



City of RIVER FALLS NEWSLETTER



January 2015 • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 1

Mayor's Message



Happy New Year! I hope this newsletter finds everybody healthy, happy and ready to jump right into their New Year Resolutions. By now, I have already given up on mine, so don't feel bad. According to the United Nations General Assembly, 2015 is the International Year of Light. So I guess we are supposed to celebrate everything light; light bulbs, light fixtures, flashlights, sunlight, light sabers (that's a Star Wars reference), etc. looking at the website, this is their actual description of the year: **"The**

International Year of Light 2015 recognizes the importance of raising global awareness of how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture, and health." Not a lot of fun in that explanation.

I want to talk about passion. People have passion for all sorts of different things in their lives. Hopefully, you all still have it for your spouses, partners, significant others, family and friends. Some people have it for their jobs and careers, some for volunteerism, some for certain places they have been to and keep returning to. And some people are passionate about their sport teams (Go Pack Go). Whatever it is that you are passionate about, enjoy it. It's good to have passion in our lives.

Some of you are thinking... where the heck is this goof ball going with this whole passion rant? I want everybody to add one more passion to their list and that is to be passionate about your city, River Falls. When people ask you about where you are from, tell them all of the wonderful things about our city - great City services, great school district, great downtown, beautiful river, great fun options, great places to dine and drink, great Mayor (did I go too far)? You all get where I am going with this - be passionate about your town and the people in it. Okay, I'm done with passion, let's move on to the other stuff.

It's the first of the year and all things are possible. New year, new beginnings. I hope this is what we are all thinking, but unfortunately it's not always the way things turn out. We all struggle at times with day-to-day life, and we all have bad days, weeks, and months. Sometimes it seems like nothing is ever going to go our way. No matter who you are, we have all felt this way at some time in our lives. I encourage anybody who gets overwhelmed with stuff - no matter what it is - to reach out. Talk to your family, neighbor, pastor, counselor. Call me, I like to listen. In our City, there are a lot of people and organizations that are available to help people with whatever they are struggling with. So I encourage you to take the step and ask for some help, or to lend an ear to listen, or a shoulder to lean on. That is what a community is for. Hopefully, at some point we can all say it's going to be a great New Year.

As always, it's your City - get out and embrace it! Go Pack go! ~

Dan Toland

2015 Park and Recreation Activity Guide

The River Falls Park and Recreation 2015 Activity Guide will be inserted in the Western Wisconsin Buyer's Guide in mid-March. The activity guide can also be viewed on the City's website, www.rfcity.org. The edition will be packed with programs and activities to help keep you and your family occupied throughout the spring and summer with a healthy balance of recreation, entertainment, and fun.

The City is also excited to offer free online registration that is user friendly. Go to www.rfcity.org and click on "Department", then the "Park & Recreation" link. If you have questions regarding activities anytime during the year, please call the River Falls Park and Recreation Department at 715-425-0924. ~

The River Falls Police Department, in coordination with local businesses, invites residents to attend "Coffee with a Cop." This is an opportunity for citizens on a monthly basis to have a chance to ask questions, voice concerns and get to know the officers of the Police Department.

Upcoming dates include: January 9, March 25, and May 14. Please view the calendar on the City's website (www.rfcity.org) or contact the Police Department at 715-425-0909 for future dates and locations. Please stop in for a cup of coffee and some pleasant and informative discussion. ~



Inside This Issue

Calendar of Events	2
Property Tax Information	2
Wisconsin Lottery and Gaming Credit.....	2
2015 Emergency Weather Warning Siren Test Dates.....	3
Celebrate Spring	3
Arbor Day 2015	3
RFEMS to Provide Service to Prescott	3
Library Programs/Events	4-5
Join the Library Foundation.....	5
Tax Forms Available at Library	5
River Falls is a Bird City Community	6
River Falls Citizen Survey Happening Summer 2015.....	6
Open Book and Board of Review	6
City Council Adopts 2015 Strategic Plan.....	7
River Falls Plans for a Citywide Revaluation in 2015.....	7
2015 Dog Licenses/Tags.....	7
Construction Updates at UW-River Falls.....	8
2015-2016 Budget Adopted.....	9
Cascade Avenue Project Receives International Recognition	10
City Recognized as 2014 Outstanding Public Agency... ..	10
City Employees Help the Community.....	10
Pickleball - What's the Game with the Funny Name.....	11
Solar Garden Creation.....	11
Radio Road Interchange Completion	12
Park Master Plan.....	12
Hoffman Park Safe Room	12
Water Impact and Sewer Connection Fees.....	13
The City's YouTube Channel ...	13
And That's A Rap	13
Property Fraud Alert	13
2015 POWERful Choices! Programs for Residential Customers.....	14
Help RFMU Be #1!	14
New E-Bill Paperless Billing... ..	14
Utility Customer Information ..	14
Annual Report for Storm Water	15
Christmas Tree Pick Up	15
Sidewalks to be Kept Clear	15
Adopt-A-Hydrant	15
Odd/Even Parking.....	16
Mayor and Common Council ..	16

Calendar of Events

November 1-March 31	.....	Odd/Even Parking in Effect
December 21-February 1	.....	NASA Voyages of Discovery at library
January 1	.....	City Offices and Library Closed
January 2-16	.....	Christmas Tree Curbside Pick Up
January 6	.....	Middle School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
January 12, 19	.....	Lego Afternoons, 4 p.m. at library
January 12-April 28	.....	Babytime on Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. at library
January 12-April 28	.....	Toddler Lapsit on Tuesdays, 10:45 a.m. library
January 13	.....	High School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12	.....	Adult Book Club, 6:30 p.m. location to be announced
January 14-April 30	.....	Thursday Preschool Storytime, at 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. at library
January 19	.....	Out of School Event, 10:30 a.m. at library
January 20	.....	4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19	.....	Adult Book Club, 10 a.m. location to be announced
January 28	.....	History of NASA by Dr. Eileen Korenic, 7 p.m. at library
January 31	.....	Property Taxes Due at County
February 1-March 8	.....	River Falls Reads
February 9, 23	.....	Lego Afternoons, 4-5 p.m. at library
February 3	.....	Middle School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
February 4	.....	Memories of Civil Rights Leader by Julie Draves, 7 p.m. at library
February 8-March 8	.....	Quilts: Putting the Pieces Together at library
February 8	.....	Quilt Show Reception, 2-4 p.m. at library
February 10	.....	'Common Core' Educational Standards, 7:30 p.m. at library
February 10	.....	High School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
February 16	.....	Out of School Event, 10:30 a.m. at library
February 17	.....	Primary Election (if needed)
February 17	.....	4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
March 3	.....	Middle School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
March 7	.....	Dr. Seuss Read Across America, 10:30 a.m. at library
March 9, 23	.....	Lego Afternoons, 4-5 p.m. at library
March 10	.....	High School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
March 10	.....	The Mildred Fish-Harnack Story, 7 p.m. at library
March 15-April 19	.....	It's a Wrap: Wisconsin Regional Art Project at library
March 15	.....	It's a Wrap: Wisconsin Regional Art Project Reception, 2-4 p.m. at library
March 17	.....	St. Patrick's Day Celebration (see www.rfchamber.com)
March 17	.....	4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
March 18-25	.....	5th Annual Peeps Diorama Contest at library
March 23	.....	Emergency Weather Warning Siren Test Date, 1 p.m.
March 23-April 27	.....	Foreign Film Series, 7 p.m. at library
April 3, 4, 5	.....	City Offices and Library Closed
April 6, 20	.....	Lego Afternoons, 4-5 p.m. at library
April 7	.....	Spring Election, Polls Open, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
April 7	.....	Middle School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
April 10-12	.....	River Falls Roots and Bluegrass Festival (see www.rfchamber.com)
April 14	.....	High School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
April 16	.....	Emergency Weather Warning Siren Test Date, 1:45 p.m.
April 19	.....	Poetry Open Mic Night, 7 p.m. at library
April 21	.....	4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group, 4:15 p.m. at library
April 26-May 30	.....	Creative Kids: The Annual All School Art Show, at library
April 27	.....	Civil War in Camp and on the Homefront, 7 p.m. at library
May 2	.....	International Migratory Bird Day, time TBA, at City Hall
May 5	.....	Middle School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
May 7	.....	Canoeing Wild Rivers, 7 p.m. at library
May 12	.....	High School Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library
May 18	.....	Emergency Weather Warning Siren Test Date, 1 p.m.
May 19	.....	4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group, 4 p.m. at library

2014-2015 Property Tax Payments

Reminder – property taxes are due January 31. Payments should be made to your County Treasurer (the name and address is printed on the tax bill). Both counties offer the ability to pay with credit cards, and to make online payments.

