



Mayor's message



Greetings to everybody in the future! I am writing this newsletter to you in 2037. I certainly hope you had a great summer enjoying our enhanced river corridor and all

the Glen and Hoffman Park amenities that we began in the late 2010's. Now that summer vacation is over, our kids are back to schools with up-to-date technology and safe, modern buildings that continue to expand and change to meet the needs of our grandkids – and theirs!

On this day in 2037, we're enjoying our challenging work, lucky to have jobs a couple of minutes away. Investments in our corporate parks, downtown, and other business districts allow us and our UWRF and CVTC graduates to stay in the area, closer to affordable homes and green spaces that our kids and grandkids can continue to enjoy. We're closer to bike trails that wind through town and over

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Kinni Corridor Project: Next steps

Since its official launch on Dec. 8, 2016, the Kinni Corridor Project has completed a series of six instructional Tech Talks with an average attendance of 200; built a comprehensive website, kinnicorridor.org; facilitated listening sessions; connected to residents and visitors via social media; hosted event booths; and made numerous community presentations.

The next step in the project is an intensive community design workshop, called a "charrette," scheduled for Oct. 25-Oct. 28 at the River Falls Public Library. Members of the public are invited to attend several large group presentations as well as participate in design sessions with

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Finding our way through the City

The City is working with community stakeholders to develop a "wayfinding," or signage system that allows visitors to comfortably navigate around town while marking community gateways and points of interest.

"We want to create a welcoming, memorable environment that sets a positive tone for those entering the city for the first time," said Brandy Howe, senior planner for the City.

In May, the City hired Guide Studio to prepare a Community Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan that will serve as the framework for updated wayfinding. In addition to creating attractive signage, the project will eliminate sign redundancy, reduce visual clutter created by unneeded signs, and craft an enduring design for parks and City buildings.

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Mayor's message...from page 1

Whitetail Ridge and our trail system that now stretches clear across the state!

Our municipally-owned utility powers the community entirely on green energy and continues to win awards for its ingenuity and leadership. Our public safety departments are state-of-the-art, keeping us safe with the same community-based strategies that bring us closer together.

How do I know what's coming? Well, way back in 2017 – and years before that – we put on our 20 and 30-year goggles and kept looking ahead, planning for the future we saw coming. Back then, we understood the value of preserving and enhancing our green spaces, of creating new jobs and careers for residents and graduates, and attracting new talent from all corners of the region, state, and nation. We helped build a business incubator to foster entrepreneurship and reward bright ideas, and helped our long-time companies expand into international powerhouses.

We increased the City's boundaries to attract new homeowners and business development. And we did it thoughtfully, wisely, and incrementally – all the time wearing our 20 and 30-year goggles. Our decisions in 2017 made possible this wonderful, bustling, inventive, welcoming, green, dynamic community that you enjoy today – all the while maintaining our 2017 values of community service, hometown friendliness, and consideration and respect for one another.

As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The future depends on what you do today."

Remember it's your great city so get out there and enjoy it.

Go Pack Go,



(l-r): Scott Morrissette, Chris Gagne, Todd Bjerstedt, Diane Odeen, Mayor Dan Toland, Hal Watson, Jeff Bjork, and Sean Downing

City of River Falls Mayor and Council

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Council meetings

River Falls City Council meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall (Council Chambers, lower level), 222 Lewis Street, River Falls. The public is invited to attend. Time is set

aside at the beginning of each meeting for residents to address the Council.

Council agendas are posted on the City's website, www.rfcity.org/agendacenter, by the Thursday preceding each meeting. Meeting minutes are posted on the website several days after the meeting; call 715/426-3403 to request minutes by mail.

Spring elections

2018 Spring Primary

Feb. 20, 2018, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

2018 Spring Election

April 3, 2018, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Note: River Falls will have some new polling places in 2018; those affected will receive updated information via mail.

New residents who wish to register to vote should visit myvote.wi.gov or stop by City Hall to fill out an application. A photo ID and proof of residency is required. For more information about spring elections and voter registration, visit www.rfcity.org/elections.

Cutting the big, red ribbon

UW-River Falls Falcon Center opens Sept. 21

After nearly two decades of planning and fundraising, the largest building project in the 140-year history of UW-River Falls will officially open its doors Thursday, Sept. 21, with a grand opening celebration. The Falcon Center for Health, Education and Wellness will provide new spaces for academics, wellness, recreation, and athletics.

