

Berkowitz plans to keep promises for District 5

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Bob Berkowitz made three promises when he first ran for District 5 supervisor — to make Last Chance Grade a priority, to create a people’s forum and to help lower the cost of emergency room services. With his term nearing its end, he is proud to say he kept those promises, but there is still a lot of work to do.

That is precisely why he is a candidate for re-election — to finish the work.

Berkowitz's first promise was about Last Chance Grade, a three-mile landslide on U.S. Highway 101, which has threatened the passageway between Klamath and Crescent City for more than 30 years.

He, along with the other supervisors, made it a priority to focus on not just delaying the landslide, but finding a solution and alternative route. The results? They obtained \$50 million to commence that process and completion date, 2039, from the federal government.

But that is not good enough for Berkowitz, he wants to see the timeline moved up to 2030 at the latest.

“That’s when I’m shooting for. If we can get that done by then and get all the financing in place, we will then have accomplished the goal that we set out to get Last Chance Grade replaced with a new bypass,” he said.

He made his second promise after noticing the public comment portion at the board of supervisors meetings only allowed people to speak for three minutes.

“That’s frustrating for a person that spent all that time in coming to a board meeting and waiting to speak on their particular issue,” Berkowitz said.

Listening to his constituents is a priority for Berkowitz, so the first day he was in office, he enacted the “Daily Townhall Meeting.” Monday through Saturday, people can go to the Fisherman's Restaurant from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. and meet with one to two supervisors. To date, he has held over 1,500 town hall meetings.

“They don’t have to buy anything. They can just be there, and they don’t have just three minutes. They can spend a whole hour... This is their forum,” he said. “People can have a voice when they want to have that voice.”

Finally, he promised to try to lower the cost of emergency room services, and the board passed a resolution in favor of lowering the bills.

“The board of supervisors doesn’t have any control over the hospital, but we do have some influence and we started to use that influence with Sutter Coast Hospital,” Berkowitz said. “Because of all the pressure from the community and the board of supervisors, they were able to bring in a whole new physicians group and have lowered, as far as we can see, the emergency room services.”

Berkowitz made it a priority to follow through with what he said, to be someone people could trust. Now with new issues rising to the forefront, he is ready to guarantee more solutions.

“We have to show results and that’s why my theme basically is that I’m working for you, and my sub-theme is, ‘I made some promises. I kept those promises,’” he said. “A lot of people are going to promise you a lot of things. Take a look at their record. What have they actually done?”