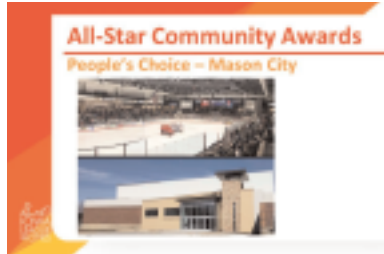


River City News



MASON CITY RECOGNIZED AS A 'PEOPLE'S ALL-STAR COMMUNITY'



Mason City's 'River City Renaissance-Mason City Arena' project was voted as the People's All-Star Award winner for 2020 sponsored by the Iowa League of Cities. This award seeks to acknowledge and encourage excellence in local government and provides an opportunity for officials and staff of member cities to receive recognition for their superior and innovative efforts. In addition, the program provides a means for sharing Iowa's best public service ideas and demonstrates that those involved with local government are progressive, caring and committed to their communities.

The People's All-Star Community competition involved a bracket-style tournament for public voting posted on the League's Facebook page. Community projects with the most 'likes' moved on to the next round and continued until the final round. Mason City was named the winner of the final round, having received the most 'likes'.

The 'River City Renaissance-Mason City Arena' application focused on the project as a perfect example of repurposing an anchor store in the downtown Southbridge Mall into a sports and entertainment destination that is creating a revitalization of the mall and downtown as a whole.

At the time of publication of this newsletter, all public meetings are being held virtually to abide by social distancing guidelines. For details, visit the City of Mason City's website at www.masoncity.net and click on the 'City Meetings' icon on the home page or call 641-421-3600. City Council meetings are aired live on the Education-Government Channel (Mediacom Cable Channel 117-2) and on the City's Live Stream page under the 'Government' heading, select 'Streaming Council Meetings'. Archives of previous meetings are also located on this page.

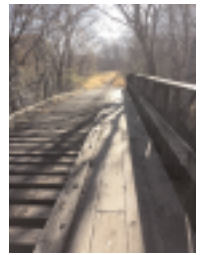
Some programs, events and City facility operating hours may be impacted by COVID-19 precautions. Please check with the individual departments for up to date information.

SPECIAL PROJECTS AND AMENITIES

City staff continually strives to provide excellent service to citizens while at the same time enhancing the amenities available in the community. Many special projects above and beyond the daily service delivery go unnoticed and should be recognized. One of these highlighted projects is the High Line Trail which will expand biking/walking/exercise options through the community.



High Line Trail being prepped for summer/fall 2021 construction



The City received a Land Water and Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant with a 50/50 match requirement in the amount of \$130,008. With the City match, utilizing LOST funds, a \$260,016 High Line Trail project is being prepared for summer/fall construction. The City has also received donations from local businesses to be used in the development of the project. The initial phase of the project limits begin at 1st Street SE and terminate at 4th Street NE. The trail project involves improvements of the abandoned UPRR corridor which was previously purchased from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. In addition to grading and trail construction materials, two existing bridges will be modified to accept the trail, then fitted with fencing for the safety of the pedestrians using the trail. The City is actively seeking additional funding to expand the trail project.



OTHER RECENT PROJECTS STAFF IS WORKING ON OR HAS COMPLETED INCLUDE:

- *Bicycle and pedestrian trail maintenance program repairing asphalt surfaces to provide a safe trail for users
- *Amenities for the parks including the 'zipline' feature installation near Prairie Playground, restroom updating, sports/soccer complex, and many other recreational enhancements
- *Aquatic Center improvements retrofitting recreational play areas and floor coating to provide a safe experience for patrons
- *MacNider Campground site hookups upgrade and concrete pad installation
- *Remote control slope viaduct mower to maintain viaducts in a safe manner
- *12th Street NW road reconstruction project and the bridge replacement near Taft Avenue

River City News

Suggestions and comments are always welcome.

Please contact:

City Administrator's office
10 1st Street NW, Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 423-5369 (phone)
(641) 424-7189 (fax)
cityinformation@masoncity.net



Get connected – stay connected!

