

RIVER CITY NEWS



TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, SUMMER 2012



CONGRATULATIONS!

We did it! Mason City has been selected as a Blue Zones Project™ demonstration site—bringing well-being our way!

Help us keep the momentum going on our well-being journey with your pledge to participate. Then invite friends, family and others to take these easy steps toward a healthier, happier life.

Step One: Visit www.bluezonesproject.com

Step Two: Click on the "Join Today" link

Step Three: Decide how you'd like to support your community's well-being

Support our town! Help us become one of the world's first Blue Zones Communities™.



Iowa has a goal to become the healthiest state in the nation by 2016. Reaching this objective means more than just eating right and moving more. True well-being includes all aspects of our lives, from community to social networks, habitat to inner self. By optimizing the environments where we spend our time, we can make the healthy choice the easy choice.

The Blue Zones Project™ is a cornerstone of how we will reach Iowa's goal. A community-driven well-being improvement initiative, this effort will help communities across the state make permanent changes to environment, policy and social networks that will reap powerful benefits, including longer, healthier, and more productive lives for citizens.

Four communities, including Mason City, have already been identified as demonstration sites for the Project. Blue Zones Project experts will work with us to improve well-being where our residents live, work and play, and support us as we work to achieve Blue Zones Community™ certification. This community transformation takes place on multiple levels, from policy and building design to social networks and the built environment. We know that a community designed for well-being makes the healthy choice easier, which leads to long term sustainability.

Making Iowa a healthier state will benefit every citizen by making Iowa's economy stronger and our quality of life better and the same holds true for Mason City. Thanks to the vision and leadership of our governing fathers and key leaders in our community we aggressively sought and were selected as one of the first four demonstrations sites.

During the next several months, members of the Mason City Blue Zones Project Power 9 Board will be working to develop a blueprint after having feedback from citizens in focus areas including: individual engagement, organization engagement including employers, grocery stores and restaurants, and city and school policy. The

blueprint will set our path for developing initiatives that will help us encourage making healthy choices the easy choices by using resources provided to us by Healthways, Inc. and Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. In late 2012 or early 2013 you will begin to see our Leadership Team and committees with many volunteers along with Blue Zones Project staff more visible in the community.

We are counting on each and every one of you to be a part of that process. We encourage you to call our Blue Zones Project office at City Hall to learn how you can be a part of this wonderful opportunity by pledging your support or volunteering. You can contact them at (641) 424-7181 or via e-mail at bluezonesprojectmasoncity@healthways.com.

New Web-Based Features to Pay Utility Bills Online, 'Like' us on Facebook, and Follow us on Twitter!

City of Mason City is excited to announce the addition of the online utility payment option and two social media pages as additional tools to provide efficient government options and enhance the communication of information to citizens.

City water utility customers now have the ability to **make payments online**. Citizens that desire to use this option must first register by clicking on the 'Utility Payments' button on the lower left side of the city's homepage at masoncity.net. First time users need to register using

their utility account number and first and last name. Once registered, allow 24 hours for the registration to be processed into the system. For all future online payments, the user can login with the designated username and password. Along with the online payment option, customers can opt out of paper billings and receive an e-billing statement by using this same registration process.

The free option for making a payment online includes using a checking or savings account. Or for a small fee, residents can call (877) 885-7968 to pay by debit card, Mastercard, Discover or Visa. This service is only available for utility billing payments at this time.

Facebook users are encouraged to 'like' the City of Mason City's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CityOfMasonCity) to keep current on the latest City events. Citizens can also follow the City of Mason City's Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/masoncityiowa to receive Tweets or updates about news and events pertaining to the City.

These two social media outlets along with the website (www.masoncity.net) are additional avenues of communication for City staff to reach citizens with timely news and information.

\$ Utility Payments

Click on this button at www.masoncity.net to pay City utilities online.

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Construction Update

The 2012 Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project consists of three construction phases involving different segments of the entire project area. Phase 1 kicked off in June focusing on 5th Street NE (Highway 122) between South Federal and South President Avenues. Phase 2 involves South Federal Avenue at the 8th and 10th Street South intersections. The final phase, Phase 3, covers South Delaware Avenue from 5th Street SE to 8th Street SE.

