

BizPac 2008 Candidate Information

Name: Jean T. (Tommy) Overcash

Phone: 256-651-0020

Home Address: 110 Sanoma Drive
Madison, AL 35758

Public Office You Are Seeking: Madison City Council, District 5

Campaign Address: 110 Sanoma Drive
Madison, AL 35758

Education: BSEE; Mississippi State University;
MBA; Florida Institute of Technology

Work Experience: Senior Systems Engineer with SYColeman Research currently working on an MDA missile program.

Community Involvement: Board member Asbury Community Thrift Store, North Alabama Gas District, and Liaison to Huntsville/Madison County Library Board. Member of Asbury United Methodist Church, Optimist Club, Madison Chamber of Commerce, Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce, Madison Friends of the Library, Madison Station Historical Society, Madison Arts Council, Huntsville/Madison County Botanical Garden and Land Trust. Volunteered with Boy Scouts, many youth sports organizations, and Madison City School PTAs and other school organizations.

Previous Political Experience: Madison City Council (previously President), Madison Planning and Zoning Commission, Madison City Human Resource Committee, Madison Industrial Development Board, and Madison Beautification and Tree Board.

Campaign Organization (staff and key volunteer leaders): Campaign manager and treasurer

Are you a graduate of the Committee of 100's Political Training Institute? No

Have you received any other political training? Please describe. No

Are you a graduate of the Leadership Huntsville-Madison County program? Yes

How much money have you raised to date for your campaign? \$1200 from '04

2008 BizPac Interviews

Madison Mayor/City Council Candidate Survey Questions

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

I have thoroughly enjoyed being on the Madison City Council for the last four years. I feel we have made great strides in making Madison government more responsive to the needs of our community and gotten many good things accomplished. I firmly believe that I have been an integral part of this team that has made this happen and sincerely wish to continue serving for the good of our city in this capacity.

We have made a very good beginning working on the City's infrastructure with limited resources. We have optimized the operating budget and many operations such as Public Works and IT. We need to continue to look for other ways to stretch the budget and increase revenues to better serve our community. One area that I am very interested in increasing our efforts is in retail recruiting with the addition of a staff person to directly work this area. I also strongly feel that we should continue to try to establish a stronger economic relationship with Huntsville/ Madison County for the betterment on North Alabama.

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

Yes, Madison and Madison County need a strong long range vision. In ten or twenty years the City of Madison may be mostly built out and no longer experiencing rapid growth. If we have done a good job of planning and preparing the infrastructure, Madison should continue to be a great place to live and its residents enjoy the quality of life that we have enjoyed this far. My long term vision for Madison, as well as the Huntsville/ Madison County area, is that it would always be a thriving community where people want to live and raise their families. However, this vision may well require much more cooperation and compromise by all parties than has been evident in some past activities.

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?

I feel that one of Madison's Mayor and City Council's role in economic development is to help the Chambers of Commerce develop an economic environment that stimulates current business growth and encourages new business opportunities in North Alabama. I also feel that the Mayor and Council must take an active and direct role in the economic development process. I think that the city should make financial contributions to and participate in both Chambers' activities. There are many benefits to our city and community as a whole if the chamber's efforts to promote business growth are successful. I also feel that there should be much stronger coordination between the two

chambers to better and more efficiently support the overall business growth of North Alabama.

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 support initiatives to stimulate retail development and the generation of sales taxes. These efforts generate most of the resources that fund our governments. If these initiatives successfully generate more revenue, then we have more funds for our governments to support the community. Sometimes these incentives do not necessarily have large short term benefit or even positive cash flow but the bigger picture and longer term benefits must be studied and weighed against the short term losses.

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 fielding of a Madison ambulance service as long as HEMSI continues to provide the excellent level of service that they now offer our community. Madison and HEMSI tried an innovative approach to solve a problem and it was not completely successful for several reasons. However, I still strongly feel that HEMSI offers our county the best possible service for our ambulance needs.

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

Almost all of us work in the North Alabama area and should be very interested in attracting and keeping the best possible workforce available to maintain our community's high tech industries as well as helping to provide a strong and fertile environment for new business opportunities. Compared to most areas of the country, our standard of living and quality of life are attractive. However, we should always strive to make them better especially for the young professionals which are the future of our local economy.

7. Do you support efforts to revitalize Madison's downtown? What incentives and efforts should be provided by the city?

I think revitalizing Madison's downtown is a great idea. Many communities have thriving areas like this that support the arts, dining, entertainment, and shopping activities. I believe that the city should provide the overall plan and provide the supporting infrastructure such as street improvements and parking to get this project moving. If done correctly, this area would be something the community could be very proud of and it would attract not only business but visitors as well.

8. What do you believe is the Mayor/City Council's role in public education?

I strongly believe that the role of the Mayor and City Council in public education is to make sure that the school system has the best possible leadership and adequate resources then let those professionals execute their jobs of providing excellent educational opportunities for the young people of our community. My family and I have been strong supporters of quality public education including the forming on the Madison City School System and the Schools Foundation which represents Huntsville, Madison, and Madison County schools. Madison's interest in establishing and maintaining the best possible school system has been and should continue to be the support and resources necessary to adequately fund our schools either at the system level or at the county level.

9. How would you work to improve cooperation between the Mayor and the City Council and within the City Council?

I believe that the ground work we have implemented in the last four years has improved relationships in Madison government. It is based on mutual respect, better communication, a spirit of cooperation and compromise, and a strong desire to do what is best for our community. Personal agendas, pettiness, and large egos have been set aside. All representatives have worked as individuals and as a part of the larger team to determine what is necessary to be accomplished to best serve our city. I will continue to strive in all my interactions to treat others as I would like to be treated and to act as an intermediary in resolving conflicts between individuals or organizations.

10. How would you work to improve cooperation with Huntsville, Madison and Madison County government entities? What opportunities do you see for shared services to improve our quality of life?

The same basic ground rules that have provided better relationships within Madison government also apply to the efforts to continue improving the working relationship with Huntsville and Madison County. I support efforts to mutually determine which areas of interest are best worked as joint efforts and in which areas we need our separate activities. Madison and Huntsville should not be enemies, in most cases what is good for one is also good for the other.

11. How would you work to stimulate state government support for local projects?

I believe the best way to stimulate state interest and support for our local projects is to work with our state legislatures to better communicate our needs and plans especially those that provide a unified benefit for our larger community. After all, these elected officials represent our area and they have a vested interest in the success of our efforts. They should help us work when necessary with the administrative areas of the state government. In general what's good for North Alabama should also be good for Alabama as a whole.

12. Do you support collective bargaining for public employees? If so, what do you see as the advantages of a public employee union?

I do not believe that unions and collective bargaining are necessary in today's environment, even though they were useful in the past, such as during the industrial revolution. The large scale abuse that they were useful in helping to eliminate are not as easily tolerated or hidden in today's world. In the government arena, I think citizens and elected officials have a responsibility to make sure that government workers are treated fairly, have safe working conditions, and receive a fair wage but it is not necessary to have public employee unions which could have the power to disrupt government service in times of dispute.

13. Give an example when you believe you did the right thing, but the decision may have cost you votes.

The smoking ordinance, the property tax increase campaign, increased building permit fees, westward expansion, and the tax improvement districts are topics that may not have been popular with portions of the voting public but are decisions that I still feel were in the best interest of the city.