

MERIDIAN TEA PARTY
2011 CANDIDATE/INCUMBENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate/Incumbent Name: Jerry Shields

Office aspired to/Currently holding: Supervisor, District 3, Lauderdale County

Campaign Point of Contact/Title: Jerry Shields, Candidate

Campaign Address: 8184 Evergreen Street, Collinsville, MS 39325

Campaign Phone – and – Fax: (H) 601 626 7839 (C) 601 479 3272, No Fax

Campaign email address: sdixiechief@ATT.NET Website Address: N/A

Education/Degrees/Certificates held: See attached

Military Experience/Highest Rate or Rank Held/ Occupational Specialty: USAF/MS Air National Guard

Chief Master Sergeant, 30000 Communications Years of Service: 39 yrs, 10 mths, 3 days

Business/Industry Experience/Highest Position held: United States Civil Service, OPM

GS-2210-12 Years of Service: 39 # Of Employees Managed: 18

Own Business Experience: N/A

Years of Service: N/A # Of Employees Managed: N/A

If elected to office, what will be your three top priorities? See attached

Simply put, what qualifies you for this office? See attached

How would you describe your political views?

Very Conservative - Conservative - Moderate - Liberal - Very Liberal - Socialist - Other

Please comment: see attached

What are the most important values and ethics you believe in and demonstrate as a leader? See attached

Identify three of your most important leadership accomplishments: _____

See attached

What is the proper role of government? _____

See attached

Are ethics as important as economics in elections? _____

see attached

Leaders often deal with conflict. Describe a recent significant conflict you have had to handle, what was the outcome? Are you satisfied with the outcome? Could you have handled it better? How?

N/A

What is your position with regard to the statement '... to the people's right to keep and bear arms?'

See attached

America's federal deficit has reached an all-time high, being measured in numbers never before expressed to the people. If elected/re-elected, what can you do to reverse this trend locally?

See attached

How do you feel about the economic outlook of Meridian, Lauderdale County and/or Mississippi?

See attached

The Mississippi Legislature recently tried to pass legislation dealing with illegal immigration (SB2197). What is your opinion about this law and similar laws and/or how should Mississippi be approaching this issue? How do you believe illegal immigration does/will affect this area and specifically your office should you win?

Illegal immigration could have an effect on some County offices and services. The Board may increase the budget for those areas if funds are available should it become necessary.

Are there any tax measures you would advocate to assist in job creation?

See attached

Do you believe children would get a better education if parents had the right to choose their children's school?

N/A

Do you support the "Charter School" concept of education?

N/A

Should teachers be required to pass standards examinations pertaining to the discipline they teach?

N/A

What are your views of the current school curriculum, textbooks and educational results in our area and what changes, if any, would you advocate?

N/A

It has been suggested that the Department of Education (and the office of the Secretary of Education) is an unnecessary extravagance. Should this government agency be abolished and bring control of education back to a state or local level?

Yes. Why? N/A

No. Why? N/A

Are you in favor of seeking funds from the Federal Government for projects in Lauderdale County?

See attached

Does Government at any level create jobs? If so, describe examples:

see attached

Do you favor indefinite extension of unemployment benefits for out-of-work people in Mississippi and how should those benefits be funded?

N/A

Should Mississippi's public sector employees be unionized or be able to collectively bargain?

N/A

Comments on any of the above topics you may wish to address further. Thank you for your input.

See attached

Use this space to explain or describe any issues or beliefs that pertain to the office for which you are running or personal information that you feel is important for voters to know about you or your campaign:

see attached

Thank you for completing this survey!

Meridian Tea Party members are grateful for your responses to our questions and in exchange for returning the completed survey to us, we will extend an invitation for you to participate in our Local Candidates Forum we plan to hold at The Temple Ballroom on a date to be announced.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the address below.

Respectfully,

Meridian, Mississippi Tea Party
P.O. Box 3399
Meridian, MS 39303

www.MeridianTeaParty.com

Email: candidates@MeridianTeaParty.com

Education/Degrees/Certificates held:

Graduate, Meridian Senior High School, Class of 1966

Meridian Junior College, 1 Year

Graduate, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama (Each listed curriculum)

- United States Senior NCO Academy
- Information Systems Management
- Air Force Project Management
- Telecommunications Operations Manager
- Cost Center/Resource Manager (Projects, Contracts, Budgets, and Personnel)
- Sexual Assault Awareness Course
- Anti-Terrorism Course
- Chemical Warfare Course
- Plans and Programs Management Course
- Computer Systems Management
- Designated Approval Authority Course
- Radio Systems Management Course
- Base Security Manager Course
- Management of Air Force Supervisors
- Administrative Specialists Course
- Suicide Awareness and Violence Prevention
- Combating Trafficking in Persons Course

Graduate, USAF Judge Advocate General

- Contemporary Base Issues Course,

Graduate, United States Civil Service

- Management for Supervisors

Graduate, State of Mississippi, Mississippi State Tax Commission

- Certified Appraiser

If elected to office, what will be your three top priorities?

