

Wendell A. Koontz

Delta County District 3 Commissioner Candidate

I grew up in Indiana and graduated from Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana with a degree in Geology and Business and have worked in the mining industry for over 30 years as a mining geologist and as Manager of Land, Geology, and Exploration. Additionally, I am a member of numerous professional societies and serve as a Board member for the Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute. Currently I am a licensed Geologist in Wyoming and Utah and a Certified Geologist through American Institute of Professional Geologists.

I was elected Mayor of the Town of Hotchkiss in 2010 and served two terms with an additional 4 years as Trustee prior to that. During my time as Mayor, I served on multiple committees including Fairground Utilization, and as Delta County Municipal Representative to the Gunnison Basin Roundtable during the development of the Colorado Water Plan 2009 – 2015. Some of the more recent committees I've been working with include North Fork Coal Mine Methane Working Group 2017-2020, Oil and Gas Working Group; 2018-2020, and the North Fork School District Task Force. The Hotchkiss Chamber of Commerce honored me with the 2018 Citizen of the Year Award. There were multiple positive accomplishments for Hotchkiss during my time as Mayor including completion of two Master Plan revisions, development of a Source Water Protection Plan, and maintaining a frugal balanced budget throughout some very lean years.

Delta County has multiple ongoing issues that will be the focus of the County Commissioners during the next few years. If elected, you will see me engaged with economic development that is county wide and supporting primary jobs. An all-of-the-above advocacy for Delta County is needed including agribusinesses, tourism, retail, services, and natural resources. I will support the 2nd Amendment and our local and county Law Enforcement professionals and will continue to promote Back the Badge initiatives. Fiscally, I have always been a frugal budgeter and know that taxpayer money should be spent wisely and judiciously. You will also see me working with and supporting our school district, teachers, and students. My children grew up and graduated from Delta County schools, and I am still vested in their success.

I bring a deep and varied skill set to the County Commissioners position. Professionally, I have developed critical thinking skills that apply to budgets, managing multiple projects, and dealing with difficult circumstances and work ethics. As Mayor, I learned how to work with multiple groups often with divergent opinions and do so with respect. In 2015 and 2016 the Town of Hotchkiss dealt with mine closures and retail marijuana issues. The conflict and misinformation along with the media spotlight could have divided Hotchkiss. We worked diligently, and often quietly, to stay focused on facts and not emotions.

Most importantly, I bring optimism and solutions driven approach to government. If elected, as District 3 Commissioner, I will serve Delta County with the same work ethic and hopefulness for the future as I applied to mining.