

Meet County Commissioner: Dusty Passick

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

If you can tell by someone's actions where someone's priorities lie, then Clay County Commissioner Dusty Passick has always made the community his priority.

"I had a career as sheriff of Clay County," Passick said. "I retired from that and spent a couple of years doing some odd stuff. I spent one season at the visitor's center at the rest area. I spent a little time working at a rural hospital. I missed the people of the county and working for the county so I decided to run for commissioner and was fortunate enough to be elected."

Now as a commissioner, Passick can serve the people he cares about.

"I think my favorite part about being commissioner is trying to make Clay County a better place for all the citizens and especially to try to take care of Clay County employees," he said.

Passick said that especially since he was a county employee, the welfare of county employees has always been high on his priority list.

"I want them to have decent jobs with a good living wage and benefits," he said. "All our departments are important to the community. It's just a

matter of making sure they're all equipped with the appropriate amount of employees and resources to serve the community to their best."

According to Passick, the number one priority for the commissioners is road and bridge repair.

"Our county highway department is responsible for that and it's a very expensive process to keep up repair and replacement," he said. "For the last couple of years we've been slipping backwards in terms of keeping up our repairs. I think the infrastructure is a very important part of the county. We certainly need it not just for transportation but also transportation of goods and crops for farmers and so on."

Passick's career as sheriff, though not a huge influence, certainly gave him a foundation to work with when he became commissioner. "The Sheriff's department is only one piece of the puzzle for a commissioner," he said. "The only real benefit I saw from it is I had experience as a county employee budgeting for the county and knowing how the basic structure of the county worked. It let me know a lot of people in the community and what

their priorities were."

Passick was born and raised in northwestern Iowa and has lived in Vermillion since 1967.

His first name, Dusty, is actually a childhood nickname, his given name being Raymond.

"It goes way back to when I was a baby," Passick said. "I had a skin disorder that required a salve and powder to be applied. They started calling me Dusty and it stuck."

Passick said he moved here when his parents bought the Coast to Coast hardware store in Vermillion which is currently Nygren's True Value hardware store.

"I had intentions of taking over that hardware store when they chose to retire," Passick said. "After working with them for a few years, I found law enforcement more intriguing. I decided that was the avenue I wanted to pursue."

As far as places to live, Passick considers Vermillion ideal.

"I think Vermillion is a perfect size town," he said. "It's big enough to provide things that you need and also provides a lot of interesting cultural things. We have the Missouri River which is a wonderful asset to the community. I just think South Dakota as a whole

is a great state to raise a family in."

Passick and his wife themselves raised three children and now are the proud grandparents of seven grandchildren.

"They're all close in the area," Passick said of his children. "My oldest son still lives in Vermillion. My daughter and youngest son both live in Harrisburg and work in Sioux Falls."

Though Passick views Vermillion as the perfect size, he looks forward to its growth.

"I think Vermillion will have a steady, progressive growth process," he said. "There are some people who don't want to see it grow at all and I'm not one of those. I think it needs to keep growing to a certain extent to survive. We need to be forward-thinking in recruiting new businesses and people to the community. I don't think that will ever cause it to become a big city."

The rural environment is especially ideal for Passick, describing himself as an outdoor person who likes to hunt, fish and camp with friends and family.

"We truly enjoy the Black Hills and try to spend a lot of time out there in the summer whenever possible," he said. "The event of being with family is the important part not necessarily the actual harvesting or anything like that."



Material Bids Decided Upon by County Commissioners

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

Clay County Board of Commissioners approved on Tuesday the material bids for future road works as recommended by Highway Superintendent Rod Polley.

The awarded bids include: Hollaway Bridge & Culvert Inc. (Crane Work/Crane Men/Driven Pilling), Jebro (Liquid Asphalt), 3D Specialties (Sign Posts), Rechnagel Construction and Concrete Materials (Crushed Surface Gravel), Concrete Materials Yankton, Concrete Materials Sioux Falls, Mryl & Roys (Sioux Falls), Barkey Asphalt (Sioux City), Knife River (Hawarden, Iowa) (for Asphalt Concrete), Hancock LLC and Cretex Concrete (Concrete Pipe and Single Barrel Per Cost Concert Box Culvert), Cretex Concrete Products (Double Barrel Pre Cast Box Culvert, Pre Cast Cattle Pass, and Pre Cast Concrete Bridge Decks).

The bids that have multiple suppliers are based on location of the work needing done and the proximity of the business to the location.

