



CITY SCENE

Fall 2003

Council Corner



Bob Villier
City Council Member

As I reflect on my four years as a council person, I find that it is something I am glad I have done. The following are some of the questions that have been posed to me during my term.

What do you feel are some of the things that have improved Webster City over the past 4 years?

I feel the biggest feat was completion of the downtown area. I call it phase one. Phase two will be getting new business to locate there. Some of which has already happened and some are in the planning stages at this time.

We (the council and staff) have held taxes down to a minimum. However, with the economy the way it is right now, it will be hard to maintain this level much longer.

What was your hardest decision during your term?

I think the open burning probably was the most controversial. I felt it was like sitting on a jury and

listening to the evidence that was presented. After the decision was made to ban open burning, I did not receive one call that objected to the ordinance. So maybe it was the right thing to do after all.

Has it given me a different outlook on the way government is run?

No. I was well aware of the way a city functioned due to the fact that I was an employee for 23 years. I think we have an excellent staff and they work very hard to operate the city in a manner that makes each citizen proud of living here.

Finally and most important, I would like to thank my wife for the support she has given me and to the citizens for allowing me to represent them in a manner that I am proud of. As I have said before, I still plan to serve on any committee that the next council may want to appoint me to.

Who knows, I may just show up on the ballot again sometime in the future.



John Hostetler
City Council Member

I wish to thank the citizens of Webster City for the wonderful opportunity afforded me to serve the last four years on the council. For me, it was a much harder decision to not run again than to run in the first place. I wish the new candidates the best of luck and have hope the new council will be united in purpose.

Webster City is a great community that has seen over three percent population growth since the 1990 census. According to 2003 figures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the median income for a single person in Hamilton County is \$38,687.50 and \$55,312.50 for a family of four. We have a strong economic base, which supports workers from as many as 41 counties. Foresight by previous policy makers forged a strong local utility base that includes gas franchise (we own the lines under a portion of the city), electricity, and water. Our heritage includes philanthropy, commitment and

sacrifice to and for our community and our country. Our schools continue to help our youth explore, learn and experience the successes necessary for a productive future. The commitment to quality of life is evident in two community daycare centers, Library, Community Theater, development of recreational trails, 7-B Ranch and the events held there, and the expansion of Fuller Hall. The Brewer Creek housing developments have allowed for the opening of a variety of housing throughout the city. And of course one of the best qualities of the community are the citizens who give of themselves to make Webster City a better place to live, work and play. Some people choose to point to all the things wrong (as they see it) within the community. It is easier to complain than to work for solutions. We have not fully reached the potential development of the Boone River, Wilson Brewer Park/Depot Complex, downtown and

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John Hostetler continued...

Highway 20. However, the potential for additional successful development exists.

All of the things I have listed, and some that I have forgotten to list, are our community assets. The potential of all of these assets rests with each citizen that believes what makes a community strong is positive effort and commitment for a brighter future. A community takes on the "life" of the citizens be it negative, positive or non-existent. Long range planning and visioning of what can be lies solely with individuals making a commitment to intentional asset building. Commitment to building upon the assets of the community benefits everyone, now and in the future.

Many people have helped this community succeed by volunteering time, money and energy. Some rural communities will face decline, decay and potential loss of identity. Keeping a

community focused upon the future, while holding onto its heritage is important. What will separate those communities who thrive from those that fade away is commitment to the positive assets of the community. Youth, families, singles and elderly should be every bit included in the shaping of our future as partners united in purpose.

Last, but not least, it is time for a "Leadership Webster City" to again take roots in the community. Leadership Webster City can be a positive effort to help the youth and adults in the community, who are willing to be leaders in the community, understand the complex forces that affect their communities and how they can get involved to make a difference.

Thanks again for allowing me the privilege of serving. I hope to continue this journey of service in other areas in the community.

E.M.D. by Peggy Arends, Communications Supervisor Administrative Assistant

In 1994, a decision was made to train all E911 call takers to be E.M.D. certified. E.M.D. is an abbreviation for Emergency Medical Dispatch. All full-time dispatchers attended a twenty-four hour, three day training session to acquire national certification from NAEMD – National Academies of Emergency Medical Dispatch. Dispatchers must recertify every two years and all new dispatchers hired must be trained and certified as soon as a training session is available to attend in their area.

