

Sawatzke strikes out on own

By MIKE CONDON
The Daily Nonpareil

The past two weeks have helped Roger L. Sawatzke appreciate what young lawyers go through trying to open their own office.

He also has come to appreciate life in Council Bluffs. Born in Nebraska and raised Omaha, Sawatzke came to Council Bluffs during his years at the Creighton Law School as a clerk.

He hasn't left since and in that time has become one of the city's biggest supporters.

Now, after being part of the Telpner, Smith, Sawatzke and Reusch firm for 13 years, he has opened the Law Office of Roger L. Sawatzke at 502 S. Seventh St.

The office opened on July 1. Sawatzke is engaged in the general practice of law.

"I'm fortunate in the fact that my clients have been very loyal," he said. "Opening my own office made me think about just how hard it must be for young guys right out of college who open their own office."

The biggest adjustment for Sawatzke being in business for himself is the detail work.

"I'll delegate more of that eventually," he said. "I am enjoying the business side of law. It's an adjustment balancing the business side and the law side of running an office."

Despite being in his new environment, Sawatzke admits he misses being around his former partners on a daily basis.

"Those guys are great lawyers and great human beings," he said of his former colleagues. "I still think it is the best firm in Council Bluffs."

Sawatzke is firm in his belief that Council Bluffs is a good place to work and raise a family. He backs those beliefs with involvement.

He is currently chairman of the Council Bluffs Tourism Board; a member of the YMCA executive board; secretary of the Rotary Club; chairman of the VODEC board; a member of the Pottawattamie County REAP Commission; a founding member for the Wabash Trace Nature Trail; past president of Leadership Council Bluffs and, along with wife Marina, president couple of the St. Albert parents support group.

Add to that coaching youth soccer and leading Boy Scout Pack 520, and



Nonpareil/Steve Glowacki

Attorney Roger L. Sawatzke is shown in his new office. He recently started his own firm.

it is obvious that Sawatzke gives plenty back to the community.

"The quality of life in Council Bluffs is good, but we can do things to make it even better," he said. "We need to make Council Bluffs a place where our children and grandchildren will want to live."

Keys to improvement are securing better jobs and chipping away at the image that Council Bluffs is simply a bedroom community for Omaha, according to Sawatzke.

The Wabash Trace is an example of what Sawatzke believes has been done to improve the city's image. He says the area shows off the natural beauty of the Bluffs to users of the trail.

Sawatzke adds that he sees a number of people from Omaha and Bellevue, Neb., using the nature tra-

ils.

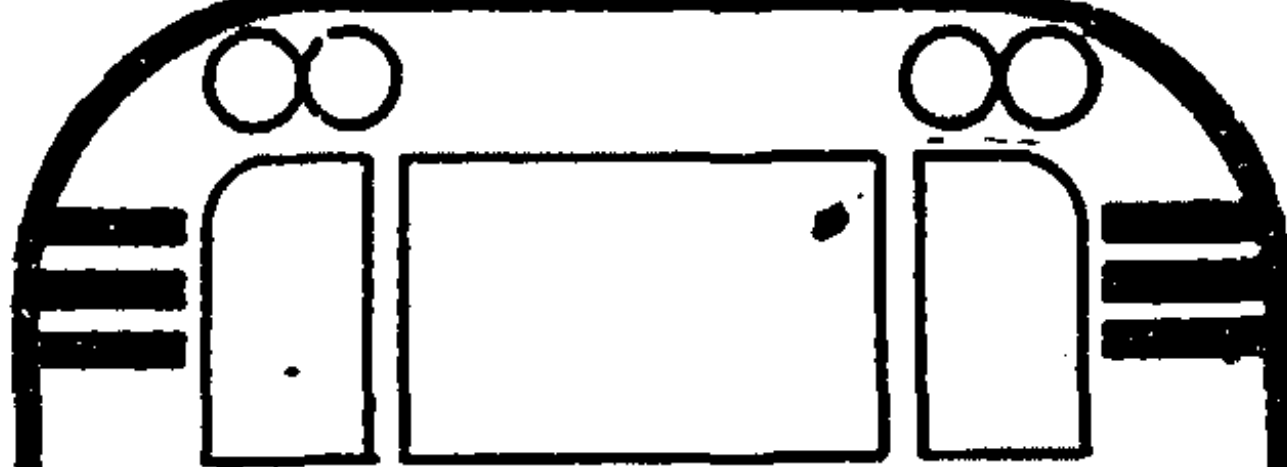
"Those are people who would have no other reason to come into Council Bluffs," he said. "Once they get over here, they find other things to do."

With the demands of a new law office and a family of three children (Adam, 10, Laura, 8, and Alex, 6), Sawatzke said he may have reduce the time he spends on various boards.

"I am a little overextended on boards right now," he said. "It does get tough sometimes to get to all the activities, but we seem to do a pretty good job."

But, as is the case with any good lawyer, Sawatzke finds the time for things he believes are important.

"It's a matter of priorities," he said. "If you think something is important, you find the time."



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