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Gordon's Move A Surprise

By SAM BLYTHE

Although the word had leaked down from Santa Fe to a few big ears in City Hall, most employees there were surprised at the news of Environmental Health Dept. Director Larry Gordon's resignation to take a similar job with the state.

It was even sort of a shock to City Manager G. B. Robertson, who thought that Gordon would stay with the city when all was said and done.

BUT GORDON'S move was no sudden decision even though he had turned down plenty of other job opportunities in recent years. One of those opportunities came more than a year ago when Robertson ask him haw he'd like to become assistant city manager. But Gordon is STRICTLY an environmental health man and the idea of switching careers at age 40 didn't appeal to him.

Gordon is well respected by Robertson, fellow department heads and those city commissioners who know of his department's growth and most of the rank and file within his own office to whom he seems somewhat distant.

UNLIKE some department heads who are willing to delegate responsibility but old tight to authority, he is willing to delegate with the result that his chief subordinates make major decisions on their own as Gordon believes they should. And unlike some others, he is not particularly hurt if he does not get his name in the paper. The fact of the matter is that Gordon's name appears there less frequently than the names of some of his staff.

For all of this, Gordon is a proud man and people who don't know him might call him a pompous one on hearing him relate the multitude of societies he belongs to and the awards he has garnered in bringing the health department up from one which used to confine itself to perfunctory restaurant inspections to a professional outfit that carries out at least 15 separate responsibilities.

PROFESSIONALISM is Gordon's by-word as everyone who works for him knows and Gordon believes the city's prestige has grown greatly through his department's efforts in the environmental health field.

Gordon sometimes indicates, however, that he wonders if anyone else knows. At \$15,000 a year, he makes less than many department heads, several of them recent additions to the city staff.

He makes \$1000 more than Donald Peterson, the city's assistant planning director, who in turn makes plenty more than Gordon's top assistants.

Perhaps it can be argued that planners should cost more than health department sanitarians. And perhaps it can't and no attempt to present either position will be made here. But no one will argue against the proposition that the city will lose no dud when it loses Larry Gordon.