

# CITY SCENE

Fall 2011



Ed Sadler

## Are They Winning After All?

By Ed Sadler, City Manager

As I racked my brain to decide what to write about this quarter, I received my inspiration while watching television last month. So, rather than writing this as Ed Sadler, City Manager, I am writing this as Ed Sadler, just regular citizen of the United States. My inspiration came as I watched the remembrance of 9-11 on television and thought about the event and its implications long and hard. As I watched speaker after speaker and news commentator after news commentator reiterate that this country stood united and that terrorism would

not succeed, I asked myself "just what were the terrorists trying to accomplish"? Certainly, it was much more than killing 3,000 innocent people and destroying

two very visible symbols of our way of life. Of course it was. Their inevitable goal was to divide us, make us afraid and destroy the strongest economy in the world. Looking back 10 years later, are they succeeding?

At least in my lifetime, I can never remember this Country being as divided as it is now, not even over Viet Nam. Polls show the President's ratings as being extremely low, Congressional approval is even worse and at an all

time low, and a huge majority of people feel that the Country is heading in the wrong direction. Every issue now seems to be a matter of life and death and also appears to be the sword worth dying on. NO COMPROMISE! MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY! The majority of us are very unhappy with Congress and a lot of that seems to be as a result of the recent Debt Ceiling discussions. The problem there is that we are all unhappy for different reasons. Each of us seems to believe that if the rest of the Country could just see it "my" way,

everything would be ok. The problem with Congress is that they are merely a reflection of us. Everyone seems to believe that we should throw them all out and start over, but not quite. My Senator and my Congressman are ok; it's all those "other" people who need to elect someone new so we can get something done. If we don't change our attitudes, Congress won't change their attitude and we will elect a Congress that is mostly the same (or worst case, even more

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divisive) and the saga will continue. As we become more divided, I become more and more tired of groups trying to be more religious and more patriotic than the rest of the country, and that somehow, if the rest of the country does not express their religion and patriotism the same way, that they must be bad. What happened to our tolerance? Isn't that what we were founded upon? The only thing that we do seem relatively united on is indeed our patriotism, but divided on how we are expressing it. How trivial!

As for our economy and the shape it is in, that is just a little more than obvious. Ten percent unemployment, a decrease in the nation's bond rating, huge debt at the federal level, huge budget cuts in all other

levels of government, housing prices plummeting, stock market looking like a yoyo, banks failing, other nations in financial disarray and the list goes on. The ranking of the United States in several financial related surveys continues to fall. Everyone knows that this is the largest issue facing our Country and everyone agrees we need to fix it, but all we seem to be able to do is argue about the "HOW". Numerous large companies and banks are sitting on record cash balances, but they are "afraid" to loan and invest that cash. Their fears may be well founded. They are unsure of what the government

will do. They are unsure of what the economy will do, so they sit tight. As long as they sit tight, they will not loan money, they will not invest in hiring people and producing more goods, and that is a recipe for an ever increasing spiral downwards. That ability to alleviate those fears is in our hands. We can send the message to businesses, government and the world that we can truly be united and not just pay lip service to the idea of being united. Tolerance is a concept that we were founded upon and we need to find it in our hearts and minds to again

be tolerant. It is what made us so strong to begin with and kept us unified.

So, I ask you again: "Are they succeeding"? We are obviously divided! We are afraid of what comes next! Our economy is suffering!

Yes, we have dealt several terrorist organizations serious blows, but are they winning in the end? I guess it is up to us (all of us) to decide if we are just going to pay lip service to being united by demonstrating our patriotism and united approach to terrorism, or are we really going to be united as a country to solve our problems and regain our position as world leader. If not, we will go the direction of previous world powerhouses and sink into a secondary role in the world, to later be discussed in history books as what once was.



## Meeting Challenges Head On

by Jerry Kloberdanz, Councilman

Summers over, school has started, Friday night football games and the chill is in the air. Yep it is getting to be that time of the year again, when we start thinking about the cold nights and short days of winter. It has been a long hot summer for some and way too short for others.

First off, I would like to say THANK YOU to all the city employees who worked hard to make a difference in Webster City. Many volunteered their time, sweat and muscle to help with many different projects around town. Without their help, many of these things would not be as successful as they are.

