



January 2011 • VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1

Mayor's Message



The 2011 River Falls City budget was presented at the November 9, 2010, City Council meeting. As a part of the discussion, a tax comparison table showing 22 Wisconsin cities with populations of 12,500 to 17,500 was presented. The information used to compile the table is from "Municipal

Facts '09" prepared by the Wisconsin Tax Payers Alliance. The table displays tax levies (the amount of general property taxes per resident) and tax rates (the amount of city taxes per \$1,000 of property value).

From this comparison of 22 similar sized cities, River Falls ranks 18th lowest in property tax levy per capita. This compares with Chippewa Falls at 13th and Menomonie at 17th for levy per capita. Chippewa Falls has the 2nd highest property tax rate, followed by Menomonie at 10th and River Falls at 14th.

A third table ranks four area cities in levies per capita and in tax rates. In the levy table, River

Falls has a lower rate than New Richmond, Hudson, and Prescott. In the tax rate table, River Falls ranks below New Richmond and Prescott, but above Hudson.

Another ranking of eleven UW System cities lists River Falls with lower levies and tax rates than all except Whitewater.

So, what's my point? We often hear complaints about taxes being too high. Indeed, they are a significant outlay. But, comparatively, citizens of New Richmond are being levied \$568 per capita, those in Hudson pay \$542, Prescott citizens pay \$509, while River Falls is at \$304 per capita. In addition, River Falls had no levy increase in 2008 or 2009.

Does that make our taxes any easier to take? Answers to that question will vary. ~

Don Richards, Mayor of River Falls

New Bright Ideas Program Recognizes Innovative River Falls Government Program

In September, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, announced 173 government programs selected for its newly created Bright Ideas program. In its inaugural year, Bright Ideas is designed to recognize and share creative government initiatives around the country with interested public sector, nonprofit, and academic communities.



Judge June H. Cicero, Officer Chris Gottfredsen and Kris Miner, SCVRJP Executive Director

The program, Safe Teen Driving Circles, was recognized as a "Bright Idea". Safe Teen Driving Circles is facilitated by local nonprofit St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program, in collaboration with the River Falls Municipal Court and River Falls Police Department. This project is unique in that Restorative Justice responds to car crashes, the number one cause of death for people 16-24. Safe Teen Driving Circles provides a social and emotional presentation, engaging area community members in prevention of teen traffic fatalities. ~

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Kindle E-readers Available at the Public Library

Kindle e-readers are available at the library for checkout on a first-come, first-served basis. Kindles must be checked out from and returned in person to the River Falls Public Library reference desk. Kindles require a \$50 deposit and checkout for 14 days. Two of the Kindles may be reserved in advance. Please call the library reference desk for scheduling. Kindles may not be renewed. Overdue fines are \$1 per day. Use of Kindles is restricted to the content installed.



The Library also has a Flip Camcorder available for a seven-day loan. The Flip cam is a palm-sized video recorder that will hold up to two hours of data. It is very easy to use, and has an attached USB connection that plugs into your computer for downloading your footage. The Flip Camcorder requires a refundable \$50 deposit at time of checkout.

For more information on either the Kindle or the Flip camcorder, call the library, 715-425-0905. ~

Key Ingredients: America by Food

The Smithsonian is coming to River Falls! Beginning January 28, 2011, the River Public Library will be hosting the Smithsonian's *Museum on Main Street* traveling exhibit Key Ingredients: America by Food. The library was selected in a competitive application process as one of six Wisconsin hosts for this exhibit.

Curated by Charles Camp, Key Ingredients: America by Food explores the connections between Americans and the foods they produce, prepare, preserve, and present at the table-- a provocative and thoughtful look at the historical, regional, and social traditions that merge in everyday meals and celebrations.

Calendar of Programs Offered

January 28.....	Exhibit opens
January 29, February 5 & 12 – 10:30 a.m...	Children's film & craft
January 31 , February 7, 14, 21 – 7 p.m.....	Evening with a Professor
February 2 – 6:30 p.m.....	Food for Thought Film Series: "Food, Inc."
February 3, 10, 17 – 7 p.m.....	Food Film Fest: movie TBA
February 13 – 2-4 p.m.....	Wisconsin Dairy History Project with Ed Janus & Boyd Huppert
February 2 – 6:30 p.m.....	Food for Thought Film Series: "What's On Your Plate?"
February 21 – 10:30 a.m.....	Etiquette for kids , with Melissa Wilson
February 22 – 7 p.m.....	Etiquette for adults with Melissa Wilson
February 24 – 6:30 p.m.....	Rhonda Funmaker, Native American foods (with samples made onsite!)
February 28 – 7 p.m.....	Terese Allen, chef and author speaking on The Flavor of Wisconsin: History and Culture through Recipes
March 2 – 7 p.m.	Author Jerry Apps speaking on Farming Life in Wisconsin
March 6 – 1 p.m.	Faye Jones, Executive Director of MOSES speaking on Local and Organic Food: Why It Matters and What's Happening in Wisconsin . 'Food for Thought' film series showing "The Future of Food" immediately following this program.
March 11	Last day of exhibit



The library is working with a number of organizations to provide additional events and talks for both children and adults, including UWRF, the school district, What We Need is Here, and River Falls Area Hospital. Tasty food samples from local producers/vendors will be available at some events.

Check the library's website for current information and additional events at www.riverfallspubliclibrary.org. ~

Tax Forms Available at the Public Library

Free Federal and Wisconsin forms and instructions will be available in the lobby of the library beginning in early January. Most forms arrive by the end of January. Check the lobby to see what is available.

To find forms online, visit the following websites:

- Federal forms - www.irs.gov
- Wisconsin forms - www.dor.state.wi.us
- Minnesota forms - taxes.state.mn.us/Pages/index.aspx

- Links to other states' Department of Revenue - <http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/link/>

Please note: The library staff will not answer specific tax questions or help you fill out your taxes, and cannot help you determine which forms you need. If you need help, please consult a tax professional.