The Falcon Center features a 15,000-square foot fitness center, four classrooms, a state-of-the-art performance lab, three fitness studios, and an indoor climbing center. The building also houses NCAA competition venues for men's and women's basketball, men's and women's ice hockey, volleyball, and more.

A concerted planning effort for a replacement facility occurred in 1999 involving UW-River Falls, UW-System Administration, and the Division of State Facilities staff. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Falcon Center took place in May 2014 and work was broken into site and building phases. Renovations to existing facilities including Ramer Field and David Smith Stadium, W. H. Hunt Ice Arena, and the Robert P. Knowles Fieldhouse, were all completed as part of the project. The Fitness Center opened for campus and community use in January 2017.



Community memberships

Community members are welcome to use the facilities; memberships are \$35/month for singles and \$60/month for families. A one-day pass is \$5. Membership discounts are available for veterans, alumni, and seniors. For more information, visit uwrf.edu/FalconCenter or call 715/425-4289.



You're Invited!

Falcon Center Grand Opening

Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017

12:30 p.m. Ribbon cutting ceremony

Front entrance of the Falcon Center, 185 Emogene Nelson Ave. (access from South Main St.)

Rain site: Falcon Center Concourse

4-7 p.m. Open House

- Tours
- Refreshments
- Kid's activities
- Open gym
- Wall climbing
- Fitness classes
- Health screenings
- Ice skating



Falcon Center: by the numbers

- 286,347** gross square feet
- 136,000** bricks
- 11,780** pounds of free weights
- 4,000** square feet of climbing area
- 2,300** Page Arena capacity
- 1,400** Hunt Arena capacity
- 720** parking stalls
- 66** pieces of cardio equipment
- 16** locker rooms
- 10** basketball courts
- 9** AEDs
- 4** classrooms

City Hall remodel improves service and eliminates redundancy

Next time you're in City Hall, you might notice some big – and not so big – changes. Why the remodeling? When City Hall opened May 1, 2009, City administration and the Utility Department operated independently. Each managed its own payroll systems, accounting functions, reception and meeting areas, work rooms, etc. Eight years later, River Falls' "one city" approach has folded Utility administrative responsibilities into the City's.



To reduce redundancy of first-floor spaces and functions, and to improve the customer experience, various alterations have been made to the building. City Council approved an evaluation of customer services in its 2015-17 Work Plan, which indicated the need for enhanced services. By April 2016 a concept plan was developed for the first floor. Architects completed designs in winter 2017 and construction began in late a spring. As of Aug. 25, staff were ensconced in new spaces and the updated service features were complete.

"We appreciate residents' patience with our remodeling process," said Mike Stifter, operations director for the City. "From the beginning, we had the customer in mind and I believe the final product has achieved that goal."



The court area was moved from the south to the north side of the building, becoming part of the main customer service area. This area will now serve as a single entry point for customers, eliminating confusion about which window to approach as well allowing staff to serve multiple customers at any one time.



Along with a new waiting area, small gathering spaces were created along the main corridor to enhance customer and staff interaction.



Parks and Recreation and the City Clerk's office now occupy a window on the south side of the entrance hall, allowing staff to respond immediately to customer requests and questions relevant to their departments. In addition, a private space was added adjacent to the window to accommodate early voting.

Planning for a resilient community

By Amy Peterson, Development Services Director, apeterson@rfcity.org



October is National Community Planning Month when cities across the country celebrate the importance of planning to create and sustain healthy and productive communities. The City's Community Development Department will mark the month with several activities (see box).

What is community development?

Holistically, it refers to a community that engages in a process to improve the social, economic, and environmental conditions of the community. This contributes to our personal well-being and helps us be more effective citizens. Often, economic or social pressures create dysfunction in communities. In resilient communities, that is the time when people come together in new ways, undertake new activities, and release new energy and resources. In the end, it is what communities can do for themselves that matters.

Two current examples of community planning projects in River Falls are the Kinni Corridor Project and the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center. The corridor project is bringing the community together to engage and set goals for



St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center will be completed by January.

future improvements along the 7-mile river corridor. Both projects focus on economic development, natural resource, social, and cultural goals.

The Innovation Center is a prime example of economic community development, bringing together multiple partners and funding sources to provide support to small, start-up, and growing businesses.

What do we do?

At the macro level, the Community Development Department manages the comprehensive plan for the City, which encompasses a long-term vision for the community. It incorporates land use, corporate limit expansions, transportation, healthy living initiatives – and more.

