

THE STAR
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YOUTH COMMISSION ORGANIZED

Several months ago it was only an idea in the mind of Mayor Paul Esser, but last Thursday, June 23, the first meeting of the Youth and Families Commission was held.

Denise Francois, who was elected as the commission chairperson, said she felt participation on the commission would give her an opportunity to repay the community for the many good things it provides. "I thought maybe I could give something back to the community," Francois said, explaining that the first order of business will be for the commission members to get educated as to what is offered for youth and families in the community.

She said the first concern of commission members will be to familiarize themselves with the various organizations offering programs within the community so duplication of services does not occur. She said they will also be holding a brain-storming session at the first meeting to give members an opportunity to explain why they volunteered for the commission.

The guest speaker at the first meeting will be Araxy Arganian, director of special services for the Sun Prairie Area School District. Francois said Arganian will offer her impressions of the needs of youth and families in Sun Prairie.

The first meeting will be held Thursday, July 14, with the second meeting on July 28. Two meetings will also be held in August, the 11th and 25th, and two more in September, the 8th and the 22nd. All meetings will be held in the meeting room of the Sun Prairie Public Library. The meetings are open to residents of the community.

"I don't know how the mayor did it," Francois said, explaining that she feels the commission is comprised of very good people. "I think it will be a real good group."

Esser attended last Thursday's meeting, but stressed that he would not be attending future meetings, especially the early ones. "I'm really looking to them for direction," Esser said, indicating that he didn't want to govern the direction of the commission. "I think they're ready to go. From there it's up to them."

Esser did say there was some discussion last week about the possibility of youth members, but he said it was not decided whether now would be the best time to contact such members. "I don't think, initially, it is critical," Esser said. However, he said the suggestion was made that a separate committee of youth be formed to report to the commission on issues pertaining directly to youth.

Esser did say, however, that he is pleased to have the commission up and running and is looking forward to anything its members can contribute.

Members of the commission are Joy Sheil, Denise Francois, Karen Bailey, Alice Johnson, John Kershner, and Lou Oppor. The city council member is 4th District Alderperson Robert Brodzin and the ex-officio members include: Emmett Connery, director of Educational Services for Sun Prairie Area School District; Bob Bernt, youth services officer for the Sun Prairie Police Department; Bob Holling, Sun Prairie Parks and Recreation Department; and Patty Wargula Sun Prairie Public Library children's librarian.