

Kootenai County Treasurer

Carlos Zamora

1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	My name is Carlos Zamora, and I am running for Kootenai County Treasurer. After 40 years of experience in the financial industry and capital markets, I want to put that expertise to work for the residents of Kootenai County. I have developed a deep understanding of financial management, investments, and fiscal responsibility- skills that are directly applicable to the Treasurer's office. Kootenai County is one of the fastest growing counties in Idaho and the residents deserve a Treasurer with proven financial expertise who can manage public funds strategically, maximize returns on county investments, and ensure every tax dollar is handled with transparency and security. I am ready to bring my decades of experience in capital markets to strengthen the county's financial position and make the Treasurer's office more efficient and accountable for every resident of Kootenai County.
2. How could the Treasurer's office be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	1. Modernize Digital Payment & Online Services Expand online payment options for property taxes, fees, and other obligations. This includes mobile friendly portals, automated payment reminders, and e-statements. Residents will still be able to visit in person or mail checks to make payments, but reducing that friction will save time for both the public and staff. 2. Increase Financial Transparency & Public Reporting Publish easy to understand dashboards showing the county's financial position, investment portfolio performance, and budget in real time. When residents can see how their tax dollars are managed, it builds public trust and accountability in the office. 3. Strengthen Investment & Cash Flow Management Implement more sophisticated cash flow forecasting tools to ensure the county earns the best return on idle funds while maintaining liquidity. Small improvements in yield on public funds can generate significant additional revenue for the county without raising taxes.
3. As the county treasurer who has the responsibility to invest idle funds, what should the investment strategy be for the public's money?	As County Treasurer, my investment strategy for idle public funds would be guided by three core principles: Safety, Liquidity and Yield in that order. Safety First. The public's money must be protected above all else. I would ensure all investments are made in high quality, low risk instruments such as U.S. Treasury securities, government agency bonds, and fully collateralized deposits. Liquidity Second. The county has ongoing financial obligations, so funds must be accessible when needed. I would implement a cash flow forecasting model to project when funds are needed allowing us to ladder investments appropriately and avoid any liquidity issues. Yield Third. Once safety and liquidity are assured, I would work to maximize returns on idle funds within those parameters. With my investment experience, even modest improvements in yield can generate significant additional revenue for the county without raising taxes. These strategies are key to our investment portfolio.

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4. What improvements can be made for greater transparency in the Treasurer's office to the public?	1. Launch a Real Time Online Financial Dashboard I would create a user friendly public dashboard on the county website showing the county's financial position, investment portfolio performance, cash balances, and tax collection status updated regularly. 2. Publish a Clear Investment Policy I would publish a straightforward and easy to understand investment policy document outlining exactly how idle public funds are invested, what instruments are used, and what safeguards are in place. 3. Regular Public Financial Reports I would issue quarterly financial reports in plain language (not just accounting jargon) so that every resident, regardless of financial background, can understand the county's fiscal health and how funds are being managed. 4. Open Communication Channels I would establish direct communication channels such as a dedicated email, phone line, and community town halls where residents can ask questions and receive timely responses from the Treasurer's office.
5. If elected, who do you see yourself accountable to and why?	If elected, I see myself accountable first and foremost to the residents of Kootenai County. They are the taxpayers whose hard earned money I would be entrusted to manage. They deserve a Treasurer who operates with complete integrity, transparency, and professionalism every single day. Beyond the residents, I also see myself accountable to the County Commissioners who oversee the financial operations of the county and rely on the Treasurer's office to provide accurate, timely, and reliable financial information to make sound governing decisions. I am also accountable to future generations of Kootenai County residents. The financial decisions made today, how we invest, how we manage cash flow, and how we steward public funds will have a lasting impact on the county's fiscal health for years to come. That term- responsibility weighs heavily on me and will guide every decision I make.
6. What should the proper balance of government revenue sources be when considering income taxes, property taxes and sales taxes?	Property taxes are Idaho's primary county revenue source, funding essential services needed by our residents. However, they can burden fixed income residents and homeowners, especially amid Kootenai County's rapidly rising property values. I would advocate for responsible property tax management that protects long-term residents while maintaining essential services like law enforcement, public health services, and infrastructure needs. Sales taxes are a key revenue source that distributes the tax burden across a wide population including visitors and tourists who use county services. Kootenai County's growing tourism and retail economy makes sales tax a reliable and fair revenue contributor. Income Taxes are primarily a state and federal revenue tool. They represent the most progressive form of taxation- those who earn more, contribute more. A well structured income tax system at the state level can relieve pressure on property and sales taxes at the local level.

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7. Do you support or oppose requirements for developers to pay for community infrastructure?	I support a fair and structured approach to developer contributions for community infrastructure. Growth should pay for growth. When developers build new neighborhoods, commercial centers, or industrial parks, they create increased demand on existing infrastructure — roads, water systems, sewer lines, schools, and public safety services. It is only fair that developers contribute to the cost of expanding that infrastructure rather than placing the entire burden on existing taxpayers. I support the use of impact fees and development agreements as structured, transparent tools to ensure developers contribute their fair share toward community infrastructure. These mechanisms are well established across Idaho and provide a clear, predictable framework for both developers and the county. I support requirements for developers to contribute to community infrastructure costs. These costs have to be mutually shared by all for the county to grow at a sustainable level.
8. How would you utilize the budget that you manage while being fiscally responsible?	My first step would be to conduct a thorough review of the Treasurer's office budget examining every line item, every expenditure, and every contract. I want to understand exactly where every dollar is going before making any decisions. This review would identify areas of inefficiency, redundancy, or unnecessary spending that can be eliminated or reduced without impacting service quality. Prioritize Core Services. Every budget decision I make will prioritize the core functions of the office accurate tax collection, responsible investment of public funds, and timely financial reporting. Invest in Technology. I would strategically invest in modern technology and digital tools that improve efficiency and reduce long-term operational costs. Staff Development. A well trained, motivated team is one of the most valuable assets of any office. I would invest in staff training and professional development to ensure the team operates at the highest level of competence and efficiency.
9. Do you believe the six Row Officers (assessor, sheriff, prosecuting attorney, treasurer, coroner, and clerk) should be appointed or stay elected? Why or why not?	The most important reason to keep Row Officers elected is direct accountability to the public. When residents have the power to vote for their Assessor, Sheriff, Prosecuting Attorney, Treasurer, Coroner, and Clerk, those officials answer directly to the community they serve and not to an appointing authority or political patron. That direct line of accountability is the cornerstone of local democracy and should be preserved.

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10. 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?	I just retired from my current position so there is nothing holding me back from serving the residents of Kootenai County to the best of my abilities.
11. What is your background and why do you believe it qualifies you for this position?	I have developed deep expertise in investment management, capital markets, cash flow analysis, risk management, and financial reporting. These are skills required to effectively manage the Treasurer's office. Investing idle public funds responsibly ensures accurate and timely financial reporting for the county. My experience in capital markets gives me an advantage when it comes to the investment responsibilities of the Treasurer's office. I understand how financial markets work, how to evaluate investment instruments, how to manage risk, and how to build a diversified portfolio that balances safety, liquidity, and yield. These are not skills that can be learned on the job. They are developed over decades of real world experience. Throughout my career I have managed significant financial resources with discipline, precision, and accountability. I know the importance of maintaining strict financial controls, operating within budget, and making sound decisions under pressure.