

2019 CANDIDATE PROFILE GUIDE

DESOTO COUNCILMEMBER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Kevin Ritter

Candidate for Ward #:

Address:

30994 W. 98th Street
De Soto, Kansas 66018

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Campaign Treasurer:

Candidate's Occupation: Safety Coordinator

Work History – Last Five Years (25 word limit):

Safety Coordinator for an electrical generation facility, former Fire Chief of the De Soto Fire Department, and experience in construction management.

Most Recent Political/Community Experience (25 word limit?):

I am currently a De Soto City Council member, a member of the Chamber of Commerce and former De Soto City Fire Chief.

Are you, or have you been, affiliated with a local or state chamber of commerce? If yes, please list chamber(s) and any leadership positions you have held (25 word limit):

De Soto Chamber of Commerce Member and I volunteer my time at their events.

Are you, or have you been, affiliated with any other business organization(s)? If yes, please list organization(s) (25 word limit):

De Soto Chamber of Commerce Member and I volunteer my time at their events.

As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues (25 words per line):

1. To provide enhanced services to the community while keeping the mill levy as low as possible.
2. Residents should expect to live in a safe community, which requires effective communication, coordination and preparedness with our Sheriff, fire and emergency management agencies.
3. Communication with the citizens and providing accurate information along with an opportunity for feedback is essential. The Council works for its citizens as a whole and not special groups.

What are your views on the services and value citizens receive for their local tax dollars?

I believe citizens receive an enormous benefit for their city tax dollars. Although some achievements may not be as visible as others, during my tenure De Soto has maintained and even lowered the mill rate while enhancing city streets, public services and parks activities. De Soto should be a safe place for our children and significant efforts have been taken to properly plan for future needs. There's always room for improvement, and the Council should seek to maximize resources and lower costs whenever possible. Having been involved in this process, I am aware of what is required to achieve this.

What changes, if any, would you propose to the current City budget?

Having been involved in the review of the City's budget during my tenure, I think we take a serious look at the needs and the revenues needed to be obtained to provide necessary services to our citizens. This is done with a lot of thought and preparation to ensure all services are provided and every penny is maximized. De Soto outsourcing services provides a significant savings for our citizens. This includes the contract with the Sheriff's department, mowing services and others that would increase our budget if we were to take on those efforts.

What role, if any, do you believe the City should play in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to our City?

I've always believed the City should be proactive rather than reactive in regards to economic development. We should decide what is the best fit for our community. Doing nothing is not an option and growth is inevitable. I want what is best for De Soto and to grow to offset the tax burden on our citizens, while maintaining our community spirit as a whole. We must partner with our economic development agencies to promote De Soto, encourage the right types of businesses that compliments our community and provide jobs for citizens and amenities that are needed in De Soto.

What do you think the three greatest opportunities are for the City's economy in the next ten years and how would you capitalize on them?

Our sales tax revenue continues to increase with the addition of our local grocery store. We must provide additional housing opportunities of all ranges and encourage citizens to spend money locally. We are fortunate to have major global companies in De Soto with large employment numbers. We want to help our retail businesses be successful, and in order to do that we must capitalize on the number of employees who would like to live in a small community and shop locally. This helps reduce the burden upon our current citizens and allows for businesses to stay profitable as well.

What is your philosophy on the role the City should play in terms of metro-area issues?

De Soto is often a forgotten part of the Metropolitan area. We must take an active role in the overall plan for the region. What happens in neighboring communities impacts De Soto and its citizens. Our Mayor represents us at the Johnson County Council of Mayors and our economic development council is a part of the Kansas City Area Development Council, and we must continue to get our message out there and be visible. There are metro-area issues that may not impact us, so in those instances we should evaluate our position, but always be present to protect our interests.

What do you think are the greatest challenges and/or opportunities for the City in the next ten years and how would you address them?

One of the greatest challenges is growing our community while maintaining our values. Change is unavoidable so I prefer to plan and attract what we want as opposed to growth overtaking our beloved community. I also believe that communicating our plans and getting input during the process is essential. Relaying accurate information in the era of social media will continue to be a challenge. If something occurs and some do not personally approve, let's learn why it is necessary and play an active role in doing what is in the best interest of De Soto citizens as a whole.

What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race, making you best suited to serve?

I have served my community for over 30 years in a wide variety of civic groups: as a volunteer firefighter/EMT, Fire Chief, De Soto Chamber of Commerce member and volunteer and other organizations. I have worked under dozens of City Council members, Mayors and have interacted with

thousands of our citizens. I have prepared city departmental budgets and worked with very lean budget resources. I chose to serve the community I have lived in for over 40+ years. I want to represent all of the citizens of De Soto and will make decisions on their behalf and interests.