

CITY SCENE



Ed Sadler

A Little Bit About A Lot of Things

by Ed Sadler, City Manager

I'd like to take this opportunity to touch on a lot of issues that have occurred over the last year and maybe a few things that are upcoming for us, along with how they all fit together. Much of what has occurred over the last year has been meant to improve our image and therefore improve our ability to attract residents and businesses (both industrial and retail). The changes were many during the year of our 150th birthday.

The River:

This year, the City changed its logo to "Webster City- Boone River Country" to reflect our emphasis on the beauty and recreation opportunities surrounding the Boone River. We were named "River Town of the Year" and the Boone River was selected by the State as one of the most important protected waterways in the State and is putting serious efforts into working with the City, County and landowners to protect the river. This year, we had an expanded Boone Bash River Dash that brought attention to the River and brought in numerous visitors. The County, City and State worked together to host a special camp for education about the river at Briggs Woods also this summer. The first river cleanup in years was held with volunteers. The City's Comprehensive Plan has recently been updated and approved and the recreation portion of the plan now focuses on the opportunities of the Boone River. The crown jewel of all of this is the new trail extension that is currently under construction and will take the trail all the way to Briggs Woods to connect with the County trails by next year. In the future, I think it would be great to extend the trail all the way to Kendall Young Park to the north and make that park more accessible to everyone via the trail system.

Cleaning up:

The City put substantial efforts into working with residents to get several properties cleaned up during the summer. I believe that this effort was

extremely effective. There is still work to be done and we continue to inspect properties, however several hundred properties have been cleaned up. Those reluctant property owners who have refused to come into compliance are now being referred to the City Attorney for legal action. Our image is important to us for a variety of reasons. A nice clean town encourages both residents and businesses to move here and above all, it helps to maintain property values which for most of us is our single largest investment.

Events:

This year was full of events, both old and new. We had the sesquicentennial with its car show, parade, play and everything else. The Depot Museum Complex was open more hours for residents and visitors alike (visitor numbers are up several hundred %). The one act play "Afternoon" by Jane Curtis and sponsored by the sesquicentennial committee was performed three times, along with plays performed by the Community Theater. We had the County Fair with its activities and parade. The races were held every weekend. We had free movies at Brewer Creek Park and free music in the new Plaza throughout the summer. We revived the Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. The first Arts Festival/Crazy Days was held this year and the Boone Bash River Dash was back in a larger and improved format. The Tour de Webster bike race was held with both a long and short course this year. Webster City even had its first Trivia Night, and the list goes on. So much for nothing to do here! Next year, the Raspberry Festival will be back on the schedule and planning has already begun. I can only hope that the other events of this year such as the car show and Arts Festival will continue and that we may be able to add a couple more events to the calendar. I know that it is my intent to continue the movies, Farmers Market and music in the Plaza along with the Boone Bash River Dash. Speaking of the Farmer's Market, Pat Nokes, City Clerk, is looking

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for feedback on the Farmer's Market to improve it for next year, so contact her with your ideas. Regarding the movies for next year, this year, we were under a time constraint to get everything in place and so we did not have time for as much input as we would have liked. If you hadn't noticed, the movies fell into four categories. The first week of the month was "Block Busters", second week was "Iowa Movies", third week was "Animation" and the last week of each month was "Oldies". This year we are going to seek your input as to categories and the movies. We will probably narrow down the choices based on what is available to us and then look to you for your vote to determine final choices. Look for this in coming editions of the City Scene. Thanks to the students and parents of the WC2DC group for running concessions during the movies.

