

RIVER

Vol. 2 No. 2 November 2006

City News



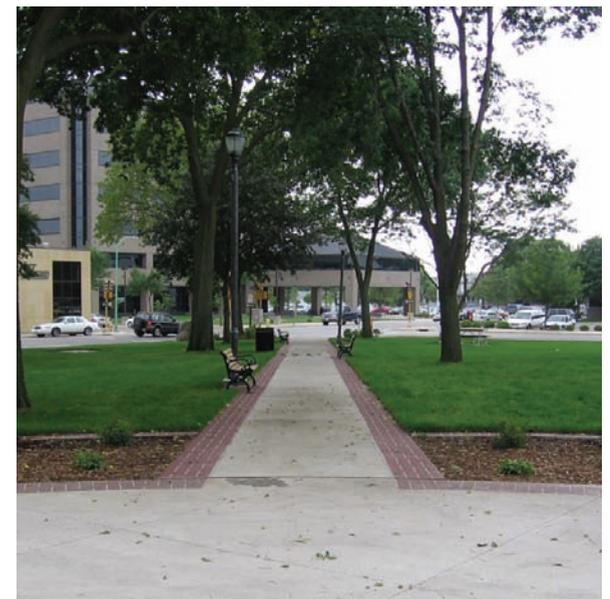
Central Park RENEWED

After much planning and many changes Central Park has been renewed. The Central Park Redevelopment project began in October of 2005 and was completed nearly one year later. The total project was a collection of sub-projects in and of themselves. The major operations included the removal of the old sidewalks and replacing them with concrete sidewalks with stamped, decorative borders, and a new electrical system to energize the new park lighting (as well as the street lighting surrounding the Central Park block, and the Veteran's Monument). An irrigation system was installed to sprinkle the new sod and the newly planted areas throughout the park.

Many other additions to the park were put into place throughout the project. The park is equipped with an underground water system to feed the sprinkling system, two decorative drinking fountains, and several water boxes, which will be used for isolated areas. There is also a sanitary sewer service line installed for a possible future water feature. Also throughout the park are many benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles.



Photo courtesy of Globe Gazette



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Council on the Road

The Mayor and Council members would like to take this opportunity to thank those citizens that attended the listening posts on the road! Mason City residents were invited to attend open discussion forums held in the four wards of the community during the months of September and October.

The traveling listening posts are a great opportunity for the City's elected officials to hear from citizens as Council begins the next budget cycle and sets goals for the upcoming year.

Fire Department Open House

The Fire Department held the annual Fire Prevention Week Open House on Sunday, October 8 from 1-5 p.m. at the fire station. Demonstrations included large water movement, the use of fire extinguishers, high angle rescue, and extrications. Citizens also took the opportunity to meet the firefighters and paramedics, and view the display of equipment and the apparatus used to fight fires and protect citizens.

New to this year's open house was a free drawing open to children. The winner, Adrian Debrah, won a 'ride to school with friends' on a fire engine. Congratulations, Adrian!



An overhead view of one of the fire department's trucks featuring high angle rescue maneuvers.



Mason City Fire Personnel demonstrate the use of extrication equipment during the annual open house.



The Volunteer Park Watch Program seeks to involve residents to help curb vandalism within our city parks. The program started in July 2006.

The Park Watch Program assigns volunteers to Park Watch tours where they report suspicious activity to the Mason City Police Department. The goal of the Park Watch program is to help decrease incidents of vandalism, crime and misuse to park properties and related costs.

