

**Frank Edwards –**

**Written Answers to questions submitted prior to the Forum.**

*What is the biggest challenge facing the City of Springfield? Explain how you would use your office and leadership as Springfield mayor to address this challenge.*

**1. The biggest challenge facing Springfield is economic development. There are two parts to bring success in economic development in our community: 1) A professional sales team, we have that with the Lincoln Land Economic Development Corporation, a partnership between the public and private sector. B) Give the sales team something to sell, it is the latter which the mayor can have the greatest impact. I would use my leadership and effort to, 1) lower utility rates 2) lower crime rates 3) stabilize taxes. We must make our community attractive so the professionals have something to sell when asking business to come to Springfield.**

*As Mayor, what would you do to improve diversification of the Police and Fire Departments?*

**2. I really believe this must start at the top and I'm talking about the very top, the Mayor's leadership should have diversification. We have slowly been making progress and it is now time to be more aggressive. I believe if the leadership team is more diverse we will have a better chance of new ideas coming forth and being more acceptable to the community.**

*Would you direct the Police and Fire Chiefs to create a Diversity and Inclusion Team within the departments to be used to reach out to people of color and to the low income population in our city? Or, what would you do to improve relationships between the Police and Fire and low income and persons of color?*

**3. I have a track record of a recruitment team for the fire department when I was Fire Chief. We need to start with recruitment at a young age, through community involvement. The best way to improve relationships is through an open door policy see what we can all bring to the table and then share the best ideas.**

*Please share any additional ideas or your vision of how you would diversify the City of Springfield workforce.*

**4. I can have all the ideas but it shouldn't just be me, a white male, with all the answers on diversity. True diversity will come with a diverse team thinking outside the box coming up with innovative ideas to solve our problems. This is what I would bring and love to lead.**

*Describe the partnerships, such as UIS, you are willing to pursue to improve city resources and outcomes.*

**5. A diverse team will be able to reach across a broad spectrum of our community to use all the resources we need to achieve our goals. Yes, I plan on partnering with other entities across our city to achieve these goals. I look forward to seeing what kinds of partnerships could be possible. UIS and LCCC are major resources for the city and I would be open to supporting partnerships with the colleges that could improve our city.**

*As Mayor, what actions will you take and/or what policies will you promote to desegregate Springfield?*

**6. One person, even the Mayor, cannot desegregate Springfield. Desegregation will take a diverse team of leaders, bringing new ideas to the table. This is not an old problem in Springfield, as Mayor, I will support and lead a team of community leaders committed to solving the problem.**

*Describe specific ways in which the City could create mentoring programs for people to gain skills in the trades, computer skills, administration, accounting, secretarial, etc, under your leadership.*

**7. I believe this is a question that a diverse team should solve and help implement. I truly believe to solve our problems; we need a diverse team of leaders. The team should reflect every part of our community. I am committed to a team concept, this will bring the change Springfield needs and start solving our problems.**