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. ~

Calendar of Events

December 23-26, 31 and January 1	City Offices and Public Library Closed
January 4	Final day for filing nomination papers
January 17	Library "Day Out of School Event", 1-2 p.m.
January 26	Last day for electors to register by mail
January 28	Key Ingredients: America by Food Exhibit Opens at Public Library
January 31	First installment property taxes due to the County
February 15	Spring Primary (if needed)
February 21	Library "Day Out of School Event", 10:30 a.m.
March 16	Library "Day Out of School Event", 10:30-11:30 a.m.
March 16	Last day for electors to register by mail for April 5 Election
March 20-April 17	River Falls Public Library Quilt Show
March 31	Last day for electors to request absentee ballots by mail
April 5	Spring Election, polls open 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

2010 Property Tax Payments

Historically, the first installment of the annual property tax payment has been processed by the City of River Falls, with the second installment processed by the counties. Both Pierce and St. Croix counties have offered to act as the City's agent for the upcoming tax season and collect the first installment payment as well as the second installment.

Making the change to a single collection agent will streamline the property tax collection system for the taxpayers and should make it less confusing. As most people have one property tax

bill, payments will be made to one entity instead of two, and questions regarding payments would be centralized.

Both counties offer the ability to pay with credit cards, and to make online payments. The counties also have online tax information for current and previous years at the following sites:

Pierce County: www.co.pierce.wi.us (Click on "Tax and Land Information" Tab)

St. Croix County: http://stcroixwi.mapping-online.com/StCroixCoWi/txt_default.htm

City staff will continue to answer questions regarding property tax assessments and tax rates, and will help wherever possible during this transition. ~

New Energy Efficient Computer Monitors at River Falls Public Library

Saving energy does not just mean turning off lights and adjusting your programmable thermostat. Sometimes energy efficiency means upgrading existing equipment. You'll see such improvements with the new computer monitors at the River Falls Public Library. Nineteen new, high efficiency liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors have replaced inefficient Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) monitors in the public computer room. The new 17 inch LCD monitors provide wider, crisper, clearer viewing along with annual electric savings equivalent of powering a typical River Falls home for over three months.

River Falls Municipal Utilities, through the POWERful Choices! initiative, worked with the Energy Center of Wisconsin, an independent nonprofit that seeks solutions to energy challenges,

to perform an energy audit on several River Falls municipal buildings. The audit outlined various areas where energy and money could be saved through conservation measures. The replacement of computer monitors was a high priority based on energy saved and benefits to the public. Recognizing this, the River Falls Public Library and River Falls Municipal Utilities shared the cost of the purchased equipment. The River Falls Library Foundation also purchased five monitors to bring the total to 24 replaced monitors.

The energy audits will continue to help guide the City of River Falls and River Falls Municipal Utilities in prioritizing and determining future conservation and energy efficiency projects within municipal facilities. Replacing computer monitors is a small example of how City departments are working together to improve facilities and customer experiences at the public library. So next time you are at the public library, take a peek at the new monitors and see how great energy conservation initiatives can look. ~

River Falls Library Children's Events



The Library offers preschool programs for three ages of children. All promote early literacy skills through stories, puppetry, music, fingerplays, rhymes and simple crafts. Beginning on December 6, people can sign up their children for whichever session is age appropriate:

- Babytime (birth-23 months) - Wednesdays, January 5 through April 27, 10:30-10:50 a.m.
- Lapsit (24-36 months) - Tuesdays, January 4 through April 26, 10:30-11:00 a.m.
- Storytime (ages 3-5) - Thursdays, January 6 through April 28, 10:30-11:15 a.m. or 1:00-1:45 p.m.

Day Out of School Events

On the days the River Falls School District has scheduled days out of school, the library will hold an activity for school age children. Those dates and times are as follows:

Monday, January 17, 1:00-2:00 p.m. - Winter Wonderland Activities

Monday, February 21, 10:30 a.m. - Etiquette for Children

Wednesday March 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m. - TBA ~

Quilt Show at the Library

"Warm & Cozy" is the title for the 2011 quilt show at the River Falls Public Library. The show will be open March 20 and run through April 17. This colorful display features work by experienced and beginning quilters and includes a variety of quilting techniques that are both hand and machine-quilted. If you'd like to bring in your handiwork for display, or for more information, contact Event Coordinator, Carol McClelland, at the library, 715-425-0905. ~

City and Town of Troy Committee Meeting on Boundary Agreement

Over the past months, a committee made up of representatives from the Town of Troy and the City of River Falls has been meeting on the development of a joint land use and boundary agreement. The agreement would establish long-term ground rules and limitations. When ground rules are established in advance, both governments (and all affected landowners and residents) can plan intelligently and ensure that development is financially sustainable and that growth, conservation, redevelopment, and natural resource protections are balanced. The plan will help in maintaining a cooperative intergovernmental perspective that will enhance the quality of life of the community and ensure the availability of community services.

The collaborative effort will build on the October 2005 Draft Cooperative Plan and Agreement that the Town and City developed by a committee of appointed Town and City representatives and reflects the Comprehensive Plans and ordinances of both the Town and City. The intent is that the joint committee will forward a draft agreement to the Town Board and City Council for their review and action by early 2011. ~

A Story of Cooperation

Two Years of Discussion Lead to Continued Partnership

The City of River Falls Fire Department has provided service to the community for 125 years. The Department is noted in the area for its high level of service. This is a credit to the members of the Department. Also deserving credit is the beneficial partnership with the Rural Fire Association over the past fifty years. The agreement ensures the continuation of this high level of service.

Each Town in Wisconsin is responsible for the provision of fire protection services within its jurisdiction. That can be accomplished in a number of ways including Town Fire Departments, Joint Fire Departments, and contracts for service with other departments. The River Falls Area Fire Association is made up of the Towns of River Falls, Troy, Pleasant Valley, Clifton and Kinnickinnic.

It is estimated that the formal partnership between the City and the Rural Fire Association began approximately fifty years ago. This partnership involved a financial contribution to the operating costs of the department plus the ownership and maintenance of several vehicles and equipment. Although the Fire Department is organized as a City Department under Wisconsin Statutes, the City has worked collaboratively with the Rural Fire Association to jointly provide needed resources for the successful operation of the department. Most recently, the City and Rural Association have entered into service agreements for Fire Protection Services. The agreements have provided a flat amount of revenue for the City plus a share of fire call fees charged to properties outside the City. Additionally, the Rural Association has maintained a certain amount of vehicles and equipment for the department.

