

Rocky Mountain News Editorial

Black Hawk's curious choice for mayor

**July 17, 2006**

'The citizens of Black Hawk are willing to give people a second chance,' its town spokesman said in explaining why its new mayor pleaded guilty to a felony - *just last week*.

By all means, let us give the wayward a second chance. Forgiveness is a bedrock virtue, after all, and new beginnings are part of the Western way of life. But does that justify elevating a fellow who pistol-whipped his wife last year to the town's top job even before he's finished his sentence? Isn't a man reportedly under court order to avoid guns and alcohol during his probationary period a lousy bet for local leadership - especially when he's hardly begun to prove his desire to reform his ways?

No wonder the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence is outraged that the Black Hawk council named David Spellman mayor after the death of the previous official in that job.

"The message that's been sent is that domestic violence is acceptable," a spokesman for the group said. Or if not acceptable, at least no big deal.

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