

**HAPPY 91ST BIRTHDAY, CHUCK, YOU SERVED THE PEOPLE
WELL
7/02/96**

March 12 was the first good day we had seen in months and I made good use of it. I invited Chuck Gebhardt to accompany me to Boonville for a haircut.

What followed was one of the most enjoyable days I have ever experienced. Chuck accepted and we enjoyed a nice drive and visit. We topped it off with lunch at the Buffalo head.

Chuck is an Old Forge original and he echoed all of the other old timers I have talked with that times were tough when he was starting out. Born on July 29, 1905, he turned 91 this year.

When he speaks of hard times, it is with a pragmatism that makes you realize he accepted it in stride, plugging along and making the best of it. He did what he had to do like the majority of his neighbors.

With seven children, Chuck's comments were sprinkled with praise for his mother and her common sense advice in coping with life's problems. In my visits with many of the early natives a common thread of mothers assuming a large share of family responsibility becomes evident.

Most of my recollections of Chuck's working years were of his supervision of the Public Works Department. My conversations with him that day unveiled a wide range of jobs that made up his roughly 66 working years. At one time or another he put in some time with many of the local businesses. The same was true with town government where he served in nearly every branch.

All in all, his working life was spent in service to the public, a service he took personally and willingly. The demands on his time when he was public works superintendent were non-ending. When people are without water or sewer their complaints are not always timely or tactful.

Jim Luvera unknowingly pointed out to me how commonplace requests for Chuck's time were. A patron of Kate's Diner, Chuck was a connoisseur of her cooking. Jim, hearing of his taste for venison stew, ran a bowl over to Chuck. When Chuck

answered the door he greeted Jim with, “What’s your problem?” For once, he had a pleasant surprise; it was unusual for Chuck to be greeted with other than problems.

Venison and trout were a big part of recreation and diet in Chuck’s life, as was true for many of his neighbors. An avid deer hunter, he shared many happy hours in the woods with his friend Les Wilcox.

Lake trout fishing was another of Chuck’s passions that he has not enjoyed for some time. I hope to rectify that by the time this comes to print.

Chuck worked long and hard for the people of the area and deserves our respect and thanks. Please join me in wishing him a (belated) 91st birthday.

Happy Birthday Chuck! With your attitude and perseverance, you’re in for many more.