Until recently, equipment was shared as follows:

The Rural Association owned:
Rural 1975 Ford Pumper
Rural 1989 Ford L9000 Pumper
Rural 1995 Freightliner Tanker
Rural 1997 Freightliner Tanker
Rural 2004 CRPR Trailer
Rural 2002 Ford F350 Pickup
Rural 2003 Polaris ATV

The City owned:
City Fire 1930 Ford Hose Truck
City Fire 1939 Ford Pumper
City Fire 1983 Ford Pumper
City Fire 1986 Firehouse Trailer
City Fire 1986 Ford 250 Pickup
City Fire 2000 Freightliner Truck
City Fire 2004 IHC Pierce Aerial

Notably, under the former arrangement, the Rural Association was scheduled to replace the 1975 Pumper at an estimated cost to the Association \$400,000 - \$500,000 dollars. The City also plans to replace the 1986 Brush Truck. It is estimated the replacement of this vehicle will cost \$75,000 - \$125,000. While the City and Association negotiated a successor agreement, both sides determined the replacement could be delayed until 2011.

Fire Chief Position

The City's Police and Fire Commission approved a job description for a full-time Fire Chief in 2009. The 2009 budget included a partial year of salary and related expenses for a full-time Fire Chief. On June 12, 2009, Bob Schwalen resigned as Chief.

After Bob Schwalen's resignation, a meeting with the Rural Fire Association and City officials was held June 17, 2009. This was followed by a Workshop including the City Council, PFC, and Rural Association on July 14, 2009. Consensus at that meeting was to proceed with a full-time Chief but to meet again to reach consensus on how to share costs for the Chief.

A follow-up workshop was held on September 8, 2009, in which Rural Association members and Town Board representatives were invited. The consensus at that meeting was that some additional funding from the Rural Association would be forthcoming for the 2010 partial year budget of the Chief position. Also at that meeting the City Council expressed an interest in a formula-based longer term financing agreement for the department.

In October 2009, Rural Association officials met with Finance Director Julie Bergstrom to discuss the City's suggested financing plan for 2010. It was agreed by the City and Association that the 2010 budget would be a combined one with expenses related to operations tracked as a single department and the Rural Association would increase their contribution to \$152,000 (\$30,000 from call revenue) - 30 percent of \$507,000 budget (which excluded equipment and facility and only partial year Fire Chief expenses). It was agreed talks for a longer-term agreement would resume in 2010.

Early on, it was determined that the City would negotiate only with the Rural Association and not with individual Towns. That was desired by both parties.

In 2010, the City and Rural Association met on January 13, March 2, August 4, and August 25. At the August 25 meeting, consensus was reached by those in attendance to forward the agreement to the five Town Boards and the City Council for approval.

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A Story of Cooperation

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The status of the vehicle fleet has been discussed on several occasions. There was a general consensus that a combined fleet of some type would contribute to overall lower costs. Some members of the Rural Association have been concerned about the loss of leverage they feel owning some equipment provides during negotiations. However, the concern over the need to replace the 1975 Pumper loomed large. The suggestion of the City purchasing the equipment was meant to both provide some cash to offset increases in contribution costs but also to help facilitate decision-making regarding the long-term makeup of the fleet. After an appraisal, the City and Rural agreed to \$225,000 from the City to the Rural for the equipment.

Funding Formula

A great deal of the discussion at the workshops and meetings involved the fairness of different funding models from neighboring departments. The Rural Association favored a call-based formula. The City favored a formula more heavily weighted by the value of property being protected. The Rural Association was concerned that any equalized value formula would be unfair due to the large amount of tax exempt property; specifically, the University not being "counted". A compromise was reached that included equalized value but as a lesser percentage of the weighted average and only after the City included \$161 million in "value" for the University property within its boundaries.

The final formula was suggested by a Rural Association representative and using a percentage based on a prorated share of the operating costs of the fire service and the weighted average of:

- a. Population within the service area (40 percent of formula)
- b. Prior year equalized value as determined by the State of Wisconsin for all municipalities within the fire service area plus the University of Wisconsin-River Falls reported valuation for Municipal Services Payment program (20 percent of formula)
- c. Average fire calls for the past three years (40 percent of the formula).

The resulting formula suggested 64 percent share for the City and 36 percent for the Rural Association. It was agreed to use 65 percent and 35 percent.

Input by Rural Association in Budget

A strong desire for input on the budget was expressed. The resulting agreement required the City to submit a budget to the Rural Association for review by September 1. Then a joint budget advisory committee will meet and make recommendations to the City Council. The parties agreed the formula would be based on the approved budget less principle for debt service but with estimated depreciation. The City also agreed to remove the line item costs for Fire Inspections.

Cap on Increases

Since the Rural Association does not get the final say in budget approval, they wished to see a cap on their contribution. The amount agreed to was 5 percent. The City could conceivably raise the budget amount by more than that but the contribution from the Rural Association would be capped at five percent annually more

than the previous year. This essentially was an agreement to a lump sum amount contract.

How property owners pay for fire protection service

The City Council has chosen to pay for its share of fire services via the property tax. Fire call fees are only charged for certain car accidents and hazardous material events within the City limits.

The Rural Association has chosen to use a combination of revenues to pay for its portion of costs. Currently, the mix includes a per fire number assessment plus fire call fees for fire responses outside the City limits. Prior to 2009, the City received a portion of the fire number fees plus 50 percent of the fire call revenues. With the new agreement in place, the Rural Association will pay a lump sum to the City. Each Town will continue to contribute per fire number assessments and fire call fees to the Association who will use that money to pay the City. The Rural Association and each Town now take full responsibility for the Fire Call Fee billing decisions in their jurisdiction.

SUMMARY OF AGREEMENT PROVISIONS

The following is a summary of the major provision in the agreement:

The Association agrees to pay the City thirty-five percent of the approved annual budget excluding principle on debt but including a depreciation amount to assist in pre-funding future purchases of equipment, vehicles, and major facility repairs. The 2011 budget estimate is \$746,000.

