When I came to the Village Board in 1989 as a trustee , I saw opportunity for growth and economic prosperity for the Village of South Jacksonville.

When I was elected Village President in 1997 I hoped to take that opportunity and make it a reality.

For over 18 years we, all village residents, have watched as the Village grew over 50% in size.

We watched as three hotels, a convenience store, and a diner took the place of open ground.

We witnessed one of the churches in the Village grow to become one of the largest churches in the community.

We watched Hertzberg continue its growth and commitment to the village.

We were privileged to watch, as Bartlett Grain, selected the Village for its newest location, resulting in the biggest construction project in Village history.

We participated in construction of a Water toy and fully accessible playground making our Village a destination for All children.

Over the years I have been committed to Village growth, not only by increasing revenues but by keeping costs under control. As a result, Village residents enjoy the benefits of a $2 million water plant with some of the lowest water rates in the area, a new 8,000 square foot fire station and a state of the art police department; while benefitting from one of the lowest property tax rates in Morgan County. Village residents also enjoy the fact that all of our bank debt is paid in full. No taxpayer money goes to interest. We have paid off our debt.

As far as growth. There is much more to be done. In fact, the Village may, in the near future, become home to another hotel, restaurant and large truck stop.

School Dist 117 is planning substantial improvements at South School utilizing our Tax Increment Financing funding.

This growth will require substantial commitment on the part of the Village.

I hope the Board of trustees has the vision to comprehend and appreciate the impact of this commitment on the future of this Village.

But our responsibility goes beyond growth, we, as elected officials, have a responsibility to the taxpayers and residents to prudently spend the resources provided to us.

 After all, it is their money we have been entrusted with.

Part of fulfilling that responsibility, is keeping costs under control by limiting substantial and unnecessary expenses.

Over the past year *in order to respond to the unfounded and groundless allegations of a few disgruntled employees, brought together by a newly elected official. The Village last year spent more than $20,000 in professional fees and unmeasurable bad publicity.*

*To what end?*

*A determination from the Illinois Attorney General “ there was insufficient evidence to prosecute “*

The Village now faces a claim relating to Ordinance 876. As a result of those demands, made by these individuals, it will be necessary for the Village to spend thousands…probably tens of thousands, more dollars in professional fees on special legal counsel to process this demand, which is just repeating the same groundless and unfounded claims, nothing new .

 This is a substantial and unnecessary expense for the Village tax payers. This money could far better be used items which serve our residents, such as police cars, fire equipment, street and drainage improvements.

After much discussion with the Village Attorney and others, I feel it is a far greater good - that the Village be able to avoid tens of thousands of dollars of unnecessary costs, - even if, it is at the expense of my continued service.

 Therefore, I today announce my retirement, after more than 22 years of elected service, effective June 21,2015.

My thanks to the people of the Village of South Jacksonville for their confidence in me, and the opportunity to be of service these past 22 years.

Respectfully submitted, This 23rd day of April 2015 ,By,

Gordon D Jumper, Village President