Streets:

As I'm sure you have noticed, we have taken a very aggressive position on street repairs this year. Streets in town will be receiving a variety of treatments that will continue into November (weather permitting). Some streets are being totally rebuilt, some are getting new overlays and others will be getting a slurry seal cover. This is all being done through LOSST money (sales tax now that the jail is complete and paid for) and bond money from the last bond issuance. This year's work will amount to over \$1 million and we fully expect to accomplish about \$500,000 more work each year for the next few years. I believe that this effort will make a serious dent in repairing an

aging infrastructure for us. What we will also be doing from here on is more maintenance type of projects to keep our streets in better shape and therefore get more life out of them. These maintenance projects will include everything from slurry seal work, to chip and seal jobs along with pothole repair and crack sealing.

Retail:

Let's set the stage first. There are really very few towns of our size that have as limited retail venues as we do. Why is that? Some things to consider:

1) It is estimated that about 70-80% of the employees who work here live elsewhere. That means that they use our services during working hours (water, sewer, streets, electric, and police), but take their paycheck elsewhere to pay taxes and purchase most of their retail

goods. This leaves you and me to pay for these services. If you were to assume that 50-60% of our employees lived here, we would have a population of over 15,000.

2) It is further estimated that of the 8,000 residents that we do have, they spend anywhere from 50-70% of their retail dollars elsewhere (Ames, Fort Dodge, Des Moines, Minneapolis, etc.). This causes us to lose not only the retail sales, but also sales tax money which we are currently using for infrastructure improvements.

3) Therefore we have the equivalent retail population of a town of about 3,000 people (50-70% of 8,000 people) and for a town of that size; we have the appropriate level of retail venues.

Now, since arriving here, I have gotten all sorts of helpful suggestions like: "We need a Kohl's Store." "Why don't we get a Cabela's?" "We need a Lowes." "We need more shoe stores." And just plain old "we need more stores that offer good prices." Now ask yourself why any of these stores would come to a town of 3,000 people? They are in business to stay in business and to do that, they have to have a customer base that we obviously do not have. This dilemma is exacerbated for us by the fact that we do have larger towns near us that act as "buying centers" for potential shoppers. Now the dilemma for us: What comes first, the chicken or the egg? Do we get shoppers and the stores follow, or do we get the stores and the shoppers follow? If you are a shopper, you have one answer. If you are the store owner, I'm sure the answer is different. A case in point is the fact that not long ago, a new shoe store did open here only to go out of business a few months later. You don't get to stay in business and offer "good prices and selection" if you are only selling three pair of shoes a day. The retail merchant is not here solely for our convenience. He has to make a profit.

Almost everything that I have already mentioned above was meant to bring more people to town, whether as visitors or as permanent residents. We have also taken other steps to try and encourage new residents. All in an effort to increase retail opportunities, increase the visibility of Webster City, place us higher on the radar for new businesses, stabilize property values, grow our potential labor pool and generally make this a more inviting place to live for current residents and new residents.



By Jack Foster, Councilman

"As soon as public service ceases to be the chief business of the citizens, and they would rather serve with their money than with their persons, the State is not far from its fall." - Jean-Jacques Rousseau

As many of you already know, my term of office on the City Council ends on December 31 of this year, and I am not running for reelection. I have enjoyed my four years on the Council, and they have been a great learning experience. I would like to take this opportunity to share with the community some of the insights and conclusions reached by me during my time on the Council and other local organizations and boards.

The most important thing I have come to understand is that public service - whatever form it takes - is not only a right and a privilege, it is a duty. Too often when individuals are asked to seek public office they reply that they are "too busy" or that they "fear the loss of business" and the effect on their livelihood. These are valid and understandable concerns but they must be overcome. It is incumbent upon all of us to step forward and take an active part in community affairs, with the realization that we will make unpopular - even incorrect - decisions and will be taken to task for them. Further, participation in community affairs is not accomplished by merely sitting back second-guessing and ridiculing those who do try to fulfill this obligation. I am not suggesting that reasoned criticism is not proper and necessary; it is. But this can and should be done without getting personal and hurtful, as this is counter-productive. It is a given, however, that some people will respond on a personal level, and a prospective public servant must be aware of and prepared to deal with this from day one.

