

Kurt Prenzler's administration as Madison County Board Chair begins today

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - New **Madison County Board Chair Kurt Prenzler** was sworn into office Monday morning in Room 203 of the **Madison County Administrative Building**.

Former Madison County Treasurer Prenzler, a Republican, replaces former chair **Alan Dunstan**, a Democrat. Prenzler announced many changes to the Madison County Government with his coming into office, including several new appointments for county offices, a focus on ethics and the reinstatement of **Bradley Lavite**, former head of the **Veterans' Assistance Commission**. Lavite was formerly banned from entering Madison County government offices after an incident on March 5, 2015 resulting in felony disorderly conduct charges, which may have been related to Lavite's post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from his combat experience in the U.S. Army.

For his first act as county board chairperson, Prenzler said he would allow Lavite back into the building during a small ceremony at noon Monday. He also called for a special meeting of the Madison County Board at 5 p.m. He said management issues and general maintenance of the county offices were his top short-term priorities. Long-term, Prenzler said he would tackle issues such as ethics and taxes for the people of **Madison County**.

"My overall goals are to improve ethics and tax reduction from the county government," Prenzler said, following his swearing-in ceremony Monday morning. "The county portion of taxes is only about eight or nine percent, but we can do whatever we can to alleviate high taxes."

Under his administration, Prenzler said taxes could be lowered without any services being cut. Previous to his administration, Prenzler said taxes in the county were levied at \$3-\$4 million more than necessary. He said the county's investment portfolio raised from \$108 million when he took office as treasurer to \$150 million today. Because of that extra financial padding, Prenzler said taxes could be cut safely without causing a loss.

At the special board meeting Monday evening, Prenzler intends on subjecting his proposed appointments to the board for approval. As many as seven department heads are set to be replaced by Prenzler Monday evening. These include:

- **County Administrator Joseph Parente** is to be replaced by **Madison County Deputy Treasurer Douglas Hume**. Hume was hired by Prenzler in 2014 as chief deputy treasurer. In an email, Prenzler said Hume is a Madison County resident and 1996 graduate of **Edwardsville High School**. He earned a bachelors of science and a master's in business administration from **Southern Illinois Edwardsville**.
- **Community Development Director Frank Miles** is to be replaced by **Kristen Poshard** of **Poshard Consulting**, an Edwardsville-based consulting firm. Prenzler said she served under 19 county boards in Workforce Development, grant writing with administration, housing rehabilitation, historic preservation and Community

Development. According to an email from Prenzler, Poshard's leadership transition team has helped more than 1,500 laid-off families in five counties move into high-growth occupations and helped to insure affected businesses were retained. She was awarded with the **Innovative Solutions Award** by the **State of Illinois**.

- **Director of Administrative Services Barry Harris** is to be replaced by **Steve Adler**, a former Republican county board member who opted out of campaigning for reelection in Nov. 2014. Adler chaired the Personnel and Labor Relations and the Building and Lands committees.
- **Animal Control Director Dr. David Hall** is to be replaced by **Dr. Michael Firsching**, a veterinarian and former congressional candidate. Firsching worked with Prenzler on several campaigns, including the petitions to stop the backdoor referendum bonds issued by the **Edwardsville School District** in late 2014.
- **Information Technology Director Timothy Renick** is to be replaced by **Rob Dorman**, a Republican precinct committeeman who had an unsuccessful 2015 run for **Collinsville City Council**. Dorman worked as an information technology manager for **DB Schenker**, which included work for **Proctor and Gamble**. He was also IT manager for the former 3PL-provided **UTi Integrated Logistics**.
- **Employment and Training Director David Stoecklin** is to be replaced by **Harold Wathan Jr.** who ran unsuccessfully for the District 28 seat on the Madison County Board as a Republican last November. Prenzler said Wathan has recruited and trained thousands of individuals in starting part-time careers in the financial services industry.
- **Facilities Management Director Kurt Geschwend** is to be replaced by **Christopher Doucleff**, an appraiser and business manager Doucleff is a Madison County resident and an **Alton High School** graduate. He worked as an assistant general manager of **Emerald Brick Corp.**, a demolition and architectural artifacts dealer, prior to his work at Doucleff Appraisal Co.

Emergency Management Director Larry Ringering, Health Department Director Toni Corona and Safety and Risk Management Director Annette Schoeberle will retain their positions during the Prenzler Administration.

Prior to his 9:17 a.m. swearing-in, Prenzler invited **Victory Baptist Church Pastor Danny Holliday** to speak. Holliday delivered a speech about the position of the Judeo-Christian God as "sovereign," stating God could never be taken out of government due to his very nature. He quoted scripture and the American founding fathers during his speech.

"It is not the government who gives rights, God does that," Holliday said. "Governments are instituted to protect those rights by the consent of the governed. People have to right to amend or abolish that government."

Holliday also warned against making large changes quickly. He said the founding fathers tried to defend the original constitution and warned against making major changes or amendments to those original laws. He said the laws of the United States were founded upon biblical moral principles, which he said trump the laws of any human being or government.

"I tell people I am not a Democrat or Republican, I am a Christian," Holliday stated. "God's law is superior to man's law. Man's law says abortion is a woman's choice. God's law says it is murder."

During his speech, Holliday described God as "the ultimate public official." He prayed for Prenzler, Dunstan and every other elected official in Madison County. Holliday was part of the **Citizens for Child Safety** movement, which was dedicated to fighting transgender bathroom and locker room rights in local schools.



Following Holliday's remarks, Prenzler was officially sworn into office by **Judge Luther Simmons**. After that ceremony, Prenzler thanked his wife **Rita Prenzler** and

their family, the taxpayers put their trust in him, employees of the Madison County Treasurer's Office, Judge Simmons, Pastor Holliday and God for the opportunity to serve as the Chairperson of the Madison County Board.