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Press Release

New assistant public works director starts job Monday, July 13

Arkansas City native Crandall home after Air Force; city, county finance work

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (July 15, 2015) — A native son of Arkansas City has come home to help the City of Arkansas City with plans for future street projects and other capital improvements.

Mike Crandall was hired June 1 as the city's new assistant public works director. His first day of work was Monday, July 13. He will assist Public Works Director Eric Broce with managing the department.

Crandall brings with him the experience of 10 1/2 years working as a regional operations and management director for the Southern Florida Water Management District; nine years in the finance department for Orange County, Fla.; and about five years working for the City of Bella Vista, Ark.

"I am extremely excited to add someone with Mike's experience and expertise to the Public Works team," Broce said. "I'm confident he will hit the ground running and provide immediate support."

"I'm glad Mike was able to come back home to Ark City and help us out with things," said City Manager Nick Hernandez. "Obviously, his vast and extensive experience speaks for itself."

Born in Bartlesville, Okla., and raised in Ark City, Crandall graduated from Ark City High School and Arkansas City Junior College (now Cowley College), then went into the U.S. Air Force in 1966.

Other than a few trips through town with his family, Crandall's only visit back to Arkansas City was for the high school class of 1964's 50th reunion last year.

"I fell in love with Ark City again and that's why I moved back here," said Crandall, who described his new position as a perfect fit for him given his extensive financial and governmental background.

"My background the last eight years has been on the accounting side and with budgets," he said Monday. "I was a county manager for Benton County (Ark.) and an acting comptroller, then treasurer and finance director for City of Bella Vista," where he moved because his parents had retired there.

For immediate release

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In that last capacity, Crandall helped with capital improvement plans and the budget. "I was (Bella Vista's) first treasurer and finance director, so I had to pretty much write my job description," he said.

"I've used all kinds of financial systems," said Crandall, who has a background in both contract and grant administration. "I love working with numbers because numbers don't lie, come in late or get sick."

Hernandez said Crandall's duties will relate mainly to streets, stormwater drainage and flood control, as well as assisting with the Public Works Department's capital improvement planning.

"I have a strong background in streets," Crandall said, "but this will be a new experience on the environmental side of the house, with water transmission, water treatment and sewage disposal."

"Everywhere I've been, they've either had or they were developing a street inventory, with conditions of streets and what type of overlay you were going to use," he added.

"They were big in Orange County on their five-year capital improvement plan for streets, buildings, roofs, HVAC systems — they even had a capital improvement plan for energy conservation, replacing fluorescent lights with LED lighting. So I'll probably be working on that a lot."

During his 22-year Air Force career, Crandall spent 15 years in Germany, two in Turkey and a year in Minot, S.D. He also earned a bachelor of science degree in public administration and a master of science degree and management while he was in the Air Force.

In his spare time, Crandall collects Engelhard silver bars. He also collected stamps and Morgan silver dollars when he was younger. But more than anything, he is an avid classic car enthusiast.

"When I was in Orlando, I had a 1964 Corvette coupe, a 1964 El Camino, a 1964 Pontiac Tempest station wagon and a 1964 GTO, because I graduated in 1964," he said. "But I sold them all."

"I still love working on muscle cars, old cars," he added. "I might try finding my old 1955 Chevy and 1960 Chevy. They've probably been crushed by now, but I'll get an old car (anyway)."

Crandall's car connections are part of what brought him home. He has two siblings who live in Oklahoma, one of whom owns a 1973 Corvette that he enters in the Last Run Car Show. And one of his longtime friends is legendary Ark City mechanic Cliff Gottlob, who worked on Crandall's car in school.

"As a teenager, I laid rubber on the streets of Ark City," Crandall said. "Now I'll be laying asphalt on the streets of Ark City."