A replacement for former commissioner Dave Hoffert will be appointed by early October following state mandated process to fill seat.

By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

After nine months in office, Dist. 2 Commissioner Dave Hoffert has resigned his position with the county.

Hoffert delivered his resignation to the Perkins County Clerk's office Monday afternoon, Aug. 22.

Hoffert's main reason for resigning is the number of phone calls he has received from county residents who took up hours and hours of his time complaining about issues such as road conditions and law enforcement.

For instance, the commissioner received hundreds of calls concerning the number of speeding tickets being written in Perkins County, as well as complaints against the sheriff's office in general.

A new commissioner will be put into place for the next three-plus years to complete Hoffert's four-year term.

He challenged incumbent Leon Pankonin for the seat and was elected last fall.

According to Perkins County Attorney Rick Roberts, the vacancy of the Dist. 2 Commissioner seat will be filled according to Nebraska State Statute (§ 32-567(3)).

A three-person panel will interview interested applicants in a public format on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 9 a.m. in the District Courtroom of the Perkins County Courthouse.

Roberts, along with Perkins County Clerk Rita Long and Perkins County Treasurer Patsy Kroeker, will hold an open meeting and interview process whereby the public can attend and comment.

Roberts said public comment, either pro or con, is welcome.

"We're talking about someone who will have this office for three-plus years—we want all the input we can get," said Roberts.

According to Nebraska State Statute, interested applicants must be registered voters and must reside in Dist. 2 as of the date of appointment.

The vacated seat must be filled within a 45-day period, which means a new commissioner will need to be sworn in by early October.

Roberts said he knows of similar occurrences in other counties, but does not recall being involved in seating a new commissioner in Perkins County in the midst of a term during the time he has served as county attorney.

Because residents were seeking a replacement for the previous commissioner due to lack of road maintenance, Hoffert's campaign slogan involved fixing the roads in Dist. 2.

Hoffert said he doesn't have ill feelings about the residents, but listening to hours and hours of unspecified complaints wasted time that could be spent in a productive way.

"If all day is spent dealing with complaints, nothing else gets done," said Hoffert.

Four days before he resigned, Hoffert, who has a CDL license, had taken a vacation day from his job at Sapp Brothers in Ogallala to haul dirt in his district in order to help the county guys

catch up.

The next day, he received a bunch of harassing phone calls.

“The job just wasn’t for me,” said Hoffert, whose family was also receiving negative comments from the public.

“I made the right decision,” he said. “It’s better for my family.”

He says he still wants to see the county improve its roadways and even offered to help part-time for minimum wage.

“I still want better roads,” he said.

Dist. 3 Commissioner James Deaver said business can be conducted and bills paid in the absence of one commissioner.

Deaver, who is starting his ninth term, said he does not get harassing calls from the residents of his district. However, Deaver pointed out that there have been five commissioners in Dist. 2 in the past 32 years.

“There’s a lot of turnover—it makes it hard for a commissioner to get their feet on the ground in a short period of time,” said Deaver. He pointed out that in Dist 1 there have been only two or three commissioners in the same 32-year period.

Fellow Perkins County Commissioner Sid Colson said Hoffert took an unnecessary verbal beating from residents in the county during the nine months he was in office.

“I like Dave and I thought he was doing a good job,” said Colson. “I could see some improvements. Sure, roads in Dist. 2 aren’t great, but they didn’t give him time. You can’t rectify 20 years in one year.”