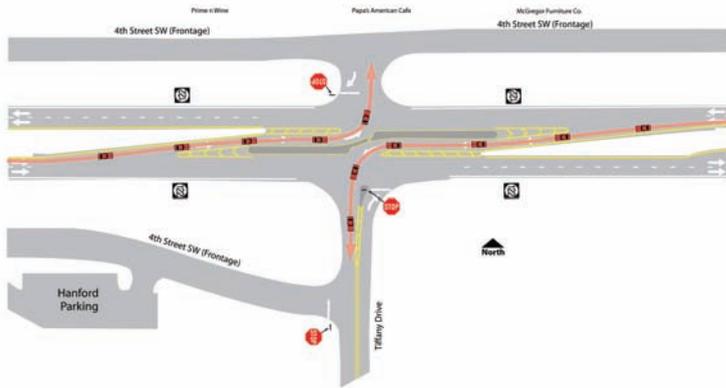
Park Watch volunteers report incidences they observe to the Joint Dispatch Center. Volunteers have reported several incidences of individuals in city parks after the parks are officially closed as well as mischief and dangerous activities. Police officers have been prompt in their response to these calls and have expressed their appreciation of the Park Watch volunteers. Currently 23 volunteers donate their time to Park Watch tours.

If you are at least 18 years old, have transportation and are interested in learning more about the Volunteer Park Watch Program, please contact City Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Zishka at 421-3372. Volunteers will complete an application and attend a two-hour training session. A local background check is required.

Projects Update

Iowa Highway 122 Frontage Road Utilities Improvement Project

Work is nearing completion on this project located on the frontage road between Village Green Drive and Eisenhower Avenue. Storm sewers were installed along the frontage road that will replace the ditch system that had been in place. Since the ditch is no longer required, curb and gutter is being installed on the north side of the frontage road and the ditch is being filled. Additionally, the water main and five sanitary sewer manholes have been replaced.



Iowa Highway 122 Frontage Road and Median Improvements

Work has been completed on this project that upgraded the existing frontage road system in front of the Hanford Inn. Prior to this, the entrance off of Highway 122 was a private entrance into the Hanford Inn parking lot. This is now a public entrance that connects directly to the frontage road.

Additionally, improvements were made to the median on Highway 122 with the installation of offset left turn lanes. These turn lanes provide better visibility as well as reducing the conflict of opposing left turn movements. This improvement also restricts the through movement across the median. Vehicles entering the highway from the frontage road at this location now have a right turn only movement.



23rd Street SW Paving Project

The 23rd Street SW Paving Improvement Project is now complete! The improvements extended 466 feet into the Frederick Hanford Park, replacing the graveled street and parking area with a new Portland Cement Concrete urban section street. The street is 31 feet wide and will accommodate parking on both sides. The project also includes an extension of the water main and a fire hydrant that are installed near the end of the street.

The project began in early spring and was completed in June, which allowed the use of the street for park activities throughout the summer months. These improvements provide a safer and cleaner recreational environment for the community.

2006 Street Rehabilitation

The Street Rehabilitation project covers over 3.5 miles of streets and alleys throughout the city, with the concentration of them in the central and northwest areas. Before streets are given a new surface of HMA (Hot Mix Asphalt), there are a number of other operations performed on or below the street level.

The rehabilitation areas tend to be in the older areas of the city and many of the utility structures are in need of repair or replacement. The existing sanitary and storm sewer manholes, originally constructed of bricks, were replaced with pre-cast concrete structures. Storm intakes were replaced, or in some cases, repaired. This year there were also several manholes rehabilitated using a spray on lining, which prevents infiltration into the sewer system.

Improvements to the water system were also performed on the streets included in the project. These improvements included the replacement of leaking or broken water main valves, and existing water valve manholes were replaced with more cost efficient valve boxes.



Enterprise Alley before



Enterprise Alley after



6th Street NE before



6th Street NE after

After all of the utility improvements were completed, the paving contractor shaped the streets and alleys with a milling machine designed to grind some of the existing surface away to remove deteriorated material. Milling is also done to help maintain gutter line elevations and for butting into adjoining streets resulting in a smooth transition after the HMA is placed.

Several areas of 12th Street NW between Tyler Ave. and Pierce Ave. were in need of repair and patched with full depth PCC (Portland Cement Concrete). This is a heavily used street with many semi trucks using it daily.