Follow the City departments on social media.
Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Twitter
for the latest information about road closures, events, and other news.



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 FIRE DEPARTMENT TRUCK PUSH-IN – READY FOR SERVICE!



Traditional 'Push In' Ceremony

The Mason City Fire Department received the new Pierce Impel fire engine, Engine 2316, mid-September. After a month and a half of outfitting new radios and electronic equipment, new firefighting tools and hoses, and training personnel on driving and pumping with the new apparatus, the traditional "Push In" ceremony was held on October 23. The new engine has a unique fire pump design that provides the ability to move the apparatus without disengaging the fire pump. Also new for this apparatus is a 360 degree camera system that records emergency scenes, 100% LED emergency lighting, and battery powered extrication and firefighting tools. Engine 2316 is ready to serve the community for years to come!



New Engine 2316 ready for service

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

Most home and business property owners who complete improvements to their homes or buildings in 2020 can take advantage of Mason City's Urban Revitalization Tax Abatement program. Owners of a single family or two-family home can receive a 5-year, 100% abatement on the increase in taxes resulting from building improvements that increase the assessed value of the property by 10% or more; some limitations apply. To be eligible, the property must be located in the Z2, Z3 or Z5 zoning districts.

Owners of multi-residential structures (three or more rental dwelling units in a building) and business structures can also take advantage of this program. The project must result in 10% increase in value for senior housing projects, or 15% for traditional multi-residential projects. Improvements to business properties must raise the assessed value by at least 15%. Qualified projects can choose one of two tax abatement schedules: a 3-year, 100% abatement on the increased taxes, or a 10-year, declining scale abatement (80% of the increased taxes in year one, 70% in year two, and so on). This program applies to multi-residential projects in the Z2, Z3, and Z5 zoning districts, and to businesses in the commercial corridors on North and South Federal Avenues, portions of the commercial areas on IA 122 - 4TH Street SW, and other older commercial neighborhoods.

Contact the Development Services Department at (641) 421-3626 to see if your project is in a qualifying neighborhood, or if you have any other questions. If you have completed property improvements during 2020 and would like to apply for the Urban Revitalization Tax Abatement program, request an application from the Development Services Department, third floor of City Hall, or download the form from www.masoncity.net. Not all improvement projects will qualify, but most will; there is no cost to apply. The deadline for submitting the application is by 4:30 PM on Monday, February 1, 2021. The City Assessor will notify you if your project qualifies for the tax abatement.

CITY COUNCIL SETS PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW YEAR

The Mayor and City Council members held a goal setting session on October 14 to review and designate priorities for the community for the year 2021. Recent accomplishments, issues/concern/trends/opportunities and potential new initiatives/programs/policies were discussed in preparation for identifying the priorities for 2021.

A total of six main priorities were approved and outlined following the discussion. Following is a list of the priorities with the description outlined in no particular order:

A) Continue Blight Enforcement & Infill Development

1. More progress on blighted properties
2. Increase code compliance on nuisance abatements
3. Improvements to the North and South entry points into the city
4. Improvements to South Port
5. Implement housing study once completed
6. Communicate to the public accomplishments in this area

B) Infrastructure Improvements

1. Begin implementation in a stage approached traffic improvements along Highway 122 – e.g., turning lanes, signage, lighting, beautification, etc.

C) Complete River City Renaissance Project

1. Construction of Hotel
2. Construction of Pavilion

D) Willow Creek

1. Obtain grant for Riverwalk
2. Prepare for physical development
3. Design public improvements
4. Begin construction of public improvements
5. Attract private investment

E) Initiate Additional Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

1. Improve bike trail system
2. Complete High Line trail
3. Develop ways to utilize the Winnebago River
4. Repairs to existing trail system

F) Support and Coordinate Branding and Marketing of MC

ALTERNATE SIDE PARKING NOTIFICATIONS

When Mason City gets 2-3" or more of snow, the Alternate Side Parking Ordinance and Emergency Snow Route will go into effect. There are several ways to know when the Alternate Side Parking Ordinance/Emergency Snow Route are in effect.