- The first payment is on June 1 (75 percent of lump sum)
- The second payment is on December 15 (25 percent of lump sum)
- The City is to purchase all existing equipment for \$225,000
- The September 1 budget will be submitted to joint committee for recommendation to City Council
- A five-year term, with two-year renewals after 2015 by mutual agreement
- A five percent cap on Rural's share in years two through five
- Rural Association is responsible for their own cost recovery system (City not involved in billing for calls)

CONCLUSION

Two years of discussions have resulted in an agreement in which both sides provided input and contributed to its final format. The agreement retains the ability to provide first class service to the protected properties and is extremely competitive with costs for Towns to participate in other fire service areas. The ability to consolidate budgets and fleets should provide for some operational efficiency.

Both parties retain a big stake in the department even though a number of changes to the way things are paid for will take place. The City and Rural Association look forward to another fifty years of cooperation. ~

The 2011 Annual Budget

The City's annual budget (excluding Utilities and Housing Authority) for fiscal year 2011 is \$18.3 million and accounts for city services such as police, fire, street maintenance and library services. The majority of the property tax funded services is recorded in the City's general fund, which is primarily comprised of wage and benefit expenses. Other major general fund costs are insurance, utilities, street maintenance and fuel. The 2011 budget was prepared with the goal to maintain the current year property tax levy, which was not increased from the 2009 budget. The final levy increase was 1.91 percent.

In an effort to minimize the property tax levy, several ideas were considered. One was the development of a street light fee, which would allocate the costs of City street lights, currently \$200,000 per year, to all property owners, including tax-exempt entities. After review by the City Council, the decision was made to continue to pay for these costs through general property taxes.

The City has worked in cooperation with the River Falls Rural Fire Association for 50 years to share equipment and costs. Because of a new five-year agreement with the Association, the costs for City and rural fire services have been consolidated within the City's fire department budget. These costs are then allocated based on a formula of equalized values, fire calls and population. This change is seen as beneficial for long range planning for equipment and future costs.

The 2011 budget also includes higher revenues from cost recovery allocations. The City's general fund contains the majority of the personnel service costs for public works, finance and administration. These services are charged out to other City funds that are financed through other revenue sources, such as ambulance charges, parking meter fees and franchise fees. This has reduced the revenue needed from property taxes by providing an alternative revenue source.

In order to keep operating costs down, several positions were removed from the 2010 budget. The 2011 budget contains some additional reductions, but also adds back some funding for necessary positions, including a Library Page, temporary Management Analyst, Community Development/Recreation position, Engineering/Public Works position, and increased hours for the Clerk of Court's office.

Capital Improvement Program

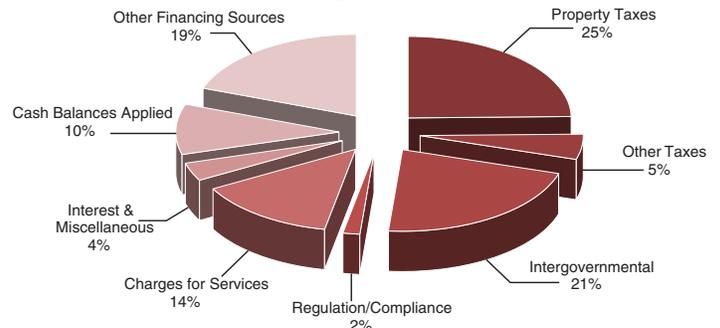
The City Council has included the following projects and equipment in the 2011 budget:

- Cascade Avenue project \$775,000
- Purchase of land for economic development purposes 1,500,000
- Other street improvements (9th Street, Radio Road) 182,500
- Park development at Highview Meadows, Glen Park pool 100,000
- Fire equipment (brush truck and SCBA) 272,400
- Street equipment (pickup and plow truck) 90,000
- Replacement motor pool vehicle (van) 25,000
- Replacement park equipment (mower, line painter) 90,000
- Security cameras, phone equipment 32,160
- Radio repeater 10,000
- Replacement police squad vehicles (2) 50,000

Funding sources include property tax levy, grants, long-term borrowing and non-General fund operating revenues.

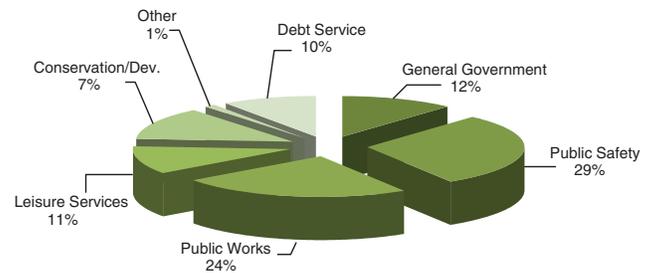
The following graph represents the funding sources for all budgeted funds in 2011.

2011 Revenues by Source - All Funds



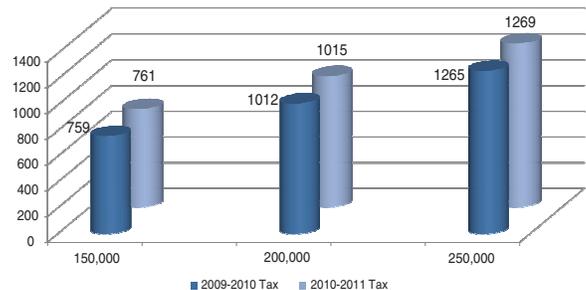
The following graph illustrates the uses of funds included in the 2011 budget.

2011 Expenditures by Type - All Funds



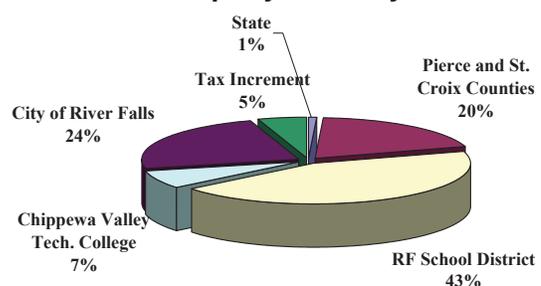
The proposed budget includes a property tax levy of \$4,454,717 to support City operations. A comparison of the City only property tax for both 2010 and 2011 is shown below. Assessed values for properties in Pierce County with values of \$150,000, \$200,000 and \$250,000 are illustrated.

