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**'Other duties as assigned'**

*Monmouth's Fancey takes on projects to improve quality of living for all*

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — City staff in Monmouth often put in extra time to make things go smoothly for residents, businesses and contractors.

When it comes to, "other duties as assigned," Mark Fancey has taken the phrase to a whole new level.

"He goes above," City Manager Scott McClure said. "Like Music in the Park. A lot of what he does is on city time — not everything is pure volunteer — however, he's out there early, setting things up, emceeing the event."

Fancey is the community development manager for the city of Monmouth and can be found shoveling bark or watering trees on Saturdays throughout the summer.

"Springtime is when they do their planting," said Terri Gregory. "They've planted hundreds of trees in the planter strips. He will go out and water on his days off or on the weekends because he doesn't want the public works guys to be overloaded. He says he doesn't want to make more work for public works."



Mark Fancey was presented with a ceremonial hammer for all the work he did to help get the senior center expansion finished. He often is seen around town caring for trees and parks on the weekend.

Fancey, a master gardener, knows in the first year of a tree's life, regular watering is important. That's why fall

is traditionally the time to plant trees. But with Earth Day and Arbor Day in the spring, that is when it the

large plantings happen. Getting groups to help with planting trees is not difficult, Fancey said, in part

because Monmouth is filled with community-minded people. **See FANCEY, Page 5A**

**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS**  
Main Street Emporium will sell decorations and gift items through December. **»Page 15A**

**FALLS CITY**  
Falls City's boys and girls basketball teams open the 2016 season. **»Page 14A**

**INDEPENDENCE**  
Polk County Fire District No. 1, Indy Rehab team up for drill. **»Page 2A**

**MONMOUTH**  
Senior Center to celebrate expansion completion. **»Page 3A**

**SPORTS**  
Polk County All-Region football team. **»Page 14A**

**EDUCATION**  
Morrison students help create Winterfest magic. **»Page 16A**

**Dallas chamber CEO talks plans for future**

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — JD Shinn's first weeks on the job as the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce's chief executive officer has him talking to a lot of people.

That is by design, part of his "90 days, 90 conversations" goal to help create a new strategy for the chamber and visitors center.

"A lot of that is just being able to be that listener that is catching what the business community is struggling with, so we at the chamber can support those needs for Dallas," he said. "It's a unique town, so we have to be able to support it in a way that this community needs."

A pattern emerged when Shinn began talking with people about what those needs are after he officially took the reins in October.

The most mentioned is that Dallas businesses — especially the "mom and pop" operations — want more networking opportunities.

"They are small companies that want to just relate to each other and be able to feed off each other, so networking is important," he said.

He said the chamber has venues to increase networking in place by providing more support to Young Pros, a networking program aimed at professionals 35 and younger, and setting aside time at chamber luncheons for people to talk. Helping companies work together

to improve the business landscape is something Shinn hears from nearly everyone he talks to, as well.

Shinn said with such a small staff at the chamber, it's been difficult to follow through on and balance those needs.

He is putting a lot of thought into ways of improving those efforts, which he said begins with establishing trust in the organization.

"Rebuilding that is a huge priority for me. That is going to take a lot of different things, so working on plans for that occupies my 9:30-at-night-to-midnight timeframe," he said. "It feels like I'm back at college doing late nights." Moving from rebuilding to expanding chamber programs will re-

quire focus on increasing membership. Shinn said just prior to taking over, the chamber had about 120 members. That isn't enough, he said.

"As far as survival, we need to be at about 180. We are not really there right now," he said. "We desperately need to probably double the number of members we have now."

Shinn has made a point to talking with businesses who have left the chamber to learn about the reasons behind those decisions.

He said there has been themes in those discussions, too.

He declined to elaborate, saying "I'm going to hold that in my head. Those things are going into part of the planning process." **See CHAMBER, Page 5A**

**Dallas extends City Manager's contract**

**Itemizer-Observer staff report**  
DALLAS — The Dallas City Council extended City Manager Ron Foggin's contract another year and granted him a 2 percent merit raise following



his annual evaluation Monday night.

Councilors approved the contract extension on a 7 to 1 vote, with Councilor Micky Garus voting "no."

The raise increases Foggin's monthly salary by \$235.99 to \$12,035.

There were no other changes made to Foggin's contract.

Foggin's performance and contract was discussed during an hour and a half executive session following the council's regular meeting. The vote to approve the amendment to the contract was taken in open session after the closed meeting.

Foggin was hired in January of 2013.

**Sheriff deputies take kids out shopping**



Polk County Sheriff Deputy Josh Brooks helps Walter Manley wrap presents for his family purchased during the annual "Shop with the Sheriff" event on Saturday.

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Walter Manley, 10, dared Polk County Sheriff's Deputy Josh Brooks to wear a bright red "ugly Christmas sweater" with cats in Santa hats on it for the rest of the day Saturday.

To Walter's surprise, Brooks bought the sweater and put it on over his uniform during the sheriff's office annual "Shop with the Sheriff" event.

"Do I get to hang out with you next year or are you too embarrassed?" Brooks asked Walter, of Falls City.

Walter smiled as he wrapped the presents he selected for his family, including something for the two dogs.

Each year, "Shop with the

Sheriff" pairs sheriff's office staff with children from Falls City for Christmas shopping, paid for with a grant from Walmart. Children invited to participate are selected by school employees and the Falls City Service Integration Team, part of Polk County Community and Family Outreach.

Each child roams the aisles at Walmart to buy presents for their families. The limit is \$40, but often deputies pitch in for amounts higher than that.

Deputy Marcos Ordaz-Munoz made a second trip through the check stand to buy a gift for his Falls City buddy, Ariel Dvorak, 9, who had spent her allotted amount on her mom, dad and brother. **See SHOP, Page 5A**

**THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK**

<b>wed</b> Today marks 75 years since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Take a moment to remember and thank a veteran for his or her service.  <b>Snow</b> Hi: 35 Lo: 30	<b>thu</b> Come network with the Polk County Young Professionals. The group will meet at Ticolor Tile in Dallas. 5:30 p.m. Free.  <b>Rain/freezing rain</b> Hi: 42 Lo: 40	<b>fri</b> Come mingle and meet Santa at the Dallas Downtown Association's inaugural Christmas at Pressed in Dallas. 2-6 p.m. Free.  <b>Showers</b> Hi: 46 Lo: 39	<b>sat</b> Sit and share a cup of coffee and conversation with an Independence police officer at the Grove Coffee House. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Free.  <b>Showers</b> Hi: 45 Lo: 36	<b>sun</b> Enjoy the Festival Carolers, who will bring Victorian holiday cheer to Trinity Lutheran Church in Dallas. 6:30 p.m. Free.  <b>Showers</b> Hi: 44 Lo: 36	<b>mon</b> Today is the perfect day to create your gingerbread mansion to celebrate Gingerbread House Day.  <b>Cloudy</b> Hi: 43 Lo: 35	<b>tue</b> Polk County France School of Dance will host a dance recital and food drive at LaCreole Middle School. 6 p.m. Donation.  <b>Showers</b> Hi: 40 Lo: 34
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