

Interview with Denny Garner, Greene County Commissioner

Greene County has a government that is led by a board of County Commissioners. I had a chance to interview a distinguished member of the council. Mr. Denny Garner, has served fifteen years on the board of county commissioners. He will most likely run again for re-election after the current term expires. Mr. Garner has several great concerns about the well-being of the county and takes special interest when it comes to the issue of county finances. -

Mr. Garner has been through many trials and situations as a County Commissioner. When he first achieved office, he was forced to be a decisive vote in the county's landfill issue. At the time there was a great divide among many in the county as to whether a landfill should be implemented or not in the county. Mr. Garner went to several engineers and visited landfills near Bertie, Roxboro, and Albermarle in order to better gain an opinion on which way to vote on the controversial issue. Mr. Garner explained to me that after he voted, several of his closest friends and constituents turned their backs on him and refused to speak to him. He further explained to me that in any position in which you are elected and must make decisions, that you run the risk of making people mad or upset with you. Trying to please everyone will get nothing done.

Mr. Garner and I both expressed great concern over the issue concerning the state of the county's Emergency Services. One of Mr. Garner's chief concerns when he first became a commissioner was the inability of the County to provide care for patients needing medical assistance. He stated that originally the emergency personnel only had ability to give patients common pain medication and a trip to the hospital. He pushed for classes and education for these personnel and currently the EMS is able to give people some care and assistance. However, Mr. Garner wishes to go even further and advance the county to have paramedics. Paramedics can give advanced care to critical patients and give people a viable chance of surviving heart-attacks and strokes. This is an extremely important goal as the nearest locations at which these patients can be treated are in other counties. I myself have seen situations in which immediate care would be beneficial to patients as I am a volunteer fireman and have seen many incidents and accidents in which the victims were in dire shape and were forced to wait for transfer to the hospital, either by EMS truck or helicopter.

The county is currently experiencing economic difficulties, which Mr. Garner admits are similar to issues he faced when he first became a Commissioner. Mr. Garner takes the economic instability of the county very seriously. He explained to me that since the county doesn't have a vast amount of industries, himself and the other commissioners have to come together to help create "incentives" for upcoming businesses that show interest in coming to Greene County. It is his opinion that the county will soon see greater days. He mentioned that the county had massive deficits due to overbudgeting. He was proud to explain that through budget cuts the deficit has been shredded and at the end of the fiscal year the county may rebound to have some extra spending money.

Submitted by: PT Harrison-Greene County 4-H