Property taxes can be made in two installments with the first payment due January 31 and the second payment due July 31.

The counties also have online tax information for current and previous years at the following sites:

- Pierce County: http://www.co.pierce.wi.us/Treasurer/Treasurer_Main.php
Phyllis Beastrom, County Treasurer,
715-273-6743
- St. Croix County: <http://stcroixcowi.wgxtreme.com/>
Laurie Noble, County Treasurer,
715-386-4645

City staff will continue to answer questions regarding the property tax process and will help with other tax related issues.

Name changes on property records

The City cannot make name or address changes to your tax bills. Contact your County Treasurers Office for information on how to make the needed changes. ~

Wisconsin Lottery and Gaming Credit

To qualify for the lottery and gaming credit on your property tax bill, you must be a Wisconsin resident, the owner of the dwelling, and use the dwelling as your primary residence as of the certification date (January 1, 2014). The lottery and gaming credit cannot be claimed on business property, rental units, vacant land, garages, or other property that is not the primary residence of the owner.

If your property tax bill does not include the Wisconsin Lottery and Gaming Credit, and it was used as a primary residence on January 1, 2014, contact your County Treasurer to get information and a form to apply for a late lottery and gaming credit. You may qualify for the credit if you purchased your home after January 1, 2014, and the previous owner used it as his/her primary residence.

Additional information is available on the Wisconsin Department of Revenue website <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/slf/lotcr.html> or 806-266-0772.

- Pierce County Treasurer:
Phyllis Beastrom 715-273-3531
- St. Croix County Treasurer:
Laurie Noble 715-386-4645 ~

2015 Emergency Weather Warning Siren Test Dates



In conjunction with the National Weather Service and the State of Wisconsin's Severe Weather Awareness Week April 13-17, 2015, the City of River Falls will be testing the outdoor warning siren system on Thursday, April 16, 2015. If actual severe or threatening weather occurs, the test will be postponed until Friday, April 17.

Listed below is the audible test schedule for 2015. The test day is Monday (except for Thursday, April 24). If severe or threatening weather exists on any of the scheduled dates, the test will be the next day (Tuesday) at the same time.

- **March 23, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, March 24, 1 p.m.
- **April 16, 1:45 p.m.** - Make-up date – Friday, April 17, 1:45 p.m.
- **May 18, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, May 19, 1 p.m.
- **June 22, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, June 23, 1 p.m.
- **July 27, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, July 28, 1 p.m.
- **August 24, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, August 25, 1 p.m.
- **September 28, 1 p.m.** - Make-up date – Tuesday, September 29, 1 p.m.

On duty staff at the River Falls Police Department monitor developing weather conditions and initiate activation of the weather sirens based on the following protocol:

- When conditions exist indicating immediate danger of a tornado or severe thunderstorm.
- If the National Weather Service issues a tornado or severe thunderstorm warning, and such conditions are threatening locally.
- When local law enforcement from the area advise of approaching severe weather conditions, sightings of tornadoes or high winds.
- If storm conditions exist, and public sightings of tornadoes or high winds are reported locally.

Please note: the City of River Falls does not sound an "all clear" after an actual activation of the outdoor warning system.

All community members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with safe practices regarding severe weather. Information can be obtained at the National Weather Service website at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/safety.php> or Wisconsin Emergency Management website at: <http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov> or by calling the River Falls Police Department. ~



Arbor Day 2015

River Falls observes the Arbor Day tradition every year on the last Friday in April. The 2015 observance will be held on April 24 and will be celebrated with school children planting trees in one of our City parks. The City also encourages citizens to celebrate with their own tree planting activities that contribute to a green and healthy City. ~

Celebrate Spring!

March 17 – St. Paddy's Day Celebration

Follow the rainbow to downtown River Falls to celebrate St. Paddy's Day! Kick off the festivities with the Pot 'O Gold Medallion Hunt as clues are revealed throughout the day. Partake in the Poker Walk and indulge in the Potato Soup Cook-off by sampling delicious, comforting soups from participating businesses. Cheer on favorite teams as beds race through historic River Falls. Sponsored by the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau. Details at www.rfchamber.com.

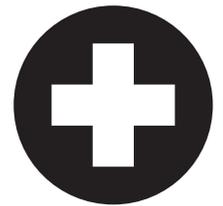


April 10 – 12 – River Falls Roots & Bluegrass Music Festival

Enjoy three days of Bluegrass, Roots and Cajun music at multiple venues in the heart of downtown River Falls. Sample craft beers and local wines at the Second Annual Beer & Wine Tasting. Join in on free foot-stomping workshops and open jam sessions. Cheer on your favorite artist during musical competitions. Sponsored by the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau. Details at www.riverfallsbluegrass.com. ~



RF EMS to Provide Service to Prescott



A service agreement was reached between the Prescott Area Fire and EMS Association and the City of River Falls for River Falls Area Ambulance Service to provide full time EMS Service to Prescott and the surrounding area effective January 1, 2015. This agreement provides for an ambulance to be stationed in Prescott and staffed on site by two EMTs with a Paramedic that can respond from River Falls (if needed). The term of the agreement is for three years from the effective date.

River Falls will collect an annual payment of \$18 per capita from Prescott Area Fire and EMS Association, which will provide approximately \$130,000 in funding for the Ambulance Service. In addition, one hundred percent of the revenue from calls to Prescott will be used to support the combined ambulance operation. By consolidating the two services, EMS operations will be enhanced in both areas and additional staffing and equipment will be available for both cities. River Falls will acquire one ambulance, two powered ambulance cots, and a defibrillator/heart monitor from the Prescott service.

Because the percentage of calls to Prescott has been steadily increasing for the River Falls Area Ambulance Service, now is an opportune time for the service consolidation. Management of the consolidated service will remain with RFAAS Director Jeff Rixmann. The City of River Falls welcomes this opportunity to formalize its commitment of service to the community. ~



Library Programs and Events Winter/Spring 2015

Check the library website www.riverfallspubliclibrary.org/events.html or our Facebook page for the most up-to-date information and events not included in this list or call 715-425-0905. Library programs are free of charge. Registration is not required unless noted.

Closed Dates

January 1 and April 3, 4, 5



Drop boxes will be open; renew materials online at the MORE website, www.more.lib.wi.us or by calling Telephone renewal 1-866-697-3639.

River Falls Reads 2015

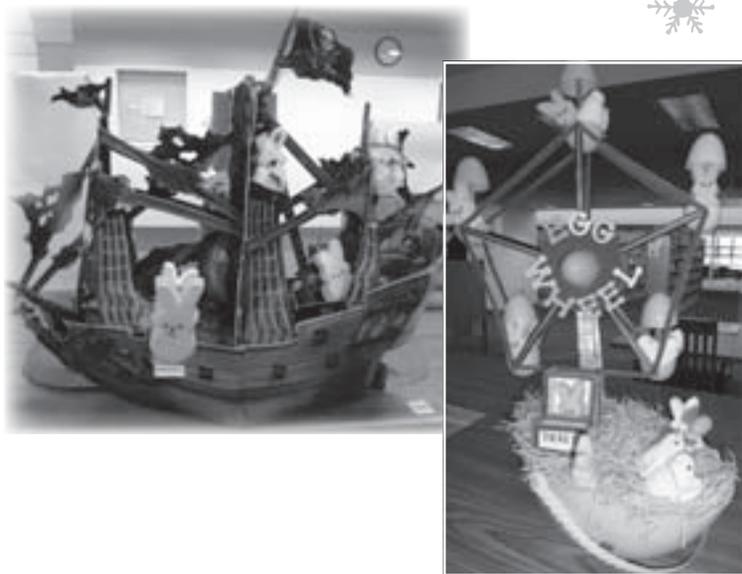


February 1 – March 8, 2015

Join us for a One Book, One Community reading event. The book for this year is Ben Logan's *The Land Remembers*, a classic American memoir of boyhood on a southwestern Wisconsin hilltop farm in the 1930s, where Logan and his brothers discussed, argued, and joked over the events around their farm, marked the seasons by the demands of the land, tested each other and themselves, and grew up learning timeless lessons. Programs and dates have not finalized as of press time, but on February 24, author Jerry Apps will be speaking about his latest book, *The Great Sand Fracas of Adams County*, and on March 6, Donald Worster, one of the founders and leading figures in the field of Environmental History, will talk about the Dust Bowl of the 1930s and the lessons that disaster might hold for us today. Please pick up a flyer at the library, or check the library website for further information on the book we will be reading, programs and events, book discussions, and film titles.