We also manage day-to-day zoning, inspection, and recreation activities. Zoning provides a number of benefits including

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Celebrate National Community Planning Month in October

- Check out library displays featuring planning, design books and media, and historic artifacts. Visit riverfallspubliclibrary.org for youth-related activities.
- Learn about iconic planning professionals at City Hall.
- Participate in the Kinni Corridor Project charrette – a four-day visioning process to create a river corridor plan (see p. 7).

Wish him well

Tony Steiner plans to retire in December after 32 years of public service, including 28 years as River Falls city planner and forester. During his tenure with the City, Steiner has helped to plan and shape changes and improvements that have been valuable to the City's growth and development.



He has worked with the Park Board, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Plan Commission to move the goals of the City forward. In addition, he has assisted countless residents and businesses with rezonings, permits, interpretation of ordinances, and more.

"Tony created the vision for our City's trail network and many of our parks, especially Larson Park," said Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom. "He has a real passion for these projects and has worked overtime to make them a reality."

Steiner will remember, he said, "the citizens I served, the people I have worked with, and the contributions that we have all made to ensure that River Falls is a great place to live and enjoy life."

Steiner looks forward to what comes next. "I have always believed that we are here to learn and contribute in whatever capacity life allows," he said. "I look forward to being active, learning new things, and seeing new places, but will always be firmly anchored to the community."

He appreciates the opportunity to serve the City, but for now, he said, "It's time for me to fly."

Wayfinding ... from page 1

In June, the City and Guide Studio met with stakeholders to better understand what makes our community a destination that visitors want to come to again and again. The group identified River Falls' top destinations, unique characteristics, and areas for improvement. Guide Studio returned in August to present a draft plan and designs to the project steering committee. The final plan is expected to be completed later this year with new signs appearing in 2018.

Plan goals are to:

- Highlight a sense of place through consistent and authentic signage;
- Increase positive perception of the City of River Falls with a consistent, recognizable, and inviting sign family that creates a safe and welcoming atmosphere; and
- Create a connective and cohesive experience for visitors so they stay longer, come back, and invite others.



A good wayfinding system provides consistent messaging and design to reflect a city's "brand" – and gets people where they need to go. System design for Xenia, OH, by Guide Studio.

We dig innovation!



A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center in the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park on May 10. The Center is planning to open in late 2017.

Picture here (l-r): City Councilmembers Sean Downing, Jeff Bjork, Diane Odeen, and Chris Gagne; CVTC President Bruce Barker; City Council President Scott Morrissette; UW-River Falls Chancellor Dean Van Galen; and Pierce County EDC Executive Director Paul Schwebach.

For more information about the Center visit www.stcroixinnovation.org.

Glen Park update

Community open houses for the \$4.2M Glen Park Renovation Project were held in June and August. At the June event, community members provided extensive feedback on a first round of concept designs by project consultants ISG. In August, ISG presented refined plans, answered questions, and solicited written comments.

One component of the project will be a new \$1.35M pavilion building that includes a FEMA-funded storm shelter. Following approval by the City Council of a preliminary design for the pavilion (below), final design will be completed to allow solicitation of bids in early 2018.



Construction is expected to begin in 2018 and be completed, along with additional renovations, in fall 2019. Renovations being studied for inclusion include a splash pad; nature-themed play area; improved river access; better defined parking areas; and safer circulation patterns for autos, bikes, and pedestrians within the park.

Approval of preliminary plans for these renovations is anticipated by the City Council in spring 2018, followed by final design and bidding with construction planned for 2019.

To keep track of Glen Park renovation progress, visit www.rfcity.org/glenparkplan. Questions? Contact City Engineer Reid Wronski at rwronski@rfcity.org



Kinni Corridor Project Committee and City Council members, and City employees and their families marched in the River Falls Days Parade in August. Banners, shirts, and give-a-ways helped spread the word about the project and the importance of community involvement.

Kinni Project ... from page 1

planning consultants, urban and waterfront designers, and city planners.

“Even if folks haven’t attended a Tech Talk, or don’t know much about the project, we hope they will join us for the workshop,” said Project Manager Buddy Lucero.

“We need the entire community to get involved in the planning process for the future of our river and river corridor.”

Community members are invited to participate in the charrette during “studio” hours as well as attend three public sessions: 1) a kick-off and work session; 2) a “pin-up” session to show design work completed since the kick-off; and 3) a final presentation of work drafts incorporating community comments, ideas, and feedback.