This has been a difficult time for many people in our community, with Electrolux closing and the loss of jobs from those businesses that supplied that plant. It would be easy to blame someone else for what happened, but there is nothing any of us could have done to change the outcome. Electrolux was leaving no mater what anyone else did or said to try to save those jobs, they were not going to settle for anything but cheaper than what any community in the United States could offer, so they went to Mexico. What we do from this point forward

**What we do from this point forward will be up to us.**

will be up to us. We are trying to encourage new businesses to locate in Webster City, but there are very few new businesses starting up or expanding to any communities. That is a huge challenge for this city and every other city that wants new business. We will need to look at the different options that are

out there to entice companies to look at us. This will require the city and its citizens to put our best foot forward. That is why we are doing everything we can to keep our community clean and presentable to those that are looking for a new town to start or expand their business.

With that in mind, I know there has been a lot of talk about how to handle



tall grass and weeds in some of our neighbor's lawns. If you are living next to one of these homes, you may want to talk with your neighbor and ask them if there is anything that they may need help with. You may find out that there may be an illness or loss of job that may be preventing them from taking care of their property. The main thing is that we get out of our comfort zone and talk with our neighbors, even if they do not need anything from you, you might find a new friend. If you are my age you remember when you knew your neighbors and you socialized with them, now days we sometimes do not even know our neighbors name, much less anything else about them. What I am saying is to meet your neighbor and take it from there.

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David Toyer

I know that we are going to meet these challenging times head on and try to prepare for the future. This is the time for us to come together for the benefit of everyone in the community. I know that we are in a better position than many cities; we have a good workforce available to meet any business needs, a great community with many options for people to utilize like Kendall Young Library, Fuller Hall, the walking trails, Hamilton County Fairgrounds and numerous other facilities. We have

## Economic Development Update

By David Toyer, Economic Development Consultant

It's been a busy and eventful summer as we seek to attract new businesses for our community, help existing businesses grow and expand, and educate new business owners to ensure our community's newest ventures have the best chance for success. Here are some of the highlights of our work:

### Webster City is Award Winning!

A big part of economic development is marketing our community, getting the word out to our targeted industries about where Webster City, Iowa is, who we are, and why businesses should locate their investment here. We've developed and are implementing a comprehensive economic development marketing plan that includes a multi-faceted approach to marketing our community. From the website we launched this year to a print ad campaign in national publications to daily "tweets." We've invested a lot of time into raising our profile, expanding our network of contacts, and placing us in the best position to be noticed by new projects.

I am happy to say that our strategy is working. Our efforts have increased the City's profile amongst other communities, economic development professionals, and industries. In fact,

excellent schools for our children and Iowa Central Community College for our continuing education. We also need to recognize all the service organizations that put a lot of time and effort to make Webster City better. The thing is sometimes we do not see all the good things that this community has. You know the old saying "can not see the forest for all the trees". I know working together; we can become more successful than we already are.

we now generate more leads from our own efforts than those generated for us by the region and the state.

More importantly, our work isn't going unnoticed.

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) recognized Webster City for having an award winning economic development website and social media

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customer demands for each industry served.

- Proximity to multi-industry strategic customers for future growth.
- Proximity to global supply-chain partners.
- Infrastructure, including airports, roads, railroads, water, electrical power and fiber-optic data channels.

**Jubail, Hattiesburg**  
**Welcome Major Projects**

These sites represent major needs of the requirements of much large plastics and chemicals manufacturers. In one of the industry's largest deals in recent years, **Dow Chemical Co. and Saudi Arabian Oil Co.** announced plans in July 2015 to build a massive plastics complex in Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

The \$20-billion project will create thousands of new jobs and is scheduled for full production by 2018. The complex will include 20 units and will have an annual capacity of nearly 7 billion pounds of various products, mostly plastics and chemicals.

The **Becht Corp.**, based in Irving, Texas, has been awarded the utilities and offices contract for the new project.

The new chemicals complex is expected to be the largest single-phase development in the world.

In the U.S., plastics companies are tending to expand their operations closer to home. A case in point is **Resinall**, a manufacturer of thermoplastic resins and polymers. The firm announced July 28 that it will expand its existing operations in Hattiesburg, Miss., to accommodate the production of white-water resin.

Resinall said it would build a three-story, 3,000-sq-ft, 120,000-sq-ft facility at its current Dixie Pine Road location with an investment of \$17 million. The project retains 120 jobs and adds 30 more.

Ken Cadey, vice president of operations and technology for Resinall, tells Site Selection that Mississippi beat out North Carolina for the project because the plant in Hattiesburg "is closer to our base of raw materials. We can get better surface stock out of Louisiana and Texas and resin out of Florida and Alabama."

