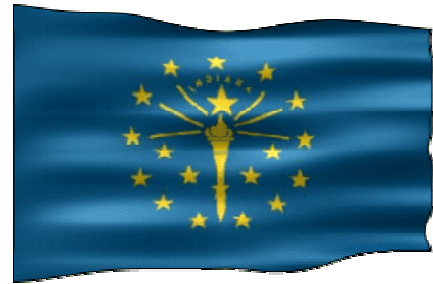


# 2008 Voters' Guide



## What is the LaPorte Political Action Committee?

LPAC is a voluntary, non-profit organization of individuals in the business community and is not affiliated with any political party. LPAC is an independent organization directed by its own Board of Directors.

The purpose of LPAC is to support on a non-partisan basis, elected officials, or candidates, who are advocates for free enterprise, pro business and promotes an economic growth environment for the LaPorte area.

## How to use the LPAC Voters' Guide

The LaPorte Political Action Committee (LPAC) asked key questions to each major candidate about issues important to business. Each candidate was given the questionnaire and LPAC did not edit or modify the answers that were submitted. In addition, LPAC has provided a summary of its position for each of the issues.

Color coded: The candidate answers are color coded for easier viewing.

Peach = Candidates for State Senator, District 8

Blue = Candidates for State Representative, District 17

Green = Candidates for State Representative, District 20

Pink = Candidates for County Commissioner, District 2

Purple = Candidates for County Commissioner, District 3

Brown = Candidates for County Council Member at Large

- Be sure to pass this guide on to friends and family members
- Share your views with the candidates
- Ask for clarification from any candidate whose answer seems unclear

**Mark Your Calendar!**  
**Vote on Tuesday, November 4th!**

## CANDIDATES

The following candidates were contacted by the LaPorte Political Action Committee and asked to complete a questionnaire that asked key questions about issues important to business. The candidates marked NO RESPONSE chose not to submit their answers.

D = Democrat R = Republican L = Libertarian

### State Senate, District 5

- Larry Balmer (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Ed Charbonneau (R) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response

### State Senate, District 8

- Jim Arnold (D)
- Allen Stevens, Jr. (R) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Gregory Kelter (L) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response

### State Representative, District 9

- Scott Pelath (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response

### State Representative, District 17

- Nancy Dembowski (D)
- Mark Mackillop (R) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response

### State Representative, District 20

- Jerry Cooley (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Tom Dermody (R)

### County Commissioner, District 2

- Barbara Huston (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Ronald Schafer (R)

### County Commissioner, District 3

- Bill Hager (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Kenneth Layton (R)

### County Council Member at Large

- Matthew Bernacchi (D)
- Scott Ford (D)
- Lois Sosinski (D) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Cary Kirkham (R)
- Geoffrey Sellers (R) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Roger Wolf (R) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response
- Mark Lindborg (L) \_\_\_\_\_ No Response

**QUESTION 1:** Please state your position on conducting economic development on a regional basis versus strictly on a local basis. Would you continue to support LaPorte County. Biz?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Commissioners must work with all branches of government within this county and the region as well to secure good paying jobs.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I am supportive of regional economic development. It has been my stance for several years that the location of improvements is not nearly as important as getting them here. Any new improvement in the county, whether it be La Crosse or Michigan City, is good for the entire county.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I believe economic development should take place at a regional and local level. We have to be engaged at every level to be successful. I have voted to fund the activities of La Porte County Biz on the Redevelopment Commission. I would support increased funding levels on the county council for economic development. I was one of the first people to publicly endorse a plan to coordinate the efforts of La Porte, Michigan City, and La Porte County's economic development efforts. I wrote articles in both local newspapers in support of a coordinated one voice/one message marketing effort. I believe that this team approach and a defined process have helped our area compete against larger better funded economic development programs.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

It is hard to have a position on a regional basis because regions vary on a local basis. I would work hard with our region base and local base to bring new business and industry to La Porte County. Economic Development is top on my list for La Porte County.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I am a lifelong resident of LaPorte County. This is my home. I would prefer we focus on economic development here in our county, then see what can be accomplished regionally.

