

One in a *Ver* Million Meet Jenny French

By David Lias
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Jenny French has just completed her first year as president of the board made up of Vermillion community members who worked hard all summer planning last week's annual Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll celebration here Sept. 7-8, 2012.

Jenny's experience with Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll goes back to 2010. That year, and last year, she served as the event's barbecue chairperson.

Before last week's event began, she talked about some of the new elements added to this year's activities. Last Friday night, a 'wing war' was held. People attending Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll sampled wings and cast votes for who they felt barbecued the best wings, she said.

An effort was also made to get USD students more involved in the downtown activities. Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll coincided with the Coyotes home-

opener football game, held 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8.

"We've been working with Neal Bendesky of USD Athletics, and we're co-marketing both of the events, and we're doing a combo ticket, so that people can get a ticket to the game and to Ribs and Rods, and save some money," Jenny said before last week's ribs event began. "With that combo ticket, you get admission to the tailgate activities Saturday."

She believes Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll has established itself as a signature event for the Vermillion community.

"It has become very well grounded," Jenny said. "I would say it is very established, and I have people asking me about it all year. We're getting very well known for it."

Being in charge of the Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n Roll committee is one of many ways she remains involved in the Vermillion community.

Jenny, who lost a re-election bid to the Vermillion City Council

earlier this year after completing a four-year term as alderman, still provides input to local government as a member of the city's swimming pool committee.

"We're planning for a new pool," she said, "so we came up with a new concept and took it to the city."

"I guess I feel Vermillion is a small enough of a community where I can make a difference," Jenny said. "I just believe you should get involved and give your time to make the community better."

She has lived in Vermillion since 1986, when she came here to attend USD. "I met a local and married him, and never really left," she said. Jenny and her husband, Tom, are parents of daughters Mikaela 16, Shantel 14, Tasia 11, and a son, Rollie 6.

This fall, she has also begun a new job as secretary at Jolley Elementary School.



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