



## **THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript**

### **Season 3, Episode 3: Plans for the County: Conversation with John Hinnant – Republican Candidate for New Hanover County Commission**

**Reuel Sample:** Welcome to the NHC GOP Podcast. I'm Reuel Sample. I am happy to be joined by the man who got us into video podcasts, John Hinnant. John, how are you today?

**John Hinnant:** I'm doing well. I've got a face for podcast. But somehow I made you famous on video.

**Reuel Sample:** John, you are running for New Hanover County Commission. Uh, most people will recognize you from running in 2022 as a state House candidate, but the the playing field has changed. What you were saying before, when we started, before we started recording, is that a lot of people came up to you and wanted to vote for you, but they couldn't. What do you say to those people now?

**John Hinnant:** Right. So, um. My opponent spent close to \$300,000 against me in 2022, and then the abortion groups spent a couple million dollars in New Hanover County. And so the outside groups spent a lot of postcards around with me and Ted and Michael Lee on the same postcard. And so I got hundreds and hundreds of people saying that showed up to vote, and they wouldn't let me vote for you. And, um, that's because that district was only 17 precincts of downtown in northern New Hanover County. And, um, my wife and I agreed to take about a year off, uh, before we talked about if this was something else we were going to do. And, uh, and talking to supporters and donors and, and talking to, um, people really active in countywide politics. They said you ought to think about a county commission race, because we got we got

headwinds that they were going to change the district lines. Um, and they took that 18th House district and made it smaller and packed it into downtown. And so it was a D plus seven. And so now it's probably a D ten. And it's no matter the name ID or the money of a Republican in a district, it's going to be really tough. And so what has to happen is some, some well informed Democrats in New Hanover County, um, have to decide to challenge for that seat because. She remains ineffective despite her ability to win. So, um. Anyway, uh, we're excited to run for New Hanover County, uh, commission, and, um, had a great reception so far and really looking forward to getting into it with the voters and and talking to you here on the podcast today.

**Reuel Sample:** You say that you have taken a year to step back, but that's really not true because you have been involved in continuing development downtown, continuing continuing development around the county and and sussing out the challenges that New Hanover County is facing. And we've kind of brought it down to three areas that we want to talk about today growth and development, education and crime. Let's talk about growth and development is that there's there's no question that New Hanover County is facing some big challenges as more and more people discover who we are.

**John Hinnant:** Right. Um, so so I was born and raised here, um, about ten, right around 10 or 11 years before I was born. Our big industry up and left with Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. And so it's been a slow, steady process with with pockets of high growth and, and pockets of no growth and pockets of more growth. And when I was, when I was working in WD Wilmington Downtown Inc., people would complain about parking and the easy and the quick comeback was, well, if we didn't have a parking problem, what kind of problems would we have? And if growth is our problem, if we didn't have growth, what would we look like as a community? And it's a short drive up to Greenville or Rocky Mountain, and look at the areas in between that don't have growth. And, you know, we're blessed to have growth. And growth is a good thing to have a growing tax base. But but this current situation began in 2018 with Hurricane Florence. Hurricane Florence hit and probably three out of five roofs had to be replaced. And and every time we have a major hurricane, uh, hit direct hit in the Wilmington area real estate market really jumps right after it rebounds really robustly. People who live along the water are frustrated with the repeated damages, and they just call it quits. And then others see opportunity and, um, with the the the Hurricane Andrew hit Miami and Hurricane Hugo hit Charlotte. And a lot of people don't realize that when Hurricane Hugo hit Charlotte,

by the time I'm sorry, Charleston, by the time it got to Charlotte, it was a category one still. And so, um, so what happened out of those two hurricanes is building standards got improved, and so you won't see as much property damage in places like Wrightsville Beach as you do in Rocky Point and Burgaw, because the flooding is largely inland and the building standards have been improved along the coast.

**John Hinnant:** And so after in in that time before Covid, pre-COVID PC if you want UNC Wilmington was growing at a pace of a thousand net new students per year. So that was our biggest economic driver. Um, and many of those students stay behind. Companies like Live Oak and Encino will tell you that 25 to 30% of their workforce are uncW graduates. So they're coming here and they're staying here.

