

A couple weeks ago I shared with the City Council and department heads my intention to resign sometime in the coming year. This was not a new decision; I'd already talked with the Mayor and Finance Committee back in early August.

Any staffing change causes a disruption, and a more prominent position can cause a greater disruption. With the Water & Light Superintendent retiring, I wanted to limit the amount of disruption at one time. I'd recently seen another municipality name its City Engineer as its Interim City Administrator; that may have been right for them, but I didn't want to see Evansville's Engineer applicants offer or promise the wrong services. And I didn't want my pending departure to be a distraction during the budget process. It made sense to wait on the job search, and we kept my future resignation quiet until now.

Kelly Gildner told me she wasn't sure what to write about my future resignation and asked me to write a review of the projects and activities of the last five years.

Evansville is a wonderful town. I recently talked with Dave Vander Haegen at Creekside Place Community Center. He showed me their calendar. They were booked with multiple events every day and every evening: from zumba classes to Woodchucks holiday dinner to the Boy Scouts to senior meals to more and more. I am continually wowed by our residents' engagement in the community. Personally, I have enjoyed volunteering at the Fourth of July, Chili Cook-off, Civil War Sesquicentennial, Ice Cream Social, school facility and strategic planning, museum docent, and t-ball coach.

My five years here have gone by amazingly fast. And a lot has happened in that time. The list includes buildings such as remodeling City Hall, moving the police station downtown, and a new Fire Hall. It includes tax incremental assistance for the Heights at Evansville Manor, downtown infrastructure and building renovations, and the hotel. It includes improvements for storm water drainage and infrastructure such as Main Street, Madison Street, County Road M, and the new wastewater treatment plant. It includes recapture provisions to protect city finances in the cancelled biodiesel project and revised development agreements to work out stalled residential developments. It includes staff changes, office reorganization, and streamlining of city procedures. It includes major upgrades to the electric utility with a new substation, looping and rebuilding lines in the rural service areas, and starting to bury lines underground in the city. And the list includes community enhancements such as restoring Lake Leota.

That was a long paragraph, but I could have instead quoted the Mayor's annual State of the City reports from the last five years and filled the paper.

The accomplishment of which I am most proud is the city's healthy fiscal condition. When I first accepted this job I checked the city website, subscribed to the newspaper, and read online blogs to begin getting up to speed before I actually started. I remember one blog commented that it would be a short honeymoon and by the time I got through the first budget even my dog wouldn't look me in the eye. I am very pleased that the city has maintained a set of fiscal

policies to limit spending to within our means and to provide stability over time. And, just now while writing this column, I paused to make sure my dog would still look me in the eye.

Listing all these accomplishments should not be seen as my taking credit for any of them. All of these accomplishments required the dedication and participation of volunteers, city staff, and elected and appointed officials. The advisory referendum on lake restoration, public hearings on ordinances, informal talks over coffee or at the barber, groups such as Creekside and SOLE, and citizens helping on focus groups and advisory committees are just a few examples of the public's involvement.

As great as it has been, I prefer looking forward than backward. In my next column I will preview what I see for 2012.