



# BIZVOTES QUESTIONNAIRE



INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING  
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

## 2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire Blue Ridge District

1. What is the biggest issue/challenge you believe Loudoun faces in the upcoming term? Please use list format.

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

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- Continuing to build the schools and other facilities necessary for a rapidly growing population while maintaining our debt cap, AAA bond rating, and a reasonable tax burden. In the past decade approximately 143,000 new residents have moved into Loudoun. Over this period we have added an average of over 3,000 new students in the school system each year. That trend is predicted to continue, and in turn will continue to put upward pressure on homeowners' tax bills.
- If we go into a double-dip recession, managing the County's finances so that we remain fiscally stable and strong.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

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The budget and taxes and the need to attract businesses to Loudoun County.

2. How do you propose to address this challenge?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I will continue to apply the knowledge and experience I have gained over the past 16 years dealing with these specific issues. As a member of the Finance/Government Services and Operations Committee for 15 years (Chairman for eight years), I have dedicated my efforts to financially guiding us through the explosive growth period and recent recession. I co-authored the Debt Cap policy that led directly to our AAA bond rating and have led the Board in establishing the annual fiscal guidance for many years, which enabled us to get through the recession in better shape than most jurisdictions.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

I would implement a government restructuring committee to include representatives from different sectors of the community. I would also propose to implement an independent budget review committee. These groups would provide the board with the detailed analysis and review needed to make our local government run more effectively and efficiently. Also for the purpose of finding the funding necessary for needed projects and to help better direct priorities.



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3. Please detail the specific opportunities or regulatory measures that, if elected, you will work to see implemented to support the private sector's efforts to create jobs and make commercial investment in Loudoun County.

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

Loudoun currently has:

- An unemployment rate of 4.4%, half the national average, and 50% better than that of the State.
- Essentially doubled the number of business establishments over the past decade (from 4,565 in 2000 to 9,115 in 2010).
- Increased the number of jobs in Loudoun over the past decade by approximately 46,000 jobs.

Clearly the policies we have followed in recent years have been beneficial. I see no need for significant changes.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

I will work to get the county's process for companies to establish and stay here, streamlined to reduce the time, expense and inconsistent requirements placed on businesses. Additionally, I will commit to proposing programs to attract and retain businesses and pursue a strategy for zoning and building structures to attract business communities that can grow and thrive in a sustainable fashion.

4. What is your vision for supporting and growing the tourism industry in Loudoun County, and what changes do you feel are necessary to improve the infrastructure in the County to better support the success and growth of tourism and related economic development that can come with it?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

The primary attraction for tourists is the rural setting and various businesses of western Loudoun. I will continue to support wineries and bed and breakfasts, policies that promote agribusinesses, farm-to-table initiatives, and maintaining the current zoning and land use regulations (which encourage these industries) for the rural area and the Transition Area. I have been a member of the Rural Economic Development Committee and support its efforts.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

My vision for supporting and growing tourism in Loudoun County involves applying best practice solutions for attracting and retaining business in municipalities. To that point, I feel it is necessary to have true collaboration with the various sectors of the business community to define and create the necessary infrastructure to support the success and growth of tourism and the related economic development that can come with it. We have a beautiful county with much culture and history that should be considered and incorporated in the infrastructure planning and promotion of tourism.



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5. It is clear that Northern Virginia will not be able to count on the state or federal government to fully meet its transportation needs. As a rapidly growing jurisdiction, Loudoun County has unique challenges in the area of transportation. What actions do you believe Loudoun County should take at the local level to ensure citizens and businesses have an efficient multimodal transportation system?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I will continue to pressure the General Assembly to establish a viable, sustainable funding source for transportation projects, which the State has thus far failed to do because it would require raising State taxes. I will resist with all my energy the State's plans to shift from the State to local governments the responsibility for building and maintaining roads, which the Secretary of Transportation is now publicly advocating. I am reluctant to commit any more local tax funding or debt capacity to roads when we face the tremendous task of building more schools in the near future.

