

# NEW FACES



**Louis Gira** started with the City of Mason City on May 13, 2016 as a part-time Transit Driver. Lou was previously employed by Smithfield Foods as a Supervisor for 39 years and joined the City after his retirement. Welcome aboard!



**Josh Deverell** joined the Mason City Fire Department on March 11, 2016 as a Firefighter. Josh is currently attending DMACC's Paramedic Program and brings with him experience as a Volunteer EMT with Sheffield Emergency Medical Services. Welcome aboard!



**Heather Jacobs** was hired as Support Staff at the Mason City Youth Task Force on March 22, 2016. Heather assisted the Youth Task Force for six months through a temp agency prior to being hired with the City. Thank you for joining us!



**Casey Swyter** joined the City of Mason City June 22, 2016 as a Swing Worker. Casey is a graduate from Mason City High School and previously worked in the concrete industry for 16 years. Congratulations!



**Ben Van Den Broeke** started with the Mason City Police Department on April 5, 2016 as a Police Officer. Ben received his Associate of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice from North Iowa Area Community College. Congratulations!

## 2016 GALLUP-HEALTHWAYS WELL-BEING INDEX RESULTS



Mason City continues to show positive statistical improvement in the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index® measurement, gaining two percentage points since May 2012. Each point in well-being improvement equates to a statistically significant percent decrease in the likelihood of hospital admission and emergency room visits and in the likelihood of incurring healthcare costs.

- 83% are aware of Blue Zones Project® in our community.
- 49% believe Blue Zones Project has made a positive impact on the community, 24% believe Blue Zones Project has made a positive impact on their life.
- 64% are proud of their community.
- 76% have someone in their life that encourages them to be healthy, up 3.6 percentage points since our baseline measure in 2012.
- Learning or doing something interesting each day is up 4.8 percentage points since 2015.
- Improvement in those with high blood pressure and obesity was recognized since baseline in 2012.

Blue Zones Project needs your help to continue improving well-being in Mason City. Whether it's asking your favorite restaurant for healthier options, reaching out to volunteer at a new organization, or making small changes in your daily choices, we all can make a difference. Learn more and get involved: [www.bluezonesproject.com](http://www.bluezonesproject.com) or contact us at 641-424-7181.

## 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."*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER 2016

- 1 September 2016
- 5 City offices closed
- 6 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 6 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 7 Sanitation Make-up Day for September 1
- 8 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 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 NIDAT Lunch by Central Park, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 20 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 24 Elmwood St. Joseph Cemetery History Walk

### OCTOBER 2016

- 3 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 4 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 4 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 6 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 7 Arttoberfest, MacNider Museum, 6-9 p.m.
- 10 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 11 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 12 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 13 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 18 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 18 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 18 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.

### NOVEMBER 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.
- 6 Daylight Saving Time Ends

- 7 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 8 Election Day
- 8 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 9 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 11
- 9 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 10 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 10 Stories and Cuentos Puppet Show at MacNider Art Museum
- 11 City offices closed
- 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.
- 23 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 24 & 25
- 24 City offices closed
- 25 City offices closed

### DECEMBER 2016

- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 5 Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Commission, 4:15 p.m.
- 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 Holiday Open House/Kids' Club, 1-4 p.m.
- 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.
- 20 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 20 Museum Board, 7 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 26 City offices and MacNider Museum closed
- 28 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 26

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

## CAPTAIN MIKE MCKELVEY HONORED WITH THE SERVICE ABOVE SELF AWARD

The Mason City Noon Rotary Club annually recognizes a government employee to receive the "Service Above Self" Award. This year's recipient was Captain Mike McKelvey from the Mason City Police Department. Captain McKelvey was selected based on his high moral character, strong work ethic, his professional manner that he conducts business, and his strong belief that you try every day to leave your community a better place at the end of the day. He also has dedicated many hours to support the youth in the community. Captain McKelvey has over 20 years with the Mason City Police Department. Congratulations!

