



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF MARCH 31, 2008

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ The City of Cedar Rapids received 20 responses (one was a letter of no further interest and one was received after the deadline) for the Riverfront Park Master Plan RFQ on March 27, 2008. Staff will begin the initial review process of the 18 submittals.
- ✓ The Design Guideline Review Process and Schedule presented to the Planning Commission on March 4, 2008 will be revised. The updated schedule will include a *public participation process*. This process may include open house and focus group meetings. Staff will provide the information again when updated.
- ✓ Staff met with the Director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) on March 24 and 25, 2008. The discussion included an overview of the role and services available to the City from IDED. In addition, staff met with IDED representatives that provide technical support to communities that apply for Vision Iowa/CAT funds. IDED staff is scheduled to make a site visit to Cedar Rapids on April 15 or 16, 2008 to tour Downtown Area Plan redevelopment activities. Staff will provide an update following the IDED visit.

LIBRARY

- ✓ The first Creative Gardening program of the year, sponsored by ISU Extension and the Linn County Master Gardeners, will be held April 1st from 6:30 - 8:00pm in Beems Auditorium. "Visualizing Changes In Your Landscape" will be presented by Professional Gardener and author Janet Macunovich. She will offer a step-by-step method to see into the future of your garden and plan landscaping with confidence. The program is free and open to the public. No advance registration is required, though seating is limited to 150.
- ✓ A new version of the Iowa Facility Locator is now on the ISAIC website at <http://www.drugfreeinfo.org/php/srchdir.html>. This directory, used by professionals and community members, is an accurate and reliable resource for finding treatment and prevention providers in local communities. It allows people to find the help they need in their part of the state.

PARKS & RECREATION

- ✓ All four golf courses will open on March 31st. Courses will open at 8:00a.m. every day depending on weather conditions and play will be open to "walkers only" until turf conditions can sustain power golf cart traffic. Flood waters recently covered parts or all or six holes at Jones Golf Course. The water receded leaving much debris, silt and a few "unplanned" sand bars. Superintendents Jeff Schmidt, Chauncey Barry, Chad Bildstein and Corey DePauw spent several hours removing the thick sand from the golf course turf and washing turf and cart paths of silt. Jones will start out with only the front nine open the first week. Ellis Golf Course still has several back nine golf holes with ice and snow in fairways and on cart paths, therefore Ellis will start out with the front nine open for play.
- ✓ Tennis court nets are up at Noelridge, Veterans Memorial, Jones and Ellis park courts.
- ✓ Coe College has a cooperative use agreement with the Parks and Recreation Department for the use of the baseball diamond located at Daniels Park. The Department and Coe rebuilt the baseball diamond a few years ago as a joint project. To further reinforce the great working relationship with Coe College, for the second year in a row, 50 to 60 of Coe's student athletes have volunteered to rake leaves and pick up sticks and branches throughout the park. Once the leaves and branches are piled in accessible locations, park crew members based out of Noelridge Park will load and haul the debris. This display of cooperation and stewardship for one of the city's most attractive and mature parks illustrates what can be done when win-win relationships are encouraged, nurtured and maintained.

- ✓ The Easter Open House held at the Noelridge Greenhouse on March 22nd and 23rd saw 2,347 visitors. The Easter Bunny made an extended appearance both days and was a big hit giving away candy to the kids with permission from the parents. Two weeks prior to the event, volunteers and staff prepared the conservatory and ten volunteers put in 79 hours of time counting visitors, distributing comment cards, acting as docents, and answering questions. Two of the Department's other partners added to the day; Trees Forever provided 150 coloring books that were given to children and the Eastern Iowa Aquarium Association had dozens of aquariums set up. Mike Hunt with Pet's Playhouse sold \$522 worth of raffle tickets for two large aquariums that will be given away next month. The proceeds from the raffle will go to the CRPD's K-9 program for dogs and dog accessories. Members of the CRPD and some K-9 dogs were at the greenhouse both days and were popular with everyone.