**QUESTION 2:** Do you support the following, if not please explain.

Tax Abatement for real estate and manufacturing equipment?  
Infrastructure dollars such as roads, sewer and/or water lines to a new industrial property?  
TIF (tax increment financing) as a means of paying for infrastructure?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

- A. Yes if it brings good paying jobs.
- B. Absolutely.
- C. Use as a last resort, to my knowledge the county has not dealt with TIF

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

A. yes B. This can not be answered with a simple yes/no. Several important factors must be explained on each project before just a blanket yes/no answer. C. I can support TIF financing if it is for specific infrastructure and projects. It would have to be perfectly clear, that once the project is completed, the TIF would be removed. We must remember that other units of government also need the tax base from the new growth.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I support every program listed and have voted to increase the size of the redevelopment area on I-94.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

A) Tax abatement for real estate and manufacturing equipment?

Yes, because it brings business in and if they get the abatement, then they have a quota to meet. If the quota is not met the abatement can be taken away or another will not be given.

B) Infrastructure dollars such as roads, sewer and/or water lines to a new industrial property?

I would like to see the industrial parks we currently have, used to their full potential, but we have a committed industry or business coming into the county, I feel it would be in the best interest of the taxpayer to do so.

C) TIF as a means of paying for infrastructure?

I see no problem using this method as it can be beneficial to the County and Business.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

A) I support tax abatements, but only on a limited basis. Also for no more than 5 yrs. Then a year by year renewal.

B) Yes, I support money being spent on infrastructure extensions to industrial properties and places of possible residential growth.

C) Yes to T.I.F.

**QUESTION 3:** Do you support unlimited access or the current status of Severs/Fail Road open to truck traffic for local businesses only?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

This road should be open to trucks serving Rose Industrial Park.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

No. Let me explain my answer. In 1990, I was Sheriff of La Porte County and the very same question was posed. I was asked to do a traffic study on the issue and used both state and county engineers for expert assistance. I also did a housing count, school bus route count and number of children in the effected area. The conclusion of all the data stated the roadway was to narrow and curved for large amounts of truck traffic. The number of school buses and children riding the buses made it a very dangerous situation especially with the narrow road.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Absolutely

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I feel that Severs/Fail Rd. could be open to unlimited truck access from the industrial park to Hwy 2 or 20 but be left to local truck traffic only past Park St . It seems to me that the road is not meant for high traffic or heavy trucks/semi's after Park St and residents would not appreciate heavy trucks or semis cruising down residential populated areas.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I support the current status of Severs/Fail road.

**QUESTION 4:** Do you support the WorkKeys program? (WorkKeys is a three-stage employability skills assessment tool designed to insure that job seekers and current employees have the specific job skills and competency for today's employment requirements.)

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate  
I'm not familiar with WorkKeys, but any tool that promotes employment is good.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate  
Yes.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
Yes, but I believe what is more important is that we need to engage local schools to develop the academic skills that employers need. The Howmet/Alcoa partnership with LPHS in developing an engineering skills program is a great example. Basic skills are lacking and for local business to compete globally we need to focus on the basic skills of math, reading and writing.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
I fully support WorkKeys and/or any program that would help with job advancement or job placement in La Porte County.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
I support the WorkKeys program. It can be used as a tool for prospective companies to see what our workforce consists of.

**QUESTION 5:** Do you support the extension of infrastructure (water & sewer) from the City of LaPorte and Michigan City into the County for Economic Development? (SR 35 South to Kingsbury, SR 2 West and US 421 South)

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Yes, Infrastructure is required if we want to compete in economic development.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

Supporting the issue is easy. Who wouldn't want to have everything at hand for potential companies. The question that remains, is who and how are we going to pay for those improvements? Do we simply put in a regional sewer district and put it on the backs of our taxpayers? Do we impose a TIF as suggested above? Do we become partners with the potential new developers. I would want the input of all entities involved before being a signer of any such major project.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Yes utility infrastructure is the first step to development. I've voted several times to extend the utility services to the I-94 redevelopment corridor.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

At this current time of economic uncertainty, I do not feel that such a project would be relevant or beneficial to the taxpayers of La Porte County. It is an expensive burden, especially when you are uncertain if any economic development is going to occur outside the city.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Yes and other towns in the county that have these services available.