**John Hinnant:** They're not just working in the food industry. So they're they're working in high end, high paying jobs, high tech jobs, and they're having a positive impact. Um, but back to Florence. Um, the Wilmington Housing Authority had about 160 of their housing units damaged. And so the housing authority went in and made quick makeshift repairs because there was nowhere else to put them. Hotels were damages hard, um, apartments were damaged. And so they just made makeshift repairs, put them back in. And then a year or so later, uh, as we got into Covid, um, these 160 units started to develop mold. So 320 women and children were displaced, and they had to put them up in apartments, hotels, whatever they could find. So on paper, bankers, developers and multifamily groups that do data tracking so that we were effectively 100% occupied and our rents were increasing. And so on paper, we became a target for multifamily developers, with a growing university, a growing population, and growing rents and 100% occupancy. Much like Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, Chapel Hill, they said, hey, this looks like a market we want to be. So they came in. At the same time, the fed loosened up and made multifamily housing a lot more easy than, say, standard single family development, because nationwide we've got a seven, you know, 40 year deficit of housing. We just not been building houses fast enough. Yeah. And so, um, so the multifamily development began really rapidly.

**John Hinnant:** One of the problems, I think, that the past couple of boards of commissions have made is they they think of there's this discussion of workforce housing, and they think that there's a product type, be it a townhome or a condo and workforce housing is not a product type. It's a price point. And so typically 80% the

person the tenant has earns 80% AMI. And those are your teachers, your first year teachers, first year new nurses, uh, first responders, police, fire rescue. And, uh, and so the city has done a good job with incorporating dense, uh, workforce housing into requests for more density. And what what that means is if somebody's developing a class A market rate multifamily development of nurse, first responder, a teacher can live in a first class class, a amenity rich development their first years as they're starting their professional careers. And so they don't have to hustle around town and find roommates and do this and do that, they they can live in a nice place. And so, um, so, so I think we've made a mistake in the county saying. We need this product type when what we need is the price point. And I spoke a couple of weeks back at the county commission meeting when they were thinking about putting in this EV charging requirements in the development standards. And I said, you're holding the stick when you should be selling a carrot. If you want more workforce housing or developer wants more density, require them to put these things in. But I don't think that solves your problem, because the shortfall we have in EV charging stations are in public places, not on private property.

**Reuel Sample:** We'll have more on this in just a second. But keeping our family safe, our children educated and our elections secure takes constant vigilance. Hi, I'm Reuel Sample from the Republican Party. As you know, we cannot do anything without the generous help of conservative minded people like you here in New Hanover County. Please consider joining our 15 for Freedom program just \$15 a month for 15 months, will help get Republicans elected to our local school board and county commission, kick the Democrats out of the governor's seat and help take back the White House. Go to [NewHanoverGOP.org/15](http://NewHanoverGOP.org/15) today. We can't do it without you.

**John Hinnant:** This past week, um, the county commission had a public hearing for, uh, townhome development in the Porters Neck area. And the the neighbors came out in opposition and in big numbers. And and we heard a lot of arguments, uh, environment density, there's no affordability in the project. And the thing that caused a lot of people off guard was how overpopulated Porters Neck Elementary School was. Well, earlier this week, there was a work session between the school board and the county commissioners to do a facility analysis. And we majority of our schools are over populated. And so in order to fix the current problem, we're talking hundreds of millions of dollars. And the other thing that came up in that meeting was that I had pointed out to a couple of commissioners in the county manager about two months ago when they

approved the townhome development, Sea breeze was. This development is saying it's only going to be adding 25 trips during peak time in the morning and the evening. I said, but the problem is, you've got other projects that you've approved along this stretch of Carolina Beach Road that have yet to be built, and we're not seeing the complete picture of the traffic problem that may come.

**John Hinnant:** And now, because of the good work of the Marsh Oaks residents, we now know we also need to see how the schools are going to be impacted because we've got overpopulation of schools. And so the discussion that evolved came into, well, how do we alleviate the problem? And the school board floated the idea of a bond referendum, and they wanted to do it this year. And while that sounds like a great idea, the current LGC may not have an appetite for New Hanover County to go forward this year. Uh, besides, the LGC is going to completely remake itself after the election. And so one of the things I think that one of the ideas that came up was, hey, we can Riverlights has established a site for us to build a school. We can the Mary C Williams population do pre-K two to second grade and Williams and build a 3 to 5 at River lights. And that will really help the overpopulation we have down on that southwestern part of the county. The other idea that I really liked was build a 1000 capacity middle school at the C-Tech. Property on the North campus of Cape Fear Community College.

