



BIZVOTES QUESTIONNAIRE



INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire Dulles District

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

Larry Roeder (D)
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The vast majority of voters I've met in Dulles since August, 2010 have said infrastructure, followed by economic development and schools on a nearly equal basis. Infrastructure includes roads, mass transit and internet. Supporting North-South traffic is rarely spoken of; but fostering more effective East-West commuter traffic and general mass transit in support of the elderly and shoppers is regularly requested. Many supporters want a main airport entrance on 606 to avoid 50 and 28 traffic. They also want an experienced, Full-Time Supervisor with the time to build practical solutions.

Matt Letourneau (R)
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Economic Development. Loudoun County is reliant on residential property taxes for 82% of our revenue, resulting in some of the highest property taxes in the South and ever-increasing debt. I am concerned that without additional revenue streams, tax rates will become unmanageable for families and businesses, and our debt service will threaten our bond ratings. We will need to continue to invest in schools to meet the needs of our expanding population, and I would also like to see Loudoun partner with the state on some key road projects, but without additional revenue it won't be possible.

2. How do you propose to address this challenge?

Larry Roeder (D)

Traffic is like water, so widening 50 and 606 will alone not solve our east-west traffic. A bigger pipe just brings a bigger traffic jam. We need to move traffic off of main roads by connecting the Loudoun County Parkway, open Dulles on 606 and foster more creative mass transit solutions. More long-haul buses are needed on a wider, more frequent schedule. We also need short haul buses for commutes to Metro distribution points and HOA based strip malls, but also throughout the day to Leesburg, Middleburg, Dulles Town Center, etc for shopping, entertainment and medical appointments.

Matt Letourneau (R)

I strongly support the creation of a Loudoun County Economic Development Authority (EDA). Loudoun and Fairfax counties share similar growth trajectories, with the exception that in 1976, Fairfax created a public Economic Development Authority to be a full time, all inclusive liaison with the worldwide business community. In contrast, Loudoun's economic development efforts have been somewhat sporadic and not on the scale needed. With our location, access to Dulles, highly educated workforce and excellent school system, Loudoun should be an attractive destination for businesses.



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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.

Larry Roeder (D)

Regulations should be rational and provide a predictable environment for investment, as well as foster jobs that are close to homes; but also support the public's desire to protect historical and rural lands. Fostering economic development should also be a partnership between industry, the citizens and government, so as a full-time Supervisor I will meet stakeholders on a daily basis.

Matt Letourneau (R)

Loudoun County must have an entirely new attitude and focus when it comes to regulation and commercial investment. One reason I favor an EDA is to establish a "one-stop shop" for new and existing businesses trying to weave their way through the process. In particular, we should focus on the land use and zoning process, where applicants complain of moving targets and unnecessary delays-- in this economic climate, capital will not sit on the sidelines very long. The current Board's long flirtation with the Chesapeake Bay Protection Ordinance is evidence that the mindset has not shifted enough.

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?

Larry Roeder (D)

All of Loudoun must have access to high speed internet, which will also help advertising and work-at-home residents. County seed money can be recouped through usage fees for fiber optic cable. Conference centers, educational facilities and sporting and entertainment venues will also generate income; but increased traffic should not deteriorate the county ambiance; we must avoid high speed flows through HOAs. Folk festivals commemorating Loudoun's past as well as its wine and livestock will help. We also need to highlight our Revolutionary War, Civil War and African-American history.

Matt Letourneau (R)

The current Board's embarrassing behavior toward the Washington Redskins is evidence that a different approach is needed. The Redskins are a significant asset for Loudoun, and we should do what we can to keep training camp here. Beyond that, given the difficult economic climate, we must make sure that we get the most bang for our buck from funds allocated for tourism. We should thoroughly evaluate the worthiness of specific efforts and ensure that they are resulting in real returns by surveying hotel owners and businesses.



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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?

Larry Roeder (D)

Convincing Dulles Airport to open a major entrance on 606 will significantly shorten airport commutes from Dulles and the west by avoiding most of 50 and 28. It will also enhance business opportunities in Dulles area. Short haul shuttles in Dulles will enhance commerce in HOA based strip malls as well as the towns as well as reduce the need for automobiles during rush hour.