**QUESTION 6:** List qualifications for the position (education and job experience).

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

10 years business experience in private sector. 15 years as owner of LaPorte Insurance Agency.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I am a graduate of Westville High School and attended Indiana University Northwest Campus. I am not a college graduate, but have years of expertise in government. I have been involved in La Porte County Government for 40 years. I spent nearly 30 years on the Sheriff's Department and served our County as Sheriff for eight years. I have served in the Auditor's office for eight years and am finishing my 4 year term as County Treasurer. No one running for office today has the background and experience that I can offer to this position. I know the budgetary process, have worked hand in hand with every unit of government in La Porte County, including the cities and towns and school districts. I have worked hand in hand with the Department of Local Government Finance, State Board of Accounts and the State Auditor's office and know the people from those agencies by their first names. I have earned their respect over the years.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Ball State University B.S. 1983, plus graduate courses in Supply Chain and Logistics at University of Texas Arlington, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, professional development in international trade, negotiations, sales, transportation, warehousing, and supply chain planning. Over the last 25 years I've served in positions of leadership in manufacturing and logistics. I've held P&L responsibilities for the last 15 years and have a solid business accounting background. Currently I manage transportation services for Alcoa/Howmet Corporation. I have a position on the national logistics leadership team for Alcoa Corporation.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I graduated from La Porte High School in 2000

Attended PNC for Business

Attended PNC for Construction Management

Worked in a family-owned La Porte County business that has been in business for over 100 years.

Own and Operate Bernacchi Property Management, landscape and lawn service

Union Labor for 8 years

Underground Utilities and Building Trades skills

Board Member of the Michigan City Exchange Club

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Graduate of LaPorte High School 1966. Attended Purdue University. Served in the U.S. Marine Corps, 1 year in Viet Nam. Wounded and decorated for heroism. 33 yrs. with Northern Indiana Public Service Co. Last 15 as a control room operator of 500 megawatt power plant in Michigan City, In. Directing 5 other operators in the safe operations of the plant during our shift. LaPorte County taxpayer.

**QUESTION 7:** What solutions would you present to lower the utility rates of local manufacturing companies?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

I have no solution at this time.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

In all honesty, I can offer no solutions to this question. I do not have the knowledge of the energy needs of our companies. This could only be obtained through direct communication with the companies.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

The only way to lower utility rates is through open and aggressive competition. We need to work with and lobby the state legislature. The state regulatory agencies must continuously be told that utility rates are central to our ability to compete and equally important to drawing new business to the region.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

In my family business we have dealt with NIPSCO for many of years and it has been on the downward slide for us. Heat is a major factor for the greenhouse and gas is ever rising so our only option is to produce less and sell at a local level instead of regional. This option is not available for everyone. I would say that the manufacturing company should work with the local energy company and legislation to try to cut the cost of energy.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Possible use of solar power, recycling of gray water for other uses and off peak operations. A energy audit to expose problem areas.

**QUESTION 8:** Should our county government continue in its on going effort to improve NIPSCO service and lower electric rates which affect business and industry in our county?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate  
County government money should not be spent on litigation to try to force lower rates.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate  
Not only county government should be involved with the negotiations with NIPSCO. This should be a unified effort, with all of our entities involved. These rates affect all of us, not just the county and should be dealt with by all of us.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
I believe there are some benefits by challenging Nipsco rate increases. Niccor Inc. is looking out for its shareholders and the state Public Utility Commission isn't focused on the concerns of local La Porte county businesses and households. We have to work together to make sure LP County and its businesses, homeowners and residents are heard at the state level.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
Definitely, yes! Cheaper energy in our area will bring new business and citizens to La Porte County.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
Yes, as long as it seems to be effective.

