

Gary Rhoads

Candidate Questions:

1. Have you ever managed any employees and If so how many?

A – Yes, I have managed several employees throughout my career. I started my career with the Colorado State Patrol in 1991 and within a short time; I became a Field Training Officer where I was responsible for training and supervision of the new trooper for his/her 9-12 week training program. In 2001, I was promoted to the rank of corporal where at times I was responsible for supervising approximately 20 troopers who were responsible for 5 different counties. During this time, I assumed the duties of the sergeant in his absence. In 2006, I was again promoted this time to the rank of sergeant where I was still responsible for the supervision of approximately 20 troopers who covered 5 different counties; however, I was also responsible for the developing of performance work plans, conducted year end performance evaluations, developed work schedules, deployed resources and directed workflow problem solving. I analyzed trends and statistics to provide a safe environment for our citizens. I was responsible for providing my officers with leadership and training opportunities to assist them with completing their daily duties and for future career advancement. I was responsible for their certifications/re-certifications, maintained certification records and insured all certifications were up to date. I was responsible for investigating complaints both internal and external and was required to provide the outcome of the investigation. I was required to be on call 24 hours at a time and assumed the duties of my captain and my major in their absence.

I have coached several sport programs for the Platte Canyon School District for approximately 15 years where I have been responsible for the supervision of 5-40 young adults at one time. These duties consist of teaching ethics, morals and integrity and preparing these young adults with lifelong learning experiences and preparing them for adulthood. I displayed a positive attitude and provided them with a positive role model and taught them right from wrong and to always “doing the right thing.”

I have been in a supervisory position since an early age. At the age of 17, I was an assistant manager for a restaurant that employed 10-20 employees. I was responsible for the scheduling the employees, the ordering and inventory of the products. As a supervisor, I was responsible for providing our customers with a friendly, safe place to bring their family and a place to enjoy a good meal.

2. What do you feel are the minimum requirements are to be a Park County Deputy and what should the base rate for that position?

A – I feel that the minimum requirement to be a Park County Deputy should include a positive attitude, someone that is community orientated and wants to make a positive difference in our county. He/she shall have high morals; integrity and he/she shall be honest at all times. They shall complete a thorough background and psychological test and shall be able to pass a

standardized physical fitness test. Each certified deputy will be and will maintain his or her POST Certification and will remain in good standing with the POST Board.

I believe that the base rate of pay should be comparable to the surrounding law enforcement agencies that have similar demographics as Park County. It appears that as of this date our deputies are well under paid. By raising the pay, I believe we can retain our officers and save thousands of tax payer dollars by not having to continue to train new officers just to lose them to the higher paying agencies.

3. Should you seek higher salaries for Deputies how will you ensure that any tax increase goes toward training and making sure that Park County has qualified people in that position?

A – I shall seek higher salaries for our deputies in an attempt to retain them thus saving thousands of tax payer dollars in the ongoing rehiring and retraining of our department. I will work with the commissioners and will thoroughly review the current budget and make adjustments where needed and I will find ways to provide the deputies with more training opportunities. I will continue to search and apply for available grants to assist in their training. I will make every effort to work together with our commissioners and require that the money collected either by tax increase or budget reallocations are put into a hiring/training fund and NOT the General fund. I believe the safety of our citizens is paramount and that if we do not pay or offer our deputies a competitive benefit package we will not attract the type of applicants that our county deserves. I feel that we need to attract the highest quality individuals, provide them with an opportunity to grow and succeed as a long term deputy with the PCSO. If we do not offer a competitive benefit package we will lose these employees to the surrounding agencies that are willing to pay them for what they are worth as we have been doing for the last several years.

4. What will you direct your deputies/employees to focus on and why? How do these issues affect citizens of Park County?

A – I will direct my deputies/employees to focus on the safety of our citizens. I will have them get more involved in Community Policing and provide the community with quality service. I will demand that they treat our citizens with respect, dignity and honesty. They will always tell the truth and will not lie to our community. My deputies will get to know the people (our customers) they serve and will be approachable and will be readily available to assist when needed. My deputies will work together with the community and will rebuild the trust with that I feel we have lost. By making these simple changes and by providing our community a professional law enforcement agency, I think we can work together with the people of Park County and make it a safer place where people want to live and raise a family.

The specialty units including our detective unit requires a higher level of education and training to be able to work and solve the major crimes in the county. I would require that the current detectives receive the proper training and see that they are properly trained and have the

needed tools to complete a thorough investigation whether it is a simple auto theft to a complex homicide.

