

# Jerry Bean, profile

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REDLANDS - Local newspaperman Jerry Bean believes his financial and business expertise is just what the Redlands City Council needs.

Bean decided to campaign for election after reading about the city's fiscal crisis.

"It was just a realization that other cities did not have problems like this. It seemed unusual that the city would be having this problem, given the revenue side of it," Bean said, noting that general fund revenues increased 25 percent in two years, yet the city operated at a shortfall the past five years.

"I thought `what business wouldn't like to have those kinds of numbers?' Yet the city is having financial problems. The reason is they just spend an incredible amount of money."

Bean singled out the Fire and Police departments, salaries, benefits and consultants as expenses that bog down the city's budget.

"They just have to have no new spending," Bean said. "The income of the city needs to catch up to expenses. And future salary increases need to be more moderate until the economy can catch up."

However, the most important issue facing the city today is not the budget itself, Bean said, but how the budget problems impact the quality of life in Redlands.

"They haven't maintained streets the way they should have ... the medians in town are horrible ... I'd like to see the city's entrance ways landscaped the way other cities do ... Hillside Memorial Park is horrible ... There's no need for that. That's the quality of life side of it," Bean said.

Bean has been looking at business budgets and financial plans for more than 30 years.

"The overall problem is balancing the budget. I think the budget they passed for this fiscal year is extremely optimistic," Bean said. "It calls for \$4 million in new revenues and everybody knows we're entering into an economic slowdown. I think it would be almost impossible for them to meet their sales tax, which they project to be \$1 million higher than last year. Citrus Plaza has to do a lot of additional business to come up with that kind of money."

In 1979, after 13 years in the newspaper business, Bean was named president and publisher of the Rockford Register Star, in Rockford, Ill., a 100,000-circulation daily paper.

Bean later became general manager of USA Today and helped plan its launch in 1982. He supervised the writing of the national newspaper's initial financial business plan.

Bean moved to Redlands in 1983 after accepting a position as publisher of the San Bernardino Sun and regional vice president for Gannett Co.

In 1987, he started his own company, Century Group Newspapers, which now owns and operates six weekly community newspapers that serve the nearby cities of Fontana, Highland, Yucaipa, Calimesa, Banning and Beaumont, as well as Hemet and San Jacinto.

Bean, 64, still lives in Redlands with his wife of 40 years, Brenda, who is a special education teacher. Their two children, Scott, 35, and Eric, 31, were both raised in Redlands and attended Redlands public schools. Eric is an electrical contractor in Redlands, and Scott works for Amgen, a biotechnology company in Thousand Oaks.

The council has a tough road ahead of it, Bean said, and it is going to face some difficult times.

"The council has to make a reasonable judgment about things," Bean said.

He said economic development is a sound long-term solution, but any plan is at least five years in the making and not a short-term solution.

"There has to at least be an approach as to how the city is going to pay its bills over the next few years," Bean said.

Bean has been a board member of Redlands Community Music Association and is president of the church council at First Lutheran Church of Redlands.

He is a former president of Inland Action and a former president of the Inland Empire Symphony. He has been a volunteer for the Redlands Symphony Orchestra, arranging for the orchestra to present two concerts in Yucaipa.

He also was a volunteer for several school organizations, including the Redlands High School speech team and the Academic Decathlon team.

He received professional accolades in 2006 when he was elected president of the California Newspaper Publishers Association, the trade and professional organization for the state's daily and weekly newspapers. He is immediate past president of the association.