Matt Letourneau (R)

First, we must more aggressively pursue state funding opportunities. The entire Board should be involved in our efforts to obtain transportation funds. Redistricting will increase our clout in Richmond, so we must work with our new reps. to be at the top of the line for state funds. At the county level, we should establish a clear priority list and then explore all possibilities, including partnerships, bonds, and proffers for building those roads. I believe that the single most important road project in the County is the completion of Loudoun County Parkway. LCP is the missing link from the Dulles region to the rest of Loudoun for future Metro stations, StoneSpring Medical Center on Route 50, and future retail development in the Route 50 corridor such as the Arcola Center. I also place a high priority on Tall Cedars Parkway as a reliever route for Route 50, 606 (and a potential "back" entrance to Dulles), and completing Claiborne. I believe that we should not be closed minded about the State's Corridor of Statewide Significance designation for a north-south route from Prince William. Finally, I support the business community's efforts to find cost savings in the Metro plan.



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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?

Larry Roeder (D)

The current ratio is about 19%. I'd set the goal of 24.5% within four years as it currently is in Fairfax. This will require restraint on residential development and investments in infrastructure such as transportation and the internet, and tax incentives to attract firms that hire locally. We also need to avoid borrowing money, for fear of risking our AAA rating; that will require strict priority setting on investments

Matt Letourneau (R)

As I previously mentioned, Loudoun is far too reliant on residential property taxes--82% in 2012. During the last several years, the percentage of revenue from residential has actually been increasing--an alarming sign. In an ideal world, this number would be as close to 50/50 as possible. However, it is extremely unlikely that this will be achieved in the foreseeable future, given that the ratio has not been better than 79/21 since 2000. The first step is to stop the bleeding, and then focus on balancing the ratio incrementally from there. It has taken decades of effort by our neighbors in Fairfax County, but their economic development efforts have paid off over time and their property tax rates are significantly lower than Loudoun's--because they are much less reliant on residential tax revenue. As I stated, I believe Loudoun should create an Economic Development Authority to strengthen our efforts. Loudoun County government employees should be given a clear mission of job creation and economic development, but in order to do that the message must come from the top.



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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.

Larry Roeder (D)

We need to avoid transmission projects that damage the environment, and by doing so, harm tourism and the rationale for living in Loudoun. Development of a low emission infrastructure (such as electric vehicle charging stations at local shopping centers and business parks) within the county is an opportunity to seed future economic growth. In addition, both business and government need to do more energy audits of large structures in order to locate and reduce energy losses. A broader use of natural gas and electric vehicles would be excellent investment. Further, this will incentivize businesses that service such vehicles to locate to the county. Significant tax incentives for firms and residences that migrate zero or low emission sources, for example solar, will be good for the environment and reduce the county's traditional energy footprint

Matt Letourneau (R)

As someone who works on energy issues for the US Chamber of Commerce, and as the former Communications Director of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, this is a topic of considerable interest to me. I support the further development and utilization of all types of energy sources. Although we have seen a dip in demand due to the economic slowdown, the Energy Information Administration predicts a 21% increase in demand by 2035, and Loudoun will not be immune from this need. I fully support the development of renewable energy resources, but we should be cognizant of their limitations, particularly in terms of the need for additional transmission capacity to support them and their cost effectiveness. We must be careful not to place additional burdens on businesses by restricting access to some energy sources and mandating the use of others--government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. At the same time, I strongly support energy efficiency efforts through greater awareness and green building initiatives to improve energy consumption of new and existing structures. The best new source of energy we have is the one we currently waste.



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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”?

Larry Roeder (D)

The county's approach to gain public support for these concepts has been weak. My approach is different. Taking advantage of the fact that I will be a full-time Supervisor, in the future should such legislation be thought to be needed, I'd arrange for experts to discuss with all stakeholders the science and their associated impact on and costs to them.

