

RIVER CITY NEWS

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF MASON CITY, Fall 2017



Mason City Celebrates Arbor Day

Arbor Day began in 1872 in the state of Nebraska when J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees. The holiday was first observed with the planting of an estimated one million trees in Nebraska and Arbor Day is now celebrated in all 50 states and many countries throughout the world. Trees play an important role in our lives: trees can reduce the erosion of precious topsoil by wind and water, help with energy efficiency by cutting heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife. They are also a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products.



Trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and wherever they are planted, they serve as a source of joy and spiritual renewal. Arbor Day is celebrated in Iowa the last Friday in April every year. The Mayor and City Council members commemorated Arbor Day by planting a Korean Maple tree at the MacNider Art Museum and Mayor Bookmeyer designated Arbor Day in Mason City by signing a proclamation at a Council meeting. Street/Park Supervisor Bob Berggren taught students proper tree planting techniques and the importance of correct tree planting measures at 2 separate tree planting events this past spring. Students were also educated on the history and importance of celebrating Arbor Day and taking care of trees year round, not just when they are planted. Over 300 trees of diverse species were planted thanks to the hard work and dedication of volunteers to improve the environment and quality of life in Mason City.

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Mason City Designated as a Tree City USA

In honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management, Mason City received the 'Tree City USA' designation for the 13th year. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters and has been greening up communities across the country since 1976. This nationwide movement provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. Mason City achieved the four core standards of sound urban forestry management to become a Tree City USA by maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, and celebrating Arbor Day. Trees are assets to a community when properly planted and maintained, and they help improve the visual appeal of a neighborhood, increase property values, reduce home cooling costs, remove air pollutants and provide wildlife habitats, among many other benefits. As a Tree City USA recipient, Mason City joins more than 3,400 cities and towns in all 50 states with a population total of 137 million people.



Want to Help Plant Trees?

Volunteers have been planting trees in Mason City for many years. Strong partnerships with sponsors and many volunteer groups including students from the Alternative School, elementary schools and even pre-school/daycare facilities ensure trees are planted around the



community and to enjoy the benefits trees provide. The City thanks Alliant Energy and Trees Forever for the Branching Out program grant, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the Trees for Kids grant and ITC who make the tree plantings possible. Interested persons and groups should

contact Volunteer Program Coordinator Drew Verstegen at 421-3372 or volunteer@masoncity.net.

Location and Upkeep

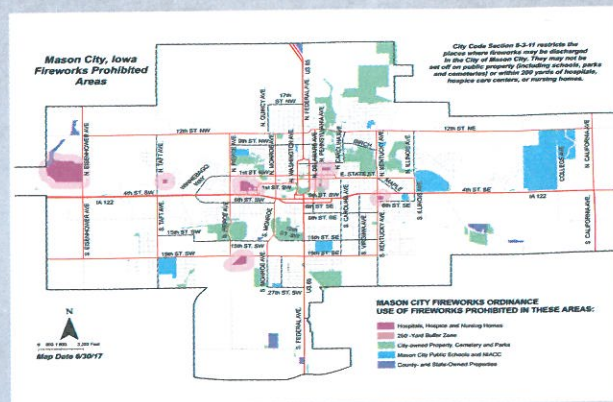
In determining where to plant trees, City staff determines the best type of tree to be planted at specific locations to include diverse species of trees, consideration of height and width of the mature tree and any obstacles that may pose a concern as the tree develops. It is important to not only plant trees but to maintain the trees that we already have. The City has added an aerial basket truck to its fleet of vehicles and hired additional staff members dedicated as an Arborist crew. This crew is responsible for the trimming of trees in the street right-of-way and at all city facilities including parks, the cemetery, and golf course. The crew will continually train to ensure the safety of personnel, property, power lines and other potential barriers.

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

FIREWORKS FOR NEW YEAR'S SEASON

Fireworks can legally be set off in Mason City on December 31 from 9 am until 12:30 am on January 1 with the exception of certain areas in the City. City Code Section 8-3-11 restricts the places where fireworks may be discharged in the City of Mason City. They may not be set off on public property (including schools, parks and cemeteries) or within 200 yards of hospitals, hospice care centers, or nursing homes. Be a good neighbor and respect others' property and sensitivity. Most of all - be careful!



Do you dream of owning your own home but struggle to find a home you can afford?

We may have the ideal home for you! The City is offering a remodeled low-maintenance home for sale. Located at 430 1st St. NE, this 3 bedroom, 1 ½ bath home has been completely rehabilitated. The City has invested \$40,000 to update the house. A new electrical service, new furnace and boiler and new water heater have been installed. In addition, both bathrooms and the kitchen have been completely overhauled with new cabinets and appliances. In addition, many of the windows are new. The house features first floor laundry hookups and a flexible space that could be used for an office or a fourth bedroom. For storage, there is a ¾ basement and large 2-stall garage in the back yard. Located in a redeveloping neighborhood near Downtown, the Library and MacNider Museum, it is less than half a mile from East Park. This house is a great first home for a young and growing family, at a price that cannot be beat. It is available for \$59,100. The buyer will receive instant equity, as this home has been appraised at \$69,100. The successful buyer must qualify for bank financing and have a family income no higher than 120% of the area median income (\$77,300 for a family of four). The buyer obtains a mortgage for the purchase price less any down payment. At closing, the City will place a second mortgage on the property for the \$40,000 in renovation costs. If the owner does not sell for at least seven years, the City's second mortgage will be forgiven. If the buyer sells before seven years have passed, the owner must pay back the unforgiven balance of the City's mortgage (i.e., if the home is sold after five years, the seller must pay the final two years of the loan prior to or at closing). Contact Tricia Sandahl at (641) 421-3626 for more information.



