

RE-ELECTION TIME IN MONTE VISTA

Club super Jardon does double time as mayor

By MICHAEL LEVANS

MONTE VISTA, Colo. — When the residents of Monte Vista have a bone to pick with the mayor, they don't fight City Hall.

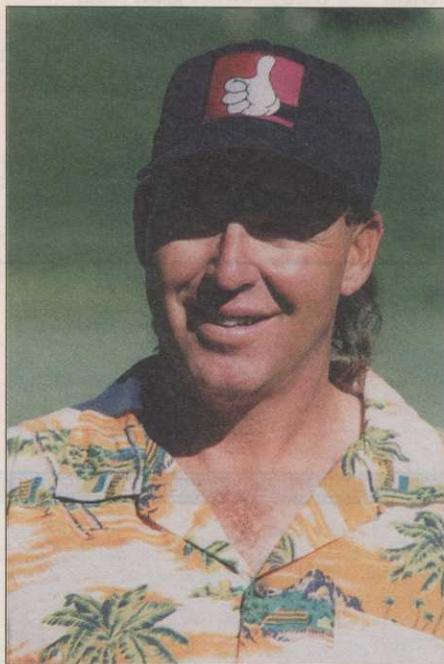
Instead they march down to the golf course and knock on the superintendents door.

Britt Jardon will probably be there to hear them out. Jardon, Monte Vista Golf Club superintendent, just so happens to be the mayor of the town.

"When they come talk to the mayor they find me at the course in my coveralls full of grease," said Jardon.

A resident since the summer of 1988 when he took over as the course super, Jardon has been working this odd double duty since he saw an advertisement in the local paper in 1995. He said he stumbled into politics due to his pure love of this community nestled in southern Colorado's San Luis Valley — an area that sees about five inches a rain a year.

"The ad said the town needed someone for a city council seat," said Jardon. "This is a beautiful little town and we wanted to make it home. Our kids call it home. So I decided to get involved in the community, and I



Mayor and superintendent Britt Jardon

responded to the ad," he said.

Never having served in any political office, Jardon was appointed to council. "I served on council for a year and a half ... then the council appointed me mayor a year later."

The job is done on a volunteer basis,

demanding more than 30 hours a week.

Since his appointment, Jardon has adhered to a routine like few others in the golf course maintenance business.

"We start at 5:30 a.m. and get greens, bunkers and tees out of the way," he said. By 9:00 a.m., the phone in Jardon's course maintenance office — which doubles as the official mayor's office — starts ringing off the hook.

"I like to sit and listen," he said. "I like to have people get what's bothering them off their chests. If there's a problem, there's got to be a way to fix it."

As one would imagine, things do get a little hectic. "We have council two times a month, the first and third Thursday ... and men's league is Thursday night. So I have to get the grill going for men's league then run over for council and get ready to run a city meeting."

Recent meetings have been a little more intense for Jardon. It's an election year and Mayor Jardon has thrown his hat in the ring for another term.

Pressing issues for the Mayor? Parts of the town need new storm water and surface drainage systems. Replacement systems ring in at a cost of several million dollars. That new nine-hole



development has been put on the back burner.

"We've acquired grants and loans but those agencies are saying that our rate structure is below average. We have a lot of low-income families, and now we might have to raise the rates. That's the worst thing you can do in an election year," said Jardon.

Unfortunately, the city-owned Monte Vista golf course, which hosts 15,000 rounds a year, has always been low on the list of city priorities.

"We're looking to get our streets paved, all the sewer and water done and hopefully we'll have some left over for recreation," said Jardon "We're thinking off adding nine holes and redoing the nine we have now. I try to keep the course an issue since recreation is a valuable piece in the social structure of a community."

Now, Jardon has a little more on his plate with reelection time in full swing. He has to rake bunkers, cut the tees and kiss a lot of babies.

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