**QUESTION 9:** Please state your thoughts on whether a by-pass should be constructed around the City of LaPorte?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate  
Boyd, Servers & Fail Roads should be improved to form a partial bypass.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate  
I am not sure a by-pass is the answer. This issue again has been brought up time and time again. Remonstrance against the project has been very strong, and I believe still is. Would the extension of Boyd Blvd. north to the industrial park not be a partial answer? Again, funding is a major issue. With the advent of HB 1001, no one is absolutely sure what our financial climate will be in the near future.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
Absolutely this is critical to grow our community. We have to make sure our congressional leadership is on board with this vision and starts to fight for federal funding of this project. The sooner this bypass gets built the better. This has to be part of our vision for the future.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
I see no reason to do this, unless a intermodal facility is built, then reducing truck traffic threw our historic city may need to be considered.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate  
No, I believe the traffic keeps the downtown the business center of the City of LaPorte and alive. Truck traffic is a minor inconvenience.

**QUESTION 10:** How would you improve intergovernmental cooperation between the various units of government in LaPorte County?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Credibility, integrity, leadership & common sense needs to be employed to all branches of government know the Board of Commissioners can be trusted.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

We have seen some success in this area. I would advocate quarterly meetings between all entities. I believe Purdue North Central should be the moderator of such meetings and be fully involved with their expertise. Dialog is the key to success.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Improving communications and access should be our focus. I would like to see a central point on the internet where all recent reports, meeting notes, and minutes for municipal, city, and county governmental information are easily accessible to everyone. As a public official I would work on improving the shared vision for where our county is heading. We need to be one voice with an aggressive approach for growth and development.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I think they should have quarterly meetings to discuss common issues.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I would try to get all county, city, town and township officials together to try and solve problems of the county. Also to set the direction we want the county to go. I would also encourage of tapping the resources of Purdue North Central. It is a great asset we have available to us.

**QUESTION 11:** What is your plan to improve local government efficiency and reduce waste?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Central purchasing of all supplies, vehicles should be provided through a car-pool, purchase low end vehicles, or even program cars.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

We have been at break neck speed with purchases of buildings, moving of offices and in general spending with no plans or expectations. We must step back, establish a long range plan that not only involves the county but takes into consideration what effect our decisions make upon the other entities.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

The first step is to define and map governmental processes. Then publish the process so people can see what is being done on a daily basis by local government. The next step would be to develop measurements that are easily understood and readily available to the public. We have to begin to publish measurements of each and every department in county government. Without effective measurements improvements won't take place. This business approach would be a radical departure from the current operating mode but, I would like to pursue this approach. Another area for process improvements is purchasing. I would like to pursue a program of centralized purchasing. We can't allow every department to continue to buy goods and services without oversight and direction. I would like municipalities to be able to take advantage of this consolidated purchasing power.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

First by prioritizing projects  
Second by utilizing what La Porte County Government already has  
Third, Stop cost overruns  
Fourth, buy in bulk  
Fifth, Using Common sense

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I would see what services maybe duplicate between depts. Maybe a central stores for office supplies and equipment with one purchasing agent for all depts. and possibly other entities of the county.

**QUESTION 12:** What positions, if any, would you support of the Kernan-Shepard County Government reorganization plan?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

