

# RIVER CITY NEWS



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



Mason City has actively been working to become a Blue Zones Community and we were notified that we have been named one of eleven successful Blue Zones Community demonstration sites. You could be sitting in a Blue Zones Community™ became more permanent - YOU ARE SITTING IN A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY™. We could not have done it without the support of residents, businesses, service groups, non-profits - WITHOUT YOU MASON CITY!

What happens now? A Blue Zones community makes changes to its physical, social and policy environment to make it easier for citizens to adopt Blue Zones principles and enjoy longer, better lives. We will continue to work with our Advisory Board and Leadership Team to transform our community, a process to improve the emotional and physical health of residents, which should result in lower healthcare costs, higher productivity for employers and increased economic vitality.

Mason City will be hosting the Blue Zones Project team in March to gauge our readiness. Our job is to convincingly convey that Mason City is one of three communities that is ready to hit the ground running.

Members of committees working on the application since last fall will present to the Blue Zones Project Team why we believe we are ready, and ready we are. This group has worked diligently since October to assess projects that will move us forward in an effort to become a healthier community. We know that the lessons that were learned by Blue Zones will not

come to Mason City without CHANGE. This change will come in many shapes and sizes at our schools, churches, restaurants, grocery stores and most importantly in our homes and businesses.

Change can be a daunting word and stop us in our tracks or it can be something that we, the Mason City community, look forward to with excitement knowing that good things are coming our way. Mason City has spoken loud and clear demonstrating community support and enthusiasm. We want a changed community, one moving forward and doing what work it takes to move from a good community to becoming a better community.

Through collaboration and partnerships, across multiple settings we have begun and will continue to make small but meaningful changes. It may be as small as having dinner together as a family and visiting about Power 9™, the nine common traits of Blue Zones communities. Or it may be working on trails for increased walkability and bikeability in our community. Perhaps it could be church groups assessing how we can impact and engage relationships with people that would benefit from change in their social lives. It might be employers evaluating and improving worksite wellness or an employee taking that extra step in utilizing available programs.

A Leadership Team formed with members of our community will work closely with professional expertise provided by Healthways and Wellmark BCBS to use tools and their insight to assess our current overall health and create

a healthier environment one step at a time.

As our reputation as a progressive and healthy community becomes readily apparent, we will use it as a tool to retain families in our community and to recruit and attract businesses and new residents.

The enthusiasm for the Blue Zones project has been nothing short of overwhelming. Everyone is marching in the same direction. We have already benefitted from participation of government, non-profits and private business working together during the application process. We are excited to begin implementing the next stages and further developing our initiatives and unrolling them in the community.

Mason City, we are a Blue Zones Community! Now let's make Mason City the best Blue Zones Community, a better us for a better Iowa. Two years down the road we hope to be writing that we will no longer require the assistance of Blue Zones resources but sustaining physical, mental and social well-being changes.

More information on the Blue Zones project or to volunteer, go to [www.bluezonesproject.com](http://www.bluezonesproject.com) or [www.facebook.com/mcbzp](http://www.facebook.com/mcbzp) or contact Angela Determan at (641) 421-3372 or [adeterman@masoncity.net](mailto:adeterman@masoncity.net).

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## Street Rehabilitation

Two heavily traveled streets are undergoing rehabilitation this construction season - East State Street from Willow Creek to Illinois Avenue and 6th Street SW from Cheslea Creek to Monroe Avenue. The improvements include upgrades to the water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems. The East State Street project also includes the replacement of curb and gutter west of Kentucky Avenue. Sidewalks will be reconstructed at each of the intersections to meet the latest ADA requirements.

## Take Charge – Number your Property!

With spring just around the corner, residents are asked to ensure that identifiable numbers are located on the front of their residence or business. The City Code outlines regulations regarding the placement and maintenance of numbers no less than 3 inches in height and located in a conspicuous place on the building visibly readable from the street. Property owners failing to display the proper placement of numbers will be subject to the City placing numbers on the property with the cost assessed to the property owner.

For more information about City Building Code Title 10, Chapter 1, log onto [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net) and click on the City Code tab under 'Your Government'.

