

Gourley stays on go



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Gonzales Mayor Matt Gourley, who owns his own construction company, works Nov. 23 on the old Fairview Schoolhouse in Gonzales.

Mayor keeps busy meeting the needs of Gonzales

By **ERIK VANCE**
The Salinas Californian

Between his wife and himself, Gonzales Mayor Matt Gourley's family is involved in almost every aspect of the town's civic life.

Ten years ago, Gourley was a plumber in Gonzales. He had a high school diploma and was making a moderate living doing something he enjoyed. But his intense desire to achieve something greater made him take a gamble on local politics. Gourley, who never graduated from college, decided to run for mayor.

Today, Gourley owns his own contracting company, is Gonzales' mayor, and is still happy to be doing work he enjoys.

MATT GOURLEY

n **AGE:** 38

n **POSITION:** Mayor of Gonzales.

n **JOB:** Has owned a contracting business since 2002.

n **EXPERIENCE:** Gonzales City Council, Gonzales Planning Commission, Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission.

n **EDUCATION:** Graduated from North Salinas High School in 1985. Two years at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

n **PERSONAL:** Lives in Gonzales with his wife, Tina, and three children, Kyle, 4, Shelby, 6, and Quincy, 8.

"He is just constantly a go-getter and always trying to thrive and excel and be motivated," said his wife and high school sweetheart, Tina. "There is basically no slowing

him down. Which I think is definitely a good trait."

Not to be outdone by her husband's role in the community, Tina is vice president of the Gonzales Parent Teacher Community Association, vice president of the volunteer fire department and vice president of the Gifted And Talented Education program in town, as well as a partner in Gourley Construction. In addition to fighting fires in town and coaching softball, Tina also likes to take time for her favorite hobby, riding her Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

"You are here for ... who knows how long, and you know you've got to live life to its fullest," she said. "And we also have to show our children that it's great to be involved in your community."

For Matt, who starts his busy day at 3:45 a.m., being mayor is a part-time job and a full-time passion.

Since being elected to office,

Matt Gourley has helped secure a \$3.2 million grant for city infrastructure, begun looking into harnessing methane gas in town for electricity and has attracted local businesses such as boutique wineries and a small manufacturing company. Creating jobs is central to Mayor Gourley's vision for the town and he laments that some see Gonzales as a bedroom community.

"We need to have a good job-housing balance," he said. "We have a very educated work force here, with people getting on the road to travel, and they shouldn't be. We'd like to keep their business in Gonzales."

It may seem odd that a mayor who works as a builder is skeptical of residential development. But Gourley takes his role as mayor seriously and separates it from his other life. And his other life is in a small town, which he hopes will remain that way.