

RIVER CITY NEWS



TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, FALL 2011

Help Make Mason City a Blue Zones Community!

What if you knew you could add healthy and happy years to your life? As part of the Blue Zones Project™, 10 communities in Iowa will be chosen to become Blue Zones Communities—places where people live longer, happier, healthier lives by applying the secrets of the longest-living cultures on earth. With your help, Mason City could be one of them.

Here's where you can help! They're looking for places with a lot of community support for improving well-being and will measure that enthusiasm by the number of residents from each community that **sign up at www.bluezonesproject.com or by texting BZP to 772937.** The information is updated every 24 hours and you can track Mason City's progress at www.bluezonesproject.com/scoreboard. It is based upon a percentage of the community's population that has pledged support. And it takes less than 2 minutes to sign up.

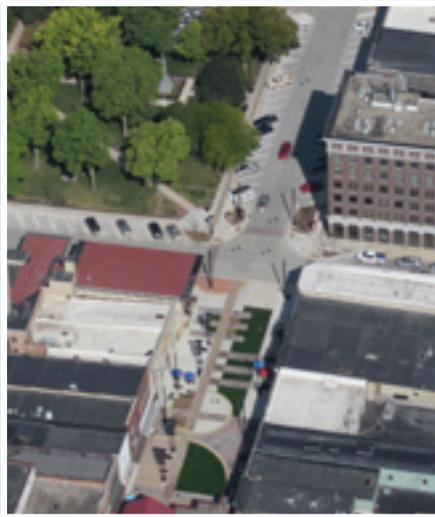
Be sure to share this information with your friends and neighbors - as more people sign up and show their support for our community, Mason City's chances will improve.

So, Mason City residents - let's go ahead and start living longer, better!

The Federal Avenue Streetscape Facelift is Complete!

The North Federal Avenue Streetscape and Utility Improvements project was completed fourteen months after it began. The project included replacing or rehabilitating underground infrastructure throughout the four-block corridor and plaza area that dates back over a hundred years. Streets and sidewalks were replaced from store front to store front with a unique sub-slab design and brick paver pattern integrated into the design.

The corridor is lined with piers constructed of concrete and bricks, and finished off with decorative steel cap plates inlaid with art tiles. Intersections



Aerial view of Federal Avenue Streetscape. The mall plaza area is at the bottom with Central Park at top left.

and mid-block point lighting is provided using a catenary system - hanging freely from a two point suspended cable supported by rigid steel poles. Several benches are available for relaxation and trash receptacles are positioned to keep downtown streets and sidewalks free of litter.

The plaza area was reconstructed giving Mason City's downtown a one of a kind appearance. The plaza is patterned



Decorative fencing along the Enterprise Alley parking area.

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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

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Concrete and brick pier inlaid with art tiles in downtown by City Hall.

with straight line and geometric shapes constructed of colored concrete, multiple colored pavers, and synthetic turf. The primary lighting is provided by a catenary system similar to those used for intersection lighting. Other features specific to the plaza are decorative light towers and sitting stones.

West State Street, Enterprise Alley, and 1st Street SW have also been reconstructed and reconfigured to update public utilities in those areas and provide additional parking in the downtown district.

Alternate Side Parking Ordinance and Emergency Snow Route

Staff will place the Alternate Side Parking Ordinance in effect when necessary - most likely after the first snow event of the year.

During the time the ordinance is in effect, parking is 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. People moving their vehicle(s) from one side of the street to the other side must do so between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. the night before.

The portion of 1st Street NW from Monroe Avenue to Pierce Avenue has been designated as an Emergency Snow Route. When the Emergency Snow Route is in effect, no parking is allowed on either side of this designated roadway until further notice.

To learn the current status of the Alternate Side Parking Ordinance and Emergency Snow Route designations, citizens are asked to log onto www.masoncity.net and view the icon on the lower left side of the page or call the Alternate Side Parking hotline at (641) 424-7188. Local media outlets are also notified of the status as it is updated.

For more information, contact City Hall at (641) 421-3600 or view the City Code online at www.masoncity.net.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Guidelines

When it snows, the City of Mason City depends on citizens to be aware of the need to remove snow and ice from public sidewalks including walks and ramps leading to street crosswalks.

