

# RIVER CITY NEWS

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, FALL 2010



## Public Library Renovation Complete!

The Mason City Public Library building renovation is complete which includes updating the Mason City Room. Renovation of the 1939 facility began in June 2009 and took just over 17 months to complete.

The newly renovated Library includes a Commons area complete with a coffee shop, patio, circulation desk, public access computers and seating. The coffee shop, named Bestsellers Coffee, is operated independently by Nancy Pearson and will offer catering services in the Library. There are two additional entrances to the Library - one at the Commons Area and one leading to the Mason City Room.



*Children's Desk at the newly renovated Public Library.*

Now you will be able to move from the Library to the Mason City Room without going outside. Some enhancements to the Library include Wireless Internet access inside the facility and outside on the new patio, additional public access computers throughout the Library, and updated meeting rooms with built-in screens and ceiling projectors. The Library offers many more comfortable seating areas with free Wireless access.

The Library hours have changed in order



*Commons area at the Public Library*

to offer an additional evening of service. The new hours are: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Bestsellers Coffee will be open Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Library and Bestsellers Coffee are closed on Sundays.

## Buyout Update

Acquisition is nearly complete for the City's four FEMA-funded buyout programs. There are 12 properties left to be acquired with FEMA funds, including five that were recently added to this project. Mason City's 100% Community Development Block Grant-funded buyout program received final approval and the City is now able to make offers to purchase the 70 properties included in this buyout.

Offers will be made to the most heavily damaged structures first and then to property owners based on when they acquired a replacement house and when their final Duplication of Benefits amount is certified by the Iowa Department of Economic Development. To ensure acquisition happens as quickly as possible, property owners should respond promptly to all information requests from the City.

City staff and representatives from each of the buyout neighborhoods have been meeting to discuss potential re-use options for the buyout properties. Meetings will be conducted through the fall and winter in each of the buyout neighborhoods to discuss how the properties may be used in the future. A final set of recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration.

### RIVER CITY NEWS

Suggestions and comments are always welcome. Please contact: City Administrator's office  
10 1st Street NW  
Mason City, IA 50401  
(641) 421-2701 (phone)  
(641) 424-7189 (fax)  
cityinformation@masoncity.net

### INSIDE THIS EDITION:

- 2 Construction Updates  
Using the New Zoning Ordinance  
Awards and Achievements  
Contact your Mayor and Council
- 3 Preliminary Flood Plain Maps  
Available for Viewing  
Volunteer Mason City Cemetery Walk a Success  
Learn 2 Sew in the Spring  
A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety
- 4 Calendar of Events  
MCW Launches New Website  
Increase in Security at Cemetery  
Lunch with Santa and  
Holiday Open House  
New Employees

## Mason City Education Government Channel

The City of Mason City administers the education and government cable television channel. The channel is currently located on Channel 4 on the Mediacom cable system in Mason City.

Tax supported and non-profit government or educational institutions wishing to use the cable television channel are encouraged to do so. Guidelines and procedures for submitting information for broadcast can be found on the Education Government Channel 4 page under the Residents tab on the City's web page at [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net). This page also includes a complete listing of videos currently being broadcast on the Channel, with start times and length of each presentation, including the most recent City Council meeting. The schedule is also broadcast directly on Channel 4.

To learn more, contact Mary at [mzishka@masoncity.net](mailto:mzishka@masoncity.net) or by phone at (641) 421-3372, or Pam at [pstecker@masoncity.net](mailto:pstecker@masoncity.net) or by phone at (641) 421-2701.

## Preliminary Flood Plain Maps Available for Viewing

Preliminary flood plain maps have been issued for Cerro Gordo County, but are not yet in effect. FEMA anticipates that they will be in effect in the fall of 2011. These preliminary maps depict the boundaries of the high, medium and low flood risk areas of the community. A second document, our Flood Insurance Study, tells us how deep we can expect water to be, describes some of the City's flood history and explains how the maps were created. The preliminary Flood Insurance Study is available on the City's web site at [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net).

