

Goals outlined by NCSD candidates

By Adobe Staff

As part of our Election 2012 coverage, the Adobe Press asked candidates in local races to submit short profiles that identify their most important issues and outline how they will handle public concerns if they are elected.

Candidates for the Nipomo Community Services District are Craig Armstrong, Robert L. Blair, Ed Eby and Ernie Thompson.

Thompson did not return a questionnaire. Here are the responses from the others.

Robert 'Bob' Blair

Blair, 78, is running for a seat on the district board because he says he wants change.

Having served on the board from 1994 to 2004, among positions on other boards over the years, "I can hit the ground running because I have done it before and I was good at it!" he said.

Blair, a retired pharmacist who is married and has one son, called for "a better solution" than a water pipeline between Nipomo and Santa Maria that was voted down by a majority of local voters.

He charged that the district "is trying to force other water companies' ratepayers to finance (its) project without allowing them to vote on it."

Blair charges the "current administration" has not been up-front with ratepayers about the pipeline project.

Additionally, he questions a "moratorium" on water service, which he say was put in place "to punish people for voting down the pipeline."

"Lift it for projects now in the process," he said.

"When I was on the NCSD board before, it ran like a well-oiled machine," he said. "I had a deal for a pipeline for \$6 million and water for \$1,250 an acre-foot with no escalation clause attached."

Blair points to differences in costs for sewer and water hookups in Oceano and Nipomo as something that needs to change.

Blair said the water rates are too high for larger parcels with large animals, and the tiered rates need to be adjusted. "There needs to be a leveling of rates," he said.

Ed Eby

Eby said he is seeking re-election because he is "informed, experienced and effective."

Informed, in that among other things, he has "studied every water resource report concerning San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara counties."

Experienced, in that he brings "a strong technical, financial and business management background to the NCSD board of directors."

And effective, because during his eight years as a director for NCSD, the district has "greatly improved the NCSD facilities, including the first-time-ever cleaning of sewer lines, replacing failing sewer lines and developing a new maintenance program to regularly test and replace valves, pumps, fire hydrants and meters."

Eby, who did not give his age, spent more than 35 years as a research and development engineer and program manager for Bendix, General Dynamics, TRW and Hughes until his retirement in 1999.

He is married, with two sons.

“The experts tell us we are running out of water and face seawater intrusion,” he said. “We need a source of imported water. I support the cheapest, soonest and best imported water solution that does not raise our property taxes. We must act before severe water rationing is necessary.”

Eby said the district is already using more water than is being replaced by rainfall and he supports keeping the building moratorium in place “until we have an assured source of imported water for our current residents.”

Craig Armstrong

As a board member, Armstrong, 69, said he would work toward securing reliable alternate sources of water for the region, developing policies that limit development to the availability of proven water supplies, and keeping operating costs and rates as low as possible.

Armstrong and his wife have a son and a daughter.

He is a retired certified public accountant who spent 40 years in a variety of finance positions, including his final job as vice president of the Hilton Finance Division.

He is a member of NCSD’s Supplemental Water Alternatives Evaluation Committee, a citizen’s committee evaluating alternatives to the previously proposed water pipeline from Santa Maria.

He is also a board member and secretary for the San Luis Obispo Bicycle Club.

Armstrong cites his “very strong background in all areas of finance and accounting” as a reason he should be elected to the board.

“I am used to working with a diverse group of individuals and on challenges which require teamwork and collaboration,” he said. “I have been interested in water issues for a number of years and am familiar with both local and statewide water issues.”

Armstrong said that, long-term, some type of regional approach will likely be needed to address the demand for water in the South County.

He said further development on the Nipomo Mesa “will result in additional demand on our limited water resources.”