With that said, I wish to take this opportunity to encourage interested persons to serve on the Council. By the time this article appears it will be too late to file this year. However, there will be three seats open in two more years and it is not too early to start preparing for that election cycle. I have three thoughts to share with you in this regard. First, we need more women on the Council. I don't say this because I believe women make better decisions than men; I don't. Women do, however, frequently approach a problem with a different point of view and from a different direction than men. Attacking a problem with these differing approaches

results in a synergy that is not present in an all-male or all-female Council.

Second, it is not necessary to be an accountant, a lawyer, or any other form of professional to be an effective Council member. I firmly believe that the most important qualification for the position is to have plain old common sense (a good sense of humor also helps). Your duties as a councilperson, your relations with the City Staff, the rules of order, etc., can be learned by study and on the job.

Lastly, and I believe most important right now, is the need for young businessmen and businesswomen on the Council. When we advertised for a new City Manager, and when we interviewed prospective applicants, the Council made it very clear that we were looking for someone willing and able to move Webster City forward, someone who would emphasize economic development and meaningful growth, someone who would work to retain our next generations of workers and entrepreneurs, and I believe we now have that person. We need people who have a stake in the success of this city, people who are willing to plan ahead for the retention and success of their children and grandchildren, to guide, assist, and support him.

And one last thought for the community at large: For years the demographic projections for this part of Iowa show a declining, aging population. If Webster City is to be an exception to this prediction, we need the Council, City Staff, and Webster City Area Development to be bold and innovative. To do so means that missteps and mistakes will occur, and the community must recognize and accept them for what they are. Thomas Edison, when asked about his many attempts to create a workable light bulb, said: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that don't work." To fail in nine out of ten attempts at growth, and to have that one success, is infinitely preferable to doing nothing - to just sitting back and saying to ourselves that "It's a waste of time and money. Nothing's going to change." If you have a suggestion for promoting growth, please pass it along to the City Manager and the Council. Remain open to new ideas and changes of direction. Be optimistic and encouraging. It is possible to turn Webster City into a more vibrant, positive, successful community.



Fire Prevention Week October 7th-13th "Practice Your Escape Plan"

This year's fire prevention theme is "Practice Your Escape Plan". Fire Captain Mark Whaley will be going to the grade schools and talk about fire safety. Mark will visit with students from kindergarten through the fourth grade. It is the fire department's objective that the children will take the fire safety message home and talk with their parents about fire safety and practice an escape plan.

The department is also recruiting for volunteer firefighters. Agility testing and interviews will be conducted on October 8th. If you are interested in getting involved in civic activities, consider the fire department. Firefighting is a challenging job and the camaraderie established with members is one of the many rewards. Applications are available at the fire station, city hall or on line at www.webstercity.com by clicking on the city employment link.

Commemorating a conflagration

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.

According to popular legend, the fire broke

out after a cow - belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary - kicked over a lamp, setting first the barn, then the whole city on fire. Chances are you've heard some version of this story yourself; people have been blaming the Great Chicago Fire on the cow and Mrs. O'Leary, for more than 130 years. But recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has helped to debunk this version of events.

The 'Moo' myth

Like any good story, the 'case of the cow' has some truth to it. The great fire almost certainly started near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milking cows. But there is no proof that O'Leary was in the barn when the fire broke out - or that a jumpy cow sparked the blaze. Mrs. O'Leary herself swore that she'd been in bed early that night, and that the cows were also tucked in for the evening.

But if a cow wasn't to blame for the huge fire, what was? Over the years, journalists and historians have offered plenty of theories. Some blamed the blaze on a couple of neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes. Others believed that a neighbor of the O'Leary's may have started the fire. Some people have speculated that a fiery meteorite may have fallen to earth on October 8, starting several fires that day - in Michigan and Wisconsin, as well as in Chicago.

By Mayor Eugene C. Gray

Not having the chance to make assignments for a number of years, I'm taking this opportunity to test your lexical skills.

