

IF YOU BUILD ROADS, THEY WILL COME

Tom Hanafan has been mayor of Council Bluffs (CB) for 16 years. During this period there has been a dramatic transition and improvement of infrastructure to facilitate growth, development, and living in and around CB. As a native he witnessed the zenith of rail commerce (1957) and of population (1969) in Council Bluffs. Mayor Hanafan noted that CB once ranked 5th in the world in rail commerce. The legacy of this was nearly 200 rail and street crossings in the city. Many have been eliminated and most are improved. The interstate roadways through CB were designed in the 60's and now carry more than the design traffic load. Mayor Hanafan stated that a new interstate roadway is planned but implementation is about 14 years away. He noted the 1% sales tax has contributed greatly to the funds for improving wastewater drainage, providing water service, and street upgrading throughout the city; and this is still ongoing. According to Mayor Hanafan about 70% of the city budget goes for public safety-something that cannot be postponed or set aside. Since 1991, Mayor Hanafan noted, the population of CB has been growing. A large, new 500-unit subdivision is in development. Also, there is a great deal of residential development in the county near CB. Thus, the CB area is now becoming a significant part of the Omaha area housing market. Mayor Hanafan said he has been part of a Lincoln-Omaha-CB regional planning group contemplating the status 50-yr in the future of the metro areas and a region within a 60-mile radius around. While the current population is about one million it is expected to double. Improvement of infrastructure will attract companies that provide jobs that will lead to population growth. Mayor Hanafan said he is proud of the accomplishments of CB during his term in office and the efforts are ongoing.