

Council Bluffs



Art Hill, financial director for the city of Council Bluffs, was the Treynor Optimist Club speaker on August 17. He has held that position for five years, but is now retiring. Thom Hanafan, along with the police chief, fire chief, and human resource director are all retiring before the end of the year.

Art said that the Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park has changed Omaha's vision of Council Bluffs. Omaha doesn't have anything similar on their side of the river. Also, with all the bike trails connected to the park, bikers have a lot of options in the Council Bluffs area compared to a few in Omaha.

Council Bluffs is looking at a variety of changes that are needed. The police department is in a 40 year old building and need more space. The fire department has 100 firefighters, but only about 300 fire calls a year. Animal control needs relocating because of Interstate changes and the city is looking at different options. The Library is now an attractive place, but some people stay all day just to be out of the weather.

Council Bluffs includes about 40 square miles. The city is looking at housing and retail nearer the river, more like most cities along a river. They haven't had any growth in the Council Bluffs schools. Growth has been in Lewis Central and outlying areas like Treynor.

Council Bluffs needs to attract young professionals, like for the Google plants. It currently has a low average income. Art said that there are about 4,000 people commute from Omaha to Council Bluffs, but about 18,000 commute from Pottawattamie County to Omaha. With 90,000 working people in Pottawattamie County, 20% of them commute to Omaha.

Art is running for the Iowa Senate for District 11.