The principle behind the CBPA and TMDL process is that governments at all levels must understand and protect the carrying capacity of their lands for current and future populations. For example, is the water useful and plentiful enough to sustain life? However, with conservation comes financial and social costs to which the public needs to agree or such regulations will not be followed. While the principle makes sense, the science and economics of implementation is not always well understood by the general public, which might not agree to a specific regulation that potentially inhibit their business, agricultural and recreational activities. Supervisors must therefore insure that the public is properly informed and can articulate their opinion after a neutral, science-based discussion. That didn't happen well enough before.

Matt Letourneau (R)

I opposed the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. In my view, the process was broken from the start and did not include a broad enough range of stakeholders from the very beginning. In particular, HOA's were brought into the process too late. The proposal itself was an example of the type of regulatory overreach that could seriously threaten our economic recovery. It would have proven to be overly burdensome for homeowners, many of whom were not even aware that their properties would be affected, as well as businesses. While I am frustrated that so many staff hours were spent on this process, I am pleased that the Board ultimately ended the discussion, though I suspect that had this not been an election year the outcome may have been different. With regard to TMDL, I am aware of concerns that the Chamber and others have expressed in terms of the impact that these regulations will have on economic development. I personally have not studied the issue closely yet, but in general I support reasonable compromises between protecting the environment and not stifling economic growth.



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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?

Larry Roeder (D)

We must reduce housing inventory growth, since it reduces property values in the current market. We can look to grow again later where needed for smart economic development. We must also attract businesses, especially those with the expectation of fresh jobs. One way is to eliminate taxes for the first year for firms with receipts over \$100,000, then in the second year, cut the license tax in half, thus allowing start-up businesses more money in the initial years. Better signage is also required to attract business from the highway to the malls.

We must convince Dulles airport to open the western side of 606, increase short haul busing to bolster commerce in the many HOA strip malls and use new Metro stations to foster a destination hotel and upper end commercial businesses on 606. That will increase convenience for residents and office workers.

Many small firms can't spare the time to go to Leesburg or Sterling to take full advantage of county services. Instead, I propose bringing those services to the "malls" for short seminar/discussions, saving business owners time and money. This will also more fully expose county staff to local issues and solutions.

Matt Letourneau (R)

Loudoun County must engage in a smart, long term strategy to manage the influx of jobs and residents. First and foremost, we must have an adequate infrastructure in place. This means completing our road network, identifying potential future areas of traffic growth and congestion, and taking steps well in advance to find solutions. Unfortunately, in the past, this has not always been the case--witness the 28/Waxpool interchange which is seeing far greater traffic than it can handle. I also believe it is vital to spend a great deal of time and effort planning the areas around our future Metro stations. These stations must have adequate vehicle access and parking. They could also serve as key zones for future job growth, so we must make wise land use decisions in these spots. Finally, the County could become more active in areas such as telecommuting or shared office space to relieve traffic congestion. Education is another component of future growth--with the rapid influx of students, many of our schools fill quickly and are now overcrowded. Ultimately, I believe that we will need to be more flexible in the size of schools to allow for future growth.



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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

Larry Roeder (D)

Volunteer and career firefighters, other emergency workers, health workers, teachers and county staff must be able to afford to live in Loudoun. We could offer to reduce or eliminate property taxes on a sliding income scale for these essential service employees. Further, competitive college scholarships for the children of county workers of all kinds would help these families. Lower income staff on farms and in commercial entities also need similar help.

We must also remember that currently about 1/3 of Loudoun mortgages are under water, a strong foreclosure indicator. I therefore propose a plan similar to Section 8 of the US Housing Act of 1937. If a house is vacated because it is foreclosed, instead of placing it on the market for a long period of time at a major cost to the bank, the county could place lower income county staff in those homes. The new residents would pay a lower rent for 5 years than the original mortgage rate and the County would exempt property taxes otherwise paid by the bank. The residents would be responsible for upkeep and in 5 years be given an option to buy or to continue renting, depending on the market.

