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## Desert Hot Springs council, mayor hopefuls discuss priorities

### Seven candidates are running for positions in Desert Hot Springs



*Desert Hot Springs candidates for November 5, 2013 elections. / Desert Sun file*

**DESERT HOT SPRINGS** — Seven candidates are vying for two City Council positions and the mayoral seat on Nov. 5 in this city facing budget deficit, commercial development and job creation issues.

In the mayoral race, incumbent Mayor Yvonne Parks faces Desert Hot Springs Councilman Adam Sanchez and John-Paul Valdez to keep her position.

Running to keep their Desert Hot Springs City Council seats are Scott Matas and Jan Pye, whose challengers are Joe McKee and Robert Bentley.

In her ballot statement, Parks said she's proud of the city's "many successes" and that the "local economy is growing and new major retailers are choosing Desert Hot Springs. This means new businesses and new jobs."

The city is leading the Coachella Valley in increased sales and bed tax revenues, she said, and she'll continue to advocate for increased public safety.

"We have made tremendous progress toward cleaning up our most troubled neighborhoods, and it shows," she stated.

As of Oct. 19, Parks had raised \$18,740 in campaign contributions, spent \$27,136 and has \$3,396 in cash on hand.

Sanchez describes himself as the candidate who will be a new leader in fiscal leadership. The City Council approved an "\$18 million budget knowing that we only have \$16 million. I voted no because it was an irresponsible decision," according to his ballot statement.

His priorities will be "fiscal responsibility, public safety, job training and cleaning up our city — both physically and politically." His new approach to leadership will attract the "right kinds" of economic development and business to the area.

Sanchez raised \$19,057 in campaign contributions, spent \$17,992 and has \$1,065 cash in hand. As of his last filing, his biggest donor was D & E L and Co. LLC.

A former television economist and financial blogger, Valdez said in his ballot statement that he is not a politician. As mayor, he would use his "education and language abilities to help grow our city's economy and reach out to the international community more effectively ... I see this city on the hill that deserves so much more, and I have the management skills best suited to this office."

Campaign contribution forms for Valdez were not provided by the Desert Hot Springs City Clerk's Office in time for this article.

Four candidates are running for two positions in the City Council race. The winners will be the top vote-getters.

Incumbent Mayor Pro Tem Matas described himself as the "pro-business and pro-public safety choice for Desert Hot Springs" in his statement. He would continue "creating and sustaining positive and productive programs that serve the quality of life" of residents.

He also stated his continued support toward protecting police and fire staffing levels to "safeguard our community."

Matas has raised \$16,691, spent \$13,447 and has \$3,255 in cash on hand.

Pye, the other incumbent in the council race, said her priorities are “a stronger local economy and more local jobs.”

“Desert Hot Springs loses more than \$2 million in sales tax revenue every year that must change,” she said. “It is my priority to attract new businesses and keep those tax revenues in our own community.”

Pye has raised \$13,306, spent \$10,549 and has \$2,757 in cash on hand.

As of the last filing, the largest contributors to the Parks, Pye and Matas ticket have been Skyborne Ventures LLC and CREPAC.

Retired corporate manager Joe McKee’s main goals will be crime prevention, fiscal responsibility, downtown revitalization and fairness, according to his statement.

“Desert Hot Springs faces a budget deficit,” he said. “I have the experience and background to put our financial house in order. I oppose any new taxes on the hardworking people of Desert Hot Springs.”

McKee has raised \$34,636, spent \$27,499 and has \$3,096 in cash on hand. Of his campaign finances, \$10,000 is a loan from himself that remains unpaid. His other largest contributor in the latest filing is Five Star Gym and Fitness, which made a \$5,000 campaign donation.

An author and journalist, Bentley said on the ballot his goals will be to elevate the city’s reputation and “take America back. Government messes up — you pay the price.”

Bentley filed a form stating he didn’t plan on raising more than \$1,000 on his campaign.

To find your nearest polling place, visit

<http://www.voteinfo.net/voterInformation/root1105/pollplac.htm>.