

BENZIE COUNTY GENERAL ELECTION VOTER GUIDE
COUNTY-WIDE RACES

GENERAL ELECTION: NOVEMBER 4, 2008

Polling Hours: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Candidates' responses are presented as submitted unless they exceeded the word limit, in which case the response ends with an ellipsis (...).

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District I (Almira) 2-year term		
	Please provide biographical information including your qualifications for the office and the reasons you are running (150 word limit)	State your top three priorities for the office and explain your reasons for choosing those priorities (150 word limit)
Delores Duddles-Berta Democratic	24 Year resident of Benzie; County Retired School Counselor; Former Village Clerk of Beulah, Michigan; Past President of Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; Past Secretary of Big Brothers and Big Sisters; Member of the Pastoral Council of St. Philip Neri Church; Chaiman of the Guatemalan School Mission for St. Philip Neri. Education: Bachelor Degree in Business Education, Ferris State University; Master of Arts in Counseling, Central Michigan Univ. Personal: Wife of James Berta, Mother of four children --Linda, Lisa, Brian, and Laura. Grandmother of four Grandchildren -- Chandler, Brent, Jordan, and Blake.	1. The biggest issue is the economy. As County Commissioner, I will do my utmost to encourage effective economic development in Benzie County, while preserving natural resources. 2. Also important and part of the economy issue is the increasing cost of transportation to jobs and medical care. Support of the Benzie Bus system is vital, both for young families as well as senior citizens. As commissioner, I will also support linking public transpotation in the northwest Michigan area. 3. I strongly support education. As mother of four children who graduated from public schools and public universities in Michigan, I fully understand the need for a well-educated populace. Increasingly our young people are forced to move out of state to find jobs. To attract new high technology companies to Michigan, we must spend money to educate our families beyond high school.
Mark E Roper Republican	I was born and raised in Benzie County. While attending BCHS I played football, basketball and served on the Student Council. I attended Michigan Tech where I received a degree in Electrical Engineering. I am currently self-employed as a licensed freight broker. My wife Kathy and I have been married for 33 years and have two grown children living in Almira Township with their families. I enjoy farming, hunting and spending time with my family and friends. I served as Almira Twp Trustee from 01/95 until 01/03 at which time I began serving as Benzie County Commissioner for District 1. The past 5 ½ years have brought many good things such as The Gathering Place and our Benzie Bus System however there is more to do and I would be honored if you would allow me to continue working to make Benzie County an even better place to live.	1) Finances: We can not count on the State for the degree of funding we once received. I believe we must start looking for ways to bring revenue to Benzie County and as always we must use our funds in a responsible way. Our finances directly affect the safety and well being of our citizens and should therefore be our number one priority. 2) Improve Communications: We are making headway in this area and I would like to see it continue. We have hosted public forums such as the Summit and we have attended various meetings with the MTA and other groups to address concerns. Communications with the public were greatly improved by the addition of our website. 3) Quality of life in Benzie County: Supporting our human service organizations in their efforts to preserve and improve the quality of life for our residents is of great importance.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District II (Platte, Crystal Lake, Lake Townships) 2-year term		
	Please provide biographical information including your qualifications for the office and the reasons you are running (150 word limit)	State your top three priorities for the office and explain your reasons for choosing those priorities (150 word limit)
Mary J Pitcher Republican	Mary's 12 years of experience serving as County Commissioner makes her the most qualified candidate for District II County Commissioner. Mary has a diverse scope of leadership experience. She represents the interests of Benzie County at the local, regional, and State levels. Mary serves on two state committees; the Worker's Compensation Board and the Michigan State Park Committee. She has degree in natural resources from the University of Michigan. Mary was named Environmentalist of the Year in 2006 by NMEAC for her accomplishments as a community leader. Mary's values of conservation and natural resource protection are the foundation upon which she bases decisions. Mary is also a graduate of the MSU Political Leadership Program. "I am running for re-election because I want to continue to serve my community and use my knowledge and experience to make Benzie County the best that it can be."	1) Fiscal Responsibility: To continue to operate the County with fiscal responsibility. With reduced growth in revenues and loss of State revenue sharing we had to make very difficult decisions this year. Tough times call for tough leaders. My commitment to you is to make financially prudent decisions. Contracting for services is one way to reduce expenditures. Counties throughout Michigan are switching to contract for service in a variety of areas as a means to reduce costs without a loss of quality. 2) Zoning ordinance updates: We have adopted two ordinance updates this year with a third one proposed for December. It is imperative that we complete several additional updates. I am advocating for amendments with tools to encourage value added farming and wind power generation. 3) Public safety: We need to look for increased efficiencies with the goal of a return to 24/7 police coverage in the Sheriff's Office.
Phillip T. Kiteley Democratic	I have been a citizen of Benzie County for only six years, but in that time I have met and married my wife Kristin Pyne Kiteley, designed and built a home near the north shore of Crystal Lake, and have become a father of two amazing little boys. As I have taken on these new life challenges, I feel drawn to the community around me. I feel absolutely driven to serve my community at the highest level possible, and right now that opportunity presents itself in the role of County Commissioner. I am the product of a blue collar, hard working family. I am the oldest of four children, and was the first person in my family to pursue and obtain a college education. I have lived through prosperous times and very hard financial times as well. My background in business management, construction, design, and contract negotiations has made me a good problem solver, a team player, and a dynamic personality.	1) A county wide energy conservation initiative. Employ one full-time energy conservation specialist to be funded by federal and/or state grant funding. Goal would be to provide physical and possibly financial support for any Benzie County resident interested in reducing their electricity, propane, heating oil, gasoline and diesel consumption in an effort to reduce monthly heating, cooling, and transportation costs. 2) Create a more effective county government by increasing the daily interaction of county residents with their elected and appointed officials. Create a monthly newsletter to be used as a tool to keep the citizenry informed, involved, and invested in the direction of the county and their community. Newsletter would be partially or fully funded by grants and/or a very small millage proposal. Also, schedule county level meetings at times when a majority to people could attend, and then encourage them to do so. 3) Create a publicly/private owned Center for Technology and Business. Create a place where business ...

