

Foreman demonstrates a passion for community service

Mankato Council Primary

By Dan Linehan

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MANKATO — Radical change is not a campaign promise Mankato City Council candidate Karen Foreman is likely to make anytime soon.

“ The condition of the streets is that we’re going a year or two too long,” she said, before conceding that budget constraints make it hard to catch up. Quality streets are a priority of residents, Foreman said.

There aren’t as many neighborhood parks as there should be, she said, but the city has done a great job with plowing and makes good choices for median plantings.

When asked about changes she’d make, Foreman replies with tweaks. Her exception would be a measure allowing residents to keep up to five hens in their backyards, which she opposes because “98 percent” of the people she’s met while doorknocking are against it.

Even so, change isn’t her major motivation for running.

“I have this passion about community service and about how we come together as a people to care for each other,” said

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FOREMAN: Core services must be maintained

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Foreman, a Mankato resident since 1987.

Foreman is vying with three other challengers — Tim Adams, Najwa Massad and Cynthia Frederick — to represent Ward 1 on Mankato’s City Council.

The Aug. 10 primary will cut the field of four in half.

The 1st Ward covers the southeast portion of Mankato, atop the hill and generally east of Minnesota State University and south of Fair Street.

As far as the budget goes, she said cities should focus on the services at the heart of what it means to be a city, such as public safety, streets and utilities.

“ While you may need to ask these areas to share the sacrifice, you need to maintain core services,” she said. Foreman said the property tax is “ very regressive” because it does not increase with the taxpayer’s income.

“I understand that we’re all in a very fixed (income) situation,” she said. The furloughs, lack of pay raises and reduced hours that are present now means the term “fixed income” no longer refers only to retirees, she said.

As for an impending decision on whether to build a new public safety facility or renovate the Law Enforcement Center, Foreman said the lower- cost option is preferable if it works for staff.

“ We want an environment where the employees can be productive,” she said.

Foreman said her work representing the 3,400 front-line employees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System in her union has given her a statewide perspective. She has also worked through two mergers — one of the system itself that combined its universities, technical colleges and community colleges about a dozen years ago and another in the state union structure.

“ While it takes time, in the end the organization is stronger and we do better customer service at a lower cost,” she said.

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