

Reynolds

From A1

probably works six and a half days a week.”

Kevin Reynolds joked that once, when she took a week off, he thought it would be great to relax. Instead, they painted the entire inside and outside of their house.

“I’m project-driven,” Kim Reynolds said with a laugh.

“So, I was just a little bit nervous about this retirement,” Kevin Reynolds joked.

Kim Reynolds started her political career helping out with a campaign to replace Kevin Reynolds’ aunt as Clarke County treasurer, he said. The newly elected treasurer then hired Kim Reynolds to be a motor vehicle clerk.

Eventually, Reynolds herself ran for the treasurer job, launching a political career that would include being a state senator, lieutenant governor and the first woman elected governor of Iowa in 2018.

“I never thought about the next thing,” Reynolds told reporters after the event. “It just kind of, the door opened, and I went through it.”

Reynolds said her faith and her family kept her going through trying times — under pressure as governor and when Kevin Reynolds received a cancer diagnosis three years ago. He is now in remission.

She also gave a window into her motivation for stepping away from the governorship. The couple have three daughters and 11 grandchildren, and Reynolds said she’s looking forward to being with them and her parents more. Her mother has had some health issues, she said.

“He (Kevin) will literally go and spend a week with the grandkids and babysit when mom and dad have to go some place, and he can do it, and he’s great at it, and those are wonderful memories. And now I want to be part of that,” Reynolds said. “I’m missing that. I’m so grateful he’s been able to do that, but now I want to go with him and be there for the kids too.”

Governor outlines her successes, challenges

Asked what she sees as her biggest accomplishments, Reynolds said she’s proud of the tax environment in Iowa. During Reynolds’ tenure, with a Republican trifecta in state government, Iowa has cut income tax rates and enacted a flat 3.8% rate for all taxpayers. Reynolds also signed laws that did away with taxes on retirement income, eliminated the inheritance tax, and reduced corporate and property



Iowa GOP Chairman Jeff Kaufmann interviews Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds during a stop on Reynolds’ legacy tour at Dahl Old Car Home in Davenport on Thursday. SARAH WATSON PHOTOS, QUAD-CITY TIMES



Iowa GOP Chairman Jeff Kaufmann speaks at Dahl Old Car Home in Davenport on Thursday.

taxes.

Reynolds said she’s hoping the state can get something passed this session, which is winding down, on property taxes.

On education, Reynolds said it was important for her to work on raising reading and math scores of Iowa kids and said she’s “really, really proud” of “keeping our kids in school during COVID.”

“There were states where kids were kept out of a classroom for almost three years, and some of those kids will never recover,”

Reynolds said.

Michelle Crawford, the past president of the Iowa Federation of Republican Women, praised Reynolds for her handling of the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our governor led our state with such courage,” Crawford said. “She trusted us. And she worked so hard so quickly to get our state back open and not just our state back open, but also our kids back in school.”

Reynolds said she also tried to realign state government. She cut

the number of cabinet-level agencies from 37 to 16, eliminated hundreds of open positions, gave the governor more direct control over executive branch employees and eliminated dozens of state boards and commissions.

As for challenges during her tenure, Reynolds said “COVID, COVID, COVID.”

“Really, nobody knew at the beginning,” Reynolds said. “... People were literally leaving their groceries in the garage for a couple days. We were wiping down boxes with disinfectant. Nobody knew, and every day was a new scenario or something had changed.”

She also said she may have had the most natural disasters of any Iowa governor during her tenure, notably including the 2020 derecho. She said she was proud of how her administration has responded quickly to disasters.

To the next governor, Reynolds said, “Go in there and break every record that I’ve set. I’m handing them the state that I feel like I made some improvements, and you take the state where it is right now, and you take it to the next level.”

Five Republicans are running to replace her — Randy Feenstra, a congressman from Hull; Zach

Lahn, a business owner from Belle Plaine; Adam Steen, a former state agency director from Runnells; Eddie Andrews, a state legislator from Johnston; and Brad Sherman, a pastor and former state lawmaker from Williamsburg.

State Auditor Rob Sand is the likely Democratic nominee.

Reynolds said she does not plan to make an endorsement in the primary, but will campaign for the Republican nominee.

“This is the first time we’ve had an open primary in a long time, and I just think it’s important for people to make those decisions,” Reynolds said. “And once that decision is made, though, I will be out on the trail and I’ll be doing everything I can to make sure this office remains in Republican hands.”

Reynolds Thursday was showered with praise from Republican Party of Iowa Chairman Jeff Kaufmann and with five video messages from former Gov. Terry Branstad, who recruited Reynolds to run as his lieutenant governor, former Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, former U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and current U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon.

Campaign

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the early 2000s, food aid was tied up in ports because of bureaucratic hurdles and regulatory barriers while people starved. After a 40-year career in food safety, Lielieveld founded a nonprofit called the Global Harmonization Initiative to build international consensus around science-based food regulations and legislation so countries could be confident in the safety of the food being distributed across borders.

Vilsack, a former governor of Iowa and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, wants more Iowans to know about the World Food Prize and be proud of it.

“Part of the reason why I was asked to take this job was to

deepen Iowans’ understanding, and the folks in the Midwest’s understanding, of the significance of the World Food Prize,” Vilsack said. “I think there’s a tendency to think that this activity and this foundation’s work is either located in central Iowa and/or is discussing hunger issues far, far away.”

But it’s not, Vilsack said, citing a recent Feeding America report that found widespread food-insecurity in America.

“Hunger is in every county,” Vilsack said. “It’s in Scott County. It’s in every one of the 99 counties in Iowa, and it’s in every county in the United States, no matter how prosperous.”

The World Food Prize, Vilsack said, is dedicated to working toward a world where there are no food-insecure people in the

United States and anywhere else in the world.

“It’s a big task and a big job,” Vilsack said.

The World Food Prize tries to lift up awareness of the issue with a Hunger Summit, which is July 22 this year. It brings in experts from across Iowa and the U.S. to Des Moines to discuss best practices to address hunger issues.

It also has a Youth Institute, where it encourages young people in high school to think about food insecurity and suggest solutions with a written paper and presentation. The World Food Prize has Youth Institutes in 23 states and 74 countries, Vilsack said, with 2,500 young people participating. Of that group 175 to 200 come to Des Moines during the laureate award ceremony in October. From those young people, the

World Food Prize selects about 15-20 interns who serve in foreign countries with researchers.

And then there’s the prize. Vilsack said few Iowans are aware that such a prize exists and that it’s a unique award. No other similar prize exists around the world for agriculture and food-supply contributions, Vilsack said.

“We’re it. This is a unique, one-of-a-kind acknowledgment and recognition that happens in the state of Iowa,” Vilsack said.

To raise awareness of the World Food Prize’s uniqueness, Vilsack has been traveling to a different county every month and highlighting something or someone that is unique or interesting from that part of the state.

In Davenport, it’s Bix Beiderbecke, a renowned jazz musician from the early 1900s, who has a

festival and race named after him.

This is one of about a dozen locations the World Food Prize highlighted in videos that aim to promote unique features of Iowa, like the World Food Prize.

They started in February with Ames and George Washington Carver and his connection with Iowa State University. Then, in Beacon, Iowa, they highlighted John Ruan, who started a successful trucking company and endowed the World Food Prize. Vilsack also traveled to Mount Ayr, where astronaut Peggy Whitson graduated from high school.

Vilsack said he hopes the videos spark conversations about Iowa and a sense of pride.

“No one’s doing any more important work than we’re doing right here,” Vilsack said. “We’re feeding the world.”

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