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District II (Platte, Crystal Lake, Lake Townships) - continued		
<p>Sally E. Casey Write-in</p>	<p>Benzie County has been the most meaningful place for me throughout my sixty-three years. My closest friends, my family memories, my work experiences, and my love for nature are all an integral part of Benzie County. My granddaughter will be the fourth generation in our family to be married on Big Platte Lake. She loves Benzie County as much as the three generations before her! I am running for commissioner in order to have a caring, positive impact on our community. I care deeply about the people who love living here, and I care deeply about our natural resources that we must protect. I will continue to work with the PLIA, continue to be a member of the planning committee for Lake Township, and continue to work on the county master plan.</p>	<p>My first priority as a county commissioner will be to improve communication between the county, the townships, and most importantly, the citizens of our county. We need to have much more give and take with all of our citizens, and have more community involvement as important decisions are made. My second priority will be to help balance growth in our county, while at the same time protect our fragile environment. Our county must retain its natural beauty in order to survive. We can attract businesses and grow in population, but we must do this carefully. My third priority will be to help our county make prudent decisions that are the best for everyone as the commissioners deal with many important issues. One of the most important is the county budget. As a commissioner, I will get as much information as possible, from a variety of citizens. I will make decisions with as much knowledge as possible.</p>

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District III (Gilmore Township, City of Frankfort) 2-year term		
	Please provide biographical information including your qualifications for the office and the reasons you are running (150 word limit)	State your top three priorities for the office and explain your reasons for choosing those priorities (150 word limit)
Kristin E. Hollenbeck Democratic	I was born in Frankfort in 1950, as have my ancestors on both sides in either Elberta or Frankfort going back to my grandfather in 1875. I graduated from Frankfort and from CMU with a degree in English, secondary education. I retired after 27 years from Mesick Schools in 2005 and began writing for the Patriot and continue to present. I have three children: Kelly, Michael and Amy Acre all of whom have had to find work outside Benzie County. While NCA district chair in Mesick, I worked with colleagues and administrators to define our school improvement needs and plan for its continuous growth culminating in our first NCA accreditation. As commissioner, I will work to refocus county planning on its economic development, to bring living wage jobs so people can own their homes, pay their mortgages and taxes, support local businesses and send their children to our outstanding schools.	1) Bring transparency to county government. Citizens frequently find it difficult to discover what decisions are being made and what facts lie behind those decisions. We need to be vigilant in complying with the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts Commissioners serve the public, not themselves. 2) Plan for the future. We have a comprehensive plan for Benzie County. To facilitate that plan, a county planner, planning commission and board of commissioners must work together focusing on preparation for change, so our reaction to it brings positive growth. 3) Bring living wage jobs to Benzie County. The national economic crisis has been Benzie County's economic crisis for 25 years with an average of 17 mortgage foreclosure notices per week in the Patriot. Local economic development, using our great renewable energy assets, our entrepreneurial spirit, the expertise of our citizens and our chambers of commerce, the future of Benzie County shines bright.
Richard C. Bayer Republican	Richard Bayer is a Frankfort native and a 1965 graduate of Frankfort-Elberta High School. He and his wife Billie are "year round residents" of Frankfort, and have three children. They also enjoy seven grandchildren. Besides being a veteran of the United States Air Force, Dick enjoyed an enlistment in the Army National Guard. His significant and meritorious military service included tours in Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. He worked for Michigan Bell telephone, Munson Medical Center in the telecommunications department, and was site supervisor for Worldcom in Traverse City. He has attended and completed numerous schools and courses in business and telephone communications. He served the City of Frankfort as mayor for a 4 year period, during which he was instrumental in constructing and completing the new City Hall, starting the sewer-water project, and securing use of the old Coast Guard facility for the Crystal Lake Art Center	1. Communication: With better communication between the county (departments, commission, local government and residents of the county) confidence with the elected officials will improve. 2. Budget: In these challenging economic times we need to keep a close eye on the budget and find appropriate ways to keep it balanced. 3. Economic development is going to be key in our area. With our natural beauty and great tourist attractions, we need to attract Eco friendly energy production, and facilitate it's use in order to attract new manufacturing industry

