

## **Abita Springs Mayor**

Daniel J. Curtis (I)

O.J. Pouncey (C)

Republican

Democrat

### **1) Why do you want to continue as Mayor of Abita Springs? (I)**

**Daniel J. Curtis (I)**

*I have never been the type of person who stops something before it is completed. In my first term we had to deal with COVID 19 and Hurricane Ida. These two events caused delays on very important projects. We were able to start numerous big infrastructure projects but were hindered by supply chain shortages and work restrictions as well as increased pricing for everything. We've been able to do many things over the past four years and have several major projects in the works on sewer, water & roads. I want to be involved in completing these projects so that Abita Springs can be prepared for whatever development comes.*

### **Why do you want to become Mayor of Abita Springs? (C)**

**O.J. Pouncey (C)**

*I would like to be the mayor of Abita Springs because I believe that the current administration isn't doing their job. Our ditches are clogged and don't drain properly during storms, contractors treat the town poorly and don't have proper oversight, our roads are in terrible shape, and residents have to beg for things like stop signs and street lights. These are things that we shouldn't have to ask for—they should be taken care of because they keep all of us safer and secure. If I were mayor I would address these issues first before embarking on any other projects.*

### **2) What are three significant accomplishments in your current term as Mayor? (I)**

**Daniel J. Curtis (I)**

*a. We were able to completely rework the bid specifications and scope of work for the gravity sewer line and lift station rehabilitation project to save money so that we could add funding for a Wastewater Treatment Plant rehabilitation project.*

*b. We have completed an Annex Building remodel and moved all administrative offices into the Annex Building returning an important town asset to service. This allowed for better more efficient work by town employees. The open-air environment allows for collaboration between all departments, the public and the administration. We are now focusing on Town Hall and the repair and remodel of the structure so that we can secure the future of that building for generations to come so that it can continue to be a gathering place for the community.*

*c. We negotiated an agreement with a local family to transfer 12 acres of environmentally sensitive property along the scenic Abita River to the town while also remove several properties off private treatment systems to protect from potential hazards & discharging into our river. This space will be returned to the community as a place for experiencing nature and viewing our beautiful river.*

### **What are three significant accomplishments in your political, personal, or business career? (C)**

**O.J. Pouncey (C)**

*The success I am most proud of is my family. I have a loving wife who supports me in all that I do and that is something I am very thankful for. I am also very proud to be a homeowner in Abita Springs and to also own additional property here. I was one of nine children growing up and my dad passed away when I was fourteen. No one has ever given me anything. I have worked hard all my life and I am a self-made man. I am proud of that.*

### **3) Please rank your top three priorities for the next four years, and outline your plans for implementing them. Indicate how your priorities will generate growth in the community while also preserving its roots.**

**Daniel J. Curtis (I)**

*a. Continue work on infrastructure improvements to water lines, sewer plant and a new water well so that we can meet the current and future needs of our system.*

b. A Safety Action Plan and Road Maintenance program for current and future improvements to roads, drainage, and complete streets. This includes roads, ditches, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and other improvements. This will help us secure needed funding and a plan for providing safe, easy access to our town.

c. Preservation of the Town Hall building. This building has always been a meeting space in the town for the community. The building is on the original historic application for the Town of Abita Springs, and we need to be good stewards and leave it in better shape than we found it. We will make needed structural repairs, make it more energy efficient through rehabilitating the windows, insulating throughout, repairing the floors, and upgrading ADA compliance wherever possible. Rental of this space for use by the community for their family celebrations is also a source of revenue for the town to secure the funding for maintaining the space now and in the future.

**O.J. Pouncey (C)**

My first priority would be to stop and listen to the people who live in Abita Springs. Addressing resident concerns is very important. Second I would address infrastructure. We need our ditches cleared regularly and there are still areas in our town that are holding water during storms. Our roads are in a sorry state. We have potholes in almost every street, poorly done patches, and some streets have poor signage or need better lighting. Without a stable foundation, we can't build. Addressing these issues will naturally draw more people to the town which will increase revenue. My third priority would be crime. We have way too many people running stop signs and speeding in our neighborhoods where children play. We also have teenagers that regularly damage property around town at night. Ticketing driving offenses could create revenue. Addressing delinquent teenagers would again make our town more attractive to visitors and business owners. We need to be safe from weather, storms, and people.

**4) Other than raising property millage rates, what plans, if any, do you have to increase town revenues in ways that are consistent with economic growth and a healthy, prosperous, livable, and safe community?**

**Daniel J. Curtis (I)**

a. Increase rental of town property for events in town hall, pavilion, parks, and the splash pad.

b. Increase promotion of online ordering by residents to increase sales tax revenue without creating any burden on the infrastructure.

c. Work with St Tammany Parish to increase development of sales tax generating businesses inside of our growth management area that are outside of town limits. Negotiate for Abita for a new Growth Management Agreement so that growth in areas other than Highway 59 will reflect in the sales tax numbers of Abita Springs.

d. Promote tourism and culturally based business in Abita Springs to bring visitors to our town to enjoy our festivals and spend money at our local businesses.

**O.J. Pouncey (C)**

This is a difficult question to answer because I don't think that increasing revenue is what we need to do. What we need to do is use the money we already have more wisely. Vanity construction projects shouldn't be taken on until we have handled the things that our town needs. Any money spent before the basics are covered is wasteful spending. I would also work hard to bring grants into our town. I have already begun talking with advisors in the Edwards administration about how grant programs can bring more money into our community.

**5) Do you have any recommendations for changes/modifications to current zoning and planning laws and decisions that will ensure that as the town grows, our cultural and historical significance will not be compromised?**

**Daniel J. Curtis (I)**

a. It is important for us to complete the Comprehensive Zoning review and the Planning Project to determine the future of growth in Abita. This includes review and revision of our Zoning Ordinances

*and a review of the Zoning Districts and update zoning maps to match with projected growth of Abita in the next 20 years.*

*b. We must strengthen our Cultural district to protect our historic ties to tourism and culture. This district should be the heart of our town and bustle with residents and visitors enjoying our beautiful community. This includes places to stay, eat, meet, and find entertainment. Zoning ordinances must support this goal. This will also help us draw in more culturally based business. Music and the arts along with family entertainment should be central to the development of this area of town.*

*c. We must create streamlined, clear processes for development of property in Abita Springs that provides for transparency and public input while also protecting the property rights of property owners.*

*d. We must work with parish & regional leaders to plan for future growth in Abita Springs and an annexation plan for properties on the outskirts of town where it is beneficial to the town.*

**O.J. Pouncey (C)**

*We definitely need to limit the size of the commercial buildings that we allow in Abita Springs. Some businesses are just too big. We also need to try to encourage business growth in areas that aren't directly next to residences. There are good areas in town that would benefit from businesses but they are ignored. You can't stop growth—I've been here a long time and this town has changed a lot. But you can make sure that the growth is smart growth.*