

JOHN GORENA – 03-25-2009, Dallas Morning News

For each of the following, please limit your response to 1000 characters.

Q: Candidate for (please include place or district, if applicable):

A: Lewisville City Council Place 4. This is a special election for the last year of the three year term. If I am elected, I will need to run next year for the full three year term.

Q: Length of residency in the city:

A: Since 1987 – 22 years

Q: Length of residency in your current council district:

A: Since 1987 – 22 years , Lewisville City Council members are elected City wide. There are no districts.

Q: Occupation/main source of income:

A: Current: My occupation is an IT Consultant, Owner of JMG Enterprises: Server & PC Networking, Domain Hosting Services, Web Design Services. In 1982, I had started a part-time computer repair business while working for Texas Instruments and called it JMG Enterprises. It has grown and it began to demand my time full-time in 2000. It has been a very successful business and continues to grow.

Previous employment: I was employed with Texas Instruments (1982 to 1993). After volunteering as a firefighter (1987 to 1993), I was led to follow my ambition of being a Firefighter Paramedic for the City of Coppell (1993 to 2000). I also worked part-time in Carrollton on the Fire Chief's staff in Emergency Management (1996 to 1999) which started as an intern but became a part-time employee for 2 more years.

Q: Current civic involvement/highlights:

A: I regularly attend the City Council Meetings and workshop sessions (since April 2007), Precinct chair #318, Lewisville Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association, various volunteer work in the Community. I also created and maintain the Sounds Of Lewisville website to have a list of free events in the area for residents, Board member for Citizens for Immigration reform. Member of The Lewisville Chamber of Commerce (since 2000). Though the City Council is not a partisan position I am an active member of the following in Lewisville: Pachyderm Club, Republican Men's Club, Lewisville Area republican club, and the Denton County Republican Assembly.

Q: Previous civic involvement/accomplishments:

A: I have had the honor of helping my community in several ways including: church activities, volunteering for the Lewisville Volunteer Fire Department (1987 to 1993), the Boy Scouts, along with my son, John, from (1989 to 2006), as well as, lending a hand with many of the City's events such as the Christmas Stroll, Summer Blast, Western Days, on the City's Transportation Board (2007 to 2008), I worked at voting locations and served as an Election judge in the last few elections, a sponsor of The Sounds of Lewisville, member of Old Town Business Association.

Q: Previous public offices sought/held:

A: In 2008, I ran for City Council against the incumbent and received 38% of the vote.

Q: How much funding have you raised for your campaign?

A: As of this Writing, about \$2050.

Q: Who are your top three contributors?

A: Besides myself, The Fitzgerald's of Lewisville, and DeMarzo's of Flower Mound. Funds are from individuals who care about the issues that I believe in.

Q: Have you ever been arrested or involved in any criminal proceedings or civil suits? Please explain:

A: No.

Q: Why are you running for this office, and why should voters consider you the most qualified candidate? What in your personal or professional background most prepares you to serve in this office?

A: As a citizen of Lewisville, I care very much for this city as all the candidates do. I am running for office because I think the City needs to make decisions differently than they have in the past. I have been regularly attending City Council meetings and open work shop meetings since April 2007. I became active with the issues of the city when the city council voted to build a day laborer site (which has been stopped). I think that decision was the wrong route to take. Sometimes enough is enough. As a council member, I never would have made that decision for many reasons. I would rather have pushed for enforcement.

As a Christian, an American citizen, a person of Hispanic heritage, I am affected like other Americans about the issues caused by illegal immigration. As a business owner, I follow the rules and run my business as a law abiding citizen. It is unfair for any business (or individuals) to hire illegal aliens to cheat the system by not paying the employee taxes, a fair wage, etc... I have a degree in Emergency Administration and Planning and have 15 Hours of Public Administration classes at the graduate level. I understand how a City works from the inside. For many years, I have been involved with Lewisville and other cities in the area.

Q: What are the key differences between you and your opponent(s) that make you the best choice?