12th Street NW before



12th Street NW after

Neighborhood Notes

Friends of the 457 Receive Governor's Volunteer Award

Friends of the 457 were nominated for the Governor's Volunteer Award through the Iowa League of Cities for their outstanding volunteer efforts in the preservation and continued maintenance of the 457 Steam Locomotive located in East Park. Members of the

Friends of the 457 attended the awards ceremony held on June 14 at the

Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Art Center in Cedar Falls.



Accepting the award from Lt. Governor Sally Pederson on behalf of the Friends of the 457 are co-chairs Dennis Wilson (l) and Cliff Hagman.

Shining Star Volunteer Recognition

Thirty-nine volunteers were recognized at a luncheon held in their honor to thank them for their outstanding contributions to the City organization. Mayor Roger Bang presented Shirley Nehls and Zoe Hugo with this year's Shining Star Award.

Shirley donated over 200 hours to the City organizing and sorting information for easier access by city staff. Zoe was recognized for her tireless efforts necessary

to acquire the Aquatic Center.

The Shining Star Team Award was presented to Earth Day Committee charter members Michele Appelgate and Todd VonEhewegen for their 13-year commitment to environmental awareness.

Volunteer Gardeners Make Mason City "Sparkle"

Thirty-five years ago Don Lee of Mason City donated his gardening expertise to a beautification project and planted what was to become one of several gardens throughout East Park. With efforts from other volunteers associated with the Men's Garden Club, that idea flourished and today we see how their labor has blossomed to over 60 community flowerbeds throughout the city.

Now known as the Garden Club of North Iowa, members continue to donate their time and expertise to the beautification project



Volunteers prepare ground for spring planting. (Don Lee (r) & Dave Sjostrand)



Several weeks later, the care provided to the bed results in this welcoming entrance to East Park.

as do several other community volunteers interested in adding beauty to various locations throughout Mason City.

With financial assistance awarded by the Kinney Lindstrom Foundation, the City organization has been able to distribute funds to volunteer gardeners to cover the cost of plants. Additionally, several gardeners donate perennials from their private gardens.

Today community flowerbeds are planted and maintained by volunteer gardeners representing clubs, families, neighborhoods, businesses and the faith community. By the end of the growing season, volunteers will have donated nearly 750 hours to the annual and perennial beds. Flowerbeds located in city parks, right-of-ways and cul-de-sacs welcome visitors and citizens with enticing fragrances and brilliant colors. This long-standing commitment from volunteers adds tremendously to the City's beautification efforts and helps make Mason City "Sparkle."

If you'd like to learn more about how you can volunteer for municipal projects, please contact City Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Zishka, at 421-3372 or e-mail her at: mzishka@masoncity.net.

Neighborhoods

The **Morgan Timberland Park Neighborhood** has a new picnic shelter to go with their new play equipment. Weather permitting, the neighborhood group, led by **Tonya Kantaris**, will have a celebration/ribbon cutting later this fall.



Monroe Park will see the addition of new playground equipment next spring/summer thanks to the efforts of the **Monroe Park Committee** spearheaded by **Sheila Dwine, Teri Reed, Leonard Foster and Tim Latham**. The Park committee will select the equipment with the help of **Mark Suby, Park Superintendent**. The **North End Partnership Association** continues to assist the neighborhood with fund raising and donations for park improvements.

Community Issues

New Addition to the Main Entrance of Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery



Work is complete on a new entrance sign at the South Federal Avenue entrance to Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery. Jack Leaman volunteered his time to design the structure, Larry Elwood Construction built the sign, Martin Marietta Materials donated the limestone to cover the sign, and the lettering insert was purchased from Marquart Concrete Products.

Prior to this structure, there were only two small signs on the pillars. This is the first sign to designate the cemetery as municipal or city-owned. Lights and plantings will be added to the structure this year.

Outdoor Warning Sirens



The Outdoor Warning Sirens project is complete. The package includes 12 new Federal Warning Sirens to replace our old system of 9 sirens. This will provide better coverage for the citizens of Mason City.

