

Bonner County Clerk

Roger Rudd

1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	My name is Roger Rudd. I'm a retired Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel with 30 years of service, and I'm running for Bonner County Clerk. I'm running because the outgoing Clerk, Mike Rosedale, personally recruited me for this race. He's seen enough of my background to trust me with the office he's spent years building, and that meant a lot. When I looked at what the Clerk actually does elections, court administration, financial auditing, property recording, and board support I saw a direct match with everything I've spent my career doing: leading large organizations, managing multimillion dollar budgets, maintaining precise records, and ensuring compliance with law and policy under pressure. This isn't a protest run or a steppingstone. It's a leadership and management job, and I've been a leader and a manager my entire adult life. Bonner County deserves someone who has been responsible, not just involved and that's exactly what I bring.
2. How could the Clerk's office be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	The Clerk's office under Mike Rosedale has been well run, and I intend to build on that foundation. That said, every organization has room to improve. My top priorities: 1. Transparency in financials. As ex-officio Auditor, I will make budget and expenditure information more accessible and understandable to the average Bonner County resident, not just those who already know how to navigate government websites. 2. Continuous staff development. A 40-person office is only as good as its people. I will invest in cross-training deputies across all five functional areas, so the office is resilient with no single point of failure, no gaps in service when someone is out. 3. Election process communication. Voter confidence is earned, not assumed. I will improve how the office communicates with the public before, during, and after each election with plain language explanations of how ballots are processed, results certified, and audits conducted. An informed public is a confident public.
3. Election integrity has become a serious concern for voters. How will you preserve election integrity to the highest level?	Election integrity is a statutory responsibility. As Chief Elections Officer, the Clerk is solely accountable for how Bonner County conducts its elections. My approach rests on three pillars: 1. Follow the law. Execute Idaho election law precisely and impartially no improvising, no outside pressure, no shortcuts. Every procedure and certification will comply with Idaho Code Title 34 and federal requirements. 2. Apply best practices. The law is the floor, not the ceiling. Rigorous chain-of-custody, post-election audits, accurate voter rolls, and fully documented processes that can withstand public scrutiny. 3. High-caliber volunteers. I will recruit capable, trained, civic-minded Bonner County residents as poll workers, people who understand they are guardians of the process, not just filling a seat. Voter confidence is earned through consistent, transparent, lawful execution, every election and every time.
4. As AI continues to advance in capabilities and is more frequently being used by hackers, what would you do to protect election infrastructure against fraud?	The Clerk is not an IT or cybersecurity expert, and I won't pretend otherwise. I will ensure the office leverages every available resource, county IT, the Idaho Secretary of State's office, and federal partners like CISA who are trained and resourced to protect election infrastructure. The expertise exists; the Clerk's job is to make sure it is engaged and applied. What I bring is a military background in planning and risk management. I will apply that discipline by conducting tabletop exercises before each election cycle primary, general, and special stress-testing our procedures, exposing vulnerabilities, and closing gaps before they become failures. AI-assisted attacks are real and evolving, but the fundamentals haven't changed: know your vulnerabilities, train your people, test your systems, and have a plan when something goes wrong. That is exactly what I intend to do.