Tax Comparison - 2010 and 2011 Budgets



The City of River Falls is one of the taxing jurisdictions included on the property tax bill. Levies from the River Falls School District, State of Wisconsin, Chippewa Valley Technical College and the counties are also included. The following is a graph of the allocation of general property taxes by entity.

2010-11 Property Tax Levy Allocation



The City welcomes your input into the annual budget process. For more information, please contact Julie Bergstrom, Finance Director, at 715-426-3416 or by email at jbergstrom@rfcity.org.

Employee Spotlight –



Angel Smith

Angel Smith began employment with the City on October 15. Angel, a native Floridian, has more than eight years of combined experience in local city, county and state government, the non-profit sector and the university system. Most recently, she served as Community Relations Coordinator/Public Information Officer for the City of Orange City, Florida. For over four years, she provided primary support to the City Manager, City Council, and

worked closely with department heads on various operational and administrative matters.

Over the course of her career, she has been responsible for carrying out a wide range of community and recreational programs, analysis, research, legislative coordination, program evaluation, strategic plan management, grant and contract management, fundraising, marketing, team building, volunteer management, budget preparation, community and media relations, and HR recruitment. Angel graduated from the University of Central Florida with a B.A. in Legal Studies and Public Administration as well as a Master's of Public Administration and a Master's of Nonprofit Management.

Angel is passionate about public service; she was selected as a *2010 ICMA Local Government Management Fellow* and is grateful for this opportunity. She is looking forward to getting involved with the community and is certain that as a Management Analyst, she will be committed to providing first-rate service. Angel believes that she is a public administrator who is willing to serve, contribute, learn and grow. ~

Employee Spotlight –



Chief Scott Nelson

On September 27, Scott Nelson joined the City staff as the first full-time Fire Chief. Scott has 22 years of fire service experience. He spent the last six years as the first full-time Chief in Lakeville, Minnesota, where he led that growing department through transitional changes. Scott had planned on teaching and consulting when the opportunity in River Falls presented itself. Switching gears, Chief Nelson decided to throw his hat in the ring.

Nelson, a Wisconsin native, has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Fire Science and has completed the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. He started his career as a volunteer firefighter in Mankato, Minnesota, and says, "I never lost my spirit of volunteerism when I became a full time firefighter."

Chief Nelson is familiar with the Pierce County area having served with the Red Wing Fire Department. A self-proclaimed "river rat", Scott's favorite hobby is restoring old boats, which he works on at his vacation property in Bay City.

Excited about being part of the fire department and community, Chief Nelson is already in the process of relocating here. Scott is engaged and his fiancée, Stacy, who has two daughters and lives in Farmington, Minnesota. Welcome Chief Nelson! ~



From left: Paul Whiteside, Bill Cernohous, Sean Slaikeu, Andrea Ellefson, Scott Gavin, Adam Larson, Troy Malmer. In front: Rick Pechacek

River Falls Fire Department 125th Anniversary Celebration

On September 25, 2010, the River Falls Fire Department celebrated 125 years of fire service to the community of River Falls. The day's events included free activities for all ages, free food, prizes, and music for all to enjoy. The inflatables were a big hit for the younger crowd, although a few adults were enjoying them as well! Fire hall tours, truck tours, and the fire safety house were also popular attractions for the day. The department raised \$380 for the local food shelf through the generous donations of those attending. ~



City Changes Refuse and Recycling Hauler

The City's current refuse and recycling contract will expire on December 31, 2010. To assist in developing the new contract for 2011-2015, a resident survey on the current services and changes desired was offered. There were 63 responses to this survey.

Survey Results Summary

Complete survey results can be accessed from a link on the City's homepage at www.rfcity.org.

Single Hauler for City

- Residents generally agree with utilizing one hauler for reasons such as minimizing deterioration of local streets, reducing fuel consumption and pollution, quieter neighborhoods with less unnecessary truck traffic, and lower monthly rates for residents.

Recycling

- 65 percent said a covered container would be better than the current uncovered bin
- 69.5 percent said the ability to put #3-7 plastics in their recycling container would make recycling easier and cause them to recycle more material

Spring Clean Up

- 87 percent find the location and hours convenient

Compost Site

- 92.6 percent find the location and hours convenient. There were many comments about liking the new extended hours and availability

The new contract keeps the service to the residents of River Falls nearly the same, with weekly pickup of both refuse and recycling

occurring on the same day it currently does. The main changes proposed in this contract from the current contract are:

- A one week spring clean up and a one week fall clean up instead of a two week spring clean up (Veolia's proposal had no price difference between these two options)
- Recycling is now single stream and residents will be provided with wheeled covered bins. The single stream will collect paper, cardboard, tin, aluminum, plastics #1-7, aseptic packing (milk cartons, juice boxes, etc) and glass. (both of these requests were prevalent in our resident survey)

Billing

Residents will be billed quarterly by Veolia as they were with Waste Management. Non-payment of the bill may result in the charges being placed on the annual tax bill.

Changeover

New containers from Veolia will be delivered the last week of December. Waste Management should pick up refuse and recycling, along with their containers the last week of December. The cart and bin with a Waste Management logo are the property of Waste Management. Please leave your cart and bin curbside until they are collected. Uncollected bins are subject to a non-collection charge by Waste Management. Please coordinate with a neighbor to get your cart and bin to the end of your driveway that week if you know you'll be out of town.

Every resident will receive a letter from the City outlining these changes and additional information can also be found on the City's website. Customer service issues should be directed to Veolia at RiverFalls.SW@VeoliaES.com or (800) 459-3933. ~

River Falls – Preparing to Become a “Bird City” Wisconsin Community

Established in 2009 by the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI), “Bird City” seeks to foster actions which promote bird conservation and voluntary stewardship on behalf of residents in the distinguished communities. The Kinnickinnic River Watershed, home to over 140 of bird species, accounts for nearly 50 percent of all the bird species present in the Badger State. As a result, bird-watchers have been flocking to the area for years to catch a glimpse of the diverse group of birds in action. With official recognition as a “Bird City” Wisconsin, River Falls will gain statewide accolades for its exceptional bird quality and draw more tourism, especially with the growing interest in bird watching itself. Here are a few strategies which can be utilized to improve the bird habitat in one's backyard.



