

Kurt Prenzler and Chris Slusser Outline Policies at Voter Event

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - During a debate hosted by the League of Women Voters and the Edwardsville chapter of the NAACP, incumbent Kurt Prenzler and challenger Chris Slusser outlined their policy ideas as both compete for the Madison County Chairman seat.

On Wednesday, March 6, 2024, candidates gathered at the Wildey Theater in Edwardsville for a Voter Service Event that aimed to inform voters about the candidates ahead of the Madison County primary election on March 19. Both candidates began by introducing themselves and outlining some of their major policies, and then [they answered five questions](#) posed by audience members.

Who is Chris Slusser?

Slusser currently serves as Madison County Treasurer. He was previously employed as a police officer, investment advisor and Chief Financial Officer for a commercial real estate firm. He was elected to the County Board twice before he became treasurer in 2016.

“I’m a Christian first, and my faith guides my decisions both personally and professionally. I’m also an unashamed conservative,” Slusser said. “I enjoy serving as county treasurer, but I’ve been troubled for many years by the turmoil and the lack of direction, at the collapses and missed opportunities out of the County Chairman’s office the past few years. My three objectives will be, number one, working on real, meaningful property tax reform, not just gimmicks or sound bites to mislead the public, and powering economic development through relentless recruitment and a regional economic development plan, and restoring ethics and integrity to the Chairman’s office.”

Slusser voted against property tax increases as a County Board member and “overhauled the County’s underperforming investment portfolio” as treasurer. He said Madison County has been the top-performing investment portfolio in the state for the past six years.

Who is Kurt Prenzler?

Prenzler has served as the County Chairman since 2016. He previously served as the Madison County Treasurer. He noted that he was the first Republican County Board Chairman elected at large in Madison County.

“A couple of things that I’m proud of is number one, I appointed the first Black department head in Madison County’s history, and that’s 200 years,” Prenzler said. “One of the things that I’ve been focused on in terms of as County Board Chairman has been property taxes. I’ve collected a lot of petitions in my time and in the spring of 2016 collected 10,000 signatures — I think myself I collected 1,000 — to put a tax cut referendum on the ballot in November, which passed four to one. We reduced our maximum general fund tax rate from .25 to .20, which allowed us to, in my first year, reduce the tax levy from \$32.6 million down to \$30.8, and we’ve kept it there for about seven years.”

Prenzler added that he is “very much a proponent of property tax caps,” specifically the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), which wouldn’t cap taxes but would limit the inflationary increase in tax extensions on existing property. He noted that PTELL “worked very successfully in other counties.”

You can read [this article](#) on RiverBender.com to learn more about the debate and the candidates' answers to the questions.