A: I have not spoken to them or had time to review their websites much. I could not really discern what their issues were. Readers will have to compare the answers from the other candidates and draw their own conclusions. All the issues are important and there are many issues that I stand for, here are a few (more in depth answers can be found on my website at www.gorena.org):

- Continuing to provide the best police and fire protection.
- Traffic and mobilization issues
- Addressing the problems caused by illegal immigration.
- Maintaining or reducing our property tax rate.
- Neighborhood and retail revitalization.
- Economic stability and growth (capitalism works best on a fair playing field).

Q: Do you favor or oppose a regional rail system, and if you favor it, what steps would you take to make it happen? Do you favor or oppose local option elections to raise new transportation revenue? Why or why not?

A: I favor a seamless rail system. The plans for the area are mostly finalized. I agree with the plans that I have seen. It will connect the cities from Denton to Lewisville with the rest of the Metroplex. This will benefit commuters greatly. When the I35 expansion is completed with the rail system, I think the improvement will be a good one. I do not favor local option elections to revenue as this is just another tax. I also do not think toll roads should be used to pay for these ventures either. I think toll roads should be used only to pay for the road that is being tolled and then stop taking tolls once the funds have been achieved to pay for the road. Every year citizens pay the county for vehicle registration which is supposed to be used for maintaining roads. The new Rail system will be used by those traveling between Dallas and Denton for school and business. The rail system should be self supporting with fees paid for by those using the system.

Q: Identify other issues where you think your city and North Texas could benefit from greater regional cooperation. What would you do to encourage regional partnerships?

A: For the most part, I think the regional relationship is very good. Police and Fire have mutual aid agreements to assist when needed. Though it would be nice for every department to have every specialty mastered, most departments have taken the responsibility to specialize in a few areas so that they can assist when needed. Some of these specialties are dive teams, trench rescue, etc... We are lucky to have The University of North Texas in our County with one of the best

Emergency Administration departments in the Country. They have recently completed an Emergency Operations Center to help with Regional Exercises and plans. Regional cooperation is already a priority in this region.

Q: What demographic changes are happening in your city that the rest of the region should know more about? How should your city deal with those changes?

A: With the State of Oklahoma and Arizona passing laws to address illegal immigration, they are leaving those states and coming to Texas. We see this clearly in Lewisville too. I perceive Lewisville to be like Farmers Branch and Irving was about 7 years ago. We know from recent events what issues they are facing with illegal aliens in their community. Using 2008 figures, Lewisville has about 27% reported rental properties which is about 10 times more than Flower Mound (2.3%) and Highland Village (3.5%). Also, our mean rent is \$775 which is about half of the cities mentioned. If a certain population is going to fit as many people as they can in a single dwelling, they usually do not go for the higher rental areas. We must find ways to control the number of people living in a single family dwelling or apartments. I think our schools are feeling most of the problem at this time. If we enforce ordinances and laws, this should help this area.

Q: Because of the economy, many North Texas cities are facing budget shortfalls, with the hard budgeting work still ahead. How would you advise making up the difference: a property tax increase, cuts to city services or a combination?

A: The last thing I want to do is raise property taxes. Lewisville is doing very well on cutting back and redirecting funds when needed. Departments are very efficient from what I can see. However, there are things that I want the City Council to do to save money. For Example, having the Council budget retreat at a City owned building instead of having it at the Fort Worth Worthington Hotel. We will have to continue cutting back when we find a place to do so. Our City's services are essential.

Q: If the city faces difficult service cuts in this budget cycle, please list the three areas, in order, you consider to be off-limits for cuts and the three areas where you would start cutting.

A: As previously stated, Lewisville is efficient. All areas should continue to strive for more efficiency. Police, Fire, and Water services are absolutely essential. But in tough times, we may need to cut back in the areas like the festivals. If we cannot afford to pay for the festivals, then we should not have them. We can also postpone projects paid for by the general fund that are not essential. I do not think cutting jobs is the answer as the City doesn't hire unnecessarily. However, non critical jobs may be able to stay unfilled when employees leave.

Q: What strategies should your city pursue to ensure future water supplies?