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District IV (Benzonia Township) 2-year term		
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Uledene L. Merrill Republican	Leonard Merrill Sr., Husband of 53 years, 8 children. Former co-owner of Merrill's Old Mill. Education: Graduate: Benzie County Normal, Senior at Central Michigan University. School teacher. Current Co-Director of Benzie Manistee Farm Bureau. Benzie Manistee County of Board of Director. Benzie County Commissioner 1976-2000. First Female to chair the county commissioners 8 years; first non-professional elected to president for the Michigan Rural Public Health; first from Benzie County to serve as director for Michigan Association of Counties; Chair of Tri-County Health Department, several terms. Instrumental in getting the septic tank ordinance in Benzie County. Turned first stoplight on in the county at the intersection of US 31 and M115. Developed legislation regarding the indigent care of tuberculosis cases in Michigan. Instrumental in amending Proposal A in the area of exemptions for Michigan Farm Bureau consideration at this time. Chair of Benzie County Family Independence Advisory Board. Co-Chair of Michigan Child and Family Services.	I am a candidate because of my experience, knowledge, and ability to serve in this position. Major issues involving Benzie County include preserving the Betsie River Watershed from legislation which could impact aquatic wildlife and water supplies for tax payers. Agriculture, tourism and service industries are top employers in the county, deserving the attention with the support of the county board. County wide planning is now in a developmental stage addressing public services, transportation, roads, schools, housing, and creating a climate conducive to businesses. (I chose these issues because I have a keen interest in serving our residents.)
Anne Damm Democratic	I was raised in Birmingham, MI. As a National Merit Finalist, I graduated from the University of MI. I raised my two daughters in Bethesda, MD and owned a design/build firm there. I completed 3 years of full time graduate work in architecture and planning at the University of Maryland. I moved to Beulah in 1990, and opened the Ice House Gallery in 1991. In 1995, with partner Phil Gagliano, we opened Cafe Bravo. I became library director of the then Beulah Public Library in 1999. The library was underfunded and only 682 sq ft. I spearheaded a millage campaign that won, talked the Village into donating land, designed the new library, and with much help from the Friends of the Library and the Grand Traverse Band we built a new 3200 sq ft library. For these efforts, I won Rural Librarian of the Year.	I became County Commissioner running on my record of accomplishment. As a Democrat, I believe representation from men and women of both parties ensures more inclusive government, utilizing good ideas from the whole community. I ran on transparency in government. I was able to expedite getting http://www.benzieco.net/ (our new county website) online and available to the public within a few months of my first term. I wrote a grant to improve our planning, zoning, and building services which we are addressing. "Crisis of Confidence" is on my blog http://annedammforcountycommissioner.blogspot.com/ . I initiated a much needed human resources study. I am chair of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update Committee along with experts and the public (you!). Email me at annedamm@sbcglobal.net to participate in any way.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District V (Homestead Township) 2-year term		
	Please provide biographical information including your qualifications for the office and the reasons you are running (150 word limit)	State your top three priorities for the office and explain your reasons for choosing those priorities (150 word limit)
Frank F. Walterhouse Republican	Did not respond in time for publication.	Did not respond in time for publication.
