

Liz Gajdos for Hays County Judge

San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce Hays County Judge Candidates Questionnaire 2026

1. Describe your experience, areas of expertise, and leadership style and how you feel they will make you an effective County Judge.

Former Hays County Judge and Business Owner. I was county judge during the downturn of the economy and guided the county to a successful recovery; protected the aquifer by strengthening the subdivision rules and buying development rights; expanded access to healthcare with Communicare and the health department; negotiated a road contract with TXDOT that repaid the county for its expenditures on state road construction (today the county receives repayment and those funds are used on county road repairs instead of new debt); and live streamed Commissioner Court meetings.

I believe that the citizens of Hays County should be the first voice heard over consultants. My management style is whatever it takes to get the job done.

2. How would you balance the explosive growth we're seeing in Hays County with the wants and needs of our county and community, while staying in compliance with Texas law?

Growth needs to be managed in accordance with our environmental infrastructure. Water will be the limiting factor. I would continue to push the legislature for more development tools for the county. When I was county judge, I worked with 16 other ground water reliant counties writing legislation that did get through committee but it never reached the floor. We had never gotten a bill out of committee before. Unfortunately, that group of counties has not tried again.

3. The County Judge often brings together cities, school districts, regional partners, and state agencies to solve complex issues. Describe your approach to building consensus and collaborating with diverse stakeholders.

What I have found successful in building coalitions to address complex issues is to first listen, find the common denominator among the group and build consensus from there. Sometimes complex issues are solved by taking small bites at a time. Quick small successes build good partnerships as we conquer the tougher issues. Checking in with leaders periodically, building relationships before an issue arises is paramount to successfully tackle contentious issues.

4. What can the County do to encourage existing business growth and new business attraction?

The county should be focused on small business growth and retention. Working with the City of San Marcos, and Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area for training grants and hiring incentives would be a good start. Tax abatements for large corporations are not in the best interest of San Marcos and should only be a tool used if necessary to bolster jobs in needed industry areas.

5. If elected, how would you strengthen partnerships with Texas State University to support workforce development, entrepreneurship and regional prosperity?

Recognizing that AI in the next few years is going to dramatically alter the landscape for jobs, the county along with the University need to determine, sooner rather than later, which fields are going to be affected with losses and which will grow in need. Both the county and the university need to support job training and retraining programs for the areas of need now. Waiting to figure it out is not an option.

6. What are your top priorities for improving transportation/mobility in the county and advocating for state and federal transportation funding?

Top priority is relieving congestion. Dollars for governments are strained and need to be used in the most effective way. Before we look at building new roads, we need to make sure it does not add to congestion issues and that it actually relieves them. Mass transportation needs to be a priority in areas where roads cannot or citizens do not want roads expanded. The university and county need to move the seasonal influx of students more efficiently instead of adding more traffic downtown and surrounding areas.

7. Housing affordability and availability are major concerns for employers and residents alike. What role should Hays County play in expanding housing choices while maintaining responsible growth?

Supporting agencies and 501c3s that address the housing need is essential. Making sure that the county adequately funds leasing assistance, affordable housing development programs and encouraging development of subdivisions that diversify in housing classifications is essential.

8. If Hays County received a \$5 million grant that could be used for any project or initiative, how would you choose to invest it and why?

I would invest the \$5 million in animal shelter diversion programs which include spay and neuter, robust marketing for adoptions, support for fosters and medical assistance. The need in Hays County and the strain the San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter puts on the citizens and City of San Marcos is untenable. Because of the current situation, animals have gone through several unrestrained breeding cycles and packing in rural areas is on the rise. Coupled with no county-wide solution, we risk the health and safety of our citizens.

9. Please review the San Marcos Chamber's "Government Relations & Advocacy Guiding Principles" document. Do you agree with all of these statements? Please describe below any statements you do not agree with.

I do agree with the water statement but I would add that any water sources that are new must be senior rights. Junior rights to new water sources puts the businesses and homes that rely on the new water at risk. We cannot grow our economy if our water is reallocated because we have junior rights.

10. You may use this opportunity to provide any additional information you would like members of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce to know.

I want to thank the Chamber for the opportunity to participate in this forum and look forward to the meeting. I am asking for your vote and support so that we can move forward together in Hays County in a positive way for all that do business, live, work and play here.

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