The outdoor warning system is intended to alert individuals who are outside to seek shelter inside a building. This system is not intended to alert citizens inside their homes. Citizens are encouraged to purchase a Weather Radio, which will provide the needed warnings when they are at home. The new system will be tested all year long on the first Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

New Playground for Central Heights Hoover Water Tower Playground

Water Tower Park in the Central Heights Neighborhood has new play equipment. Thanks to uncooperative weather, the installation was delayed several weeks. **Central Heights Neighborhood Association** volunteers and Mason City Park Department staff worked for several days the week of July 4th to complete the installation! **Janet Solberg**, association president, and **Mary Lou Wood**, chair of the Water Tower Park Renovation Committee, say that the kids love the park and are thrilled with the new equipment. **Ron Holt**, retired Mason City Street Department employee, was elected Vice President of the neighborhood association this past spring. Not ones to rest on their laurels, the association held their **2nd Annual Clean Up Day on October 14**, and they are planning continued fund raising to match the **\$5,000 Muse Norris Grant** they received to add a shelter to the park.



Update of City Happenings

New Faces



Tom Meyer was appointed Interim City Administrator in July 2006. He obtained his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law. Tom was hired as City Attorney with the City in March of 2004.



David Sims was appointed as the Operations/Maintenance Coordinator for the Mason City Airport in May of 2006. David has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Louisiana Tech University.

Jana Barracks was hired as the MacNider Museum's first Coordinator of Development. Jana has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Colorado in Journalism and Public Relations.



Yard Waste Collection Ends

The City will be picking up yard waste until Friday, December 1, 2006, weather permitting. The public will be notified of any changes to this pick-up schedule. For more information, contact the Sanitation Department at 421-3691.



Dennis Bengtson has been appointed the Interim Chief of Police for the Mason City Police Department. He has served as Captain with the department and began his responsibilities as Chief in August of 2006.

Photo courtesy of Globe Gazette

Traci Bittner assumed the duties of Interim Director for the MacNider Museum September 1, 2006. Traci has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Buena Vista University and has previous museum experience.



Winter Recreation Programs Available!

There are many activities available during the winter months for all ages through the Recreation Department. Activities range from basketball to tumbling, open gym on Wednesday nights, kickball, adult volleyball and basketball leagues, magic class, ski trip, cheerleading camps and more! Contact the recreation office by phone at 421-3673, e-mail at recreation@masoncity.net, or visit their website www.masoncity.net. "The benefits are endless."

Winter Weather Advice/Reminders

The winter season is just around the corner! The City's Alternate Side Parking Ordinance will begin on November 15 and will be in effect until March 31. Parking shall be permitted on the odd numbered side of the street on odd numbered days and on the even numbered side of the street on even numbered days. The change-over period is from 4:00-8:00 p.m. each day.



Jo Callicotte was hired as the Administrative Assistant/Records Clerk for the Fire Department. She will begin her duties in November.

Jeremiah Cole joined the Police Department as a Police Officer in April, 2006. Jeremiah is a graduate of Hawkeye Community College with an Associate of Applied Science Degree.



Jacob Hubert began his employment with the Mason City Police Department as a Police Officer in April, 2006. Jacob has an Associate of Arts Degree with a Criminal Justice Certificate from NIACC.

Krystal Norby was hired as a Computer Operator for the Finance Department. Krystal began her employment with the City in April, 2006. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Buena Vista University.



The following tips are offered for a safe winter for everyone:

- * Stay informed of the weather forecast.
- * Clear snow and ice from the entire vehicle to improve visibility.
- * Put safety first – during snow fall or adverse weather, drive only if necessary and allow extra time to reach your destination.
- * Maintain a safe traveling speed and increase following distance between vehicles.
- * Be ready for ice on bridges, hidden lane markings, stalled cars and poor visibility.
- * Do not follow too closely to plow equipment and do not stop too closely behind a plow truck.
- * Do not allow children to build snow forts or tunnels next to the street. Also, do not let them play in piles of snow along the curb. Children have been injured or killed by snow removal equipment.