5th Annual Peeps Diorama Contest

Another helping of fun—show off your creativity, and your ability to make anything related to marshmallow chicks and bunnies. Entries should be no bigger than 18”X18” and must include at least one Peep. Imagination and bad puns are encouraged, but please keep in mind that the library is a family-friendly place. Earn a brand new toothbrush for your entry - courtesy of our local dentists. Entries due by closing Wednesday March 18. Judging Thursday, March 19. Peeples' Choice Voting March 19-25. All Winners announced March 26.



Books and Beverages Adult Book Club

The River Falls Public Library is offering two adult book discussion options: Books & Beans, a morning group that meets the third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. and Second Tuesday, an evening group that meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Books can be requested and checked out through the MORE consortium at the library, or participants can bring their own copy. Book titles will be selected by the group. Discussions will be led by a library staff member. Meeting locations to be announced. No sign up is required. For more information about the new book clubs, contact Heather Johnson at 715-425-0905 ext. 660.

Children/Youth Programs

The **High School Book Discussion Group** meets the second Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. Upcoming dates are January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, and May 12. The group is open to students in 9-12 grade.

The **Middle School Book Discussion Group** meets the first Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. Upcoming dates are January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, and May 5. The group is open to students in 6-8 grade.

The **4th-5th Grade Book Discussion Group** meets the third Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. Upcoming dates are January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, and May 19. Books are selected by group members. Participants sign an agreement to attend the discussion and receive a copy of the book to keep.

Legos Afternoons (grades K-5)

Lego time will be held on every other Monday afternoons from 4-5 p.m. Join us for a fun hour of building Lego creations at the Library. We provide the Legos, you provide the imagination. Please register by stopping by or calling the children's desk; limited to 20 children per session. Dates: January 12, 19; February 9, 23; March 9, 23; April 6, 20.

Out of School Day Events



The library will be sponsoring a special event or craft session on no-school days. Check the library website for details as the date approaches. Dates: January 19, 10:30 a.m.; February 16, 10:30 a.m.

Winter Story Times

Stories, songs, action rhymes, and lots of fun! Pre-registration required. Class sizes are limited. Registration begins August 25.

- **Babytime** (0-23 months & caregiver – Tuesdays 9:30-9:50 a.m. Dates: January 12-April 28
- **Toddler Lapsit** (24–36 months & caregiver) – Tuesdays 10:45-11:15 a.m. Dates: January 12-April 28
- **Preschool Story Time** (3-5 year olds) Thursdays 10:30-11:15 a.m. or 1:00-1:45 p.m. Dates: January 14-April 30
- **Family Story Hour** (geared for up to 5 years but open to all) Third Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. Dates: March 24, April 21, May 19

Dr. Seuss Birthday Party – Read Across America – March 7, 10:30 a.m. Celebrate Dr. Seuss with a craft and game event.

Paws to Read – Make an appointment to read with a therapy-trained dog. Visit Children's Desk for details.

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Want to do something great with your child to help them get ready to read? Enroll in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program at the Library! This is a passive, individual program. Set your own pace. The goal is to read 1000 books together before your child starts school - one book before bedtime is 1000 books in three years. If you enroll when your child is four, three books every day will get you to 1000 in just one year! The library has lots of information on why reading with your child is so important, and you will earn some incentives along the way. Stop by the Children's Desk and talk to Monica to register or with questions.

(continued on page 5)

Library Programs and Events

(continued from page 4)

Events and Programs

Up, Up and Away! A History of NASA by UWRF Physics Professor Dr. Eileen Korenic–January 28, 7 p.m. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) took its current form in 1958 as the U.S. response to the Soviet satellite Sputnik I. The space race between the two super powers has a seesawing history with triumphs and losses on both sides. NASA's accomplishments include both technological and human knowledge advances that are fascinating and ongoing.

Memories of a Civil Rights Leader–February 4, 7 p.m. Julie Draves, veteran of the 1960s Civil Rights rallies and marches, talks about her first-hand experiences and meetings with some of the big names in the struggle for racial equality.

A Look at 'Common Core' Educational Standards–February 10, 7:30 p.m. This informational program addresses the standards development, content, intent, implementation, and efficacy.

Wisconsin's Nazi Resistance: The Mildred Fish-Harnack Story–March 10, 7 p.m. A Wisconsin native with a strange name and an amazing story of heroism, Mildred Fish-Harnack, was the only American woman executed on the direct orders of Adolf Hitler. The documentary follows Fish-Harnack from birth in Milwaukee to 1930s Germany and to her eventual arrest and execution in 1942.

Foreign Film Series–Mondays, March 23–April 27, 7 p.m. See award-winning current and classic international films. Free popcorn.

Poetry Open Mic Night–April 9, 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome to read. Come enjoy a great evening of listening or sharing.

In Time of War: Civil War in Camp and on the Homefront–April 27, 7 p.m. Singer and storyteller Judy Cook weaves excerpts from her great-great-grandparents' letters to each other with favorite songs of the Civil War to tell the story of those whose lives were torn apart by this terrible conflict now 150 years in our past.

Canoeing Wild Rivers–May 7, 7 p.m. Expedition leader, outdoor writer, and consultant, Cliff Jacobson, will talk about canoeing wild rivers. Cliff's presentations are fast-moving and action-packed, as well as chock full of vital information for anyone going out into the wilderness.

In the Lower Level Kleinpell Gallery

NASA: Voyages of Discovery–December 21–February 1

Cool artifacts and great photos tell the story of this 100-year-old institution's efforts to take us to the moon, into space, and keep us in the air. Watch for some great associated programming with this show.

Quilts: Putting the Pieces Together–February 8–March 8; Opening Reception is February 8, 2-4 p.m.

This annual quilt exhibit is always a favorite, bringing warmth and color to those cold late-winter days.

It's A Wrap! Wisconsin Regional Art Project–March 15–April 19
Opening Reception is March 15, 2-4 p.m. This show is one of many held throughout the state in preparation for the WRAP's annual statewide show held in Madison each fall, which includes artwork chosen from each of the regional shows. It's the equivalent of "Going to State" for artists!

Creative Kids: The Annual All-school Art Show–April 26–May 30
Hundreds of colorful and creative pieces by area students. What fun! ~

Join the River Falls Library Foundation



If you want to do something nice for the library, join the Library Foundation!

The River Falls Library Foundation provides funding and support for projects outside of the scope of the library's regular budget. The Foundation has played a major role in all the library's building projects, including the current building (1997), lower level construction (2003), and the 2009 remodeling project. They also provided half the funding for the electronic signboard. The Foundation underwrites the cost of the children's annual Summer Library Program, funds library technology purchases, financially supports programming and gallery exhibits, and purchases new bestsellers, as well as other projects as requested by staff. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization. The board invites community members to become members of this worthy undertaking by joining the River Falls Library Foundation. Annual membership is just \$5 for individuals and \$15 for families. Membership forms are available at the Public Library. They can be returned there, or sent to the Foundation at P.O. Box 592, River Falls, WI 54022. Also watch for a couple of fun Foundation fundraisers being planned for this year. There will be mini-golf in the library in April, and a fun run in October. Watch for details in coming months. If you would like more information, you can pick up a brochure at the library, or contact a board member (listed on the library's website <http://www.riverfallspubliclibrary.org>). ~



Tax Forms Available at the Public Library

Free Federal and State tax forms and instructions will be available in the lobby of the library beginning early January. Staff puts out forms as soon as they are received, so if the form you want isn't there, we don't have it yet.

Reproducible forms and instructions will be available in the reference area by the information desk. The copier is self-service and copies are 10¢ per page. You can also go to the websites listed below and print them out at the library or at home.