Those maps that include Mason City are available for viewing in the 2nd floor corridor of City Hall during normal business hours. A brochure explaining the map review process is also available near the maps. Please feel free to contact the Growth Development & Planning Department on the 3rd floor of City Hall or call (641) 421-3626 with any questions.

## Volunteer Mason City

Volunteers involved in the Adopt-a-Street program spent several hours cleaning their designated streets this fall. As a result, there will be less litter to pick up after the snow melts in the spring. It is never too early to inquire about how you can become involved in the community-wide litter clean up effort that occurs annually in April during Earth Day week, or inquire about becoming a member of the Earth Day Committee.

Volunteer recruitment efforts are underway for a variety of municipal projects through the City Volunteer Program. Call now to learn about becoming a Parks Ambassador with the successful and highly regarded Park Watch Program. Learn how you can become part of the community flower gardens through the Beautification Project, which is entering its 41st year. Streets are available through the Adopt-a-Street Program and several sections are available through the Adopt-a-Section Program at Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery. Call to learn about the newly formed Adopt-a-Parking Lot Program. Consider becoming a tour guide or sales depot clerk at the 457 steam locomotive located in East Park.

Long-term and short-term municipal projects are available through the City Volunteer Program.

Call Mary today to learn more: (641) 421-3372. E-mail: [mzishka@masoncity.net](mailto:mzishka@masoncity.net). The Volunteer Program page can be found under the Your Government tab on the City's website at: [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net).

## First Annual Cemetery History Walk a Huge Success!

Over 130 people of all ages attended the Elmwood - St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Walk in spite of rainy weather. Grandma's Apple Bread Pudding was a delicious hit and Claudia Cooper soothed the crowd with her viola music. The forty volunteers that participated had so much fun, they are planning to make it an annual event.



*Elizabeth Hartsborn Russell, the first milliner in Mason City, portrayed by Carla Burke.*

The historic walk accomplished its purpose of getting the community involved in the cemetery and more informed of its historic value. Over \$1,000 was raised for historic preservation within the cemetery grounds because of generous sponsors and many in-kind donations from local businesses.

## Coming this Spring to your Recreation Department... Learn 2 Sew!

Were you someone who watched your mother or grandmother create things on the sewing machine and always wanted to be able to do the same? Learn 2 Sew offers basic sewing classes to teach you the art of sewing. It's very simple to learn and the possibilities are endless!

If you have a sewing machine and don't know how to use it, bring it to class. We'll teach you. If you don't have a ma-

chine, one will be provided for you.

More details will be available in the spring through the Recreation Department at (641) 421-3673.

## Mason City Fire Department

### *A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety*

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 Americans and cause more than \$990 million in damage.

**Preventing Christmas Tree Fires** – Select a fresh tree. Needles should be green and hard to pull back from the branches and the trunk should be sticky to the touch. Do not place it near a heat source which will dry it out. Don't put your tree up too early or leave it up longer than two weeks. Always have fresh water in the stand. Dispose of your tree properly and never put branches or needles in a fireplace. When it becomes dry, dispose of it promptly. The best way to get rid of your tree is put it out for the City's tree collection service on January 12, 2011. If you're using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it's flame retardant.

Inspect your **holiday lights** each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in insulation or broken or cracked sockets. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. Do not overload electrical outlets and do not link more than 3 light strands. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord or power strip – never directly into a wall socket. Make sure to periodically check the wires on lights – they should not be warm to the touch.

Use non-flammable **decorations** and keep them away from heat vents. Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace which results in a very large fire and can throw off dangerous sparks and embers.

Avoid using lit **candles**; instead use no flame realistic looking candles. If you do use candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they are not easily knocked over. Never put lit candles on a tree and never leave burning candles unattended.

**Smoke Alarms** – Working smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home. Test and clean all smoke alarms monthly and keep them equipped with fresh batteries (replace them when daylight saving time ends). And remember, practice your home escape plan.

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

### Water Treatment Plant Floodwall



Construction of the Water Treatment Plant floodwall project began in August and includes storm sewer installation, a wet well pumping station to expel storm water collected behind the wall, and relocation of access to the lower pumping building. The finished wall design is an interlocking pinned block constructed with a low permeability soil embankment. The wall is designed to protect the building against a 100 year flood plus two feet of free board which is equivalent to a 500 year event. The project is being funded by Federal and State grants, and a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2011.