*Call the hotline (641) 424-7188

*Follow the City's Facebook page ([CityOfMasonCity](https://www.facebook.com/CityOfMasonCity)) and Twitter ([@masoncityiowa](https://twitter.com/masoncityiowa))

*Subscribe to **CodeRED** to receive notifications

*Tune in to local media outlets

*Visit www.masoncity.net. The 'Alert' at the top of the page will be highlighted if it is enforced

It's not too late to sign up to receive **CodeRED** calls or notifications informing residents when the Alternate Side Parking and Emergency Snow Route are in effect. Visit the 'Sign up for Alert Notifications' page under 'How Do I' heading at www.masoncity.net. Create an account that you can manage by entering your name, address, phone number and email (optional). You can also select the alert type and various weather warnings.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor: Bill Schickel
(641) 421-3600 (City Hall)
(641) 512-4502
bschickel@masoncity.net

At-Large: Paul Adams
(641) 525-0378
padams@masoncity.net

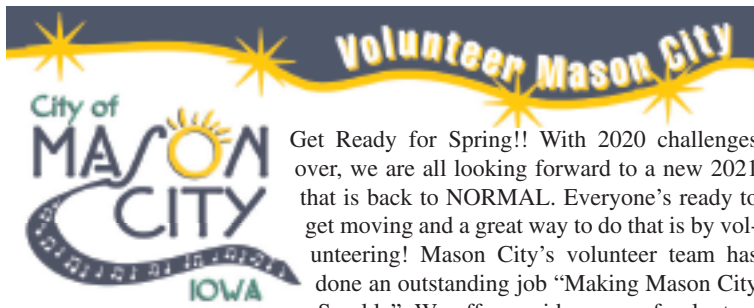
At-Large: Tom Thoma
(920) 412-6629
tthoma@masoncity.net

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

Second Ward: Will Symonds
(641) 512-0511
wsymonds@masoncity.net

Third Ward: Joshua Masson
(641) 420-4754
jmasson@masoncity.net

Fourth Ward: John Jaszewski
(641) 420-4055
jjaszewski@masoncity.net



Get Ready for Spring!! With 2020 challenges over, we are all looking forward to a new 2021 that is back to NORMAL. Everyone's ready to get moving and a great way to do that is by volunteering! Mason City's volunteer team has done an outstanding job "Making Mason City Sparkle". We offer a wide range of volunteer

opportunities for people to become involved. The best ways to make things happen is by everyone working as a **team**. The City's Volunteer Program is very unique - city departments team up with citizen volunteers to make projects and events happen that otherwise might not. There's a wide array of volunteer opportunities that can be done by an individual, family, business, or organization. Some are one time projects and others are ongoing, there are volunteer opportunities for all age groups. We have projects that can be done when you can fit them into your schedule or at specific times and days tailored just for you.

SOME PROGRAMS TO CHECK OUT ARE:

BEAUTIFICATION: design, plant and maintain a community flower bed - there are all sizes and locations around town available to adopt. Funds are available to assist in the purchase of planting. You design the bed, pick out the plants and maintain the garden for the season.

LITTER CLEAN UP TEAMS: the annual city-wide litter cleanup event is held in the spring which coincides with Earth Day. The Earth Day Committee will be gearing up for another successful Earth Day event which entails a few weeks of cleanup along with a festival sponsored by the Earth Day Committee.

VISION BRINGS NEW FOUNTAIN TO EAST PARK

Devoted Mason City volunteers Miles Duck and Les Batton are well-known for their meticulous care of the flower beds in East Park. But their commitment to the beautification of this park did not stop there. They had a larger vision for the duck pond area on the east section of the park - a replacement water fountain in the pond. The dynamic duo initiated this endeavor by visiting a landscape company in Des Moines to develop a plan, getting an idea of the type of fountain to best suit the pond. Once the plans were set, Miles and Les submitted the proposal including the cost to obtain and install the new fountain to Operation & Maintenance Manager Bill Stangler, Park Superintendent Bob Berggren and the Park Board, with unanimous approval.

