



[Close This Window](#)
[Print This Window](#)

★ COMMISSIONERS RETIRE / TWO NEW SWORN IN

C-T, December 29, 2016



Republican Dave Mapel
West District Commissioner



Republican Alvin Thompson
East District Commissioner

On December 29, 2016, newly elected officials were sworn in including West District Commissioner David Maple and East District Commissioner Alvin Thompson. Sheriff Steve Cox was sworn in by Cindy Fitzpatrick. They all began their duties in 2017.

Two County Commissioners Retire After 28 Years of Combined Service

Reception Honors Ken Lauhoff and Todd Rodenberg

By LAURA SCHULER
Special to the C-T

East District County Commissioner Ken Lauhoff and West District County Commissioner Todd Rodenberg are both retiring at the end of the week, effectively bringing to a close two A reception to honor them was held Thursday, December 29, 2016, from 2 until 3:30 p.m. at the Livingston County Courthouse.



Lauhoff's career at the courthouse began officially in 1996. He says that a good friend, Jerry Deardorff, urged him to run for office in the early '90s, and after attending the Commission's weekly meetings for a year, he decided to give it a shot. Although he didn't win his first campaign for the seat against Incumbent Charlene Coleman in 1994, his second attempt proved successful, and he began his career with Presiding Commissioner Eva Danner, and West District Commissioner Max Smith. "With their experience and great

leadership, they (Danner and Smith) helped me learn the job and I always gave it 100 percent effort," Lauhoff said.

Rodenberg, who is finishing his second four-year term on the Commission, had formerly served as the mayor of Chillicothe but said he had to give up that post because he and his wife, Jody, moved outside of the city limits. Rodenberg said he also had friends who encouraged him to run for the West District seat in 2008. "They knew I wanted to stay involved with local politics," Rodenberg said, adding with a smile, "So if people aren't happy with my performance as Commissioner, they should blame them." Rodenberg won a close primary election in 2008 against the late Kenney Warren and went on to win the general election in November. He ran unopposed four years later.

Looking back on the 20 years on the Commission, Lauhoff said there are many accomplishments he's proud of having a hand in, like the passage of the Use Tax to make county funds available to install the ground source heating and cooling system in the Courthouse. Those same funds, he said, were used to remodel the bathrooms on the Courthouse's first floor to make them accessible to the handicapped. During Lauhoff's tenure, several ordinances were approved including the ordinance establishing health regulations for Confined Animal Feeding Operations, another that regulates Adult Cabarets, and one for abatement of public nuisance properties. He also helped revise the County's planning and zoning ordinance and helped create a position for a county planning and zoning officer. Lauhoff said he's also pleased with the Enhanced 911 service in the county that came about during his service and the cooperative agreement between Livingston County and the City of Chillicothe to provide central dispatch for emergency services for more efficient operations. He also said he's glad to have partnered with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars to build the veteran's memorial on the south lawn of the courthouse. And he's pleased with the new parking lot and landscaping for the Courthouse's west side. Lauhoff says he's proud of the many new BRO bridges throughout the county, which are all wider and non-posted for safety and accessibility, allowing farmers to move their equipment where needed.

For Rodenberg, accomplishments he's proud of also includes the development and adoption of the county's nuisance ordinance and improvement of the enforcement of the county's brush ordinance. "Both of these (ordinances), much like our county health ordinance, are quality-of-life issues that make Livingston County unique because most counties don't have them on the books," Rodenberg explained. Rodenberg also noted that most of what he considers to be his accomplishments during his tenure as West District commissioner involved his service on many committees and boards because most have a mission to improve the lives of the impoverished and disadvantaged. "I enjoyed working on those kind of boards and hope my efforts have lightened the load for the people they served," Rodenberg said.

Both men agreed that the biggest challenge of their careers while serving on the Commission has been formulating a workable budget for Livingston County. "Twenty years ago after my first 30 days in office I told my wife, Brenda, that doing the county budget was the hardest thing I had ever done," Lauhoff said, adding, "Twenty years later it is still the same." Both Lauhoff and Rodenberg said that each year while in office, they struggled to balance the budget and, at the same time, meet the needs of the citizens. "This (formulating a balanced budget) has been a problem because we have had stagnant county revenues and increasing expenses each year," Rodenberg said. That, both men say, led to the closing of the Livingston County Jail and the transporting of prisoners to the Daviess Regional Jail during their tenure. They explained that the expenses involved with the upkeep of the County's aging jail, and the declining state reimbursement given to the county per prisoner played big factors in that determination. "It was a big decision, and it was the right one for our county," Lauhoff said. Rodenberg agreed. "Closing our jail was undoubtedly the toughest decision we ever made on the commission. Financially, we absolutely had no choice and, looking back, it was the right thing to do," he said.

Although both men will not be serving on the commission in April, Lauhoff and Rodenberg are both advocating for the passage of a half-cent sales tax proposal which will be featured on the ballot in 2017. Passage of that proposal, the commissioners say, will help continue to meet the needs of the citizens in Livingston County. "The bottom line is that our county is horribly under funded, but we have a viable plan to turn it around. We all want a first class county we can be proud of and passing the proposal in April is a giant step to reach that goal," Rodenberg said. While the men are actively working on passage of the sales tax issue in April, they both say they are looking forward to their respective retirements.

Lauhoff says he plans to slow down, relax and continue to enjoy life. "I am looking forward to accomplishing that goal," Lauhoff said. Rodenberg says his retirement will likely involve more hunting, fishing and golf, although he says his wife thinks he can't possibly do more than he already does. "I accepted that as a challenge and my retirement goal is to prove her (Jody) wrong," he said.

In parting, Lauhoff said he is thankful for having a chance to serve on the commission for the past 20 years. "I have traveled to many counties throughout the state, and Livingston County is the best. Our family is so proud

to call Chillicothe and Livingston County our home. I am thankful for the love and support this community has shown to our family," he said. Rodenberg also expressed his appreciation to his constituents. "Looking back, I have truly been blessed my entire working life. I had 30 years in education, two terms as mayor and two terms as county commissioner. I have had the rewarding opportunity that few people get to enjoy - a lifetime of helping other people.



C-T Photo by LAURA SCHULER

CAPTION: East District Commissioner Ken Lauhoff (left) and West District Commissioner Todd Rodenberg (right) are both retiring at the end of the week. Together, the men have a combined 28 years of experience on the commission. Photo by Laura Schuler

[Return to Top](#)

Livingston County Courthouse
700 Webster Street
Chillicothe, MO 64601

660-646-8000