Commissioners approved Johnson Engineering to do bridge inspection work.

The county would pay only 20 percent of the total cost of the work.

Commissioners

approved a memorandum of understanding between themselves and the South Dakota State University Extension office.

Load limits have begun and are expected to remain in place for a period of time along county roads.

Paul Haase apologized to the commissioners during the "Visitors to Be Heard" segment at the beginning of the hearing.

"I apologize for last week when I made a mistake about the procedure for passing the (Wheel Tax) ordinance on the first reading," Haase said. "I am just so against the state law that allows up to four wheels, that I just keep fighting and fighting. I don't think it's fair to be just four wheels. It did promote some good conversation and thanks for letting me speak."

Commissioner Leo Powell told Haase that "I think the way you believe in something, I believe it's admirable in how you've gone after it."

Commissioner Travis Mockler also told Haase that in the new state legislation being decided upon, that a wheel tax suggestion has moved to make the wheel tax maximum increase to 12 wheels at \$5 a wheel, rather than the current maximum of four wheels at \$4.

The board adopted a new wheel tax ordinance for Clay County last week.

CARE

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these discussions. I believe a number of concerns that providers had were answered during the meeting we have had together."

Prescott also added that he believed that two ways out of a basement daycare are needed and an egress window can be one of two ways out, but two doors work as well.

Vermillion Fire Chief Shannon Draper confirmed that any provider that registers with the city prior to the official date set forth by the council would get a waiver from inspection for two years until the next cycle begins. Draper also noted that those that registered after that date - estimated to be sometime this summer - would be subject to inspection.

He also added that those in-home day care provider locations that work in the standard, non-basement areas of the home would be inspected but he didn't foresee many if any issues arising from those.

City Councilwoman Kelsey Collier-Wise believes this is a pivotal new step in how Vermillion and daycare providers work in unison.

First and foremost, the providers of emergency services need to know what they're responding to," Collier-Wise said. "Currently, we have no way of knowing how many home daycares there are, where they are, or how many children they're serving."

"I believe the providers

we've been talking to are providing quality care, and bad things still happen in the best of situations.

There is no way to totally eliminate risk. This ordinance will increase the likelihood that children will receive quality care in a safe environment. In addition, another set of eyes (in some form) will enable glaring deficiencies to be able to be noted and addressed before an emergency arises."

Local private providers have shown support for the ordinance.

"The city council started this in October and passed out letters to all in-home daycare providers with the idea and asked for input or concerns that we may have," Linda Baedke said. "I was one that did provide input and the city council did a wonderful job listening to our concerns and made changes in the original provisions to suit our small community."

"They had been using provisions which larger cities use. The city council did a wonderful job to work with what our small city needs."

Baedke noted that some providers would maybe have to build in egress windows at properties that would require that safety provision especially with young kids on the premises.

That could be an issue for other private providers.

"We don't have that many providers in our town with 13 in-home providers that we know of," in-home provider Lori Kruse said. "The city thinks that we have a lot of new providers that will come in so what kind of codes,

standards do we have for them?"

Kruse, who has provided daycare services for 33 years, said that she believes more than 50 percent of the private providers are over 50-years-old and with Clay County being a poor one according to Kruse, registering could affect all parties involved due to potential needs to upgrade property safety.

"(Providers) aren't going to bother with it," Kruse said. "My place would pass with flying colors, but we can't lose one provider when we only have a few. None of us have no openings and we can't absorb it."

"(Registering) is not a bad deal, nothing about it is bad. But will it cost us to raise our rates? Our rates are really low. My parents, God bless them, do the best they can to pay me. We know our parents are good support."

Prescott said that registering with the city would serve emergency providers with advance notice that a daycare is at the address to which a response is requested.

"The address will be loaded into the CAD (Community Aided Dispatch) system in Emergency Communication so that responders have a better idea of the situation before arrival," Prescott said. "The proposed ordinance also establishes some base safety standards for a childcare facility in the community."

Collier-Wise believes citizens and providers will want to address the issue of making sure that what's best for the children comes first.

"But now that we've discussed and been educated on the potential issues that could be addressed, especially in relation to fire safety, I can't imagine choosing not to address them," Collier-Wise said. "Any work done on the prevention side decreases the likelihood that children, providers, and emergency personnel will be put in harm's way."

Baedke agrees with Collier-Wise.

