

Anderson says a healthy economy is paramount

Mankato mayoral primary

By Dan Linehan

dlinehan@mankatofreepress.com

MANKATO — If the credit crisis in late 2008 was like a receding tide, it forced the country to take a hard look at the ugly realities that used to be ignored.

“What was unearthed is the size of our responsibilities,” said Eric Anderson, who is running for mayor of Mankato. “We now have an expanded area we have to take care of with a constricting tax base.”

When times were good, he said, big gains in the tax base allowed local governments to spend more money without raising their tax rate.

When the economy went south, the unsustainability of that model was laid bare, Anderson said.

He’s owned a financial services business since 1992, and said he is qualified to help lead the city through this crisis.

“I wanted to make sure this understanding was

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ANDERSON: Maintain services

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brought to the council,” he said. “I want to help keep us as stable and economically viable as I can.”

Anderson said Mankato will continue to feel the “domino effect of the budgetary issues in Washington and St. Paul.”

According to a report from the National Conference of State Legislatures, Minnesota’s \$ 4.77 billion budget gap is the sixth worst in the nation at 25 percent of revenues.

Despite the budget problems, Anderson said core services should be maintained.

“The question, then, is what are the priorities.”

He said he wants to lead the discussion on this issue and solicit input from the community.

“When I evaluate local government, to me the priorities are public safety and public works ... those areas that can be provided best by government and not easily duplicated by the private sector.”

Anderson said Mankato “maybe missed the boat by not going up to the Justice Center,” the county’s law enforcement facility. He acknowledged he wasn’t privy to the details of those discussions, though.

As far as their plans to either stay in the Law Enforcement Center or build a new headquarters, he said they should stay if the department feels comfortable being there and the improvements are costeffective.

On the whole, it will be a struggle “trying to maintain our quality of life with fewer resources,” he said.

“ For the time being, this struggle precludes local government from entertaining new amenities.”

As a lifelong resident of Mankato, Anderson said he knows the economic makeup of the area and wants the council to have a strong relationship with the business community.

When the mayor is sworn in this January, he'll have a large part of a year to learn about the budget, and Anderson said he'll spend that time learning the intricacies of public finance to help explain it to regular people.

Anderson said he hasn't had much of an interest in running for public office before now and is “coming off the sidelines, so to speak, after keeping an eye on Mankato for many years. “ People that I encounter are looking for elected officials who understand we're in a very defensive mode right now.”

As of July 30, Anderson has spent \$ 920.18 on the campaign.

Citizens will vote Aug.

10 in a primary that will trim the slate of Mankato mayoral candidates from three to two.

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