## GRANT AWARDED TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director Mary Markwalter accepts the award from Alliant Energy Key Account Manager Rebecca Gisell

The Alliant Energy Foundation has awarded a grant of \$2,600 to the Mason City Public Library to purchase a new Early Literacy Station Computer for preschoolers to use when they visit the library!



# RIVER CITY NEWS

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, FALL 2016

## CANNONBALL GARDENS TERRACE PROJECT COMPLETE

The Cannonball Gardens in East Park originated as a three phase project starting in 2014 with the intent to control the erosion of the area that threatens the location of the Rotary Cannonball steam engine in East Park. The project also is designed to remove the dead trees, undergrowth and weeds which rendered the entire area unsightly and unusable.

The Friends of the 457 set out to 1. Contain the erosion 2. Replace the state of the area with a Garden like theme 3. Provide an educational area.

Phase 1 completed in 2014 consisted of clearing the area east of the existing stairway and building terraces, walkways, and landscaping. Phase 2 completed in 2015 consisted of clearing the area west of the stairway and building terraces, walkways, and landscaping. Phase 3 completed in 2016 consisted of laying the upper patio, landscaping and installing the educational center with three history boards, the History of East Park, History of Iowa Railroads, and History of the Orphan Train. It also included the placement of six benches and six lamps and post.

The community and many out-of-state visitors who visit the gardens have expressed their appreciation for the relaxing atmosphere, many benches, and beauty of the area.

The Friends of the 457 extend a sincere appreciation to those purchasing engraved bricks, donor plaque benches, lamp post, and terrace walls and for the donations and grants, along with City of Mason City contributions. Without that community support the Gardens would never have happened.



## NORTH IOWA FARMERS MARKET GREAT RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT!

Have you been to the North Iowa Farmers' Market lately? Over the past few years, the market has undergone changes, including a new location, vendors and leadership. The market is filled with local produce, eggs, jelly, honey, home-made baked goods, and artisan products perfect to share with family and friends. Not only does local food have more flavor and nutrition, the shorter commute for vendors means that every dollar spent at the market will be turned around and reinvested almost 100 percent in North Iowa. It's a win-win for vendors, customers, and our community as a whole.

With this in mind, Blue Zones Project encourages you to get your plant slant on and re-focus on working your favorite produce into your daily diet. Sit down as a family to talk about how to bring a rainbow of color onto your dinner plate and plan your next trip to the market.

The North Iowa Farmers Market is on Tuesdays and Fridays from 3 to 6 pm in the Mills Fleet Farm parking lot through the end of October. Follow North Iowa Farmers Market on Facebook for updates on produce availability, recipes, and more.

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.



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## 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](mailto:cityinformation@masoncity.net)



# PROJECTS UPDATE

The 19th Street SE Street and Utility Extension Project was completed in August. The project involved constructing a 2,800' street pavement extension, including a bridge over Mason Creek east of Kentucky Avenue. The street provided connecting points with three existing streets in the Stone Pillar area. The extension also provides access to new development underway east of Illinois Avenue. The project also included water and storm sewer utility extensions, and provisions for future development south of 19th Street SE.

The Downtown Street Lighting Project began in the spring of this year and is expected to be completed by the end of September. The project included the replacement of the existing street lighting system along Delaware and Washington Avenues between 2nd Street south and 4th Street north. The street lighting along the connecting streets between the avenues was also replaced with the project. The new lighting system included the demolition of existing system, the construction and installation of approximately 90 new light fixtures including foundations, poles and LED luminaires, new electrical conduits, wiring, control panels and junction boxes. The new lighting will provide a more uniform, reliable, and energy efficient system.



