

Questionnaires are due back to ahutchison@fcchamber.org
 by noon on Thursday, September 17, 2020
 Please note that all questionnaire answers
 will be shared with the business community.

Office Sought: Larimer County Commissioner	District: District 3
Name: Ben R. Aste	
Home Address: 3487 SCR 13, Loveland, CO 80537	
Daytime Phone: 970-776-0788	Evening Phone: Same as Day
Email: benaste@vote4aste.com	
Employment: Owner of Uncle Benny's Building Supplies	
Length of Residence: 48 years	In County: 48 years
	In District: 34 years

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

<p>Education: Loveland High School '76, 2 years Larimer Vo-Tech, 1 year NJC, 1 year AIMS, 1 year CSU</p>
<p>Past and Present Community Service Including Offices Held: Through my business I have been supporting and supplying multiple community organizations like FFA, Schools, 4H Clubs, First Responders, Teen Suicide Prevention, and many more. Logged countless hours of life coaching, helping those with drug and alcohol addictions. Volunteered after the '76 and '13 Floods.</p>
<p>Past and Present Employment/Business Experience: Worked for multiple corporations in "blue collar and white collar" organizations. Have started 4 successful small businesses in Larimer County. Purchasing agent for two different organizations.</p>
<p>Current Employment and Responsibilities: I am the Founder and CEO of Uncle Benny's Building Supplies which has been running successfully for the past 25 years. Spearheaded the restreaming of building materials in Larimer County.</p>
<p>Specific Qualifications For This Office: 32 years of experience working with the County. Served on a Water and Sanitation District Board. Stakeholder in 3 County projects. Attended Planning Commission Meetings and Work Sessions for 8 months straight. Assistant purchasing agent for two companies. Developed and kept a multi-million dollar budget balanced for years. Went through 6 critical economic challenges in this County without layoffs and maintaining margins of savings to carry us through successfully.</p>
<p>Why are you running for this office? I am compelled to give back to a County that has been so good to 4 generations of my family. I want to do all I can to make sure that we can hand over a user-friendly County to our future legacy.</p>
<p>What have you done to prepare for election to this office and how will you conduct yourself if elected to this office? Shadowed all 3 commissioners for over 2 years, as well as keeping abreast of the minutes from multiple departments within the County, learning as much as possible about the job so that if elected, I can hit the ground running. Engaging residents for over a decade, hearing their concerns and guiding them through challenges. During the initial stages of the pandemic, I held over 100 Zoom meetings to connect multiple sectors, especially business people, to help them walk through this difficult time.</p>

What experiences have you had that makes you qualified to serve in office?

I have 38 years business experience starting 4 of my own successful businesses in this county. My current business, Uncle Benny's Building Supplies, has been growing strong for over 25 years, serving regionally as a building supply hub. We've diverted over 3 million tons of new and usable building materials from our landfill. Served as a stakeholder on the Larimer County Landfill Buildout Project, The Thompson River Reclamation Project and the CO HWY 402 Expansion Project.

If you are elected, what are the top three accomplishments you want to have completed by the end of your term and how will you get them done?

Ensure that the current businesses are back to 100% as safely as possible, and help as many new businesses start up strong. I will accomplish this by working with codes/compliance fees for existing businesses and new starts. With increased cash flow in businesses, there will be more jobs created.

When the budget can bear it, I want to see the completion of currently targeted road and bridge projects. I would like to see this done without raising taxes.

Getting the word out to citizens in this County about how many programs and services are available to them that they are unaware of. This is a concern with the department heads of these programs.

What do you think are the top 3 economic priorities the county government should undertake during the next four years? What role should Larimer County have in economic development? How will you make the economy a County budget priority?

Softening codes and compliance, encouraging more brick and mortar businesses to make their homes here, and trusting/allowing businesses to self-regulate as much as possible.

How will you make Larimer County a more Job Friendly community? Are you willing to engage with business leaders to discuss these solutions? Please explain how you will stay in touch with business leaders.

Ease requirements/fees to new startups, which will in turn cause existing businesses to hire more employees. Yes, I am. I will make myself available to business leaders in the community.

What role should Larimer County have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years?

The County has been involved regionally for years. It helps keep continuity. We learn new ideas and collaborate on issues that affect us all, such as traffic infrastructure. Water, Transportation and Growth Management.

Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should Larimer County plan for growth, if at all?

Yes, infrastructure needs to be in place before build outs. We also need to make sure we have sufficient water supply in order to support the growth and jobs to sustain the local economy.

What are the top two issues facing county government over the next 4 years and why do you believe they are the most important?

Getting businesses established as soon as possible, and building the budget up after the unforeseen costs of the pandemic.

The businesses bring in revenue and provide jobs, taxes are collected and the budget will be built up again. Rebuilding a healthy community starts with healthy commerce which stimulates life in our community.

What economic tools should the County add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers?

Start up fees on new businesses need to be softened, with a potential for fees to be spread out over a year's time, instead of being charged at once.

What are the top three transportation improvements Larimer County should accomplish?

What is your position on the Fix North I-25 effort? Why?

The oldest ones should be made the top priority. This has been a bit of a moving target. We should target the 3 areas that have the heaviest traffic flow. According to the 2019 County Prioritized Project List the #1 project was I-25 to Riverside, #2 HWY 402 to HWY 66 (seg. 5&6), #3 Boise to Rocky Mountain Ave.

Yes, the Fix I-25 effort is a priority to me and I want to do all I can to get it finished.

What is your position on water storage in northern Colorado? Do you support the NISP project?

As I have attended the most recent hearings on the Glade Reservoir Project, it sounded like the 12 point criteria was addressed fully and our county will benefit from the snow pack each year and have storage for the future needs of our County and other communities. I am concerned for property owners that will be impacted by pipeline installations and placements. If elected, I will be watchful to see that this project will be carried out as it has been proposed and voted upon. I do support the NISP Project.

A key role for a County Commissioner is serving as a convener of resources. Share with us relationships that you have with various county resources that you will be able to access in the role of County Commissioner.

I was a stakeholder in 3 Larimer County concerns, and I sat on a Water and Sanitation Board. I have also met with multiple entities along the Front Range. I have attended numerous MPO, IGA and GMA work sessions over the past few years. Collaboration is vital to me.

Why would a business person support your election to office?

Having started 4 successful businesses in this county, I bring 38 years of experience to the position of County Commissioner, if elected. I have kept a multi-million dollar balanced budget for many years. I connect well with business owners - we can relate to one another.

If business groups endorse you, is there any significant information that could come out about you during a campaign that could potentially embarrass you (and them) publicly? (ex: bankruptcy, arrest, conviction, etc.)

No, nothing significant. I have been very transparent over the course of my life.