Kathy A. Ralston Democratic	Currently, I am Chair of the Benzie County Planning Commission and have served on that board since 2006. The time I've spent in the planning arena has been rewarding as well as educational. It has allowed me to stay closely involved with county government while serving the community I love. In November of 2007, I organized the Benzie County Summit on Intergovernmental Cooperation. Participants prioritized top issues in our county then formed groups to address those issues. This process is ongoing with another summit meeting planned for February 2009. I received a Bachelor of Science degree with honors from the University of Michigan in 1997. Currently, I serve on the Legislative Council for the Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association. My work for the last 20 years in the dental field and on the Legislative Council has allowed me to hone my communication skills. This is a must for public service in government.	The largest obstacle to progress on many fronts in Benzie County is the current lack of trust between the county government and other local units and between county government and constituents. A prerequisite to the development of good public policy is collaboration and buy in on the part of all involved stakeholders. Building better lines of communication will open the way for progress in the areas of planning, zoning, economic development and personnel policy within the government center. Better communication and listening skills will also pave the way to more intergovernmental cooperation leading to wiser usage of public funds and taxpayer savings. As County Commissioner I will insist on open and responsive government. Compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act of Michigan must be consistent. I will continuously seek input from constituents and work to provide opportunities for the public to participate in the decisions of government.
COUNTY COMMISSIONER District VI (Inland, Colfax Townships) 2-year term		
Tom Kelley Republican	Not contested	

COUNTY COMMISSIONER District VII (Blaine, Joyfield, Weldon Townships) 2-year term		
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Donald C. Smeltzer Republican	I am 50 Years old. I graduated Frankfort High School in 1975. I received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with high distinction from the University of Michigan in 1979. My business education included an emphasis in accounting. After considering a career in public accounting, I came home to work with the family owned farm operation. I am now operating Blackbird Farm LLC. I served as Blaine Township Supervisor for 16 years and have served Commissioner of District VII for the past 2 1/2 years. My historical and business ties to Benzie County and record of public office here qualify me for re-election.	1. Continue to rebuild the fiscal security of Benzie County. Through careful and prudent operation Benzie County has been able to rebuild many fund balances and recently received a favorable audit review. 2. Continue to build on the success of Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health. I have been on this board for two years. We have made changes. Things are better now and I want to continue this. 3. Finish the interior of the county government center. It has been more than ten years, this project needs to be completed and additional court space utilized.
Donald R. Tanner Democratic	Born 6/8/58. Married 24 years to Rae Ann; four children – Ray, Chelsie, Augustus, and Sheridan. Education: 1976 graduated Dow High School, Midland, MI; 1982 graduated NMC Automotive Services Technology; Certified MSU Master Citizen Planner. Business: Own and operate Northern Michigan Guide Service, Claybank Outfitters, and Fields Unlimited. Current Memberships/Boards/Commission: Michigan United Conservation Club; Benzie-Manistee Farm Bureau; Benzie County Zoning Board of Appeals; Benzie County Parks & Recreation Commission – Chairman; Betsie River Natural River Zoning Board of Appeals; Betsie River Watershed & Restoration Committee; Benzie County MSU Extension Advisory Council. Past Positions: Benzie County Board of Commissioners – Chair, Vice-Chair; Health Department Board of Appeals; Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health; Benzie County Chamber of Commerce; 4-H Leader; Michigan River Guides Association.	1) The role of the County Controller/Administrator must be redefined, severely reducing the power and authority of that position within the legal framework of the Controller Act. The current Administrator should be replaced. The Commissioners set policy and direct their staff to implement that policy – the opposite is not true! 2) I truly believe we must have government in the sunshine. An open honest, and participatory government process is a must. 3) We must plan for the “new economy” by encouraging entrepreneurial spirit among our citizens and give them the necessary support to thrive during this difficult economy. We must stop the overpayment of under-qualified people and quit squandering taxpayer dollars. Necessary supports include creative land-use and energy policies, adequately funded public and mental health programs, and adequately funded public safety programs.