ABOVE: 19th Street SE Before Photo BELOW: 19th Street SE After Photo



ABOVE: New & Old Streetlights

## MASON CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT (MCFD) NEWS

The Fire Department is offering a new Explorers program open to ages 14-20 and will teach team work, discipline, professionalism, basic first aid, CPR and firefighting skills. The Explorer program teaches the mental and physical aspects of firefighting and working in a team. Explorers will learn the satisfaction that comes from completing tasks given with a high degree of quality in a profession where there is little room for error. This program is enjoyable and rewarding not only for the youth who join, but also for the members of the MCFD. Meetings are twice a month on Wednesday evenings. Openings are available but the limit is 15. Contact the Mason City Fire Department (641-421-3640) or Neil Maki (nmaki@masoncity.net) for more information.

In any type of emergency, seconds count. When lives are on the line, responders can't afford to take extra time trying to discern whether they're at the right address. It is imperative that home and business owners ensure that building and address numbers are clearly visible.

- \* Numbers should be a minimum of 3-4", visible from the road during daylight hours and made from durable material that will hold up in cold temperatures
- \* Colors should contrast with the background increasing visibility
- \* Use reflective numbering to aid the ability to quickly recognize addresses
- \* House numbers should remain unobstructed from trees, shrubs and tall plants

The onset of the winter heating season brings a need to be reminded of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that results from incomplete combustion. All natural gas and propane-fired furnaces regardless of efficiency give off some degree of carbon monoxide which is properly vented from the home through the chimney or furnace exhaust. Fireplaces and heating stoves are also producers of smoke and carbon monoxide and it is important that heat sources are properly installed and vented. Modern homes are sealed more tightly and are much more energy efficient in regards to heat loss but they are also more susceptible to dangerous buildups of carbon monoxide as compared to older homes.

Carbon monoxide poisoning results in nearly 500 deaths in the United States and over 15,000 hospital admissions annually. Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the most preventable causes of death and illness if homeowners follow some simple tips.

First, any home relying on a heat source using fossil fuels or any combustible fuel source, carbon monoxide detectors are an absolute necessity. Detectors should be plugged into an electrical outlet and also have a battery backup. Change the battery annually and replace the detector

before it expires. Avoid buying combination smoke and CO detectors: to detect properly, smoke detectors need to be mounted on the ceilings and CO detectors need to be mounted near the floor.

Have your furnace checked and serviced annually by a qualified technician. Ensure all screens and vents remain free of obstructions like dirt, leaves and rodents. Spider webs and cob webs can potentially trap enough exhaust gases to cause a buildup of carbon monoxide.

The signs/symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headaches, weakness, dizziness, nausea and/or vomiting, shortness of breath, blurred vision, confusion and, ultimately, a loss of consciousness. If you suspect you may be experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, exit the premises immediately and call 9-1-1.

### 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: Position Vacant**  
**First Ward: John Lee**  
(641) 420-7922  
leewardone@masoncity.net

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

**Third Ward: Brett Schoneman**  
(641) 423-0500  
schonemanwardthree@masoncity.net

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



## volunteer Mason City

After months of hard work by the City's volunteers, the summer is winding down and so are our summer programs. Many volunteers have put in countless hours to continue to make Mason City Sparkle. We've had some successful months of work, but with fall just around the corner, there are new opportunities approaching.

One new event that will be coming up this fall is our Walk, Roll, and Stroll event put on by the Earth Day Committee. Every year, Mason City holds an Earth Day cleanup and festival in April, where teams go out and cleanup a certain area. After cleanup, the families, teams or organizations that

volunteered their time are invited to a festival to celebrate Earth Day. This festival usually has activities, informational booths, and food. We think this is such a great event that we are going to hold a similar event in the fall.

While the event is in the early stages of planning, we know that it will be held at a park in Mason City. The event will include a cleanup of the park where we are holding the event in the morning, followed by lunch and some activities.

For more information about this event and to stay up to date with all the Earth Day activities, like Mason City Earth Day on Facebook.

For other volunteer opportunities or information on volunteering in Mason City, call **Drew Versteegen** at 421-3372 or email [dversteegen@masoncity.net](mailto:dversteegen@masoncity.net).