I strongly support the Loudoun Commuter Bus system and a variable toll rate for the Greenway.

I believe that bringing Metrorail to Loudoun will provide great benefits to our residents, from both a transportation and an economic development perspective. However, I have serious concerns about the proposed financing scheme and am skeptical that it will actually work. Uncertainty on the availability of Federal loans and possible \$13 one-way tolls on the Toll Road give me serious concern. The program is still evolving and I will keep an open mind until the final product is presented for a vote.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

The actions Loudoun County should take at a local level to ensure citizens and businesses have an efficient multimodal transportation system, starts with the entire Board of Supervisors agreeing on this need and giving direction for expansion of working groups and further outreach for the creation of a clear and timely plan that is backed by programs to facilitate true progress. This means working creatively and cooperatively to meet citizen and business needs.



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6. It is the Chamber's view that the County's commercial tax base should be grown through expanded economic development, not through increasing taxes on existing businesses. Balancing the commercial tax base with the residential tax base is essential to the continued growth of Loudoun County and the stabilization of its tax base. In your view, what is the optimal ratio of commercial to residential tax base in order to achieve a balanced fiscal structure in the County and how would you propose to achieve this goal?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

The County has a formal goal of 30 percent of the tax base being commercial. Unfortunately, that is not achievable. For the past 15 years we have struggled to maintain approximately 20 percent (current value), dropping as low as 13 percent five years ago. Our percentage has been within one or two points of Fairfax's over these 15 years (both were at 21 percent in 2009) and far better than Prince William's (currently 14.7%). As long as we continue to build lots of houses, maintaining 20 percent will be a challenge. Remember: the ratio has a numerator and a denominator.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

It is clear that year after year our county's commercial tax base has decreased in comparison to the residential development. Better planning, communications and collaboration that includes business development as part of the overall development plan, is necessary to move us forward into modern times. We need to make our county a robust business community where businesses want to be, can affordably be, and which serves the community through bringing jobs and other offerings to our citizens. A clear plan and concentrated focus in this direction should result in work that will bring enough business to increase our commercial tax base to a ratio that should be 25% or greater versus the current 14%.



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7. Reliable, affordable energy is required to support the needs of Loudoun's businesses and to sustain our community's high quality of life. Please discuss/explain what specific initiatives you would propose or support to develop a long-term, County-wide energy plan which emphasizes energy generation, transmission and conservation.

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I support the current energy plan which emphasizes encouraging energy saving-design features for businesses and government buildings. The County has no control over energy transmission or distribution. The State Corporation Commission controls these items. I will deal with land use decisions involving generation proposals individually and as objectively as I can, depending upon the circumstances.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

Going green is not just a trend, it is a necessity for the future of our nation. To that end, there are many efforts ongoing in this county, some of which have resulted in successful and efficient energy models, which conserve energy and save money. Such examples are solar powered businesses that are generating enough solar energy that they are reaping energy credits, saving them financially much more than direct electricity. Our county needs a county-wide energy plan that focuses not just on the here and now, but on the future of Loudoun. Developing this plan should also involve subject matter experts and businesses in the county who can add experience and value to the plan.



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8. Loudoun has a diversity of land uses from urban and transit-oriented nodes, to suburban communities and rural uses in the west. Various proposed environmental regulations, such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process, have been extensively discussed and debated in recent months and will impact these uses in different ways. What is your position on these proposals and what would you do to make these or any other proposed environmental regulation or strategy "Loudoun-appropriate"?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

As a result of my motion (and the deciding vote in a 5-4 decision), the proposed Chesapeake Bay Ordinance was tabled earlier this spring until such time as the State informed us what mandatory actions would have to be undertaken in response to the court-ordered directive to meet the maximum daily level of nutrients and sediment that Loudoun's water bodies can receive. The State has now informed us that our daily pollution targets are as follows: Nitrogen – 17 percent decrease over current levels; Phosphorus – 21 percent decrease over current levels; Sediment – 30 percent decrease over current levels.