• Provide Nesting Sites

- Choosing Native Plants-these plants provide the best protection for the part-time residents.
- Structural Diversity – plants which grow at different heights and assemblages. This aids birds in creating nesting site, obtaining food, and concealment from predators

- Plantings Which Mimic Natural Configurations – plantings that resemble the natural environment allow birds to thrive. This includes overlapping plant species and growing in clumps as opposed to a straight-line approach
- Allow Nature to take its Course – leave dead plant species and brush intact as it allows natural cavities to form as opposed to bird boxes. Also, if you collect grass clippings from mowing the grass, scatter the clippings to allow birds to use the waste as nesting supplies/sites.
- **Reduce Predators:** Millions of birds are killed each day by cats and native predators, to reduce this number, certain measures can be taken
 - Keep Cats Indoors – Young birds are very vulnerable as cats are natural predators, to reduce the risk, keep your cat indoors as much as possible
 - Food – eliminate outdoor sources of food like uncovered garbage cans and compost piles, pet food dishes, and bird feeders which allow for jays and squirrels to take advantage of the food source. ~

CLIP 'N' SAVE INFO SHEET



**SOLID WASTE INFORMATION FOR
CITY OF RIVER FALLS RESIDENTS**
Customer Service - 1-866-983-6542



City Residents Must Sign Up for Service from Veolia

The City of River Falls contracts with Veolia Environmental Services for residential solid waste and recycling disposal. In accordance with City Ordinance 8.36.040, all residential units in the City are required to have their solid waste collected by the City through its contractor. **Please call Veolia at 1-866-983-6542 to provide them with billing information and to obtain waste and recycling containers if necessary.** Standard garbage containers are 35 gallons. Billing is on a quarterly basis (2011 rate = \$11.00/mo).

Suspending Your Garbage Service

City residents are only allowed to discontinue their garbage service if the water service to their home has been disconnected.

Why Can't I Choose My Own Hauler?

There are a number of reasons why the City of River Falls has chosen to contract for residential garbage collection through one hauler including:

- ◆ It is a sustainable practice reducing fuel consumption, pollution, and unnecessary damage to roads. Garbage trucks are the single biggest vehicle contributing to deterioration of our local neighborhood streets.
- ◆ It makes our neighborhoods cleaner, safer and quieter with less unnecessary truck traffic.
- ◆ The City knows who to contact if there is a litter problem associated with garbage pickup.
- ◆ The monthly rate within a City-wide contract is lower than households would pay by contracting individually. It is most efficient for one hauler to pick up from each and every home in neighborhood rather than having to skip one that would be picked up by another hauler.

Curbside Garbage and Recycling

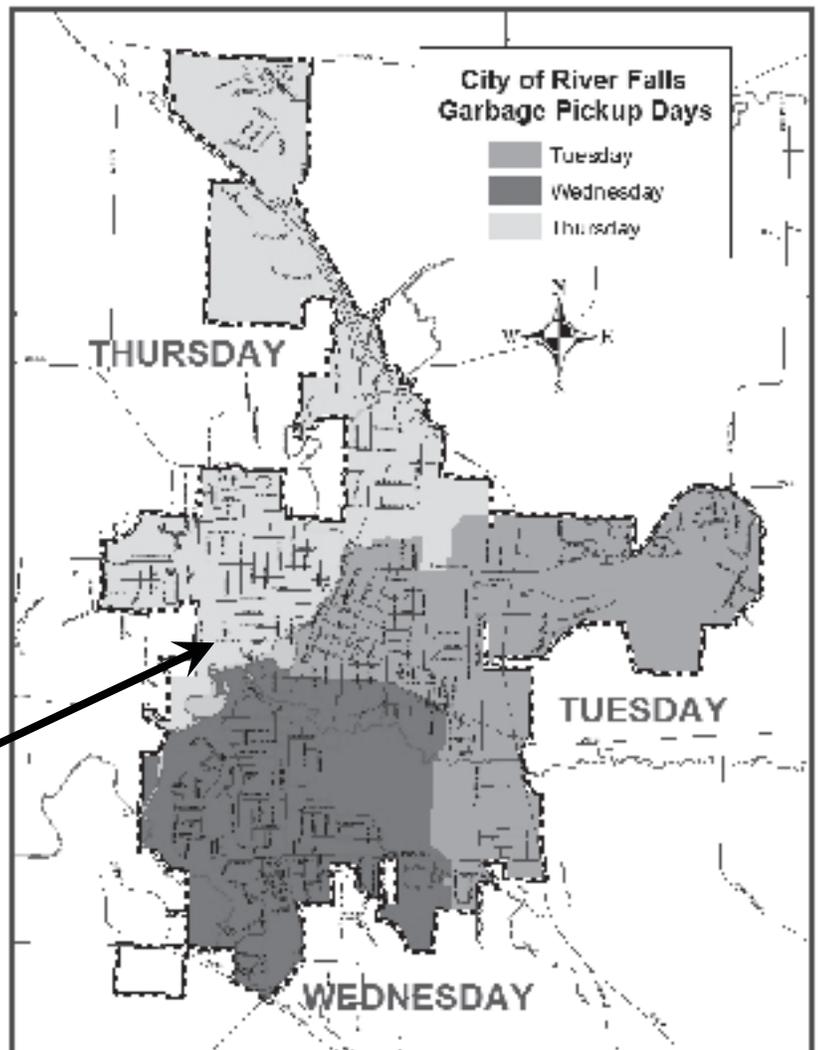
The hauler is not obligated to pick-up garbage and recycling that was not at curbside by 6:00 a.m. on the day of scheduled pick-up, as shown in the figure to the right. **Call 1-866-983-6542** if your garbage pick-up has been missed.