Property owners are reminded that all snow and ice must be removed from the sidewalks within 48 hours of the end of a snow, ice, or wind event. If accumulated snow and ice frozen to the sidewalk cannot be removed, the property owner/occupant shall keep fine cinders and/or sand on the full width of the sidewalk. It is a violation to deposit snow/ice upon any public street, alley, or traveled area within the city.

If a citizen has a concern regarding sidewalk snow removal 48 hours after the end of an accumulation greater than one-

inch, the City's Neighborhood Services Division is ready to help. Citizens may call (641) 421-3380 (24-hour voice mail) to report locations in violation.

Upon reports of non-compliance, staff performs an inspection of the reported address. If a violation exists, a "Sidewalk Snow Removal Notice" will be posted on the front door which gives the resident and/or property owner 24 hours to correct the situation. If upon re-inspection the necessary action required has not been taken, the city contractor will clear the sidewalk and the property owner will be billed for the costs.

To file a Neighborhood Services complaint, call (641) 421-3380 or fill out a Service Request at www.masoncity.net. The entire Ordinance may also be found on-line.

Awards and Achievements

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the City of Mason City by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). **Finance Director Kevin Jacobson** received an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement as the individual responsible for preparing the CAFR.

For the fifth year, the **Mason City Municipal Airport** received a discrepancy free inspection by the Federal Aviation Administration. The airport staff was commended for the procedures used in the day-to-day operations and was presented with a 'Medal of Excellence' from the FAA.

Mason City Police Officers Charlie Connor, Tiffany Creekmur, Ed Walthall, and Lane Siefken and Mason City Firefighters Aaron Beemer, Peter Bieber, and Lt. David Orr were honored by Governor Branstad with the Sullivan Brother's Award of Valor for their life saving actions in October 2010. This honor is awarded to peace officers and firefighters who distinguish themselves by the performance of a heroic act in excess of normal demands of police or fire services where the person was fully aware of the threat to his/her personal safety.

Penny Bennett of the Recreation Department was selected by the Iowa District to receive the Outstanding

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: Max Weaver
(641) 423-6888
weaveratlarge@masoncity.net

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

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

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

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

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

Contributor to United States Tennis Association Youth Programs for 2011. She was honored at an Awards Luncheon held in Ames in October.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the City of Mason City operates programs and provides services without regard to race, color or national origin and is committed to providing non-discriminatory service open to the general public.

Anyone who believes that they have been subject to an unlawful discriminatory practice by the City of Mason City has the right to file a complaint with the City of Mason City and should call the Human Rights Director at (641) 421-3618. Formal complaints should be in writing and mailed to the Human Rights Director, City of Mason City, 10 First Street NW, Mason City, IA 50401.

Volunteer Mason City

When I recently became aware of the opening for the Volunteer Service Coordinator position, I immediately knew this was a position I was interested in. At an early age I watched my dad give back to the community as an informal volunteer – not through an organized program that Mason City is lucky to have today. From his example, I have become a volunteer myself serving different non-profits and projects in our area. I, like my father, believe in giving back and hope I have instilled this in my children and grandchildren.

Formally I worked in economic development serving Mason City, Cerro Gordo and our north Iowa area. I am thrilled to be able to continue to contribute to Mason City and assist the City, its staff and the City Council in their role of providing all of us with a place where we can enjoy living, working, and playing.

I know Mary Zishka will be extremely difficult to replace. I have been told multiple times that “you have big shoes to fill”. There are many wonderful programs that Mary has been a part of since this program’s inception in 2002. A little daunting but hopefully all the staff, partners of the volunteer service, and wonderful volunteers will be patient with me as I get up to speed. I wish Mary a wonderful retirement and thank her for her commitment to having the program ready to hand off to someone that will embrace her enthusiasm.

So my challenge to Mason Cityans, if you are a current volunteer, please stop and let me get acquainted with you. If you are not a current volunteer, please think about it! If you are young or old, shy or outgoing, let’s get acquainted and see where you might volunteer. Or if you just want to learn more about the Volunteer Service Program in Mason City please check out our website at www.masoncity.net and view the Volunteer Program tab or call me at (641) 421-3772.