5. Do you support the AG's position on attempting to enforce federal law on Marijuana? Will you allow your deputies to assist federal law enforcement in simple possession/manufacture cases?

A – The county sheriff is not responsible for enforcing federal law; however, I will assist the federal authorities if and only if needed (officer safety and the safety of our citizens is paramount and will not be jeopardized) and in circumstances where both state and federal law are violated. Whether the citizens of Park County are for or against the new marijuana laws, Colorado has voted and the use of medical and recreational marijuana is now legalized with several stipulations being in place. The federal authorities have no jurisdiction when it comes to the state and or county who are responsible for enforcing these laws. Even though the citizens of Park County have voted and currently allow the selling and manufacturing of marijuana, I feel that the large manufacturing and the larger grow operations that are currently operating in our residential neighborhoods needs to be addressed by our county commissioners. By allowing these operations to continue, I believe that our neighborhoods are at risk.

6. How do you plan to balance the wants and needs of the rural vs suburban residents? There is a perception the Park County is becoming Denver lite. Do you agree with the code of the west if so why if not then why?

A – Park County is very diverse and after living in the county for approximately 18 years, I have seen people come and go. Whether a person lives in a rural or a suburban area, they deserve the same quality service from our sheriff's office. As sheriff, it is my responsibility to know where to deploy my resources to provide the needed service each area whether rural or suburban needs or requires. With that being said, it is well known that Park County is growing and the population is ever increasing and it is my responsibility to adapt to the changes and provide the service each resident deserves and requires.

I do believe with "The Code of The West." I believe in integrity, be a man of your word, be honest, do your best, take pride in your work, be fair, always do the right thing, stand up for what's right, always finish what you start and never quit. I believe that everybody should live by these simple rules.

7. What is your position on Civil Asset Forfeiture?

A – I believe that seizing someone's property without due process is a violation of that person's Constitutional Rights and a violation of their 4th Amendment. With that being said, I do believe that Civil Asset Forfeiture has its place when the seizure is done legally and the property seized was or is being used illegally and in an attempt to further criminal activity. I do not believe that the government has a right to confiscate someone's property without due process or to use it for their own benefit before due process was served.

8. What is your position on eminent domain?

A – I do not believe in the government taking one's private property without permission; however, I think there needs to be an agreement and understanding. If there is a civil action ordered I as the sheriff am required by law to enforce the action. I do understand the need for eminent domain; however, I believe that the property owner has a right to keep and use his/her property/land and use it for its purpose and that the government not interfere.

9. What procedures will you implement to provide transparency in your departments activities above and beyond the open records laws?

A – Transparency=accountability, honest, timely communication. I have always had an open door policy for both my employees and the people I serve and this will continue. With that being said, it must be understood that there will be certain times i.e. homicide investigation, that some information may not be immediately released as it may compromise the investigation. I will keep the community informed of the progress and will keep them informed in a timely manner and will ensure their safety. Transparency is the act of communication and honesty and I will make every attempt to provide the information in a timely fashion.

10. Will you consider running as an independent should you not be the caucus winner?

A – No.

11. What will you do to streamline the optimize the budget of our department, what wasteful practices do you want to eliminate?

A – I will complete a thorough audit of the budget and will cut expenses where needed. One concern is the jail. For the 18 years that I have lived in Park County the jail has always been a concern of whether it's making or losing money. It is currently not being utilized to its fullest potential and it needs to be looked at and re-evaluated as to cost versus effectiveness and how can we utilize it more efficiently.

One of the biggest issues with the budget is the high employee turnover rate and the amount of money we currently spend on the training of new hires whether deputies or civilians. Currently we are losing our deputies after approximately 2 years of service as they are leaving and going to higher paying agencies that have a better benefit package. We roughly spend \$60,000 to train these deputies and then they leave forcing our deputies to work overtime thus wasting more money. If we could provide a better benefit package and pay them what the other surrounding agencies with similar demographics we could save money and provide our community with a well trained, well educated, professional law enforcement agency.

It appears that the sheriff's office is currently staffed with one sergeant and or one corporal for every deputy. It appears that we are "very top heavy."

12. What personal and or economic relations do you have to the current elected county officials?

A – None.

13. No question

14. What would you do different in regard to the most recent tragedy involving Miss Long? Things leading up to, during and after this investigation?

A – Previously answered this question but will provide the same answer.