Customer Service

The Veolia call center provides residents with direct access to a staff of customer service representatives who have direct access to real time truck locations, current billing information and other information necessary to promptly deal with customer service issues in a timely and efficient manner. The call center can be reached toll-free **1-866-983-6542**, or by e-mail at **RiverFalls.SW@VeoliaES.com**. If you have an unsatisfactory experience with Veolia customer service, call City Hall at 425-0900.

Compost Site

The City operates a site located at 901 W. Locust Street near the River Falls School Bus Garage. **This site is for disposal of yard waste and brush only.** The site is open April through November during daylight hours. Please help us by self-monitoring the site as hours will have to be severely curtailed if we are forced to have an attendant on duty to monitor the sites usage. Use of this site is for City residents.



CUT HERE

Oil Recycling

The local businesses listed below accept used oil from the general public.

Location	Address	Monday - Friday	Saturday
Bowen's Garage	405 S. Main St.	7:30 AM – 5:30 PM	8:00 AM – Noon
BP Amoco	700 N Main St	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
River Falls Tire	410 N. Main St.	7:30 AM – 5:30 PM	8:00 AM – Noon
River Falls Car Wash	661 N. Main St.	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Note: Pierce County and River Falls Car Wash also accept used antifreeze.

Curbside Yard Waste Pick-Up

The City contract does not provide any curb side yard waste pick up services. However, residents can contact Veolia directly or a private firm to arrange pick up of yard wastes.

Spring and Fall Clean-Up

Each May and November, a clean-up is conducted at the City Public Works Garage (950 Benson Street). Spring clean-up begins the second Monday in May and runs for one week. Fall clean-up begins the second Monday in November and runs one week. The following hours are utilized for both clean-up operations:

Monday through Friday - 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday - 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Acceptable Items include: Carpet/pad, large, bulky items, furniture, misc. garbage, mattress/box spring, propane tanks, minor household construction debris.

Acceptable Items that will be charged a fee include:

Car Tire	\$5.00	Truck Tire	\$4.00	Appliances.....	\$16.00
Air Conditioner.....	\$16.00	Microwave.....	\$4.00	Dehumidifier.....	\$8.00
Computer or Printer.....	\$8.00	TVs & Monitors 20" or less.....	\$16.00	TVs & Monitors >20".....	\$32.00

Unacceptable Items Include: Oil, paint, car batteries, special or hazardous waste, chemicals, or waste that is generated by a contractor. Veolia reserves the right to refuse hazardous materials (see below for disposal of these items).

Eligibility: Clean-up operations are provided only for residents in the City of River Falls who are currently billed for garbage service by Veolia. Residents bringing items for disposal will be asked to present a form of identification and a copy of a recent invoice for City garbage service from Veolia. People who do not qualify will not be allowed to dispose of their goods.

Any calls regarding questions on what can be discarded should be directed to Veolia at 1-866-983-6542.

Residential Recycling

Place steel and aluminum cans, #1-7 plastics, colored and clear bottles and jars, newspaper, magazines, aseptic packaging (milk cartons, juice boxes, etc) and cardboard together in the recycling bin. They do not have to be separated. Do not use plastic bags. Large cardboard that cannot fit in the recycling cart should be flattened and folded or cut into pieces not larger than 3' x 3' in size, placed next to or underneath the cart. All recycling must be placed curbside for collection on the same day as your garbage service.

Preparation Tips: Rinse to produce less than five percent food debris. Remove caps from bottles, jars, and other containers.

Non-Recyclable Items Include:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ◆ Hazardous waste containers | ◆ Plastic and paper cups | ◆ Paint cans | ◆ Pottery/Ceramics |
| ◆ Food contaminated packaging | ◆ Packaging material | ◆ Gasoline containers | ◆ Dishes |
| ◆ Plate/window glass/mirrors | ◆ Bathroom wastepaper | ◆ Aerosol cans | |

Recyclable Items Collected Elsewhere: CFL bulbs, Cell Phones, Batteries, Plastic Bags (see City website for more information)

Hazardous Waste Collections

Pierce County (715) 273-3092 and St. Croix County (715) 386-4675 offer spring and fall clean sweep programs for disposal of many hazardous waste products generated by residents. Call them or check their website for dates.

Disposal of Appliances and White Goods

Veolia will collect appliances and white goods from your residence if you contact them at **1-866-983-6542** at least two days in advance. You will be billed by Veolia for the cost for collection, hauling, and disposal of appliances and white goods in accordance with the following rates: (Note: These items are accepted at the Clean-Up days for a reduce fee, see above)

Auto Seat.....	\$10.00	Box Spring.....	\$25.00	Air Conditioners.....	\$20.00
Truck Tire.....	\$10.00	Chair.....	\$10.00	Microwave.....	\$5.00
Car Tire.....	\$5.00	Couch.....	\$20.00	Dehumidifier.....	\$10.00
Appliances.....	\$25.00	TVs & Monitors 20" or less.....	\$20.00	Carpet and/or Pad (per roll).....	\$3.00
Mattresses.....	\$25.00	TVs & Monitors > 20".....	\$40.00	Computers and Printers.....	\$10.00

For more information

www.VeoliaTwinCities.com (click on Municipalities) or www.rfcity.org/pubworks_garbagerecycle.asp

Ambulance Service Contract

River Falls Area Ambulance Service is very progressive in providing high quality Advanced Life Support (ALS) care at the paramedic level to the residents served. The Ambulance Service has one of the lowest per capita rates in lower Wisconsin (\$9 per capita). The per capita pay 14 percent of the overall annual costs. The majority of the revenue comes from user fees of the department. The Ambulance Service operates four ALS equipped ambulances, two Quick Response vehicles (Dodge Durango), and a mobile command center/disaster trailer. The annual run volume is around 1600 calls or about 4-5 calls per day.

The Ambulance Service has a combination of career and paid on-call staff. The staff goes through an average of seven hours per month of continuing education to maintain proficient skills and knowledge. There are 4 full-time staff members (Director, Operations Supervisor and two field paramedics) and additional staff consists of 18 paramedics and 25 EMTs. Paramedic training is 1200-1400 hours initially and EMT training ranges from 160-250 initial certified hours.