**Speaker3:** Oh, that would be interesting.

**John Hinnant:** Yeah, and then move the population of Trask Middle School there. And then the Laney High School, which is just busting at the seams, can can bleed over to Trask and maybe make move some ninth and 10th graders over there. And then you'll still be at capacity at Laney, but you'll be able to breathe, right? You'll be able to breathe. You'll be able to keep class sizes down. And so, um, and then there were other proposals such as, uh, doing an addition to Pine Valley, building an addition to Porter's Neck, which is only three years old, and it 50 or 15 or 25 people over capacity. Now, I mean, the principal of Porter's neck abandoned his office for more classroom place, and he's actually using the conference room. They took their art room and split it in half to two classrooms, and now they have art in a cart. And so the art instructor actually rolls down the hallway to go to a different classroom to do art.

**Reuel Sample:** I had a friend of mine do that for the longest time. And it was it was just not it was not good to just, you know, art in a cart.

**John Hinnant:** Yeah. You need, you know, certain subjects need certain places, obviously. Music and a music room. Uh, I think art and art room, because they can see past projects and they can see the future work they're going to be doing. Yeah. Um, and so go ahead.

**Reuel Sample:** Yeah. I want to go. I'm going to get into education here just a second. But one of the things that you keep talking about is, is development, getting a right use of spaces and smart use of spaces, but that gets us into things like zoning and this whole idea that Republicans are in the back pocket of developers. But the current, uh, voting record of the county commission gives a different story altogether. What is all that?

**John Hinnant:** I forget how many terms Jonathan Barfield has served, but we have to remind everybody that he's a past president of the Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors. And if there's ever a rezoning that includes housing, he voted for it. And more disturbingly, and in fact, just exemplified in that Porters Neck townhome development project, he actually didn't vote. And and as a voter and as a member of the business community, I just can't tolerate that. If you're elected and you're sitting up there, you have to vote. You absolutely have to vote. And unfortunately, they don't have an electronic means of recording the votes. So it's all done verbally. So when elected, I'm going to change that. We're going to make the elected officials press a button, green or red.

**Reuel Sample:** Go on record for what you what you vote.

**Speaker3:** And I want to point out that Mr. Barfield is a Democrat.

**John Hinnant:** Right. And a realtor.

**Reuel Sample:** And a realtor.

**John Hinnant:** Yep. And I'm a realtor. I'm a commercial realtor. Uh, a lot of my focus over the last few years have been the nuisance hotels along Market Street. Um, I've done a lot of work in downtown Wilmington. I really enjoy working in the urban environment and infill lots. Um, I've sold a handful of greenfield lots for development, but, um, it's not much, and it's nothing anybody would probably remember because they're usually in commercial areas. They're not abutting residential. Um, but one thing I want to say about growth and development that, that, that people may not be aware of in 2021, they passed an update to the Uniform Development Ordinance, the UDO, okay, which is our zoning code. It had previously been updated since 2016. And so with Covid and the slowdown, they said, hey, let's update the code. And so they did a little bit of public outreach, but it was largely done via zoom. And if you remember 2020 early 2021, we were still discouraged from showing up in public. And I give people the example that I had working for WDI. We had the vision 2020 plan, and one of my priorities was implementation. And if you look at the watercolors that were drawn out of that public input process where citizens showed up and said, this is what we want our downtown to look like, was what we feel like. We want it to be a robust 24 hour economy. We want people living, working, playing downtown and the watercolor that was painted 20 years ago largely resembles what's been built.

**John Hinnant:** And so one of the things I like to do is, uh, in the northern part of the county and the southern part of the county is have a visioning process for the residents and say, hey, you got this vacant land. We know development's coming. What do you want it to look like? What are some what are some amenities that you'd like to have a five minute drive from the house. You know how far? How far is too far for you to have to go pick your kid up from school? How far is too far if you have to run and get groceries? And so let's let's start to define what what it is you want your community to look like. What do you want it to feel like? What where do you want to? Where do you want to be able to buy your goods and services and medical services and professional services? How far is too far for you to have to drive so that we can keep you off the road?

**John Hinnant:** The other thing. That falls inside the city limits, but the county has some influence on as the university has a one mile ring prohibition. So if a student, a full time student, lives inside of a mile of campus, they're not issued a parking permit. They have to ride the Seahawks shuttle. And given the growth and expansion of UNCW, I think

maybe that ring could come out half a mile. Maybe another mile, um, and get more of those cars off of the road, because that's some of the most congested roadways in our region is right there around the college. And it doesn't matter where you live in New Hanover County, if you have to take College Road, you're going to experience congestion

**Reuel Sample:** You can always tell when the when the university is not in, because College Avenue becomes much easier to drive.

