

## 2009 Candidate Questionnaire

### SECTION I

#### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Bob		Rosenberger

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

**King County Assessor**

3. Are you the incumbent?       Yes       No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

**NA**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**49 years**

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?       Partisan       Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Bob Rosenberger for Assessor

Address: 9686 54<sup>th</sup> Ave S.

City/State/Zip: Seattle

Campaign Phone: 206-396-7891

Campaign Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Website: Bobrosenberger.com

#### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run
King County Assessor	1992
King County Assessor	1991

## SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
  - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
  - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
  - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

I am running for Assessor because the job calls for leadership to continue modernizing the department, to find ways to do more with less, and to educate the public about tax policy & choices. Past Assessors have done part of the job, but no one has offered the complete package. None have come in with knowledge of the department from the ground up.

As a former shop steward, I was involved with contract negotiations and personnel matters. I learned the advantages of teamwork, and a willingness to work things out.

Newly elected Assessors join the International Association of Assessing Officers. I joined in 1986, helped found our local chapter, attended five international conferences, and have taken its classes including Assessment Administration.

The job calls for a dedication to service; both to the individual taxpayer who seeks accuracy and understanding, and also to the larger community. We fund vital services such as public education, public safety, and public health with property taxes. Over one third of our bill consists of taxes we voted to impose upon ourselves. We need to maintain faith in the system of property taxes in order to assure continued funding for the programs we want.

I possess the knowledge to coordinate the flow of work in a complex environment. I know the department, I know appraising (specifically computer assisted mass appraisal), and am familiar with Washington State tax law. With two sudden vacancies in department leadership, this is no time for on the job training at the top.

I take pride in the department's awards for Public Information, Research & Development, and Excellence in Assessment Administration. I would like to carry on Scott Noble's legacy of innovation and education, by combining it with firsthand knowledge of what needs more attention.

I retired from the Department of Assessments last year with 24 years of service. I had prime responsibility for appraising tens of thousands of properties of all types – in all kinds of markets. These properties ranged from the home you may own or rent, all the way to complex commercial and industrial projects.

The Department is not broken, but needs to join the rest of the county in reducing costs. I offer the knowledge and leadership to carry its vital mission forward.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

I have long been fascinated with history and government. Over time, my focus has shifted from the national scene toward local government where the decisions are made that most affect the way we live. At the same time, I have had a career in various aspects of real estate; selling, appraising, and investing.

The joy of appraising is that of being given a problem, learning the rules, finding the facts, and wrapping them all up in a solution. In assessing, the problem is more complex as whole neighborhoods, or property types are analyzed at once. What's more, Deputy Assessors need to be mindful of what was done before, and be willing to coordinate their findings with that of their peers working in adjacent areas. The Assessor needs to be the ultimate puzzle master who can smooth interpersonal friction while adjusting the end product into one coherent whole.

My strengths are ideally suited to the field of assessing. I have an analytical mind that looks for patterns and solutions to problems, be it interpolating or extrapolating. At some other time, I could have become an engineer or an architect. Coming of age in the turmoil of the sixties, I chose to major in Sociology, the study of people in groups, with a particular interest in social psychology. Workplace dynamics and market behaviors are part of my interests.

Running for office is often viewed as an expression of ego or greed. I find it instead, to be very humbling. Political involvement leaves me with a greater feeling of connection to the community, which is what I hope to impart to an otherwise technical job.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

One accomplishment of which I am proud is the house I am building, or rather its design. It is located on a small, triangular piece of ground which is classified as a steep slope. What's more it has streets on two sides, one being a busy arterial. I was able to create a design that blends into its location while presenting an attractive face to the street. The result is a multi-level structure built around a central stair. All of the private spaces are away from road noise, while bathrooms, garage, and closets absorb much of the sound. I like to think of architecture as sculpture that both contains and liberates us.

Several years ago, I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. Although I had climbed Rainier and Hood, this was an adventure of a higher order. I arrived in Africa at night, totally outside my comfort zone. I had to rely on a driver sent to meet me who spoke no English. The climb itself was extremely arduous, but thanks to my guide, Albert, I made it to the top. I was left with the feeling that if I planned and prepared, took things one step at a time, I could accomplish anything I set out to do. In the brief time before and after the climb, I became quite impressed with the local residents who worked hard to support their families, but did so with pride, joy, and a grace that seems lacking in our more accomplished society.

Lastly, I was a founder of the Evergreen Chapter the International Association of Assessing Officers. Although I served two terms as President, and many more as Treasurer, I am most proud of the seminars I organized. I worked to obtain speakers that both challenged and expanded our thoughts about our job and the function it serves in the larger societal context.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

Since attending my first precinct caucus in 1972, I became active in my political party. I have served as a precinct committee officer in 4 different districts. I was chair of the 48<sup>th</sup> District in 1981, and have served in various capacities since then. Currently, I serve on the Legislative Action Committee representing the 37<sup>th</sup> District. In the capacity of a citizen lobbyist, I take part of the credit for defeating the bill on Transit Oriented Development which would have imposed from Olympia one-size-fits-all zoning on Seattle neighborhoods near transit stations.

Although I have worked on numerous campaigns and organized many fundraisers, I have never allowed my political views to influence my work in Assessments where all property owners were treated equally.

In the 1980's I served as President of the Washington State Americans for Democratic Action, on the board of the ACLU-Washington, and on the board of Washington State Sane/Freeze. I negotiated the local merger of the latter organization, and dealt with budgeting and personnel decisions on all three.

At the same time, I was a volunteer educator for the Bellevue clinic of Planned Parenthood. I was a board member of the Eastgate Community Club until I moved to North Bend in 1993 where I quickly became a board member of the Wilderness Rim Association which functions both as a homeowners' association and as a water purveyor to 600 customers.

I have twice testified before the King County Charter Review Commission recommending that the job of Assessor be made appointive to allow for greater professionalism. I have also testified before the County Council itself.

As stated previously, I was a founder and long time officer of the local chapter of my professional association, having served two terms as president. I was also elected shop steward through three contract negotiations.

These are some of the reasons why my candidacy has attracted the endorsements of Councilmember Larry Gossett, Senator Margarita Prentice, Senator Joe McDermott, Representative Sharon Tomiko-Santos, former Assessor Ruthe Ridder, and others.

On a family note, I have a cousin in Germany who serves in the legislature of Lower Saxony, with whom I enjoy discussing governmental affairs.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The role of the Assessor is to distribute the tax bills in a fair and equitable manner. This means that over 600,000 appraisals must be done in a consistent manner. In other words making sure that each Deputy Assessor has the proper education, training, and tools to do the job. The tools are not merely tape measures and calculators, but also concepts and formulas. The Assessor reviews the reports of the Deputies and accepts or modifies their conclusions. Then, after 103 separate exemptions have been processed, the department calculates the tax rates for 160 overlapping jurisdictions.

That's quite a job, but it must be done in a more efficient manner in the future due to King County's budget shortfall. I propose to re-establish satellite offices to save on driving, time, and expensive downtown rent & parking. I pledge to work with our technology director in seeking lower cost off the shelf programs in conjunction with other Assessors across the state.

Since most of the department is covered under the county's civil service program, the most critical duty of the Assessor is to make sure that those who pass probation have the right attributes and attitudes to do the job. To that end, I will reach out to our diverse communities to attract the best and the brightest into government service. Using interns and Appraiser Assistants will improve efficiency now and lay the groundwork for well trained experts in the future.