

# Businesswoman Vernon joins C.R. District 2 race

By Rick Smith

The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Monica Vernon, a small-business owner and past chairwoman of the Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, is running for the District 2 seat on the City Council.

Vernon, 49, owner/president of Vernon Research Group Inc., says she's running because she wants Cedar Rapids to go from a good community to a great one.

"We have done pretty well



**Monica Vernon**

Business owner

with good-paying jobs over a long period of time," she says. "We have some quality-of-life amenities, and we have a beautiful river.

"But we've fallen behind other commu-

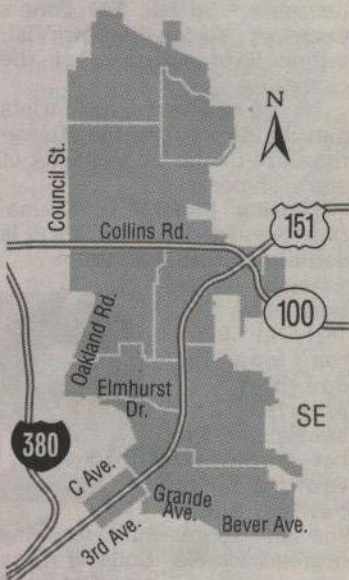
nities. And we need to improve in order to ensure a vibrant future for our children and grandchildren."

Incumbent Sarah Henderson, 32, director of marketing for GreatAmerica Leasing, plans to seek re-election, and Robin Tucker, 43, businessman and Realtor, is running.

Vernon, of 326 23rd St. Dr. SE, is a founding board member of the Fifteen in 5 community planning initiative; a founding member of the Cedar Rapids Visioning Committee, which is concentrating on downtown revitalization; past chairwoman and 10-year member of the City Planning Commission; and recent past member of the Linn County Regional Planning Commission.

Vernon, married with three

## District 2 C.R. council



Gazette map

daughters, has good things to say about the city's 18-month-old council/manager government, which features nine part-time council members and a city manager.

She says the new City Hall setup has provided "frank and open discussions about who we want to be and where we want to go."

"I think we as a community have made a lot of plans over the years, but it's time now to get them done," Vernon said.

On that list, she says, are a vibrant downtown; a riverfront people can enjoy; good jobs; economic development; and safe neighborhoods.

Council members will earn \$15,300 a year in the fiscal year that began July 1.

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-8312 or rick.smith@gazettecommunications.com