At this time, I don't feel the plan would be a cost savings. It also put too much control in one person.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I have read the Kernan-Shepard report and find that on several of the issues I agree with the assessments made. As always, there are portions of the report that I disagree with. I have had the opportunity, that few have, to speak directly with Governor Kernan on the issue. We were both very candid during the discussion and when it ended, agreed to disagree on some of the issues. I have a distinct dislike in taking away the "voice of the people", by eliminating the right to vote. Hundreds of thousands of men and women of this country died for that exact right. When the report was first presented, we were told it was about accountability and economics. Every elected official today has taken an oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Indiana. I hold that oath sacred. Under the plan, we would eliminate three commissioners and elect one executive. We would then change the council from seven members to either nine or eleven. So far we have eliminated nothing. The executive would have full appointment powers of the current elected officials, thereby taking away the voice of the people I discussed earlier. Where is the savings here? We are simply appointing the same positions that we have eliminated voting for. Economically, I don't believe qualified persons would come forward for these positions for the current amount of enumeration. I have always during my tenures of office held myself and my staffs accountable to all the citizens of La Porte County. I do however agree with the report on certain qualifications for the different offices and persons seeking those offices. If you read the report clearly, there is more and more suggestion for the State to oversee "everything". I don't feel that is a healthy atmosphere for local government.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I believe some aspects of local government can be streamlined but I'm opposed to taking away the opportunity of people to vote on local elected positions.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I disagree with it, it would take away or eliminate some elected positions, and make those positions appointed. I feel that it is taking away the voice of the voter and turning the voting system into the buddy system.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I only have a limited knowledge of what the report contains, so I cannot form an opinion at this time.

**QUESTION 13:** Should local sales taxes be added to bring in more revenue to local government? (Innkeepers tax, food and beverage tax, local sales tax, auto rental excise tax, local option income tax, etc.)

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

LOIT seems to be the only vehicle to bring significant revenue, but any new tax would be unpopular.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I am not opposed to the taxes you listed. We currently have an inn keeper's tax that goes completely to the Convention and Tourism Bureau. I have stated often, that I believe if the State Legislature wants a LOIT, they should pass it in Indianapolis. You know as well as I do that if it is passed locally, the council people that vote in favor of it will lose their seats. That has been proven in the 9 counties that have adopted the tax to date. I have directed this issue to our local representatives and senator. The answer was why they should pass the law for the entire state, when some of the units didn't need the extra revenue. My response was, if they didn't need the extra revenue, then it could simply be used as another form of property tax relief.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

The first step is to look for saving and improve efficiencies before additional taxes are imposed on our county. As a general statement I'm more apt to support user taxes like you described versus a local option income tax.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

We do not yet know what the total effect of HB1001 bill, especially on the effects on county and local budgets. The last thing taxpayers want to hear is more taxing, and if at all possible, I do not want to incorporate a local tax unless it is completely necessary.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I think possibly the innkeepers, food and beverage, and the auto rental taxes might work with out putting a large increase on these services.

**QUESTION 14:** The City of LaPorte needs to expand its tax base. What is your position on annexation by the City of LaPorte?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

I think annexation should be an ongoing process and be more aggressive.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I have no hesitation in the City's attempts to annex. I would not support a hostile annexation or annexation by right of immanent domain.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I would support LP annexation plans if the local people involved would see an improvement in services and they were allowed to vote on the issue.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Annexation is extremely expensive, because, if you annex you need to run sewer and water to those new city residents. La Porte City needs to work on the Sewer and Water in the city and concentrate on other ways of creating revenue. It may not be cost effective and probably upset county residents.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I believe they need to annex. The last administration proposed a number of areas and these should be looked into again.

**QUESTION 15:** What is your position on the Illiana Expressway?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

I see no need for any additional highways with traffic patterns as they are now.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I addressed this issue previously. When it was first brought to the public, we were told that it was needed to relief the congestion on I-94 and I-65, and having traveled that area often, can see the need. I asked at the time, if a solution might be using Indiana Highway 49 would not be best suited. It is currently a limited access four lane highway that runs from south of Valparaiso to the Indiana Dunes National Park. It has direct access to both the Indiana Toll Road and I-94 and would entail very little new land access or design. I still believe, although I never received a response, it is a viable alternative.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I support the ongoing study of the Illiana Expressway. We have to look out farther into the future and make sure the infrastructure is in place to meets the future demands.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

They show you a map of where it could go, but no definite routes. I cannot say I am for or against something if I don't know where they are planning to locate it. If it were beneficial to La Porte County, I would most likely approve its construction.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I don't believe we need it in LaPorte County. Porter County has already built the 49 by-pass. Use it as a starting point.