Drain Commissioner 4-year term		
	Please provide biographical information including your qualifications for the office and the reasons you are running (150 word limit)	State your top three priorities for the office and explain your reasons for choosing those priorities (150 word limit)
Terry Money Republican	Did not respond in time for publication.	Did not respond in time for publication.
Eric E Pyne Democratic	<p>I am a 42 -year -old construction worker and organic farmer. I've also worked at Recycle Ann Arbor and briefly with PIRGIM, the non-profit which made the 10-cent bottle deposit into Michigan law. I attended the University of Michigan, taking classes in Ecology and other natural sciences. I am a lifetime environmentalist, as well as a fisherman and avid boater. I love Benzie County and especially its rivers and lakes. My inspiration for seeking the office of Drain Commissioner is Joanne Beemon, who was elected Drain Commissioner in Petoskey. She has used the office to promote understanding about water issues, and if I am elected I will follow her example. Water connects us with our environment intimately. There is no real division between the health of our water and our personal health. This simple fact must be understood by everyone who would make decisions that have an impact on the water we all share.</p>	<p>This campaign has a motto - "We like our water clean!". By this we mean WE as in all living things, LIKE as in like attracts like (you are made up of %60-%70 water), OUR as in not any one's but every ones' water, WATER as in rivers lakes puddles pond scum frappes mists tears etc. , CLEAN as in free from poison, life sustaining, vibrant. That is my number one priority. Number two is not spending a bunch of money. Frugality is essential in government, especially now. For too long people have acted like money can fix anything, when we all know this isn't true. Education and consensus can be done inexpensively. My third priority is public involvement. The challenges that face our water resources are only going to be met when everyone takes part. I feel that that is the great strength of Democracy - people acting in their common best interest.</p>

Prosecuting Attorney 4-year term		
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Michael Lawrence Smith Democratic	Michael Lawrence Smith. Allow me the opportunity to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about who I am. I am a 1979 graduate of Traverse City Senior High and a native of Northern Michigan. I have been practicing for nearly twenty years, and have practiced in Northern Michigan since 1991. I received my undergraduate degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University in 1985, graduating magna cum laude. I received my law degree from Wayne State University in 1988, and have been a licensed attorney in Michigan since November 1988. My first job out of law school was working as the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Branch County (Coldwater). My law practice is in Lake Ann, concentrating on general practice and criminal defense. I am on the court-appointed criminal defense rosters for both Benzie and Manistee Counties. My family and I have lived in the village of Lake Ann since 2003. ...	My three priorities of office are: professionalism; fairness; and integrity. First, PROFESSIONALISM. The prosecuting attorney is the chief law enforcement of the county. He reviews all warrant requests and should exercise control over ALL law enforcement agencies. Abuses by law enforcement officers should not be tolerated. Officers who violate an accused person's constitutional rights should first be counseled and if the behavior continues reprimanded. Ethics is the foundation of a respected and self-respecting prosecuting attorney. Unlike attorneys in general, Prosecuting attorneys have an obligation to see that justice is done and that those prosecuted are accorded all rights under law. THE BUCK STOPS with the prosecuting attorney. He must take ultimate responsibility for each and every case. Second, FAIRNESS. All citizens should be treated fairly. No sweet heart deals. No under-handed, backroom dismissals of tickets for family and friends. All people should be treated fairly, regardless of wealth, connections and influence. ...
John B. Daugherty Republican	My life long love affair with Benzie County inspired me to move here in 1995. I am a graduate of Calvin College and Thomas M. Cooley Law School (cum laude) where I served on law review. In my 20th year of practice, I've handled virtually every type of case which would be handled by a prosecutor in Benzie County. Over the years I've served on several non-profit boards and presently serve on the boards of: Benzie County Chamber of Commerce, Benzie Community Services/Home Healthcare and Benzie Sunrise Rotary Foundation. I am married to Patricia Jaquish Daugherty. We have three young children: Rebekah, Justus and Liberty. The fact that our Benzie County Prosecuting Attorney's office should be an example to our citizens, and in particular our youth, along with the encouragement of numerous individuals in the community, prompted me to run.	1) To create a better working relationship between the Prosecutor's Office and the various police agencies. For effective law enforcement in Benzie County, it is imperative that there be a positive working relationship between the Prosecutor's Office and the Sheriff's Office along with all other police agencies. A team approach to the challenges we face will bring about more effective law enforcement and afford greater protection to our citizens. 2) To serve the public with professionalism and provide greater accessibility to the public. I will strive to operate the office in a non-partisan manner. 3) To provide a tough, aggressive approach to law enforcement with particular emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable in our county.