Meeting these mandated targets (60% by 2017 and 100% by 2025) will have a significant impact on the following sectors: Agriculture, urban/suburban storm water, wastewater plants, septic systems, and overall use of fertilizers. Over the next year the County and the State will negotiate and decide upon the specific actions Loudoun must take to meet the mandated targets. I want to emphasize here: These actions will be mandated by the State; other than negotiating the best possible deal we can get for our citizens, Loudoun County will have no choice but to meet this State mandate.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

Environmental regulations are very important as they impact most everyone. Therefore, my position is that any actions taken by the board should be based on what is best for the greater whole and whether it is an absolute necessity. Additionally, in order to make environmental regulation or strategy "Loudoun appropriate" we need to involve the stakeholders of the community in the development of these regulations and not make it a staff down determination. After watching the staff time and money wasted on an attempt to push the CBPO on the stakeholders of this county, it is time for a change. There are existing regulations that are not effectively monitored and enforced, which would address many of the additional government layers attempting to be imposed.



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9. Virginia and especially Northern Virginia is predicted to attract both significant numbers of jobs and residents over the next 20 years. What tools and policies would you seek to implement in the County to address both the benefits and challenges of this anticipated growth?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I will continue to support new commercial development in an effort to at least maintain commercial as 20% of the tax base.

I have appeared before the General Assembly for County many times to request authority to employ tools to slow the rate of growth – not stop it, but slow it – to a rate that we could adjust to financially and socially. Each request was denied. Thus, we have only one tool to deal with growth: control of zoning. The 41,000 approved but unbuilt houses represent a 20-year supply at current rates. Paying for the facilities and services for these approved but unbuilt houses will be difficult. I will oppose any efforts to change the zoning in the transition, western and rural areas to allow more density. We cannot afford to open up new areas to more intense development. We have averaged building 3+ schools a year for the past 15 years. We cannot continue that trend, much less add to the problem by upzoning in these three areas. To do so would place an unbearable tax burden on our citizens. I will continue to advocate restraint in approving more residential projects while we are struggling to provide facilities and services for those residents already here.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

Tools I would implement in the county to address both the benefits and challenges of Loudoun County's anticipated growth are effective planning and feedback through communications and collaboration with the community and surrounding jurisdictions. Loudoun county is not an island and thus requires effective relations with a number of jurisdictions and entities to help create a success plan for our county. I have the corporate experience and willingness to work with all people, and as a representative of the people feel that I should be a conduit for the people's overall interests, concerns and abilities.



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10. Affordable housing isn't only housing for low-income, homeless or unemployed – it's housing for vital workers in our community whose work is essential to a strong and vibrant business community in Loudoun County. What programs do you propose to develop affordable and/or workforce housing in the County?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I am a member of the Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board and strongly support our Affordable Dwelling Unit program which has enabled over 1,500 low-to-medium income residents to buy homes, as well as made over 350 rental units accessible to this group. The County encourages, and I support, proposals for work force housing as part of rezonings; however there is no requirement to provide it. I also support continuing to give grants to such organizations as Habitat for Humanity and Windy Hill Foundation to assist in providing low-cost housing. I would ask the business world what it proposes to do to address the problem. Government action cannot and should not be the only answer.

Foreclosures have been a major problem and may become so again if the economy doesn't improve. I'm deeply concerned about our underwater homeowners and would encourage lenders to find innovative ways to help them stay in their homes and avoid foreclosure, perhaps through programs such as is mentioned in a recent Washington Post article ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/ocwen-financial-offers-a-lifeline-to-underwater-borrowers/2011/07/29/gIQAgdmlwl\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/ocwen-financial-offers-a-lifeline-to-underwater-borrowers/2011/07/29/gIQAgdmlwl_story.html)). Empty houses benefit no one.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

Working in the community for so long, I am quite aware that there is a large absence in Loudoun County of workforce housing and affordable housing. In fact many of the county's teachers and public safety workers have to live out of the county because they cannot afford to live here due to the cost of housing. The ADU program within the county needs to be revisited for consideration of changing to be more effective. The way the ADU program is structured has made it difficult for many of the people needing affordable housing to take advantage of due to the process and definition of the program.