River Falls Area Ambulance also utilizes rural first responders. They are medically trained volunteers

that respond from their homes directly to the scene of an emergency to bridge the time gap before an ambulance arrives. First responders receive 62 hours of certified training. Currently, there are 16 first responders living within the rural area. Each responder carries medical supplies, an advanced airway kit, oxygen, stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, blankets, and limited medications, such as glucose for diabetics. They also provide reassurance for patients that the ambulance is on its way. In addition, Town governments have purchased seven Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) that are strategically placed with responders.

River Falls Area Ambulance Service work closely with other communities and take pride in providing our communities and visitors to River Falls with the best pre-hospital care possible. There are approximately 32,000 people within the area served; the service area is 180 square miles. Since the early 1990's, River Falls Area Ambulance Service has had service agreements with six townships: River Falls, Clifton, Kinnickinnic, Troy, Pleasant Valley and Warren.

If you are interested in learning more about River Falls Area Ambulance Service or if you are interested in riding along to see if EMS is for you, please visit <http://www.rfcity.org>.

Open Book and Board of Review

The 2011 Assessment Roll (value of each property) will be complete sometime after the second Monday in May. All property owners whose total assessment has changed from the 2010 value will receive a [Notice of Assessment](#) from Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc., the City's contracted assessor.

The Notice of Assessment is mailed to property owners and shows the change in value, the date, time, and place of Open Book and Board of Review, and instructions to property owners on how to object to their assessment.

The 2011 Open Book is scheduled on Thursday, May 5, 12 noon to 8 p.m. and Friday, May 6, 8 a.m. to 12 noon. If you wish to speak with the assessor, you will need to make an appointment with Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc., 1-800-721-4157. It is an opportunity for property owners to speak one-on-one with the City Assessor. You can review your property record to check for errors such as incorrect number of rooms or total

square feet of home, garage, and lot size; and ask the Assessor how your value was determined. You may inform the Assessor of recent home sales in your area, or other information that could affect the value of your property, such as a fire, removal of part of the structure, or water damage. The Assessor is able to correct errors to your property's value at Open Book.

The Board of Review will be held on Thursday, May 26, 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Board of Review members are the Mayor, City Alderpersons, and City Clerk. Property owners must file a notice of intent to object no later than 48 hours prior to the Board of Review meeting. Anyone wishing to appear before the Board must complete an objection form and schedule an appointment with the City Clerk. The objector must present oral and/or written evidence supporting his/her opinion of the property value. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue's publication the [Property Assessment Appeal Guide for Wisconsin Real Property Owners](#), can be found at <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/slf/pb055.pdf>. For more information, contact the City Clerk's Office at 715-426-3408 or by email at lhecht@rfcity.org.

2011 Elections in the City of River Falls

Elections for local offices will be held on April 5, 2011. There are four offices up for re-election: Alderperson At Large (Randy Kusilek), Alderperson District 1 (Tom Cafilisch), Alderperson District 2 (Jim Nordgren) and Alderperson District 3 (David Reese). If you are interested in running for a City Office, contact City Clerk Lu Ann Hecht at 715-426-3408 for more information.

Important dates to remember:

January 4, 2011 - the last day for candidates to file nomination papers

January 26, 2011 - last day for electors to register by mail

February 15, 2011 - Spring Primary if needed (would need if more than two candidates file for same office)

March 16, 2011 - last day for electors to register by mail (absentee ballots available in Clerk's Office)

March 31, 2011 - last day for electors to request absentee ballots by mail

April 5, 2011 - Spring Election - polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

You can check your registration status online at www.vpa.wi.gov. If you have moved since you last voted, you will need to re-register with your current address. First-time voters who mail in a Voter Registration Form must submit a copy of their Wisconsin Driver's License. For more information on voter registration, call the City Clerk's Office at 715-426-3408 or visit the City's website at www.rfcity.org or the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board at www.gab.wi.gov.



The Inaugural “River Falls Bird of the Year”

The American Peregrine Falcon has been selected as the first “River Falls Bird of the Year”. As part of the city’s celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), the city newsletter will be profiling an individual bird in the region each year. The American Peregrine Falcon received this award this year due to the immediate threat of extinction as it is on the Endangered Species List. The bird is similar in size to a crow and weighs just over two pounds with an average wingspan of approximately three feet. This species is very beautiful. Adults have a dark grey back and crown, dark bars or streaks on a pale chest and abdomen, and heavy stripes on the side of the face. Immature peregrines are buff-colored in front and have dark brown backs; adults are white or buff in front and bluish-gray on their backs. As a community, we can take action to make sure that the American Peregrine Falcon will not go extinct and eventually thrive in its natural environment. We encourage everyone to keep their eyes peeled for an American Peregrine Falcon and check back to find out next year’s recipient! ~

**All information courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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

NEWSLETTER TEAM:

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

Kristi McKahan
Dawn Wills
Scot Simpson, City Administrator

PHOTO CREDITS:

Margaret Smith
Dawn Wills
Pauline Williams
Vicky Cain
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Lindell



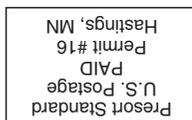
*Back Row: Tom Caflisch, Scott Morrisette, David Cronk, Randy Kusilek
Front Row: Bob Hughes, David Reese, Mayor Don Richards, Jim Nordgren*

The Current Mayor and Common Council

Position	Name	Address	Phone	E-mail Address
Mayor	Don Richards	106 N. Wasson	715-441-2397	drichards@rfcity.org
At Large	Randy Kusilek	518 N. Winter	715-425-0415	rkusilek@rfcity.org
At Large	David Cronk	843 Leroy Lane	715-425-9174	dcronk@rfcity.org
At Large	Scott Morrisette	2137 Rushmore Drive	715-425-8993	smorrisette@rfcity.org
District 1	Tom Caflisch	508 Roosevelt Court	715-425-7186	tcaflisch@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	Bob Hughes	709 Bartosh Lane	715-441-8325	bhughes@rfcity.org



City of River Falls
Web Site
www.rfcity.org



222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022