## Welcome New Council Members!



Newly elected **Council Member At Large Alex Kuhn** was born and raised in Charles City and graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelors Degree and his teaching license,

studying Political Science and Education. Kuhn served as a legislative law clerk in the Iowa House of Representatives and worked in the United States Senate for Senator Tom Harkin. After investing in his family farm, Kuhn moved back to north Iowa and works in private business development for Henkel Construction Company and is part owner/operator of a farming operation.

Kuhn volunteers for many non-profit organizations including MC Youth

Baseball, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, Youth Task Force and serves as a board member for Mason City Noon Rotary. He enjoys playing tennis, reading, following the New York Yankees, and spending time with his wife and two sons.



**First Ward Council Member John Lee** is a graduate of Newman High School and the University of Northern Iowa where he received a Social Science Degree in Education. He

began his teaching career at Mason City High School and over the past 17 years, has taught American History, American Government, World Cultures, Psychology and Economics. His decision to run for the City Council was prompted by his desire to be more involved in the community where he and his wife have chosen to raise their children. In 2000 he was recognized by the Globe Gazette as one of the 30 outstanding community members under 40. In 2010 he was named Wartburg's Outstanding Teacher of the year. He is married to another Mason City native, Abigail (Hussey). They have three kids; Matilda (9), Grant (8) and Broderick (5).



**Third Ward Council Member Jean Marinos** was born and raised in southern Kansas, and graduated from Kansas State University of Emporia with a Bachelors of Science in

Education. Jean married Rex Shorten and lived in a variety of communities including Tulsa, Oklahoma; Kansas City, Kansas; and Portland, Oregon. Her family moved to Mason City in 1981 for Rex's position with Winnebago. Three years after Rex's death in 1990, Jean married James Marinos, making a combined family of five wonderful children: Collier, Kendra, Christina, Alexandra and Theodora. Jim and Jean work together at their company, American Realty & Management Inc.

Jean has been involved in a variety of organizations and committees in Mason City. She served fifteen years on the Board of Directors for the Mason City Community School District and for many years held the position of President. She was elected Mayor of Mason City in February of 2003 and served until 2006.

## 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: Alex Kuhn**  
(641) 425-0078  
[kuhnatlarge@masoncity.net](mailto:kuhnatlarge@masoncity.net)

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

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

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

## 2012 City Council Goals

The City Council outlined their vision for the community with the development of goals and priorities. The list below represents the goals of the Council for 2012.

### GOALS

- ✓ Maintain Fund Balances per City Financial Policies and Current Bond Rating
- ✓ Develop Sustainability Plan that Links to the Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Increase Population by the State of Iowa Average
- ✓ Become a Healthy Community Utilizing the Blue Zone Model
- ✓ Commitment to Excellence in Government Services
- ✓ Increase Commercial and Municipal Energy Development

For a complete list of the priorities, visit [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net) and click on Mayor and City Council under 'Your Government'.



As I focus on the upcoming spring/summer programs I can't overlook applauding where we have come.

2011 provided Mason City with over 7,400 hours of volunteer service. Numbers vary between what the national average and Iowa average suggests the worth of a volunteer's hours. Conservatively, volunteers have saved our city over \$125,000 while providing amenities and aiding in keeping our city cleaner for us and visitors.

We currently have eight regular programs and last year, 89 projects were performed ranging from flower beds, litter pick up, graffiti eradication and administrative projects including filing, mailings and data input to name a few. I challenge each citizen who has a few hours of time or may be trying to find a new purpose in life, to contact me to discuss how they might find volunteer opportunities a meaningful way to give back to the community, meet some new friends along the way and enjoy a sense of purpose that volunteerism provides.

April 21 kicks off Earth Day with our City Wide Community Clean Up beginning the Adopt a Street and Adopt A Lot programs. We encourage businesses, civic organizations, family groups or individuals to help spruce up our city after the winter months.

Park Watch is a great program that assists in encouraging positive usage of the parks and curbing vandalism and graffiti. The program partners volunteers aiding the police department patrolling our city parks.

In late May you will notice the Beautification program will be planting flower beds throughout the city. They will have spent early spring designing the beds and will continue to maintain beds throughout the summer months.

If you would like to be a part of these or other volunteer projects contact Angela Determan at City Hall 421.3372 or [adeterman@masoncity.net](mailto:adeterman@masoncity.net).

