

MEET VERMILLION'S MAYOR: JACK POWELL

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

Some may not know this, but the Mayor of Vermillion loves lemon bars.

One day he picked up a box of them while on a fun, travel, excursion thinking they were ready to go.

What Jack Powell didn't realize was that it was a box that had all the ingredients; someone would need to make them before eating them.

"I let my wife make them," Powell admitted with a grin.

Yet other than being unable to whip up a food he loves, Powell has spent much of his time in Vermillion cooking up as many ideas as he could on so many levels to make Vermillion a better place.

So far, he hasn't yet needed to read the directions on the box for that task.

Powell, who is wrapping up his first year of his second term of four years as the mayor of Vermillion, has dedicated five decades of his life to being a part of the culture of the city and most of that time aiming to make it a better place.

"I have lived in Vermillion since 1961 and it's a wonderful community, a wonderful place to raise children," Powell said. "You are within easy access of major metropolitan areas.

"I wanted to pay back to the community and see if I could offer anything to the community. It gave me a great quality of life and amenities. When my kids were growing up they

could just tell me where they were going and they were safe. It's a nice place to live."

Powell was first voted in as mayor on July 1, 2011 and before that spent 10 years on the Vermillion city council, and he spent plenty of time getting ready to take the reins in leading his home to better days.

Born in Redding, Pennsylvania and ultimately moving to Kingsley, Iowa where he grew up while attending school, Powell, 78, graduated from Morningside College in Sioux City and later earned a Masters at the University of South Dakota.

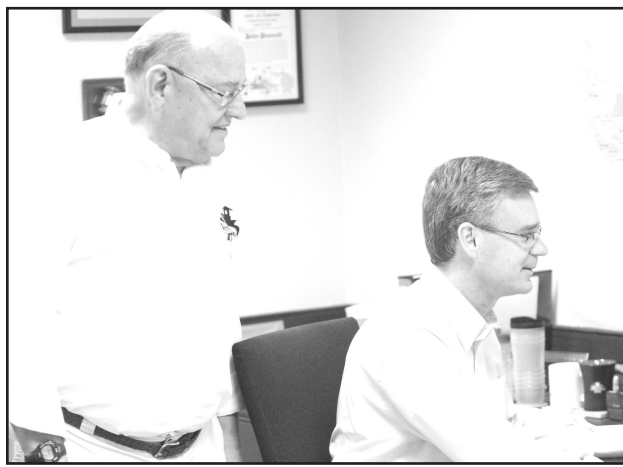
He also spent some time at Indiana University where he earned an MBA and a Doctorate in Applied Mathematics.

His first job was as a teacher in Correctionville, Iowa, located east of Sioux City.

"It's called Correctionville because as you move from the equator, north and south, the longitude lines move closer so they make 'corrections' every so many miles," Powell said. "It's on Highway 20 going east. It's not a prison."

Eventually his career path led him back to USD where he would teach there for 45 years. During his time there he helped start up the school's computer center in the 1960s and he taught math while helping develop the computer science program.

Later on he moved over to the School of Business where he taught until he retired in 2006. He still



City of Vermillion mayor Jack Powell (left) visits with City Manager John Prescott.

ALAN DALE / THE PLAIN TALK

taught a single course for a few semesters, but by then he was deep into local issues as a member of the city council.

"The difference being in charge of a class where I have a body of material and with the city it's more of trying to help people understand why we do some things and what we do for the community," Powell said. "I do hope the community is a little bit better for having my having been involved."

"I am a good listener and I think I am approachable with anybody. I have no problem interacting with anybody and I don't think I have a big ego. I don't flaunt any background I may have. I can talk to anybody."

Those traits gave Powell the confidence to decide to run for mayor and ultimately earn the spot. Yet, if one didn't know him and they asked who the mayor of the city was it wouldn't be a shock if he hesitated to answer right away.

said. "I can talk to you as easily as I can talk to a barber... I'd like to think I tell the truth.

"We are also blessed with good (city) employees. They do a good job here. Snow removal for example they are on it right away. I have had a lot of compliments on how well the city takes care of our streets."

One thing Powell wants to take care of is what he sees as a housing issue, especially the high property costs.

"We have a lot of people who commute into town and work and do their purchases somewhere else," Powell said. "If we had affordable housing we might have those people stay here and be a part of our community and contribute. That's why Bliss Pointe is going to be a wonderful thing for us.

"We are building so many more apartments. Competition will help make it more comfortable (and drive prices down)."

He wondered openly if these issues have played in some Vermillion businesses struggling or even closing down.

"We are kind of in an area where we don't really have that big of a footprint," Powell said. "If we can get more affordable housing that could help us a lot in the business sense. We also have to recognize the importance of the university as a major employer in this community."

His take on the town/gown split myth?

"I don't buy it," Powell said. "How long do I have to live here to be a

Vermillion-ite? I've lived here 50 years now. You may have some people that won't associate with everybody, but I don't have that problem."

One problem lies with false perceptions of the city that may stem by some of the recent litigation that has brought Vermillion into the spotlight. One case in particular is the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company (VCDC) and its lawsuit against Eagle Creek Software Services.

"I have had people say it makes the city look bad and it's not a city project," Powell said. "The city doesn't own that. Are we players? Of course, some of us are on the board of the VCDC. I am satisfied with the guidance that we get that the VCDC has done things right and hopefully will prevail.