Until next time, I am looking forward to Making Mason City Sparkle.

ANGELA DETERMAN, COORDINATOR
City of Mason City, Volunteer Services Department



The Mason City Police Department will be conducting enforcement of underage drinking laws December 16th, 2011-January 1st, 2012. Enforcement will include alcohol compliance checks, party patrols, and bar and walk-throughs of motels. Targets of this effort are high school and college age adults violating alcohol laws and legal age adults supplying alcohol to minors.

This wave of enforcement is part of the demonstration project funding received by the Mason City Youth Task Force through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Cerro Gordo County Sheriff and Clear Lake Police Departments are also participating in the project. The next wave is scheduled for prom and graduation 2012.

Annual Cemetery History Walk Proceeds to Fund Monument Restoration

Over 140 people enjoyed watching eight city ancestors come alive to talk about their lives. Among the portrayals were Alonso Willson, grandfather of Meredith Willson, Elizabeth Stanton, co-owner of the Stanton Hotel and Minnie Melson, wife of Joshua Melson. As the visitors strolled through the cemetery, they also caught glimpses of a grieving widow in a black dress and veil roaming the grounds.

Over 40 volunteers were involved in putting the event together which took over 400 hours to design and produce. This year’s event raised over \$2,000 to be used for purchasing equipment and supplies to repair broken monuments in the historic sections of the cemetery. A portion of the money will be used as matching funds for grants.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the event or contributing funds toward preserving the historic aspects of the cemetery is encouraged to contact (641) 421-3687 or Elmwood@masoncity.net.

A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

Fires during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 Americans and cause over \$990 million in damage annually. To ensure a safe and happy holiday:

Prevent Christmas tree fires by selecting a fresh tree with green needles and a sticky trunk. Do not place it close to a heat source and don’t put your tree up too early or leave it up longer than two weeks. Make sure your tree has fresh water in the stand and never put branches or needles in a fireplace. If using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it’s flame retardant. Dispose of your tree properly. The City’s tree collection service is January 11, 2012.

Lights – Maintain your holiday lights and inspect them each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in insulation or broken or cracked sockets. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory and do not overload electrical outlets (link no more than 3 light strands). Connect strings of lights to an extension cord or power strip – never directly into a wall socket. Make sure the lights are not warm to the touch.

Decorations – Use non-flammable decorations, keep them away from heat vents and never put wrapping paper in a fireplace.

Holiday Candles – Avoid using lit candles. If you do use candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they are not easily knocked over. **NEVER LEAVE BURNING CANDLES UNATTENDED** and never put lit candles on a tree.



Now featuring another way you can access benefits of the Mason City Public Library from the comfort of your home! The Mason City Public Library is proud to offer over 500 online Non-Credit Continuing Education courses free through “Universal Classroom” on their website www.mcpl.org. There is a wide range of ‘self paced’ classes from academic and technology like Accounting, Chemistry, Auto Maintenance and Microsoft Office, to cooking and crafts. (These are non-credit courses and are provided for your personal enrichment. These courses are not intended to be a substitute to any state, government, licensing, or educational requirements.)

A parking space has been dedicated to City program volunteers. The space is located in the southwest corner of the parking lot just outside the first floor windows of City Hall. This space provides convenience to our dedicated volunteers and has been designated in appreciation of their service to the City Volunteer Program.

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



Angie Determan joined the City as the Volunteer Service Coordinator in September. Angie is a Newman Catholic High School graduate. She attended NEIACC and NIACC. She sits on several boards within the community. Angie most recently did independent contract work and was formerly project manager and served as interim director of the North Iowa Corridor EDC.



David Green is a native of Iowa, but has lived in Arizona for many years. He had a full career with the Arizona Department of Corrections as Corrections Officer and went on to complete his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. He recently retired and returned with his wife to the Mason City area where he works as our newest transit driver. Welcome aboard!



Mike Rickard is welcomed by the City of Mason City as our new mechanic. He graduated from Nora Springs High School and holds a degree from Iowa Lakes Community College in Farm Equipment Mechanics. Mike has over 20 years experience working as a mechanic here in North Iowa and we are happy to now have him on our staff!