The extent of the project includes labor and materials for the rehabilitation and replacement of the sanitary sewer under a large storm sewer system including pipe replacement, manholes and lining of portions of the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer box culvert replacement, surface restoration and other related items.

The project is part of the Collection System Maintenance Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2013. The contractor for the project is McKiness Excavating of Mason City.

Expect congestion and delays around these areas and please watch for construction workers and equipment if you are traveling near the work zone. Avoid traveling in this area and plan an alternate route if possible. The City apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.

Emergency Preemption GPS System for Emergency Vehicles

The City of Mason City was awarded a federal grant for a traffic light pre-emption system. This GPS



system will automatically give emergency personnel control of intersections when they have their lights and sirens on.

City Emergency vehicles will soon be equipped with the capability of sending calls to GPS equipment installed at approaching intersections which will trigger the traffic light to 'green', allowing emergency personnel to continue through the intersection. This equipment will cover 44 signalized intersections in the community and provide 21 GPS kits for City emergency vehicles.

The system is designed to enhance the safety and effectiveness of emergency response procedures along the main

corridors within the community for both emergency personnel as well as other drivers on the roadway.

More information about this system and what it means to drivers in Mason City will be forthcoming this fall when it becomes operational.

SeeClickFix to Improve Quality of Life in Your Neighborhood

The City launched a new program to allow residents to report quality-of-life issues and request city services. Powered by SeeClickFix, the place-based reporting application allows residents to document neighborhood concerns ranging from junk, rubbish and refuse and inoperable vehicles to tall grass and weeds. At this time, the City is testing this program in Neighborhood Services for nuisance issues only; if this service is successful we hope to open this to all City departments in the future.



A view of the SeeClickFix mobile app

With the online and mobile reporting platform, these concerns are reported via the City's website, custom mobile applications (iPhone, Android, BlackBerry), Facebook and SeeClickFix.com. When submitting issues via the SeeClickFix mobile app, residents can provide locational, descriptive, and photographic information as they see the issue in real time. Once the resident submits an issue, the citizen reporter, Mason City staff, and anyone "watching" the area will receive an alert. The service request will be acknowledged, routed to the proper department, and the request – and residents following the issue- will be updated once it's been resolved.

This program allows residents to not only report community issues, but also view, comment on, and vote to fix problems submitted by neighbors. Citizens can create their own "watch areas" to receive notifications about all issues reported in this area, enabling them to follow the progress of those service requests, too, not just the ones they report.

The Mason City SeeClickFix website can be found at www.masoncity.net and residents can download iPhone, Android, and BlackBerry apps at www.seeclickfix.com/apps.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor: Eric Bookmeyer
(641) 421-3600 (City Hall)
mayor@masoncity.net

***At-Large: Scott Tornquist**
(641) 423-4803
tornquistatlarge@masoncity.net

At-Large: Alex Kuhn
(641) 425-0078
kuhnatlarge@masoncity.net

First Ward: John Lee
(641) 420-7922
leewardone@masoncity.net

Second Ward: Travis Hickey
(641) 423-4565
hickeywardtwo@masoncity.net

Third Ward: Jean Marinos
(641) 201-0002
marinoswardthree@masoncity.net

Fourth Ward: Janet Solberg
(641) 425-0749
solbergwardfour@masoncity.net

**Council Member Tornquist serves as the Mayor Pro Tem*

Artoberfest comes to the MacNider Art Museum!

Stop by Artoberfest at the museum on October 20 from 6-9 p.m. to hear live entertainment, bid on items on the silent and live auctions and enjoy gourmet beer and food and wine tasting. Proceeds support the continued operations of the museum. Tickets are \$40. Call the museum at (641) 421-3666 for more information.

Tutor.com Homework Help

Summer will soon be over and school will be in session. Visit the Public Library online at www.mcpl.org and click on tutor.com for one-on-one anonymous tutoring, test prep in math, science, English and social studies, ACT, SAT, GED and career test prep, and live homework help available 3 p.m.-midnight daily with a skills center available 24/7. Free online resources available with valid library card.



Starting a new position is always fun, exciting, and a bit overwhelming, but my recent transition into

the Volunteer Coordinator position has me looking forward to the future. There will be many people to meet, projects to cover, and new opportunities for the Volunteer Service Department to be involved in.

