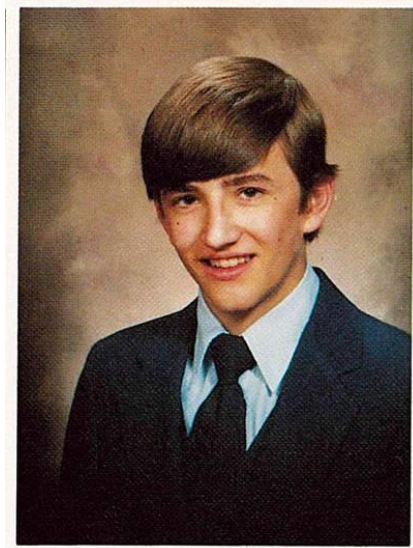


AN INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR MIKE

By John D. Wilson
Rush County Historian

This is the 27th article written to commemorate the Rush County Bicentennial. The subject of this month's column is current Rushville Mayor, Mike Pavey.

Mike was born at Rush Memorial Hospital in 1963. He is the 11th child of parents Charlie and Margaret Pavey; 5 older brothers and 5 older sisters. Needless to say these 10 brothers and sisters have had a tremendous influence on Mike's life, and they still do. His mother's words of wisdom were important too. One of her most famous quotes when Mike was growing up was, "self brag stinks."



As a former teacher and coach, I've often wondered how former students and athletes turned out. Are they gainfully employed and are they solid citizens? Many educators probably have those same questions. The first day of school each teacher looks out over a classroom of kids with unlimited potential. Such was the case with Mike Pavey. Mike said he struggled in the 7th grade academically and athletically. By 8th grade he had turned the corner with the influence of teachers like Chuck Grimes, Becky Webb, Pat Busard, Bill Swigart, and Rick Cumberworth. A positive comment from Cumberworth helped Mike go from a D to an A in math. Mike went on to graduate from Rushville Consolidated High School in 1982, and then attended Purdue University where he earned a degree in engineering. Today Mayor Mike helps sponsor awards for hard-working, deserving students.

Before becoming Mayor of Rushville, Mike was a project engineer for McComas Engineering for eighteen years. Recently he has announced plans to run for a 4th term as Mayor of Rushville. During the previous 3 terms, the successes of his leadership are visibly obvious. Significant historic buildings have been preserved and repurposed. Those properties that could not be saved or presented an eyesore to the town have been torn down. A new industry is coming to town (Diamond Pet Foods), and there is other activity at Commerce Park (Frito-Lay Distribution Center).

Mike has a long list of goals for a 4th term, and I asked him to elaborate some:

Increasing the city's population – "It was predicted our current population would be around 5,800. We are now at 6,200. We need to continue to expand services and promote our positives to people outside our community." Mike further commented regarding attracting families to Rushville, "We can't be a compromise; we must be a reasonable option."

Launching Diamond Pet Foods – "Permits are being submitted. We hope that digging will begin by the end of July."

The proposed Community Center in the old Walmart Building – Out of the \$24 million to fund the project, \$13 million has already been earmarked for construction. Mike said, “The rest of the funds will come from new market tax credits, redevelopment tax credits, and a Readi Grant.” Sustaining funds would be managed by the Rush County Community Foundation.

Completing the Cherry Street Extension – “Drainage issues for the city will be addressed by building detention and retention ponds.”

Renovating Willkie Park – “That is an ongoing project.”

Completing the Launch Center above Fish Moon Brewing Company – The city owns the building. “Use of the 2nd floor space as a Launch Center will make high speed Wi-Fi available for small businesses.”

Repurposing the old Havens School – The building would be renovated for additional apartments. The Housing Authority would hopefully provide dollars.

New single family homes on city owned property on Washington Street – “We need a developer.”

A pipeline of future leaders in the community – “City internships help young people learn leadership on the job. We need to educate future community leaders.”

Expanding the city’s parks and trails – “Those improvements would primarily be in Riverside Park.”

Upgrading the city’s infrastructure – Diamond Pet Foods is a big part of needed improvement. Also improvements within the current city limits will be phased in. “One area that needs an immediate upgrade is 5th Street.”

I asked Mayor Mike how Rushville will be fifty years from now. He replied, “We must diversify our economic base. We will need measurable, realistic expectations. To be bigger, better; that creates its own economy.”

What are Mike’s future political aspirations? He commented, “I’m here to be Mayor. I’m not sure about future steps.” Mike says he is still a Conservative Republican, but he has become more moderate on social issues.

In his spare time Mike Pavey enjoys time with his family, football games, and volunteer work. His son Nicholas will be a freshman at Anderson University this fall where he plans to study computer technology. Look for Mike to add orange shirts to his red and black wardrobe.

So teachers, when you look out at all those bright and shining faces this fall, remember you may be teaching a future Mayor of Rushville.