2012 City Holiday (offices closed)

New Year's, Monday, January 2
 President's Day, Monday, February 20
 Good Friday, Friday, April 6
 Memorial Day, Monday, May 28
 Independence Day, Wednesday, July 4
 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 4
 Wednesday, February 22
 Wednesday, April 4
 Wednesday, May 30
 No sanitation service
 Wednesday, September 5
 Wednesday, November 14
 Wednesday, November 21
 Wednesday, December 26

Winter Happenings @ MacNider Art Museum

Save the date: December 9th from 5-7 p.m. for the Museum's Off the Clock Holiday Edition. Join us on December 10th for Lunch with Santa at 11:30 a.m. and kids' activities, seasonal treats, and a special visit from Santa at Holiday Open House from 1-4 p.m. The Holiday Open House is sponsored by the MacNider Family.

Kids' Club will be held throughout the winter months and is open to kids ages 5-12. And it's FREE!

To learn more about exhibitions, classes and events, visit www.macniderart.org.

Retirements



Captain Bruce Quam officially retired from the Mason City Fire Department in November - exactly 23 years to the day after he started as a probationary Fire Fighter. In 1998, he was chosen to serve as the Assistant Fire Marshal and has been a Paramedic since 2004, which is when he achieved the rank of Captain. He was active with the search and rescue dive team and was a member of the North Iowa Hazmat Team.

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 2011

- 1 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 Yard Waste pick-up season ends
- 3 Live Music in the Commons of the Public Library, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (Paul Weitzel)
- 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 MacNider: Off-the-Clock Holiday Edition, 5-7 p.m.
- 10 MacNider Museum Lunch with Santa, 11:30 a.m.
- 10 MacNider Museum Holiday Open House, 1-4 p.m.
- 10 *Light to Dark: Twelve Intaglio Prints by Mauricio Lasansky* closes @ MacNider Museum
- 10 Live Music in the Commons of the Public Library, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (Feldspar)
- 12 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 13 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 14 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 16 Exhibition from the Charles H. MacNider Art Museum's Permanent Collection opens @ 9:00 a.m.
- 17 Live Music in the Commons of the Public Library, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (Matt Jensen)
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 20 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 24 MacNider Museum closes @ 12 noon
- 25 MacNider Museum closed
- 26 City offices closed
- 27 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 28 Sanitation Make-up Day for Dec. 26
- 31 MacNider Museum closes @ 12 noon

JANUARY 2012

- 1 MacNider Museum closed
- 2 City offices closed
- 3 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 3 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 31
- 5 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 5 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 9 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 10 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 11 Holiday tree pick-up by Sanitation Division
- 11 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.

- 12 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 14 *Iowa Crafts: 40* closes @ 5 p.m. @ MacNider Museum
- 17 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 17 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 17 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 21 Kids' Club from 10 a.m. to 12 noon @ MacNider Museum
- 24 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 27 Ceramic Studio Exhibition opens @ MacNider Museum at 9 a.m.

FEBRUARY 2012

- 2 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 2 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 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.
- 13 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 14 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 14 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 16 Kids' Club from 6:30-7:30 p.m. @ MacNider Museum
- 21 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 21 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 21 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 20 City offices closed
- 22 Sanitation Make-up Day for Feb. 21
- 25 Exhibition from the Charles H. MacNider Museum's Permanent Collection closes @ 5 p.m.
- 28 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.

MARCH 2012

- 1 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 Annual School Art Exhibition (Middle School) opens @ 9 a.m. at MacNider Museum
- 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.
- 11 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 12 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 13 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 14 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 17 Kids' Club from 10 a.m. - 12 noon @ MacNider Museum
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 20 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 27 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 31 Ceramic Studio Exhibition closes @ 5 p.m. at MacNider Museum

Mary Zishka retired as the City's Volunteer Service Coordinator in September. She became the first Volunteer Service Coordinator in 2002 with a mission to identify city or community projects that could be accomplished by volunteers. She was very instrumental in providing opportunities for City staff to connect with citizens and organizations wishing to volunteer with a variety of projects in the City parks, the waterways and the rights-of-way.

