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the deadlines and duties of the office: Tax Certifications; Claims; Payroll; Annual Financial Reports; County Audits; Elections; Clerk to the Board of Supervisors; Custodian of numerous county records.

E) Cost Conscious – by process of needs determination and a thorough RFP process we eliminate costly mistakes, overspending and failure to diagnose problems accurately.

F) Understanding of real estate and facilities management – which lends itself to good fiscal management

G) Proficient in performance management; ability to write procedures, policies and implement changes in a way that causes the least amount of disruption.

H) Practice Dale Carnegie Principles
3) What is the essential role of the Auditor's office?

(MS): The Auditor's office is multifaceted, with responsibilities that include serving as the Commissioner of Elections, managing payroll and bills, overseeing real estate and tax functions, and handling budgetary duties. These roles, and numerous others are outlined in Iowa Code 331.502, which provides a clear framework for the office's operations. It's an interesting read if you want to understand just how broad the scope of this position is and to get a sense of the skillsets needed to succeed.

(MB): The county auditor is primarily responsible for overseeing the financial operations of the county, in-

cluding maintaining financial records, preparing budgets, and ensuring that county funds are used responsibly and legally. They also play a crucial role in managing elections and calculating tax rates.

4) Can you describe your experience with financial auditing and how it relates to the responsibilities of an auditor for Madison Co.?

(MS): Earlier in my career, I worked on embezzlement cases, analyzing systems and identifying where processes did fail. This experience has helped me recognize where issues might arise with the controls in place and how to prevent them from happening. Later, I managed large contracts, which required close tracking of budgets and expenses to ensure projects stayed on track. This background gives me a strong foundation in financial oversight, which is essential for the Auditor's role in managing county resources effectively and ensuring taxpayers' money is used wisely.

(MB): As an asset and property manager - I have taken on derelict properties where the income may have been misappropriated, expenditures failed proper documentation, and the bottom line did not match up. At one property we had to manually recreate ledgers because of the condition of the accounting that was in place. Those experiences have prepared me for what may or may not lie ahead.

5) If elected as Madison County Auditor, what measures will you implement to prevent fraud, enhance transparency, and foster trust in the electoral process?

(MS): This question can apply to several different areas within the office related to budget, payroll and claims. However, related to the election process, the guidelines are clear-cut. The Secretary of State's office has specific guidelines to ensure every election in every county follows exactly the same process per Iowa Code. This is NOT an area for individual interpretation of the process. As for physical security, that is something we will always review to make sure standards are consistently met. My background with creating and managing chain of custody workflows and evidence storage systems goes hand in hand with these duties.

(MB): Ensure that all staff involved with elections are vetted for bipartisanship and trained to follow the direction of Iowa Secretary of State. Employees need to be professional, possess excellent customer service skills and display impartiality.

6) Which political party are you representing in this election, and what influenced your decision to align with that party?

(MS): I am a lifelong Republican. My values align with the belief that government should be small and work efficiently behind the scenes. I believe in reducing unnecessary interference in our lives and focusing on creating solutions that allow individuals and families to succeed. My experiences have shown me the importance of good, effective leadership that makes decisions in the best interest of the community, not for personal gain.

(MB): I am running No Party. We are a community who believes in democ-

racy and good government. It is for these reasons that I decided to run as an independent candidate. Partisan politics has no place for our county auditor who is charged with running fair elections, financial management, and enforcing the Iowa Code in Madison County.

7) Why should people vote for you on Tuesday, August 26?

(MS): My goal is to bring stability and efficiency to the Auditor's office. The Auditor should be a position where you only know the person because you have an envelope or paperwork with their name on it close by. It's an important role, but one that should function quietly behind the scenes, ensuring smooth operations that serve the taxpayers.

With over 20 years of experience in leadership roles, I've spent my career fixing broken systems and implementing lasting solutions. I'm committed to bringing practical, effective change to the office, where accountability and responsibility are at the forefront. My focus is on making the office more responsive to the needs of Madison County residents, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used wisely, and creating an office that prioritizes the public's best interests.

If voters have additional questions for me, they can contact me at schwarzforauditor@gmail.com

(MB): At this time, we need leadership that is strong, competent, and brave. I have demonstrated each of these qualities as farmer, restaurant owner, property manager, business owner and most importantly as an employee of Madison County.

NEW HEAD OF CINEMA
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would be delivered on time for the festival. The screening sold out in minutes. It was at that moment that I knew I wanted to work in the film exhibition industry, including film festivals and cinemas. The thrill of connecting a movie with an audience, whether it's an audience of a thousand or ten, motivates me every morning," Fons said.

Although perhaps a bit biased, Fons believes that a movie theater is one of the most essential places in a community. It is a hub for art, gathering, and shared experiences. She feels that a movie theater encourages neighbors to come together and laugh, scream, cry, and learn as a community. There is potential for two people who might disagree on everything else, whether it's politics, sports, or which side of the street the trash cans should go, to share the same favorite movie.

"Because of this power, I take great pride in my work, and I am honored to be a film programmer. For every film I program, I think about every step of the movie-going process: the patron deciding to go to the movie, buying the ticket, arriving at the theater, choosing their concessions, selecting their seat; the moment the light goes down, whether they'll like the film or not (and how that will make them feel about the theater itself), and how they might chat about the movie as they exit to the lobby or out on the street. The stories we watch in the theater, we take with us, and that is a very special thing - I think about it with every movie I select," she said.

Fons, who currently lives in Chicago with her husband, Jack, is very excited about moving to London. While they will retain their apartment in Chicago for the time being, since her husband is a filmmaker involved in numerous projects, they will travel between the two cities.



Photo special to the Madisonian

The strongman who performed at this year's Madison County Fair flexed his muscles and attempted to bend a bar with his teeth. Although he was successful in his endeavor, he advised the audience to not try it at home.



I'm Michele Brant and I'm running for Madison County Auditor because **I think folks are tired of the division.**

I want to be a fair and honest Auditor. **Someone who works for everyone and helps keep the county on the right track.**

The People of Madison County Deserve...

- ✓ Fair Elections
- ✓ A Well-Managed Auditors Office
- ✓ Balancing the Checkbook Every Month
- ✓ Ethical and Transparent Leadership
- ✓ Clear, Proactive Communication
- ✓ Keeping County Bills Paid On Time