As a result of the charrette, project consultants with SEH will have drafted three or four design alternatives to share with the project committee. In turn, the committee will submit their recommendations to the City Council to inform the Council’s decision in February to relicense or surrender the City’s hydroelectric facilities.

Kinni Charrette prep

In preparation for the community workshop, get up to speed on Kinni Project happenings, information, and resources at www.kinnicorridor.org. What you’ll find:

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Over 15 pages of questions and answers have been compiled from multiple sources and events. The committee has distilled them into the most frequent, frequently asked questions. Give them a read. (Don’t worry, access to all the questions and answers received to date are available on the website.)

Planning timelines

The final decision about the corridor plan won’t be made until June 2019 – over 20 months from now. Website information will help you understand the steps between now and then, and how you can get involved.

Tech Talk videos

Each of the six Tech Talks have been recorded and are available on the website. A short compilation video will be available by the first of October.

Committee work

The Kinni Corridor Project Committee has been meeting regularly to steer the course

of the project. Catch up with meeting minutes and other work products posted online.

Studies, research, and surveys

If you like to dig deeper, there are countless studies to absorb, research projects to follow, and past and future surveys to review.

Comments

The committee considers every comment they receive. Leave yours on the comment form online or send to blucero@rfcity.org.

Design Charrette public sessions

River Falls Public Library

Wed., Oct. 25, 6-8:30 p.m.

Kick-off and community work session

Thurs., Oct. 26,

1-5:30 p.m. Planning studio

7-9 p.m. Planning studio

Friday, Oct. 27

8:30-noon Planning studio

4-6 p.m. Pin-up session to review alternative concepts

Saturday, Oct. 28, 5-7 p.m.

Presentation/Open House

all about town

Sept. 21, noon-7 p.m.

Falcon Center Grand Opening

12:30, Ribbon Cutting

4-7 p.m., Open House

Falcon Center main entrance

UWRF campus

Sept. 23, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Grand Opening Celebration

Allina Health River Falls Clinic

10 a.m.: Ribbon cutting

10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.: Tours; family activities

1617 E. Division Street

Sept. 25, 6-8 p.m.

Fire Department Open House

Fire Station, 115 N. 2nd Street

Sept. 27, Oct. 25,

Nov. 22, Dec. 27, 6-8 p.m.

Coloring for Adults

RFPL, Main Level

Oct. 5, 7 p.m.

Lorna Landvick

Bestselling author and comedienne

RFPL, Lower Level



Oct. 7, 10 a.m. -1 p.m.

Gallery Opening: "Under the Surface"

Student nature photography exhibit

Kleinpell Gallery, RFPL, Lower Level

Gallery opening also features "Paint Out"

with the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota

Location: along the Kinnickinnic River

(See RFPL website for details.)

Oct. 5-8

UWRF Homecoming/Family Weekend

UWRF campus

Oct. 9 and Nov. 10, 10:30 a.m.

Out-of-School/In-Service Day

Programming for kids and families

RFPL, Lower Level

Oct. 10, 5-9 p.m.

Run with the Cops

UW-River Falls (UWRF) campus

facebook.com/riverfallsrunwiththecops

Oct. 9, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, 3:30-6 p.m.

Maker Mondays

RFPL, Lower Level



Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8, 4-7 p.m.

ARTful Fridays

Art's House Gallery

108 E. Maple Street

Oct. 14, 6-8 p.m.

Mother/Son Barn Dance

Ages K-5th grade

Meyer Middle School tennis courts

Rain site: MMS Gym

rflearns.org

Oct. 16-20

Fall Clean-Up for City residents

Mon.-Fri., 4-8 p.m.; Sat., 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

City Public Works Garage

950 Benson Street

www.rfcity.org/cleanup

Senior News

River Falls seniors are an active bunch! See what's happening Monday-Friday at the Senior Center, Wellhaven Senior Living Apartments, 119 Union Street in River Falls.

Let's Do Lunch

Mon.-Fri., 11:30-noon, \$4 suggested donation per person, no reservation needed.

Home delivered meals are also provided Monday through Friday; suggested donation is \$6.50. Call 715/425-9932 to schedule a delivery or to volunteer as a delivery driver.

Center activities

- Euchre, Tuesdays at 6:15 p.m.; Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
- Bridge and '500,' Fridays at 1 p.m.
- Foot care, twice monthly; \$20 per visit
- Exercise, Tuesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m.

