

Northern Lakes Fire Protection District Commissioner Sub District 3

| | Bill Deruyter | Stewart J. Kuespert |
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| 1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position? | My name is Bill Deruyter and I am running for the Sub District 3 Fire Commissioner position at the Northern Lakes Fire Protection District. I have served my community through my career and many venues. As I reach the end of my career, I am looking to see where I can use my experience to continue to serve my community. This opportunity presented itself and it seems to be a natural fit. Through my heavy involvement on State boards and associations, I know many of the challenges and obstacles the District faces and will face in the future. | Stewart Kuespert Northern Lakes Fire Commissioner Sub-district 3 I am running for this position because I feel like my business experience and understanding of the impact of fire protection and it's impact on property owners provide a unique perspective for this role. |
| 2. How can your fire district be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas. | The fire district will have many challenges in the future. Growth and funding being the top challenges. With rapid growth and limited funding, we face both a challenge and an opportunity. We need strategic planning for growth, community engagement, sustainable funding solutions, workforce development and accountability. Ultimately, my goal is to ensure that our fire district remains proactive, resilient, and deeply connected to the community it protects. | Fiscally responsible oversight of growth and development of the Northern Lakes District to not only the success of the district but also for the potential financial burden on the residents and property owners in the district. The mismanagement of the original Garwood fire house project is something that we cannot allow to happen again, I plan to be sure that the new project is well thought out to not only keep costs down, but have maximum impact for residents and see the project through to completion. I also believe that transparency and communication is crucial between the taxpayers of the district and the fire district, I would like to see the district be more proactive in how they communicate with the public in regard to what their challenges are and what is being done to overcome these challenges. |
| 3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho? | Growth is inevitable but safety must be non-negotiable. We have to be engaged with the community and include fire service input in all development planning. Infrastructure is being outpaced. We need to push for funding mechanisms that ensure the fire service grows with the community without overburdening taxpayers. | My view on the rapid growth of our area is that outsiders can now see what it is that we as residents love about our area and want to take part in it. My hope is that the people coming in can keep in mind why they left the area they came from and adapt to our area rather than bringing the same failed ideas that changed where they came from. |
| 4. As development continues the fire districts resources are stretched. What are your suggestions on how to fund the fire district to meet its additional obligations? | Public and private partnerships need to be explored. For equipment, land, or funding for special projects. Advocacy for legislative reform. Transparency, community input, accountability and building trust by showing measurable improvements in service delivery. Grants for equipment, training and staffing. Staffing is the big issue. Impact fees can cover new stations and equipment but the staffing of those resources must be funded yearly. Community involvement is key. What does the community want from its fire district? How are we going to get there? | I would like to see impact fees more aggressively fund the growth of our fire districts as developments continue to put strains on our resources. |

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| 5. Do you believe there should be a long-range plan for projected growth to ensure financial resources are able to meet demand? If so, what would it look like? | Yes. That all starts with strategic planning. There is a process for this and it includes: Strategic planning for growth, sustainable funding solutions, community engagement and education, workforce development, accountability and innovation. | Yes, I believe that growth without long-range planning is reckless and should be avoided at all costs. I also believe that as we look to the future, we need to also include the challenges for the property insurance market that will continue to tighten in this future planning. While a large part of this planning should be around fiscal responsibility and stewardship for resources themselves, we also must include these other potential impacts while looking at the future of our area. |
| 6. What are your suggestions to balance the budget for your fire district? | Prioritize spending based on the mission of the district and community needs. Implement multi-year financial planning. Control personnel costs without sacrificing service. Monitor small expenditures closely. Use data to justify budget requests. Maintain a realistic reserve fund. Advocate for Legislative support. Engage the community. | Without having anything more than the publicly available information on the Northern Lakes budget it would be irresponsible to make specific suggestions in regard to balancing the budget. This being said, I plan to dig into the budget as there are definitely some line items in what is publicly available that seem to be out of line. I plan to dig into these things if elected and see where changes can be made to both be sure that our district is funded to be able to meet it's responsibilities to the fullest but also to do so with budgetary constraints. |
| 7. Should there be any changes to the role that Fire Districts have in the planning and authorization of new developments? | Yes. Wildland-urban interface risks are increasing. The fire district should be a part of the planning process through integration of fire risk assessments into zoning and subdivision regulations. | I believe that the impact that new development has on fire districts should most definitely be considered more than they are currently. |
| 8. Do you believe access to city managed water should be increased to rural communities? Why or why not? | Yes. Reliable water access is critical for fire suppression. Municipal water systems offer consistent pressure and hydrant access which can improve response effectiveness and reduce risk to life and property. Challenges are cost and infrastructure. We need a balanced approach to make this happen. | City managed water should be at the discretion of the city and rural communities should be developed with plans for their own water supply, which should include water supply for fire suppression. |
| 9. In your opinion, are there areas can be improved with forest management in your fire district? | Yes. Expand hazardous fuels reduction projects. Strengthen interagency collaboration. Improve community engagement and education. | It is my opinion that fire safe and defensible space education programs and information should utilized and dispersed more readily to property owners and residents in our area. |
| 10. What should be the role of the fire district be in working with local governing authorities (county commissioners, city planners, etc.) and why? | Public safety must be central to development decisions. We need proactive involvement in planning which is through collaboration. Fire districts enhance emergency management planning through collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management. Community involvement builds trust and support. | Commissioners and city planners should be consulting with fire districts more closely to in regard to how the growth that new developments directly affect the fire districts. |

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| 11. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position? | <p>I have been involved in the fire service since 1990. I started as a volunteer and worked my way up to a paid position in 1997. I am currently the Deputy Chief of Training at my current department. I have served and continue to serve on many boards and sit in leadership roles in many associations. For a detailed background, please visit my Facebook page Bill Deruyter for Northern Lakes Fire Commissioner. Please email questions to nlfpdcommish2025@yahoo.com</p> <p>Thank you for the consideration!</p> | <p>With 25 years in the insurance industry, I bring a fresh perspective and understanding on the impact that fire protection and wildfire risk pose to the residents of the district. In my time on the Board of Directors of Avondale Golf Course, I oversaw the transformation of an organization that was facing decrepit machinery, a dwindling membership and spending more money than they were bringing in, to an organization that had a full membership with waitlist to join, balanced the budget, paid off lingering debt and built a seven figure savings for future capital improvements.</p> |