

It's been five months since he retired, but Gordon "Gordie" Crockett can't sleep in. He still gets up at five — the same time he rose nearly every day for more than 40 years. "I don't know," Crockett replies, when asked why he doesn't cut himself some slack and sleep until seven or eight. "I just can't do it yet."

Crockett called it a day for good in early March after a 41-year-career, including 39 years as superintendent, at Purple Sage and Fairview Municipal golf courses in Caldwell, Idaho, a small town located about 30 miles from Boise. Needless to say, his body clock is set to rise with the roosters.

Don't think for a minute, however, that you can take the man out of the superintendent, but you can't take the superintendent out of the man. Crockett may not be catching up on years of lost sleep, but he's catching plenty of rainbow trout. Translation: He's digging retirement.

"I'm lovin' it," Crockett says convincingly in his friendly twang. "I've been busy. I'm doin' a lot of fishin' and playin' a lot of golf."

More importantly, he's *not* doing a lot of dwelling on what it's like *not* to be a superintendent anymore.

"It was time to do something else," Crockett says. "It's nice to get up and not have to worry about the greens and the fairways."

There are things to ponder — and learn — from Crockett's lengthy career. First, it's all right to work at the same course for four decades and not have to apologize for it. Too many superintendents these days feel like they have to move around the country every five years to move up in their careers. They consider themselves "lifers" if they're at courses for more than five years.

I'm not knocking the move-around-to-move-up-in-the-world philosophy, but there's something to be said for stability. Crockett should be proud of working at the same place for that long.

"I'm kind of surprised myself," the humble Crockett says of his longevity. "I don't know. I guess I was just dumb enough to stay here."

He laughs at his comment. Crockett is proud to have spent so many years at Purple Sage and Fairview. He loved his job. Like many of his peers, golf course maintenance was his passion.

And he loves Caldwell, Idaho, the only town he's known. Crockett's like the character from

He's Just Enjoying 'Doin' Nothin' '

BY LARRY AYLWARD



THERE ARE THINGS
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SUPERINTENDENT
GORDIE CROCKETT'S
LENGTHY CAREER

the John Mellencamp song, "Small Town."

*I was born in a small town;
And I live in a small town;
Prob'ly die in a small town;
Oh, those small communities.*

You'd think that after 41 years, Crockett would have a hard time letting go of his job — but he doesn't even miss it. Heck, it doesn't even sound like Crockett had to ease into retirement. "It was kinda nice to get up that first morning and think, 'Man, I don't have to do a darn thing today,'" he says.

That's the way it should be when the time comes — for all of us.

Perhaps Crockett's legacy is his son, T.J., who became a superintendent because he wanted to be like his dad. T.J., the superintendent of Meridian GC near Boise, said he's happy his dad decided to hang up his work boots.

But T.J. will miss his father. After all, Gordie wasn't just his dad; he was his mentor and ally. "We relied on each other," T.J. says.

T.J. will miss moments he may have taken for granted — like when he'd pick up the phone and call Gordie at his course to talk turf maintenance. "I'd ask him, 'What are you doing to get rid of the green moss or the black algae?'" T.J. says.

There's a hint of sadness in his voice when T.J. realizes there will be no more dialing up his dad for advice.

"Oh, he can still call me on the phone to talk," Gordie says, when told of T.J.'s sentiment. "If I'm home."

Gordie cackles. Chances are he *won't* be home. He'll be casting his line into the lake or studying his line to the hole on the green.

"I'm just enjoyin' doin' nothin'," he declares.

After more than 40 years in the business, he deserves to enjoy "doin' nothin'."

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