**John Hinnant:** My office is 3/10 of a mile from College Road on Randall Parkway, and it's changed since Covid prior to Covid. To get out of our parking lot, it might take 5 or 10 minutes with the pedestrians, bicyclists, and skateboarders. We don't see as many as that now. Um, and so I don't know that they're back on campus or if they're doing virtual learning, I don't know. Um, but yeah, you can always tell when school's in session for sure.

**Reuel Sample:** What we were talking a little bit about education before. And you, you've brought in something that actually hasn't been mentioned a lot as we talk about education, is the impact of high capacity schools on the quality and value of education. And you're taking a development approach to that. Why is high capacity or overcrowding in classrooms such a problem, and why do we need to develop to address it?

**John Hinnant:** Well, let me let me give you an example of of initiatives that are currently underway that people may not be aware of. Um, on the capital improvement plan for the county is called the Last Frontier. And so the county is funding the expansion of water and sewer projects along Holly Shelter Road, Sudbury Road, and then a seldom known road called Plantation Road. Now everybody knows where Holly shelter is and everybody knows where Sidbury is. And if you've been out there, you've seen new housing developments sprout up. In addition, there's a couple of business parks that the county has established for economic development purposes, and you got to have water and sewer. Plus, the soils aren't that great for, uh, septic and other things, so. So they they budgeted \$23.5 million. Well, in a work session with CFPUA a few months ago the estimates have come in \$16 million over budget.



**Speaker3:** Wow.

**John Hinnant:** And so the reason Plantation Road is important and I think should be put on pause. Because it lies in an area bounded by I-140, Market Street, Gordon Road and North College Road. Now in that area right now, there's over 8000 households. Every school that services that area is overcrowded. Porters neck, Coddington, Trask, Laney, Wrightsboro, you name it. Um. Is overcrowded. Well. Plantation road, if you can visualize almost is a direct line for the end of Murrayville road across Military Cut Off Extension to Porters Neck Road. Um, now, I've already told you that the county is funding water and sewer projects to get for Plantation Road. Why isn't CFPUA doing it? Because the ratepayer was supposed to pay for the growth of water and sewer. But yet the taxpayers are paying for it, and it's to spur growth and spur development. Yeah. Plantation road is over 100 acres of vacant land. And so the DOT just last month released an initial design for an extension of Murrville Road along Plantation Road to connect to Porters Neck Road at Market and Hayes Lane, which is the road next to Walmart in Porters Neck. And so in my opinion, we need to press pause on that project until we can figure out the overcrowding situation at Porters Neck, Ogden Elementary, Trask and Laney and Coddington because that hundred acres might be better served as a school or something like that down the road. Um, and so and I was I was meeting with some residents of Marsh Oaks last night and they were completely unaware of this. And they they said, well, why are they doing that? And I said, that's why I'm alerting you.

**Reuel Sample:** Good question.

**John Hinnant:** This could become a campaign issue. I'm alerting you to this because it's likely going to get done. And so, um, that you can't when you're doing development, you got to be able to keep track of two things, right, traffic and education. And yeah, the education component has not been talked about until very recently. And with Porter's Neck brand new, it's only they're only in their third year and they're busting at the seams. And I'm in real estate. I look at the GIS mapping technology every day as part of my work. And if you were to look at an aerial of Porter's Neck Elementary right now, you still see large patches of green suitable for future growth and development. And that just means more families and more kids that need to go in that school.

**Reuel Sample:** And so when you put your kids in an overcrowded school, they get less individual attention, right? There's there's the the health, the the health concerns is that, as you said, you have to take away. I would say just as vital classrooms like art and music to put in reading, writing and arithmetic and homerooms and the quality of education goes down simply because there's no room.

**John Hinnant:** Yeah. So so what's the solution? Right. Maybe the school board takes a look at, um, block scheduling, you know, get kids in at different times of the day or different days of the week, maybe incorporate some virtual, um, maybe we need to take a couple of those projects that I've already mentioned. The River lights and the C-Tech Middle School put that in the county's capital improvement plan. And then in 2026, let's look at a bond referendum for the other needs to the other projects to meet our current needs, and then maybe figure out a way to incorporate a future school or two to anticipate future growth. So so here's an interesting thing, right? Nationally, birth rates are down. But as reported by Doctor Catawba yesterday at the chamber's uh Executive Economic Summit, Wilmington is the 10th fastest growing community among inbound migrants, meeting the millennial designation of the age 25 to 39. Wow, 25 to 39. You're a worker and you're likely a parent.