To find forms online, visit the following websites:

Federal forms:

- Internal Revenue Service www.irs.gov

Wisconsin forms:

- Wisconsin Department of Revenue www.dor.state.wi.us

Minnesota forms:

- Minnesota Department of Revenue taxes.state.mn.us/Pages/index.aspx

Links to other states' Department of Revenue:

<http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/link/>

For a listing of helpful agencies, phone numbers, and websites, go to the library's webpage, www.riverfallspubliclibrary.org, and click on the 'Helpful Links' button on the left side of the page, or call the library, 715-425-0905.

Please note: The library staff cannot answer specific tax questions or help you fill out your taxes. Nor can they help you determine which forms you need. If you need assistance, please consult a tax professional. ~

River Falls is a Bird City Community

City of River Falls is a Charter Bird City Wisconsin Community and is a four year member. In less than four years, Bird City Wisconsin has saluted 87 Wisconsin communities and enlisted them in a long-term commitment to work with residents to make their neighborhoods a better place for people, birds and other wildlife.



Modeled on the "Tree City USA" program, Bird City Wisconsin developed 22 criteria across five categories, including habitat creation and protection, community forest management, limiting hazards, public education, and recognizing International Migratory Bird Day. If a community meets at least seven criteria, it becomes an official "Bird City." The City of River Falls has consistently met ten of the criteria and has been recognized for being in the forefront of efforts to forge a statewide coalition of citizens and public officials who know that birds are more than beautiful -- they are significant. This recognition not only promotes strategies for bird-centered conservation activities, it also presents the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live, conduct their business or ask people to come visit.



The Steering Committee of Bird City Wisconsin has specifically given recognition to the level of cooperation that exists between the City and the St. Croix Valley Bird Club, at both the direct conservation activity level (enlarging habitat) and in promoting educational activities through bird walks and the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. International Migratory Bird Day is held each year on the first Saturday of May. Information on this year's celebration can be found in the City Park and Recreation Activity Guide sent to each household in mid-March. ~

Voter Registration

Wisconsin Act 182 requires that voters provide a document establishing their proof of residence as part of the voter registration application. The requirement applies to all electors who are not military or permanent overseas electors whether they register to vote online, in person, or by mail. Acceptable documents include a current and valid Wisconsin driver's license or identification card, bank statement, paycheck, and utility bill. The document must contain the voters name and current address. A full list of acceptable documents and the voter registration application can be found on the City of River Falls website at www.rfcity.org/elections.

Individuals who have had a change of address since the last time they voted, must complete a voter registration application and submit a document establishing their proof of residence. Please call the Clerk's Office at (715) 426-3408 or (715) 426-3419 for details.

Absentee voting by mail - in order to receive an absentee ballot by mail, you must be a registered voter, and request the ballot in writing. Your absentee ballot request can be used for all elections in the same year.

Absentee voting in the Clerk's Office is available to registered voters the last two full weeks prior to an election. The hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Spring General Election is April 7, 2015. If needed, there will be a Preliminary Election on February 17, 2015. ~

River Falls Citizen Survey Happening Summer 2015

The City of River Falls will be continuing its partnership with the National Research Center and conducting a survey of River Falls residents this coming summer. Planned at regular two-year intervals, the first comprehensive citizen survey was conducted in 2013, which included responses from 380 households. The services identified as most important to respondents were economic development, the preservation of natural areas, and public schools. These key drivers and other survey responses have had a direct impact on the decisions by City leaders since 2013.

For 2015, the City will be using the National Citizen Survey, which was developed by the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) and the National Research Center (NRC). Since 2001, ICMA and NRC have helped municipalities across the nation develop and administer statistically significant citizen surveys. By conducting a comprehensive survey of local residents, the National Citizen Survey allows for the collection of valuable information for municipalities to utilize during their decision making processes. Additionally, by utilizing the National Citizen Survey, the City of River Falls will be able to benchmark to cities all across the country and our own past responses.

In 2015, over 1,000 randomly selected households will be surveyed. Selected households will receive a pre-survey postcard in late May that will advise they have been selected to participate in the City of River Falls Citizen Survey. About one week later, the household will receive their survey to complete. When the survey arrives, please follow the instructions included with the survey and return the survey directly to the National Research Center. The City will not review or see any individual completed surveys submitted by residents. The final results will be sent to the City at the beginning of August 2015. The City Council will review these results at its September 8, 2015, regular meeting.

The results of the 2015 Citizen Survey will be used to guide future decision making and help identify the key areas of importance and those that need improvement. City leaders and staff are committed to continuous improvements in our service delivery and resident satisfaction. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey or its process, please contact Ray French, Management Analyst, either by phone at 715-426-3437 or email at rfrench@rfcity.org. More information on the 2015 survey and the 2013 results can be found at <http://www.rfcity.org/citizensurvey>. ~

Open Book and Board of Review



The City usually holds Open Book in May and Board of Review in June. The City has contracted with Associated Appraisal for a revaluation of all properties in the City, which will delay the Open Book and Board of Review until later in the year. All property owners within the City will receive a notice from the Assessor regarding their 2015 assessed value. The notice will also list the date of the Open Book and Board of Review. If a property owner objects to that assessment, they may appeal the assessment with the Assessor at Open Book or with the Board of Review. ~

City Council Adopts 2015 Strategic Plan

At its December 9, 2014, meeting, the City Council adopted the City's first comprehensive Strategic Plan. The 2015 Strategic Plan will be a guide for the development of future work plans, the investment of City resources, and where the City's leadership and staff focuses its energy. It was developed following Council workshops and discussions with the senior leadership team.



The 2015 Strategic Plan includes the following goals and initiatives:

1. Promote Economic Vitality (Managed Growth)
 - Identifying private sector commercial land development partners
 - Encouraging job growth
 - Developing Sterling Ponds Corporate Park
 - Developing the Regional Business Incubator
 - Securing future growth opportunities (boundary agreements)
2. Connecting Community Members (Places and Spaces)
 - Positioning our parks for the future
 - Enhancing Kinnickinnic River corridor
3. Considering Future Generations (Sustainability)
 - Cultivating a sustainable community
 - Leading by example in energy sustainability
 - Monitoring infrastructure condition
 - Delivering a package of services that is affordable
4. Consistently Deliver Quality Municipal Services (Operations)
 - Maintaining a high performance workforce
 - Maintaining high resident satisfaction of life in River Falls
 - Maintaining high resident satisfaction in City's customer service
5. Ensure Financial Sustainability (Finance)
 - Preparing for financial contingencies
 - Maintaining diverse revenue sources
 - Maintaining an excellent credit rating
 - Maintaining vibrant business-type activities

To monitor the City's progress toward meeting the goals, quarterly updates are planned. More information on the details and measures of the 2015 Strategic Plan can be found at www.rfcity.org/strategicplanning.



River Falls Plans for a Citywide Revaluation in 2015

Property owners will be receiving a formal introductory letter from City's Assessor, Associated Appraisal, notifying them that they will be in the community soon to complete a citywide assessment. The assessor will be easily identifiable by the company logo, name badge, and will also have a letter of introduction from the City. The Assessor will need to view your property, but will not enter any property without the consent of the owner. If the property owner is not available, the assessor will leave a notice on the door with instructions for the owner to make an appointment for a review.

The City Assessor's Office is responsible for estimating the market value of all locally assessable property in the City of River Falls. An assessment roll is generated listing all taxable property. The assessment roll describes the property, states the assessed value as of January 1st and lists the owner's name and address.

There are many forces in the marketplace that affect a property's value. The assessor is interested in determining the value based on the price a knowledgeable buyer would pay for a piece of property. As defined by Wisconsin State Statute, assessors must value property at "full value." "Full Value" has been defined by the courts as synonymous with market value, which is "the most probable price, in cash or its equivalent, which a property would bring in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale: a willing buyer and a willing seller. Note that market value is neither the highest nor the lowest price paid, but the 'most probable price'. Buyers and sellers, through their market transactions, tell assessors important factors and trends taking place in the market, these sales between buyers and sellers that are also used in determining assessed values.

The goal of a revaluation is to create uniform, equitable and fair assessments so that each property bears its share of the property tax burden on an annual basis. These values will be used to compute property tax statements in December.