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11. In recent years, Loudoun County has allocated much of the cost and responsibility for providing school sites, parks and recreational opportunities to the development community through the imposition of proffered obligations and capital facilities fees, which are among the highest in the country, in connection with rezoning applications. The Chamber is opposed to any tax policies or capital facilities fee increases that will inflate the cost of housing to the point of creating a disincentive for businesses to locate in Loudoun County. How do you propose to ensure that there are adequate schools, parks and recreational opportunities for current and future residents without unduly burdening the business community?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

It is current policy, which I strongly support, that the public at large will pay for capital facilities generated by base zoning (by-right zoning) and that developers will pay 100 percent of facilities costs for rezoned densities above base zoning. It is argued that this increases the cost of houses and buyers cannot afford them. Considering how many houses have been sold in Loudoun over the past ten years, I consider this a bogus argument. Clearly people have been able to afford to purchase all these houses. It is only fair for the new residents to pay for the new facilities required to serve them. It is unfair to ask long-term residents to pay over and over again for new facilities when they have already paid for the facilities that serve them and will receive no benefit from these new facilities (primarily schools).

New businesses pay the same taxes that all existing businesses pay. Apparently the tax policy we have followed for the past decade has been viewed favorably by the business community since the number of new businesses has essentially doubled since 2000.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

There is no quick fix for the back pressure issue of need for schools and other public facilities, so the county needs to move quickly to rectify the situation. The real answer is to create programs and incentives to bring businesses into the county to increase the commercial tax base enough to help fund these needs more appropriately. Additionally, community planning for residential areas should include factoring in of schools, parks and recreational opportunities along with businesses, in order to provide quality of life living in this county that also provides local jobs, reduces traffic on our roadways and provides more balance in our tax base as well.



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12. Please briefly describe what traditional and innovative policies or initiatives you support to ensure Loudoun's children have access to a K-12 system that will allow them to achieve competitive levels of proficiency in science, technology, mathematics, engineering and the arts, and how you would fund these policies or initiatives

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

By law, the Board of Supervisors can only appropriate a lump sum for the school system. How the money is spent within the school system is totally up the School Board. I have supported building the schools we need when we need them, even though that has been very difficult at times. I will continue to find the funds necessary to support a strong school system while keeping the tax burden at reasonable level.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

We have a good educational system that is working to keep up with federal and state initiatives in STEM and the arts. More business partnerships and creative programs that bring students into the real world (businesses) for more exposure and learning, as well as bring businesses into the schools, will be important as we move forward. Additionally, many of unique programs in the public school system serve a small portion of the student population. I support policies and initiatives that would expand programs to the students not only in the schools but community based as well. If businesses who cover industry areas in the STEM and arts would form community based after school programs or clubs, such as Ashburn Robotics is attempting to do, it would be such a value add to the Loudoun community and the workplace preparedness skills for children.



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13. Small business access to affordable health care continues to be a top priority of the Loudoun County Chamber. Please describe what specific policies/initiatives you would support to help address the significant changes facing businesses related to implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Please also share any other ideas that may be implemented from a policy standpoint that may help businesses to reduce their healthcare costs and improve the health of their workers.

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

The Affordable Care Act is convoluted and confusing. It remains to be seen how it will actually effect healthcare costs and improve the health of citizens. That having been said if the Chamber feels that the County should or could bear some responsibility for the healthcare costs of its business employees, then I am open to suggestions as to (1) how it believes the County could give it some assistance; and (2) how the Chamber proposes the County should pay for whatever it would like the County to undertake on behalf of businesses. Logically speaking, for the County to undertake any such endeavor it would be necessary to raise business taxes to pay for the effort. Would the Chamber support a business tax increase in order to provide healthcare for their workers?