**Reuel Sample:** Yes, at least one kid who has to go go somewhere.

**John Hinnant:** Yeah. And so among millennials, we are a hotbed, a hotbed of a destination number ten in the country. And so it's important that we understand that it's not just retirees coming into our market, it's that we have to we have to plan for these young professionals, upwardly mobile professionals who are bringing in kids with them. And that may be partly related to our our emerging tech sector. It might be partly the fact that we have a great beach, a great downtown and a vibrant art scene. Um, but but whatever it is, we have to be prepared for it, because once our schools are rated or deemed overrated and underperforming, then they're going to stop coming. And like I said, if you if you don't have a growth problem, what kind of problems do you have? And so we have to address it.

**Reuel Sample:** We're going to pivot to one final area. This isn't the last time we're going to have you on the podcast before the generals. And it really is very, very nice that, uh, you, Dane Scalise and Bill Rivenbark are actually there's no primary for the Republicans

right now. And so the three of you, instead of focusing on having to run against each other, is that you are focusing on what are the good, solid, uh, solutions that you're bringing to New Hanover County. So the final thing is crime is that, uh, this is one of those interesting areas where the statistics and the anecdotal evidence are really at odds, because on one hand, we're given we're given numbers that crime is down. But on the other hand, you just had a police helicopter hovering over your place this morning. And so we're constantly hearing about shootings. And as you were saying, shootings always encourage more shootings. And so what is from both a developer perspective and also from a family man's perspective, what is the state of crime here in New Hanover County?

**John Hinnant:** It's you know, it's not good. Um, and I know during the city Council election, uh, I specifically spoke to a council member and they said, well, we're at a 20 year low. And I said, you know, I found a hard time believing that because every Monday I see a report of a shooting or two. And typically when there's a shooting, there's a response, shooting another section of town. And, um, you know, this morning, yeah, I told you there was helicopters hovering over the neighborhood this morning, and I'd much rather hear a helicopter than gunshots. Um, but, um, but, yeah, they were out early this morning. Um, break of dawn, um, hovering around the area, and and I just, I think that maybe the FBI crime stats comes out delayed a little bit. Um, uh, so I think that's typically around the 1st of February. So we should be seeing that in the next couple weeks. Um, I feel like there was a spike in shootings. And, you know, when you wake up and you learn that there was a shooting downtown on Princess Street in there second, and that a bakery had its bakery case shot. And they say, you know, no, nobody was hurt. And then later you read into the details of the story. And there's 85 gun shells on the street. And, you know, a typical Glock 17 has a clip of about 17 rounds, and you could put one in the chamber. So that's 18. How many times do the math? How many times did they change their clip? Or yeah, even worse, how many shooters were there?

**Reuel Sample:** How many shooters were there?

**John Hinnant:** Yeah. I mean, and this is at a time when the bars are just let out shortly after 2 a.m.. Wow. We're we're fortunate we didn't have a bloodbath and a massacre. And I'm, you know, the we've got a couple of different things going on in town trying to

prevent crime. And I just I haven't seen any results. I know that the, the project with the DA's office was just funded by the community endowment, but the county's got a stiff price tag on Port City United, and I don't I don't know how they measure success, but I'm not really sure what they're doing to prevent crime. And so that's a budget item we're going to take a real hard look at when I get elected. Um, we, we we have to do a better job as a county partnering with the city, um, making sure that there's no turf wars and and I don't I don't believe Sheriff McMahon has a turf war. Um, I think that, uh, I think that he's ready to help whenever and wherever. And, uh, in fact, they've gone to great lengths to deputize city police, uh, to assist on issues. And so I think that, um, we have to do better. And I think that, um, one way to help with crime is to improve our education. Um, but, you know, one of the prerequisites of economic prosperity is solving crime. And, and nobody wants to move to a community of high crime. And, and, you know, our local news media has been challenged in recent years.

**John Hinnant:** They've been challenged. And, um, I'm hoping that we can get, um, better coverage of what's going on. Um, because it's always two or 3 or 4 days later that we hear a story of it. And, um, there was another shooting. Somebody was arrested today, uh, for a shooting Thursday. So, um, yeah, there's some that I, I don't believe that we're a 20 year low, and I'd have to, uh, all sources of data. And who was it you were talking about? The best places. Net said that property crime in the county was 69.2, while the nationwide average is 35. That's nearly double. I mean, that's double. We're double the national average on property crime. You can't have that and be successful as a community.