### Using the City's New Zoning Ordinance

The new Zoning Ordinance and map, effective July 1, 2010, are available online at the City's website [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net). Click the Document Central button on the left, then click on the "Growth Development and Planning" folder. You will see a list of many different plan documents. At the bottom of the list, you will find the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. Click to open. You can enlarge the map to find the property you are looking for and the corresponding zoning district to the property. You can then refer to the new zoning ordinance to review the regulations to that district. There are seven zoning districts. Page 52 of the ordinance is especially useful with a table of 'forms and functions' (building types and uses) allowed in the various zoning districts.

### Federal Avenue Streetscape and Utility Improvements

The reconstruction of four blocks of North Federal Avenue and the Plaza north of Southbridge Mall has been on-going since July. City utilities including water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and street lighting are being replaced or rehabilitated before the street and sidewalks are replaced. The project will feature decorative piers and pavers within the sidewalks and crosswalks at each of the intersections. The plaza will feature colored concrete and decorative paver patterns, synthetic turf, and decorative lighting.

Those segments not completed are dressed with a temporary surface until construction activities resume in the spring. In addition to the streetscape, the project includes the reconstruction of Enterprise Alley to create parking for the historic Park Inn and the reconfiguration of State Street west of Federal Avenue including the replacement of a water main. The project will be completed in the summer of 2011.



*Preliminary view of plaza area, not representative of the final design.*

### Awards and Achievements

The certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the **City of Mason City** for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). This is the highest form of recognition for governmental accounting and financial reporting representing a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. **Finance Director Kevin Jacobson** received an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement as the individual primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning CAFR.

### HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

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

**At-Large: Max Weaver**  
(641) 423-6888  
[weaveratlarge@masoncity.net](mailto:weaveratlarge@masoncity.net)

**First Ward: Jeff Marsters**  
(641) 424-5845  
[marsterswardone@masoncity.net](mailto:marsterswardone@masoncity.net)

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

**Third Ward: Don Nelson**  
(641) 423-3896  
[nelsonwardthree@masoncity.net](mailto:nelsonwardthree@masoncity.net)

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

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

Three Mason City Police Officers graduated from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). **Kevin Duenow, Seth McChesney and Matt Heuer** successfully completed a 13-week session providing training on the many components of law enforcement.

**Officer Kevin Duenow** was awarded the Woodward Award. This award is presented to one member of each ILEA class who earns the highest academic average.

**Officer Seth McChesney** earned membership in the ILEA's 300 Club which recognizes individuals that exceed the physical agility standards.

## New Faces



Raelene Evans was hired as a Library Assistant I for the Public Library in July of 2010. She is a graduate of Mason City High School and NIACC with an Associate of Arts degree in Business and Accounting.



Rachel Herman joined the Recreation Department as an Assistant Programmer in August of 2010. She is a graduate of Newman Catholic High School and NIACC with an Associate of Arts degree in Elementary Education. She is attending the University of Northern Iowa and is working toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in Leisure, Youth & Human Services. She served her Internship with the Mason City Recreation Department during the summer of 2010.



Matt Heuer was appointed as a Police Officer in September of 2010. Matt is a graduate of Allison-Bristow High School, Hawkeye Community College with an Associated of Applied Science degree in Police Science, Indian-Hills Community College with an Associated of Applied Science degree in Computer Forensics and Upper Iowa University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice/Public Administration.



Michelle Imoehl joined the Public Library as a Custodian in July of 2010. Michelle is a graduate of Garner-Hayfield High School and NIACC with an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and an Optometric Assistant Diploma.



Amanda Korenberg was hired by the Youth Task Force as an Outreach Coordinator in June of 2010. Amanda is a graduate of Clear Lake High School and the University of Northern Iowa with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology.



Tom Nestvedt was appointed as the Custodian of Building & Grounds for the MacNider Art Museum in September of 2010. He is a graduate of Mason City High School.



