



HESSTON Harvest

January 2014

New administrator begins



The governing body hired Gary Emry as the new administrator effective December 9, 2014, replacing John Carder. Gary is a Kansas native and grew up in Stanley, Kansas in Johnson County. "I consider it a privilege to serve the citizens of Hesston. From the first time I visited Hesston I have been impressed with the sense of pride this community exhibits and it fits well with my demeanor." When asked of his vision of the future of

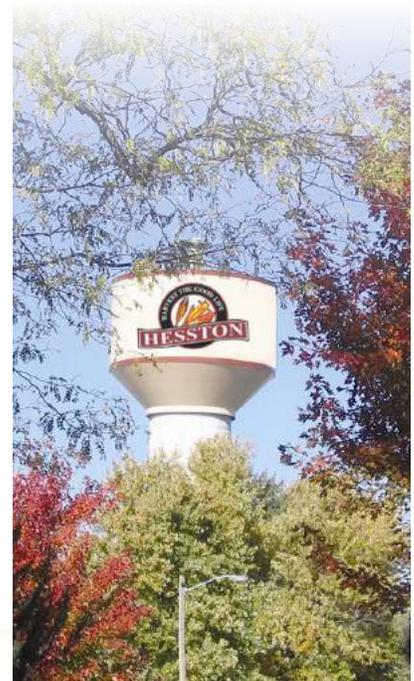
Hesston he replied "My goal is to continue forward with the established goals and objectives of the governing body. Until I have a clear and objective view of the overall community and the factors that impact us, I will likely not suggest significant changes". He added, "It's just not like me to come into an organization and effect big change at the onset. I'll visit, listen, learn, and then assess for change if needed." That doesn't mean that Emry isn't comfortable being a change agent. In his last community he was hired specifically because of his background in effective positive change to organizations and communities. "In Augusta, while serving as the President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, there were two big changes we accomplished; becoming a Main Street city, and achieving a transient guest tax. Taxation is generally a tough subject. Both of these achievements were controversial and had been attempted several times before my arrival. Sometimes it's simply a matter of providing options and opportunities, then letting the decision makers do their work. That's all I did." As to how these projects ended up, "the proof is in the pudding. All you have to do is take a look at the downtown and see the benefit of the transient guest tax, the work we did has helped them grow and re-invest dollars back into the community."

Whether rural or urban, communities in Kansas and throughout the Midwest are all working hard to overcome economic obstacles, a topic that Emry has close ties to having grown up in a rural setting and raised on a farm. "This is a dynamic period of time. We are working through a recovering economy. On one hand it makes sense for us to take advantage of the benefits of a struggling economy, such as low interest rates and more competitive pricing. There is work that can be done more efficiently and economically if you can achieve it in a responsible manner. On the other hand, we have an obligation to the citizens to be a good steward of their resources, fiscal and otherwise. It's a delicate balance, and one I am fully mindful of. Hesston has a sound reputation for exemplary management of governmental assets and I intend to continue that".

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Website makeover

Over the next few weeks we will transition to an updated website. Beyond a "facelift" you will see features such as online payment. Once added, you will be able to pay your utility bill online from the convenience of your home or smart-phone. An added bonus is that the city will not charge a convenience fee for this service. However, there will be a small fee applied to your transaction by our management agency. Other updates to the website may include a survey module, weather module, and immediate update crawler at the top or bottom of the home page. Your input is valuable to us and if there is anything you would like to see included on the site, please let us know by contacting city hall at 327-4412.



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Whether it's managing the city on a day-today basis, volunteering with the chamber, or for that matter any other aspect of his life, Emry says there is one area that he is passionate about; leadership. "In my opinion, one area we miss the target on as a society is leadership. Sound leadership is built on a basis of trust and so often today trust is betrayed. Regardless of whether I'm dealing with the public, employees, or others in general, my philosophy and the foundation of my leadership model is honesty. In our line of work however, people don't always appreciate honesty because we are often the bearer of bad news. Having difficult conversation is something most people will avoid. You can't avoid it, but you certainly don't have to engage in it like someone has to come out the winner. Success, progress, personal satisfaction...call it what you like, when it is one-sided, it's rarely a good overall result."

He attributes his leadership and management style to his military background, which is somewhat of a dichotomy considering his experience and practice. "As a general rule, people think the military leadership model is a "rule by fear" approach...far from the truth. I was very fortunate to have been mentored by several folks who each impacted me differently with their leadership style. I've shaped my character and leadership style based on blending their best practices with my personality traits. Basically, it's about treating people like you want to be treated...based on trust, empowerment, accountability, and reward. When those elements are evident, you generally have good results."

Looking ahead to 2014

Each year the staff identifies work under the capital improvement plan. Although the schedule is followed, it may be interrupted or work postponed for varying reasons, typically weather related. Below is a schedule of work to be completed through the coming year:

- Improvements to Plaza & Cherry Hills Court from Lincoln to Randall. This project is being done to upgrade the street to meet standards. It is funded through the special street and highway fund.
- Reconstruction of the 400 block of N. Weaver. City crews will be patching asphalt throughout town in areas where the pavements are not full depth and subject to breakdown from heavy traffic especially from the heavy trash trucks.
- West Embers IV Addition update: This addition is filling fast. New housing permits continue at a good pace. The contractor will soon begin adding infrastructure to complete this addition and new building will follow.
- Prairie Lakes Addition update: The bonding was completed for this project in December.

Wastewater project

The wastewater project has been awarded. Notice to proceed was given and work should begin mid-January. The project will be managed by SMH Consultants (engineering firm) and constructed by Walters-Morgan Construction, each based in Manhattan, Ks. The scope of the project will encompass a comprehensive upgrade to the treatment plant and pump station improvements. The project is scheduled to be completed in slightly less than a year at a contract amount of \$2,747,529. The project should have minimal impact on the community since line work throughout the community is not being done, but may impact traffic at lift station locations near roadways. Please be aware and obey all traffic signage placed at work locations.

Contact Information

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Office Hours

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
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