Trips

- San Antonio, Texas: March 2-11, 2018
- New York City: July 18-July 26, 2018

Senior Resources

In St. Croix County, call 715/381-4360 or visit www.co.saint-croix.wi.us/adrc

Pierce County, call 715/273-6780 or visit www.co.pierce.wi.us (click Aging and Disability Resource Center)



Oct. 21, 9 a.m. – Kirby Symes Memorial 5K/1mile Fun Run, RFPL

5K begins at 9 a.m.; 1 mile begins at 10:30 p.m. at the library. Come in costume for a chance to win prizes. Bounce house, face painting, and more! Sponsored by the Library Foundation

Oct. 19, 4-8 p.m.

Ladies Night Out

Downtown River Falls

tourism.rfchamber.com/events

Oct. 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Main Street Art Crawl

Downtown River Falls

riverfallscab.org

Oct. 25-28

Kinni Project Charrette

RFPL, Lower Level

kinnicorridor.org

Oct. 29, 1:30 p.m.

Halloween Party

RFPL, Main Level

Oct. 29, 2 p.m.

Michael Norman

Author of "Haunted Wisconsin"

RFPL, Lower Level

Oct. 31, 1-5 p.m.

Trick or Treat

Downtown River Falls

tourism.rfchamber.com/events

Nov. 11-Dec. 15

"Plein Air River Falls"

Outdoor Painters of Minnesota

Kleinpell Gallery, RFPL, Lower Level

Nov. 24, 1-7 p.m.

River Dazzle

Downtown River Falls

tourism.rfchamber.com/events

Dec. 16 (Time: TBA)

Fall Commencement

University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

RFPL Holiday Open House

20th Anniversary of the Union Street building. Gingerbread contest entries due Dec. 6 by 8 p.m.

Dec. 31, 1-2:30 p.m.

Noon Year's Eve Party for Families

RFPL, Lower Level

Fall/Winter Activities

Community Education Program

School District of River Falls

Some new classes/events for fall:

- A "Taste" of Mindful Eating
- The Brain Chemistry of Addiction: Opioid Epidemic
- Barn Quilt Tour
- Home Buying 101
- Social Media for your Small Business

Visit www.rflearns.org for complete registration information.

City of River Falls

Parks and Recreation

Fall/winter programs include: girls' and boys' basketball; girls' volleyball; gymnastics; hockey; swim club; and wrestling.

Visit www.rfcity.org/youthsports for registration and other information.

Where to look for what to do...

City of River Falls: www.rfcity.org

City Parks and Recreation: www.rfcity.org/recreation

Community events: tourism.rfchamber.com/events

Community Arts Base: riverfallscab.org

Library: riverfallspubliclibrary.org

School District Continuing Education: rflearns.org

University of Wisconsin-River Falls: go.uwrf.edu/cal



Danke honored for service to youth

Cindi Danke, River Falls' Parks and Recreation Department manager, received the Roger Horness Service to Youth and Community Award at the River Falls Lions Club annual banquet in May. Along with the award, the club donated \$500 in Danke's honor to fund scholarships for youth to participate in department programs.



Cindi Danke (center) receives the Roger Horness Service to Youth and Community Award in May. (l-r): Ryan Leitch, Michael Page, Todd Schultz, Danke, Susan Reese, and Mike Stifter.

Danke has served the department for 36 years, and has been recreation manager for most of that time. She manages part-time employees, develops program curricula, and coordinates swimming lessons, gymnastics, soccer, baseball, t-ball, tennis, summer camps, and pre-school classes. She also works with local adult/youth associations and the River Falls School District in scheduling and utilizing the school/park facilities.

The award honors Roger Horness who was a long-time member of the River Falls Lions Club and active community participant.

Officer Gottfredsen recognized

At the June 27 City Council meeting, Officer Chris Gottfredsen received the River Falls Police Officer of the Year Award by Police Chief Gordon Young. Gottfredsen has been with the RFPD for over 19 years and has worked as a resource officer in district schools for the past 10 years.

"A school resource officer requires trust, compassion, patience, sacrifice, and knowledge," said Chief Young. "Chris embodies these qualities and works tirelessly as a police officer and as a teacher for students."

Gottfredsen's duties include investigating criminal cases that involve children, and conducting home visits to help find root causes for school-related problems. In addition to his investigatory duties, Gottfredsen organizes presentations for students on a wide variety of topics, coordinates special trainings, and supervises the Safety Patrol Program. He also organizes a mock car crash every three years to educate high schoolers about the dangers

of texting and other distractions while driving, and driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

"Chris' contributions have a direct impact on the general health and safety of our students," said District Superintendent Jamie Benson. "He also encourages students to be the best they can be – in the classroom, in co-curricular activities, and most importantly, in life. We are fortunate to have Officer G in our community and our schools."