2015 Dog Licenses/Tags



A reminder to dog owners to please license your dog (ages five months and up). The City will need your current rabies vaccination record. The record must include the vaccination's date, serial number, expiration date, manufacturer, and also whether the dog is spayed or neutered.

The license fee for a spayed/neutered dog is \$5 and \$10 for intact dogs. Please note that licenses issued after March 31 will include a \$5 late fee unless you have owned your dog for less than 30 days. Licenses are issued at City Hall during regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

You can also receive your license through the mail if that is more convenient. Please include a copy of the rabies record, your name, phone number, the appropriate fee and mail to: Dog License, City of River Falls, 222 Lewis Street, Suite 207, River Falls, WI 54022. The license and tag will be returned to you by mail. If you have any questions, please call Bridget Hieb at 715-426-3419.

Construction Updates at UW-River Falls

If you have driven on South Main Street recently, you have undoubtedly noticed a considerable amount of construction work on the UW-River Falls campus. Two long-awaited projects are taking place simultaneously - a renovation of Smith Stadium at Ramer Field and the Falcon Center.

The first phase of the Smith Stadium renovation, the installation of field turf, has been completed. The River Falls High School and UW-River Falls football teams played their first games on the new turf in October. Additional renovations, including the addition of a new press box, will be completed prior to the start of the 2015 football season.

Construction of the Falcon Center, the largest building project in the history of UW-River Falls, began in August. Phase I of the project includes substantial site work including the creation of a new entrance and aligning the new entrance with the Main Street entrance to Dick's Fresh Market. Phase II, construction of the Falcon Center building, will begin next year and will continue into 2017.

The Falcon Center is a new 162,300 GSF building for the Health and Human Performance programs, athletics, and student recreation as an addition to the existing Hunt/Knowles complex. The building includes classrooms, a human performance laboratory, a large gymnasium (Don Page Arena), dance studio, auxiliary gym, offices, locker rooms, training rooms, and other supporting spaces. The project also remodels approximately 14,670 GSF of space in the existing Hunt/Knowles complex.

In addition to greatly enhancing student life, education, research, health, wellness, and experiential learning, the Falcon Center will provide numerous benefits to the River Falls community including:

- Community members will continue to have access to Recreational Facilities via Membership privileges, but greater opportunities as a result of the fitness center, personal training and group exercise training
- Qualified subjects may benefit from cardiac rehab programs led by the Health and Human Performance department and/or other programs such as health assessments and screenings
- Greater access to recreation and athletic facilities for youth teams and adult leagues, practices, and/or contests
- Opportunity to utilize the new climbing and bouldering wall as well as the Outdoor Adventures rental center
- Spectators can expect a more fulfilling game-day experience with the new Page Arena and improvements to Hunt Ice Arena
- Expanded opportunities for court sports with the addition of a new auxiliary gym
- Ability to host large conventions, conferences, and tournaments with the increased locker room space, new practice and competition areas, storage space, and meeting and hospitality rooms
- Overall increase in facility usage due to increased activities that will inherently increase business to local businesses in general.

More information on the Smith Stadium at Ramer Field and Falcon Center projects, including frequent construction progress updates is available at <http://www.uwrf.edu/FalconCenter>. ~



Photos: Architectural renderings show the exterior of the Falcon Center from the south and west and the inside of the new Don Page Arena.



2015-2016 Budget Adopted

In 2014, the City Council approved the first biennial budget for the City of River Falls. The newly approved budget will cover the calendar years of 2015 and 2016. The five-year fiscal and established fiscal policies serve as the foundation for the City's financial planning and control, biennial budget is the presentation of the projected revenues and expenses to responsibly carry out the policies and direction of the Mayor and City Council.

The City Council held two budget workshops to discuss the budget in detail, ask questions and to refine and prioritize spending. The first budget workshop focused on the General fund, Library and Ambulance budgets. The second budget workshop focused on Enterprise funds, including the Electric, Water and Sewer funds. As a result, the total approved budget for 2015 is \$38,673,216 and in 2016 the approved budget is \$38,344,366. Both years are less than the current 2014 budget.

The City receives funding from many different sources to provide the programmed services. The majority of the funding is from user fees for electric, water, sewer, and ambulance charges to customers. Other major sources include shared revenues and transportation aids from the State of Wisconsin. The graph below describes the funding sources by percentage as projected in the 2015-2016 budget. Property taxes make up 14 percent of the annual budget.

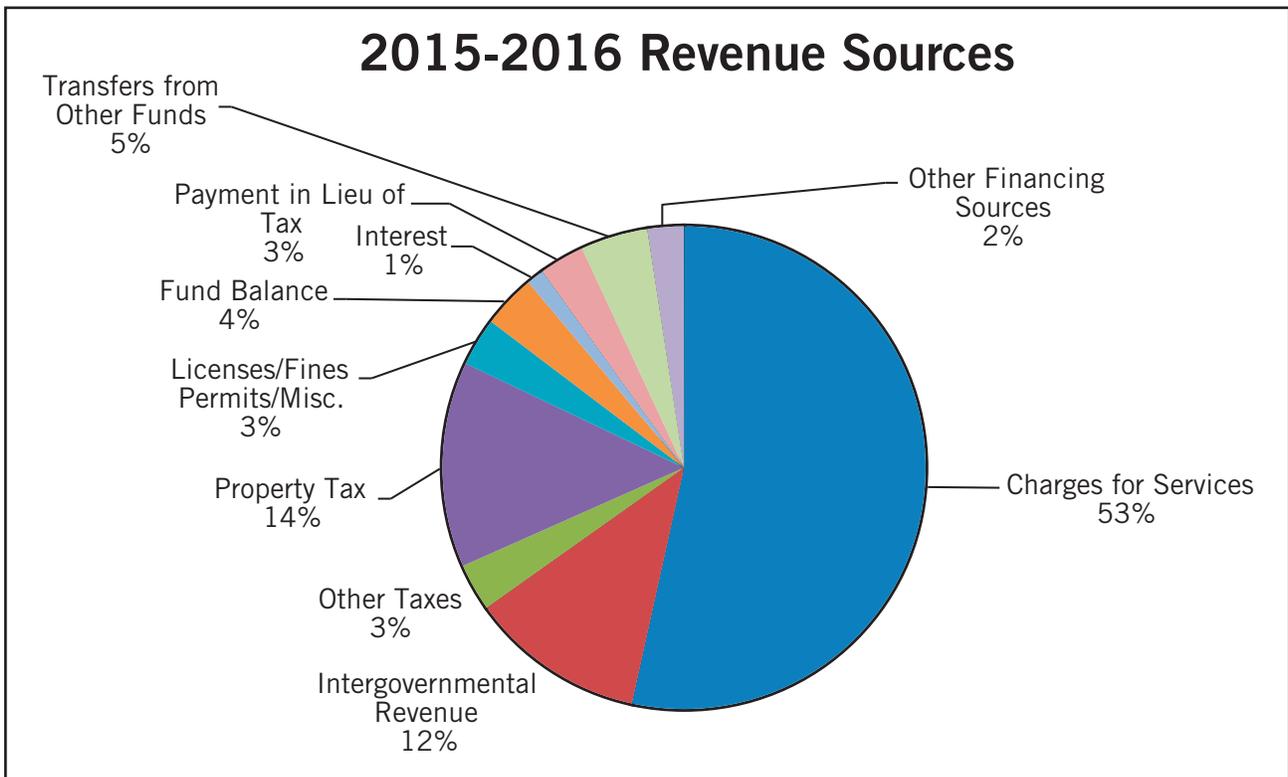
The 2015-2016 budget includes the addition of staff positions to address initiatives, begin department succession plan implementation, and strengthen service to the community. New staff that will be added in 2015 and 2016 include an additional Paramedic to serve as a training officer, full year of budgeting of a Police Officer (added in 2014), additional hours for an Account Clerk, IT Technician and Wastewater Apprentice. In 2016, an Assistant Engineer has been added to the budget. The 2015 budgeted full-time equivalent staffing is less than the level included in the 2009 budget.

