New Star mayor says growth tops his agenda

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STAR — The city of Star saw a shift in power this last election cycle as City Council President Trevor Chadwick assumed the mayor’s position in a landslide victory, taking 75% of the votes.

Chadwick spoke to the Idaho Press about his hopes for Star in the coming years, his concerns about continuing growth in the area, and how he believes working with other governmental leaders can help Star grow in the right way.
“I’m excited about getting going and working with regional partners — that’s something we haven’t done a real good job of in the past,” Chadwick said in a phone interview last week.

Along with greater cooperation with regional groups, Chadwick wants to work on lowering property taxes and clearing up transportation issues in Star.

The northwestern Ada County city has exploded over the past two decades. According to the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, Star has jumped from just 1,795 residents in the year 2000 to 10,719 residents in 2019. By 2040, Compass expects Star to have a population over 20,000, doubling its size.

“Star is the epicenter for growth,” said Chadwick, who added that dealing with that growth is high on his mayoral agenda.

Directed growth is what Chadwick is hoping to bring to Star, with more businesses coming into the municipality to grow the city’s commercial tax base — something he called a “challenge.”

“There isn’t a lot of commercial space,” Chadwick said. He believes that challenge will exist until Star grows far enough south to get to the Chinden Boulevard corridor, which has enough space for commercial growth.

But, Chadwick said he plans to work on updates to Star’s city code to make it easier for businesses to grow and expand, as well as making sure to keep open space open to maintain the town’s “rural feel.”

Part of Star’s issues are challenges with how growth has reduced that “rural feel,” Chadwick said.

“A lot of frustration is with traffic; how the infrastructure doesn’t appear to be keeping up,” Chadwick said.

Star’s new mayor pointed to Eagle Road’s rapid expansion and change from a two-lane road to an important traffic artery in the years since he has lived in Star. Its growth, and the construction of housing and the subsequent loss of farmland and open space, are all parts of what Chadwick is hoping to deal with in tandem with other governmental organizations like Ada and Canyon counties, the Ada County Highway District and the Idaho Transportation Department.
“That’s part of my plan, to engage with those folks and to work on a regional deal,” said Chadwick, seeming to echo the Ada County Board of Commissioner’s Treasure Valley-wide attempt to create a coordinated growth plan.

“There’s a lot of stuff going on the table” for discussion, he said.

Efforts to reach new Councilwoman Jennifer Salmonsen, who replaced Chadwick on the Star City Council, were unsuccessful.