I come to the Volunteer Service Department from the Mason City Youth Task Force where I was the Youth Coordinator working with high school and adult volunteers. I hope to be as effective of a Volunteer Coordinator as my predecessors and be a great contact for new and exciting opportunities.

The City Volunteer Program is a unique partnership between volunteers and City staff. Resources and time are critical to meeting the needs of our community. Volunteers donate time to many of the projects essential to meeting those needs. The growth of the program exists because of our volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities appeal to an array of skill levels, interests and time availability. Opportunities exist for individuals and groups and can include but are not limited to maintenance (painting & carpentry), administrative assistance (mailings, filing and data entry), park upkeep (trimming, branch/limb pick up and weed removal), arts, crafts and recreation.

As the City Volunteer Program grows, volunteers become increasingly necessary to ensure that projects which were established to promote safety, historical, educational and beautification efforts, continue with the intent to help make our community a better place to live. Some of these projects include the following:

- Blue Zones Projects Volunteers to work on various initiatives and committees
- Parks Ambassadors to patrol our parks through the Park Watch Program
- Tour guides, depot clerks, event planners, welders and groundskeepers to assist with East Park's 1912 Steam Locomotive Preservation Project
- Gardeners to plant and maintain community flower gardens through the Beautification Program

- Litter clean-up teams to participate in the annual community-wide litter clean-up event held in the spring
- Committee members to join the volunteer Earth Day Committee that plans the annual festival/post-clean up rally
- Businesses, families, clubs and other groups to help remove litter from assigned streets through the Adopt-a-Street Program, assigned parking lots through the Adopt-a-Parking Lot Program, assigned river banks through the Adopt-a-Bank Program, and individuals to care for the maintenance of assigned sections within the City's cemetery through the Adopt-a-Section Program

All of us with the City organization sincerely appreciate the support of our volunteers.

For more information, contact:
Rachel Pike

Volunteer Service Coordinator:
421-3372 or rpike@masoncity.net
Visit us at www.masoncity.net.

'Two Ways Out' Fire Escape Planning

The Mason City Fire Department is preparing for National Fire Prevention Week (October 7-13) and its annual Open House on Sunday, October 14th at 1:00 p.m. The Fire Department interacts with kindergarten through second grade children and will host the third graders in the Mason City schools during Fire Prevention Week. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, TWO WAYS OUT, shows the importance of fire escape planning and practice. Fire Department staff invites everyone to visit the Open House and learn how to escape from home fires. Information will be provided to help families draw up home fire escape plans on the Fire Department's webpages on the City's website (www.masoncity.net).

For the third year, Mason City Fire Fighters will "Care Enough to Wear Pink"

and hold t-shirt sales. A limited number of shirts will be sold so get yours early. All profits benefit local cancer programs. Watch the Fire Department's webpages for more information on the shirt sales in August.



Exciting Changes Planned for Cemetery History Walk

Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery is making major changes to the History Walk scheduled for Saturday, September 29th. There will be a late afternoon History Walk from 4:00 to 5:30, chili supper from 5:30 to 7:30, plus an entertaining Evening Stroll from 7:30 to 9:00.



The afternoon History Walk will feature prominent citizens from the past with interesting life stories including:

The Story Sisters, Sophia and Dolly, 1863 – 1956, founded the first hospital in Mason City;

May Hanford McNider, 1863-1954, philanthropist for Mason City's cultural interests and mother of General Hanford MacNider;

Martha Jane Parker, 1852-1943, taught the Ringling Brothers;

Dr. Channing E. Dakin, 1876-1944, prestigious medical doctor in Mason City from 1901 to 1944;

Owen T. Denison, 1847-1910, an early officer of the Mason City Brick and Tile Company;

Levi Cadwell, 1832- 1880, owned a livery stable and drove funeral coaches.

The Evening Stroll will portray people of early Mason City who have interesting life stories, but more fittingly told during a dark night in the cemetery. While the historical aspects of the person's lives will be told, the portrayals will be entertaining as well. The full moon on that night may bring some other spirits out too. People being considered for portrayals are:

Yefto Radovich, 1897-1914, murdered on Powder Street at age 17;

Cora Bell, 1879-1965, suspected of running a house of ill repute;

Sargent Hoyt, 1800- 1859, was moved from burial grounds in NE part of early city;

Helen L. Berkley, ???-1921, murdered by another woman, thought to be over a man.