Every two years, the Capital Improvement Plan is updated to reflect changes in capital projects in the City of River Falls. The City plans for replacement of equipment and vehicles as well as building and other infrastructure projects. The following major projects have been funded in the 2015-16 approved budget:

- Power Plant Substation Upgrades \$4,200,000
- Road Improvements Chapman Drive-County Road U to STH 35 \$1,200,000
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements \$1,000,000
- Replacement Fire Engine \$ 600,000
- South Paulson Road Improvements \$ 308,000
- Hoffman Park Safe Room \$ 300,000
- Hoffman Park Improvements \$ 250,000

Major projects are included in the Capital Improvement Plan and the budget, however, there will be continued discussion and approvals by the City Council as the projects progress. Citizen input is always welcome before, during and after the budget process.

The complete approved 2015-2016 budget can be found at www.rfcity.org, at City Hall and at the Library. For questions, contact Julie Bergstrom, Finance Director at jbergstrom@rfcity.org.



Cascade Avenue Reconstruction Project Receives International Recognition

The American Public Works Association (APWA) recognized the City of River Falls (Managing Agency) along with Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) (Primary Consultant) and Haas Sons (Primary Contractor) for the Cascade Avenue Reconstruction Project at the 2014 APWA International Public Works Congress & Exposition in Toronto on August 18. The project was named Project of the Year for a transportation project of less than \$5 million. The project was co-nominated by the Minnesota and Wisconsin APWA state chapters. With a worldwide membership over 28,500 strong, APWA includes not only personnel from local, county, state/province, and federal agencies, but also private sector personnel who supply products and services to those professionals. There to receive the award from Larry Stevens, APWA President, were Reid Wronski, Director of Public Works/City Engineer and Dave Simons, Principal/Senior Project Manager, SEH. ~



City Recognized as 2014 Outstanding Public Agency

The City of River Falls was recently recognized as the 2014 Outstanding Public Agency at the Northwest Wisconsin Regional - American Planning Association (APA) meeting. The City was recognized for its collaboration with numerous stakeholders to ensure that the Sterling Ponds development meets the future needs of businesses and residents. Mike Huth, Nathan Schilling, and Josh Solinger all worked on the award nomination material to demonstrate how the City included numerous needs in planning the development.



In explaining why the City of River Falls received the award, the APA referenced the inclusion of trails and buffer zones that provide recreation options as well as a separation between residents and future businesses. In addition, the job growth that will occur as a result of the Corporate Park is a model in using planning to spur economic revitalization. The City is proud of its Sterling Ponds development and is pleased to receive the APA award on behalf of the citizens of River Falls. ~

City Employees Help the Community

The F.U.N. Committee (Fellowship, Unity, Networking) was formed with the goal of uniting City employees and finding ways to become more involved in our community. City staff participated in many activities throughout the year.

In June, City employees brought food for donation boxes, donated cash, or shopped at our Food Shelf Flash Mob event. A total of 317 lbs. of food and \$64 in cash was donated to the food shelf. Also in June, employees and their family helped in serving a meal for the Tuesday Banquet program at St. Bridget's Church.

In August, employees and community members donated several boxes full of school supplies to assist the Tuesday Banquet group in supplying our local children in need of school supplies. City employees volunteered to 'shop' with children for



the event held at St. Bridget's Church. Almost 300 children received free school supplies and a picnic lunch. Allina Health also supplied new tennis shoes for many of the children.



In September, City employees and family members rang the bells during the Bacon Bash event to help the Salvation Army get a jump on raising money for the holiday season. They raised over \$120 in a little over three hours! In November, employees participated in the Sharing Family program through the River Falls Journal. Many families were given a brighter Christmas through the generosity of those who adopted family members.

In December, City employees invited River Falls' residents to donate items to the local Food Shelf. All donations were collected and delivered just in time for the holiday season! The F.U.N. Committee looks forward to 2015 and continuing to support more of our local programs. ~

Pickleball – What’s This Game with the Funny Name?

Have you heard about pickleball lately? This sport with the funny name is exploding all across America, including in Wisconsin and most recently in River Falls. New courts at the old tennis court in Glen Park will be transformed into four pickleball courts by end of May 2015.

Pickleball is a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong. Its appeal is that it’s easy, fun, and a game everyone can play. The game is played on a hard-surface court, the size of a doubles badminton court. Each player uses a pickleball paddle, which is smaller than a tennis racquet but larger than a ping-pong paddle, to hit a ball that is similar to a whiffle ball over the net. The court is 20 feet by 44 feet, and the net height is 36 inches at the sidelines and 34 inches in the middle. Players alternate serving, with a “double-bounce” rule, and then volleying begins. The action is fast and fun. Games are generally played to 11 points. Doubles play is by far the most popular game, but singles play is also available. A game usually takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The program is low-cost, the ages of players vary from 17 to 87 years of age, and so multiple generations can play together. It’s not unusual to see grandparents, parents and children all playing pickleball together.

The benefits of pickleball are numerous — it’s great exercise; it increases coordination; it’s very social; it’s good for all ages; and last, but not least, the game is really fun! So look for a game in your neighborhood, and see what the pickleball excitement is all about! ~



Solar Garden Creation

The citizens of River Falls have shown a powerful appetite for renewable energy. We have consistently been ranked in the top 10 in the nation for customer participation in green power programs. We also have over 20 renewable energy projects installed around town. So as the demand for alternative, clean energy grows, River Falls Municipal Utilities continues to provide opportunities.

We’re proud to introduce the creation of a Solar Garden in River Falls. A solar garden is a field of solar panels connected to the grid with multiple subscribers. Subscribers purchase a portion of the power produced by the panels and receive a credit on their electric bill over a 20 year span.

Trees, bad roof angles, aging roofs, among other factors can all be barriers to installing solar on a home or business. The beauty of a solar garden is that any customer can now have renewable energy without the responsibilities of ownership. Residents, businesses, local governments, non-profits, and faith-based organizations, can now all subscribe to the sun, regardless of their solar access.

The solar garden will be built on one acre of otherwise unbuildable land on the south facing slope of a retention basin in the new Sterling Ponds

Corporate Park. By mid-year 2015, you’ll be able to see the garden on your drive towards Hudson on Highway 35. Customers will be able to buy a share in early 2015.

As a publicly-owned utility, we respond to the people of this community. Reliability, reasonable prices and environmental stewardship are what you get with public power. We’re happy to serve and lead the community now and into the future. ~



Radio Road Interchange Completion Opens Development in Sterling Ponds Corporate Park

With the opening of the Radio Road Interchange and the creation of Tax Increment District #10 in the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park in July 2014, construction began in August to establish the first buildable lots in the Park. That is all the dirt-moving you have been seeing in Sterling Ponds area!

The new corporate park will be very similar to the existing Whitetail Corporate Park across Highway 35, with similar type of tenants and buildings, and will include paved trails along the street. As part of the final restoration work for Radio Road, a crushed rock trail along Chapman Drive will be completed from Kingsbarn Avenue west to the paved trail at the interchange. The trail will be paved in the future, with reconstruction of Chapman Drive that is anticipated in 2016.

Work this fall has opened up nearly 40 acres of sites for corporate development. Crews have been working to prepare the roads, utilities, and install curb and gutter as part of Phase 1. The stream bed through the Park has also been enhanced and preserved for the sustainable development on the Park. Final paving and site restoration will be completed for Phase 1 this spring 2015.

For updates on the construction of the Park, see the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park project page at <http://www.rfcity.org/SPconstruction>.

For more information about locating your business in the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park, please contact Scot Simpson, City Administrator, at 715-426-3402. ~

Park Master Plan

Glen and Hoffman Parks have experienced significant demands from various user groups as the City has grown. The City Park Board has determined that there is a need for specific master plans for these two parks and the City Council has directed that a master plan be created to aid in future financial and activity type decisions that will be encountered.

In late summer of 2014, the City of River Falls hired HKGI from Minneapolis to aid our community in creating a Park Master Plan for Glen and Hoffman Parks. The park master plan will coordinate and guide future development for each of the parks. Last fall, HKGI, City staff, and committee members started to conduct the preliminary analysis of the parks. From there, the plan will be developed through a defined planning process that includes public participation to solicit the community's input.



The plan that develops from this process will be based on realistic projections, needs and demand for services, space and facilities in each park. It will identify and assess current uses, issues affecting the parks and it will prioritize the needs and develop an action program and strategy for decision makers. The plan will be organized in a format that is interesting, informative and attractive to the public, including graphic illustrations.

