

For immediate release

MEET THE CANDIDATES IN CYBER SPACE

Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce – Bethany Bland, 815-625-4500

The Rock Falls Chamber is utilizing a revolutionary new way to help the public meet their candidates for the April 4th consolidated election, Facebook live. “In recent years attendance and viewing of local meet the candidate forums have dwindled right alongside voter turn outs. The Rock Falls Chamber has hosted candidate forums for years and feels that helping the public understand the issues and the goals of candidates is vital to the health of our community. Social media platforms are the future of communication, and we realized we can communicate to the people we have been missing in a whole new way,” says Bethany Bland, President/CEO of the Rock Falls Chamber.

All candidates running for any office within Whiteside County are invited to take part in the Rock Falls Chamber’s Meet the Candidates online forum. The forum will be displayed and hosted a different format than the typical forum, where multiple candidates converge, even debate all in one place at one time. Instead, candidates will be invited to schedule short interviews that are recorded and posted live on Facebook. All candidates will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves and answer questions relevant to their election. Viewers can tune into Facebook to watch live, or check out the posts at their convenience.

“We are hopeful that the new format will allow more people to be aware of the candidates running to represent them. They may even learn a little bit about local government and have the opportunity to be inspired to get involved in a new way. We are always looking to utilize technology to expand our mission and Facebook live is the perfect fit,” says Bland.

Both candidates in contested and uncontested races are invited to participate. Candidates may schedule an interview to be hosted between March 27th and March 31st, by calling the Rock Falls Chamber at 815-625-4500. Voters can visit the Rock Falls Chamber’s Facebook page for a listing of candidate interview times as they become available and watch the videos of the interviews.

www.facebook.com/rockfallschamber

Meet the Candidates Online Forum

Congratulations! You are running for an elected position and we would love to share your story with voters. Due to dwindling attendance and the significant time commitment it takes to organize a Meet the Candidates televised forum, we have decided to try something new. Yes, you are our guinea pigs, but we have lots of experience in hosting Facebook live events and online videos posts before. Consider this an opportunity to get your message to the public in a brand new, highly relevant way. You are utilizing the cutting edge of technology and communication. We are here to help educate the public about who is running for office and the issues facing our local leaders.

Here's the format/rules:

- 1) Candidates' interviews will be hosted Monday 3/27-Friday 3/31 between the hours of 7:30am-4:00pm. You must schedule your interview by March 29th to be included and we highly recommend scheduling as soon as you can. Interviews will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis. Interviews will be one candidate at a time, not in a group forum format.
- 2) Candidates running in contested races will be given up to fifteen minutes for interviews. Candidates running in uncontested races will be given up to five minutes for interviews. Candidates can use as much, or as little time as they would like, up to the time limit.
- 3) Each candidate will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves, then will be asked a series of questions by the interviewer. Questions may vary slightly from candidate to candidate depending on the length of time they use for their introduction.
- 4) Interviews will be recorded and posted live on Facebook. They will remain on Facebook throughout the election.
- 5) Candidates are welcome to "share" and utilize their own interviews in any way they see fit.
- 6) We reserve the right to add additional rules, applicable to all candidates as we see fit. Rules will only be added if their help to facilitate an additional level of fairness for all candidates. New rules will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner to all candidates.

For questions and to schedule your interview contact the Rock Falls Chamber at 815-625-4500.

Thank you for considering joining on our forum. We hope this will be a great benefit to our community and appreciate your support in participating, if you see fit.

Sincerely,

Bethany Bland
President/CEO