

River City News



Mason City

National Civic League



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All-America City Finalist

www.nationalcivicleague.org

**MASON CITY HAS BEEN SELECTED AS A
2020 ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST!**

The All-America City Award recognizes communities that leverage civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness and innovation to successfully address local issues. The theme for this year's award is "Enhancing health and well-being through civic engagement" and is focused on celebrating examples of civic engagement practices that advance health and well-being in local communities. The application process focused on the submission of three community driven projects with a compelling community-wide vision, resulting in significant local impact and action planning. Mason City's projects included Mason City's River City Renaissance Project – Mason City Arena, Volunteers 'Make Mason City Sparkle', and 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count. In applying, communities reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, challenges and the progress they have made.

Since 1949, the National Civic League has recognized and celebrated the best in American civic innovation with the prestigious All-America City Award. The Award, bestowed yearly on 10 communities (more than 500 in all) recognizes the work of communities in using inclusive civic engagement to address critical issues and create stronger connections among residents, businesses and nonprofit and government leaders. The Award is open to all American communities, from major cities, counties and regions to tribes, towns and villages.

The All-America City Award shines a spotlight on the incredible work taking place in communities across the country. By celebrating the best in local innovation, civic engagement and cross-sector collaboration, the All-America City Awards remind us of the potential within every community to tackle tough issues and create real change.

Mason City is 1 of 21 communities from across the country and the only community in Iowa to become a finalist in 2020 for this prestigious honor.

The All-America City Awards Competition and Conference will be held virtually this year.

MASON CITY ARENA RECOGNIZED AS 'GAME CHANGER'

The Main Street Iowa Awards program recognizes the efforts of those who work to revitalize Iowa's downtowns – the heart and soul of communities across the state, honoring outstanding accomplishments, activities and people making a difference in the state's designated Main Street Iowa districts.

Main Street Mason City was the recipient of the Game Changer Award distinction for the River City Renaissance Multi-Purpose Arena Project.

"This project is a catalyst for a significant amount of downtown development...with long lasting economic benefit. As shopping habits changed and retail stores in the mall began to close, including the anchor stores, it became apparent a new approach was needed to re-purpose vacant space to make the building functional again. As a result of this project, Southbridge has been reimagined and is once again a downtown destination," according to the Main Street Iowa award announcement.

Main Street Mason City President Melissa Fabian and Executive Director Emily Ginneberge presented the award to Mayor Bill Schickel and City Administrator Aaron Burnett on behalf of Main Street Iowa. The Main Street Iowa award was unveiled and will be put on permanent display at the arena entrance. This is one of two statewide Game Changer Awards this year. The second went to Cedar Rapids.

This is one of four awards Mason City took away this year in an earlier virtual presentation due to COVID-19. The city also received the Exceptional Special Events Award for the Haunted Historic Building Tour. The Leadership Award was given to Melissa Fabian and the Business of the Year was awarded to Market 124 owner Katie Wold.



MASON CITY RECEIVES THE TREE CITY USA DESIGNATION AND GROWTH AWARD

In honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management, Mason City was named a recipient of the 'Tree City USA' designation and the 'Growth Award' this past spring. Mason City has been a Tree City USA for 16 years and a Growth Award recipient for 5 years.

The Growth Award is awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation to recognize higher levels of tree care by participating Tree City USA communities. It highlights innovative programs and projects as well as increased commitment of resources for urban forestry. It also provides an opportunity to share new ideas and successes across the country. The City's Growth Award Application focused on Tree-Maintenance Budget and Tree Preservation.



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

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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.

10TH ANNUAL POLICE VS. FIRE BATTLE ON ICE

The annual Police vs. Fire Battle of the Badges charity hockey game was held in the new Mason City Arena this past spring. The house was sold out, full to capacity with fans cheering on their favorite team. The law enforcement team won this round 6-3 but the real winners are the Wish kids. The event raised \$73,403 for the foundation. This is a great opportunity to support the Make-A-Wish Iowa Foundation and grant a wish in North Iowa.

Way to go North Iowa - thank you to everyone for your support!



MASON CITY WORKS TO ELIMINATE ABANDONED BUILDINGS

The problem of abandoned buildings has long been a challenge for communities. Cities now have a more effective incentive for owners to rehabilitate or demolish these problem properties. Iowa Code Section 657A.10 allows a city to petition the District Court to grant the title to “abandoned” properties to the city. If working with the owner to rehabilitate or demolish the dilapidated structure fails, the city can ask the Court to grant title to the City, free and clear of back taxes, liens, or other encumbrances. The city can then decide to demolish the structure, or find a buyer who will bring it back up to code.

In 2019, the City of Mason City began a program to target long-abandoned buildings where Section 657A.10 could play a role. The owners of several of these buildings were notified that the

buildings would have to be rehabilitated or demolished, or the City would petition the District Court to take title to them. In most cases, the owners of these properties have worked with the City on plans to rehabilitate the dilapidated structures and make them habitable again. A few others have agreed to demolish the structures at their own expense. There have been six cases where the District Court has agreed that the structures are abandoned and have granted title to the City. Of these six, one was sold for redevelopment, one is being evaluated for redevelopment, one has been demolished, and three are approved for demolition this summer.