"When we register our address, the number of kids in our care, and any kids who need extra care would be provided so that (emergency services) had that when they get there," Baedke said. "That's a good thing."

"It gives credibility to our profession that we are registered providers. It's basically a checklist for providers to use and a lot of it is common sense. I would say 95 to 99 percent of the providers are totally on board with it."

Collier-Wise also understands the need for good daycare in these modern times.

"Quality, affordable childcare is a definite need in Vermillion, and across the country," she said.

"South Dakota has a very high percentage of families with both parents working, and with a third of people in Vermillion living at or

below the poverty line, finding care on a budget can be difficult. We've worked hard to make sure the ordinance being considered isn't a burden on families or providers, but an enhancement and a partnership that will benefit everyone."

Licensed providers like the University of South Dakota's John T. Vucurevich Children's Center has to follow state licensing standards, which is an option as well for local, private providers.

"The Division of Social Services and the State Health Inspectors complete annual inspections as well as unannounced visits to see how the Center is supporting children in accordance with these standards and laws," Dawna Andersen, director of the Vucurevich Children Center said. "To my knowledge the private, non-registered daycares do not have these inspections. A similarity of both registered and non-registered providers are that the parents are the ultimate checks and balance of how well you are providing child care to their family."

Andersen sees the advantages of being a registered daycare facility.

"One advantage of being registered is there is an outside agency completing inspections and providing feedback based on certain standards to assure the quality and safety for children in child care," Andersen said. "I still believe it is the parent's right to make surprise visits

and spend some time at their child care facility to assure their comfort with the care their child is receiving. I welcome parental feedback to our Center which ultimately assures our supports are of quality and what families need for services."

Yet, Andersen doesn't believe that being registered necessarily means a provider is good at what they do just because a piece of paper says so.

"I do think that working with young children is a tough job and having that special gift to teach them makes the provider," Andersen said. "It takes more than just knowing children to be a quality provider. Children and parents are your primary customers and being flexible to their needs to support them is a must. As a director, I also need to work with the strengths, training, and needs of the teachers who are caring for the little ones of our community."

"These are all things that are not easily captured on paper."

Andersen doesn't see any overburden for her facility if this ordinance forced private daycares to close.

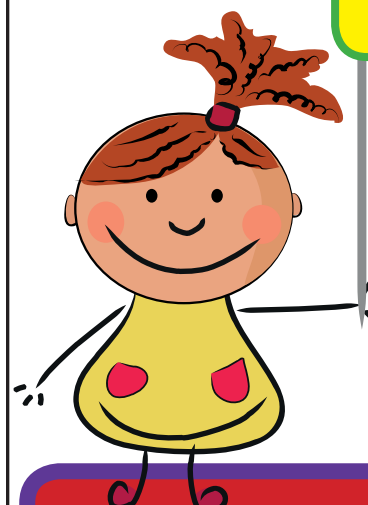
"I do not think it would be a burden to the current child care providers in town," Andersen said. "I could see it more as a burden to families with young children. There may be a potential shortage of child care options for families in the Vermillion Community."

Please visit our website at www.vermilion.k12.sd.us for additional information, look under "Kindergarten Screening Scheduled".

Vermillion Public Schools
Kindergarten Round-Up
Austin Elementary School
300 High Street

- Wednesday, March 18th
- Thursday, March 19th
- Friday, March 20th

Any child who will have their 5th birthday on or before September 1st, 2015 and their parents



Parents, if your child is going to be 5 on or before September 1st, 2015 please call Jayme at 677-7010 to register for a round-up session. Parents will have a question and answer time with school personnel while the incoming students will be screened.

Please plan to spend the morning or afternoon with us.

PLEASE BRING A CERTIFIED COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO ROUND-UP. IF YOUR CHILD WAS BORN IN SOUTH DAKOTA, YOU MAY PURCHASE A CERTIFIED COPY FROM THE CLAY COUNTY COURT HOUSE FOR \$15.00. WE ASK THAT PARENTS PROVIDE ORIGINAL COPIES OF BIRTH CERTIFICATES. IF YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATION RECORDS INCLUDE THE KINDERGARTEN SHOTS, PLEASE BRING THE COMPLETED IMMUNIZATION RECORD TO THE ROUND-UP.

ATTENTION

The Garfield Board of Supervisors will meet as a Board of Equalization at the Marshalltown School
Wednesday, March 18th, 2015
at 7 p.m.

Please call 605-253-2524 for an appointment.

Jim Danielson, Clerk

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