POLICE

- ✓ Sgt. Cerruto, Sgt. Strother, Sgt. Hansen, Sgt. Fields, and Officer Stauffer recently attended a one-day school for Firearms Instructors. This training will assist firearms instructors in creating new techniques for officers.
- ✓ The current recruits are entering the solo phase of their probationary training. The recruits have been either in the academy or with a Field Training Officer. This will be their first opportunity to work alone and demonstrate what they have learned thus far. Probation runs thru July 2008 when they will have their final probationary review.
- ✓ Sgt. McGarvey, Sgt. Wallerstedt, Officer Stokesberry and Officer Schmitz attended the Governor's Traffic Safety Conference last week. The conference covered ideas, stats and upcoming changes in traffic laws.
- ✓ Captain Walther, Sgt. Fields, Sgt. Dostal, Sgt. Cerruto, Sgt. Hamblin, Officer Grubb, Officer Kieler and Officer Osterhaus attended Instructor's Training of the X26 Taser. Numerous officers will be trained in the next few weeks. The X26 is a non-lethal tool available to officers when dealing with hostile and violent individuals.
- ✓ Officers recently attended the Aegon USA Health Fair with approximately 75 Aegon employees and shared crime prevention tips, bike safety info and car seat info.
- ✓ Officer Magnuson recently attended the Wilson Elementary and Middle School Carnival where he distributed material and stickers to attendees.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ Approximately 20 residents attended an open house on March 25th for the C Avenue NE, from Revere Court to Sheffield Drive, reconstruction project. PW staff and consultant shared concepts and solicited feedback on what features the neighborhood wanted to see. Some liked the landscaped median option, while others were concerned how it would look after snow season and hot summers. Cross walk location opinions varied, and surprisingly there was not overwhelming demand for a full pedestrian signal to replace the existing flasher.
- ✓ Construction has begun on the Council Street NE reconstruction project, between Dry Creek and 74th Street. Alliant Energy has initiated pole relocations and City Council awarded the first city construction contract on March 26th for sanitary sewer and retaining wall work north of Boyson Road. In anticipation of these events, PW staff sent letters to over 600 neighborhood property owners outlining what to expect during the 2008 construction season.
- ✓ PW staff invited approximately 100 property owners to a public open house on April 9th to provide input on location options for a new road extension to better link C Street and Ely Road SW. From an engineering design standpoint, either 41st Avenue SW or Old River Road SW could be extended, and it is hoped that the public feedback will help select the desired corridor.
- ✓ Ken DeKeyser, Storm Water Manager, attended a seminar in Ames on innovative, new ways of stormwater management. Interestingly, the Bowman Woods subdivision two decades ago was a generation ahead in using one of the features being represented as one of the "new" ideas. Local consultants did not attend, but Ken plans on briefing them and encouraging them to get training and consider employing some of these practices in Cedar Rapids.
- ✓ Iowa DOT has verbally accepted the City's request to build a pedestrian under-crossing at the new northbound Edgewood Road to eastbound Highway 30 ramp scheduled to be constructed in 2009. This is a critical step to complete a pedestrian and bike bridge over Hwy 30 on the east side of Edgewood Road. The goal is to remove the Hwy 30 interchange as being a pedestrian obstruction and to make Edgewood Road a "complete street". Also, the layout of this new ramp will require all southbound traffic to use the right loop ramp built 2-1/2 years ago, instead of the continued left turns being made out of the through lane.

- ✓ As the 2008 construction season begins, a map has been posted on the PW website showing the type and location of major 2008 capital improvement construction projects.
- ✓ With the inch of snow on Thursday March 27th, the total is over 60 inches for the season. This is double the average of 30.2 inches and is the second worst on record. This is the 38th snow event that crews have responded to this season.
- ✓ City crews are sweeping the streets and removing tree debris after the severe winter. Downtown sweeping started prior to the St Patrick's parade and is complete from 5th Ave to 1st Ave for the first 10 blocks. Crews are now working the main roads first and will then enter the residential streets. To assist in this process, residents should not rake leaves or debris into the roadways. There is no leaf pickup program from roadways in the spring. The Street Maintenance website lists remaining areas that crews are removing tree debris. Additional personnel and overtime will be used to increase the progress rate of cleaning over the coming weeks now that the weather permits sweeping and access to branches that had previously been frozen in the snow.
- ✓ The City has collected over 200 tons of street sweeper debris to date and currently working with Iowa DNR to determine if screened material may be re-used as construction fill or other beneficial uses. If possible, this will save landfill space and \$35 per ton in tipping fees.
- ✓ Crews have now used over 1,000 tons of cold patch to repair potholes. A normal winter uses 700 to 800 tons. To report a site, please call Public Works at 286-5802 or email street@cedar-rapids.org.
- ✓ The removal of snow fences will start this week. The city wants to acknowledge and thank residents for accommodating the access and use of these areas to make our roads safer during the snow season.

SOLID WASTE

- ✓ Keep Linn County Beautiful coordinates and holds its annual I-380 Clean Up in conjunction with events held across the country to celebrate Keep America Beautiful. This year the I-380 clean up will be held on Saturday, April 26th from 8:00a.m. – Noon. The I-380 clean up areas must be approved in advance by IDOT. In addition to the I-380 on/off ramps, volunteers can choose to clean up other areas around town such as the downtown riverfront, both the east and west side; the Hoover, Cedar Lake, McCloud Run and Cedar Valley trails; County Home Road between I-380 and Hwy 13 and/or North 10th Street in Marion. Any individual interested in volunteering to participate in this year's Keep Linn County Beautiful can apply on line at the Keep Linn County Beautiful website, www.keeplinncountybeautiful.org.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' CALENDAR

*(Not all meetings are noted. The calendar is **not** an official posting.)*

Monday, March 31	1:30pm	Moody's Bond Rating presentation, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
Tuesday, April 1	Noon	Brown Bag - Economic Development Policy, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
Wednesday, April 2	6:00pm	Council Work Session, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>