

Our City

Although I wish it were true, good things don't always "just" happen to good people. No, most often the good things that come our way have to be earned; and even when we may feel we have earned something it still may not happen. More often than not though we make our own luck, our own future, our own good things. And, like most of you have experienced luck comes from years of hard work, dedication and learning from real life experiences. Further, good things seldom occur without effort, dedication and experiences.

As mayor or city council person, whenever I have been involved in the hiring of a new employee my criteria are very simple; does the candidate have the skill set and life experiences to make them a good fit for our community. It is easy to get bogged down in the minutia of resumes and the like, they are important. But for me it is all about the fit; will the employee fit well with our staff and add value to our community.

As my student teacher, Daniel Heikkila, and I attended the open house for the school district's new superintendent last Tuesday, I was looking for the same thing from the three candidates. They all clearly passed the resume test and initial screening. After listening and talking to the three in my mind I narrowed it down to two. One of the two was polished and certainly said all the right things leaving an "I can work with him" thought in my mind. The second of the two, while every bit as polished, came across as passionate and sincere, filling me with a sense of "I want to work with him." On my comment card I simply wrote, "Please hire Randy Jensen, he is the best fit for our schools and our community."

I would be less than honest if I said my sole reason for being at the open house was to meet the candidates for superintendent. Over the past five or so years I have been working to make our Ag program a two-person department. The program has grown to more than I can continue to improve upon by myself. Last May the School District hired Emily Fisher to fill a vacated science opening at the high school. Emily is a certified Ag teacher who is also certified to teach science; she fit the bill perfectly. However, life's circumstances have drawn her back closer to home and earlier this month she accepted a position as the third Ag teacher at Middleton. Finding teachers in general is exceedingly difficult, finding an Ag teacher who can teach science, leadership, Ag mechanics, plant science and animal science is like finding hen's teeth. Currently in Idaho there are ten openings for someone with those credentials. Daniel Heikkila was the only candidate left. My secondary purpose at the open house was to introduce Daniel to the school board and superintendent candidates in hopes that he might be hired to fill the position soon to be vacated by Emily moving back to in New Plymouth and Middleton.

Friday night found me with extended family and friends at Willow Bay café. As we were eating and visiting, School Board chair Bruce Hauber came in to pick up a takeout order. I excused myself from the table and went over to talk to him after he had placed his order. I shook his hand saying, "Thank you!" He followed with, "For which one?" I said, "Both." In the conversation that followed Bruce stated that, "Randy was the best fit for our schools." I couldn't agree more. As we talked about the hiring of Daniel Heikkila as our second Ag teacher I felt a degree of accomplishment for the Ag program. The growth and success of the Ag program at American Falls High School is due to the efforts of our community, the support it gets from our school board, current Superintendent Dr. Ron Bolinger, my principal Travis

Hansen and the fantastic students who choose to be a part of it. I very much appreciate the things Dr. Bolinger has done for the School District and this community in his tenure here; his retirement is well-earned and I wish him the very best in the years to come.

A lot of good things happened last week and were the result of efforts by many. Without minimizing the efforts of Dr. Bolinger; I truly look forward to working with Superintendent Randy Jensen in both of my positions; and I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to be working with Daniel Heikkila to build on what was started 27 years ago. I find myself reinvigorated and optimistic about my day job and the direction the program is going. In their new positions within our School District and community, I certainly see both Jensen and Heikkila as the best fit for us. We are indeed lucky to have both. Though they don't always just happen, good things do happen to good people.

Until next week...