These photos show the “before” and “after” of a house that was persistently dilapidated and vacant, and was affecting the value

and aesthetics of the neighborhood. When the owner became aware that she could lose the house to the City, she sold it to a new owner, who has completely rehabilitated it. This positive outcome avoided the need for court action.



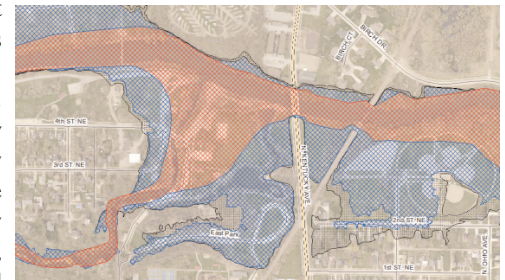
These photos show houses that have been vacant for years and have become “attractive nuisances” for vandalism, vagrancy, and other criminal activity. The owners were unable or unwilling to renovate the houses, so the City successfully petitioned to gain title. These houses will be demolished this summer, eliminating blight that has affected their surrounding neighborhoods for several years.

The Code Enforcement Division of the Development Services Department will continue to work with the owners of abandoned properties to rehabilitate them and make them habitable again. For those few who do not intend to improve the properties, the City’s ability to gain title provides a tool to improve or eliminate them. The result is better, safer, and more beautiful neighborhoods.

NEW FLOODPLAIN MAP CHANGES

FEMA has approved new floodplain maps (FIRMs) for the City of Mason City. The City’s Floodplain Management Ordinance has also been updated. These changes became effective on June 3, 2020. Mason City’s floodplain maps have not been updated since 2012. The new maps were developed with much more detailed elevation data. As a result, the maps depict flood hazards more accurately than our older maps.

The floodplain maps indicate if properties are in areas of low, moderate or high flood risk. Property owners may find their risk is higher or lower than they thought. If the risk level for a property changes, the requirement to carry flood insurance may change as well. The updated maps allow property owners to make better financial decisions about protecting themselves and their property. The map also helps community officials and others make important determinations about where and how new structures and developments should be built, making Mason City a safer place to live. In addition, the maps show where a floodplain permit is required for development. Floodplain permits are required before a project begins.



Floodplain map of East Park

You can locate your property on the map of the regulated floodplain area on the City’s web site, www.masoncity.net. (Click “Departments” then “Development Services.”) If you have any questions, contact the Development Services on the 3rd floor of City Hall, or at **641-421-3626**.

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) or on the City’s Live Stream page under ‘Government’ select ‘Streaming Council Meetings’. Archives of previous meetings are also located on this page of the City’s website.

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

SERVE UP FIRE SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN!™

This year's Fire Prevention theme is **"Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!™"** which works to educate everyone about the simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves, and those around them, safe in the kitchen. Cooking is the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Remember not to leave the kitchen while cooking as unattended cooking is the leading cause of fires in the kitchen. Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried. Do not to use water on an cooking fire involving oils, use a dry powder fire extinguisher or cover with a lid, and remember to keep kitchen rags, towels and pot holders away from stove tops, toasters, or other cooking devices.



MASON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

UPCOMING EVENTS

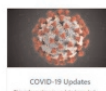
Watch the Mason City Public Library's website at www.mcpl.org, visit the Mason City Public Library Facebook page or call the library at **(421) 421-3668** for information on upcoming activities and virtual events such as 'A Night with Edgar Allan Poe' during October 2020, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. There will be fall reading programs listed on the library's website soon.

CITY'S WEBSITE GETS A NEW LOOK

The City's website at www.masoncity.net has a fresh new look! The recent graphic redesign was launched in early April and features easy-to-find options with the user in mind. The varied options quickly redirect users to the information needed with ease and fewer keystrokes. Check it out for yourself!



News & Announcements



COVID-19 Updates
This information is updated regularly.



Road Closure for Utility Work
East State Street between Georgia and
Connecticut Avenue will be closed for 2
days.



Road Closure: 12th Street
12th Street will be closed between Federal Avenue
and Federal Avenue will be closed for
several months.

More News

Programs & Events



Yard Waste
Collection
Resumes

Residents may use yard waste
and tree branches on the day of
pickup only.

On the Calendar



Business and Justice Commission
7:00 PM

July 18
Landmarks Foundation on World Street
10:00 AM

July 21
City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

July 28
Watch It, Catch It, Cook It
1:00 PM

More Events

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2020 CENSUS STILL UNDERWAY - NONRESPONDING HOUSEHOLDS FOLLOW UP

To ensure everyone is counted, census takers visit households that haven't responded yet to the 2020 Census to collect their responses in person.

