

The New Face on City Council

Part III : Lane Carter

By Brit Macias

San Angelo native and newly elected SMD5 Councilman, Lane Carter, sat down with CRN to share his council priorities and what led him to run in the first place.

The 28-year-old Central High School and Angelo State graduate—where he received his RN, BSN, and a Biology degree—explains he decided to run for council merely because San Angelo is his hometown and the citizens were unhappy. Many of those unhappy citizens came to him as he worked in the ER at Community and the OR at Shannon before moving to his current place of employment, the Shannon Surgery Center.



“It was probably about a year ago, around this time, that I decided to run for City Council. It was seeming like everybody was unhappy with how the City Government was functioning. They weren’t being talked with; no one was asking their opinions. Of course they’re the ones that vote the people into office and they were just tired of putting them in (office) and then not hearing from them and their voices just not being heard. Anything that was being placed that they disagreed with we would talk about it at work and with friends and family and one day someone just asked me, ‘Have you ever thought of running for city council; running for an office?’”

Carter wasn’t so certain at first, but came around to the idea. “At first I just said to myself I don’t know... I had thought of it but not really into detail. I thought it would be kind of interesting to do so and when more and more people came asking me ‘have you ever thought of it, do you think you could do it,’ I started looking into it more and more. Everything they had been talking about and (talking about) with me kind of compiled and I decided to put my name in the hat and go from there. Five months later, we’re here.”

Here we are, indeed after a heated race. Now that Carter has been elected and will be officially sworn in at the July 12th City Council meeting—his first—CRN inquired about his priorities while on council.

“Besides the big topics: infrastructure, trash, streets, and water, one thing I want to definitely change is the communication between the council and the people. Getting more people involved. I think that’s a big thing. It’s kind of discouraging to look and see what the voter base is and see how many people are actually involved... I would love to see a voter turnout of 25-30,000 people. That is a big thing for me. Letting them be more informed about what is going on. What the options are, asking their opinions, and getting a bigger opinion-base presented to the council. Then that would include the water issues, fixing the infrastructure, finding that water source for a reasonable price because no one wants to spend over 100 million dollars on anything.”

In regards to the Big Topics, Carter explains his stance on street reconstruction and the highly-debated trash contract. “If we have any excess money that we can use, we can look at (re)doing a street with better quality materials, especially a highly traveled area. That way maybe we can save and if we can get double the life out of it, it will pay off in the long run.”

His goal for the trash system, he states, is, “Getting the trash contract better to where everybody is satisfied. I think more bulk pickup in exchange of the every-other-week recycling probably would have been a good deal especially if the avid recyclers are given another can.”

Carter also tells CRN that many of his constituents want trash receptacles returned to alley pick-up. “I think we could probably look at some streets like Southland has, they’re still being picked up in the alley. There are probably some streets that are straight enough to satisfy the people. Of course, I’ve never ridden on a trash truck to witness that first-hand but if there’s something we could look at like that where some people could get what they want, but others let them know there’s not really anything with the new system (to do) besides the front (pickup)...I’m open for options.”

With Carter being such a young seated official—even thought to be a high schooler while going door-to-door—CRN asked his thoughts on the younger generation in San Angelo wanting to leave due to their idea that there is little of value to do here and few grocery and clothing shopping options.

“San Angelo is unique in that we’re the same but different from everybody else. Different as in the quality of life we have—we’re not big city. But, we’re close enough that we can go to the big city on vacation. That would be good for a certain age group. A lot of people like the hustle and bustle and being able to go to all the different places that they choose and when San Angelo doesn’t have it, that’s when they want to move to Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, or even out of the state to a bigger city.”

So, how does Carter think the City Council can help the younger generation want to stay and draw in new businesses, both nationally owned businesses and thriving local ones?

“One thing that I ran on is small business. I’m very pro small business and I think that if we show the bigger businesses that our small business community is thriving, certain businesses like Whole Foods or different chains like that would probably follow in a, ‘feed the small fish and the big fish will come,’ kind of situation, looking at showing and setting the example that the small business can do it and then the bigger businesses can come.”

With all the City ordinances and “Red Tape” in front of start-up businesses as well as the upkeep of those things to keep businesses open, CRN asks Carter if the Council can help alleviate some of that to make it easier to keep the doors open, or even get them open to begin with.

“I think so, in a way that we could probably work with the City and the Chamber and the permit department and planning. If we can lessen some of the restrictions on small businesses in that sense, then they can stay afloat and thrive and set that example (to bigger businesses) because no one wants red tape anywhere.”

With San Angelo being a College Town, among other things, we asked Carter what he thought of running at such a young age and being elected to represent the younger generation as well as his district. “Going door-to-door someone thought I was in high school still. I had to tell them ‘I just look young. I’m 28 and I’ve done this and this and this.’”

“That’s one of the reasons I ran,” he continues, “because there were no young people on (Council) and at some point they all start thinking alike. In my opinion, a healthy City Council would have a more split-down-the-middle kind of vote. Once you start getting 7-0’s or 6-1’s they’re all maybe thinking alike. Sometimes that’s not a bad thing, and I’m not saying it is a bad thing, but if it happens consistently, we need a change and a different perspective. If you put a group of people in a box, they’re going to start thinking alike.”

When it comes to motivating the citizens of San Angelo to stay or become more involved, Carter explains his approach. “In SMD5 I’m going to motivate (voters) by letting them know my face. That’s going to be (by) holding meetings and going door-to-door as a seated official. So if they see a seated official, a young guy, coming by and setting the example that might motivate them to keep involved instead of them just being discouraged and saying ‘this is just ran by the same ol’ people.’”

“People don’t take advantage of their right (to vote),” Carter explains, “A lot of people I hear (say), ‘It doesn’t matter if I go vote, it won’t change anything.’ Wrong. People got out and voted and it changed the outcome of SMD5 and police chief.”

In closing, Carter expressed his gratitude and high hopes for his future on City Council as the SMD5 representative. “I’m excited. I’m just grateful that they gave me a chance coming up against who I was going against, and I’m just grateful and humble (the people) gave me a chance to do the job... Thank you to all supporters.”

Until Next Time...

Brit Macias

Christian Reporter News

www.ChristianReporterNews.com

If you enjoyed, please forward to a friend and share!

© 2011-2016 CHRISTIAN REPORTER NEWS. Kathryn G Rowoldt - all rights reserved. You are welcomed to forward and share this KAT NOTES / BRIT NOTES with friends and family, but all rights are reserved and no part of this material may be published in any form without written consent from the CHRISTIAN REPORTER NEWS