## 2409 is Here!

The Fire Department's new ambulance was driven into Fire Headquarters in February! When outfitted with radios, it will be used for hospital transfers during the break-in period. Soon enough it will be responding to 911 calls in the City. Watch [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net) for more pictures and the official wetting of 2409 into service.



The demonstration project funded by the Mason City Youth Task Force

through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is in full swing! The Mason City Police Department will be conducting waves of enforcement of underage drinking laws from April 14 through July 14, in August and during Homecoming, including alcohol compliance checks, party patrols, and walk-through of bars and motels.

Targets of the enforcement effort are high school and college age persons violating alcohol laws and people of legal age who supply alcohol to minors.

The Cerro Gordo County Sheriff and Clear Lake Police Departments are also participating in the project.

## 'America's Night Out Against Crime'

Neighborhoods are invited to join forces on Tuesday, August 7 for the 29th Annual National Night Out Crime and Drug Prevention Event at 5:00 p.m. in East Park. Sponsors are the National Association of Town Watch, Target Stores, the Mason City Police Department and the Community Policing Advisory Board. This event is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anti-crime efforts, and strengthen neighborhood spirit and community partnerships sending a message to criminals that neighborhoods are watching and fighting back.

Turn on your porch lights and join your neighbors for a free "family affair" at East Park on August 7.

**CODERED**



With the spring and summer weather season just around the corner, residents are encouraged to sign up for CodeRED Weather Warning. This unique service automatically calls affected citizens in the path of severe weather just moments after a warning has been issued by the National Weather Service. The service is available to citizens in Cerro Gordo County at no direct cost. TO REGISTER: Log onto [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net) for more information.

## Gravestone Preservation Days at Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery

Elmwood-St. Joseph's History Walk and Adopt a Section program have raised awareness of the City's heritage contained within the cemetery. People participating in these activities have noticed some of the older headstones, mausoleums and features need cleaning, straightening and/or repair.

Cemetery staff and volunteers are taking action toward the preservation and restoration of gravestones in the original sections of the cemetery. Training materials, equipment and supplies were purchased with some of the funds raised at last year's history walk. Volunteer Jo Beck and Manager Randy Opheim attended a workshop and learned hands-on training from Jonathan Appell, a nationally known monument conservator.

The first Gravestone Preservation Day is planned to train people interested in preserving and restoring gravestones of the city's forefathers. Two sessions on cleaning and straightening stones will be held on June 22nd and June 23rd, 9 a.m. to noon. With proper training and supplies, the tasks are easy and produce dramatic improvements. A session will be held Friday afternoon from 1 to 3 p.m. repairing broken gravestones and cleaning and joining the broken pieces with special bonders. Donations will be accepted to cover the cost of supplies.

Join us in preserving an important part of Mason City's heritage and explore the history that abounds within the City's cemetery grounds.

## Cemetery Sentry Volunteers Needed

Amazing results were achieved by Elmwood-St. Joseph's Sentry program last year - a 50% reduction of items missing from gravesites, thanks to a number of volunteers keeping a careful watch over the grounds. The goal of staff is to reduce the number of missing items in half again this year. Citizens are encouraged to volunteer for this important endeavor - spending quiet time in our beautiful cemetery is enjoyable and relaxing while watching for suspicious activity. Initial training is required so please sign up now by contacting Volunteer Coordinator Angie Determan at (641) 421-3372 or [adeterman@masoncity.net](mailto:adeterman@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



**Billy Kammeyer** previously worked as a Custodian for the MacNider Art Museum for 5 years and most recently at NIACC in the maintenance department. He returned to City employment as a Custodian at the Mason City Public Library and was recently promoted to Building Superintendent.



**Amy Isaacson** was hired as a Fire Fighter/Paramedic. Originally from Minnesota, Amy completed an Associate's Degree in Paramedicine. She has been working in the emergency services field since 2004 and was employed with Mercy Air Med in Mason City.



**Tyson Anderson** is a graduate of Newman High School and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources. He attended Bemidji State University earning an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice and attended the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. He worked for the City of Manly before joining the Mason City Police Department.



**Craig Budach** joined the Finance Department as Intermediate Accounting Clerk. He is a graduate of Lake Mills High School and completed his Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Buena Vista University.



