

NEW FACES



Sarah During started with the City of Mason City on September 21, 2015 as a Human Resources Assistant. She has an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Hamilton College and experience in the background screening industry. Welcome aboard!



Nathan Kremer joined the Mason City Fire Department on November 4, 2015 as a Firefighter. Nathan was previously a Volunteer Firefighter for Gilbertville Fire & Rescue and Evansdale Fire & Rescue. We are happy you have joined us!



Eric Maki joined the Mason City Fire Department on November 4, 2015 as a Firefighter. Eric was previously employed as a Firefighter for the City of Chaska, Minnesota. Congratulations!



Alex Mariner joined the City of Mason City on October 21, 2015 as a Refuse Collector. Alex is a graduate of Mason City High School. We are happy you have joined us!



Dean Pruisman started with the City of Mason City on September 23, 2015 as a part-time Transit Driver. Dean brings 28 years of driving experience with him. Welcome aboard!



Jeff Watermilller was recently hired as the Utility Person for the Police Department on October 15, 2015. Jeff brings with him 18 years of experience from Mercy Medical Center of North Iowa. Congratulations!



Walker Wilson joined the Mason City Fire Department on November 4, 2015 as a Firefighter. Walker was previously a Volunteer Firefighter for the City of Clear Lake. Welcome aboard!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2016

- 1 MacNider Museum closed
- 1 City offices closed (New Year's Day)
- 4 Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 9 Iowa Crafts:42 closes, MacNider Art Museum
- 11 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 12 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 13 Holiday tree pick-up by Sanitation Division
- 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.
- 21 City Council Budget Meeting, 6 p.m.
- 22 Dean Schwarz Exhibition opens, MacNider Art Museum
- 28 City Council Budget Meeting, 6 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2016

- 1 Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 2 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 2 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 4 City Council Budget Meeting, 6 p.m.
- 7 MacNider Museum Film Series Begins: Twenty Feet from Stardom, 2 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.
- 13 Area Show: 44 Best in Show Award Winner closes, MacNider Art Museum
- 15 City offices closed (President's Day)
- 16 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 16 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 16 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 17 Sanitation Make-up Day for February 16
- 26 School Art Exhibition: High School opens, MacNider Art Museum
- 27 Volunteer Tree Pruning & Maintenance event at Gerk Arboretum, 11 a.m.

MARCH 2016

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 7 Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Commission, 4:15 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.
- 13 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 14 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 14-18 Spring Break Art Camp, MacNider Art Museum
- 15 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 15 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 15 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19 School Art Exhibition: High School reception, MacNider Art Museum
- 23 Sanitation make-up day for March 25
- 25 City offices closed

APRIL 2016

- 1 Winter decorations must be removed from Cemetery
- 2 Dean Schwarz Exhibition closes, MacNider Art Museum
- 4 Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 7 Puppet Show 'Peter and the Wolf' at 11 am, & 1 and 6 pm, MacNider Art Museum
- 7 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 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.
- 15 Oaxacan Wood Carvings: Exhibition opens, MacNider Art Museum
- 19 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 19 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 19 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 23 School Art Exhibition: High School closes, MacNider Art Museum

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

2016 CITY HOLIDAYS (OFFICES CLOSED)

- New Year's, Friday, January 1
- President's Day, Monday, February 15
- Good Friday, Friday, March 25
- Memorial Day, Monday, May 30
- Independence Day, Monday, July 4
- Labor Day, Monday, September 5
- Veteran's Day, Friday, November 11
- Thanksgiving Holiday, Thursday & Friday, November 24 & 25
- Christmas Day, Monday, December 26

SANITATION MAKE-UP DAY

- Wednesday, December 30, 2015
- Wednesday, February 17
- Wednesday, March 23
- Wednesday, June 1
- Wednesday, July 6
- Wednesday, September 7
- Wednesday, November 9
- Wednesday, November 23
- Wednesday, December 28

RIVER CITY NEWS

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, WINTER 2015

SERVICE LINE WARRANTY PROGRAM

Buried deep underground, water and sewer lines remain out of sight and out of mind...until there is a problem. Many homeowners are unaware of their responsibilities for the service lines that run between the point of the utility connection and the home. Moreover, citizens are under the impression that these lines rarely fail and if they did, the city or utility would perform, and cover the cost of, any needed repairs.

The goal of the Service Line Warranty Program is to work with the National League of Cities to address a critical issue on which both organizations were aligned: aging infrastructure. While efforts were underway to address that need at the larger city level, there is a need to help communities educate their residents about their responsibilities for the private water and sewer lines on their property while also providing an affordable solution to address the high cost of service line repairs.