## MASON CITY'S FIRST REHAB HOME FOR SALE AT 430 1ST STREET NE

The Neighborhood Homeownership and Neighborhood Stabilization (NHANS) program provides for rehabilitation of former rental houses that are converted for sale as single family, owner-occupied homes. The City is completing its first rehabilitation under this program at 430 1st Street NE. Under this program, the City purchases a home that had been used as a rental and rehabilitates it into a single family home which is offered for sale for the original purchase price plus other carrying costs. The cost of the rehabilitation, up to \$40,000, becomes a forgivable loan to the buyer. If the new owner stays for seven years, the loan is

completely forgiven. At the time of sale, the house is deed-restricted to single family, owner-occupancy for 20 years.

This house has three bedrooms, 1½ baths and a large, two-stall detached garage. The home will have the following items new: electrical service, furnace/boiler, water heater, kitchen cabinets and appliances. Most of the windows will also be new. The home is in a redeveloping neighborhood near Downtown, the Library and the MacNider Museum, and the nearby Rock Crest/Rock Glen add to the historic ambience.

Although the final price is yet to be determined, it is expected it will be on the market for around \$55,000. This price includes \$40,000 of upgrades, the cost of which will be forgiven after seven years. Once rehab is completed, the City will offer the home for sale through a bidding process. Bidders will need to show proof to qualify for financing. The announcement will be made through the City's Facebook page, Mason City Craigslist page, the Globe Gazette, and other media outlets.

There are income guidelines to participate in this program. For questions or more information about the home for sale or

the NHANS program, contact Director of Development Services Steven J. Van Steenhuyse at (641) 421-3626.



## LET THE MASON CITY VOLUNTEER CENTER HELP YOU FIND YOUR PURPOSE

The Mason City Volunteer Center (MCVC), an outcome of Blue Zones Project® - Mason City work, works to inspire more youth, families, seniors, businesses, to volunteer and to improve the volunteer opportunities and placement in our community. We have over 35 not-for-profit organizations right here in Mason City with volunteer opportunities waiting to be filled.

Some include:

- Child Advocate through CASA
- Serving noon or evening meal at Community Kitchen
- Advocating on behalf of and being a friendly face to victims of domestic violence through Crisis Intervention
- Volunteer Reception Center volunteer in case of an emergency in Cerro Gordo County
- Organizing Cannonball Day or assisting with engine maintenance for Friends of the 457
- Assisting clients shopping at the Hawkeye Harvest Food Bank

- Leading Men's Group or Catholic Rosary Group at IOOF Home
- Announcer or coordinating the Community Calendar for KCMR Radio
- Lime Creek Nature Center Building Attendant
- Capturing photos or videos of volunteerism around Mason City
- Mentoring youth at the Youth Task Force
- Assisting check-in, patients in waiting room, or cashiering at Mercy Medical Center Gift Shop

- Serving as a Board Member or graphic design/ marketing at National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Tour Docent at The Music Man Square or Wright on the Park



This is a short list of the over one hundred opportunities in our community. For a full list and to submit a volunteer application, visit [www.masoncityvolunteercenter.com](http://www.masoncityvolunteercenter.com).

## ELMWOOD CEMETERY'S LAKESIDE COLUMBARIUM IMPROVEMENTS

The City continues to beautify the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery by improving landscaping at the Lakeside Columbarium. New granite surfaced concrete pavers were installed around the three columbaria, bringing a more elegant look and providing a better surface for families to place memorials.

Improvements encouraged the family of Robert & Louise Sorenson to contribute a memorial to add more beauty to the site. Three planters with colorful flowers were installed which gave the Lakeside columbarium the finishing touch. We are grateful to the Sorenson family and appreciate their contribution to the improvements.

Replacing the black landscaping rocks has made the maintenance of the area easier and will reduce costs. The deteriorating asphalt curbing and sidewalk approaches with curbs were replaced with sloped curbing and flat sidewalks that facilitates inurnment setups and improves safety for families and cemetery staff.

This beautiful upgrade to the cemetery grounds creates a more inviting place for loved ones. Contact the Cemetery office for more information at 641-421-3687.