Whenever a medical emergency call is received by E911, the call taker immediately ascertains the address of where the emergency is occurring, the call back number of the caller, what the chief complaint is, approximate age(s) and number of patient(s), is the patient(s) conscious, and is the patient(s) breathing. Upon receiving this initial information, the call taker puts the caller on hold, and then dispatches the appropriate rescue unit relaying the initial information received. The call taker then returns to the caller on 911, finds the chief complaint on a flip chart and proceeds to ask the caller additional questions, giving the caller directions to necessary first aid, relays any additional pertinent information to the responding rescue unit and stays on the line with the caller monitoring the emergency until help arrives. The call taker can assist the caller in performing CPR, helping a choking patient, control severe bleeding and many more life

threatening emergencies. Following the flip chart by asking questions verbatim, assists the call taker in providing initial first aid until help can arrive.

Once a month a quality assurance board meets and critiques six randomly taped 911 medical emergency calls. The quality assurance boards consists of an appointed local doctor who serves as the medical control physician, one call taker (dispatcher), the communication supervisor, a dispatcher from the Sheriff Dept., and a representative from each rescue agency in Hamilton County. After the calls have been critiqued by the QA board, feedback is given to the call takers (dispatchers) to improve their performance or to acknowledge properly handled calls.



2003 Project Summary by Jan Andrew, Public Works Project Coordinator

Line Department Building Addition

Construction of an 880 square feet addition to the existing Webster City Municipal Line Department Building has been completed, allowing consolidation of the Light Plant and Line Department operation into one facility.

Sweazey Substation Relay/Control Panel Procurement and Installation

The new remote switchgear equipment has been delivered and installation is scheduled to begin in the near future. The new switchgear will be installed in the addition to the Line Department area along with a portion of the existing equipment at the Light Plant.

Southeast Development Park Improvement Project

(Located in the southeast quadrant of the Highway #17 & U. S. Highway #20 interchange)

The water main, sanitary sewer, street and storm sewer improvements are currently in progress and on schedule. Rasch Construction of Fort Dodge is the project contractor. The City Council, in conjunction with the Business and Industry Group, prioritized the completion of the infrastructure in the industrial park so that the remaining industrial parcels can be aggressively marketed. Grant funds have been secured from the Iowa Department of Transportation to fund a portion of the street and storm improvements.

2003 Broadway & Des Moines Resurfacing Project

As of the writing of this update, the resurfacing project on Broadway between Second Street and Ohio Street as well as Des Moines Street between Second Street and Elm Street is nearing completion.

The development of this project began late in 2001 with the submittal of a grant application for Federal Surface Transportation funds. Approval of the grant application was given early in 2002 with funding to be available in the federal fiscal year starting October 2002. As the federal grant funds are administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation, an agreement between the City and the Iowa Department of Transportation was approved by the City Council in December 2002 to fund eighty percent of all grant eligible work.

During the fall and winter months of 2002, the

project engineer began field work. The required environmental review process was completed, the grant agreement with DOT was reviewed and executed, concept statement, plans and specifications, preliminary plan check, and other related documentation was submitted to DOT by the project engineer. Submittal of these documents was done in accordance with the DOT's "critical path dates" for a June 17, 2003 bid letting.

In conjunction with preparation of the plans and specifications for the resurfacing project, the project engineer began preliminary field work along with City staff to identify sanitary sewer and water main issues that needed to be addressed prior to the resurfacing work. A project was developed to remove and replace six deteriorated brick sanitary sewer manholes, remove and replace seven inoperative water valves, and three fire hydrants. This work was not eligible for grant funding and therefore was handled as a separate project, namely the 2003 Broadway/Des Moines Utility Project that was completed by Ingraham Construction of Webster City. This work was scheduled for completion prior to the June 17 bid date set by DOT so that bidders would see the actual condition of the street.

The DOT held the bid letting in Ames on June 17 bid date with a contract subsequently being awarded to Fort Dodge Asphalt and approved by the City Council on July 20.