Kevin Jacobson 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. The award is presented to a government employee for their actions both on and off the job. This year's recipient is Finance Director Kevin Jacobson. Kevin has a strong work ethic and is considered an advocate for good government and decision making. He has a strong belief that his responsibility is to protect our City's resources. The professional manner the Kevin conducts business has created a profound respect among his peers and members of the public he comes in to contact with. Kevin has been with the city for over 20 years. Congratulations!



Monarch Butterfly Garden Developing at Georgia Hanford Park

The Mason City Parks Department has seeded a five-acre pollinator garden in the Art Gerk Arboretum at Georgia Hanford Park, helping with the Monarch Butterfly conservation efforts in Mason City. The Monarch population has plummeted in recent years, declining in numbers. The gardens are being developed to promote an increase in the species. The process to develop the garden is extensive. The area is first prepared with a controlled burn, then the ground is tilled. Treatment for weed control to remove unwanted weeds, prairie seed planting and mowing are the next steps in the garden. This whole process will take approximately 2-3 years to establish the prairie restoration. A big thank you to Ozzie Ohl for his outstanding fundraising efforts to make this garden a reality.

Award Winning Public Transit

Mason City Public Transit received a Federal Transit Administration Award of Excellence for highest increase of ridership among Small Urban Transit Systems in Iowa for 2015-2016. Shown is Development Services Director Steven Van Steenhuyse, Transit Operations & Safety Manager Dylan Schulte and Logan Daniels, FTA Program Manager. Congratulations!



HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

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

Third Ward: Position Vacant

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



Volunteer Mason City

With fall now upon us and the winter months around the corner, our summer programs are winding down. The Beautification program was a great success this year and the flower beds once again looked terrific around Mason City. Our Adopt-A-Programs helped to beautify the City and keep our environment in good shape.

Even though our summer programs are coming to a finish for the season, there is still plenty of volunteer work to be done. This fall there are still a few service projects planned, plenty of one-time projects to get done, and a few tree plantings planned. For more information, please visit the volunteer section of the City's website by going to www.masoncity.net clicking on "How Do I" and then clicking on "Volunteer".

If you have any questions or would like more information on anything, please call Drew Verstegen at (641)-421-3372 or email dverstegen@masoncity.net.



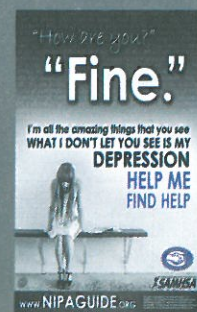
SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF NEW BIKE SHARE PROGRAM



The Active Living and Transportation (A.L.T.) Commission, an outcome of Blue Zones Project, ordered twelve bikes that serve as the first phase of the new bike share program, with approval and support from the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Board. Bike rack locations will be at

City Hall, East Park Prairie Playground parking area, and at MacNider Campgrounds. The program will increase accessibility to biking around the City, complementing the expansion of the bike trail system. Equipment is sourced from Koloni Bike, a bike share platform that uses Bluetooth technology to provide a simple and affordable experience for users and operators. "The bikes are rented through an app, so a smart phone and credit card will be required. The instructions will be on each bike rack on how to download and put in your personal information and credit card information. The app will then send you a code for you to unlock the bike," says Dr. Steven Shurtz, Chairman of the A.L.T. Commission. Special thanks to local program sponsors: 1st Insurance, Brick Furniture, Cerro Gordo Independent Insurance Agents, Central Park Denistry, Fat Hill Brewing, First Citizens Bank, Lee Realty, Moorman Clothiers, North Iowa Community Credit Union, North Iowa SPIN, Visit Mason City, and Wayne's Ski & Cycle. For more information regarding the bike share program or bike awareness in Mason City, or to pick up Mason City Bike Maps, contact Blue Zones Project-Mason City at (641) 424-7181. More information about Koloni can be found at kolonishare.com.

