

# Skoog-McKenney 'First Things First' — Water Must Be Priority for Next Governor

*Skoog-McKenney Announce Essential Governing Priority Highlighting Executive Leadership Needed to Build Consensus and Make Kansas can THRIVE*

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“

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*Mayor Curt Skoog*

Standing next to the Arkansas River with the Keeper of the Plains as a backdrop, Mayor Curt Skoog and Dr. Jen Bacani McKenney demonstrated their executive leadership calling for a “first things first” approach to ensure Kansas thrives moving forward. The campaign made the announcement to start off its THRIVE Kansas: R is for Rural Roots Where Water is Essential Tour, calling attention to its [THRIVE Kansas Plan](#).

“From the future of agriculture and ranching, to the innovation we need in business and industry, and most importantly for every Kansas family, the next Governor must prioritize addressing the water challenges we face,” said Mayor Skoog (D-Overland Park). “It is easy for candidates to say they are for agriculture or against data centers, but as a Mayor I know that's just playing politics and Kansans are tired of that. A Skoog-McKenney Administration will prioritize issues, using a first things first approach knowing that when we can build consensus and tackle the most fundamental issues, like ensuring water resources for generations to come, then other issues will be easier to tackle,” Skoog added.

Dr. McKenney (D-Fredonia) said, “As a physician, I'm trained to triage each situation. We address the most critical issues first and work through the situation systematically. We identify and deal with the underlying issues because they are key to all of the remaining challenges. My patients don't have time for theoretical debates or approaches that only treat a symptom without offering real healing. Mayor Skoog and I understand how to diagnose situations, consider options, and solve problems. Growing up in Fredonia and managing my practice and businesses there, I understand that for rural Kansas to thrive, we must secure our water resources so people can be healthy and plan to invest for the long term here.”

Skoog made clear he offers a leadership style and demonstrates success in bringing people together to govern with a “first things first” approach.

“Some candidates offer sound bites as solutions. Jen and I believe the answers to the challenges Kansas faces are best if they come from Kansans. As Mayor, I’ve convened thousands of citizens, stakeholders, and formed a consensus vision the council then finalized and implemented. That’s what distinguishes me from the others in this race, I’m not interested in imposing my views on people, or engaging in legislative bickering, I’m interested in finding solutions and making progress. Mayors get things done, and that’s what I intend to do as Governor,” Skoog said.

Skoog noted his father, a geologist and attorney, was on a state water commission in the 1970s and most water plans look 50-100 years to the future. “These aren’t new issues. Governor Brownback had an exhaustive study but offered no funding mechanism. That’s talk without action and everyone knows that solves nothing. Governor Kelly has called for a framework like the successful 40 year transportation program and a legislative task force will make recommendations in 2027.”

Skoog also noted that this isn’t about starting a brand new approach. “Too many Governors try to start a new process, we will build on the good work many thoughtful Kansans have put into solving these water issues — we need not start over. As Governor I will hold state agencies accountable and work with the legislature to make sure we complete a comprehensive water plan, get it funded and implemented, taking a huge step toward a thriving Kansas for generations to come.” Skoog pointed to recommendations of the Kansas Water Office, and the work of the Water Legislative Task Force, as the foundation of the work his administration will prioritize completing.

Skoog noted innovations in Precision Agriculture and advanced industrial approaches that are already working to reduce consumption. “I’m confident the private sector will continue innovating and offering tools to address the demand side, what the state must do is address water quality and reservoirs on the supply side so that all systems are working toward the same goal.”



Mayor Skoog and Dr. McKenney are running for Governor and Lt. Gov.

“Water issues are complex issues with many competing interests and essential to ensure our families, communities, farms, ranches, and industry can thrive. By making water a priority, demonstrating a first things first leadership style, I’m asking Kansans for the opportunity to tackle the toughest issues, just as I have for 21 years at the local level, as your next Governor,” Skoog said.

Skoog-McKenney THRIVE Kansas Tour: Water is Essential to Our Rural Roots

July 9 Wichita, Hutchinson, Garden City, Dodge City

July 10 Great Bend, Manhattan, Junction City

July 11 Junction City, Salina

July 12 Salina, Wichita

Wichita

Please contact the campaign to schedule interviews in these cities or by phone/Zoom.

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