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New Department Directors David Ades, Waylon Andrews Share Common Goal

David Ades and Waylon Andrews have stepped into new roles as they lead the Building Office and Public Works Department, respectively, into the future but they share a common goal.

"We hope to have a seamless transition," Ades said after succeeding Ed Higgins, who retired last month.

Andrews, who takes over for the recently retired John Rouse, echoes that sentiment.

"My goal would be business as usual. I've been here 21 years so I don't plan to make great changes," he said. "We're just going to evolve a little bit and keep moving forward."

Ades is in his 23rd year with the City after beginning his career in 2000 with the Boone Police Department, where he was an officer for 17 years. He was a technical accident investigator who also was a certified instructor when a severe sports-related injury led to his early retirement from duty. Meanwhile, the building department's community service officer's move to a Boone County position created an opening that led Ades into his next career chapter.

"That job entails code enforcement and nuisance abatement, and running our demolition program to get rid of dilapidated properties with the goal of clearing the way for economic development as new properties backfill some of those lots," he explained.

About two years ago City Administrator Bill Skare asked Ades if he had an interest in cross-training with building official Ed Higgins, who performed building inspections and issued permits. Ades said yes.

He believes his experience as an accident investigator was helpful during the cross-training process and will be a big plus in his new role.

"The building officer wears several hats so being organized and paying attention to details is a must. As an accident investigator, there's always the potential of going to court, either criminal or civil, to testify, which means you have to have all your ducks in a row. That job experience and mindset have definitely carried over," Ades said.

While so much of each job requires the ability to "go by the book," their ability to make judgment calls is still a necessity. "There's some crossover in that respect, too. I wouldn't say it's always been easy, but having that background has been helpful," he added.

Ades said doing the job well is especially important to him because of his hometown roots.

"I feel like I have skin in the game because I grew up in Boone. I've lived here my entire life and I decided long time ago to live here. My two kids were raised here, so I want to see this town grow and prosper," he continued. "My goal is to make sure that housing and development are safe and done properly and, along with that, that the town grows and prospers in the process."

Ades expects one of the biggest challenges for the department this year will be adapting to a software program changeover. While it may take some getting used to, it will ultimately allow for a more seamless, efficient and effective inspection process.

Andrews was born and raised in Hamilton County, just north of the Boone County line and graduated from South Hamilton High School in Jewell. He attended Des Moines Area Community College in Boone and worked at the Fareway Grocery distribution center in the industrial park before applying for a city position.

He will mark his 22nd year with the City this June, beginning in the street department and filling in with other departments. He joined the water department in 2008 and became the meter department foreman in 2012 when his predecessor retired. He continued his professional

development by earning an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Grade 3 water license, which includes the requirement of four years of operational experience in water treatment, water distribution or wastewater. He was promoted to the daily operations manager for public works in 2018.

Andrews' experience has been an advantage as he has stepped up to the director role because he understands the responsibilities and challenges that each of the department's employees face.

"I always try to say that I won't ask any of my guys to do anything that I haven't done. There may be a few minor times that that may not apply, but generally 99% of the time I've done that task. It does help," he said. "My memory is one of my things that co-workers talk about because I've seen about 90% of our utilities or know where they are, how they run and where they go. I think the guys value that."

Few urban residents realize how many miles of infrastructure – above and under the ground – even the smallest city needs to function. Adding to the department's challenges, much of Boone's sewer and water pipes were installed in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Miles of clay sewer pipes are more than 120 years old, and the department works each year to insert a resin lining in sections of pipe without digging.

Another challenge is Iowa's climate and soil, which combine to damage roadways, create potholes, and break underground pipes this time of the year. "We do have plans to purchase an asphalt patching machine this year. If approved, it will make longer-lasting patches," Andrews said.

Both Ades and Andrews had high praise for their predecessors, who set a high bar for excellence.

"I want to continue the good work that Ed did in this office. It's hard to replace a person that has 31 years of experience in this job. Ed had a great memory bank where he could just call up information immediately," Ades said. "It might take me a little bit longer to get some answers but I don't expect there will be any huge lulls or changes. I hope people have a little bit of patience with me as I navigate this new role."

Andrews emphasized that public input is "always, always welcome."

I hope people will always feel free to bring things to us through the city website, through me or the administrative assistant at City Hall. I try to keep up on any complaints or comments that come in, and I want people to feel free to share their two cents' worth with us," he said.