Matt Letourneau (R)

I am concerned about the lack of affordable housing in Loudoun County. To an extent, I think this issue has a public safety component, since the most affordable housing in the County right now exists in areas that are more at risk for crime. We must ensure that all areas in the county are safe, which means maintaining appropriate funding levels for the Sheriff's Office and partnering with neighboring jurisdictions and the federal government on anti-gang initiatives. At the Board level, the first thing we can do is be mindful of the impact that high property taxes have on our workforce. Our tax rate is one of the highest in the South and high taxes are having an impact on families and their ability to afford housing. That will mean some hard decisions regarding programs that are not core government services. I support Chairman York's government reform commission which will identify potential areas of cost savings for the Board. I also support programs at the County level to provide tax relief to seniors whose home values have risen far in excess of their incomes--we must be sure not to price out those who have made Loudoun what it is today.



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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?

Larry Roeder (D)

It is clear that we need to broaden the revenue base without elevating tax rates for business or residences, in order to lower the impact on the developer community of creating adequate school, parks, etc. Unfortunately, due to excessive growth in housing in the past, our rapid growth of population will require many more facilities in the future in order to meet the will of the people. The proffer system does have benefits creating negotiation that lowers costs to the taxpayers. But I agree as well that the severe imbalance in revenue between residences and businesses must be rectified, with raising rates. We also need to slow the growth in housing.

One idea is to give the business community incentives, via tax breaks or reduction in license fees, to integrate their growth with the county. For example, a company could offer a certain number of quality internships to Loudoun students so they get 'real world' exposure; in exchange the county grants them a break on fees.

Matt Letourneau (R)

Our lack of business base makes this a particularly tough issue, since the revenue to fund school sites, parks and recreation must either come from residential taxes or from proffers. Now that the economy has slowed, there are fewer opportunities to fund these services through proffers since there are not as many projects moving forward. As rezoning applications come to the Board, we will need to identify the infrastructure needs associated with each project and negotiate fair proffers. After all, high property taxes, overcrowded schools, traffic congestion and the lack of parks for youth sports activities are also a disincentive for businesses to relocate to Loudoun, so we can't ignore the impact that adding residential units will have on the county if adequate proffers are not in place.



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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.

Larry Roeder (D)

By fostering critical thinking & reading comprehension, raising standards beyond standardized tests across all subjects, and grouping students heterogeneously so that struggling learners have an equal chance, our schools can be a national model. The traditional diversity of American schools needs to be strengthened to break down today's prevalent prejudices and prepare students for tomorrow's diverse corporate and scientific world. I am impressed with our system; but today's realities require pressing for even higher goals, migrating from paper books to electronic media and more use of white boards. We also must foster Academies, magnet and charter schools/programs, vocational programs, and more exposure to the corporate, political and scientific world by convincing Loudoun companies to invest in education either directly through donations or via internships or similar means. Beginning teacher salaries must be improved. Being the largest item in the county's budget, we need to smartly invest our funds (which argues against voucher programs which decrease school funding), and aggressively broaden the tax base so that property taxes are not increased, only revenue.

Matt Letourneau (R)

School overcrowding is a major issue which interferes with the ability to achieve proficiency. In my district, Freedom High School is so overcrowded that ninth graders must be bused to Mercer Middle School for instruction. This situation was created because the Board of Supervisors and the School Board could not agree on a school site and spent far too long resolving the issue. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors must work better with the School Board on these issues and cannot allow personal and political conflicts to impede the decision making process. Beyond that, I would like to see more public-private partnerships to provide curriculum enrichment in schools--there are some excellent programs that already exist on a limited basis in certain schools that could be expanded. There must be greater transparency in the LCPS budget so that parents, teachers and taxpayers can better understand exactly how their money is being spent. The School Department must become partners with the Board in cost saving efforts so that we can continue to provide high quality education and avoid cuts that affect classroom instruction.



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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.

Larry Roeder (D)

Ending health disparities in low-income and minority populations, as well as reducing unfair insurance practices will make the Affordable Care Act a tool to significantly reduce business costs by reducing sick days and layoffs. Their children will also have health coverage and there will be an end to lifetime and annual limits. Patients will have access to a broader range of preventative services without costs, which clearly will reduce losses to the company from hospital care. Small businesses in the past paid an average of 18% for insurance. The act creates a level playing field with larger employers. Very small businesses that are common in Loudoun HOAs will also qualify for tax credits. No plan is perfect of course, so as a Supervisor, I commit to working with workers, business leaders and our Richmond and Washington legislative teams to further improve the reforms developed by the Act.