Cadey says another key factor was the presence of an established work force and senior management team in Hattiesburg, one of the leading polymer science research locations in the world.

"The University of Southern Mississippi has a worldwide reputation for its expertise in polymer science," he says. "We certainly benefit from the graduates of their research program. We have had some very talented people come to Resinall from Southern Miss."

Cadey says the new facility should be operational by late 2012. The Mississippi Development Authority assisted the project by providing funding through the Job Protection Grant program.

"We are very excited and consider this a milestone for Resinall," said Leo Gordin, executive vice president of Resinall. "It will allow re-engineering of our newest technology, allow entry into new markets, create jobs and help to protect approximately 120 existing jobs."

"Cooperation from the leadership of Hattiesburg, Forrest County and the state of Mississippi is a major reason for Resinall's success and growth," said Gordin. "It was appreciation of the help from the Mississippi Development Authority and the Area Development Partnership for their assistance in bringing this vision to reality." —SIE



strategy. This recognition is significant because Webster City was chosen for these honors by a panel of economic development experts from the public

and private sectors that span the globe.

### **Webster City is a Proven Value**

Webster City is a great place to do business and our low cost of business allows our industries to compete and excel. But knowing it and proving it are two separate things. That's why we worked with our regional economic development partnership to prove it.

The proof is in a recent study by Wilson Tax & Business Consulting that found the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership region, including Webster City, tops communities in Minnesota, South Dakota and Illinois when it comes to both low taxes and a low cost of doing business. For instance, the study found that a light manufacturing company with 100 employees locating in a Mid Iowa Growth Partnership community would have an annual cost of doing business approximately \$150,000 less than Minnesota, \$250,000 less than South Dakota and \$350,000 less than Illinois. The study looked at three business scenarios (light manufacturing, renewable energy manufacturing and agricultural manufacturing) and evaluated communities on a series of factors including income taxes, sales taxes, unemployment/workers compensation, property taxes, utilities, building and land costs, tax credits and incentives, and wage comparisons. You can obtain copies of this report on our website ([www.buildwebstercity.com](http://www.buildwebstercity.com)).

### **Webster City is Building Business for the Future**

Some of our largest employers are companies that were started in Webster City. And, it's very likely that some of our largest in the future will be started this same way: great people with great ideas that take great risks to pursue their dreams.

Recognizing this, we've emphasized working with new businesses as a way we can create new jobs and strengthen our community over the long term.

That's why Webster City teamed up with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Senior Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Hamilton County SEED to provide a workshop in September that was designed to assist newly created businesses and new entrepreneurs just starting a business. The goal of the workshop was to provide the resources and expertise that will help these businesses have the best chance at success.



Thanks to a handful of business experts and a couple of our existing Webster City business owners, more than a dozen new entrepreneurs were able to get valuable information on marketing and promotion, financing, accounting and management from professionals and peers.

It's no wonder that for the last four years, Iowa has been amongst the five states with the lowest rate of small business failures – a whopping 40% below the national average.

### **Conclusion**

We've come a long way in a short period of time. We're working to create jobs immediately that will help those displaced by the closure of Electrolux. But, we're also working to create the opportunities for new local businesses that will become a solid foundation for the long term economic health of our community.

## Employee Recognition Picnic

On Thursday, September 8th the City held an Employee Recognition Picnic. The event was a potluck dinner held at Brewer Creek Park Shelter. The following awards were given out.

### Years of Service Awards for 2010

40 years of service – Jan Ensley, Marty Hanson, Mike Lund

20 years of service – Brad Iles

15 years of service – George Johnston

10 years of service – Shiloh Mork

### Safety Awards – Departments with no injuries in 2010

Electric Utility, Public Grounds, Water Plant, Wastewater Plant and Street Department

### Attendance Awards -The following people used less than 8 hours of sick leave in 2010

Don Roe, Ann Smith, Karyl Bonjour, Liz Pevestorf, Vicki Smith, Dodie Wolfgram, Chad Kuebler, Brandon Hayes, Mike

Lund, Andy Sowle, Don Zehner, Doug McCollough, Marty Parkhill, Tim Ziegenbein, Ryan Petersburg, Ted Knutson, Ryan Pittman, Craig Biggs, Mark Glasock and Brandon Bahrenfuss

### New full-time & part-time employees for 2010 were also recognized they are:

#### Full-time

Tim Danielson – Water & Wastewater Supervisor, Brian Hughes – Police Chief and JoAnne Gemmel – Police Dispatcher

#### Part-Time

Stacy Grimshaw – Utility Office, Steve Olson – Police Dispatcher, Macey Mark – Police Dispatcher and Nesha Schwienebart – Police Dispatcher

The City would like to thank North Central Turf, Inc. and Ruba Lawn Care for their generous donations that made this event possible.

