

As time goes by, gray hair will surface

Wednesday, January 2, 2008

File under as time goes by.

Mayor Kevin Dumas will be 32 next month, and he'll be one month into his fifth year and third term as the city's chief executive.

He was the youngest person ever elected to the corner office, and most people would probably say he doesn't look any worse for the wear that the stress of the job brings - although he has a different opinion.

While still early in his fourth decade, the gray hairs are starting to creep in, he said during a recent interview. Dumas said he counts them, but it wasn't clear if he was kidding.

"Oh, yeah, I've got some," he said. "There were 25 the last time I looked." And Dumas - who's sometimes hard to catch up with because he bounces from one city hall office to another and sometimes literally runs down corridors - is worried about other physical changes.

Weight is starting to weigh on Dumas' mind, in those fleeting moments he has to reflect on personal matters.

"I've gained about 10 pounds since I was first elected," said the mayor, who to all appearances is slim. "I've got to find some time to work out more."

Meanwhile, he's looking to the future, before it comes and goes.

Academic pursuits are useful at any age, but Dumas said the time has come for him to go to graduate school.

While four years as a chief executive of a small city with a \$102 million budget has provided a boatload of executive and political experience, Dumas believes academic training can enhance the practical knowledge he has gained.

He plans to enroll in a part-time master's degree program in public administration at Rhode Island College.

Going back to school will help him be a better mayor, he said.

"It's been an incredible experience," Dumas said of his first two terms as mayor. "But going forward, I want to continue to grow and get better."

While his energy is high, the years slip by, and he wants to make the most of them, he said. "I don't want to let this opportunity go by," Dumas said. "It's amazing how fast four

years of my life has gone by. If I blink my eyes another year will go by."

Want to volunteer at zoo?

If you enjoy interacting with people and working with the public, the Capron Park Zoo is looking for volunteers. Volunteers receive six weeks of training on various topics, from animal natural history to public speaking and programming.

Volunteer applicants must be at least 18 years of age and be ready to learn how to educate the public about endangered species, conservation issues and more.

Training sessions will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 and run until Feb. 16. There is no charge for volunteer training. A meeting will be held at 7:15 p.m. Jan. 9. Contact 508-222-6202 to RSVP for the meeting.