



# Local Political Questionnaires

## A Note from the Publisher

Having stepped into the political arena myself, I've experienced firsthand the realities — and frustrations — that can come with politics and media coverage. It gives me a different perspective on what candidates and public officials often face.

Years ago, when I was a candidate for office, I experienced situations that raised serious questions for me about fairness in local political coverage. My candidate questionnaire was not published alongside others, and paid advertising I submitted was declined because of its content. At the same time, major

public announcements involving taxpayer-funded projects were prominently featured in the days leading up to an election — projects that, in some cases, still have not fully materialized more than a decade later.

Politics is not always clean, and it is rarely simple.

That experience shaped how I view the responsibility of community journalism today.

Our coverage may not always align with everyone's expectations, and at times it may be perceived as slanted by those on one side or the other. But our

commitment remains the same: to report truthfully, fairly, and in the best interest of the communities we serve.

As election season continues, we are providing candidates an opportunity to answer questions and share where they stand on the issues. If you do not see responses from a candidate in this edition or in the weeks ahead, it is not because we failed to ask. It simply means they chose not to respond — or believe their record speaks for itself.

An informed community depends on informed voters. That remains our mission.

## Russell County Clerk Candidate Amy Riggins Melson

### 1. What experience do you have that prepares you to manage the responsibilities of the County Clerk's Office?

I bring over 23 years of hands-on experience in titles, vehicle registration, taxes, and accounting, core responsibilities of the County Clerk's Office. I also have six years of direct public service experience working under two previous County Clerks, where I worked in all areas of the office. That included serving citizens on the front line with registrations and title work, assisting in the deed room with filing official documents, and participating in election duties.

Today as Office Manager at Don Franklin here in Russell Springs, I continue to build on that experience. My work in accounting, management, title transfers, taxes, and registration allows me to stay actively engaged in many of the same responsibilities required of the Clerk's Office. This combination of public and private-sector experience has prepared me to serve as your clerk.

### 2. The clerk's office handles elections, records, and many public services. How would you ensure efficiency and accessibility for citizens?

Ensuring efficiency and accessibility starts with an experienced and knowledgeable leader-the Clerk. I am someone who understands the responsibilities and has the knowledge to lead the office, backed by my extensive experience in all areas required of a Clerk.

I will be a working clerk. You'll see me on the front line alongside a well-trained staff, serving the public six days a week. My goal is simple-to make sure every visit is fast, friendly, and efficient the first time you walk through the door, without requiring multiple trips.

### 3. What steps would you take to maintain accuracy, transparency, and security in election administration?

Maintaining accuracy, transparency, and security in the election process starts with strictly following the law and established procedures, while working closely with the County Board of Elections.

Accuracy comes from training and accountability. I will ensure every staff member is properly trained and that all processes are double-checked to prevent errors.

Transparency means the public can have confidence in the process. I will maintain open communication, allow for proper observation, and ensure all records are handled and reported clearly and correctly.

Security is critical. I will make sure all ballots, equipment, and records are properly handled, secured, and monitored so the integrity of the election is never in question.

### 4. How would you work to improve customer service and modernize services provided by the clerk's office?

To improve customer service, I will focus on a well-trained, knowledgeable staff and a well-organized office so transactions are handled correctly the first time-without long waits or multiple trips. I will be a working Clerk, present on the front line alongside my staff, making sure citizens receive the help they need.

To modernize services, I would turn the online renewals system back on, so citizens can complete transactions more conveniently. At the same time, I understand not everyone prefers or has access to technology, so it's important we continue to provide strong in-person service as well.

I would also complete the process of the electronic records, with all the remaining documents in the deed room to ensure we have access to those records for many years rather it be in office or online.

### 5. Why are you seeking this office, and what priorities would guide your leadership?

I'm seeking this office because I believe I have a great deal to offer the citizens of Russell County through public service, backed by my experience and dedication. With over 23 years of experience in titles, registration, taxes, and accounting-and hands-on experience inside the Clerk's Office I know what this job requires, and I'm prepared to do it right the first time.