A: Lewisville drinking water comes from production at our Water Treatment Plant and purchased water from the City of Dallas. By state law, the Upper Trinity Regional Water District (UTRWD) must plan 50 years ahead to assure an adequate water supply for its Members and Customers. Lewisville is also following independent water supply strategies, partnering and coordinating with the District as appropriate to assure prudent and effective results. We are planning to avoid a shortfall by recognizing that it takes from 20 to 35 years to develop a new resource of surface water like a new reservoir. Existing water supplies are projected to be adequate for approximately 25 years. The UTRWD is acting both diligently and with vision to assure adequate supplies of safe water for Members and Customers by the time of future need. Lewisville is expanding to the east and structure is being planned for annexations. There is a continuing effort to improve water distribution and water quality. The treatment plant also treats reclaimed water from storm and sewer drainage systems. Technology is used when feasible and cost effective.

Q: What would you do to improve the quality of life in your city? How would you pay for it?

A: To improve the quality of life in Lewisville, we have to address the things that are causing the problems. These include crime, living conditions, public services, population related ordinances, etc... Many of these problems can be addressed by enforcing ordinances and laws. Some of our schools are becoming overcrowded. The question is really why are they becoming over crowded in an older neighborhood? It's not really because of new construction. Could it be that 20 people are living in many single family dwellings? Could LISD change the areas that each school serves to spread out the school population? Enforcement of our ordinances and laws is a priority.

Q: Some cities have taken an aggressive stance against illegal immigration. What changes in local laws, if any, should your city adopt to address this issue?

A: Aggressive? How about just enforcing the current laws that are on the books now? Ignoring the problem is allowing it to get worse. Every elected position and law enforcement agency in Texas takes the same basic oath that usually contains "... preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and Laws of the United States and of this State and the Charter and Ordinances of this city...". We must overcome the obstacles created by the Pro-Illegal Alien racial groups and get the 287g training that will allow local law enforcement to enforce the law. There are groups that want to change this Country for the worse not better. Lewisville does not need to create more laws or ordinances at this time. Other cities are leading the fight. For Example, Farmer's Branch is trying to get their rental property problem cleaned up by requiring legal status to rent, etc... They are confident that it will be upheld in the Supreme Court once the delays are expired – it will take a few years. Once upheld, I am sure that many cities will adopt the same ordinance. Basically, if you can't work here illegally, why should you be allowed to live here illegally? Illegal is illegal.

Q: Development challenges vary from city to city. Where does attracting residential and/or commercial development to your city rank on your list of priorities? How would you evaluate the job your city has done to date in attracting such development?

A: This is a very high priority. The City has done well in attracting development. Lewisville is getting closer to a point where most of the city is built up. While we still do have some room to build up new areas, we should start focusing on redeveloping older areas. Historic Downtown area was a good start for revitalization. Lewisville has a great location in the Metroplex and is a great place to invest. Those investing in new building construction usually do not like to build in an area with older deteriorating areas. Redevelopment of older areas is a very important to attract new development. What is needed is the right type of development. Some have been content in getting any type of business – a position that I do not agree. The type of business that attracts illegal aliens or promotes non-desirable affects on the community is something we need to discourage. This is one complaint that I hear about the most.

Q: What issue divides your city the most, and what would you do to make your city less divided?

A: This issue depends where you live in Lewisville. On the East side which is also known as the older part of town have different priorities than the west side of town. For example, the number one complaint that I hear from those on the east side is about the illegal alien problem which is also related to some of their other concerns like: how the Schools are mostly non-English, increased crime, over crowding, many cars parked in the streets, etc... Some of the businesses are changing to non-English. Many residents are having to drive to the other side of town to do shopping. Several residents have told me that they want their street widened and to have curbs, sewage backup and overflow problems in the street, etc..

On the west side, I am hearing that businesses are starting to change and businesses are leaving because of the type of businesses that are coming in. I am hearing more and more that people are leaving or have left Lewisville so that their kids will go to Flower Mound High School instead of Lewisville high School. It all seems to come back to demographics.

Q: What is an uncomfortable truth about your city that your constituents need to confront?

A: There are several things that citizens of Lewisville need to keep in mind and be prepared. Lewisville is about to have a large amount of disruption along the I35 corridor with the expansion. This will take years to complete. It is unavoidable and we must stay focused on the finished project. Lewisville is getting older and certain areas of our city will need to be redeveloped to maintain a good local economy. Lewisville will have to address the problems caused by illegal immigration. With lower rental rates and a larger amount of rental properties when compared to our neighboring cities, Lewisville's problem will get worse.

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