**QUESTION 16:** Do you favor the development of the intermodal rail yard in LaPorte County?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Any development that brings good paying jobs must be considered. I have not seen any impact studies or proposals yet.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I have been misunderstood on this issue. Never once, have I stated that I was opposed to the intermodal. I simply stated that I had opted not to sell our property. I have, on the other hand, publicly stated both in forum and print, that I felt the Kingsbury Industrial Park was the best suited setting for such a facility. I have visited Elwood, Illinois and Centerpoint Intermodal, and having done such, feel even more strongly than before. The proposed site is pristine productive farm land, that we are reminded almost daily, we are losing at an alarming rate. KIP is currently zoned commercial and industrial. It has water, sewer, power, roads and rail beds. Granted, they need improvement; however, the other site has none and has not gone through the zoning process.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Over the last four years I've written multiple articles and spoken out in favor of the multi-modal project. I've taken a leading position on this project because of my understanding of the issues involved. My 25 years of experience in logistics and the fact that I've worked at Alliance, TX and Elwood, IL at large warehouse sites makes me the most qualified candidate at the county level to speak about the project. I have been to most of the ports and large logistic sites in the USA. I understand that we have to mitigate the environmental issues, address the infrastructure requirements, and protect the local home owners. This project has the potential to reshape the business climate in our region. If elected I would be the only person in county government with extensive logistics experience.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

We are in dire need of business and industry in La Porte County. If the county knew more about where the intermodal facility would be located, what the environmental risk would be, the total amount of local jobs created, who would be responsible for damaged roads due to increased truck traffic, and what kind of tax revenue it would create, Then those factors would make it easier for me to make a decision if I am for or against such a facility. That being said, I am in total support of business or industry coming into La Porte County if we know what we are getting into and the facts are known.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

I would prefer that it would be built in K.I.D. I would like to know the projected impact it would have on the county and the cost to provide infrastructure to support it.

**QUESTION 17:** Is there one thing that you would like to accomplish as an elected official of LaPorte County?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Bring credibility, integrity and leadership to the Board of Commissioners.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

Absolutely. I want to return credibility and accountability to the commissioner's office. We currently have a commissioner that has told a group of citizens in Union Mills that he knew nothing of the intermodal, when in fact he had signed a confidentiality agreement months before. We have a commissioner in office that told the county council in a public meeting in Wanatah that he had not signed a contract with an architectural firm, when in fact he had months earlier. We have a commissioner in office that told the county council's attorney in a public meeting that he was in the process of canceling the very same contract, when in fact he did not. We have a commissioner in office that on two separate occasions called a public meeting to order with the statement "there will be no public comment allowed". We have a commissioner in office that held a "special meeting" without publication, to award a contract for construction, contrary to the open door law. We have a commissioner in office that awarded a construction bid without have the money appropriated by the county council first, contrary to state statute. We have a county commissioner in office that awarded a million dollar contract to a bidder other than the lowest bidder by over \$100,000.00 without justifiable cause as required by Indiana statute. These and other examples need to be stopped. We must return credibility and accountability to the commissioner's office.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

To successfully manage and mitigate the potential issues of the anticipated logistics project in LP County. To aggressively new businesses and growth. My approach would improve communications with local businesses. I would address the concerns of the local citizens in an open and direct manner. I would measure our success by the local business climate, did we create jobs, increase investment, and lower taxes.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Bring Back the days of thriving businesses, low taxes, and common sense politics to La Porte County.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

Economic development. Making LaPorte county a place our young will want to return to. To raise their families, buy homes and spend their money. Also encourage people to stay that are here now. Not have to move to find quality jobs. Improve the quality of life. Make LaPorte County a place people are proud to call home.

**QUESTION 18:** What steps would you take as an elected official of LaPorte County to make the County one of the best managed counties in the State of Indiana?

**Ronald Schafer (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 2 Candidate

Use common sense, and set the standard of accountability for all county employees to follow.

