

Charles retires

Great Plains Development Authority, May 18, 2017



Ann Charles, assistant director of Great Plains, announced her retirement effective May 18, just short of 10 years with the redevelopment authority.

Prior to this position she spent 27 years at the Parsons Sun – 17 of those as editor and publisher. “I never expected to actually have a second career,” Charles said, “but this has certainly become that.”

Charles said she applied for the job at Great Plains after having been retired from the Sun for nearly a year. “While I thought I wanted to retire, in reality I was too young. When this position opened, I knew immediately it was meant to be.”

“Navigating the BRAC process to transfer the former Kansas Army Ammunition Plant to the community was most challenging, and it required the talents of many people in this community. I was fortunate to have been a part of this very important process.”

Charles said she and the others had no idea how long and arduous the process would be when they first started, but she is particularly impressed with the fact that most of the original board of directors are still volunteering their time.

“Most of them are the same folks who met the first day, 12 years ago, when we learned that KSAAP was on the BRAC closure list. I cannot give them enough credit for their tireless effort.”

Charles has handled a variety of projects at Great Plains including a stint as interim director for nearly a year. Initially involved in negotiating terms with Army, legal challenges and congressional interactions, her duties segued to monitoring the environmental remediation and working with state and federal regulators. She also became adept at creating marketing materials and visuals in-house, including detailed slide presentations that brought the park – its challenges and its changes – into the board meetings since board members couldn’t routinely go out there.

Charles says she hopes to stay involved with Great Plains in her retirement, attending board meetings and helping out as needed, but she says that it’s time to do other things, too. “Hugh is 82, and there are things that we want to do as a couple that this demanding job just doesn’t allow the time for. And we want to do them while we are both healthy.”

While in the newspaper industry Charles served in several leadership roles and was named the 2005 Clyde M. Reed Master Editor by the Kansas Press Association. She continued that leadership at Great Plains, having been elected to the national board of directors of the Association of Defense Communities, an organization that helps BRAC sites. She also served as a speaker at many of its conferences.