I am asking you to take each of the words listed below, look them up in a dictionary, and add them to your working vocabulary.

I have placed them in alphabetical order for your ease in research. One caution: several words have variant meanings; therefore, use the number of the meaning I have supplied.

My definitions have come from The American Heritage Dictionary of The American Language, 1980

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. con, #4 | 5. ignorant | 9. obdurate | 13. perfidy |
| 2. etiology | 6. marionette | 10. obfuscate | 14. puppet |
| 3. ideology | 7. martinet | 11. obsequious | 15. pusillanimous |
| 4. ignominy | 8. mendicant | 12. paranoia | 16. sycophant |

Please be aware that many of the terms have a pejorative connotation in many instances and may be considered libelous when directed toward a sentient individual.

Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Have fun.

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City Scene

New Exotic Animals Law by Mike McConnell, Chief of Police

The ownership of exotic animals as personal pets is becoming more common to some residents in Iowa. With this apparent increased number of exotic animals, concern from neighbors (justifiably so) has also increased. For this reason, the Iowa legislature enacted new legislation to help regulate exotic animals and to promote public safety.

This article is written to inform Webster City residents of the new law concerning ownership of exotic animals and to inform the owners of exotic animals of their responsibilities. Having now responded to 2 recent incidents of a baby alligator being loose in a residential area in Webster City, it is time to address this issue for the safety of our community. The new code section is 717F and has numerous requirements; a few of which are described herein.

Definition of exotic animals

The definition of exotic animals includes examples such as; alligators, crocodiles, monkeys, coyotes, lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, rhinoceros, elephants, water monitors, vipers, beaded lizards, Gila monsters, cobras, mambas, coral snakes, adders, rattlesnakes, copperheads, pit vipers, cottonmouths, sea snakes, pythons, anacondas, and non-domesticated wolves. This list is a summary of the entire list found in the law of some of the more common exotic animals. For an entire list, see the new law.

Grandfather Clause

Individuals currently owning exotic animals when the law was enacted on July 1, 2007, are still allowed to own exotic animals; however, they are subject to the new provisions effective December 31, 2007. The exception is that effective August 29, 2007; the owner must have an electronic identification device (chip) implanted under the animal's skin unless the veterinarian determines that the implant would endanger the life of the animal. If the implant is not possible, the owner must attach some sort of identification to the animal as required by the Iowa Department of Agriculture.

Exceptions, Registration & Insurance

Zoos, a circus, and wildlife sanctuaries are exempt from certain parts of the law, however;

they are fairly heavily regulated in other ways. The law requires registration of exotic animals to the Iowa Department of Agriculture no later than December 31, 2007.

Moreover, the owner must maintain liability insurance of not less than \$100,000 with a deductible of not more than \$250.00.

Escaped Exotic Animals & Signage

The new law is very clear in stating that the owner must immediately notify an animal warden or local law enforcement if an exotic animal escapes. To provide for safety of the neighborhood and children, the owner must erect at least one sign on the property where the animal resides and the sign must include a symbol that children can understand.

Becomes Effective December 31, 2007

Most of the requirements of this law take effect on December 31, 2007. There are many requirements owners of exotic animals must adhere to, some of which may be very costly. It appears that the new state law will be very effective in addressing Iowans' concerns for safety. For now, the owner of the most recent loose alligator case was cited under a city ordinance for allowing an animal to run at large. The owner has taken steps to keep the alligator confined more securely.

It is my understanding that there are other owners of alligators in Webster City. For those owners, I suggest reviewing the new law very carefully to ensure your compliance. Further information concerning this new law can be obtained via the Internet at <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/press/press4707.htm>.

According to the law, the primary responsibility of enforcing this law falls to the Iowa Department of Agriculture who can be reached at 515-281-5321. In all likelihood, after the initial complaint is received by the Iowa Department of Agriculture, local law enforcement will become involved, especially if the need is immediate and public safety is threatened. Residents can also call the police department and speak with Chief McConnell or Captain Janssen at 832-9166 for more information.