(1) **Budget:** Stop each/all expenditures except payroll for county employees. Conduct a complete review of every line-item in the current budget; make the required motions to cut as needed. Stop blanket approvals and address the garbage situation. Ensure the Lauderdale County Public Library is funded. Address the purchasing procedures the County currently utilizes. *Ensure all monies owned the County is paid in full.*

(2) **Basic Services:** We shall provide basic services: Sheriff, Ambulance, LEMA, E911, and Fire Protection. Ensure all Deputies, EMTs, Volunteer Fire Fighters are trained and equipped with the necessary equipment to ensure quality of life. Provide safe, maintained road and bridges. Ensure the County has a fully trained, qualified Road Manager.

(3) **Investment in local economic development:** We need fresh ideas! A manufacturing plant would be great, but we need to help the expansion of our Medical Community, Navy Base, Air National Guard Base, Steel Industry, Trucking and Railroads to name only a few. Economic Development is paid by the local Tax Payers. I believe it's better to invest and grow locally than bring in a company already in trouble and give tax breaks. Let's give these tax breaks to our established companies first. Youth Programs are economic development from the ground up. This teaches both children and adults responsibility and is very important when the county is in competition for outside industry.

Simply put, what qualifies you for this office?

Leadership with extensive experience and training. Having managerial ability to plan, direct, coordinate and implement a wide range of work activity to include: Personnel Resources, Revenue and Budget, Project Management, actions to improve Operation Efficiency and Emergency Operations. Being a member of management for over 30 years.

How would you describe your political views?

Conservative

Please comment:

Presently, cost savings should be a primary goal of all governments. Having a tight County budget, taxpayers expect the most from their tax dollar. Cost matters and improvements are not free. All government benefits must not exceed our income. The returns on investment of taxpayer dollars determine the effective use of scarce resources.

What are the most important values and ethics you believe in and demonstrate as a leader?

A Supervisor/Leader is an individual who cannot be bought, is an individual who will make no compromise with wrong, an individual who is not ashamed or afraid to stand for truth and most important, being able to say “no” with emphasis when required for the citizens. A Supervisor must be vigilant in exercising his oversight responsibilities.

Identify three of your most important leadership accomplishments:

1. Being a member of the Lauderdale County Cancer Society for several years was a life changing event. Helping to raise funds for Cancer victims was very humbling. I was Chairman of Pig in the Park for two years which was conducted each July 4th. We were able to sell over 5,000 plates of BBQ to the public and raise a large sum of money. Those events evolved to the Relay for Life. I had a part in helping to establish the event which raises funds for the Cancer victims.

2. While working at the Air National Guard Base, Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, I was selected by Headquarters, Air National Guard, Washington, D.C. to help develop five secure computer centers for the Department of Defense. These Centers were to monitor security on military networks. We designed, equipped, staffed and operated these to ensure secure networks were being properly utilized with no intrusion. Our first year of operation, we saved the tax payers 62 million dollars. These centers are still in operation today.

3. Working as an Air National Guard Project Manager gave me the opportunity to work many projects from burying cable to installing radio, telephone, computer, and antenna systems. I was required to manage implementation of many projects to ensure architecture; configuration and conformity were in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines. I had oversight during acquisition of equipment, developed plans, and ensured all systems were integrated with trained staff for operation. Several times, our developed systems were picked as the “model” for others to follow

What is the proper role of government?

County Government was created with the purpose of providing state services. They were to be administered by a locally-elected executive body to provide the taxpayers with basic services. I believe the basic principles and roles of government are:

- Listening
- Being Involved
- Conducting the core business of the county
- Manage all changes that will effect the County taxpayers

Are ethics as important as economics in elections?

Yes: Every form of government is operated by men and women who are paid by the taxpayer for their service. These individuals must make the proper choices everyday which effect individual lives and well being. Taxpayer satisfaction should be the prime focus of our government at every level. Manipulating numbers, spreading false rumors and providing information on bids to name a few, are choices an individual makes until they are exposed. Numbers and misinformation have a direct effect within the economic structure of our government system.