With the wide range of activities at each park location, the community's voice is integral in the planning process. To gain broader knowledge about how residents and park visitors use the parks, an online survey is being conducted. The survey can be accessed via the City of River Falls website. Survey results will help us gain input about the specific uses, activities, expectations and desires the community has for each of the parks. This information can also help us identify what is most important to the community and link this into funding and improvement prioritization. Community workshops will be held on January 15th and March 26th from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. at the River Falls Public Library, so we encourage anyone, of any age, to join us in the park planning process and discover what the vision of the parks will be for many years to come. Please watch for more details on the City of River Falls website, local news outlets, and through local civic organizations. ~

Hoffman Park Safe Room

In late 2013 the City received a significant grant from FEMA to construct a safe room in Hoffman Park. A safe room is a structure built to withstand winds up to 250 miles per hour. The safe room will be built near the First National Bank of River Falls Field and will provide shelter for up to 360 residents, visitors and campers during severe weather events. The structure has been designed to accommodate the access and functional needs of the park visitors and will be available for other uses yet to be determined. Construction will begin in the spring of 2015 and will be completed by fall. ~



HOFFMAN PARK SAFEROOM-WEST ELEVATION



Water Impact Fee/Sewer Connection Fee Changes

Effective January 1, 2015

At the October 28, 2014, River Falls Common Council meeting, the City Council voted to approve water impact fee/sewer connection fee changes effective January 1, 2015. Impact and connection fees are imposed to recover future capital costs, such as new water towers, wells, upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, and other major additions. The new rates will apply to building permits issued after January 1, 2015.

The City of River Falls has experienced and continues to expect population growth and significant residential, commercial, and industrial development. Trilogy Consulting was hired by the City to evaluate the City's water supply and sewer facilities needs and capital costs to serve the City through the year 2045.

Trilogy Consulting presented the report to the Utility Advisory Board and the City Council and recommended a standardized rate for both water impact and sewer connection fees to remove the economic incentive or disincentive to develop in a particular location. The fee for a typical single family home will be \$3,789 including both sewer and water fees. The new rate structure will decrease fees for most areas of the City except in the southwest area.

A complete list of water impact fees/sewer connection fees effective January 1, 2015, is available on the City's website: www.rfcity.org.

River Falls Facility Fun Facts

The City has 63.5 miles of water mains, five wells, two elevated towers and one storage reservoir.

The City's Wastewater Treatment Plant has a per day peak capacity of 1.80 million gallons. It has 13.2 miles of trunk sewers, 53 miles of collection sewer and five lift stations.

Property Fraud Alert

Property Fraud Alert is available free to St. Croix County residents. Property/mortgage fraud is the fastest-growing white collar crime in the country according to the FBI. By registering for Property Fraud Alert, you, as a St. Croix County property owner, will receive an e-mail or phone call alert whenever a document has been recorded under your name. For more information on how this alert works, use this link: <http://www.propertyfraudalert.com/AboutPropertyFraud.aspx>. To sign up for Property Fraud Alert go to www.propertyfraudalert.com. Contact Beth Pabst at the St. Croix County Register of Deeds Office, 715-286-4650 or beth.pabst@co.saint-croix.wi.co if you have additional questions.

Protecting our Water System Cross Connection Control Program

A cross connection may occur when a pipe designed to carry safe (potable) drinking water is connected to a pipe containing unsafe (non-potable) water or other liquid material. In this scenario, the non-potable water/liquid then has the potential to siphon (or backflow) into the potable system causing a threat for contamination. Minimizing the threat of a cross connection can help protect you and the community from a potential contamination.

The City of River Falls will be performing a Cross Connection Survey for all River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU) Water customers starting January 2015. This survey, required by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, will span over the next five years. The River Falls Water Utility will inspect when water meter service is required and/or by appointment. A Cross Connection informational brochure was sent to all River Falls water customers in December 2014. Watch for further information on your upcoming survey as your inspection date gets closer.

The City's YouTube Channel

Did you know the City has a YouTube Channel? When you subscribe, the City moves higher up on the Search Engines for YouTube, so people can find us when they search. Once you subscribe, you will get notifications of new videos added by Media Services.



You can subscribe to the City's YouTube Channel via this link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/cityofriverfalls>.

Check out the New Series—One Minute City Rap. You will see more of these One Minute videos coming in the future.

Note: The red "subscribe" button is in upper right hand corner. If you are not signed into YouTube, it will ask you to sign in or setup an account (it's a google account, so you may already have one). Thanks for subscribing to your City's YouTube Channel.

And That's a Rap!

Check Out the New One Minute Rap City Videos

It's a play on words and not everyone is "rapping", but City Raps gives citizens a quick look at different issues and topics around the City of River Falls and they can all be found on the City's YouTube page: www.youtube.com/cityofriverfalls. With an increased emphasis five years ago on the City communicating effectively with our residents (hence this newsletter) the City is now trying to get your attention with these short video blasts that inform, educate and entertain.

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, the average attention span of a human being has dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2013. This is one second less than the attention span of a goldfish. That's right, goldfish have an attention span of 9 seconds – 1 second more than a human.

The on-camera talent is quite surprisingly good here at City Hall. The Utility Director, Police Chief, City Engineer, Library Director, Community Development Director, City Administrator and the Mayor have been on camera talking about anything from automatic bill payments to where does your tax dollar go. We even had two employees literally rap about all the accolades River Falls has received and the various signs around town.

Viewers have really embraced these one minute City Raps and are learning important information in short bursts. A big benefit of social media is that these raps are easily shared so they have been getting passed around fairly vigorously. We hope you'll check out our City Raps and be in the know!

Below are some "tweets" about the City's 1 Minute Rap Videos.



2015 POWERful Choices! Programs for Residential Customers

Conservation and efficiency programs work for all customers and are good business for public power electric utilities, such as River Falls Municipal Utilities.

Here is a list of residential energy efficiency programs offered by POWERful Choices! in 2015:

- Home Energy Audits: Receive a home energy audit that includes a detailed report using infrared scanning, a blower and combustion safety test. This report makes you eligible for state and local incentives for some home energy improvements.
- Infrared Scanner: Check out our infrared scanner, free of charge, to view temperature differences in your home or business. Temperature changes will give an idea where cold air is entering your home.
- Express Energy Efficiency: Have a professional come into your home and install compact fluorescent light bulbs, low flow showerheads and faucet aerators at a great price – FREE!
- Energy Star Appliances: River Falls Municipal Utilities, a community owned, public power utility, will provide an incentive of \$25 in Chamber Checks per appliance on certain Energy Star appliances purchased from local retailers.
- Tree Power! Receive an incentive up to 50 percent of the cost of eligible trees.
- Programmable Thermostat: Receive an incentive up to 50 percent of the purchase, installation and programming of a programmable thermostat.
- CFL Recycling: River Falls Municipal Utilities will recycle CFL light bulbs for free.
- Refrigerator and Freezer Recycling: You can receive \$40 for that old refrigerator or freezer that is actually costing you lots of money in electricity.
- Central Air Tune Up: If your central air conditioner is more than three years old, you'll want to have it tuned up. This program will provide an incentive of up to \$25 in Chamber Checks toward a tune up.

For more information, contact Mike Noreen, Conservation and Efficiency Coordinator, at 715-426-3467 or check out www.RFMU.org. ~

Help RFMU Be #1!

Help River Falls be Number 1 in the state in customer participation in our renewable energy program. This year, we're giving you incentive options to become part of the program. By purchasing a block of renewable energy, you will receive a voucher for your choice of one of the following:

- Two LED light bulbs
- Two additional Led lights with the participation in the Express Energy Efficiency Program
- \$25 off a Home Energy Audit
- Receive an additional \$25 toward recycling your old refrigerator or freezer ~

NEW! E-Bill Paperless Billing

View your bill online instead of receiving a paper bill in the mail. It's simple and convenient; you can manage the entire bill-paying process online. Go paperless and sign up for e-bill today! Visit www.rfmu.org and click on Residential Services, Billing Information for detailed steps on how to sign up. ~

Utility Customer Information

Payments/Due Dates

Please remember that in order for us to process your payment in a timely manner, it must be in the Utility Office by 5 p.m. on the due date. Payments received after that time will be credited to the next business day and will be subject to a late fee. This includes payments made in person, by phone, on-line, or by drop box.