As a member of the military, I am familiar with the Tricare system, and because of this familiarity, personally favor a single-payer system for its simplicity and ease of use for both the consumer and the medical community. This, however, was not what Congress passed

**Janet Clarke (R)**

Many small businesses are struggling as it is in this economy, but yet small businesses are the still the economic engine for Loudoun County. Many businesses I have spoken to are concerned about what is ahead with respect to healthcare for them and their employees. In fact, some have said they will have to close their businesses if healthcare costs continue to rise and effect how they are required to apply them, impacting their business. Once again, businesses partnering together within the county for the benefit of the county's citizens would be beneficial to all concerned. There are a number of quality healthcare organizations in Loudoun County we could collaborate with toward this end.



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14. The Loudoun County Chamber and the County's business community has made effective contributions to several important public policy issues in Loudoun in recent years, such as the processes created to revise the County's sign regulations and on the adopted Route 28 Comprehensive Plan Amendment. How would you assess the County's efforts to engage the Loudoun business community on important public policy issues and how would you improve or otherwise change those efforts?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

Weighing the views of various competing factions is the essence of representative government. The business community's perspective, while very important, is only one perspective that we, as Supervisors, must consider when dealing with important, and sometimes controversial, issues. There are always other perspectives. Finding the right balance between the various perspectives is often a tremendous challenge, but it must be done if rational decisions are to be made. Apparently the business community's views have had a significant impact on policies and decisions over the past decade, since the number of new business establishments has essentially doubled, from 4,565 to 9115 and we have created 46,000 new jobs in the County. Clearly the current process for considering inputs from the business community has worked well, and I see no need to change it.

The process we have in place has been very effective in allowing the business community to present its perspective on various important issues. I see no reason to change the process itself. We have a very active Economic Development Commission which is not shy about offering its opinion on various issues.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

The Chamber and business community's effective contributions to several important policy issues in Loudoun in recent years is evidence of what works and should be applied more universally. The Chamber's description of successful collaboration and communications between the business community and the County is consistent with my position on how we should be working on a regular basis in the county for the benefit of the Loudoun community.



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15. Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

- Education: B.S., U.S. Air Force Academy; MBA Auburn
- Military experience: 27 years, US Air Force, retiring as Colonel
- 16 years Board of Supervisors experience, assignments including (but not limited to):
  - 15 years on the Finance/Government Services and Operations Committee, eight as its Chairman
  - Eight years on the Fiscal Impact Committee, Chairman 2008-2011
  - Membership on Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board
  - Membership of the Joint Board/School Board Committee
  - Former membership on the Route 28 Transportation Commission District, Chairman for 2 years

**Janet Clarke (R)**

I am qualified to be a Supervisor with a degree in Community Interrelations, a Graduate degree in Education in Leadership and Administration, having served on the Loudoun County Community Services Board, worked for the Loudoun County Public School system, served on one of the County's seven incorporated Town council's, served as a county election official, run federally funded programs in the county which involved interfacing with all sectors of the community including law enforcement, family services, the school board and such. I love my county and have an interest in the betterment of it.

16. What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

**Jim Burton\* (I)**

I believe the kind of in-depth, hands-on education, knowledge, and experience I possess (see #15 above) will be vital in leading the County through our probable continued rapid growth and what may possibly be troubled national, international, and local economic times to come. It will also be invaluable in representing a district which is, in essence, a microcosm of the county at large, with incorporated towns, rural villages, open farm land, and suburban communities. I have considerable experience in simultaneously representing such varied communities and, in fact, find it enjoyable.

**Janet Clarke (R)**

My open door policy for both businesses and citizens, my track record of business development success in the private sector and my record of grass roots volunteer work throughout the county for the betterment of the county.

17. Do you have a web site where more information about you is available? What is that web site address?



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**Janet Clarke (R)**

[www.clarkeforloudoun.com](http://www.clarkeforloudoun.com)

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact Tony Howard at 571-209-9020. This questionnaire has been sent to the list of candidates provided by the Board of Elections. Thank you.