Census takers will follow local public health guidelines when they visit. Census takers will:

- Wear a mask
- Conduct the interview outside a home in an open, well-ventilated space, when possible
- Allow 6 feet of space between them and the person they are interviewing
- Not allow anyone else to handle Census Bureau equipment
- Follow healthy hygiene habits

If a household does not want to conduct the interview in person, they can provide the census taker with their phone number to complete it over the phone.

All interviews are confidential. • Answers cannot be shared with immigration or law enforcement agencies. • Census takers must keep answers confidential for life.

Households can identify the census takers by their ID badge with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date and a Census Bureau-issued phone. Many census takers will also carry a bag with the Census Bureau logo.

The interview is quick and easy. You can expect a few questions like name, age, race, and sex. No questions regarding Social Security numbers, bank information, or citizenship status. Census takers are likely to visit between 9 am and 9 pm, including weekends when people are likely to be home. If no one is home when the census taker visits, the census taker will leave a notice of the visit with information about how to respond online or by phone. If necessary, a census taker will return several times to ensure the household is accurately included in the census.

Responding Is Important. A complete and accurate count will benefit your area. By answering a few questions, you'll help shape the future of your community for the next 10 years. The 2020 Census results determine how many seats your state gets in Congress and how public funds are spent on schools, roads, fire and emergency services, hospitals, and more in your community.

Households can still respond online at www.2020census.gov, by phone at **844-330-2020**, or by mail until October 31.

NEW FACES



Tyler Anderson started with the City of Mason City on April 13, 2020 in the Cemetery Department as the Cemetery Manager. Thanks for joining our team!



Trevor Blum started with the City of Mason City on March 25, 2020 in the Airport Department as an Operations & Maintenance Coordinator. Thank you for joining us!



Logan Boos started with the City of Mason City on March 23, 2020 in the Operations and Maintenance Department as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Welcome aboard!



Joel Enabnit started with the City of Mason City on March 23, 2020 in the Police Department as a Utility Worker. Welcome aboard!



Kyle Griffin started with the City of Mason City on March 18, 2020 in the Operations and Maintenance Department as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Welcome!



Wesley Hardy started with the City of Mason City on June 1, 2020 in the Fire Department as a Firefighter/EMT. Welcome aboard!



Mariah Piippo started with the City of Mason City on June 9, 2020 at the Museum as a Museum Receptionist. We're glad you have joined the City!



Alexander Potter started with the City of Mason City on June 1, 2020 in the Fire Department as a Firefighter/EMT. Thanks for joining us!



Mike Voortmann started with the City of Mason City on March 18, 2020 in the Operations and Maintenance Department as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Thanks for joining our team!



Scott Watson started with the City of Mason City on June 1, 2020 in the Fire Department as a Firefighter/EMT. Thanks for joining our team!



Matt Wolfe started with the City of Mason City on March 18, 2020 in the Engineering Department as a Meter Utility Worker. Thank you for joining us!



Tracy Young started with the City of Mason City on April 13, 2020 in the Operations & Maintenance Department as a Heavy Equipment Operator. We're glad you have joined the City!

The Yard Waste collection season is scheduled to end on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2020 weather pending. Updates of the status of yard waste will be listed on the City's website and Facebook page.

2021 CITY HOLIDAYS (OFFICES CLOSED)

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

SANITATION MAKE-UP DAY

CALENDAR ITEMS

SEPTEMBER 2020

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission
- 7 City offices and MacNider Museum closed
- 8 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 9 Sanitation Make-up Day for September 7
- 9 North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team, 4 p.m.
- 10 Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board, 8 a.m.
- 14 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 15 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 15 Museum Board, 5:30 p.m.
- 15 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 26 Elmwood St. Joseph Cemetery History Walk

OCTOBER 2020

- 1 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 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.
- 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, 5:30 p.m.
- 20 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2020

- 1 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 3 Election Day
- 3 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 3 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 5 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 p.m.
- 9 Airport Commission, 4 pm
- 10 Park & Recreation Board, 6 p.m.
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 p.m.
- 11 City offices closed
- 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, 5:30 p.m.
- 17 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 25 Sanitation Make-up Day for November 26 and 27
- 26 City offices and MacNider Museum closed
- 27 City offices closed

DECEMBER 2020

- 1 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 4 p.m.
- 1 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3 Historic Preservation Commission, 4:30 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.
- 14 Airport Commission, 4 p.m.
- 15 Library Board, 4:15 p.m.
- 15 Museum Board, 5:30 p.m.
- 15 City Council Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 23 Sanitation Make-up Day for December 25
- 24 MacNider Museum closed at noon
- 25 City offices and MacNider Museum closed
- 31 MacNider Museum closed at noon

This calendar does not include all events and is subject to change. Sign up for Mason City's e-notification option to receive the latest updates, agendas, news releases, event notification, and other timely news. For more information, visit www.masoncity.net or contact staff at (641) 421-3600 or the individual department responsible for the event.