Mason City Youth Task Force is promoting youth mental health awareness within schools and throughout the community. Youth Mental Health First Aid training workshops are being held in our area to provide information and increase awareness of symptoms in youth. If interested in learning more about the free workshop training, please contact the Mason City Youth Task Force office at (641) 421-2708



Learn How YOU Can make Mason City a safer Place to Walk and Bike

Just imagine: Mason City as the premier Midwestern micropolitan community for livability and well-being. The City has completed major projects in the last several years jump starting the 15 year Activating Mason City Bicycle Pedestrian Masterplan working towards that vision. But now the community needs to educate our residents and visitors on the overall safe



usage. Improved safety is a critical goal and is fundamental to the efforts to increase the number of people, both residents and visitors, who walk and bike in the city. The Active Living and Transportation (ALT) Commission created four videos to address this need with funding by the Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation and the Mason City Police Department. The project is a call to action encouraging individuals to have a knowledge and understanding of usage of the transportation system-sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, sharrows, and roadways. The videos each target a different audience focusing on bicycle and pedestrian safety, traffic laws, general courtesy and self-protection as well as knowledge of the overall trail system and off-street connectivity. This project builds on the foundation of annual bike education for all third grade classrooms in the City and bike rodeos. To view the videos, visit the Mason City Blue Zones Project page on Facebook or the City website. We encourage you to share them with your friends, family and community.

Elementary Students Planting Trees as part of the Trees For Kids Program



New Faces



Tyler Beemer was hired as a Transit Driver on June 12, 2017. Tyler is currently attending Iowa State University and joined the City while he is home for summer break. Welcome aboard!



Josh Boehmer started with the City of Mason City as a Meter Utility Person on June 21, 2017. Josh has previously worked for the City as a Seasonal Meter Reader. Congratulations and thank you for joining us full time!



Victor Boehmer was hired as a Transit Driver on June 9, 2017. Victor previously worked for the City for several years, also as a Transit Driver. We're happy you have joined our team again!



Alice Ciavarelli started on May 1, 2017 as the Youth Task Force Director. Alice was previously employed at Mercy Medical Center North Iowa for a number of years and held several positions throughout her career. Congratulations and thank you for joining us!



Briana Hesse joined the City's Development Services Department on July 6, 2017 as a Part-time Administrative Specialist - Transit Safety. Briana brings with her administrative and technical experience from the nursing field. Welcome aboard!



Kevin Jahnel joined the City as a Transit Driver on June 9, 2017. Kevin brings with him several years' experience as an over-the-road driver. Thank you for joining us!



Doug Sorenson started with the City of Mason City on July 10, 2017 as a Heavy Equipment Operator-Arborist in our Operations & Maintenance Department. Doug has 20 years' experience between using a variety of heavy equipment and trucking. Congratulations and thank you for joining us!



Danya Thoms was hired as the Mason City Recreation Department as a Recreation Programmer-Aquatics & Activities on April 19, 2017. Danya has a Bachelor's Degree in Leisure, Youth and Human Services from the University of Northern Iowa and was previously employed with the City's Recreation Department working in multiple positions. Welcome aboard!

2018 HOLIDAY AND SANITATION MAKE-UP DATES

| HOLIDAY | Date | Sanitation Make-Up |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| New Year's Day | Monday, January 1 | Wednesday, January 3 |
| President's Day | Monday, February 19 | Wednesday, February 21 |
| Good Friday | Friday, March 30 | Wednesday, March 28 |
| Memorial Day | Monday, May 28 | Wednesday May 30 |
| Independence Day | Wednesday, July 4 | N/A |
| Labor Day | Monday, September 3 | Wednesday, September 5 |
| Veteran's Day | Monday, November 12 | Wednesday, November 14 |
| Thanksgiving Day | Thursday, November 22 | Wednesday, November 21 |
| Day after Thanksgiving | Friday, November 23 | Wednesday, November 21 |
| Christmas Day | Tuesday, December 25 | Wednesday, December 26 |

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 2017

4 City offices closed
5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
6 Sanitation Make-up Day for September 4
7 Historic Preservation Commission
11 Airport Commission, 4 pm
12 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
12 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
13 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
14 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
15 NIDAT Lunch by Central Park, 11 am-1:30 pm
19 Library Board, 4:15 pm
19 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
19 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
30 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery History Walk

October 2017

3 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
3 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
5 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
9 Airport Commission, 4 pm
10 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
10 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
11 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 7 pm
12 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
17 Library Board, 4:15 pm
17 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
17 City Council Regular Meeting
20 Arttoberfest, MacNider Museum, 7 pm
23 City Council Listening Post, Time and Location TBD

November 2017

2 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
5 Daylight Savings Time Ends
7 Election Day
7 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
7 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
8 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 10
8 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
9 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
10 City offices closed
13 Airport Commission, 4 pm
14 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
14 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
21 Library Board, 4:15 pm
21 Museum Board, 7 pm
21 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
22 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 23 and 24
23 City offices closed
24 City offices closed

December 2017

5 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 pm
5 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
7 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 pm
8 MacNider: Off the Clock Holiday Edition, 5-7 pm
9 MacNider Museum Holiday Open House/Kids' Club, 1-4pm
11 Airport Commission
12 Park & Recreation Board, 6 pm
12 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 pm
13 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 pm
14 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 am
19 Library Board, 4:15 pm
19 Museum Board, 5:30 pm
19 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm
25 City offices and MacNider Museum closed
27 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 25

This calendar is subject to change.

DID YOU KNOW

...turning off the water while you brush your teeth can save 4 gallons of water a MINUTE!

...running your dishwasher and washing machine only when full can save 1000 gallons of water a month.

...that 70% of the Earth is covered in water, but only .4% of that is available for human consumption for 7 billion people. Teach your family to conserve water every day!