

Mayor Garry Sampson-40th Mayor of Lehi 1982-83

The Lehi City Council wasted little time in appointing a new mayor to replace Bud Ellison whose resignation was effective on July 16, 1983. During a thirty-minute July 19 session, the council reviewed the following list of potential mayors: J. B. Cooper, Chris Lind, Sterling Merrill, Johnny Barnes, and Garry Sampson. The first ballot narrowed the group to Sampson, Cooper and Barnes. Sampson, who had been serving as a city councilman for two years, received the nod on the final tally. Sworn in as new mayor by Judge Rick Worthen, Sampson, who turned forty-one that day, was empowered to serve until December 31, 1983.

Garry R. Sampson was born in Delta, Utah on July 19, 1941, and moved with his family to Lehi in 1955. After graduating from Lehi High School he served an LDS mission to the Gulf States. Upon his return he married Kay Stewart then subsequently graduated from Salt Lake Technical College. After working as a barber in Lehi and Salt Lake City he eventually became personal manager for Boise Cascade, then regional administrator for Combined Insurance Company of America. At the time of his appointment to the mayorship, he was serving as personnel manager for Intermountain Consumer Power Association.

During Sampson's administration, Cable Television became a controversial item in Lehi in late 1982 as the city gave Action TV, Inc., the franchise for installation of cable lines. Petitions were circulated in Lehi and elsewhere recommending state legislation to regulate the new industry. Ultimately legislation was passed, but after considerable battling and legal expenditures, the law was declared unconstitutional.

A study by the Utah State Tax Commission showed that Lehi residents paid \$4.9 million in federal income taxes for the 1982 tax year--an average of \$1,773 for each tax return. Lehi taxpayers filed 2,762 federal returns reporting a gross income totaling \$48.7 million. Income per return averaged \$17,646--below the state

average of \$18, 665.

Doyle Kohler and sons Lex and Cliff opened Kohler's Food Town on March 1, 1983. The largest grocery store in Lehi's history, Food town was housed in a new 17, 100 square foot building at Third East and Main with parking space for ninety-five cars.

High water problems caused much difficulty for Utah County in 1982-83 and for Mayor Sampson and his administration. As Utah Lake rose to its highest level in modern history, more than five feet above the compromise point, the Utah Lake State Park at Prove, the American Fork Boat Harbor, and most other boating facilities around the lake were destroyed.

When the hot days of June 1983 began to melt the snowpack above Alpine, Dry Creek came flooding down from the mountains, this drained no only the watershed, but also the city budget as well. Several street throughout town were converted into canals to funnel the raging waters safely past homes, and a channel was cut through Highway 73 (West Main Street) to eliminate a bottleneck in Dry Creek's channel. Despite the danger to homes and buildings in the water's pathway, community-wide comradery was displayed as hundreds of citizens turned out to sandbag homes and buildings and to monitor the flood's progress.

A highlight of the Sampson years was the spring of 1983 when the Lehi Pioneers, cached by Ken Wagner, won the 2-! basketball championship by defeating wasatch in BYU's Marriott Center. Following the game with a fire engine, police cars and three student buses leading the procession. Following the impromptu parade an assembly was held at the high school in which school officials and townspeople honored the players and their coaches.

During the summer of 1983, huge Paramount Picture Company vans and equipment could be seen at various sites about town as the movie "Footloose" was filmed in several locations, notably the picturesque Lehi Roller Mills. Produced by Dan Melnick, directed by Herb Ross, starring Kevin Bacon and Lori Singer, the

blockbuster musical was a story of an American town that has banned dancing. A new teenager moves into town, falls in love with the minister's daughter, and she leads the fight against the dance ban.

During July 1983, Native Plants Incorporated (NPI) announced plans to move their large company to Lehi. Established on forty six acres of northwest Lehi (formerly Boyd Sunderland's property), the business has provided employment to dozens of local residents, the establishment's seed division, ultimately sold to Granite Seed Company, sells a wide variety of native seeds primarily to government agencies responsible for re-seeding burned out areas.

In August 1983, the Lehi City Council voted to accept a \$180,000 loan from the Utah State Safe Drinking Water Committee. This money was used to obtain water rights to dig a large well near Fifth West because, according to Lehi Water Superintendent Dale Walker, the city's system "is pulling more water now than what we can provide in the daytime. A decrease in nighttime usage which helps the city build up reserves is keeping the water system afloat."

Lehi City, due to high inflation rates, flooding and other factors, was strapped for money during Mayor Sampson's administration. Hard spending cuts and freezes were required to keep the city in solid financial ground. The purchase plan instituted during the Sampson reign saved the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is still in effect today.

Aside from these accomplishments, Mayor Sampson will be best known to history for his untiring efforts in protecting Lehi's power collection and distribution system, the city's greatest single source of revenue. In 1983, Lehi City officials, under Mayor Sampson's leadership, became actively engaged in efforts to ensure that the town would again be allocated power from the Colorado River Storage Project (RSP) which its contract expired in September 1989.

If the city would have lost this "cheap energy" it would have required to purchase power from more expensive sources such as Utah Power and Light. Not

only would Lehi citizens be required to pay nearly twice as much for their electrical needs, but the city would have lost 25 percent of its annual income, a loss which would require either a reduction in city services or an increase in taxes. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Mayor Sampson and subsequent mayors, our local power needs have been secured for many years into the future.

During the election campaign of 1983, Mayor Sampson was pitted against Democratic challenger George Tripp, a political newcomer. The campaign was a spirited one, public debates both in town meetings and in newspapers were held. When the votes from the November 7, election were counted, Tripp was declared mayor. Kent Shepherd, Devere Fowler and Dale Ashton were the new city councilmen.

A decade in retrospect, Lehi citizens are much obliged to Mayor Garry Sampson, and council members John Haws, Joseph Shelton, Chris Lind, Wayne Carlton and Johnny Barnes. Their contributions as a group continue to benefit the town and make it the quality of community that it is today.