



## My Interview with the Commissioners

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For the interview portion of my assignment I chose to interview Caldwell County Commissioner Randy T. Church. As I arrived at the county offices for the interview Chairman Jeff Branch happened to be there. So I was able to interview both for my project. Mr. Church added that the reason he ran for office was that he felt that being a county commissioner was the best way for him to make a positive influence on the community.

For the first questions I asked how long had they served on the board and will they run for re-election? Both Mr. Church and Mr. Branch started in December of this past year, and the both plan to run for re-election when their term expires. Secondly, I asked them what they "personally" deemed the most important issues in the county and what their top priorities were. Mr. Branch and Mr. Church agreed that gaining new jobs and keeping old ones, the education of the county, and the upkeep of the infrastructure were among their top priorities. Chairman Branch also said that he is most frequently asked about taxes and tax cuts. Mr. Branch answered that the most unusual problems were citizens calling him and asking about fixing a stopped up culvert or quieting a neighbors barking dog. He also added, "I have begun carrying a shovel around in the back of my truck so I can fix drains." Mr. Church added that it amazes him of the amount of new things he learns every day.

Lastly Mr. Church gave me a tour of the county offices. I talked with many workers including the Register of Deeds, Human Resources, and the Clerk to the Board, just to name a few. We walked through the County Chambers where the board meetings are held. Finally at the end of the tour I pre-registered to vote when I turn 18.

I attended the Caldwell County board meeting for June 17<sup>th</sup> where commissioners debated over changing the tax rate to 61.5¢; in the end the county's tax rate for fiscal 2013-2014 was to be set at 60¢ per \$100. At the meeting I was able to introduce myself and inform my intent to represent my county at the NCACC youth summit.

I really enjoyed the experience and I learned a few things about our local government and how important it is to our well-being and living.