I am not involved in the investigation and will only discuss the information that is of public record as of this date. I will give you my opinion and the mistakes that I feel our law enforcement made on the evening of Dec. 1. Again, this is my opinion and I too have investigated several homicides in my law enforcement career and I can tell you that in my 27 years in law enforcement I have never heard of the type of investigation or the way this investigation (if you can call it an investigation) was handled . There are so many rumors floating around out there so we really do not know what was conducted or not conducted during the SO's investigation. Here are just a few of my concerns. 1. Why wasn't the scene secured and why was the family and friends allowed to enter the residence before the scene was processed? 2. Knowing that PCSO has very little if any training and or experience this type of homicide and have knowing that they have never investigated a homicide of this nature, why didn't they call for outside assistance immediately? 3. Why was the community told there was no reason to believe our safety was in danger when they knew there were stolen firearms including an AK-47 and 2000 round of ammunition. 4. Why were we told that Maggie was a suspect in the arson (incompetent) 5. Why did they tell our community that there was no need for a search party? I for one knew that our community made their own search parties and were actively looking for Miss Long. I am sure these folks are feeling very lucky knowing that they did not come upon that suspect/suspects that just stole the firearms and 2000 rounds of ammunition. 6. Why was there no immediate canvassing of the area, knocking on doors, interviews or asking about video cameras in the area or setting up road blocks and stopping every car on 43/43A (isn't there only one way in and one way out?) 7. Why were so many people allowed to come back to the residence whether family or not? 8. Why did the Under Sheriff lie to us and tell us there was no body found when we already knew the coroner had been to the scene (coroner=deceased body). 9. Why did he continue to lie when he could of explained that he could not release this information at that time or he did not know the answer to that particular question. Just do NOT lie to us!! 10. Why the false Bolo? (Never heard of airing a false Bolo to catch a criminal) wouldn't you want the correct information aired so the entire nation could Be On the Look Out more eyes looking more likely to be apprehended. 11. Why do we not know more now than we did on Dec 1? 12. Why was there no CSI or Arson investigator involved or called in the night of the fire? Why was no evidence whether it was trace, hair, fingerprints collected before the family was allowed back into the home? 13. Was there a log of who entered the residence? 14. Were the deputies donned in protective gear? (Locards exchange principle). 15. Did they collect any evidence prior to the numerous law enforcement personnel, family and friends entering the residence? They lie to us and tell us they can not disclose the information; however, we all have

our own theories most based off the rumorville which is very sad for the Long family as well as our community. It's very sad that even though the sheriff's office has not released much information, it's very obvious that the deputies failed and have talked to their friends and neighbors creating the rumors and information (true or not) we are all hearing today. This is very unfortunate for the Long family in getting justice they deserve from our sheriff's office. Like the comment below states "we have been robbed and have lost the heart of our community, Maggie Long!" If elected Sheriff, I will do my best to ensure a safe and secure environment for all of Park County. I will give you my word that I will not lie to you, if I do not know the answer, I will find the answer or work with you in finding the answer. I will not tolerate the "Good ol Boy" reputation we currently have nor will I tolerate the overzealous, over confident attitudes some may have in thinking they are able to properly investigate a crime scene of this nature. I will not be afraid to request the assistance from the surrounding agencies as I know they are better trained and have much more experience in handling the more complex cases. I will continue to send my deputies to training that will better educate them and teach them at least the basics of investigating these types of scenes and at least teach them what not to do in such cases. With this in mind, I will still rely and call upon our neighboring agencies for their assistance as they unfortunately will most likely have more training and experience with investigating these types of crime scenes. It is very sad that we will continue to live with the loss of Maggie Long but I will give you my word that if elected as your next Park County Sheriff, I will continue to pursue and work this case until there is an arrest/arrests made and justice is served for Maggie and her family. I will not make the same mistakes as noted above and will pursue EVERY lead (not being done now).

15. What will you do to ensure that an armed Resource officer is ALWAYS present during school hours at the Fitzsimmons Middle School and High School?

A – I feel that school resource officers are a necessity not only in the Park County schools but in all schools throughout the United States. Our children's safety is paramount and cannot be disregarded. Being on the PCSD Safety Committee, it was decided at that time that a school resource officer would be at FMS and PCHS during school hours. It is very sad that we are always "REACTIVE" to a tragic event rather than being "PROACTIVE." I believe that just the sight of a deputy in the school is a deterrent and could possibly eliminate a possible threat just by the simple presence of an officer. As your sheriff, it will be my priority to provide the school districts with SROs.

