)

The Headlee amendment which passed in 1978 limits the amount of revenue from property assessment increases. On a number of occasions, this has caused a rollback of millage rates. The original rate of .55 mill has been rolled back to .5394. Proposition #1 is for continuing .5394 of 1 mill (the rolled back amount instead of .55). Proposition #2 would bring the amount back to .55 mill.

If you owned a home valued at \$75,000, Proposition 2 would add \$0.40/year to your bill.

3. Operating Millage Proposition For a Department of Veterans Affairs

Shall the limitations on the amount of taxes which shall be assessed against all property both real and personal in Alpena County, Michigan be increased as provided in Section 6, Article 9 of the Michigan Constitution, and the Alpena County Board of Commissioners be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed 0.1250 (1/8) mill (\$0.1250 on each \$1000 of Equalized State Taxable Value) for a period of 4 years starting with the Levy made December 1, 2010 for the purpose of providing funds to equip, operate, maintain and provide support and assistance services to Veterans through the Alpena County Department of Veterans Affairs?

(The estimate of revenue the County of Alpena will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year (2010) is \$124,380.79.)

New millage to create a Department of Veterans Affairs in the county. Money for Veterans Affairs currently comes from the County's general fund.

If your property is valued at \$75,000, you could expect an increase of \$4.69 in your tax bill.

4. Alpena County Operating Millage Proposition for Youth and Recreation

Shall the limitations on the amount of taxes which shall be assessed against all property both real and personal in Alpena County, Michigan be increased as provided in Section 6, Article 9 of the Michigan Constitution, and the Alpena County Board of Commissioners be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed one half of one mill (\$0.50 on each \$1000 of Equalized State Taxable Value) for a period of 4 years starting with the Levy made December 1, 2010 for the sole purpose of providing "Recreational Activities" for Youth and Recreation for Alpena County Residents, as well as, recreational service and improvement or development of recreational sites?

(The estimate of revenue the County of Alpena will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year (2010) is \$483,000.)

The intent of this new millage is to help fund recreational activities that are being restricted or cut in the County, such as the pool, parks, 4-H, sports.

If your property is valued at \$75,000, you could expect an increase of \$18.75 in your tax bill.