

Candidate Information:

Joshua T. Hartke  
County Board District #6  
303 S. Fair St.  
Champaign, IL 61821

Ph: 217-390-2808  
e-mail: [jthartke713@yahoo.com](mailto:jthartke713@yahoo.com)

I do not own a business, but my fiancée is heavily involved with Browne's Fine Jewelry.

1. I am not an incumbent, but I have a great deal of public and private sector experience that I believe can enhance the performance of the Champaign County Board. I have worked as an IT developer with several private companies and the University of Illinois. For nearly four years I served as an administrator with IDOT District 5. I have also worked for several local restaurants. I have always been very involved and informed on government issues from the very local to the world level.
2. I would support a sales tax rebate for new small business start ups who pay rent on their business property. A percentage of their monthly rent could be deducted from their sales tax payments. I am also pushing for a property tax shift from owner occupied housing and small businesses towards out of community developers and large rental operators. I am also for preservation of agricultural zones, as they bring income into our community over the long run, as opposed to residential development, which only provide short term construction. We also have a very high inventory of unsold housing in this county, and new residential developments only slow the reduction of that inventory. I would also push for an increase in transportation spending.
3. The national climate of fear regarding a bad economy trickles down to the local level, and people are not spending. Part of that is a lack of good employment. We need to encourage businesses to hire in this community, and find new ways to bring other industries into this community. Wind power and other green development are key areas where this county can improve and create high paying jobs. Agriculture, something I am very familiar with having grown up on a farm in Effingham County, is also very key to this community. Agricultural products and education are the top exports of our county. Farmers spending their money in town is one of the major drivers of our local economy. They are the best customers for our small businesses. We need to encourage new agricultural products and development in our farm rich county.
4. By setting property tax levies, the county board directly affects every property owner in the county, including businesses and farms. That is why I support the levy shift towards those who develop huge properties, some of which still sit empty years later. These properties drive down other property values, and reduce the rental opportunities for local folks who own grandma's old house or one or two properties for a nest egg. The county board also sets county sales taxes, which are high enough, and I would never support raising.

5. I would not vote to raise sales taxes. I would not vote to raise the county property tax levy unless it were under extremely extreme circumstances. I would, however, vote to shift that levy burden from local home owners and small business owners who occupy their own property, to large developments and multiple property owners.
6. I believe the Auditor should be elected. I do not understand how the County Board could appoint its own watchdog. Positions like Sheriff, Coroner, and Clerk require a far more specialized skill set, yet we elect them. It is the Auditor that is supposed to be the people's person to insure the County Board spends their money wisely. It is key that this position answer to the people. On another note, I would be for folding the Recorder's office into the Clerk's office.
7. It is part of the business of governance to be aware of and coordinated with the other units of government in a district. At IDOT we did a lot of Jurisdictional Transfers, where we would build roads and then the county would take over their maintenance. The new Curtis Road interchange is an example of how the state worked with the city to create a great public work. I think there is plenty of room for improvement in this area. The agreement between the Champaign County Board of Health and the CU Public Health District is another example of an intergovernmental relationship that could work more smoothly.
8. I believe that we need to go back and readdress CUUATTS. It was developed before the recent economic crash, and we need to reassess transportation growth needs. I am for property owners having a strong say in what happens with development in their community. Prairie Fruits Farm is a local business gaining national acclaim in a new and growing food industry that would be very heavily affected by further expansion of Olympian Drive. We should be encouraging this new ag business, rather than hampering it. Instead, I would be for investing that building money in areas already developed that could use a shot in the arm (or just better parking). I believe Urbana has plenty of new development area near High Cross, and Champaign near Curtis Road. These already built interstate interchanges need to be where we focus new development.
9. In some circumstances, possibly. However I believe that the point of TIF districts is to get business started, then gradually return them to the tax base. There are plenty of developments that have now grown into successful businesses, that need to be removed from these districts. I also think that when you are talking about environmental mandates, businesses are responsible to the community for their actions that affect that community. Their right to develop and make money does not exceed the citizens rights to a clean, healthy community.
10. The Free Market works well in most cases, but there are times when the randomness of it must be focused in necessary directions to solve specific problems (war, environmental destruction, community safety, and public health). That is the role of government in our society. I am against the smoking ban, however.
11. The current County Board has been very responsible with its money. I would not be for any more across the board cuts, as they do not reward those who are already efficient. I also feel that they are a lazy man's solution. We should do our job and determine specific line items of waste. Folding the Recorder's office into the Clerk's office would be another efficiency initiative I would propose. I am also for tightening restrictions on those organizations which are property tax exempt.

12. I believe that the current structure of the county board allows it to be more diverse and better represent all the different segments of our county. It allows for more specialties among its members. The current board seems to operate rather efficiently when compared to other similar units around the state. I also do not think the county needs to pay an out of state firm to draw our districts for us. It is our job, and I believe the current map is very understandable and results in a board that looks like our county.
  
13. I am for finding ways to get business and government to work together to solve our problems, rather than just blame each other. I am a progressive moderate Democrat, but I can find ways to compromise with conservatives and Republicans. I live in the city, and understand its issues, but I grew up on a farm in a far more rural and small community, so I understand and empathize with the needs and desires of our rural and farming communities. I understand that agriculture and the University are our two most important tools in economic development, and I want to implement those tools in helping to drive our county forward. I also want to create an environment that supports small business start ups that will become the big businesses and employers of tomorrow.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further exposition on my stances.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my candidacy.