16. What will you do to decrease the illegal drugs coming into our county and the ability for our kids to obtain illegal drugs?

A – I believe that it starts with education and educating our young adults and getting the parents and the teachers more involved in recognizing the effects of illegal drugs to include marijuana and the abuse of prescription narcotics. I will work with our school districts and will assist with finding the funding to bring back programs like D.A.R.E. and N.O.P.E. and will continue with the SAFE2TELL program. I will provide a School Resource Officer to work with the students and staff. I will assist the staff with their training and education when dealing with and

recognizing the indicators of drug use. I believe that the teachers need to be more involved during class breaks and during the passing periods. I believe that by being in the halls and talking with the students they are not only doing their jobs of interacting they are another set of eyes watching for not only possible drug exchanges between students but watching for other suspicious activities and or persons.

For our patrol deputies, I will provide the needed training and teach them what indicators to look for during their traffic contacts and while patrolling their respective neighborhoods. With approximately 20 years of service with the Colorado State Patrol it was our job and expectation to contact the potential drug runner and recognize the indicators that they were hauling drugs and or other types of contraband and remove them from the streets. I will actively work with our community and together we will decrease the distribution and availability of illegal drugs within our county.

17. What will you do about the fact that some of our current deputies have been involved in activities in the past that have gotten them relieved of their position then rehired at a later date? Activities that are illegal and violate the sworn oath they have taken.

A – If a PCSO employee has been involved in any activity that had gotten them relieved/terminated from their position they would not be eligible for rehire under my administration. If there are employees currently employed who have been terminated and then rehired, I would need the proper documentation supporting the facts and then I would have confirm and or deny the information and based off of these facts I would make a decision on whether they remained employed or were terminated. Either way, a terminated employee would not be eligible for rehire under my administration.

18. What makes your promises or answers more believable than other candidates?

A – I am a man of my word. I have approximately 27 years of outstanding law enforcement experience and have received several commendations and endorsements to include the “Honorary Chief’s Coin” and the “Law Enforcement Officer of The Year.” As a young Colorado State Trooper, I learned and believed in the 7 tenants of the badge which are Character, Integrity, Judgment, Loyalty, Courtesy, Honor and Knowledge and I continue to live my life both personally and professionally by these same 7 tenants. All organizations are as successful as their leader and as your leader, I will work with my deputies and staff and we will re-establish the trust and relationships and work together with our citizens who we serve and to make Park County a great place to live and raise a family.

19. Why should we believe that you will truly do what you say you will do and that your answers are not just campaign promises said to merely get elected?

A – Again, as stated above, I am a man of my word. I have strong ethics and integrity and I will work with my deputies and staff and we will re-establish the trust and relationships and work

together with our citizens who we serve and to make Park County a great place to live and raise a family.

20. Do you have kids currently enrolled in the Park County school system?

A – No, not at this time; however, my three kids all went through the Platte Canyon School District from elementary through high school and all three graduated from PCHS. My oldest daughter is currently employed with the school district both as a teacher and a coach.

21. Would you support or not support teachers in the Platte Canyon school system being trained and authorized to maintain a firearm in select classrooms?

A – Having unfortunately worked both the Columbine and the Emily Keyes shootings, I would support the teachers being armed with the understanding that the teacher would successfully complete an extensive firearms class that included the safe keeping and cleaning of the firearm, qualification, and scenario based training in a school atmosphere similar to an active shooter training with the PCSO, malfunction drills and weapon retention drills. They would have to qualify at least twice a year and complete practice/scenario drills at least twice a year (shooting their firearm at least 4 times a year). They would have to know the law regarding use of force and the when deadly force is justified and when a firearm can be utilized. The PCSO as well as the Colorado State Patrol and other emergency services would have to have records of all teachers who were authorized to carry a firearm in the school and the school would have to keep the police departments advised of any changes made. The firearm and ammunition would have to be safely stored so the students could not access either of them.

22. As an Accreditation & Policy Compliance Manager in a neighboring jurisdiction, I am wondering why the PCSO has not decided to pursue law enforcement accreditation? I believe many of the issues the PCSO has faced/ is currently facing are covered by LE standards, and these programs would immensely help bring this agency back on track. Can the candidates speak as to their thought on pursuing this recognition?