Prior to the start of the resurfacing work, Fort Dodge Asphalt's subcontractor, Ingraham Construction, completed storm sewer and intake work, intersection radius work, and pedestrian ramp work to comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements. On Des Moines Street, this work involved several intersections between Second and Elm and two mid block locations. On Broadway, the work involved every intersection between Second and Ohio and several mid block locations. During this time, Webster City Street Department staff reconstructed several alley approaches along Broadway as well.

Iowa Plains Signing, Slater, Iowa, was the subcontractor for project signage and barricading for safety closure and traffic control of the project area. For a project of this magnitude, traffic control is typically handled by a subcontractor to ensure a safe work environment, protection of the work zone, as well as protection of the public.





2003 Project Summary continued...

During the construction period the project area is in the custody and care of the contractor. Proper closure and detour signage, barricading as well as maintenance of all signage and barricades according to the approved traffic control plan contained in the plans and specifications is

essential. Other than minor modifications to the traffic control and safety closure of the area, changes to the approved traffic control plan typically result in additional project costs.

Police Chief Reminds Residents Concerning Sound System Ordinance by Chief of Police Mike McConnell

Late last year, the City Council passed a new ordinance that regulates the loud stereos that are played in vehicles. This ordinance was passed as a direct result of the many complaints by residents that have been disturbed by the loud bass emanating from some vehicles. The following is the ordinance as it is written:

45.05.8 SOUND SYSTEM NOISE

A. No person shall operate a motor vehicle in a public place or any public street, highway, or alley in which a stereo (stereo, tape player, compact disc player, radio, or any other sound amplification device) can be heard a distance of one hundred (100) feet or more from the vehicle. The provisions of this Section may be enforced following personal observation or hearing by any police officer or upon receipt of a written complaint (emphasis added) made or filed with the Police Department by the person or persons disturbed by such noise.

B. Variances.

The chief of police or the city council may grant a temporary variance to this section to facilitate special events, subject to such terms and conditions as may be established. Any violation of any of the terms and conditions of the variance shall be considered a violation of this section.

C. Penalty.

Any person who is convicted of violating the

provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

If a resident complains about a specific vehicle, it will be necessary for you the (complainant) to give an accurate description of the vehicle, the driver, along with the date and time of the occurrence, in writing. Just as any criminal case must have probable cause and be investigated appropriately, the resident must also be able to testify that you heard the music from more than 100 feet away. Additionally, you will be required to be a witness at any future court proceedings.

We prefer that your complaint is reported immediately after the occurrence. A delayed report to the police department may impact the strength of the case.

Residents may still complain anonymously, however, the officer must specifically hear the noise from a distance of more than 100 feet and be able to identify the vehicle and the driver. It further enhances the case if the resident who is making a complaint about a specific situation can identify themselves to the officer.

Our police officers and dispatchers are always ready and willing to receive your call should you need our assistance. We can be reached at 832-9166 for non-emergency calls and 9-1-1 in cases of emergencies.



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City Scene

DARE in Webster City by Sergeant Ed Wardell

A new class of D.A.R.E. students are on the schedule and will start in the following months. The D.A.R.E. program has been modified from seventeen lessons to nine lessons. All the new lessons have been energized with class participation and new learning techniques. The new and exciting curriculum has an air of the future of teaching skills. Science has given D.A.R.E. a face-lift by giving updated data to each child of current surveys from children their own age. D.A.R.E. also kept its integrity by keeping the values that were important to the old program as well as to the future individual. Each child will receive a newly developed D.A.R.E. curriculum workbook and a D.A.R.E. T-shirt. There are plenty of other goodies that the children will receive throughout the lessons to assist in each of the different areas of learning.

Teaching has changed over the past five years, even for a person that has limited teaching experience like me. I learn so much from each of the teachers at their respective schools when I visit. The teaching staff at the middle school and St. Thomas who I see during my visits are an outstanding team of teachers. When I go to the classrooms I see smiles from teachers and students alike. The teachers have a rapport with the students to get each student to do their very best that they can give and still maintain the discipline necessary for day-to-day safety. We are lucky to have such a great professional teaching staff in our community and I greatly appreciate each and every one of them for all of their efforts with our children and my class time. I attempt to take energy into my classes that will get the attention of each and every student. With my training at the D.A.R.E. workshops I attended, I am now teaching with a new innovated teaching style that encourages the student to become more involved with the classes. No more yawning and sitting in the back of the classroom and not raising their hands. All students are encouraged to participate and think on their feet and get involved!