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KCCI Project Mainstreet Returns to WC

On Wednesday, September 26, Caitlin Coyner and KCCI News Channel 8 returned to Webster City as a follow up to the Project Mainstreet Grant Award that was given to

Chelsea Tolle, Sally Trueblood and the Girl Scouts for the renovation of the Wapawokis Girl Scout Lodge at Kendall Young Park.

Winter Disconnection Procedure

The Webster City Municipal Utility Office will follow the rules and regulations set by the Iowa Utility Board regarding winter weather disconnections. If the temperature is below 20 degrees, service cannot be disconnected until the temperature reaches 20 degrees. Weather conditions will be watched closely when necessary.

Only customers who have been approved for the low-income energy assistance program (LIHEAP) will be protected from disconnection of electric service for non-payment during the winter moratorium, which is November 1 through April 1. Any customer who has not been approved for energy assistance may be disconnected for non-payment. Please contact our office for payment arrangements before disconnection occurs.

City Plaza Update

On Saturdays this summer and fall the new city hall plaza was a busy place. Fresh vegetables, Hamilton County honey, baked goods, candles and other misc. items were for sale each Saturday morning. As with any new project it will take a while to build it up, but plans are already being made for a bigger and better market next year. If you have any ideas that might make our market better and bigger contact Pat Nokes at 832-9141 or P O Box 217, Webster City.

On Saturday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. you could come down to the plaza and listen to music. Different groups or individuals were scheduled for each Saturday night with a variety of music being offered during the

Any questions regarding LIHEAP applications should be directed to Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. at (515) 832-6451.

Approval for energy assistance has to take place before disconnection occurs, if not, service will not be restored until the past due amount is paid in full. Customers who have been approved for energy assistance are still required to pay for all other services during the moratorium. Energy assistance funds are for heating purposes only. Failure to pay the water, sewer and recycling portions of the bill will result in disconnection of water services during the winter moratorium. On April 1, all past due balances on an energy assistance customer's account are due in full to avoid disconnection of service. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Utility Office at 832-9141.

summer. If you didn't come down to the plaza and enjoy the activities this year, we hope you'll give it a try next year.

Another addition to the city hall plaza area is the community bulletin board. Anyone who has something for sale or give away or who is going to have a garage sale is asked to come down to the plaza and post their sign/notice up and advertise this way instead of putting signs up around town in the parking areas. People will then be able to come to one place and see where garage sales are being held that day instead of driving around town looking for signs. Citizens are urged to start using the bulletin board whenever they have something they want to advertise.

Thank you!

The City of Webster City would like to thank the following sponsors for making our first outdoor movie season a big success!

- * International Union U.A.W. Local 442
- * Gary J. Groves Attorney
- * Osweilers - R&K Birkestrand, Inc.
- * Scrap Processors - W.C. Iron & Metal
- * Doolittle Oil Company - Doc's Stop C Stores
- * Beam Industries
- * McDonalds of Webster City
- * Gene Barrick - Seven B Ranch
- * Abens Realty
- * Moriarty Dental Group, PLC
- * Chalfant Plumbing, Inc.
- * Casey's General Store
- * F&F Quick Mart

Did you know?

Our City ordinances prohibit the following:

- * Blowing grass and leaves into the street.
- * Parking vehicles in the front yard on grass or on the city right-of-way.
- * Posting signs on utility poles or in the city right-of-way (i.e. Garage Sale signs)
- * It is the property owners' responsibility to keep alleys and sidewalks clear of overgrown trees, bushes and shrubs.

Thank you for doing your part. If you have questions please call City Hall at 832-9151.

