

Paul Hepp takes HR post in Wells

Jim Kanak



WELLS — The Town of Wells didn't have to go far to find its new human resources manager, **Paul Hepp.**

An eight-year resident of Wells, Hepp was chosen for the job Jan. 6. His tenure begins Jan. 26.

"He has extensive experience in human resources with a lot of depth and breadth as well as a lot of education and training," said Town Manager Jane Duncan. "He was unanimously chosen by the Personnel Advisory Committee."

A native of Colorado, Hepp spent more than 20 years in human resources as a civilian employee of the Air Force. He worked during that time at the Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio.

"I was exposed to all human resource functional areas, specializing in labor and employee relations," Hepp said. "I did the master labor negotiations and also negotiated agreements on the national level for the firefighter units."

Hepp spent his time initially with the Aeronautical Systems Division and then with the Air Force Logistics Command. For 10 years, he was the labor relations officer for the latter unit.

At the time he was at the base, 29,000 civilians were employed there.

"It occurred to me that large Air Force bases are basically small cities in and of themselves," Hepp said. "I'm sure I'll see parallels even more as I go along here."

His professional interest has always been labor. "I was drawn to labor and employee relations because it is infinite in the variety of situations that can come up," said Hepp. "It's definitely not the humdrum and the routine. You get into everything. Anything that touches an employee in the workplace or at home can come into play."

Following his career in Ohio, Hepp and his wife, Joanne, moved to Wells. Joanne is originally from York. The couple has three children and one grandchild, with two more on the way, Hepp said.

Most recently, Hepp served as a store-level human resource manager at Home Depot in South Portland. He left that position when Home Depot reorganized.

"They moved away from a store-level to a district configuration," Hepp said. "There were 12 human resource managers in Maine. Now there are three."

Hepp has a master's degree in public administration with a specialization in human resources management. He said he expects to encounter issues related to the poor economy in his new position.

"The economic issues will have an impact on municipalities," he said. "It's an issue that involves the workforce, taxpayers, and visitors to Wells. We have the reputation of being the friendliest town in Maine and also that we have one of the better work forces. Maintaining these reputations is going to be a priority."

For now, though, Hepp is happy to get started.

"I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to selectmen, the Personnel Advisory Committee, and the town manager for their expressed confidence in me and for allowing me to join their team," he said.