



HUB makes history with first woman manager

By Cindy Simpson

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Harriman Utility Board approved its first female manager Monday when board members unanimously voted for the hiring of Candace Vannasdale.



Vannasdale, manager of the gas water and sewer administration and engineering, will start May 1 contingent on approval of the finalization of her contract.

Lonnie Wright, the Harriman City Council representative on the board, said he is confident she'll do a great job.

Chairman Buddy Bowers said he is impressed with Vannasdale's vision for the future.

Vannasdale beat out three other candidates, including co-workers Jeremy Gibson, director of safety, and Heath Lewis, manager of electric operations.

"In selecting our new general manager we had to pass over two excellent choices. Jeremy Gibson, Heath Lewis, you guys have been very, very important to this system. You'll be very important to this system in the future. We want you to know we appreciate you," Bowers said.

Vannasdale has worked for the utility for four years, and she was a consultant for the utility a number of years as an engineer before that.

She detailed what she hopes to accomplish in her new role.

"As general manager of HUB, I will carry out the orders of the board of directors while ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. I will foster an environment of respectfulness, fairness and transparency. I will continue our strong relationships with city, county and state officials, as well as, the employees and rate payers. Under my leadership, HUB will thrive and become one of the most respected utilities in the state of Tennessee," Vannasdale said.

Vannasdale will work alongside retiring manager Bill Young until his last official day on May 25.

She hopes to build upon the direction the utility is heading under Young.

"We have a highly skilled workforce and knowledgeable staff already in place. I will continue the upward trajectory set by Mr. Bill Young and the governing board," Vannasdale said.

"I will strengthen and enhance HUB by emphasizing the importance of and overseeing the planning/budgeting for programs to improve workplace efficiency and utilization of emerging technologies in order to maintain affordable rates for the citizens of Roane and Morgan counties.

"As an engineer, I understand the importance of proactive planning needed to replace aging and failing infrastructure. And most importantly, I will develop new lines of communication with the rate payers in effort to better serve our community."

Young sees a lot of potential in the staffing at the utility today.

"You've got three outstanding people who applied for this work. The job here is really a team. It's not the manager. It's not the assistant manager. It's a team effort," Young said.

"I look forward to working with Candace and all the staff to move forward."

Young sees progress being made at the utility, especially as young people tackle some of the changes in the industry.

"I think we have got some great young people here who can carry this thing forward for a long time to come," he said.

Young also spoke about his selection as manager and the many valuable board members who have been at the utility over the years.

"When I was selected as manager we had an excellent board at that time. Dr. Gary Goff, who was president of Roane State, was our board chairman, and I just considered it a great honor that a fine group of people like that selected me. It's been an honor to work with them. It's been an honor to work with you folks," he said.

He hinted at the potential of utility mergers in the future, and said he believes Harriman will lead that.

"I think down the road in some years to come there is going to be some mergers and things happen," Young said.

"I think HUB is going to be positioned to be a leader in that ,and I think they are going to be coming to us. I don't think we're going to be going out to anybody. I think they are going to be coming here saying how can we be part of this," Young said.