D.A.R.E. also has gone to a learning ability style that says the more a student is involved, the more they will learn. To get the blood flowing and the brain working is the objective. Following the nine-week lesson plans will help the students stay interested and want to learn. The 5th graders are going to be working in pairs, teams, in front of the class, and talking with me on problem solving exercises. The program is fun, exciting, and

informative with the interaction I am seeking, I am excited to hear the bright and inquisitive questions that will develop our discussions. I enjoy the eyes lighting up and seeing them perking up in their chairs when a question is asked and they want to be part of the discussion. A tidal wave of answers come in that generates more questions. My time with the students melts away so quickly when we discuss important issues to them and how it could affect their futures.

The D.A.R.E. program will also be changing with an addition to the D.A.R.E. family. In conjunction with the Webster City Police Department, S.A.F.E. Committee and a grant from the state of Iowa, a D.A.R.E. vehicle will be made possible. I am very excited to be helping with this project together with fellow officers to make this possible. A facelift to the car with new decals, and a light bar will make this a vehicle that the whole community will be proud of. The car should be completed before the classes of 2003-2004 D.A.R.E. begin.

The D.A.R.E program is motivated towards learning life skills that will help the young adults to say no to alcohol, drugs, and violence. Along with teaching, there are a lot of fun exercises where I, as a police officer, become more than the teacher or someone to get them into trouble if they do something wrong. I become a person in their world who they can ask questions to and gain information from as compared with other sources that are not as positive on the street. I have seen many towns where an officer is scowled upon because there is no interaction with law enforcement before something bad happens in their life. D.A.R.E. gives them that one-on-one time with a police officer to find he or she is there to help a person in need also. When we answer a question before the wrong route has been taken, it is always better than after the fact.

I am honing up with my teaching skills for a new season. The D.A.R.E. workbooks are eagerly waiting to get out of their crate and in the hands of each of the 5th graders, and Darren is ready to make his way back into the classroom for another great year. If you don't know who Darren is, ask any student who has gone through the program or a parent who has had a child that went through the program. They will fill you in. I will see the 5th grade classes of the middle school and St. Thomas very soon and I am eagerly looking forward to it.



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Ongoing Strategic Priorities

Every year the City Council holds a Strategic Planning Session. The goals set in 2001 were set with a two-year time frame in mind and the session in 2002 was to review the goals, re-assess their priority and to make any new goals or changes to the 2001 goals. The following are the ongoing strategic priorities to the strategic plan established by the City Council in November 2002. These priorities guide the City staff in preparing the budget, policies and programs for Council consideration. The City Council along with the two newly elected Council persons will be meeting on December 16th to set the priorities for 2004 and 2005.

1. Develop a Capital Improvements Plan.

- a. Develop a funding strategy and plan (to include streets).

2. Continue to support economic development.

- a. Review city incentives and policies.
- b. Continue efforts to improve coordination.

3. Continue to pursue effective intergovernmental cooperation.

- c. Continue to attempt to reach agreement with the county on the jail project and trail development.

4. Continue to support drug enforcement and prevention efforts.

- d. Provide support for officers.

5. Develop a multi-faceted housing program.

- e. Proceed with subdivision development plan.
- f. Continue to work with developers.
- g. Continue housing rehabilitation efforts.

6. Continue efforts to enhance public information efforts.

- h. Explore utilizing council meetings for public information pieces.
- i. Utilize newspaper options.

7. Implement the Highway 20 area development plan.

- j. Develop a plan for extending the infrastructure.
- k. Review possible funding strategies.
- l. Explore land acquisition and potential partner.
- m. Support commercial development in the area.
- n. Implement entrance appearance improvements.

8. Adopt revised and updated fiscal policies.

9. Develop a water service extension policy and plan for areas outside the city (i.e., the 2 mile area).

- o. Review the comprehensive plan – the annexation plan. Analyze growing infrastructure extension feasibility.

Green City Energy by Kelly Needles, Electric Utility Advisor

Iowa imports 97% of the energy we use—coal, natural gas, petroleum—from other states and nations. What if, instead, we could harness the power of the natural resources we have in our state? That's exactly what we can do through Green City Energy.

