

### Candidate Forum Held In Atchison

(KAIR)--With the April 7th General Election nearly a week away, candidates for the Atchison City Commission gathered Monday night to answer questions submitted by the public.

The forum, presented by the leadership council of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce was moderated by Benedictine College's Steve Johnson.

Candidates Rita Hartman, Luke Jesnowski, Charles Perdue, Jack Bower, Mike Hein, and David Hausman answered questions on topics ranging from tourism in the city, to their experience in budgeting. The proposed expansion at the Atchison airport was also brought up, with Perdue voicing his opposition to the project as well as the possibility of using eminent domain to acquire the land needed. He said "as far as it goes with the eminent domain, that is not our right. We are in a free country, we should have the right to do what you want to do, you don't force it. And as far as bringing business to the city by the airport...my son in law...an international corporate lawyer...will tell you that an airport is the last thing that will be considered when a company is relocating."

Hein stated that he supported the expansion, but thought that funding should come from an alternate source. He said that "we don't want to pass this funding on to the taxpayer. The funding for the \$700,000 should be private funding...the Country Club out here, the people that pay for the Country Club, they are the ones that should pay for it, not the people of Atchison. I think we should do the airport expansion, but I think we should find other ways of funding that part and not charging this against the people of Atchison. Now I think the people that own that property should be well paid."

Candidates were also asked about downtown revitalization. Bower suggested this could be done by adding different types of structures. He said "I would suggest that we work on adding some different types of structures downtown. Use a developer to build a small strip center, then you can attract the retailers who have cookie cutter type things. If you want the Ma and Pas, I think we have adequate spaces available for them and I think we have the adequate help to get them to move."

The second half of the forum focused on the candidates for the USD 409 Board of Education. Herb Gwaltney, George Ross, and Bill Shipley each answered three questions focused on education in the community. Richard Zumbrunn was unable to attend the forum due to a work related issue.

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