Matt Letourneau (R)

Loudoun's access to health care will change with the opening of the StoneSpring Medical Center. StoneSpring will provide access to a wide range of medical services to tens of thousands of Route 50-area citizens who previously had to travel long distances to Fair Oaks or Leesburg. The opening of the hospital will create new opportunities for affordable health care services like screenings, etc, many of which are also generously provided by Inova. I look forward to working with both Inova and HCA on these efforts, as well as supporting the Loudoun Community Health Center's work. I share the Loudoun Chamber's concerns about the impact of the Affordable Care Act on health care costs. As this was a federal initiative, there is not a great deal that can be done by the Board to address these issues, but the County government itself should be on the forefront of innovative ideas such as wellness programs for its own employees.



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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?

Larry Roeder (D)

Members of the various chambers of commerce that care about Loudoun business growth have complained that Supervisors and staff don't attend enough meetings. I will attend all major meetings, either in person or via representative, as a fully engaged Supervisor. Further, I plan to visit with small businesses and business leaders every day to more fully appreciate their problems and develop solutions that I can raise with other stakeholders and present to the Board and staff.

Many small Dulles businesses can't spare the time to travel to Leesburg or Sterling to take advantage of county services, so I will bring staff to Dulles for focus discussions that I will also attend on signage, zoning and other topics small business owners care about. Many store owners I have talked with especially like this idea, and it's one reason I will be a full-time supervisor, so that I have the time to attend the meetings, foster practical solutions and build consensus with my fellow Supervisors and other stakeholders.

Matt Letourneau (R)

The Loudoun Chamber has been a force for reform in Loudoun County. The Chamber's efforts to curb excessive regulation and adopt more pro-business policies have made an impact on several key issues facing the Board. I hope to see the Chamber take an even more active role in the next term. Since I believe that economic development is essential to our long term future, I will partner with the business community in every way possible to create an atmosphere that is friendly to business and where businesses can thrive. Specifically, as part of my "Dulles Direct" public outreach initiative, I will be in regular contact with Route 50 corridor business owners and stakeholders who will help shape the future of my district. I will engage in constructive dialogue with project developers and partner with them on recruitment efforts to bring businesses and retailers to Loudoun County.



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

Larry Roeder (D)

Loudoun needs experienced leaders who easily reach across party lines to build practical solutions, who work well with citizens from a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and who have a background in economic development and emergency management. I have all of that. Over 35 years experience in economic development and emergency management in the US Army, the Department of State and the private sector, sometimes working with Presidents and world leaders, and a lifetime of living and/or working around the world has prepared me for the challenges that lie ahead.

Matt Letourneau (R)

My work at the US Chamber of Commerce--the world's largest business organization--has given me unique insight into the business community and what businesses need to be successful. In addition, the seven years I spent as an aide in the US Senate has made me intimately familiar with the legislative process and taught me the ability to work across party lines to achieve results. As a former HOA president, I am familiar with county government and have firsthand experience in the shortcomings of the current Board's efforts.

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

Larry Roeder (D)

The problems Dulles faces with job creation, spreading the tax base, fixing infrastructure and paying for services like schools, safety, health, etc. require knowledge and much time to build a consensus between citizens, businesses, other special interests and the government. My extensive executive experience contrasts sharply with my opponent and is especially significant because I will use it as a full-time Supervisor. We can no longer afford part time Supervisors in Dulles with day jobs that distract from fully serving the citizens. I will have no distractions.

Matt Letourneau (R)

I am a father of three young children and a commuter. I believe this perspective is badly needed on the Board of Supervisors, whose current makeup does not reflect the demographics of our county. I can relate to the challenges that the residents of my district are facing because my family is experiencing the same ones every day. In addition, I am a fiscal conservative who believes that government's role is to empower our citizens, and my legislative, private sector and HOA experience is the right blend to be a successful Supervisor.



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

Larry Roeder (D) www.loudoun4roeder.org

Matt Letourneau (R) Yes, more information is available at www.matt2011.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.