Upcoming Events & Meetings

November, 2006

2	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
2	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
7	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
7	7:00 p.m.	City Council
8		Sanitation pick-up for Veteran's Day
8	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
9	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
10		Veteran's Day holiday (City offices closed)
13	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
14	6:00 p.m.	Park and Recreation Board
14	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
15		Alternate Side Parking Begins
15	4:00 p.m.	Cable Commission
21	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
21	7:00 p.m.	City Council
21	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board
22		Sanitation pick-up for Thanksgiving holiday
23 & 24		Thanksgiving holiday (City offices closed)

December, 2006

1		Yard Waste Collection ends
5	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
5	7:00 p.m.	City Council
7	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
7	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
11	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
12	6:00 p.m.	Park and Recreation Board
12	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
13	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
14	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
19	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
19	7:00 p.m.	City Council
19	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board
25		Christmas holiday (City offices closed)
27		Sanitation pick-up for Christmas holiday

January, 2007

1		New Year's holiday (City offices closed)
2	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
2	7:00 p.m.	City Council
3		Sanitation pick-up for New Year's holiday
4	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
4	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
8	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
9	6:00 p.m.	Park and Recreation Board
9	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
10	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
11	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
16	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
16	7:00 p.m.	City Council
16	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board

February, 2007

1	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
1	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
6	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
6	7:00 p.m.	City Council
8	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
12	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
13	6:00 p.m.	Park and Recreation Board
13	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
14	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
19		President's Day holiday (City offices closed)
20	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
20	7:00 p.m.	City Council
20	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board
21		Sanitation pick-up for President's Day holiday

March, 2007

1	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
1	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
6	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
6	7:00 p.m.	City Council
8	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
12	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
13	6:00 p.m.	Park and Recreation Board
13	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
14	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
20	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
20	7:00 p.m.	City Council
20	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board

April, 2007

3	4:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Adjustment
3	7:00 p.m.	City Council
4		Sanitation pick-up for Good Friday holiday
5	12:00 noon	Human Rights Commission
5	4:30 p.m.	Historic Preservation Commission
6		Good Friday holiday (City offices closed)
9	4:00 p.m.	Airport Commission
10	6:00 p.m.	Park Board
10	7:00 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission
11	4:00 p.m.	North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team
12	8:00 a.m.	Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board
17	4:15 p.m.	Public Library Board
17	7:00 p.m.	City Council
17	7:00 p.m.	MacNider Museum Board
21		Earth Day

2007 City Holidays and Sanitation Make-up Days

City offices are closed on the following holidays. The sanitation make-up day for the holiday is listed in the column across from the holiday.

2007 City Holiday

New Year's Day, Monday, January 1
 President's Day, Monday, February 19
 Good Friday, Friday, April 6
 Memorial Day, Monday, May 28
 Labor Day, Monday, September 3
 Veteran's Day, Monday, November 12
 Thanksgiving Holiday, Thursday & Friday,
 November 22 & 23
 Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25

Sanitation Make-Up Day

Wednesday, January 3, 2006
 Wednesday, February 21
 Wednesday, April 4
 Wednesday, May 30
 Wednesday, September 5
 Wednesday, November 14
 Wednesday, November 21
 Wednesday, December 26

Employee celebrates 50 years with the City

Congratulations

Marie Colby, head of the Mason City Public Library's Outreach Department, was recently honored this year as the library's first 50-year employee. A reception was held at the library on September 1, 2006 to celebrate her years of service.

Marie began working at the library's "South Branch" in 1956. After graduating from high school in Mason City in 1960, she joined the staff as a full-time library page, shelving for the Circulation Department. From there, she moved to the Children's Department, becoming the "story lady" on the local television program "Bart's Clubhouse" and the head of the Children's Library. Eventually, she moved to the Circulation Department, serving as head of Reference and as head of Outreach Services (her present position).

After half a century on the job, you might think that Marie would be ready to retire, but she intends to keep working.

"I'm not planning to retire because I love the library, the people I work with and the patrons," Marie declared. "You can't imagine what it's like to hear patrons say to their children: 'You know, when I was your age, she read me stories.' Sometimes it makes me feel old; but, it makes me feel good too."



HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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