

**New Mexican Candidate Questionnaire**  
**Thomas Blog, Candidate for County Commission District 2**

April 30, 2004

Dear Ms. Grimm,

Here are my reply to you questionnaire. This is a critical time for the County, and a very critical election. Thank you for taking the time to write the questions and read the replies. Please feel free to contact me for additional details or clarification.

Sincerely,

Tom Blog, Candidate for County Commissioner, district 2.

1. Full Name, Birth date, place of birth:  
**Thomas Matthew Blog, April 15, 1957, Panama**
2. Name of the key people helping you with your campaign?  
**Lucille Cueva is my Treasurer. She owns an aircraft service business. Jerry Rightman, Harvey VanSicle and a few others provide help when requested.**
3. How are you paying for your campaign? Who are your major supporters?  
**I have limited donations to not more than \$200, or not more than \$100 if the donor does business with the County. As such, I expect to personally pay for most of my campaign. I have posted all my campaign donors and expenses to my website.**
4. Are you married? Any children?  
**Yes, to Anne Blog for 12 years. 8 year old twins, boy and girl, born at St. Vincent.**
5. Have you ever run for office or held an elected office before? Explain.  
**No. Never run before. Typically, I'm the one signing up to address the elected officials.**
6. What is your plan for solving the county's office space problem? (Do you favor building a new courthouse outside downtown?)  
**I have not seen any strong indications that the County has a pressing space problem. The 2002-2003 budget did not indicate a need in the Capital Improvement section. The 2003-2004 budget shows a new line item of \$45,000,000 for an Administrative Complex and \$4,000,000 for a new Public Work Facility, both unfunded. The County should first focus on water system(s) before using bonding capacity for new administrative buildings. Any such construction should be done outside downtown, perhaps off Airport Road or 599.**

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7. There is a public perception that the County Commission has been more accommodating to development than the City Council. Do you agree with that perception? Would you like to change it? If so, how?

**Yes, and the perception is founded on fact. It is far easier to get approval for projects in the county than in the city, the notification requirements are less, and with a few exceptions, neighborhood groups form based on a perceived threat rather than being an ongoing operation.**

**I would like to change this. Land use ordinances need to be strengthened and more closely follow the County Growth Management Plan. There must be a greater flow of information to the public: All agenda items should be displayed on a location map on the County website. The county should provide automatic email notification to residents of items of interest on agendas and minutes (similar to news push services provided by many news sources). Development can have many benefits to current residents, but only if openly disclosed and debated.**

**As the BCC faces these growth pressures, there must be more assurance that commissioners are acting in the public's best interest. To this goal, there should be greater disclosure required of commissioners, a real ethics and 'non compete' ordinance, and less use of executive sessions.**

8. Do you think growth should pay for itself? If so, how can the county accomplish this?

**Yes. Disclosed, debated and well planned growth is good for the entire community. Such growth provides many benefits, including property and gross receipts taxes. However, any growth entails a direct cost to existing citizens. That cost should be paid by the developer with fair impact fees. At least 75% of the collected impact fees should go directly to the budgets of the services impacted (sheriff, fire, roads, water, schools, etc.). Impact fees fail when they go to general funds – they become just another tax.**

9. What is your vision of a long-term water supply? How should the county pay for its part of the planned Rio Grande diversion project? Should private well-owners share in the cost, and how?

**My vision of a long term water supply includes actual conjunctive use of ground, surface and grey water. We need much greater cooperation in planning, policy and water systems between the City and the County – an elected regional water board and utility. On the consumption side, realistic pricing of water, conservation by ordinance and education.**

**The water supply/consumption issue must be addressed in tandem with land zoning that follows the key points and goals of the County Growth Management Plan.**

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**The County (and the city) are trying to pay for the RG diversion project without bonds (i.e. GRT State, Fed). This is to avoid taking to the voters the question of funding growth. This is shortsighted – from a policy side, both governments should plan and show that this would be a benefit to both existing and future residents.**

**No matter how it is funded (unless entirely by State or Fed), private well owners should share in the cost and benefits of a long term water supply.**

10. What would you do as commissioner to stop impairment on existing domestic wells in Santa Fe County?

**There is relatively little the Commission can do directly to stop or prevent impairment of existing wells – that power is vested with the State Engineer. However, the County can reduce the rate of impairment by building a water system and providing water to existing and new development. Also, as considered with Suarte del Sur, an impairment bond to protect adjacent wells could be required of the developer. See additional comments on #12**

**The County could minimize impairment by following its own land use ‘guidelines’ (lot size) in the Growth Management Plan. The County should also support the State Engineer’s goal to reduce the 3 acre feet of domestic well use to .25 acre feet per year (Over the last 9 years, my family of 4 has averaged .13 afy). The County can also be careful in its location of large production wells – see question #12.**

**In some areas another source of impairment is septic systems. To the extent possible, this could be addressed by lot size, lot splits and inspection. This is a lurking issue that needs to be addressed in conjunction with a water system.**

11. Would you have voted for the water-service agreement between Santa Fe County and Suerte del Sur LLC that was approved by the County Commission in December 2003, then reversed this month? Why or why not?

**No. I helped organize and plan with the group that opposed the water service agreement. It was bad policy: there was no public debate, the County was unable or unwilling to disclose its anticipated amount of water rights to be transferred to the well, the main paid public proponent was the former Utility Director that, as one of his last official acts prior to retirement, was to recommend approval of the sharing agreement, and there was little question that the location of such a large production well (or two) would impair existing nearby domestic wells. Finally, the developer was proposing a water budget of .5 acre feet a lot – twice the county’s own recommendation.**

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12. The County Commission has directed staff to study locations for possible wells that would produce water for the county utility system. Do you agree with that policy? Why or why not?

**I agree, and it should have been done 10 years ago when the wheeling agreement gave the County some breathing room (and water).**

**However, per real conjunctive use, surface water via the RG diversion should be a first priority. A joint regional water system (N. County & City) would also allow for better area wide planning and development. Is the existing city / county 'system' (mostly city) limited by capacity or water rights?**

**If additional ground water wells are needed (most likely), the County should locate them a reasonable 'hydrological' distance away from current domestic well users. This might best be on Federal or State land. These wells may have a longer development time because of required environmental studies, and a higher construction and operating cost as a function of distance.**

**If a County production well must be located near existing domestic well users, provisions (and costs) for connecting them should be planned.**

13. Have you ever been arrested? Explain.

**I've never been arrested. I've never been indicted or targeted.**

14. Are you a party in any current litigation? Explain.

**I have never been a party to any lawsuit.**

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