**Riley Onofrio** joined the Mason City Fire Department as a Fire Fighter/Paramedic. He completed the requirements to become an EMT-B at DMACC, and went onto Mercy College of Health Sciences to attain his certification as a Paramedic Specialist. Before joining the MCFD, he was employed by Bondurant Emergency Services and Dallas County EMS.

### MCPD Officer Chosen for 2011 Espeland Award

The Tim Espeland Award recognizes a Police Department employee seeking to improve themselves while displaying a strong work ethic, integrity and commitment to others above self. Tim Espeland's life was cut short by an acute illness, but despite his sudden terminal diagnosis, Tim's courage, positive demeanor, professionalism, and dedication to others remained strong until the end. Congratulations to the 2011 recipient of the Tim Espeland Award, **Officer Rick Ott**.

### Retirements

**Linda Johnston** retired from the MacNider Art Museum where she was employed for over 15 years! She started working part-time as a Receptionist until the position became full-time and became a staple with a great smile and friendly welcome. We wish her all the best in the coming years. Congratulations!

### Saints Shuttle Begins Service to Iowa City

The Region 2 Transit and United Way of North Central Iowa have developed a transportation service between Mason City and the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. Every Wednesday and Thursday, a bus will leave the North Iowa Joint Transit Facility (525 6th Street SW in Mason City) at 6:00 a.m. The cost is \$20 per person round trip. The service is open to the general public and is wheelchair accessible. **Reservations must be made in advance.** For more information, contact the Region 2 Transit office at (641) 423-2262.

## Calendar of Events

### APRIL 2012

- 1 Winter decorations must be from Cemetery
- 2 Yard Waste Season begins
- 3 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 3 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4 Sanitation Make-Up Day for April 6
- 5 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 5 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 6 City offices closed
- 6 *Cerro Gordo Photo Show Entry* deadline, 5 p.m. at Museum
- 7 MC Little League Registration at Hy-Vee, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 9 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 10 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 11 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 11 Iowa Poet Laureate Mary Swander reading and program, 6:30 p.m., Mason City Room, Public Library
- 12 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 13 *A Prayer for the Earth* exhibit opens, 5 p.m. at Museum
- 17 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 17 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 17 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19 MacNider Museum Kids' Club Art of the Move, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 21 18th Annual Earth Day Festival, East Park, 10 a.m.-12 noon
- 23 Registration deadline for T-ball
- 24 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 26 *Coyote Sings* free puppet show, 7 p.m. at Museum
- 26 Cemetery Adopt-A-Section spring kickoff meeting
- 28 School Art Exhibition *Awesome Art* closes, Museum

### MAY 2012

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 1 Outdoor Art Market Call for Entries deadline, 5 p.m. at Museum
- 3 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 4 Last day to purchase discounted pool passes
- 5 457 Cannonball Season Opening, East Park, 1-5 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.
- 11 *Cerro Gordo Photo Show* opens, 9 a.m. at Museum
- 12 Minnesota Twins clinic, Recreation
- 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.
- 17 *Cerro Gordo Photo Show* reception, 6 p.m. at Museum
- 19 MacNider Museum Kids' Club Trastastic Float, 10 a.m.-12 noon
- 22 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 24-29 Band Festival weekend
- 28 City offices closed
- 28 Memorial Day ceremony at Elmwood Cemetery
- 30 Sanitation make-up day for May 28

### JUNE 2012

- 2 River City Fishing Derby at East Park, 1-3 p.m.
- 5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 7 Human Rights Commission, 12 noon
- 7 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 9 MacNider Arts Festival, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Museum
- 10 Memorial Day decorations must be removed from Cemetery
- 11 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 12 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 13 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 14 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 19 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 19 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 19 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 22-23 Gravestone preservation days at Cemetery
- 23 *A Prayer for the Earth* exhibit closes, 5 p.m. at Museum
- 26 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 30 7th Annual Cannonball Day, East Park

### JULY 2012

- 3 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 3 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4 City offices closed
- 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 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 12 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 17 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 17 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 17 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 24 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 5 p.m.
- 27-28 Up in Smoke BBQ Bash, East Park

### PURCHASE PLOTS AND SAVE

Memorial Day season is a good time to purchase your family plots at Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery. During the months of May and June discounts will be available. Call for details at (641) 421-3687. No-interest payment plans are also available.

**Beautiful silk flower bouquets and quality permanent vases are available through the Cemetery office.**