After 12 years, more than 270 partners around North America offer external water, external sewer and in-home plumbing warranty protection programs to their communities through the National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program, and to date, more than 100,000 homeowners have saved over \$64 million in repair costs through the program.

A reminder to Mason City residents who plan to sign up for the Service Line Warranty Program: the City does not collect payment for the service through Service Line Warranty Program. Contact Service Line Warranty staff directly at (855) 535-7141 or visit www.slwofa.com for more information or to enroll in the program.

NEW WARD 3 COUNCIL MEMBER



Brett Schoneman, 37, lives in Mason City with his wife, Hollie, teacher at Hoover Elementary, and two children of 3 and 2 years. He is the broker of Schoneman Realtors in Mason City. Brett has been on the front lines of economic development as a commercial real estate broker and developer and enjoys being the first impression that businesses and relocating homeowners experience when they visit Mason City.

"I deliberately chose to move to North Iowa in 2003, and I settled in Mason City. The choices were very dear to me with all that this city has to offer. North Iowa is big enough to give my family and I opportunities, while being small enough that I spend my time building forts in my living room instead of in rush hour traffic. The next generation of workers are looking for the community that puts emphasis on both parts of the work/life balance, and I think that Mason City has an upper hand in this new market."

Brett enjoys his work almost too much, but between deals he loves to golf, fish, travel to look at buildings, and eat in little local favorite joints. Locally, Brett stays involved in his past life of music performance playing in a local band with his best friends.

A big thank you to outgoing Councilmember Jean Marinos who served on the Mason City City Council for the past four years. Prior to serving as a Councilmember, Jean served as the Mayor of Mason City for three years. Along with serving on the Council, Jean has been involved in many activities and organizations throughout the community. Thank you, Jean, for your service to the community!



Daylight Saving Time begins on **SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016.** Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour at 2:00 a.m. on **March 13.**

INSIDE THIS EDITION:

- Service Line Warranty Program 1
- New Ward 3 Council Member 1
- Urban Rev. Tax Abatement Program 2
- Police Lt. Award 2
- Lt. Col. Brent Trout Retires 2
- Engineering Projects Update 2
- Volunteer Mason City 3
- Ideas for New Year's Resolutions 3
- Elmwood Cemetery's West Entrance 3
- iJAG Park & Rec Program 3
- New Faces 4
- Calendar of Events 4
- Notes of Interest 4

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

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."

RETIREMENTS **Dennis Mihm** retired on December 29, 2015. Dennis served as the Operations Coordinator at the Airport and worked for the City of Mason City for 25 years. Thank you for all of your years to the City!

Chief Michael Lashbrook retired December 31, 2015. Chief Lashbrook has been the Police Chief in Mason City for 9 years. Thank you for your years of service!

NOTES OF INTEREST

Coming again to the museum near you! The MacNider Art Museum will be hosting 'Films in February' and 'Movies in March' in 2016! Watch for dates, times and independent movie titles coming soon!

The winter/spring class schedule of the MacNider Art Museum is now available! The complete list of classes for children, teens, and adults can be found on the museum's website at www.macniderart.org. Or stop by the museum and pick up a schedule.

The MacNider Art Museum will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2016. Watch for information on upcoming events and ways you participate in the celebration!

The Friends of the Public Library will host 'Winter Reading Bingo', a popular reading program for adults January through March 2016. Interested participants are encouraged to sign up at the Commons Desk at the Public Library.

2016 Friends of the Library Geranium Sale pre-orders will be accepted beginning January 1, 2016 and continue through March 31, 2016. Pre-orders must be paid in full at the time of submission.

URBAN REVITALIZATION TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAM – EASING THE TAX “STING” OF MAKING PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

Most homeowners and business property owners who improved their properties in 2015 can take advantage of Mason City’s Urban Revitalization Tax Abatement program. Properties may be eligible for tax abatement based on increased property valuations and if the properties are located within specific zoning districts, commercial corridors or qualifying neighborhoods within the community.

