Answers to questionnaire from El Sol Newspaper

Keith Effler, candidate for Yakima County Assessor 2026

1. Why am I running and what qualifications make me the right person?
I'm a Yakima-based homeowner, husband, father and small-business owner who knows how property taxes affect everyday lives. My family is currently developing residential and commercial projects, so I understand the impact of assessments on both homeowners and investors. I'm a Republican Precinct Committee Officer, former president of the Yakima Valley Society for Cultural Education, and a longtime community-service volunteer. My Bachelor's in Psychology (Dean's List, Northwest Nazarene University) and math skills give me a solid foundation to run a modern, transparent assessor's office.

2. What experience has best prepared me for this role?
Fifteen years as a commercial photographer and entrepreneur have taught me data-driven decision-making, customer service, and how to turn complex information into clear visuals. Leading a youth-arts nonprofit and serving as a preacher have sharpened my public-engagement skills. I've run campaigns, managed budgets and built coalitions—direct experience for managing the assessor's office.

3. Why should voters care about this position?
The assessor sets the property values that determine a Yakima resident's property-tax bill. An accurate, transparent valuation system protects homeowners from over-assessment. The office effectively touches every household's wallet.

4. Top three priorities if elected
1. Put taxpayers first – treat property owners "like kings" with responsive, friendly service.
2. Data-Depot & online access – launch a public portal (assessyakima.com) that explains formulas, shows parcel-specific coefficients, comparable sales, market data, webinars and a live-chat. All forms will be available online.
3. Dual dashboards – create separate, user-friendly sites for homeowners and for real-estate/loan professionals, delivering the exact data each group needs.

5. Most important issue and my approach

Taxpayers are frustrated by the “crazy swings” in assessed values. I will stabilize those swings by adopting consistent, market-based methods and publishing the underlying data so residents can see exactly how their numbers are derived.

6. Common resident concerns

- Lack of transparency – “What does my assessment really mean?”
- Inaccessible information – the mailed assessment card offers little guidance.
- Unpredictable year-to-year swings

I will address each with clear online explanations, webinars and a live-chat help desk.

7. Overlooked groups and my plan

- Low-income senior citizens – many must travel to the Assessor’s office to request property-tax exemptions, even though Washington law requires the form to be available online. I will post the exemption form and instructions on the new portal, providing a fully accessible, electronic option.
- Real-estate professionals – a dedicated dashboard with detailed market analytics and downloadable forms will help them serve clients efficiently.