My priorities are simple: to provide fast, friendly, and efficient service; to run a well-organized and accountable office; available to the public six days a week, and to always operate with honesty and integrity. I will be a working Clerk-present, accessible, and leading by example alongside my staff maintaining the fast, friendly, personal, hometown level of service people expect.

### Candidate's Top Priority if Elected:

My top priority is simple: restore fast, friendly, and knowledgeable service six days a week — by working alongside my well-trained staff to deliver accurate service the first time, with the welcoming hometown feel the Clerk's Office was once known for and that our citizens expect.

### INSPECTION PERIOD FOR THE 2026 PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT ROLL RUSSELL COUNTY

The Russell County real property tax roll will be opened for inspection from May 4th through May 18th, 2026, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. CST. Under the supervision of the Property Valuation Administrator or one of the deputies, any person may inspect the tax roll.

This is the January 1st, 2026, assessment on which state, county, and school taxes for 2026 will be due. The collection of 2026 property taxes will begin in the Sheriff's office around October 1st, 2026.

The tax roll is in the office of the Property Valuation Administrator in the county courthouse located at 410 Monument Square, Suite 106.

Any taxpayer desiring to appeal an assessment on real property made by the PVA must first request a conference with the PVA or a designated deputy. The conference may be held prior to or during the inspection period.

Any taxpayer still aggrieved by an assessment on real property, after the conference with the PVA or designated deputy, may appeal to the County Board of Assessment Appeals with the County Clerk.

The taxpayer can appeal their assessment by filing in person or sending a letter or other written petition stating the reasons for appeal, identifying the property, and stating the taxpayer's opinion of the fair cash value of the property.

The appeal must be filed with the County Clerk's office no later than one workday following the conclusion of the inspection period. Please contact the County Clerk's office to receive instructions on the method the office is using to accept appeals this year and to obtain a form that can be used to file your appeal.

A taxpayer failing to appeal to the County Board of Assessment Appeals, or failing to appear before the board, either in person or by designated representative, will not be eligible to appeal directly to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Appeals for personal property assessments shall **NOT** be made to the County Board of Assessment Appeals. Personal property taxpayers shall be served notice under the provisions of KRS 1320450(4) and shall have the protest and appeal rights granted under the provisions of KRS 131.110.

#### Reminders:

- **If you feel your property is worth as much or more than your assessment, you do not need to do anything. If you feel it's worth less than your assessment, contact our office.**
- **2026 Tangible Personal Property Returns are due to the PVA office by May 15th.**
- **If you turn 65 years of age during 2026, you can apply for the Homestead Exemption in the PVA office.**
- **If you were receiving Social Security Disability benefits on January 1st, 2026, you may be eligible for the Disability Exemption. You must have your Disability Exemption documents filed in the PVA office by December 31st, 2026.**
- **IF YOU ARE 65 YEARS OLD OR DISABLED AND NOT SURE IF YOU ARE ALREADY RECEIVING THE HOMESTEAD/DISABILITY EXEMPTION, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE.**

#### Tim Popplewell

Office: (270) 343-4395  
After Hours: (270) 858-9093

## Coming Soon!

# Graduation Keepsake Edition

Send best wishes to your graduate as they celebrate this milestone!

**TO PLACE YOUR AD, CONTACT**

**Russell County Times-Journal**  
120 Wilson Street, Russell Springs, KY 42642  
270-866-3191 Office  
news@russellcountynewspapers.com

**- DEADLINE MAY 6 -**

*Honor your graduate with a congratulatory ad to be included inside the keepsake edition.*

**Congratulations**  
CLASS OF 2026

**ZACKERY SMITH**

WE LOVE YOU AND ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!

LOVE, YOUR FAMILY

▲ **2 col. x 2**  
3.208" width x 2" height  
\$25 - Black & White  
(No Picture)

▲ **2 col. x 5**  
3.208" width x 5" height  
\$50 - Black & White

**Additional sizes and color options are available. Call for pricing!**