

BizPac 2008 Candidate Information

Name: **Cynthia N. McCollum** Phone: **(256) 658-9822/Cell (256) 658-9822**
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Home Address: **193 Pin Oak Drive/Madison, AL 35758**

Public Office You Are Seeking: **Madison City Council, District One**

Campaign Address: **193 Pin Oak Drive, Madison, AL 35758**

Education: **BS - Alabama A&M University (Psychology/Sociology in the School of Education/ Executive Business Management Studies at Emory University**

Work Experience:

Huntsville Girls Club	Executive Director	1976 - 1985
New York Life Insurance Company	Field Underwriter	1985 - 1991
USAMC Logistics Support Activity	Executive Assistant	1991 - Present

Community Involvement :

Board Member North Alabama Gas District
Member, Executive Committee of the Alabama League of Municipalities
Vice President, Board of Trustees Alabama Municipal Worker's Compensation Fund,
Vice Chair of the US Space and Rocket Center Foundation
Member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Member of the Greater Huntsville Chapter of the Links, Inc.

Past Affiliations: Board Member, Madison County Senior Center, Voluntary Action Agency (Volunteer Ctr), Community Action Agency of Madison/Limestone Counties, Kids on the Block , Family Services Center, Big/Brothers/Big Sisters, and the Madison Drugs Offer No Tomorrow Program

National Involvement:

President, National League of Cities
Member of the Advisory Council of the National League of Cities
Past President, National Black Caucus of Local & Elected Officials
Past Board Member, Board of Directors of the National League of Cities

Previous Political Experience:

Madison City Council

May 1989 – Present

Campaign Organization (staff and key volunteer leaders):

Michelle Durig

Community Outreach Director

Robert Salinas

Director of Communications

Jerrel McCollum

Finance Chairperson

Are you a graduate of the Committee of 100's Political Training Institute? **Yes, I have attended the training offered, but I am not sure if completing the weekend training is considered as "graduating". If so, then yes.**

Have you received any other political training?

As stated above, I have taken the political training offered by the Committee of 100 prior to the last two campaign cycles.

Are you a graduate of the Leadership Huntsville-Madison County program? **Yes, I am also a graduate of Leadership Alabama.**

How much money have you raised to date for your campaign? **\$2,100**

1. Why are you running for this office and what do you hope to accomplish during the next four years?

ANSWER: In short, because I love Madison and everything that it represents – America at its best: safe streets, great schools, healthy environment, and family oriented morality. I serve because I have a passion for this city. Webster defines “passion” as the “emotions as distinguished from reason”. In other words my head wonders why I do this but my heart knows why. Because I love service and I am fulfilled by service. To get anything substantive done, involves incessant negotiation. One day we can be in good spirits, working together, and the next day at each other's throats over something that everybody feels passionate about. I've learned not to make any of the issues personal. It's when you internalize them and make them personal that you experience the greatest stress. Get the job done, seek results, work toward consensus, and don't make it personal. It's as simple -- and complicated -- as that. I also believe that this city government needs my perspective. My voice has always been one of unselfish reason and compassion for the human element of our decisions and has oftentimes been the thread that ties our collective spirit of service together.

In spite of many past obstacles, Madison has enjoyed tremendous growth and because of our careful fiscal policies, we have been able to maintain an optimistic quality of life for our citizens. But, we are at a unique moment in America that without careful decisions in the next four years, we could very easily become plagued with the very serious problems that are facing other cities our size. Problems brought on by the housing crisis, failed infrastructure, and the like. As President of the NLC, I am in a unique vantage point to not only recognize the pitfalls, but to also offer viable solutions should they arise. So, naturally I want us to continue to maintain our strong fiscal stance, to increase our public safety workforce, to grow our economy, but I want us to also begin the efforts of protecting our environment, and thinking more regionally in our growth approach.

My greatest desire as the representative of District One is one that is closest to my heart and the most frustrating. For years, I have worked tirelessly to secure funding from every source to revitalize the Pension Row area. Because of Madison's high per capita income, we have not been able to qualify for any outside funding. But, I have a glimmer of hope. I have forged a relationship with executives from Freddie Mac who are aggressively working to make it a project that will bring together many agencies seeking a solution. This endeavor is my dream of making Madison great for all of its citizens.

2. Do you see a need for a long-range vision for Madison and/or Madison County? If so, how should it be developed?

Of course a long-rang vision is necessary and I believe that for us to truly develop a vision for Madison/and or Madison County we need to engage our citizens in the

process of determining the future of our areas. Many successful cities in America have been so because they connected the citizens to local government in a democratic framework of civility and responsibility. We as elected officials can only be effective in accomplishing our goals if we can improve citizen's trust and empathy. If we can get them involved they will develop a better understanding of the complexity of many of the issues facing us, we get input from a broader audience, we get a buy-in from stakeholders, and most importantly the entire community becomes accountable for results. I believe that with this kind of approach on a regional level, we will be more able to develop our future vision.

3. What do you believe is the Mayor/City Council's role in economic development? Do you support city contributions and participation in the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville-Madison County?

A community's spirit, its history, its recreational and cultural amenities, a welcoming atmosphere, affordable housing, skilled workers, an efficient means to get to work, and good schools all create a sense of "place", if you will. It is a big mistake to always look for the big ticket employers, but instead I think it is important for us to invest in existing business clusters - these successful mom and pop businesses. As a governing body, it is not only our responsibility to ensure a business friendly license process that will foster the "we want your business" attitude, but to also communicate these strengths that are unique to Madison in the global market. These assets, in turn, can drive sustainable economic growth and potentially serve as magnets for new business investments.

I have always supported the need for our participation in the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville-Madison by providing funding at a level that is affordable for Madison. We cannot operate in a vacuum and really need the expertise of the Chamber on so many levels. Tommy Overcash has been vital in fostering a better relationship with the City and the Chamber, and I am very grateful for his leadership in this role.

4. Do you support strategic marketing and incentives to stimulate retail/sales tax development? If so, what is your vision for this effort?

I do, but at the same time, I believe that we should not be allured by the fad of giving away the farm by offering overly generous tax incentives to target businesses and economic development projects for what we believe to be the economic future of Madison. Our sister city to the West was overly generous in their promised incentives to what I believed to be the detriment of every other City service, and I thought there is no way that I would ever offer those kinds of incentives regardless of the perceived payback. I believe that steady, realistic incentives as we have done in the past are more in tune to the vitality of our bedroom community.

5. Do you support city formation of a Madison ambulance service or do you believe the current non-profit HEMSI countywide service to be the best option?

I do not support the formation of a Madison ambulance service. Not only is it cost prohibitive with huge liabilities, but there isn't a need to do so. HEMSI is the cream of the crop and they are providing the kind of service in which we can rest assured that our citizens are being treated with dignity and excellent medical treatment. The is the classic, "not broken, no need to fix" service!!

6. Do you support efforts to better attract and retain the young, professional workforce to this community to fill advance technology and other jobs? Do you have additional ideas to strengthen these efforts?

Absolutely!