Sheriff 4-year term		
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Brant M. Downing Democratic	I grew up here in Benzie County and it is where I intend on raising my family. I'm running for Sheriff because the safety I want for my family is the security I want for your family. As your Sheriff, I'll make sure we are tough on crime and compassionate with victims. I'll also work with our entire community to bring a renewed energy, new ideas, and change. Together, we'll implement innovative ways to prevent crime and save your tax dollars. I began my education attending Benzie Central schools and later went on to earn a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University, and a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Ferris State University. I worked with the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division. I have experience and knowledge working with budgets and maintaining tax dollars which will better serve our community.	1) Active in the Community: Educating the public and involving the community to prevent crime is important. As your Sheriff, I will work with students, parents, teachers, and school administrators to create safer schools and a productive atmosphere. 2) Fight Senior Crime: Crimes against seniors are on the rise. As your Sheriff, I will focus department resources and fight against elder abuse and fraud cases like identity theft. I will speak with the community to help seniors and families know their rights and protect themselves from scams. 3) Sound Money Management: New demands and legal requirements have placed expensive burdens on law enforcement. My administrative experience and education will help me stretch the dollars we have available. My knowledge of law enforcement and homeland security grants will help bring more crime fighting and crime prevention dollars to the community. As your Sheriff, I will maintain budget controls, while improving efficiency and safety.
Rory Heckman Republican	30+ years in law enforcement. Began career as patrolman, promoted to detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and administrator. Commanded special teams: bomb squad, K-9 unit, SWAT team, 911 dispatch center, jail and training division. Wrote a management plan for KKK rally; received the Professional Excellence Award from the City of Kalamazoo. Commanded a multijurisdictional SWAT Team that successfully captured a person suspected of shooting and killing three people outside of Isabella County Courthouse. Graduate of Western Michigan University, 1973. Experienced with preparation and administration of law enforcement budgets. Effectively communicates with media and experienced with Freedom of Information Act. ONLY CANDIDATE CURRENTLY LICENSED AS A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER BY THE STATE OF MICHIGAN. I hold myself and those that serve with me to the highest standards of professional behavior. First responsibility is to serve and protect our community. Believe I can make a difference in service to our community ...	The current jail millage is up for renewal by the voters. This is a top priority, to gain voter approval, as this is a requirement by state statute. The jail has been well run by staff and additional revenues are generated by boarding inmates from other counties. Hiring of additional deputies to be able to return to 24 hour patrol. Currently there are no law enforcement officers on the road to answer emergency calls for service after 3am. Providing for public safety is an obligation of government. Finding the funds within existing budgets will be addressed. Participation in a Benzie County School Truancy Program with our education partners, Benzie County Central Schools and Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools. The need for law enforcement participation is essential for a successful program. Character (honesty & integrity), proven leadership with the experience and vision to back it up will be keystones of my administration ...