



NEBANews

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Fall 2016 Edition

2016 Officers

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Barney Bishop Consulting LLC

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President's Message

This year marks the 25th anniversary of NEBA's founding as a business group. Since then NEBA has grown to become a potent voice before the City and County Commissions. Of course, that doesn't mean that NEBA always wins, but it does mean that NEBA is unabashed in our desire to voice our concerns.

What's unique about NEBA is that as a group we're unafraid to 'rock the boat' if that's what it takes to advance our interests.

Board member Maureen Thompson authored an article that recently ran in the Tallahassee Democrat's edition of Chronicle which highlights community activities and organizations (you can read the story on NEBA's website at <http://www.nebatallahassee.com>). The story, celebrating NEBA's 25th Anniversary, was both educational and informational and reminds us of why NEBA was started and how it's still relevant today.

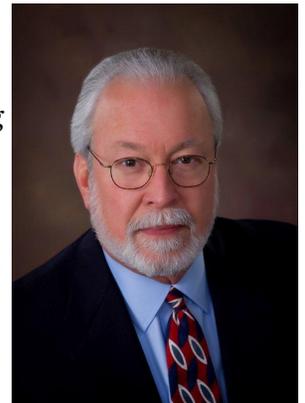
Since 2016 is an election year, NEBA has been hosting political forums starting back in the spring that have highlighted different races that are important to our members. Our monthly straw ballots have also indicated which candidates best reflect the values and issues that our members want to be discussed. This is a key role that NEBA plays for our members and helps to position our organization as one that delves into important issues.

Our last monthly meeting in November will be a preview of the business issues that the Florida legislature will need to deal with next year such as workers' compensation reform, tax cuts, rule deregulation, education priorities, economic development, to name just a few.

This year we've grown our membership to the highest number we've ever had because of the hard work of the Board of Directors and especially because of new board member Hugh Tomlinson who was our Membership Chairman.

We've implemented a new process for RSVP'ing to our monthly meetings and members have taken to it better than we had hoped, and we've got some ideas to improve it even more.

Lastly, I want to share with each of you what an incredible board NEBA has.



Barney Bishop,
NEBA President

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Congressional District Two Candidate Forum

By Emily Fritz

The forum for Congressional District Two candidates was held on August 23. Republicans Neal Dunn and Ken Sukhia and Democrats Steve Crapps and Walter Dartland participated. Dunn and Dartland won their party primaries and will face off in November.

Dunn is a retired urological surgeon from Panama City and was a military surgeon before entering private practice. In 2008, Dr. Dunn started Summit Bank with a group of Panama City community leaders. His top priorities are the economy, national security, and health care. He wants to repeal Obamacare and rebuild the military.

Dartland is an attorney who was a deputy under Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth. He was an officer in the Marine Corps and an elected district attorney in Michigan. His legal career has focused on consumer protection. Dartland describes himself as an environmentalist, social progressive, and fiscal conservative. Dartland supports Obamacare but



Congressional District 2 Candidates (L-R): Ken Sukhia (R), Neal Dunn (R), Steve Crapps (D), and Walter Dartland (D). Photo by Catherine Baer.

believes it can be improved.

Candidates were asked how they will help small businesses in rural counties. Dunn replied that reducing government regulation and taxes would help every sector of the economy. Dartland disagreed about regulation, stating that regulations protect consumers. Dartland supports free community college education to provide a trained workforce for

businesses.

On illegal immigration, Dunn stated he will end incentives for illegals to come here. Dartland believes immigrants, including illegals, have a lot to offer this country.

Dunn supports term limits for Congress. Dartland does not support term limits.

Dunn won the straw poll, but because the NEBA PAC is not a federal PAC, no endorsement was made. 

Candidate Forum for County Commission District Two

By Emily Fritz

Five of the eight candidates for Leon County Commission District Two participated in the July 26 candidate forum: Nancy Calhoun, Kirk Headley-Purdue, Jimbo Jackson, Manny Joanos, and T.J. Lewis.

The primary election was held on August 30, resulting in a November 8 runoff between Joanos and Jackson.

Jimbo Jackson has resided in

District Two for 42 years and attended Ft. Braden School, where he has served as principal for 12 years. His three priorities are citizen safety, increased recreational opportunities, and more business development in the district.