## The City Over The Last Five Years

Regarding the City over the last 5 years, just what is the truth regarding taxes and the number of employees working for the City? Let's take a look and see just what has happened in these last five years and where we will end up at the end of this fiscal year (ends June 30, 2012). The total assessed mil levy in Fiscal Year '07 was 15.99 mils. Of this, 3.03 mils was for employee benefits, of which the City has little or no control of since it includes such things as Workers Compensation, unemployment insurance, and retirement benefits which are all set at the state level. The City had 70 full time employees in that year and the General Fund cash balance was \$ 1.3 million. Now, at the beginning of this fiscal year, the approved mil levy is still 15.99, but the employee benefit portion is now up to 3.88 mils (an increase of 0.85 mils), the number of full time City employees is down to 64, and the cash balance in the General Fund exceeds \$2 million. City Council and City staff has worked hard to keep tax levies at this level. Had the City not reduced staffing by six full time positions and made extensive changes to the health insurance that is offered, by increasing co-payments, increasing deductibles and increasing employee insurance payments, the mil levy would easily have exceeded 16.5 mils for this year just to cover benefits alone, much less actual salaries and support costs. This frugal and conservative approach to City government is what has lead to the City's change in bond rating from an "A" to an AA-", which in turn saves the City money for any future bond projects by reducing interest costs.

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## Protect Your Water Meter

It's that time of year again! Winter weather will soon be here 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 water 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.

## Ladies Night Out

Steppin' Out in Webster City on Oct. 20th from 12pm-9pm for Ladies Night Out. We are excited to announce the following participating retailers:

Carolyn's Hallmark, Classic Carpet and Interiors, Gilbert Jewelers, Gingerbread House, Heart-n-Home, Osweiler's, Pampered Chef- Cindi Sweedler- at The Second Street Emporium, R Company, Shanti Wellness Day Spa, Stony Creek Landscapes, and Ted's Car Wash. The following restaurants will be participating as well: Grid Iron Family Grill and Sports Lounge, Mornin Glory Coffee Shop, Second Street Emporium, and Whoop-ti-doods and La-ti-Daas. We will be giving out prizes for

every \$20 you spend at each participating location which will be a prize of \$100 in Webster City Bucks, we will be giving out a prize of \$75 dollars in WC Bucks for a lucky winner that eats at one of the four participating restaurants, and a

\$25 in WC Bucks for a lady that turns in a passport that is stamped by all 11 participating retail stores.

We will have something fun at each location, with potential door

prizes, wine tasting, live demonstrations, and much more.

Visit [www.visitwebstercityiowa.com](http://www.visitwebstercityiowa.com) and click on the Ladies Night Out ad to see an awesome commercial promoting this great event!

## City of Webster City

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## City Wide Leaf Pick Up

The Annual City Wide Leaf Pick Up will be held on Tuesday, November 15, 2011 beginning at 7:00 a.m. Residents are reminded to have their leaves in plastic bags and on the curb by 7:00 a.m. The bags need to be tied. Please do not place sticks or any other type of yard waste or rubbish in the bags. Only leaves and grass clippings are allowed. Crews will make one pass through the city. Volunteers are needed to help pick up leaves and place them in the compost pile. Please contact Kent Harfst at 832-9193 if you are interested in helping with this project.

## 2011 Halloween Activities

### Friday, October 28, 2011

Free Outdoor Movie at Wilson Brewer Historic Park @ 7:00 p.m. – The Ghost & Mr. Chicken.

### Saturday, October 29, 2011

Preschool Halloween Party in Fuller Hall Gym from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Middle School Activity Night at Fuller Hall 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Hallowed Eve at Wilson Brewer Park with the RIPP Paranormal Group of Fort Dodge. Tours begin at 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. All persons need to pre-register. Please contact Cheryl at 297-0273 to make reservations. Cost is \$3.00/person.

### Monday, October 31, 2011

Merchant Downtown Trick or Treat 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Residential Trick or Treat Night 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

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