



EASYGOING: *New deputy city manager sports casual style.*

THE STAR

By Ann Griffith

Staff writer 4-1-2000

Steve Mitnick, Thousand Oaks' new deputy city manager, met his wife the summer before college when he was a bus boy at Marie Callender's and she spilled water on him.

They married about 12 years ago.

And he eventually found better-paying jobs.

Mitnick, who started his new job in January, worked in city administration in Burbank and later Yuba City and tries to keep an easy, accessible air with colleagues, employees and the public.

He studied finance at Syracuse University and earned a master's degree in public administration in 1989. But he also is interested in and has worked on planning projects.

In Burbank he oversaw the city's construction of a Metrolink station. It was a complex project because for years private owners had used the site as an illegal dump for carcinogens and the land had to be cleaned up.

The toughest task he faced, however, was dealing with major budget cutbacks in Burbank in the mid-1990s. The state had started taking a greater share of local taxes and a recession was slowing retail and development.

His employees at the time told him he was "always so serious." Since then, Mitnick said, he's tried to learn to relax.

"I think as you get older, you get more self confidence," he said. "If you're running late on a project or things aren't going the way they should, you learn not to panic. If you have a vision and everybody's working toward that vision, things will work out."

When he started working for Thousand Oaks in January, Mitnick joined Deputy City Manager Jim Friedl, an attorney. Their backgrounds complement each other, Friedl said.



Staff photo by Chuck Kirman

ON BOARD: Deputy City Manager Scott Mitnick, began working in Thousand Oaks in January.

"I often ask Scott for his thoughts on what the city can do financially," he said.

Denis Cook worked with Mitnick in Yuba City, a rural community 40 miles north of Sacramento. Cook, the community development director, appreciated having a finance director, Mitnick, with an enthusiasm for and understanding of city planning.

And he's a pleasant guy, Cook said.

"He's just a real casual guy; he's easygoing. He takes it as it comes," Cook said.

Mitnick's wife, Mia, who was a waitress when she ran into her future husband, is expecting twins and will take a few years off from work as an elementary school teacher.

The couple just bought a house in Thousand Oaks.

Mitnick was inspired to work for government by his uncle, who was with a district attorney's office. Mitnick watched his graduating class at Cornell conquer Wall Street and earn much more money than he has.

"To me it's not about money," he said. "It's about making our local community a better place to live and work rather than sitting back and complaining about things."

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