

DOUGLAS FARMER

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LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN 54601

Dear Neighbor,

One of the greatest pleasures of my life was the honor of representing this district for 10 years as your County Board Supervisor.

As Chairman of the Finance and Personnel Committee, I was fortunate to be part of the process that resulted in a 6.1% reduction in personnel, a 6% reduction in the mill rate and a level of taxation that was the second lowest of all 72 counties in the State of Wisconsin.

What was more rewarding was the opportunity to help you: whether it was helping with arrangements in a nursing home, straightening out a park reservation, or co-ordinating garbage pickup. Local government in the final analysis is simply helping your neighbors.

Now I am asking you, as my neighbor, for your support for City Council.

This election finds La Crosse at a crossroads. Both the Trane Company layoffs and the farm crisis mean that La Crosse is challenged and changing. There is no question that La Crosse will survive, but the quality of that survival is up to us.

1. We must begin immediate steps to develop economic and employment alternatives to Trane Company. The most reliable and solid economic development is not recruited from other states, but is "home grown". To that end, I am pleased to be associated in a minor way with the new "Business Incubator" which helps new businesses to grow. Because of this new program, La Crosse now has six new businesses.

The Business Incubator is only a start. Several years ago I participated in the Go Coulee Forum as Chairman of the Economic Development Task Force. The final report of Go Coulee Forums details many specific proposals for future economic development. It is important that our economic development efforts are organized, coherent, and well meaning. The report of the Go Coulee Forum represents the last systematic study of La Crosse economic advantages, which are many, and how to best utilize them for economic development.

Ultimately, economic development means jobs, maintenance and stabilization of the property tax base, and maintaining the market value of our homes. Never before has economic development meant more to each of us personally.

2. We need to take immediate steps to re-vitalize the downtown area. In a very real sense the downtown area is a resource we are in danger of losing. And once lost, it will never be recovered.

This is an issue that seldom gets a sympathetic hearing since it is easy to conclude that downtown's time has simply come. If we accept that, we will do so at great cost to ourselves. Further decline in the downtown area will soon reduce the property value and then reduce the tax base downtown represents. When that happens, the additional tax burden will have to be borne by our neighborhoods, by you and me.

To revitalize downtown will not be easy, but it represents economic development that we have already paid for; and if we lose it, we will pay for it again. The biggest challenge will not be "how" to do it but simply getting the City Council, the remaining merchants, and the absentee landlords to work together. For the first time, the future of downtown is in doubt.

3. Finally, all that we must do will be useless unless we can get our two most important units of government to cooperate. The lack of cooperation and coordination between the city and the county costs us greatly in ways we have only begun to imagine.

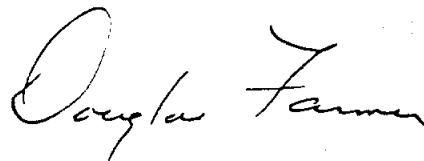
Future economic development and revitalization of the downtown area are just two concerns that are held hostage by the lack of communication and cooperation.

I hope that the 10 years I have spent on the County Board of Supervisors will be a start in reconciling some of those differences.

In this election, the issues that face us are important. La Crosse is at a crossroads. We face problems that are remaking La Crosse as we know it. The answers are already taking shape and we can be part of that process. It is important to each of us.

I ask for your vote on April 7, and your support among your family, friends and neighbors.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas L. Farmer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text "Thank you,".