Bill pay options include:

FREE payment through ACH (pre-authorized payment never forgets to pay your bill on time). Automatically deduct your utility payment from your checking or savings account on the due date. Contact our office at 715-425-0906 or visit our web site at www.rfmu.org to sign up.

- Online with VISA, MasterCard, Discover or Check at www.rfmu.org
- By phone with check or credit/debit card 877-885-7968
- Drop Box – located in the City Hall parking lot. Check or money orders only, no cash. Include the tear off portion of your statement to insure accuracy in payment processing.
- Mail – a return envelope is included with your statement each month.
- In person office hours are Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you are unable to make your payment on time, please contact our office prior to your due date to avoid late fees and/or disconnection. Beginning March 2015, customers who are paying by credit card, will pay a convenience fee charged by Payment Services Network. The Utility does not charge nor keep the convenience fee.

Due to recent state legislation, RFMU will be reviewing and revising creation policies and procedures. Updated information will be posted to: www.rfmu.org.

Energy Assistance

You may be eligible for assistance paying your electric bill. For more information Pierce County residents should call Pierce County at 715-273-6788 and St. Croix residents should call Westcap at 715-265-4271.

Other resources for energy and weatherization assistance:

Focus on Energy call 800-762-7077 or www.focusonenergy.com

Keep WI Warm/Cool Fund Bill Pay Assistance call 800-891-9276 or www.kwwf.org ~

Annual Report for Storm Water

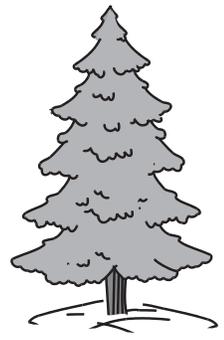
Storm water pollution degrades surface waters making them unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other activities. As authorized by the Clean Water Act, there is a nation-wide permit program that controls water pollution by regulating pipes and channels that discharge storm water and pollutants into surface waters. The City of River Falls received its permit October 1, 2006, and received a renewed permit in July 2014. UW-River Falls has its own permit. The City signed an intergovernmental agreement with them in 2009 to work together on many of the requirements of the permits.

In most cases, the goal of the permit is to improve water quality; however, the Kinnickinnic is a water resource where the water quality is already exceptional. In River Falls, our goal is to maintain this exceptional resource; this is done through the following regulated, minimum control measures:

1. **Public education and outreach.** The City of River Falls maintains a website with storm water information, prints articles in the city-wide newsletter, participates in Earth Day events and other similar activities, and runs articles in the River Falls Journal when applicable.
2. **Public participation and involvement.** The City runs an adopt a pond program and a storm drain marking program. We also try to promote citizens to actively do things on their own property through education and other items such as a rain barrel rebate.
3. **Illicit discharge detection and elimination.** The City passed an ordinance in 2007 prohibiting illicit connections (basically anything that contains anything but storm water) to the storm sewer system. This ordinance also gives us authority to force disconnections of illicit connections we become aware of. We also conduct inspections of outfall pipes. Outfalls with high risk of illicit connections are inspected annually; the others are inspected on a three year rotating basis.
4. **Construction site pollutant control.** An ordinance is in place requiring construction site erosion control. We also conduct weekly construction site inspections for erosion control.
5. **Post-construction storm water management.** An ordinance, which is more stringent than state standards, is in place requiring rate and volume control for nearly all new and re-development activities within the City.
6. **Pollution prevention/good housekeeping.** We have a proactive snow and ice removal policy. We also conduct regular maintenance on fleet vehicles and sweep City streets on a regular basis. The City owns and maintains a compost site for residents' use. We also inspect and maintain the storm sewer system. The City only applies fertilizer to City properties after conducting soils tests to ensure we are only applying what is needed.

There will be a presentation of the annual report at a City Council Meeting in early 2015. ~

Christmas Tree Pick Up



The City of River Falls' contracted waste hauler will pick up Christmas trees that are placed near your normal garbage pickup location through January 16, 2015. Trees enclosed in plastic will be accepted. Wreaths or garland with wire will not be accepted. Inclement weather conditions may delay or extend the schedule. A separate truck will be used to collect the trees independently of garbage and recycling pickup. If you have any questions or if your tree is not picked up by January 23, please contact City Hall at (715) 425-0900.

RECYCLING REMINDER: Christmas wrapping paper is **not** recyclable. Please **do not** place in recycling containers. ~

Sidewalks to be Kept Clear



The owner/occupant of any lot or parcel shall have snow and ice removed within 24 hours after the snowfall ceases. If the owner/occupant fails to comply with this requirement, the City shall cause the snow and ice to be removed and the cost charged to the property owner.

The cost for the City to remove the snow and/or ice shall be billed according to the City's current Fee Schedule. Failure to pay for said services, upon billing, will result in the costs being assessed against the property and placed on the annual tax roll.

Note: Only one door hanger notice will be posted at the property this snow season regarding clearing of sidewalks. After the first notice, the City will clear sidewalks if they have not been done. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Kusilek, Street Supervisor, by phone at 715-426-3481 or by e-mail at tkusilek@rfcity.org. ~



Adopt-A- Hydrant

The winter months bring a special concern to the Fire Department. Winter storms can often hide fire hydrants under a mountain of snow making them impossible to find quickly. In the event of a fire, firefighters have to locate and often shovel out fire hydrants before hooking up to them. Precious time is lost. We are asking that you help us keep the fire hydrant closest to your residence or business clear after each and every snowfall. Please consider helping a neighbor with a medical condition or who is elderly, by shoveling out a hydrant in front of their home. This act of kindness will benefit the entire neighborhood. Clearing a path approximately three feet around the hydrant will allow the firefighters room to work should the need arise. Thank you for your help. ~

Odd/Even Parking Runs Through March 31

The City's Odd/Even Parking runs through March 31 (Municipal Code, Chapter 10.12). Each night between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. residents must:

- Park on the odd numbered side of the street on odd dates
- Park on the even numbered side of the street on even dates
- Remember to park according to the date after midnight

Vehicles parked in violation of parking regulations may be towed for snow removal, street maintenance, or other public safety needs.

Questions may be directed to the River Falls Police Department at 715-425-0909. Thank you for your cooperation! ~

FREQUENTLY CALLED PHONE NUMBERS

General Information
715-425-0900

Utility Questions
715-425-0906

Police Department
715-425-0909

Public Library
715-425-0905

Municipal Court
715-426-3429

Garbage/Recycling
866-983-6542

**Recreation
Cancellation Hotline**
715-426-3422

NEWSLETTER TEAM:

(Please email comments or suggestions to:
newsletterfeedback@rfcity.org)

Kristi McKahan
Scot Simpson

PHOTO CREDITS:

Cindi Danke
Chris Blasius
University of Wisconsin-River Falls



222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022

PRSRT-STD
ECR
U.S. Postage PAID
River Falls, WI
Permit # 1

POSTAL CUSTOMER



From left: Dan Gulick, David Reese, Diane Odeen, Mayor Dan Toland, David Cronk, Aaron Taylor, Scott Morrisette, and Jim Nordgren

Mayor and Common Council

Position	Name	Address	Phone	E-mail Address
Mayor	Dan Toland	420 E. Elm Street	715-426-3404	dtoland@rfcity.org
At Large	Daniel Gulick	1746 Southridge Road	715-425-0486	dgulick@rfcity.org
At Large	Scott Morrisette	2137 Rushmore Drive	715-425-8993	smorrisette@rfcity.org
At Large	Diane Odeen	811 Oak Knoll Avenue	715-426-5325	dodeen@rfcity.org
District 1	David Cronk	843 Leroy Lane	715-425-9174	dcronk@rfcity.org
District 2	Jim Nordgren	1144 South Fork Drive	715-425-7327	jnordgren@rfcity.org
District 3	David Reese	425 N. Wasson Lane	715-425-9369	dreese@rfcity.org
District 4	Aaron Taylor	1143 State Street #202	608-444-2392	ataylor@rfcity.org



Like us on Facebook

City of River Falls
River Falls Municipal Utilities
River Falls Police Department
River Falls Public Library



Follow us on TWITTER

City of River Falls (@CityRiverFalls)
River Falls Police Department (@rfpolice)