

Mary Souza's Announcement of Candidacy for Mayor of CdA, May 31, 2013

Good Morning! Thank you all for coming out today, to this long-time community gathering place. It's a beautiful day, but the boat launch isn't looking its best right now and neither is McEuen Field. These are two highly visible reminders of what needs to change in our city, and that is: It's time for you to have a say in our local government!

I'm sure it will look nice when it's done, but wouldn't it have been great to have a vote on this massive project that will cost more than \$20 million and has radically changed an important part of Coeur d'Alene's history? If we all had had a vote, we would feel part of the process; we'd have a sense of ownership, of skin-in-the-game, of connection with the project. Instead it is a seriously divisive issue, separating regular people from the small group of power players making the decisions.

That is why I'm running for Mayor. I want to include everyone. Let's start to heal the divides. We can bridge the gaps and work together. And when there are major issues that will cost a great deal of money or change something sacred to our history, we'll have a public vote.

And we'll have city council meetings that are respectful and professional. We won't allow name-calling or juvenile behavior, and we'll listen to citizens when they speak, and they'll be treated well. We'll act like what we are—an \$80 million dollar public entity with 400 employees to serve all the people of CdA.

We'll keep our promises! We'll be accountable and responsible for any errors or problems that occur and we'll be careful with your money.

And as we do all of this, we begin the process of building trust again-- something that has been sorely lacking in our town. We, at City Hall, will treat citizens with respect, listen and give a vote on important issues. And, in turn, hopefully, citizens will begin to trust city officials to do the right thing in the daily operation of this town.

I bring some specific background to this endeavor: As a critical care nurse and nursing instructor, prioritization of needs was most important. As co-owner of a small business for 29 years, fiscal realities and employee relationships have been essential. As Planning and Zoning Commissioner and head of CdA's first Open Space Committee, my awareness about City issues increased, and as a political columnist for the Press and, more recently, the author of my own email newsletter about our local government, which I've sent out for several years now, my understanding of city issues has expanded tremendously.

When I am Mayor, I will continue communicating directly with you, offering information and opinion from my perspective.

But I need your help! Will you join me in this effort? Please talk to your friends and neighbors and convince them there is a way to mend the rifts in CdA. Together we can restore trust and pave a positive road forward. We'll all be better for it.