Manny Joanos owned Manny's restaurant for 28 years and represented Leon County Commission District Three from 1990 – 1998. He is currently a

division director of the Leon County School District, overseeing nutritional services, purchasing, and energy management. His priorities include reducing taxes



Manny Joanos won NEBA's straw poll.

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With six former Presidents on the board, we're never at a loss for the historical context of why we do something a particular way – and that's always important for any organization.

This year, I asked all board members to make an additional commitment by making our monthly board meetings 90 minutes long instead of an hour,

and every board member agreed to do so.

While we still have interesting and consuming debates about how to proceed on any given issue, I believe that this year has seen a renewed comradery among the board members that will help our organization continue to grow.

I hope to end the year with the board considering a revised set

of Bylaws that will bring our operations into compliance with our rules and that will afford our organization the opportunity to be around for another 25 years.

Lastly, I want to sincerely thank YOU – our members - and the board for allowing me to serve as your President. It's been an incredible honor and one that I've been proud to hold. 

...Commission Debate continued from page 2

and bringing prosperity back to the district through expansion of business.

When asked about the \$90 million of Blueprint 2020 money earmarked for economic development, Jackson said the community needs input from a full range of stakeholders, including the universities. Joanos said it's important that government not pick and choose favorite

businesses to receive funds.

Joanos does not support spending \$20 million of Blueprint funds to build a convention center. Jackson says he needs to see a deeper study before he can support it.

Neither Jackson nor Joanos support the \$300,000 expenditure for the study of a mobility fee.

On the new Office of Economic

Vitality, Jackson thinks a select small group should not make all the decisions. Joanos believes the office appears to be too bureaucratic and government-heavy, stating that more business interests should be at the table.

Joanos won the NEBA straw poll and received the endorsement of the NEBA PAC. 

Candidate Forum for Clerk of the Court and Property Appraiser

By Emily Fritz

September 27 brought the candidates for Leon County Property Appraiser and Leon County Clerk of the Court together for a forum.

Gwen Marshall won the Democratic primary for Clerk of the Court and will face NPA candidate Franklin Ayetin in the general election.

Ayetin informed the audience that there are 900 statutory requirements of the clerk's office, and his knowledge as an attorney is an advantage. He also has an MBA, which he said would be helpful in the comptroller role of the office. His goal is to modernize the clerk's office and reduce staff turnover.

Marshall emphasized her 17 years of experience at the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers, where she

trained 32 clerks and staff of clerks' offices across the state on software programs. She informed the audience that the association is governed by statute.

Both candidates said they would seek more funding from the legislature for the state clerks of court offices.

When asked if the clerk's race should be partisan or non-partisan, the candidates agreed it should be non-partisan. Both candidates believe the office should remain an elected position so the public can hold the clerk accountable.

Ayetin and Marshall were asked how they would fix the jury pool system so that calls to jury duty would be spread more evenly across the population. Marshall referred to a new software program purchased by

the current clerk and will do an audit of it. Ayetin said he will also do an audit of the software.

Ayetin won the straw poll for the Clerk's race.

Akin Akinyemi won the Democratic primary for the Property Appraiser's race and will face NPA candidate Greg Lane on November 8.

Akinyemi referred to his time on the Leon County Commission where he voted against tax increases and worked with the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce to create jobs. He said his sense of fairness makes him the best candidate for the job, because homes are most people's biggest investment. He said his experience as an architect and land planning instructor

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Lane emphasized his 20 years of experience as a licensed property appraiser, during which he has appraised over 10,000 properties. Because the office assesses over 108,000 properties, he believes the job requires the experience of an appraiser. He says the public does not need the risk of inaccurate appraisals.



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When asked if they would reorganize staff, Akinyemi said he has no plans to change staff but will improve methodology. Lane said he has not found any problems in the office but will not know for sure until he gets there. Both candidates believe the office should remain elected to be accountable to the public.

Greg Lane won the straw poll for the Property Appraiser's race. 

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Upcoming Meetings

November 29 (Note new date)
- Business Issues in the 2017
Legislative Session

December 13 - 6-8 PM - NEBA
Annual Christmas Party at The
Egg

January 24 - TBA

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