

Claremont officially names Niland manager

BY DEE HENRY

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DETAILS

CLAREMONT

After serving as interim manager for 1 1/2 years, Patrick Niland was officially named Claremont's town manager during its regular June meeting. Niland didn't mind the wait — he said he benefited from time spent getting to know the people and places of Claremont.

"There's an interaction you have with the people here that you don't have in a larger city," Niland said. "Here, I get to go out and meet people. It's just nice to know everybody's name."

Claremont Mayor Glenn Morrison said Niland so impressed town officials, they agreed to pay his tuition to the University of North Carolina School of Government, a requirement of the position.

"He's young, energetic, enthusiastic and meets people well," Morrison said. "He's just a good mix."

Niland said working in a smaller town allows him the time to attend regular meetings with the various councils and boards, as well as to travel and meet people from other towns and agencies. It has also allowed Niland to grow as a manager.

"This past year and a half has been the single-most beneficial learning experience in my life," he said. "You come out of school and you have this vision of what real life is, and it's not like what you think at all. I've grown as a manager and have ... well, I hope I never get to the point where I think I know everything because I know that's not the case."

Niland has held positions with municipalities before, serving as a grant specialist with Bethel, in the eastern part of the state; a finance officer/county clerk and administrator with Pleasant Garden, near Greensboro; and a code enforcement officer with Mount Pleasant.

Niland said he wants to tackle the town's water and sewer concerns, possibly making an agreement with Hickory and Catawba to hook into the wa-

Name: Patrick Niland

Age: 25

Family: Father, Gary; sister, Michelle

Hometown: Harrisburg, Penn.

Education: Business

Administration Degree from Coastal Carolina College, Conway, S.C.

Working on Master Degree in Public administration through CVCC's Corporate and Continuing Education Center

ter plant in Catawba.

He considers the town's industrial park as one of its assets, saying it contributes to the town's beautification efforts, technology capabilities including fiber optic cables.

In his spare time, Niland enjoys playing sports — softball, volleyball and tennis. He also likes hiking and skiing, another benefit to living in Claremont with the nearby mountains.

"I recently went to Linville Falls and hiked all the way up with my dog," he said, referring to his 3-year-old collie, Bentley.

The job has also brought him closer to some family members. His grandparents live in Shallotte and he has an uncle in Mount Airy.

He said his belief in treating people the way he wants to be treated is one characteristic that helps him succeed in his career.

"You have to involve people in every decision that affects them. You have to be sensitive to everyone's feelings," Niland said. "That includes my co-workers here with the town. We all have to recognize we're a team."