Officer Gottfredsen is known for building relationships with students and being approachable. He interacts with the students daily in the hallways, lunch rooms, and on the playground. He has even been known to perform a rap at the high school pep rally.



Officer Chris Gottfredsen received the Police Officer of the Year Award from Police Chief Gordon Young at the June 27 City Council meeting. Also pictured (l-r): Carol Mottaz, chair of the City's Police and Fire Commission; City Administrator Scot Simpson; Mayor Dan Toland; and Gottfredsen with his three children, Clara, Chayton, and Dane.

Connecting Community

By Kevin Westhuis, Director, River Falls Municipal Utilities, kwesthuis@rfcity.org



At River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU), we don't only feel it is our responsibility to deliver electric, water, and sewer services to the residents of River Falls,

but also to find ways to give back and connect to the community in many large and small ways.

One way of giving back is through a quarterly informational gathering we started about three years ago called "Landlord Connections." You may not know it, but about half the dwellings in River Falls are rented and owned by someone other than the people who live there. This information-sharing, sounding board, and relationship-



Landlords meet quarterly with RFMU staff to share ideas and discuss issues of mutual interest and concern.

building meeting was initiated to find ways we can work with property owners to help them – and their renters – be successful.

We cover many topics at Landlord Connections, varying from lease suggestions to best accounting practices, housing trends to "does your insurance cover sewer back-ups?" About 70 landlords attend each session, and, from the surveys, indicate that they find them useful, fun, and informative.

Another program that we are proud to offer the community is called "Breaking the Cycle," a money management "101"-type program that assists people who are sometimes challenged to pay utility bills in a timely manner. This program is a three-night series that covers basic financial cash flow analysis and helps people be more aware of income, expenditures, and spending prioritization. Each participant gets a small utility bill credit for attending all three sessions and a wealth of financial knowledge that can be life changing.

We are proud to be your local municipal utility and do not take any customer for granted. Giving back allows us to do our part in ensuring a healthy and prosperous community.



A new substation is under construction at the City's power plant to upgrade older infrastructure and increase capacity for future needs. When complete, the substation will be capable of serving the entire community if necessary. Over the next several months, City staff will work with local arts organizations to create art for substation walls.

Meter reading: the future is now

For nearly 100 years, meter reading was performed manually – one house or business at a time. About 15 years ago River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU) transitioned to an automated system that uses radio signals to read meters. It usually takes about ten hours to compile monthly usage data for the City.



Electric meter technicians Virgil Johnson and Brian Hatch gather usage information from local companies now using AMI readers.

The next generation of meters currently being piloted by the City operates with Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) readers. Unlike the automated meter reader, which provides a one-way communication to RFMU, the AMI meter provides nearly instantaneous usage data information to both the customer and utility. Additional benefits will include immediate outage reporting and alerts for water leaks and unexpected high electric usage.

AMI meters will allow for faster and more detailed answers for billing concerns and usage patterns, as well as help RFMU immediately recognize outages to ensure faster response times and share outage information via smart phone apps in real time. In the future, AMI meters may also include Smart Appliance interaction, thermostat communication, and pre-pay and pay-as-you-go opportunities for customers.

Meet the new recruits



The 2017 River Falls Fire Department recruits include (l-r): Kyle Morrow, Justin Athorp, Chad Zess, Andrew Rineck, Ryan Bailey (in truck), Greg Dietsche, Andrea Ellefson, Adam Meier, and Mark Hilden. In the first two years, these recruits will complete over 200 hours of firefighter, hazard materials, apparatus operator, and first aid training – in addition to regular weekly drills.

Planning...from page 5

orderly development; protecting and maintaining property values; striving for the highest and best use of land; and ensuring public health, safety, and aesthetic values.

Building inspections ensure the health and safety of our built environment. Historically, without codes and inspections, the likelihood of structural accidents was greater. While government intervention in building standards at times is averse to some, these standards not only help to ensure safe buildings, but also provide a higher economic and aesthetic return to the community.

I encourage all residents to participate in City projects. With your involvement and support, we can make our shared vision a reality. As always, please contact us with questions you have regarding building, planning, zoning, or inspections. We are happy to serve you!

