

## Research and Opinion: Sheriff scrutinizes the candidates

 [cdapress.com/news/2020/apr/16/research-and-opinion-on-sheriff-scrutinizes-the-5](https://cdapress.com/news/2020/apr/16/research-and-opinion-on-sheriff-scrutinizes-the-5)

By **Ben Wolfinger**

| April 16, 2020 1:00 AM

On Jan. 11, 2021, I will officially retire from the Sheriff's Office after 37 years and 41 weeks of full-time service. Ever since I announced that I would not be running for re-election, I have been asked, almost daily, who I recommend for the next Kootenai County Sheriff. I don't believe that I should tell you who to vote for, but I will share some of my thoughts and observations on the four candidates who have filed for this seat in the upcoming Primary Election.

When we teach leadership to our employees, we give them the 12 traits of great leaders. I think that a Sheriff should possess all 12, but there are five traits that are critical: Integrity, Humility, Learn Your Role and the Role of Related Positions, Engage in the Community and Generosity. Integrity and humility speak for themselves. Learning the Role is vitally important, as many of the candidates have expressed plans to change things that are not in their control, like pay structures, planning and zoning issues, etc. They may influence those who are responsible, but it is not the role, morally or legally of the Sheriff. A Sheriff must be engaged in the community and know its history. That engagement means knowing official and unofficial community leaders. Additionally it is important to have built relationships with those people over time so one can be effective. If a candidate does not know the history of a community, they are doomed to make the same mistakes of the past. Finally, generosity does not always mean money, but also means time, giving back to the community in many different ways making this area a much better place to live.

I can honestly tell you, this is NOT a retirement job. It is a job to retire from. This is a full-time position that takes a huge commitment of personal time and energy. It is a job that takes a good deal of both law enforcement and community experience.

...

**ROBERT NORRIS:** Robert "Bob" Norris is retired from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. According to his website, he has a wide range of experience during his career at Los Angeles County. There has been a good deal of questions regarding his residency, homeowner's exemption and his voting in California in November of 2016. In his

responses to the Coeur d'Alene Press interview he admits that he applied for his Idaho homeowner's exemption in early 2014, but due to personal circumstances was unable to move when he originally planned. "... the move that was supposed to happen over three to six months turned into a significantly longer process." Idaho law requires you to occupy as your primary residence prior to April 15 to claim your homeowner's exemption. He also admitted in that interview to voting in California in November of 2016. His reasoning was: "If you're not registered and voting in two states, then it's not voting fraud. Further, voter fraud is a stretch as a Republican in a deeply blue state." The problem with that is the California statute regarding electors states: "(a) 'Elector' means a person who is a United States citizen 18 years of age or older and, except as specified in subdivision (b), is a resident of an election precinct in this state on or before the day of an election." In other words, Mr. Norris had to be a resident of California to vote in California in 2016 and a resident of Idaho in order to maintain his homeowner's exemption. Mr. Norris' strength is his experience at Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. His weakness is this specter of fraud, either voter or tax fraud.

FINANCES: As of December 31, 2019:

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: \$33,550.11

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$28,223.44

PERSONAL LOANS: \$40,000.00