The following is a list of the properties that may be eligible for the tax abatement program:

- Single family or two-family home
- New construction
- Historic Homes (50 or more years old) or homes that can be considered blighted
- Assisted living multi-residential projects (senior care, independent living, nursing homes, group homes, etc.)
- Traditional multi-family dwellings (apartments, rooming houses, etc.)
- Owners of multi-residential structures (three or more dwelling units in a building, other than condominium units, with at least 75% of the building’s floor area dedicated to residential use)
- Condominium unit (improvements to the main dwelling structure as well as to detached outbuildings, such as a garage)
- Business owners/commercial property

Property owners are asked to contact the Development Services Department if there are questions about the zoning district of your property, to determine if your project is located in an eligible area, neighborhood or corridor

If you have completed property improvements during 2015 and would like to apply for the Urban Revitalization Tax Abatement, please request the program application from the Development Services Department, third floor of City Hall, or download the form from www.masoncity.net.

The completed form must be received by 4:30 PM on February 1, 2016. The City Assessor will notify you if your project qualifies for the tax abatement.

Questions? Please contact the Development Services Department at 421-3626.

ENGINEERING DEPT PROJECTS UPDATE

Staff is currently surveying locations and preparing cost estimates for several 2016 projects. Following the selection of project locations and data collection, project plans and specifications will be assembled for spring bidding. Planned projects include: Street Rehabilitation, Street Panel & Curb Replacement and Sidewalk Replacement.

The Street Rehabilitation Program will target sections of roadway throughout the city that are showing signs of deterioration. This program typically includes the repair or reconstruction of underground utilities including water, and sanitary and storm sewer structures. Then the street pavement is replaced and the existing street is then milled and overlain with Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) material.

The Street Panel & Curb Replacement Program takes place at various locations throughout the city. The purpose of the

program is to identify severely damaged or deteriorating street pavement. The damaged pavement material is removed and replaced to extend the longevity of the street.

The Sidewalk Program focuses on areas that have deteriorating sidewalks. This is a cooperative program between the city and the residents within the sidewalk program area, for the purpose of improving pedestrian travel in the neighborhoods.

All of the programs include pedestrian sidewalk ramp replacement and the installation of detectable warning panels. The improvements, adjustments and modifications are required to meet ADA compliance which provides for a safer transition from the sidewalk to the pedestrian street crossing.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

At-Large: Bill Schickel
(641) 512-4502
schickelatlarge@masoncity.net

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

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

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

Third Ward: Jean Marinos
(641) 201-0002 (Until December 31, 2015)
marinoswardthree@masoncity.net

Brett Schoneman
(641) 423-0500 (Effective January 1, 2016)
schonemanwardthree@masoncity.net

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

*Council Member Kuhn serves as the Mayor Pro Tem

AWARD PRESENTED TO MC POLICE LIEUTENANT

Congratulations to Mason City Police Lieutenant Ron Vande Weerd for receiving the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy’s 5-Star Innovation Leadership Award. Lieutenant Vande Weerd accomplished the necessary requirements in 5 of the individual sessions that qualified him to receive this award which provides leadership concepts for the advancement of innovational strategies to meet organizational transformation.

This award was presented to Lieutenant Vande Weerd at a City Council meeting in October.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRENT TROUT RETIRES

Lieutenant Colonel Brent D. Trout completed his last service in the military at Camp Dodge in Johnston, IA, November 8, 2015, with a military retirement ceremony. Trout was honored for serving our country 29 years in the Iowa Army National Guard. This included 2 active duty deployment tours, including Saudi Arabia for Desert Storm and in 2004 in support of military operations in Iraq.

LTC Trout was then assigned to the 67th Troop Command as the Assistant S4 until January of 2002 when he was assigned to the 185th Combat Support Battalion as the Executive Officer. While assigned as the Executive Officer, Trout deployed to Al Taji, Iraq, from November 2003 through February 2005. He became the Commander of the Joint Forces Headquarters in August 2011 and held that position until February of 2014. In March of 2014 he was assigned as the Operations Officer for the 734th Regional Support Group until his retirement.



From 1987...

To Present

Thank you for your 29-year career serving our country.

His first assignment was as a platoon leader in the 1034th Supply and Service Company. In November of 1990 his unit was mobilized to support the Desert Storm Operation for six months. In the fall of 1993, he assumed command of the 1034th Quartermaster Company.



Mason City Alternative High School Students plant trees



Local youth plant a tree & learn about the importance of trees & maintenance

This past season has seen so many hardworking and dedicated volunteers! Our community has benefitted from special projects like tree distribution and tree planting to assisting with special events at the various City organizations.

Park Watch patrols assist in encouraging positive usage of the city parks and curb vandalism by aiding the Police Department in patrolling our parks. Adopt-A-Street sponsors have been busy keeping our streets and ditches litter free and student organizations have lent helping hands to our parks. And we had a wonderful growing season with the Beautification program! Volunteers planted and maintained flower beds throughout the community providing vibrant scenery to our parks, streets and attractions.