Spring flowers bring May recognition

In conjunction with National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, River Falls' Second Street Gardeners were honored at the May 9 City Council Meeting for 13 years of dedicated service.

Each spring since 2004, more than 30 volunteers have worked with the Downtown Business Improvement District to transform Main Street with hanging baskets and median planters. In addition, they plant and maintain 26 Second Street gardens, as well as the Hoffman Park entrance, Heritage Park, and the Veterans Park planters.



Accepting recognition on behalf of the Second Street Gardeners at the May 9 Council meeting were (l-r): Deb Freeman, Ellen Schultz, Audrey Iverson, Lu Lueck, Dori Holter, Sandy Bowen, Mary Jo Pedriana, Jolene Larson, Linda Ross, Emily Higgins, Nicky Shella Simpson. Also pictured is Mayor Dan Toland.

Giving back at the library

by Cole Zrostlik, event and gallery coordinator, River Falls Public Library, czrostlik@rfcity.org

At the River Falls Public Library (RFPL) we depend on volunteers for everything from repairing and re-shelving books to fundraising, event coordination, program support, and keeping the gallery open. Our volunteers are not only awesome people, they are generous people, and no matter how often, or in what capacity they volunteer, their work ensures that library staff can stay committed to serving our community and that lifelong learners can get the things they need to stay engaged. Thank you, volunteers!

Meet Amy Glaser

Whenever Amy Glaser moves to a new city or town, the first place she goes is to the local library, and, according to Amy, none hold a candle to the RFPL.



Amy Glaser has been a super volunteer at the RFPL since 2004.

Amy has been volunteering at the library, in the lower level gallery, since 2004. After moving to River Falls in 2003 and falling head-over-heels in love with all that the library had to offer, Amy wanted to give back as a way to say thanks. Even nearly 14 years later, she enjoys her role as gallery monitor, answering questions about the current exhibits and staying up-to-date on events happening at the library. Amy loves how low-key her role is, and when the gallery is quiet, she says it's a fabulous way

to catch up on her reading and knitting.

When she's not volunteering, Amy is a voracious reader and works as an editor at a book publishing company in the Twin Cities. She says that even though she reads a lot for work, she always has time to read for fun. Because of her lengthy commute, she listens to many, many audio books as well. Amy credits the RFPL for making her drive just a little better every day. She is also active on the RFPL Foundation board and a member of several book groups.

Meet Brandi Bennett

Brandi Bennett is a recent River Falls High School graduate, summer reading program volunteer, and a youth advisory council member at the library. She started volunteering during children's summer programs her freshman year of high school because she wanted to make a difference in her community while lending a hand to youth services librarian Monica LaVold. Her sophomore year of high school, Brandi dedicated her Girl Scout Gold Award service



Brandi Bennett has volunteered at the RFPL throughout her high school career.

project to creating a series of children's activities at the library.

Brandi says that she enjoys working with children participating in the summer reading program because she loves seeing the way they learn and seeing how creative they can be. "I love how they work without limitations," she said.

Keeping it all in the family, Brandi's brother, Travis, volunteered for the summer program, too; he plans to do it again in summer 2018. Brandi is attending UW-Madison to pursue a double major in biology and psychology.



Despite the clouds and rain, approximately 850 River Falls Municipal Utilities customers and friends – a record! – attended the annual Customer Appreciation Event at City Hall on Aug. 17. Bringing out the condiments are City employees (l-r): Scott Jensen, Joe Killian, and Mike Stifter.

Adopt-a-Pond this fall

Max Neuhaus and his daughter, Amelia, volunteer twice a year to clean up a stormwater pond in the City's River Hills development between River Hills Bluff and the Kinnickinnic River.

"Adopting a pond is a great opportunity to get outside, spend time together, and do something good for the community," said Neuhaus.



The program, now in its 11th year, offers 82 adoptable ponds. So far, 49 have been adopted by families, individuals, classrooms, neighbors, clubs, groups, and others. Volunteers are responsible for picking up trash in their pond and reporting any erosion, clogging or other issues to the City.

"By volunteering," said Zach Regnier, program manager, "you get your very own sign, teachable moments, community pride, and satisfaction knowing you are helping to keep pollutants out of our Kinni."

Visit www.rfcity.org/adopt to find more information about the program and to sign up to care for a pond – or ponds.

