

Allison Ward

Recently I had the opportunity to sit down and talk to County Commissioner, Jason Falls. He has served on the Cleveland County Commissioners Board for three years, which means this is still his first term. When asked if he plans on running for re-election, Mr. Falls said that yes he would like to run once more and then move aside for someone else to take his place. Not only was Mr. Falls a very down to earth person, but he provided me with a lot of insight on how important our county commissioners are.

During our meeting, Mr. Falls acknowledged that there are many issues that exist in our county. The most important issues that Cleveland County has are our unemployment rate which is estimated at nine percent. Mr. Falls says he would be much happier to see that rate drop to six percent or less. Another topic Mr. Falls seemed passionate about was our county's water supply. He educated me by explaining that our county provides water to not only our county but five other counties as well. All of these counties are fed by a river, so Mr. Falls says that commissioners are hoping to get a reservoir built sometime soon. Another very important issue that our county faces is continuing to improve our Animal Control (AC) facility. A few years ago our county's AC put down almost all of the animals brought in due to cases of rabies; these rates have improved though. We now adopt out around thirty percent of the animals brought in. Our county has also recently hired a rescue coordinator which will eliminate a lot of confusion that once hung between AC and the public. When asked if he believes there will be anyway that volunteers, even young adult volunteers will be allowed to get involved with the animals, Mr. Falls happily replied that they are currently working on ways to do this. However there are problems such as rabies and liabilities that hinder their process. As of current Mr. Falls says there have been five cases of rabies reported.

Some of the issues that Mr. Falls gets asked about by citizens are animal control, schools, employment, and the quality of life here. He says that AC and our schools are probably the most common issues he is asked about. Concerns that residents often express about our schools are the funding and tax rate. The concerns citizens have about employment are about future jobs. Will there be jobs for the next generation to come back to after they go off to college or the military? Mr. Falls says that he hopes there will be plenty of these jobs. Right now the commissioners are working on appeasing this worry by diversifying industries. The quality of life here in Cleveland County is another concern for many. Community members would like to see things such as museums and parks opened.

From interviewing Cleveland County Commissioner, Jason Falls, I have learned far more than I expected to. I never realized how much work and effort our Commissioners put into improving our community. They set goals for our local government, pursue industries, and provide incentives for companies. In summary, our County Commissioners play a really significant role in our society.