Miles and Les spearheaded a fundraising campaign, which raised enough funding to purchase this fountain as well as an additional fountain much smaller in size and price to be installed next summer closer to the island. All funding for these beautiful additions to the pond in East Park was raised through donations and grants.

Thank you to the dedication of Miles and Les for turning this dream into a reality and continuing to beautify this picturesque park!



MASON CITY ARENA PROJECT RECEIVES IACMA'S PROGRAM OF THE YEAR AWARD



The Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA) presented Mason City with The Program of the Year award for 'Mason City's River City Renaissance Project – Mason City Arena'. This annual awards program honors creative contributions to professional local government management and increases public awareness of the value of professional management to the quality of life in our communities. The Program of the Year Award is presented to a local government and its chief administrator in recognition of an innovative and successful program.

The award application narrative demonstrated how a specific service delivery challenge was met by implementing the program nominated. It also included problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the program and tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program as well as lessons learned during planning, implementation, and analysis of the program.

The Mason City Arena is a shining example of a successful collaboration involving community partnerships, creative thinking, and support from citizens. Long term, the arena will have a significant impact on not only Mason City but North Central Iowa by offering a unique element that is transforming the downtown mall and providing an economic impact to benefit both downtown businesses and the entire region.



North Iowa Bulls Hockey Score! photo courtesy of Main Street Mason City



Crowds cheer on the North Iowa Bulls Hockey Team; photo courtesy of Visit Mason City



South entrance to the Mason City Arena; photo courtesy of Visit Mason City

The Festival will be held on a Saturday in April, date to be announced. We hope to have a huge turn out with a record number of teams participating. Volunteer teams are encouraged to sign up and attend the festival which will feature games, crafts, and activities for kids and families. Contact me for more information about the event or to volunteer to adopt an area. There are volunteer openings on our Earth Day Committee-please give it a try. It's a great way to give back to Mother Nature!

ADOPT-A-LOT/ADOPT-A-STREET OR ADOPT-A-SECTION: help remove litter from assigned areas or care for a section in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery. This can be a rewarding experience to honor persons buried in our city's cemetery.

PARK WATCH: patrol our parks and encourage positive usage of our parks while curbing vandalism and graffiti.

Mason City has an outstanding **TEAM** of volunteers and there's always room for more hands, ideas and friendships to make.

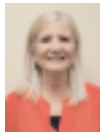
Volunteering is a great way to keep active, meet new friends and learn a new skill, and it gives many a sense of purpose that volunteerism provides.

With a **NEW YEAR**, what a great way to challenge yourself to step out of the box and try something new - it can be a onetime project or an ongoing experience. So this year come out and take the challenge to explore new things and help make Mason City Sparkle!!!

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." -Gandhi.

Please contact me: Mary Litterer, Volunteer Service Coordinator at **641-421-3372** or at volunteer@masoncity.net.

NEW FACES



Diane Yunek started with the City of Mason City on July 6, 2020 in the Finance Department as a Cashier. Welcome aboard!



Kory Meleney started with the City of Mason City on September 1, 2020 at the Mason City Public Library as a Custodian II. Thanks for joining our team!



Spencer Nash started with the City of Mason City on September 14, 2020 in the Fire Department as a Firefighter/EMT. We're glad you have joined the City!



Tina Meseck started with the City of Mason City on October 12, 2020 in the Development Services Department as the Administrative Specialist – Transit/Safety/Housing. Welcome!



Dawn Gourley started with the City of Mason City on October 22, 2020 at the Mason City Municipal Airport as an Administrative Assistant. Thank you for joining us!



Marcus Albrecht started with the City of Mason City on October 23, 2020 in the Operations & Maintenance Department as a Swing Worker. Welcome!

NOTES OF INTEREST

*The curbside yard waste collection season ends Friday, December 4, 2020. The yard waste season will resume on Monday, April 5, 2021. Both of these dates are weather permitting.