"We have a wonderful facility (1012 Princeton Street in the Riverbend Business Park across from Walmart) out there that we hope can attract one or more businesses because it can house them."

Powell did add that the whole situation is a bump in the road and that things will work themselves out.

He would also like to work out a way the city can attract more tourism to the area.

"I'd like to see our two museums be tour destinations where people come spend a day and an evening and take it the music museum which is an incredible gem here," Powell said.

For an extended version of this story visit www.plaintalk.net

County Talks About Water Shed Amendment

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

It was a short agenda with plenty to talk about regarding two topics at Tuesday's Clay County Board of Commissioners' meeting at the Clay County Courthouse.

Commissioners Travis Mockler, Phyllis Packard, Leo Powell, Michael Manning, and Dusty Passick all voiced their support – although tentatively – for the amendment to South Dakota SB-2 bill which cites the purpose of to provide for the establishment of river basin natural resource districts and to repeal certain provisions regarding county drainage management.

The move was precipitated by the floods

of 2011 which led to the move to create a water shed board.

The bill now has language that states that the Vermillion Water Shed would feature an eight-member board with two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives. Those two would come from the House with one representing each political party.

The president pro tempore of the Senate would appoint two members of that government, one from each political party, as well.

The speaker and the president pro tempore would then each also appoint two members of the general public one each representing the "agricultural producer" to

stand for "conservation districts.

As stated in Section 5 of the bill, "The Vermillion River Basin Natural Resource District is hereby established. The district shall include the portions of Brookings, Clark, Clay, Hamlin, Hutchinson, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Turner, Union, and Yankton counties located in the Vermillion River hydrologic basin."

The board was also clear that prior to the amendment added to the bill, they were already supporting the move

They also mentioned that with the small number of allocated representation and the area of the water shed in place there is no guarantee that Clay

County would be represented.

"We will go along with it, but cautiously," Powell said. "With the intent of backing away when it starts to go in a weird direction."

For an extended version of this story visit www.plaintalk.net

Looking for a business retirement plan?



Curt Robinson
Financial Advisor
23 Market Street
Vermillion, SD 57069
605-624-2028
www.edwardjones.com

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Member SIPC

■ PASSES

From Page 1A

levies, to provide property tax opt-out procedures for the capital outlay levy, and to revise the per student allocation," it reads on the SD Legislature's website.

Wide variance in dollars per student in the capital outlay area throughout the state.

Froke mentioned concern by some that capital outlay has been growing too fast.

"The legislature wants to reduce that to a 3 percent factor," Froke said. "If this bill passes then we would receive \$72 per student on the general fund side."

Beermann reported how it would affect the district with calculations using numbers and patterns from previous years.

"The average would be roughly a \$25,000 loss in capital outlay each year," she said. "Then \$72 based on student enrollment would be roughly \$85,000 in general fund."

"We need general fund dollars so badly it would be a nice trade-off but at the same time it limits us to more constraints than we're used to," Froke commented. "I think this is a big bill here so they'll hold onto it for quite a while.

Senate Bill 73 deals with Juvenile Justice initiative

reform.

Governor Dugaard recently cited national figures naming South Dakota as having the second-highest juvenile incarceration rate in the nation.

"This bill is meant to reduce those numbers and put those kids back into the communities," Froke said. "They ask for support from the communities in assisting these kids. They are appropriating \$3.2 million to the counties to help with that transition. So far it's moving through the system."

"It passed the senate 35 nothing. That's probably going to pass with a great deal of support from the legislature."

"South Dakota has a choice to make," Dugaard said in a recent press release. "We can continue to place juveniles in expensive state-funded facilities that, for many, are less effective at reducing delinquency, or we can invest in proven interventions and treatment programs that keep our youth close to home and connected to their communities."

Other business: A Teacher Evaluation Instrument was approved along with the new Superintendent Performance Evaluation Policy.

The board also declared surplus property of a field

irrigator and weight and fitness equipment which will hopefully be traded or sold in the near future.

Representative from USD Dakotathon (dance marathon) appeared before the board and requested the use of the Middle School Commons for their event on Sat. April 18, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. All proceeds go to Children's Miracle Network.

The group recently held a high-school dance marathon which raised about \$2,200.

The board said they will need to contact food services because they need access to the kitchens.

The event has already been approved by the middle school principal.

Froke reported that Natasha Gault, who presented at a previous meeting her idea of a community garden, received her desired grant for that project. The grant totals just under \$10,000, Froke said.

"She'd like to know if she could till up some of the middle school grounds just Northwest of the school on the lawn back there," Froke said. "She sent me a message. It's something like 2400 sq ft she's asking."

The board expressed excitement for Gault to come back and report after she has developed a plan which they have confidence will be successful.



THE VASCULAR SCREEN

\$25 could save your life!*

*Special pricing for a limited time

Sanford Vermillion wants to offer you the gift of understanding your health with this special price for our vascular screens. Screenings are suggested for those ages 40 and older (type 1 diabetics should be screened at age 30 or older).

Call (605) 638-8496 to schedule your vascular screen today.

sanfordhealth.org
keyword: live smarter

SANFORD HEALTH

200-46265-0509 Rev. 1/15