The City of Webster City is already providing you with wind energy from the Hancock County wind farm. Did you know that 5% of our power is now coming from wind? Iowa possesses abundant renewable energy resources, including wind, solar, biomass, methane, solid waste, and wood. What if we could do more?

Renewable energy is good for our environment, our farmers, our rural economy and our national security. Some renewable sources such as wind and solar produce no pollution at all. Others,

such as biomass, biodiesel and wood are processed from agricultural crops and trees grown in Iowa, creating jobs and income. The use of renewable resources decreases our dependence on imported energy.

You can help Webster City to be a Green City by voluntarily supporting renewable energy. You will be given an opportunity to make a contribution (either on your city utility bill or a one time donation) to help develop more clean, green, homegrown energy. Your contribution is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution to a municipality government for a public purpose. More detailed information will be provided to you through channel 12 and your utility bill in the near future.

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City Scene



Q & A

How does Webster City's electrical rates compare with other municipal utilities?

According to the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities - 2001 Electric Rate Comparison Study - the Iowa Basic Rate (Basic Rate = sum of residential, commercial and industrial revenues, divided by the sum of residential, commercial and industrial sales) Municipal Rankings; the Municipal Utility Average is \$0.0561/kWh. Webster City's rate - \$0.555/kWh - which is lower than the average rate.

How does Webster City compare in bond debt?

This question should be more specific. We assume most people are asking this question as it relates to their property taxes. Therefore, the question would be how does WC compare in the area of General Obligation Debt, which is paid only from property taxes.

Using the State of Iowa 2002 Financial Report Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2002 data, the closest cities either way in population lower and higher than Webster City, the following is the result:

City	Population	G.O. Debt	% of Debt Limit Used
Atlantic	7257	\$6,125,000	65%
Denison	7339	\$3,143,227	32%
Creston	7597	\$4,035,000	36%
Charles City	7812	\$6,190,000	50%
Clear Lake	8161	\$3,770,000	17%
Decorah	8172	\$899,795	7%
Webster City	8176	\$5,445,000	43%
Mt. Pleasant	8751	\$8,130,404	55%
Waverly	8968	\$16,047,146	89%
Grinnell	9105	\$1,100,000	7%
LeMars	9237	\$7,586,000	37%
Pella	9832	\$14,722,586	73%
Storm Lake	10076	\$572,759	4%
Carroll	10106	\$8,880,000	39%

Of these 14 cities, 6 cities have less debt than Webster City; 7 cities have more debt than Webster City.

How did Webster City handle the State funding cut imposed on them for this budget year?

The best case scenario for Webster City was a cut of \$147,500 and the worst case was \$346,422. Adjustments have been made to the 2003-2004 budget (which began July 1, 2003) to reduce \$361,706.12 from the budget. The majority of those cuts - \$262,605.00 - came in the area of personnel costs. The non-bargaining city employees received less of an increase than was budgeted, two positions within the police department were eliminated, two other positions have not been filled yet, and overtime services have been cut. Cuts were made in the budgeted equipment replacements - \$28,800 - police department; \$9,740 - fire department; \$15,935 - City Hall; \$22,000 - parks and recreation. Reduction in funding to outside agencies totaled \$10,867.57 and \$11,500 in mosquito chemicals.

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Community Wide Leaf Pickup

At the November 3rd, 2003 City Council meeting the council will set November 12th as the date for the community wide leaf pickup. Residents will have the opportunity to put their leaves in regular plastic garbage bags and place them along the curb for pickup. The bags need to be tied. City staff and volunteers will collect the bags and take them to the leaf/grass-clipping drop off site. When all bags have been collected, staff and volunteers will remove the leaves from the bags and add them to the compost piles. There will be no charge to residents for this one-time service and the date is weather permitting. If you have any questions, please contact Kent Harfst at 832-9193.



Mulch and Compost Available

The City of Webster City still has mulch and compost available at no charge for those persons interested. Both of these areas are near the Street Department (East Ohio Street). The City does ask those that are picking up the compost (humus) for the first time to contact the Street Department (832-9123) or Kent Harfst (832-9194) to make sure they proceed to the correct pile. Please contact Kent at 832-9194 if you have any questions.

Webster City Needs Your Voice

This is your community. Please let us know if you have positive suggestions or changes which may improve our community.

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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