**Kenneth Layton (R)** - LaPorte County Commissioner District 3 Candidate

I would never participate in nor preside over a meeting where the general public did not have an opportunity to voice their opinions or concerns. I would never attend an improper or illegal meeting to conduct county business. I would make the office of commissioner available to all citizens of La Porte County. I intend to attempt to move the meetings. There are 24 scheduled meetings per year. I will ask that at least six of those meetings go to say, La Crosse or Wanatah or Kingsford Heights or Rolling Prairie, etc. Take county government to the people, so they have better access and understanding of how it works. I intend to work very closely with all the entities of the county, to have a unified effort for all of us. As I stated earlier, what effects one unit, affects them all and we should be pulling together on the same rope of success.

**Scott Ford (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

We have to successfully manage change and promote growth. Over the last 25 years I've focused on business excellence. I've managed the supply chain for world class companies that include IBM, Xerox, Georgia-Pacific, Pillsbury, and now at Alcoa/Howmet. I've seen what process management and measurements do for companies. I've seen first hand how some of the world's best corporations manage change. I'll attempt to apply the same concepts and disciplines to managing our county budget and improving the lives of our citizens.

**Matthew Bernacchi (D)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

- A) First step would be to challenge irresponsible ideas and reckless spending in La Porte County Government
- B) Second would be to compare our county to other counties of close size and population
- C) Listen to the citizens of La Porte County, The elected official works for them, and in most cases local and national, they seem to forget that. If I am elected as your next councilman I will listen to you, and keep on listening.

**Cary Kirkham (R)** - LaPorte County Council Member-At-Large Candidate

An open line of communication between all entities of the county. It would help us all solve our problems and also lead us to what we can do for the future of the county

*Asked to the State Senate & House of Representative Candidates Only*

**QUESTION 1:** Are you in favor of changing the Indiana State Constitution to include the provisions for the property caps?

**Jim Arnold (D)** - State Senator District 17 Candidate

I am in favor of the 1, 2, 3% caps, however I do not support a constitutional amendment. The reason being is that I feel the constitution of the state of Indiana is a sacred document only to be amended in a most serious and needed matter. I strongly believe that taxes and tax caps along with numbers or percentages should not be included as part of our constitution and the reason being, once it is in the constitution if our economic times improve and we would like to readdress the situation it would take 3 to 4 year to amend the constitution. If we pass it Statutorily the process would be much easier and quicker to institute.

**Tom Dermody (R)** - State Representative District 20 Candidate

The basis of the Constitution is to protect its citizens. The actions we took in the Legislature were also designed to protect citizens, specifically, the property owners. We protected the property owners who were found to be in a very difficult situation. The burden of paying the bulk of providing government services to everyone fell squarely on the shoulders of the property owners. This legislation gave those citizens a voice in how much of a burden that should be. The Constitution is a sacred document and I do believe making permanent changes should be done with caution. On such an important issue, we should allow the taxpayer a vote to determine if property caps will be permanent or not. We should continue to work with all units of government to reduce the burden placed on property taxes and find alternative revenue streams and expense reductions for necessary services to be provided. At the end of the day, it is my belief that the caps are truly the way to protect the taxpayer.

**Nancy Dembowski (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

I believe that H.B. 1001 must be monitored closely and local officials must communicate with state government so that we can discern whether or not it is harmful or beneficial. There are often unintended consequences to legislation of such magnitude. We must make certain that it is in the form we approve before we have the debate about adding it to the Constitution which to me is a very deliberate and sobering action to amend the Constitution.

*Asked to the State Senate & House of Representative Candidates Only*

**QUESTION 2:** What is your position on the Illiana Expressway?

**Jim Arnold (D)** - State Senator District 8 Candidate

I fully support the need for an Illiana Expressway and need for a study. In the next 10 years the traffic volume between our area and Chicago could very well reach the point of gridlock at that point people are going to look back and ask why we didn't do something years prior. So it is very important to get things started now. This is not to say that the initial location proposal location should not be revisited.

