

Sunday, April 18, 2010

Editorial

Gibson is a strong leader the county needs to keep

Supervisor earns second term with impressive first four years

County Supervisor Bruce Gibson has impressed us as a calm, steady and capable leader over the past four years, particularly in 2009 when he served as board chairman.

Over the course of that year, he helped the county weather one crisis after another, including the widespread financial meltdown and an internal scandal that led to the ouster of the county's top two administrators.

Those problems are far from over. San Luis Obispo County — like almost all government agencies — continues to wrestle with huge revenue shortfalls and faces more painful decisions about where to cut and what to save.

We believe it's critical to have strong, experienced leadership during this period of economic recovery, which is one of the reasons we support Gibson in his bid to represent the North Coast for another four years.

Gibson, 57, has shown himself to be well informed on the issues, often to the point of wonkishness; he's careful to play by the rules, sometimes to a fault; and he strives to find the best solution for everyone involved.

That doesn't mean he satisfies everyone. Case in point: Not everyone is happy with the county's proposal for a Los Osos sewer plant, including the state Coastal Commission, which has yet to issue a permit for the project. *But we believe Gibson helped arrive at a compromise that satisfied most major concerns about the sewer. **We're impressed, too, by the energy and commitment he showed in advocating for the project, both with his fellow board members and the state Coastal Commission.***

We also admire Gibson's thoughtful, thorough analysis of the issues, and the fact that he isn't a bloc voter. Recently, he cast the sole vote against a 100-unit housing project proposed for Templeton, after criticizing the design. "I wouldn't want this at the gateway to my community, either," was his frank assessment.

To be sure, we haven't agreed with all of Gibson's decisions, and there are times when we wish he would show a little more flexibility. He can, for instance, be a stickler about following county rules in imposing fees and fee increases. While we would ordinarily agree with that approach, we believe it's sometimes appropriate to cut struggling residents a break in this economy.

... We believe that experience, along with other challenges Gibson faced over the past four years, will make him an even more effective supervisor in the future.

We strongly urge District 2 voters to re-elect Supervisor Bruce Gibson.