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Wyoming
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WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, AND WHAT DO YOU STILL HOPE TO ACHIEVE BEFORE YOU LEAVE OFFICE?

We have so much to be proud of in Teton County. A few highlights from my tenure include: establishing a housing supply plan for affordable housing and then executing it to build many units of deed-restricted affordable housing; getting child care on the agenda and creating new, physical infrastructure; creating a wildlife crossings plan, securing funding for it, and moving into implementation; supporting our community and county employees in recovery and response to the pandemic; advancing a new model for prevention services with the state health department; and establishing a focus within our organization on equity and inclusion. Sometimes it's also the small things that make me proud, like getting diaper-changing stations and free menstrual products in county bathrooms or passing regulations for bear-proof trash cans!

Looking ahead, we are in the midst of a water quality master planning process for our whole community. I very much look forward to seeing that process through and moving into implementation to ensure access to clean water as well as protection of the broader ecosystem through improved wastewater management. I know we'll need to update components of our land development regulations, strategically seek and deploy funds for new water-related infrastructure, and collaborate with our community to execute large-scale projects. It is something I know we can do but that will take continued focus and prioritization.

I also am working to keep early childhood education on the agenda for our community. While the county is not necessarily the leader in this effort, we have a critical role to play in the systems occurring in our community, and I want to ensure we don't let this drop.

Lastly, I remain very committed to showing up in Wyoming outside my county. Teton County's economic position can at times be seemingly at odds with the rest of Wyoming, making it easy to exploit differences rather than collaborate for solutions. We have challenges that are different or at times more severe than elsewhere. However, at the end of the day, our futures are intertwined - across the state of Wyoming and all across our country. I have learned - as so many others have, too - that we have more in common than not. Collaborating with other counties and county commissioners in our state on various projects and shared interests has taught me a lot about how to work together and find common ground. And so much of that starts by showing up, being curious, sharing ideas, and caring about the people you work with and the places you inhabit. We need this in our nation right now, and I believe that local elected officials are uniquely situated to model this because of the scale of our work in and with communities. We are on the front lines! I hope to continue to be part of a solution that demonstrates functional, pragmatic governance and that it is possible to debate ideas without tearing individual people down.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY?

The two biggest challenges I see facing our community are growing economic disparity and increased pressure on our natural resources. Many of the additional issues we face can be combined into these two challenges. In terms of growing economic disparity, this manifests in affordable housing, access to health care and mental health services, child care access, food insecurity, and general quality of life more broadly. While we live in an amazing and beautiful place, I know working families in our community are stressed. Business owners are fighting to keep up. And our kids face many unknowns as we navigate the rapidly changing and increasingly digitized world of the future. Increased pressure on our natural resources impacts our environment, our broader ecosystem, water quality, transportation infrastructure, and wildfire risk.

As far as the demands on our natural resources, there is increased pressure to develop while at the same time an urgent need to advance conservation, maintain wildlife permeability, and address long-term climate impacts. We face mounting pressure from tourism as a gateway to the wonders of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, and the impacts on infrastructure and the ecosystem are tangible. However, it's not all negative! These challenges have allowed us to forge strong partnerships with federal agencies as well as local NGOs that are addressing these issues head-on. Our community members are also very engaged in working with local government to find opportunities to advance our shared values within ecosystem stewardship.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

All of the clichés - work hard, and be yourself! Truly, I wish I could go tell the version of me running for office the first time to worry less about getting the words exactly right and more about finding ways to connect with people in the community. We're never going to all agree, and more often than not, people value



someone who shows up curious to hear what they have to say, whether or not they have a packaged solution to pitch.

I'm very passionate about supporting women who want to run for office, so feel free to reach out for support, encouragement, or brainstorming. I won't downplay the effort it takes or the stereotypes that still exist, but the rewards of public service are generative. The barriers to running for office are both real and perceived, yet many of them can be overcome with a strong plan, a clear vision, and hard work. Once you've made the decision, creating your own small group of very trusted advisors is key. I always have one or two people that I can call and get everything off my chest with and who I know will be candid with me. Then we take a deep breath and get to work making a plan to tackle whatever that day's challenge is.

I also find it helpful to remind myself that there is a finish line! Campaigns can be intense, and you have to have clear boundaries for that time. Continuing to carve out the time for your family and for yourself to take a break is necessary, and it can be fun to let folks know that is what you are doing so that you are living your values! Asking people to mentor you, to share their experiences, and to support you may feel daunting at first, but once you start, your success will help you build confidence. I know better decisions are made when we have diverse voices at the table, and that won't happen if we don't support each other.

IS THERE A CONSERVATION, CLIMATE OR DEMOCRACY-RELATED POLICY, RULE OR IDEA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

Maintaining free, fair, and safe elections is front of mind for me as we head into another tumultuous national election cycle. There are many ideas for ensuring access to voting; two that I would like to see happen all across our nation are same-day and/or online registration and automatic vote-by-mail.

I would also really like to see greater dialogue and collaboration on federal land management issues between local, state, and federal agencies. I realize this is a very broad statement, but I think that we would all benefit from actually collaborating and having dialogue between different levels of government. We have had some success with this and have also fallen short. I don't have a blanket solution, but we know that local governments and local elected officials are tuned in to what is happening from a land-use perspective in the West. This type of relationship-building requires commitment to process and communication. Improving how we can work together across jurisdictions seems vital for addressing conservation and climate issues that we face today and that will occur in the future.