Contact the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery for more information at (641) 421-3687 or Elmwood@masoncity.net.

City of Mason City Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide efficient and effective City services and infrastructure with sound fiscal policies that create an enjoyable quality of life in a safe and viable community.

New Faces



Christina Cocagne is our newest employee at the MacNider Art Museum. She began employment on March 6, 2012 as the Museum Receptionist. Christina is a native of Illinois and holds a bachelor's degree in the field of Integrative Biology from the University of Illinois. We're glad to have you!



In March, 2012, the Mason City Public Library hired **Michelle Moore** to fill the position of Custodian. Michelle is a graduate of Rockford Senior High School and brings 5 years of experience with her from her previous employment as a Custodian at NIACC. She will surely help keep our new library in tip top shape!



Marc Kappmeyer was sworn in as an officer with the Mason City Police Department in April, 2012. Marc is currently attending the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy where he is learning all of the skills to help keep our community safe.



Schuyler Townsend joined the Mason City Fire Department in May, 2012 as our newest Fire Fighter. While he continues to help save lives here in Mason City, he is also finishing up coursework to become a Paramedic in Rochester, where Schuyler is from originally.

Retirements

The City of Mason City would like to extend a thank you to the following employees who retired after their years of service:

Pam Myhre, 4 years, Director of Growth Development and Planning

Dave Bartels, 24 years, Building Superintendent with the Mason City Public Library

Mike Lowe, 39 years, Street Foreman with the Operations and Maintenance Department

Mark Bull, 39 years, Sanitation Foreman with the Operations and Maintenance Department

Joanne Carpenter, 27 years, Head Cashier with the Finance Department

The Mason City Police Department hosted the 4th Annual MCPD Triathlon on Saturday June 16th at the Aquatic Center. The event included a 250 meter swim, 10 mile bike ride, and a 3 mile run. Attendance substantially increased this year with 121 participants registered. Seven local Police Officers and one Fire Department staff member participated in the event. Following the event, food was served and door prizes were drawn. There were also two \$500 scholarships awarded to one female and one male participant.

Much thanks to the many volunteers that helped out with the event!

Calendar of Events

AUGUST 2012

- 2 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 2 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 7 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 7 National Night Out Event, East Park, 5 p.m.
- 7 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 8 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 9 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 13 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 14 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 14 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 16 Kid's Club, MacNider Museum, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 21 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 21 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 21 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 28 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 2012

- 1 Area Show: 43 Exhibition closes, MacNider Museum
- 3 City offices closed
- 4 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 4 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 5 Sanitation Make-up Day for September 3
- 6 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 6 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 Iowa Crafts 40: Best in Show Award Winner closes, MacNider Museum
- 10 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 11 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 12 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 13 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 14 Richard Leet Retrospective opens, MacNider Museum
- 15 Kid's Club, MacNider Museum, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- 18 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 18 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 18 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 21 NIDAT Lunch by Central Park, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- 25 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 29 Elmwood St. Joseph Cemetery History Walk

OCTOBER 2012

- 2 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 2 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 4 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 9 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 10 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 11 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 16 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 16 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 16 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 18 Kids' Club, MacNider Museum, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 20 *Artoberfest*, MacNider Museum, 6-9 p.m.
- 23 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2012

- 1 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 4 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 6 Election Day
- 6 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 6 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 8 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 9 Grant Wood exhibition opens, MacNider Museum
- 10 *Richard Leet Retrospective* closes, MacNider Museum
- 12 City offices closed
- 13 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 14 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 14 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 12
- 17 *Windows to Heaven* opens, MacNider Museum
- 17 Kids' Club, MacNider Museum, 10 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 20 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 21 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 24 and 25
- 22 City offices closed
- 23 City offices closed
- 27 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.

MCPD Promotion to Sergeant

Congratulations to Mason City Police Department's newest **Sergeant - Tiffany Creekmur**. The 16-year veteran assumed her duties of the second detail in June of 2012. She brings a wealth of experience including having previously served as an investigator, field training officer, hostage negotiator, and domestic abuse response team member. Creekmur received the Sullivan Brothers Award of Valor earlier this year and also serves as the Treasurer of the Iowa Association of Women Police.