What is your position with regard to the statement...*to the people's right to keep and bear arms?*

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution is the part of the United States Bill of Rights that protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. Being a member of the United States military for 40 plus years shows my motivation toward freedom for the United States of America!

America's federal deficit has reached an all time-high, being measured in numbers never before expressed to the people. If elected/re-elected, what can you do to reverse this trend locally?

- Increase County Government Transparency... **The People Have a Right to Know**
- Reduce Operating Cost
- Eliminate Waste
- Reorganize the Work Force
- Implement new Purchasing Procedures
- Outsource some Operations
- Use e-payments as much as possible
- Educate the Tax Payer. Keep them informed on all matters
- Downsize the amount of equipment purchased

How do you feel about the economic outlook of Meridian, Lauderdale County and/or Mississippi?

The economic outlook will be better if we promote ourselves. Location, Location, Location. Look where Lauderdale County is located. Railroads (5), Interstate Highways (2), longest civilian runway in Mississippi, the Climate, the Arts, Steel Companies, Medical Services, (East Mississippi State Hospital, Anderson, Rush, to name a few) new Hotels, industrial expansion available. Mississippi State University, Meridian Community College, and the MCC Workforce Development we have to offer. Remove **'A Retirement Community'** from all signs and advertisements (shoots us in the foot). Working together to promote Lauderdale County will enhance the economic outlook.

Are there any tax measures you would advocate to assist in job creation?

The county and city has in place an established program for tax relief. Additional time could be afforded based upon the more employees employed, the longer the tax breaks. We should have on-site reviews to ensure all tax relief is justified. Certain areas of the county could be designated as a tax break location. Identify areas for development. Reduce the Real Estate and Personal Property Tax for a new business or industry. We should assist in every way possible.

Are you in favor of seeking funds from the Federal Government for projects in Lauderdale County?

Lauderdale County must learn to stand and operate on its own. We must first clean up the mismanagement of funds, wasting of funds and stop the idea that we will borrow money to operate. Citizens talk about the misuse of equipment, waste of man-hours, and how the County Government doesn't have a plan or direction it should be following. If after cleanup of local operations, or after a major destruction of property, I would be supportive for assistance from the Federal Government. Our "Balance Sheet" should reflect our financial status showing we have a valid need. Be warned, most of the time, these funds have to be paid back and have guidelines that must be followed. Let's not forget, the Taxpayer pays the final tab.

Does Government at any level create jobs? Is so, describe examples:

Yes, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: This program included the following:

- It created jobs and promoted investment and consumer spending
- It provided federal tax incentives
- It created spending in education, health care, infrastructure, and the energy sector.

Lauderdale County; The two most damaging factors when dealing with Economic Development;

- (1) High Taxes: The Board of Supervisors and the City Council should ensure taxes are kept at the lowest rate possible.
- (2) Bad Schools: The two school districts should ensure the best education possible with the lowest tax rate possible.

Comments on any of the above topics you may wish to address further. Thank you for your input.

Budget: There are additional concerns I have that effect the budget. These are:

- The Loblolly pay off which is \$882,400.00 per year until 2026
- A County Wide Weather Alerting System
- The Juvenile Center Operations
- The Library
- The Agri-Center
- The Youth and Recreation
- Future mandates from the Federal Government concerning Road and Bridges
- The Court House Annex

Use this space to explain or describe any issues or beliefs that pertain to the office for which you are running or personal information that you feel is important for voters to know about you or your campaign:

Personal: I am a lifelong resident of Lauderdale County. I lived for 35 years at 3538-36th Avenue, and 7 years at 8184 Evergreen Street, Collinsville, MS. I married Cathy Slay; we have been married for 42 years with two children and four grandchildren. We are members of Fellowship Baptist Church and I am a member of the Republican Party.

Supervisor: I will be your working Supervisor.

- I will represent all citizens of District 3 both City and County.
- I want the Tax Levy Rate reduced without any reduction in Basic Services.
- I will be accessible.
- I will return you telephone calls.
- I do not have or operate a private business.
- I do want to hear what every taxpayer has to say about all subjects the Board addresses. I want the public to have a chance to speak at the start and end of all meetings.
- I want the meeting agenda posted on the county web site two days before the scheduled meeting.
- I work for you; tell me what you want done. You're the Boss.
- I will practice good clean professional government for the tax payer.
- I will be decisive, humble, yet I am my own man. No special Interest Groups control me.