Janice Willeke joined the Public Library as a Library Assistant in August of 2010. She is a graduate of Aplington Community High School and Iowa State University. Janice has previously worked as an Instructor at the MacNider Art Museum.

## Mason City Airport (MCW) Launches New Website

Have you visited Mason City Airport's new website, [www.flymcw.com](http://www.flymcw.com)? Everything you need to find about the Mason City Airport can be located on this new website including flight schedules, traveling tips, upcoming events and more! There is even information on how you can learn to fly. Before you plan your next trip, be sure to check out what your Mason City Municipal Airport has to offer at [flymcw.com](http://flymcw.com).

## Increasing Security at Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery

In response to the many families that have shared their heartache and frustration from the theft of decorations over the years, the Cemetery Board of Trustees is implementing measures to increase the security of the cemetery. The ordinance was changed to make it unlawful to be in the cemetery between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. to discourage activities that may lead to damage to headstones or cemetery property. This revision was patterned after the rules for city parks and the board feels it is important to protect the cemetery grounds in the same manner. While the board recognizes the varied schedules of our citizens, they feel there is ample time during the daylight and evening hours for families to visit loved ones. Questions or concerns about the changes should be related to the Cemetery Manager at (641) 421-3687.

## Calendar of Events

### DECEMBER 2010

- 2 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 2 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 Lions Club International Peace Poster Exhibit opens @ MacNider Museum, 12 noon
- 3 Yard Waste pick-up season ends
- 7 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 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.
- 10 MacNider: Off-the-Clock Holiday Open House, 5-7 p.m.
- 11 MacNider Museum Lunch with Santa, 11:30 a.m.
- 11 MacNider Museum Holiday Open House Family Day, 1-4 p.m.
- 13 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 14 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 14 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 21 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 21 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 21 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 23 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 24
- 24 City offices closed
- 24 MacNider Museum closes @ 12 noon
- 25 MacNider Museum closed
- 28 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 30 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 31
- 31 City offices closed
- 31 Lions Club International Peace Poster Exhibit closes @ MacNider Museum
- 31 MacNider Museum closes @ 12 noon

### JANUARY 2011

- 1 MacNider Museum closed
- 4 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 4 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 6 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 6 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 *Marc Sijan: Being Alive* closes @ MacNider Museum
- 10 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 11 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 12 Holiday tree pick-up by Sanitation Division
- 12 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 13 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 15 MacNider Museum Kids' Club *What is the Meaning of This?*, 10 a.m.-12 noon
- 18 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 18 Museum Board, 7 p.m.

- 18 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 20 *Iowa State University Faculty Show* opens @ MacNider Museum, 5 p.m.
- 25 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.

### FEBRUARY 2011

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 9 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 10 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 14 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 15 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 15 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 15 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 15 MacNider Museum Kids' Club *That's Puzzling*, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 21 City offices closed
- 22 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 23 Sanitation Make-up Day for February 21

### MARCH 2011

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 9 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 10 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 10 School Art Exhibition Creative *Commotion* opens @ MacNider Museum, 5 p.m.
- 14 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 15 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 15 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 15 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19 MacNider Museum Kids' Club *Go Green*, 10 a.m.-12 noon
- 22 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 26 *Iowa State University Faculty Show* closes @ MacNider Museum

This calendar is subject to change. For more information, visit [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net) or contact staff at (641) 421-3600.

**Have lunch with Santa** and his elves at the MacNider Art Museum on Saturday, December 11 at 11:30 a.m. Following the lunch, attendees will participate in a special seasonal project. Pre-registration is required by calling (641) 421-3666. The cost of the lunch is \$6.

Following the lunch is the **Holiday Open House** at the Museum from 1-4 p.m. An afternoon of winter holiday crafts, delicious treats and a visit from Santa awaits you! The Holiday Open House is free to attend.

**Kids' Club** will be held throughout the winter months at the MacNider Museum and is open to kids ages 5 to 12. And it's FREE! To learn more about these events, exhibitions or classes, visit [www.macniderart.org](http://www.macniderart.org) or contact the museum at (641) 421-3666.