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5. Our county is growing very rapidly, where do you see we need to improve election infrastructure and what are your suggestions?	Rapid growth means more voters, more ballots, and more demand on every aspect of elections. Infrastructure must keep pace. Polling locations. Evaluate whether current locations are adequate in number and accessibility as population spreads across the county. Voter roll maintenance. Growth brings new registrations and address changes. Rigorous, continuous maintenance is essential to accuracy and public confidence. Poll worker pipeline. More voters means more volunteers needed. I will build a recruitment and training program to ensure we always have capable, prepared poll workers ready. Growth is manageable but only with proactive planning. That is exactly what I intend to do.
6. What is your preference: paper ballots or electronic ballots? Why do you believe this method is best?	Bonner County uses paper ballots tabulated electronically, and I believe this is the right approach. Paper ballots provide a tangible, verifiable record that voters can trust. Electronic tabulation delivers speed and accuracy. Together they offer the best of both: efficiency without sacrificing transparency. Critically, paper ballots are retained for a legally specified period, preserving the ability to conduct a physical audit at any time. That auditability is essential to public confidence. If questions arise, the paper is there. I would maintain this system and ensure it continues to be administered with the rigor and transparency Bonner County voters deserve.
7. Do you support or oppose requirements for developers to pay for community infrastructure?	This question falls outside the statutory roles of the Bonner County Clerk. The Clerk's office does not set development policy or infrastructure requirements; those decisions rest with the Board of County Commissioners and other appropriate authorities. On a personal note: my answer is it depends. Large developments place real demands on existing roads, services, and support systems, and it is reasonable to expect developers to help shoulder that burden. Smaller developments inside already served areas warrant a different calculus. Context matters, and any decision should be made thoughtfully with the community's best interests in mind.
8. In your opinion, what does the Clerk provide in terms of checks and balances in regard to the other elected officials?	The Clerk serves in the executive branch of county government and plays a direct role in fiscal checks and balances. As ex-officio County Auditor, the Clerk monitors every department's compliance with the BOCC-approved budget by tracking revenues, expenditures, fees, petty cash, and grants to ensure spending stays within authorized limits. This means no department, regardless of who leads it, operates without financial oversight from the Clerk's office. That independence is by design, and it protects taxpayers and ensures accountability across all of county government.
9. How would you utilize the budget that you manage while being fiscally responsible?	The Clerk's office budget exists to serve Bonner County residents, and every dollar should deliver maximum return on investment. Personnel is typically the largest expense in a service organization, and rightly so because the quality and work ethic of our staff directly determines the quality of service the public receives. I will invest in recruiting, retaining, and developing good people while holding the office to high performance standards. Beyond personnel, I will scrutinize every expenditure, eliminate waste, and ensure spending aligns with the office's core statutory responsibilities. Fiscal responsibility is good policy and an obligation to the taxpayers who fund this office.

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10. What is your view on eliminating the property tax in favor of a higher sales tax?	This question falls outside the statutory role of the Bonner County Clerk, whose office administers the budget process but does not set tax policy that authority rests with the Legislature and the BOCC. On a personal note: I believe property taxes should be eliminated. Requiring citizens to make annual payments to the government on property they already own with after-tax dollars is fundamentally at odds with true private ownership. It amounts to paying rent to the government indefinitely, and that conflicts with the basic American right to pursue happiness and build lasting wealth.
11. As the county's population continues to grow, do you believe the Clerk's office currently has sufficient funds to operate efficiently?	This question is best answered by outgoing Clerk Mike Rosedale, who has firsthand knowledge of the office's current budget, staffing levels, and operational demands. I would not want to speculate on sufficiency without that ground-level understanding. What I can commit to is this: upon taking office I will conduct a thorough assessment of resources versus responsibilities, and if gaps exist, I will make the case to the BOCC with data and transparency.
12. Is there anything in your personal, business, or career life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this county?	No. I have no personal, business, or career conflicts of interest that would impair my ability to serve the people of Bonner County with full integrity and impartiality.
13. What is your background and why do you believe it qualifies you for this position?	I bring 30 years of Marine Corps experience in leadership, management, training, staff development, and complex administration. I have held a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearance, a rigorous vetting process that reflects the same standard of integrity and trustworthiness the Clerk's office demands. Throughout my career I managed multimillion-dollar budgets, oversaw large and diverse teams, and created, tracked, and indexed critical documents under strict compliance requirements. I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, the highest rank available on my career path having led organizations far larger and more complex than the Clerk's office. The five statutory roles of the Clerk require precision, accountability, and steady leadership. That is exactly what I have delivered my entire career.