Upcoming in the spring of 2016, a wide array of volunteer opportunities are available for citizens of all ages and interests. A volunteer tree pruning and maintenance event will be held on Saturday, February 27 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Art Gerk

Arboretum by Georgia Hanford Park. Volunteers are encouraged to participate! Also coming up is the annual Earth Day city wide clean up in April, Adopt-A-Street, Lot and Section programs kick off when the snow melts, the Beautification program will be planting flower beds in May and many other opportunities.

We are always looking for volunteers that want to donate their time and talents to make a difference in the community.

If you are interested, contact Volunteer Service Coordinator Drew Versteegen at (641) 421-3372 or volunteer@masoncity.net. Like the City of Mason City on Facebook for current City happenings and check out opportunities at www.masoncity.net.

All of us with the City organization sincerely appreciate the support, hard work, and dedication of our volunteers!

IDEAS FOR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS

Here are the **TOP 7 RESOLUTIONS** the Mason City Fire Dept wishes every citizen would make for 2016:

7. Resolve to be fire safe during the holiday season by checking out safety tips on the Fire Department’s webpage (www.masoncity.net – click on Your Government).
6. Resolve to never leave a candle unattended.
5. Resolve to properly dispose of all smoking materials.
4. Resolve to always stay in the kitchen when pots are on the stove.
3. Resolve to have and practice exit drills with your family.
2. Resolve to test your smoke alarms every month and change the batteries when you change clocks for daylight savings time.

And the **NUMBER 1** resolution the Fire Department wants everyone to make is - **Resolve to have a smoke alarm in every bedroom and on every level of the home.**

HERE’S TO A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!

SWIFTWATER SAFETY

Too many people have no idea of how to avoid dangers in moving water. Here are a few important clues from the Mason City Fire Department:

1. If you’re not prepared, STAY OUT! Even two feet of moving water over a road can sweep cars (and you!) away. Always wear your PFD (personal flotation device) and stay alert.

2. GO FEET FIRST. If you’re floating free downstream, keeping your feet in front of you (face up) can protect you from rocks, sticks and other obstacles.

3. WATCH OUT branches, rocks & bridge posts. If you get pinned against one, you may become a permanent fixture. You can drown in as little as 12” of water if pinned against a tree.

4. KNOW THE AREA. Scouting a river before floating it will help you avoid surprise dangers.



5. LET SOMEONE KNOW WHERE YOU ARE AND DON’T GO ALONE.

6. LET SOMEONE KNOW WHEN YOU COME HOME. You could save 50 guys (and gals) from needlessly leaving dinner (or work or dates or their oh-so-comfortable beds).

IMPROVEMENTS TO ELMWOOD CEMETERY’S WEST ENTRANCE

The City continues to beautify the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery by improving the entrance at Monroe Avenue. New decorative iron fencing and two ten foot gates were installed this fall. Concrete block retaining walls on each side of the entrance enhances the approach into the cemetery. This spring landscaping will be added between the fencing and the retaining wall. The entrance’s deteriorating asphalt street was replaced with new concrete paving with curbing to properly channel the rain water. This beautiful upgrade to the entrance also adds to the security and serenity of the grounds.



Do you want to get away from the cold, snowy winter weather for a warm weather retreat?
Look no further – Fly MCW! Contact Air Choice One at the Mason City Municipal Airport to book your flight to warmer weather during the winter/spring months!
Visit flymcw.com or call (866) 435-9847 to book your flight!

iJAG PARK & REC PROGRAM (IOWA JOBS FOR AMERICA’S GRADUATES)



City staff provided technical assistance to the Mason City High School iJAG program to plan, design, fundraise and build a park on vacant buyout lots in the Meadowbrook neighborhood. The project, called iJAG Park and Rec, will require students to collaborate

with each other, city officials, landscape experts, and the residents of the neighborhood. Staff members include Recreation Director Brian Pauly, Jack Leaman, actively retired City Planner/Landscape Architect, Planning and Zoning Manager Tricia Sandahl and Operations & Maintenance personnel.

iJAG is a graduation, leadership, and success class that helps students have a connection to school and prepare for their next step following graduation. Students learn more about themselves, why people are successful, the importance of giving back to the community, employability skills, the possibilities that exist in the community for them, and much more. The iJAG program is piloted by teachers Eva Gutierrez and Jeremy White. Mason City High’s iJAG program serves 90 students in grades 9-12.