

Unopposed and Focusing on the Positive

by Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, May 2014

Ventura County, California is small enough that you get to see friends and neighbors at local stores, you can actually reach your local elected official by phone or email, and government is able to stay on top of crime and decay.

Our quality of life is tied to growing within our means and not overburdening our roads, our schools, our water supply, or our emergency responders. Leaving areas of natural open space, parks and farmland will be one of the greatest legacies we can pass down to future generations.

My work on the Board of Supervisors focuses on keeping our county one of the safest places in the nation, with tens of thousands of acres of protected natural open space nearby, and a County government with the highest bond rating possible due to our conservative fiscal management.

I've been fortunate to be able to use my training as a transportation planner to reduce traffic congestion. I helped get funds for the 101/23 interchange, opposed toll lanes, created a popular shuttle in Oak Park, approved plans that will end back-ups on the 118 at Somis Road, brought synchronized signals to Santa Rosa Valley and soon, a signal to Wendy Drive at Gerald Drive for pedestrian safety.

Yet, one of the most rewarding things I do is help people. Whether it's finding assistance for a veteran, getting effective treatment for someone with mental illness, resolving a longstanding neighborhood issue, keeping someone from becoming homeless, assisting the elderly, helping communities get their voices heard, or bringing trauma care countywide, I'm honored to be able to help people and work with many carrying individuals to better our community and care for those in need.

Members on our Board champion many issues. In the next four years of my term I will continue to champion open space preservation with the renewal of SOAR (Save Open space and Agricultural Resources) boundaries that stop urban sprawl. I will look to make our county better stewards of water in this time of drought as well as in times of plenty because we know water availability will be a continuing challenge.

I will work at expanding shuttle systems with small comfortable buses, short wait times, and easy access to encourage transit use. I'll work at creating safe bike paths that are off roads, and push for county maintenance of public sidewalks.

I will work to close gaps in the delivery of mental health services to the severely mentally ill and encourage programs to identify symptoms earlier to speed recovery.

I will work to strengthen our County's strong fiscal footing in the wake of a local pension reform initiative that can wipe out our reserves and impact government services.

Not having an opponent running against me in this election after recently experiencing million dollar attack campaigns, makes me particularly relieved and thankful to be able to focus on the positive! It also furthers my efforts to push for transparency in political campaigns and counter big money and dirty campaigning by upholding our County's campaign reform law, and supporting the reach of HonestyCounts.org, an organization I helped start that debunks dishonest campaign material so voters can know the truth.

As you can see there is much to do in our well-sized county of some 820,000 people on 1,845 square miles. My next four years will be dedicated to protecting our high quality of life by seeing that our government remains fiscally strong, effective and efficient, that our streets are safe, our natural resources are conserved, and there is help for those in need. I am excited to be given this significant opportunity to make a positive difference, and thankful to serve.