*Christmas trees will be collected on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Trees should be placed at the curbside prior to 7:00 am on that day and if the tree is over 6 feet tall, cut it in half before placing on curb. Tree stands, nails or metal fasteners, wire, tinsel, and plastic bags must be removed from the tree. Roping or wreaths that contain wire must be placed in regular garbage.

*Banish those winter blues by filling your day with color and art! The Charles H. MacNider Art Museum is open to the public with free admission on Tuesdays-Saturdays from 10am-5pm and open late on Thursdays until 8pm. You can register for a visit in advance by following the registration link on our website at macniderart.org or calling us at 641-421-3666. Masks are required, but we can provide one if needed. We also have a variety of classes for both adults and children as well as monthly Lunch 'n' Learn and Kids' Club events to get engaged in the creation of art. The most up-to-date details about our classes can be found on our website at macniderart.org. We hope to see you soon!

*The Friends of the Library Geranium plant sale will be held Friday and Saturday, April 30 and May 1, 2021. Pre-orders for geraniums are available from the Friends of the Library beginning January 15 and continuing through March 31. Order forms are available at the Public Library located at 225 2nd Street SE. Pre-ordered plants will be available for pick-up at the Mason City Room on Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1.

*Watch the Recreation Department and Highland Park Golf Course Facebook Pages for opening dates of the MacNider Campground, Aquatic Center, and Highland Park Golf Course in the spring and for upcoming recreation programming opportunities! Stay up to date of upcoming events scheduled for the Mason City Arena by liking their Facebook page!

2021 CITY HOLIDAYS (OFFICES CLOSED)

Thursday, January 1, New Year's Day	Wednesday, December 30, 2020
Monday, February 15, President's Day	Wednesday, February 17
Friday, April 2, Good Friday	Wednesday, March 31
Monday, May 31, Memorial Day	Wednesday, June 2
Monday, July 5, Independence Day (observed)	Wednesday, July 7
Monday, September 6, Labor Day	Wednesday, September 8
Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day	Wednesday, November 10
Thursday & Friday, November 25 & 26	
Thanksgiving Day and the following day	Wednesday, November 24
Friday, December 24, Christmas Day (observed)	Wednesday, December 22

SANITATION MAKE-UP DAY

Mason City Transit routes will not run on the following holidays:

January 1 - New Year's Day
May 31 - Memorial Day
September 6 - Labor Day
November 25 & 26 - Thanksgiving Day and the following day
December 24 - Christmas Eve

*All dates are 2021 except as noted

CALENDAR ITEMS

January 2021

- 1 City offices closed (New Year's Day)
- 1 MacNider Museum closed
- 5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
- 5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 7 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
- 11 Airport Commission, 4 pm
- 12 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
- 13 Holiday tree pick-up by Sanitation Division (tentative)
- 13 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
- 14 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
- 14 City Council Budget Work Session, 6 pm
- 19 Library Board, 4:15 pm
- 19 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
- 19 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 21 City Council Budget Work Session, 6 pm

FEBRUARY 2021

- 2 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
- 2 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 4 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
- 4 City Council Budget Work Session, 6 pm
- 8 Airport Commission, 4 pm
- 9 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
- 10 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
- 11 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
- 15 City offices closed (President's Day)
- 16 Library Board, 4:15 pm
- 16 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
- 16 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 17 Sanitation Make-up day for February 15

MARCH 2021

- 2 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
- 2 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 4 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
- 8 Airport Commission, 4 pm
- 9 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
- 10 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
- 11 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
- 14 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 16 Library Board, 4:15 pm
- 16 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
- 16 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 31 Sanitation Make-up day for April 2

APRIL 2021

- 1 Winter decorations must be removed from Cemetery
- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
- 2 City offices closed (Good Friday)
- 5 Yard waste collection resumes (weather permitting)
- 6 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
- 6 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 12 Airport Commission, 4 pm
- 13 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
- 14 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
- 15 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 pm
- 20 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
- 30 Arbor Day

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