A – Although I feel that accreditation is very important, I believe that at this time it is more important to concentrate on the hiring, training and retaining of our current staff. I believe that the current policies and procedures manuals need to be rewritten and or revised and by completing these few tasks we can provide a better service to our citizens that we serve. If elected sheriff, I would work on completing these tasks in a timely manner and then would initiate the steps and procedures and would pursue the Law Enforcement Accreditation. I believe that with our current resources and the lack of funding to attain accreditation, it would be more beneficial to provide our community with a well trained, highly competent law enforcement agency that cares about its citizens and who is willing to provide them with professionalism, honesty and integrity.

23. Will you publish your agencies policy and procedures manual including use of force continuum and code of conduct publicly?

A – Yes, being open and honest with the people we serve is the best policy. It provides accountability of our department.

24. What do you think are the appropriate circumstances and criteria before implementing “no-knock” raids on private property? When is such risk of life to the deputies and victims worth it?

A – “No knock” raids or search warrants are signed by the district attorney and then reviewed by a judge and are used to protect the safety of the officers as well as the suspect. I believe that we the citizens of the United States of America should have a right to privacy and by having that right we shall have the right to be secure in our houses and protected from unreasonable searches and seizures and these rights shall not be violated without probable cause supported by Oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized. I believe that these types of searches should only be used in rare circumstances where there is an imminent danger to the officers.

25. Do you support individuals being able to own guns? If not, why and if so why?

A – Yes, I support the 2nd Amendment and believe that every law abiding citizen should be able to own and bear firearms. I am a Master Firearms Instructor and believe that firearm training and safety is paramount.

26. Do you support the federal government removing marijuana from a schedule 1 drug?

A – Yes, I believe that marijuana should be removed from a schedule 1 drug. Colorado voters have voted and medical and recreational marijuana use is now legalized.

27. Have you ever disobeyed an order from a superior and if so why?

A – No, I have never disobeyed a direct order from my supervisor.

28. If there are no funds available from the county or taxpayers, what can, and will you do to augment the training and equipment for deputies?

A – I hope this never happens and I hope that we as tax payers realize the importance of our law enforcement community and the importance of continuing training and education that they will continue to support our sheriff’s office. If not, I will seek training and equipment through local grants, I will continue to train with our surrounding agencies and I will seek aid from the government surplus to obtain the needed and available equipment. I know there is a current fund raiser that is being provided by our local media channels and I would always take advantage of these types of opportunities. Luckily, with my own 27 years of training and experience, I will work and train my deputies and staff and will do all I can to continue with their training. Lastly, I will always take advantage of the many free training classes throughout the

state and will make every opportunity to provide my deputies and staff with the safety and training equipment they need to complete their jobs.

29. If elected, how will you avoid conflict of interest, favoritism and the perception of deep corruption that currently seems to be so prevalent?

A – I have never been employed by the PCSO so I have no conflict of interest. Like I stated earlier, I learned at the very beginning of my law enforcement career approximately 27 years ago and still believe in the 7 tenants of the badge. I believe that with Character, Integrity, Judgment, Loyalty, Courtesy, Honor and Knowledge I will provide my deputies and staff with the professionalism, respect and dignity that they deserve. I believe that all organizations are as successful as their leader and as your leader, I will work with my deputies and staff and I will treat each and every one of them with respect and dignity and promote by merit and not the current “Good ol boy” theory that is currently being used. We will re-establish the trust and relationships and work together with our citizens who we serve and to make Park County a great place to live and raise a family.

30. How would you have handled the Martin Wirth eviction differently? Please provide detail.

A – First of all, this was a very tragic day for our community and I want to express my deepest condolences to the Carrigan family.

I will answer this question based off of the information I have received and the information that has been released to the public.

I believe that this incident was handled improperly and if handled properly we could have had a different outcome. I believe that there was no proper pre planning on the PCSOs part and that they acted in an overzealous manner. I have read several reports and believe that there was no reason to enter the house after Mr. Wirth had gone back into the residence. There were so many other options available to include a negotiator, to turning the utilities off to the residence and waiting, to video surveillance of Mr. Wirth and waiting for him to leave the residence and capturing him away from the residence, to deploying gas. I would have never approved to enter the residence. This is an example of poor management, and inexperience in leadership. There were no preparation and or planning and appeared to be poor decision making.

Proper planning and preparation is a must in situations like these. You need proper leadership on scene making the split second decisions for a positive outcome for all parties involved.

Park County lost two lives that day and two other deputies suffered serious injuries due to poor decision making and inexperienced leadership.

Thank you for your time in reading my answers to these questions and if you would like to discuss anything in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,
Sheriff Elect Gary Rhoads