Planting and other fall tips for trees

by Nate Croes, City Forester, ncroes@rfcity.org

If you're considering planting trees in your yard, fall is one of the best times to do it. The winter dormant months gives new trees time to adapt to new conditions before the stressful, hot summer months. New trees will need regular watering into the fall to help them establish. Mulching will also help the new tree retain moisture.

As deciduous trees start to shed their leaves, consider mulching the leaves into your lawn over hauling them to the compost site. Mulching tree and shrub leaves increases the amount of organic matter in your lawn and is beneficial to your soil. Use caution, however, if you have a very shaded lawn with heavy leaf drop. If your lawn is more than 50% covered by leaves, the turf grass underneath might be starved for sunlight and there is an increased risk for fungal diseases.

Once leaves fall from the tree, it is much easier to spot problems in a tree's canopy. Look for dead wood with fungal bodies on the bark, hanging or broken branches, or signs of insect or woodpecker damage from the



summer months. Prune out any visible deadwood or any sucker growth.

Fall is also a great time to get the little things done:

- Stake trees that are not straight.
- Apply new mulch around both young and old trees.
- Wrap burlap or place a hard, plastic cover around the trunks of young trees that are prone to sunscald and/or animal feeding during the winter months. Remove trunk covers in the late spring.

Following a few of these quick fall tips will allow your tree to overwinter better and flourish next spring.



Leaf alert!

If you don't plan to mulch leaves back into your yard this fall, consider bringing them to our City compost site at 901 W. Locust Street. Leaves and yard waste that make their way into the Kinni can be detrimental to water quality because of the excess nutrients they bring with them. Our street sweeper operates full time during the leaf drop but we can't catch them all. Please help us keep our curbs and storm drains free of leaves and the trout will smile.

Old Man Winter

It might be fall, but winter's right around the corner! Here are some tips to keep in mind.

Park smart

Odd/even parking laws go into effect Nov. 1. After midnight, residents are required to be parked on the odd numbered side of the street on odd dates and the even numbered side of the street on even dates.



Winter heating tips

- Don't block your radiators or heating vents with furniture or draperies. Keep your radiators, registers, and baseboard heaters dirt and dust free.
- Have your heating system serviced and check to see if furnace filters need replacing.
- Weatherize your home by caulking and weather-stripping around doors and windows.
- Turn the power strips for home electronics off when the equipment is not in use (TVs in standby mode still use several watts of power).

For more tips see: rfmu.org/heatingtips

Utility bill assistance

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission's winter moratorium on utility disconnections is in effect from Nov. 1 through April 15. Wisconsin law prohibits utilities from disconnecting electric customers who are behind on their bill during this time. For help with bill paying, eligible residents can apply for the state's low-income assistance programs. Check here for more info: rfmu.org/billhelp



Practice shoveling etiquette

For the winter maintenance crews to be successful keeping City roadways safe, the Public Works Department reminds residents to:

- Shovel around your mailbox and any fire hydrant on your property;
- When shoveling, please include sidewalks in the right-of-way as well as pedestrian curbs/ramps on corner lots; and
- During snowstorms, do not place garbage cans in the street or blacktop area in your alley.

Prevent holiday fires

Home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season and holiday decorations can contribute to the increased risk. Some tips for a safe holiday season:

- Use nonflammable or flame-retardant decorations and place them away from heat vents; consider using battery-operated candles;
- Inspect holiday lights for excessive wear before putting them up;
- Don't leave your live Christmas tree up for longer than two weeks; and
- Keep the tree stand filled with water.



Pictured here is one of the City's five state-of-the-art single axle plow trucks, which can clear up to a 20-foot wide path of snow. Its computer system controls the salt spreader, five-yard dump box, and liquid pre-wet system to distribute an appropriate amount of dry and liquid chemical mixtures depending on road conditions.

Connect with us!

Frequently called numbers

General information

715/425-0900

Utility Department

715/425-0906

Police Department

715/425-0909

Public Library

715/425-0905

Municipal Court

715/426-3429

Garbage/Recycling

715/425-0900

Parks and Recreation

715/425-0924



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Public Library
Kleinpell Gallery
Police Department
Ambulance Department



Check out our new videos!

[YouTube.com/user/cityofriverfalls](https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofriverfalls)

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River Falls Community Arts Base president Steve Preisler channels his inner Harry Caray, the late, legendary baseball broadcaster, to lead the crowd in singing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" at the St. Paul Saints exhibition game against the St. Croix Valley Baseball League All-Stars on May 13 at First National Bank of River Falls Field. *Photo credit: Bob Burrows, RiverTown Multimedia*