

## Prante moves to interim chief financial officer

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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When Melissa Prante first began working at Melissa Memorial Hospital as an accountant last summer, she was excited about the possibility for advancement within the financial field. What she did not expect, however, was that after only a year with the hospital she would be promoted to the interim chief financial officer position.

“With my background, I know what the hospital needs to keep going. I also know what the people need in order to get their proper health care. It’s a mix, and you just have to be able to cover both sides and I feel like I understand both sides and that enables me to help out,” Prante said.

While employed as a senior maintenance worker with the roads department in Chadron, Neb., Nebraska raised the age of retirement to 68. Unsure that she could perform her job duties that long, Prante decided to head back to college to finish her last year of classes.



The five-year hiatus between her first and final stint at college did little to slow down Prante, who graduated from Chadron State College in 2003 with a degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting.

Prante said being able to help others was what initially drew her to accounting.

She worked as a certified public accountant for five years before moving to Grant, Neb., to work as the controller for Perkins County Health Services, where she stayed for four years. She then made the jump over the state border for MMH.

After less than a year on the job, Prante was promoted to controller. She only spent a few months at the position before Greg Was resigned as the CFO, opening the door for her to continue her ascent up the company ladder.

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“I really love the accounting side of things and I didn’t want to let that go and just focus on the business office, so this enabled me to keep that accounting piece with me but also take on more job duties and learn more about how the business office works,” Prante said.

With plenty of experience in other areas of the financial field, Prante will continue to receive mentoring from CFOs in Sterling and Ogallala, Neb., as she continues to develop her knowledge of outlining budgets and learning the fine details of contractuals. She is grateful for the opportunity to learn and praised MMH Administrator John Ayoub for providing her with the tools to grow and excel in the position.

“Everyone has been very understanding of the learning curve and helpful,” Prante said. “I have an awesome staff. They are very supportive and hard-working.”

With only two weeks in the new position, Prante is already exploring possible endeavors to help the community.

“I would like to be able to get a financial counselor in here. I think that would really help the public with finding out what programs are out there,” Prante said.

She added that she is excited for the position and is eager to learn the ins and outs of her new role. While the workload has increased in her first two weeks on the job, she said she is grateful because she hasn’t had time to let the empty nest syndrome set in too much. Her youngest child, Michi, 18, just recently graduated from Perkins County High School and is in her first year of college at Black Hills State University in South Dakota.

Prante also has a 20-year-old son, Brody, who is in his first year of basic training for the Army National Guard.

Currently, Prante still lives in Grant, but with both children now out of the house, she is still contemplating her future location. She thinks she will end up in Holyoke, but no decision has

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been made at this point.

While not going to all of her children's high school activities will be new to Prante, she is presented with the opportunity to fill her free time with new interests. Fishing with her folks back in Grant has always been a hobby of hers and she mentioned she may even take up scrapbooking in the future.

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