

# One in a *Ver* Million Meet Jerad Higman

**By David Lias**  
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There is always something new on the horizon that he is aiming for, and the Vermillion community is the main beneficiary of that vision.

It's no surprise, then, that Jerad was honored with the 2012 VCDC Community Leader Award at the Annual Vermillion Area Chamber & Community Awards Banquet held March 20.

Except to Jerad, that is, who never expected to be called up to the podium to receive an award during the banquet.

"This is quite a surprise; I wasn't expecting this," he told the banquet crowd, before expressing thanks to his wife and family and sharing his heartfelt appreciation to local community leaders who have strived to make Vermillion a good place to live and to do business.

Jerad, the president and CEO of Masaba Mining Equipment, and his staff have used a resolute perseverance to create a

Vermillion success story. Since Masaba located in Vermillion in 2005, it has undergone an expansion of its manufacturing plant here, and also opened a manufacturing center in Canada to meet the growing demand for its products.

Masaba's story is still being written, as Jerad oversees a 50,000 square foot addition to the plant this spring that houses the manufacturer's sandblasting and painting chamber.

"I've got the easy job; I come up with crazy ideas and just keep plugging away here," he said. "My wife and my team ... they're the ones that have to try to keep me under control."

That's no easy task. As a former VCDC board member, he was instrumental in starting the Vermillion NOW campaign which has resulted in job growth and capital investment in Vermillion. As a lead investor, he continues his involvement in Vermillion NOW by serving as a

member of the Advisory Governance Council, and as the lead business sponsor for the newly created Welding Boot Camp.

His many contributions to the community are often made without fanfare or recognition.

There have been multiple youth baseball and softball team sponsorships through the years, and he contributed several thousand dollars to start the youth football program in Vermillion.

Jerad donated steel structures for a new batting cage, scoreboard, and for safety nets for Vermillion's baseball fields, and for the new scoreboard at the Youth Soccer Facility.

He has been a main sponsor for Ribs, Rods and Rock'n Roll as well as providing the custom trophies coveted by participants.

Jerad also provides assistance to the University of South Dakota by contributing to the athletic fund, providing facility tours, and producing steel graphics for custom Coyote



Jerad Higman (left) is presented the 2012 VCDC Community Leader Award by Alan Fritch, VCDC board treasurer, at the Annual Vermillion Area Chamber & Community Awards Banquet held earlier this spring.

(Photo by David Lias)

logos.

He is single-handedly changing the face of downtown Vermillion and has added \$6 million to the local tax base since 2005 through plant expansion and multiple downtown renovations, including the RED Steakhouse, Ava Morgan, and multiple rental properties.

That financial investment, in turn, has created new jobs in the Vermillion community. Jerad employs 181 people

at Masaba Mining Equipment, 42 at RED Steakhouse and six at Ava Morgan. He is the community's largest private employer in terms of payroll at approximately \$7 million annually.

"I really love this town, and I want to see it grow, and I guess that's the main reason I do what I do every day," Jerad said. "I'm extremely blessed; we have a phenomenal team out at Masaba and at RED Steakhouse."

"This town is pretty special," he added. "If we don't believe in it, who else is going to? If we don't invest in it, who else is going to?"

The generations of people who have worked hard to make sure Vermillion continues to prosper, Higman said, "have made this community a better place – not only for us, but also for our kids and everyone else who lives here."

## SESQUICENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**By Cleo Erickson**

Excerpts from the Plain Talk

**1975**

Kathy Ludeman and Rick Isaacson were crowned Homecoming King and Queen.

Because of an increased number of complaints from all areas of the city, the City Council

requested the Police Department to increase the enforcement of traffic violations. After August 21 the Police Department step up their use of radar to enforce speeding, reckless driving, careless driving, and exhibition driving regulations. During the first nine months of 1974, 408 traffic citations were

issued, this compares to 272 for the first nine months of this year.

The Vermillion Police Department does not operate on a quota system for traffic violations. They are however, running two radar units at all times of the day and night. At any given time one or both of the units are in use. The Police are also using an unmarked car to check for speeding and other traffic violations in school zones. The fine given to those who violate speed limits is set at \$2.00 per mile per hour

over the speed limit. The police will stop those going up to five miles per hour over the speed limit and warn them. Tickets will be issued to all those going six miles per hour over the speed limit. Fine revenues go into the City General Fund. Tickets are also being issued to drivers who do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks.

The Vermillion Chamber of Commerce will give away \$1,500.00 for their Christmas Retail Promotion. The money will be given in five

drawings to be held between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The first four weeks winning names will be announced at 8:15 over KVRF radio. The winners have three minutes to identify themselves to the store manager and the store will call the Chamber Office. If the first name called does not claim the money a second name will be announced. The second name will also have three minutes to claim their prize. If no one claims the prize after 5 names are drawn the prize will be held over for the final drawing on December 23rd.

Snow removal efforts have been hampered by parked vehicles after the big snow storm. Many cars were stalled in the middle of the streets. When people are told snow is coming, they should get their cars off the street. This would be a great help to the street crew that is trying hard to get the streets cleared.

Residents of Vermillion will see a raise of approximately 8% for their electricity next year. The raise in electric rates will be necessary to enable Vermillion to pay its share of costs to the Missouri Basin Municipal group of cities.

Snow removal costs attributed to the November 19 and 20th snow storm already total \$5,971.92. Continuing snow and ice removal from the streets are adding to that figure.

END 1975

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