**Tom Dermody (R)** - State Representative District 20 Candidate

Road funding will continue to burden all local units of government. I believe the Illiana Expressway or another alternative method of transportation needs to be evaluated and discussed with the public in Northwest Indiana. It would connect all the vital communities in this area. However, I believe this is another decision that requires the people's involvement. We have other major decisions to make in the transportation future of this area. This should not be placed before other priorities, such as the Southshore Expressway expansion. We must also look to grow economic development opportunities along the existing infrastructure such as the Indiana Toll Road.

**Nancy Dembowski (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

Since the Illiana Expressway does not impact the majority of my District, I am not well versed in the issue. I do believe, however, that improved infrastructure in all areas is extremely important to economic development and prosperity of the region.

*Asked to the State Senate & House of Representative Candidates Only*

**QUESTION 3:** Which recommendations of the Kernan-Shepard report would you support?

**Jim Arnold (D)** - State Senator District 8 Candidate

There are 27 points in this study and people should remember at this point it is merely a study and a recommendation. Several of these issues are extremely vital to our political climate that we live in today and definitely need serious consideration. Others are of the magnitude that I feel need to be placed for public referendum to allow the public to vote for weather they would like them or not. People need to realize it is only a study and a recommendation and nothing is set in concrete. In the near future there will be much discussion over this study.

**Tom Dermody (R)** - State Representative District 20 Candidate

I believe that document should be looked at as a resource to be examined by each community on an individual basis, with much local discussion taking place. I have learned that no one solution is right for every area of the State. What works for La Porte County might not work for Floyd County in southern Indiana. We should look at improving efficiency, in all levels of government, while reducing cost to the taxpayer. I do believe this report was instrumental in getting the discussions going on how government can increase its efficiencies and effectiveness in all areas of government utilizing proven business practices.

**Nancy Dembowski (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

I believe only the people of Indiana can decide if they want local Government to be as efficient as possible and responsive to the citizens. I have asked constituents to be involved and inform me of their wishes. I do believe that it is a debate that must be held and all aspects debated in full.

*Asked to the State Senate & House of Representative Candidates Only*

**QUESTION 4:** What is your position on the State of Indiana to privatize other aspects of State Government?

**Jim Arnold (D)** - State Senator District 8 Candidate

Unfortunately the word privatization in government has taken on a bad connotation. Some of this is warranted and some not. Before we pursue any further privatization I think it is important that the state do in-depth research on the pros and cons and release the results to the general public who will in turn have the opportunity to contact their legislators so we have a first hand feel on their opinions.

**Tom Dermody (R)** - State Representative District 20 Candidate

Before we look at privatizing any resource in State government we must first examine the current practices of those resources. For example, before we consider privatizing the lottery to pay for the college education of young Hoosiers, we should insure that all State Institutions are spending the state resources wisely. In these tough economic times it is important to examine all resources available to fund State programs as well as be open to new ways to move our State forward.

**Nancy Dembowski (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

I am not at this time in favor of additional privatization.

*Asked to the State Senate & House of Representative Candidates Only*

**QUESTION 5:** What further efforts would you consider to assist local governments that face fiscal difficulties?

**Jim Arnold (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

Budget shortfalls are a reality that we all have to face and subsequently until we come up with additional solution to these shortfalls governmental entities across the board; state, county, municipal, and town, will have to do some serious evaluations on budget priorities. Various aspects within local governments services that are operating at a loss will have to evaluate weather they are worth continuing. It will take cooperative effort on everyone's part to address this crisis.

**Tom Dermody (R)** - State Representative District 20 Candidate

The goal for all units of government should be to improve efficiencies. If the important services such as Police and Fire can not be provided after streamlining all units of government, then alternative funding mechanisms should be considered. The key is to reduce the government's reliance on taxing property owners, while continuing to provide necessary services to all units of government.

**Nancy Dembowski (D)** - State Representative District 17 Candidate

Fiscal difficulties will be huge in this economy for both the state and local governments. We must be as efficient and frugal as possible and eliminate all unnecessary spending. The budget session this year will be especially difficult.