**Speaker3:** I'll ask you. I already know the answer is that is that one of the things that we see across the country are our politicians who are saying we've got to hobble our police force, is that they're they're just they're we've got to defund the police. And what is your stance on, on, on the sheriff's department here in New Hanover County?

**John Hinnant:** Uh, Sheriff McMahon and I are are very friendly. We've known each other a long time. Um, I've. I first knew of him when he was a deputy chief. One of the chief deputies. Um, before, uh, uh, Sid Crosby retired and, um. I knew who he was and we were touring Wilmington Christian Academy, uh, when my kids were trying to, we were trying to decide on what schools for our children, and in the packet of information that they gave us, they gave us the, you know, the administrative of the church and the

school and. Ed McMahon was a deacon. And a good dude. Um, and and, you know, these politicians that have signed a pledge to defund the police. I, I feel like they should be impeached because they swore an oath to uphold the Constitution, laws of this country. And if you're going to defund the police, you can't do both.

**Speaker3:** Yeah, but then they also go out and get their own police force to protect them. So it's.

**Speaker3:** I mean, completely ridiculous.

**Reuel Sample:** John Hinnant, running for county commissioner. Before I give you the last word, uh, tell people how they can get a hold of you and how they can support you. Uh, because this is going to be this is going to be a long and very frankly, bloody election here in New Hanover County.

**John Hinnant:** Thank you. Reuel. You kind of froze on me there, but. Yeah. Thank you. Um, you know my number? My phone number is (910) 619-3430. My website is [ElectJohnHinnant.com](http://ElectJohnHinnant.com). That's elect is J-O-H-N Joan Bennett is h I n as in Nancy n as in Nancy, a as in Alpha, n as in Nancy, T as in Tom. You can email me by putting info at in front of [ElectJohnHinnant.com](http://ElectJohnHinnant.com). On my website. You can make a contribution there. Um, one of the things I'm finding better success with this time than prior effort is that I've got more folks coming in with \$100 a month and making it recurring, or \$200 a month recurring. And and if you can afford that, it would be great. Very, very grateful. I'd be very grateful. It'd be very helpful. It helps me to budget. Um, and and I don't have to worry about, uh, a lot more. I don't have to worry about calling you back. So.

**Reuel Sample:** Because you're only want to hear from you at least once. You don't want to hear any more.

**Speaker3:** And if you want To call me and set up a time for us to get together over coffee or breakfast or lunch, I'm happy to sit down. Um, I found that I found that when we met with the Marsh Oaks families, they just want somebody to listen. And then they want to know that you're you are listening and that you're willing to respond. And so I'm I'm happy to come talk to a neighborhood groups. Um, uh, uh hoa's. Um, you know, house parties. Happy to do that. I'm doing a couple of meet and greets, along with

some, uh, some of the school board candidates that have primaries this cycle. Um, just I'm I'm riding coattails for a change. Whereas in 2022, I provided coattails for a lot of folks. Um, and so I'm really looking forward to meeting and and talking to a lot of folks. And, uh, I'm really interested to get down. I spend a lot of time, of course, in the northern part of the county in downtown, uh, two years ago. I'm really looking forward to working the eastern part of the county and southern part of the county, getting down to Pleasure Island and meeting some folks. And, uh, man, I'm really excited about this election cycle. It is going to be. You hear this all the time. We've never had a more important election cycle. And I was really disappointed with Iowa at only 15% turnout. So we really still don't know what's happening at the top of the ticket. We've got a very busy bunch of statewide races, including judicial races. Um, we've got opportunity for a new auditor. And, you know, during Covid the DOT was broke and they've not been audited. So let's pay attention to the auditor's race. Um, but, you know, it's very likely my race and the school board are going to be on the back side of the ballot. So, uh, any last advice I could tell you is that come November 5th, start on the back of the ballot and let's take care of our local races.

**Reuel Sample:** Early voting, uh, for primaries starts, uh, February 15th. The actual day of, uh, the primary is March 5th. You're not being primaried this, this, this time around. So you'll be out, uh, helping all the other candidates that are out there

**Speaker3:** Absentee Ballots went out today, so people are. Going to start voting this weekend. People are going to start voting today.

**Reuel Sample:** Over 5000 went out today. That's that's an interesting. But if, uh, keep those dates in mind and but it is not too early to support John and, uh, the other Republican candidates as they're running for office, because it really takes money to get this stuff done because it's going to be a big race. John Hinnant for County Commission, thanks for joining us here today, and all the best for you.

**John Hinnant:** Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.