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City Scene

Boone River Recreation Trail Update

Weather permitting, the concrete for the trail will be poured the week of October 1st. Most of the grading and ground preparation has been completed. The bridge is 95 percent completed. The rails still need to be installed, as well as the approaches on each side need to be poured. The goal is to have the majority of the trail completed this fall. Unfortunately there is still a good portion of the trail on the Union Pacific right of way that will probably not be completed this fall. This portion of the trail will be traveling under the railroad train trestle near Briggs Woods and will have overhead protection, as well as other safety features. Construction for this portion of the trail will probably have to wait until spring.



Protect Your Water Meter!

Winter weather is near and the City of Webster City would like to remind our utility customers to protect their water meters.

As you are weatherproofing your home this season, please make sure to check your water meter also. If your water meter is in an unheated basement, crawlspace or underneath a trailer, you will need to insulate it from the cold. You are responsible for protecting your water meter. If you are unsure of how to do this, please call a plumber. The City has a list of licensed plumbers who can help with this.

If your water meter freezes, please contact our office as soon as possible. Please do not try to repair the meter yourself. This can result in further damage and costs that you will be responsible for. One of our meter technicians is always on call to help with

these types of emergencies.

During our regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, you may reach us at (515) 832-9141. After-hours and on weekends and holidays, please call the police department non-emergency number at (515) 832-9166 and they will page a technician. Please do not leave a message on our voice mail system if it is an urgent matter. Call the police department so that the situation can be corrected in a timely manner.

If your water meter freezes, you will be responsible for the replacement cost of the meter and any overtime charges incurred by the City for after-hours calls. You will receive a separate bill from the utility office for this charge. If you have further questions, please contact our office.

Expanded Fitness Room at Fuller Hall

The Fuller Hall Recreation Center would like to announce additional equipment has arrived in the fitness room. Additional treadmills, elliptical trainers, and exercise bikes have been added. The hours available to use this equipment are:

Monday – Friday	6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Saturday	7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Please contact Fuller Hall at 832-9193 for more information.



Snow Emergency Regulations

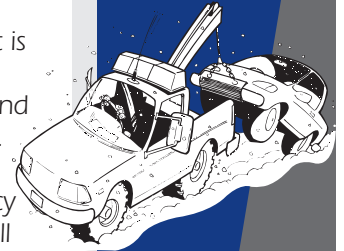
Chapter 70 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Webster City prohibits parking on residential streets during a declared emergency situation such as snow and ice conditions. A declaration of emergency may be called by the City when conditions warrant during winter weather conditions. The declaration will be made between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The City stresses the need for each person affected by this ordinance to seek alternate parking places. It is solely the responsibility of each vehicle owner to find out when the declaration was made and where his/her vehicle can be legally and safely parked.

The announcement or cancellation of declaration will be made on KQWC-AM 1570, KQWC-FM 95.7, Cable Channel 12, the city website at www.webstercity.com or a recorded message is available on the snow emergency status line at 832-9122.

Two hours following the declaration of

emergency, parking will not be allowed on any residential street. The provisions of this regulation will be in effect and will supercede all other parking regulations relating to parking on public streets until the emergency declaration is terminated. Parking may be allowed on residential streets after BOTH sides of the street have been completely plowed or the declared emergency has been removed. The Central Business District, however, is exempt from the emergency parking regulations and is regulated as the posted signs indicate. The central business district is the area between Prospect Street and Superior Street and between Bank Street and the Union Pacific Railroad Company tracks.

Two hours after a declaration of emergency has been called, the Police Department will begin ticketing and towing operations. We don't really want to tow your car, so please move it in time. If your car is towed, you must call the Police Department at 832-9166 to start the process to get it back.



Webster City Needs Your Voice

This is your community.

Please let us know if you have suggestions or changes that need to be made.

My name is _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Clip and mail to:
CITY SCENE COMMENTS
P.O. Box 217
Webster City, IA 50595

For all valid comments, signatures are required.

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Ph: 515-832-9151

Quarterly Newsletter for the City of Webster City

City of Webster City

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