Amesville is a unique town in Southeast Ohio. While many surrounding towns have suffered from the boom and bust economy of extractive industries in the region, mainly mining, Amesville has remained stable.

"Our housing stock has been stable. The number of businesses have been more or less stable. It's been a blessing compared to some other communities that struggle with either timber or coal mining," said Gary Goosman, mayor of Amesville.

Goosman said that Amesville benefits from having many willing to be innovative and try to stimulate the economy in the town in unique ways. A nonprofit in Amesville called Village Production has helped develop culture events in Amesville.

"We've tried to use culture and art as a way to attract people to the community because you want people to live here, and you want young people to move here and raise families here. That's what contributes to stability," Goosman said.

During the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Goosman had to navigate poor internet service in the area, which made it difficult for village staff to work from home. Council meetings also moved to virtual video calls.

Goosman said that while businesses did suffer from the pandemic, all survived.

"We tried to help those businesses as much as possible by reimbursing them for the cost of the pandemic," Goosman said.

And when the schools closed for periods of time, parents had to stay home and take care of kids, hurting their ability to work.

Amesville is a town of 200 people. There is a bank, a restaurant, convenience store, gas station, heating and air condition businesses and other small businesses. Goosman explained that the major source of income for people is from entrepreneurship craft work, such as painters, potters, bakers and others who sell their work in markets or craft shows.

In recent years, Amesville has been able to make infrastructure improvements, despite the challenges that come with a small population.

Goosman moved to Amesville from Cincinnati in 2007. He's been mayor for 10 years and is finishing out his third term.

Goosman said he became mayor as more of a coincidence. He made friends that were on Amesville council, and was approached by the mayor to fill out a vacancy term. After becoming City Council president, Goosman gained a sense of what is expected of the position of mayor, and after the former mayor stepped down, Goosman ran.

Goosman was formerly part of the Ohio Appalachian Development corporation, which is a service nonprofit in Southeast Ohio.

"I was familiar with supervising people. I was familiar with writing grants, particularly, I was familiar with writing grants to state and federal agencies. I think the transition into being mayor was fairly easy," Goosman said. "There were bumps in the road, but I think I knew what to expect."

The previous mayor had been involved with the Mayor's Partnership for Progress, so Goosman joined his first year as mayor.

"I felt pretty prepared, but there were still things that I had to learn and information that I didn't know who to talk to or where to go. And so the Mayor's Partnership was great for that because everybody was open to sharing information with you," Goosman said, describing how invaluable the networking within the partnership was.

One of the unique aspects about the Mayor's Partnership for Progress is despite having mayors of different party affiliations, partisanships doesn't affect the relationships the mayors have helping each other.

"We don't get into fights over ideologies. All of us as mayor have to deal with the day to day, delivery of police, fire services, maintaining streets and sidewalks, delivering water and wastewater services," Goosman said. "All those things on the ground are important to people, and you can't argue over ideology when you're trying to do those things."