

Mayor's 2006 pay helped charities

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MINNEOLA

With a new year ahead of him, Mayor Dave Yeager can look back knowing he helped many people by giving away his salary.

But the end of 2006 did not mark the end of his donations. Yeager intends to continue doing the same in 2007.



Yeager

Yeager gave approximately \$6,000 to charities, including \$1,000 to Hospice of Lake and Sumter, \$500 to PALS, \$500 to the United Way, \$283 to the Minneola Fire Department and \$500 to The Haven, a shelter for abused women.

Yeager also donated \$500 to city employee John Hendrix, whose house burned down in December of 2005.

He also paid \$2,000 in taxes to the IRS.

"That was the deal," said Yeager. "That way, if I lost, I wouldn't get it and if I won, I wouldn't get it either — something that's turned out to be a great thing."

While campaigning, Yeager said he promised to give his pay each month to a different cause to show he was not running for money, but to serve Minneola and its residents.

"Is it about money or public service? My outlook on things is that we have so much. And I don't really need anything else," said Yeager. "If you give it away this way, you don't miss it because you're doing it for the right reasons."

Minneola council members make \$4,800 and the mayor earns \$6,000. A proposed pay increase would boost all members' salaries to \$7,200 per year.

Yeager said that if the increase passes, it will just mean he will give more money to charity.

"It's not about the amount, but I thought these were some good causes. It's been good and I think it's a trend more people should do," Yeager said.

Yeager said he would like to see other city leaders follow his lead and donate the money they make — or at least some of it — to charities within their community.

"It isn't a case of being in it (the council) for the money. If I could do it, sure, I would," said Mascotte Mayor Jeff Krull. "Sitting on the council is a civic responsibility that comes with a great sense of pride and satisfaction, but there are certain realities of life, too."

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United Way campaign and marketing director Sue Cordova, who also serves on the council, said she is extremely grateful for Yeager's donation to the United Way.

Ted Williams, the executive director of Hospice of Lake and Sumter, wrote a letter to Yeager thanking him for his contributions toward Clermont's future Mike Conley Hospice House and the Hospice Ride for Angels in June.

Cordova said Yeager's donation will go into a care fund used to serve the community's needs.

"I think it's wonderful that someone who is a leader in our community is being a leader by providing a great example of his civic duty," Cordova said. "He (Yeager) said he was going to do it (donate his salary), he's doing it and I think it's a wonderful thing."

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