

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Two candidates are vying for a seat on the Perkins County Board of Commissioners when election rolls around Tuesday.

Incumbent Leon Pankonin and his challenger Dave Hoffert are running for District 2 Commissioner.

Hoffert's name was placed on the ballot after receiving the required number of signatures through a petition that circulated during the summer. Pankonin's seat was previously challenged in May when Matt Waitley ran against him in the primary. Pankonin won the primary and advanced to the November election unchallenged because no Democrats filed.

However, with Hoffert's name now on the ballot, the seat for District 2 Commissioner will be decided by the voters on Nov. 2.

Below are questions/answers for each of the candidates.

1. How long have you served as a Perkins County Commissioner? Why are you interested in serving another term?

Leon Pankonin: I have served one term and would now like to serve another. The three current commissioners have varying ideas, but work together well. I have the extra time it takes to conduct county business.

1. Why and when did you become interested in serving as a Perkins County Commissioner?

Dave Hoffert: I became interested in becoming a candidate when I was approached by some members of the community and later interviewed by them. We found out we shared the same frustrations and the same goals. I felt the county needed a commissioner that was more accessible. I have two businesses that run 24/7 and simply never close, I have never had the luxury of not being accessible. I decided to run.

2. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate?



Leon Pankonin: Being on the fair board for 25 years, and working with a wide variety of individuals. Having lived and paid taxes in this county for 40 years. Now after having worked on the county budget and with the state statutes that we are obligated to comply with, I feel that my experience will be critical to maintain.

Dave Hoffert: My background is I have a degree in business from the University of South Dakota and have worked at continuing my education since. My qualifications are that I have worked for Sapp Bros since I was 12. Sapps are absolutely dedicated to holding people accountable and having a direction. I learned this at a young age and it stuck. Sapps also has given me the opportunity to develop management, leadership, accounting, and financial skills.

3. What do you think you can contribute to the county as a commissioner? What have you accomplished while you've been in office?

Leon Pankonin: Again, experience is key. A new commissioner has a large learning curve. I'll be able to work with the rest of the county officials. Even as valuations have risen, we have been able to keep county taxes, close to the amount that it was, when I first took office.

3. What do you think you can contribute to the county as a commissioner?

Dave Hoffert: I can contribute leadership skills for the people of the county, accounting skills for the county money, and a common sense; get it done approach to all county business.

4. What important or immediate goals will you address if elected?

Leon Pankonin: We have constructed seven miles of new roads this year, which is close to my goal of 10 miles. I would like to find a gravel pit on the northeast side of the county.

Dave Hoffert: Roads.



5. Are there other issues you wish to share?

Leon Pankonin: I hope the planning commission and the joint committee can come to a workable plan with private runways. I believe that wind power is the future and we need to have a plan in place that would allow that to be explored.

Dave Hoffert: There are many issues in front of the county: Roads, wind energy, zoning to name a few. To get these issues right it is going to take work. I have never achieved a goal without work. We can have all the skills in the world but without work we will go nowhere. Please give me the opportunity to go to work.

6. What is your current occupation and how long?

Leon Pankonin: I am a third generation farmer, born and raised in Perkins County, having been involved with farming since I could run a tractor.

Dave Hoffert: As an employee of Sapp Bros. for 32 years, I employ 40 people and currently manage two successful travel centers in Sidney and Ogallala. As a stockholder in Sapp Bros., at times I work with over 1,000 people.

7. Personal: wife or husband and their occupation? Children: names/ages?

Leon Pankonin: Lisa, with the local co-op for 30 years. Children: Amy and husband Marty and their sons, Cole 12 and Brody, nine; Tad and husband Shannon and their daughters, Haley, nine and Heidi, one; CJ, Ben and Max.

Dave Hoffert: Wife Janet who has worked for Adams Bank and Trust in Madrid and Grant for eight years. Two daughters, Jessica, 15, who attends Perkins County High School in Grant, and 13-year-old Kendra, a middle-schooler at Madrid.