



Mayor's message



As the trees bud and flowers bloom, we all look forward to renewal and growth. I, for one, am excited about all the changes happening in our City. In Glen Park,

for example, our new pavilion is taking shape as other renovations begin. While we enhance this wonderful resource, we also remain true to our shared memory of what the park has meant to our community.

Another historic spot undergoing redevelopment is a parcel of land on the corner of Clark and Cedar Streets adjacent to City Hall. This was the site of the old railroad freight house, grain elevator, and gas station.

The City bought the land in 1998 with the expectation of building a new government service center. Instead, City Hall was constructed on the old Ingram Center site. This past year, staff has been working with Gerrard Corporation of La Crosse to

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Get ready for summer!

The Parks and Recreation Department has geared up for another stellar summer season with 175 classes, camps, and activities for both youth and adults. New registration software makes it easy to sign up: visit www.rfcity.org/recreation to create an account. Up to bat is Nora Munoz, participating in last summer's T-ball program. Photo credit: Jude Voiles.

State budget committee comes to River Falls

The Riverview Ballroom at UW-River Falls' University Center was at capacity on April 15 as residents from western Wisconsin and around the state waited to address the Wisconsin State Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. During the listening session, over 200 individuals and groups testified on behalf of organizations seeking funding as part of the legislature's two-year budget planning process. At the recommendation of Rep. Shannon Zimmerman, River Falls was one of four Wisconsin cities chosen to host a listening session.

Following UW-River Falls' Chancellor Dean Van Galen's welcoming remarks, City Administrator Scot Simpson addressed the group and outlined the City's 2019-

2020 legislative priorities as approved by the City Council in February. In addition to priorities focusing on policy changes, Simpson highlighted four which would require financial support from the state:

- Funding for projects included in the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan;
- Full funding for construction of the Science and Technology Innovation Center at UW-River Falls;
- Increased funding for River Falls' transportation systems, including road maintenance and construction projects, as well as the community's shared-ride taxi program; and
- Increased availability of emergency detention beds in western Wisconsin for people experiencing mental crises.

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Mayor's message...from page 1

purchase the property for apartment units. Construction of The Depot and City Station will begin this summer.

The first building will have 50 units of affordable senior housing. The second will have 24 market rate units. Both will help ease the pinch of our extremely low vacancy rate in River Falls. New residents will be close to downtown conveniences as well as to the natural setting along the river, where they can bike and walk. This will enhance our downtown economy and promote use of our extensive trail system.

In addition, funds from the sale of the property and resulting property taxes will help pay for improvements included in our Kinni Corridor Plan.

Some of you have shared concerns about the proximity of this development to the Kinnickinnic River. I want to let you know that the setback to the river will be 20 feet further than the existing apartment building, providing additional buffer to the river and walking trail.

In addition, the City has retained ownership of 60 feet of river frontage, including the trail. Finally, with the installation of sump catch basins and an underground stormwater system, stormwater quality, quantity, and flow rates will all be improved compared to what had previously existed on the redevelopment site.

Our City staff has worked hard to ensure that our vision, including "a distinct, vibrant, and safe community with an abundance of nature," is in sight while investing in the growth that will sustain it.

Go Pack Go,



Dan Toland, Mayor



River Falls City Council (l-r): Sean Downing, Chris Gagne, Scott Morrisette, Mayor Dan Toland, Diane Odeen, Todd Bjerstedt, Michael Page, and Hal Watson.

City of River Falls Mayor and Council

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Council meetings

River Falls City Council meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall (Council Chambers, lower level), 222 Lewis Street, River Falls. The public is invited to attend. Time is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for residents to address the Council.

Past and current Council agendas and minutes can be found at www.rfcity.org.



You're invited!

Plan to attend one of four listening sessions this summer with Mayor Dan Toland and your elected representatives.

Come share your ideas, suggestions, concerns – and kudos. Each session begins at 6 p.m. Hot dogs, ice cream, and lemonade will be served. All are welcome! For more information, visit www.rfcity.org/cookoutconversations.

Conversation schedule:

June 6: Sterling Ponds Park, 870 Edinburgh Dr.

June 20: Wells Park, 250 Kennedy St.

July 18: Kinnickinnic Trail, off Winter St. Bridge

Aug. 15: Glen Park, 361 West Park St. (east-side shelter)

Budget committee...from page 1

Simpson thanked the state for helping to fund community and infrastructure projects including support for a new Highway 35 interchange; completion of the trail loop around Lake George; and alley improvements in conjunction with The Falls Theatre expansion.

Earlier this spring, Simpson had the opportunity to meet with both Sen. Patty Schachtner and Rep. Zimmerman to share the City's new legislative priorities.

"Both were very receptive to our ideas and proposed partnerships," said Simpson. "We are lucky to have two such dedicated and forward-thinking legislators representing us in Madison."

Library testimony

The Wisconsin Library Association was represented at the listening session by Heather Johnson, River Falls Public Library adult services and circulation librarian. She thanked the committee for the \$1.5 million increase in funding for Wisconsin libraries

in the last biennium and urged continued support, plus a modest increase, for the current funding cycle.

In her testimony, Johnson shared some "fun facts" about the River Falls Public Library:

"Did you know that you can check out a Vibrant Health Family Clinics blood pressure kit with your library card? Or what about a 1,000-piece puzzle, a bird watching kit, or a rock hound kit to occupy the family during one of the numerous snow days that we had this year?"

"And I can't forget to mention that we have 11 free WiFi hotspots that are constantly checked out to community members, including one local family who uses it to watch their son play professional baseball!"

She concluded her remarks with: "I can guarantee that your continued investment in library systems will yield enormous dividends in terms of the education and workforce readiness of Wisconsin residents."



Chancellor Dean Van Galen welcomes members of the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance to campus April 15. Photo credit: WQOW-TV.

City Hall celebrates 10 years



A decade ago, the "new" City Hall opened its doors for the first time. From 1927-1975, the site was used as a hospital and was later repurposed as a multi-use space called the Ingram Center. The old City Hall at 123 East Elm Street was a fire hall, library, and post office and now houses the City's police station.

Did you know ...

- City Hall was designed by Frisbie Architects, Inc. (now Ayres Associates); the general contractor was Greystone Construction of Shakopee, Minnesota
- Construction costs for the new City Hall totaled \$4.9 million; it was completed in about nine months
- City Hall is approximately 26,600 square feet
- The building was the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified Silver city hall in Wisconsin
- 91% of materials from the site were recycled; 26% of materials used in construction were manufactured within 500 miles of River Falls
- 75% of wood used in the building came from sustainably grown forests

Scot Simpson: reflections on a decade of service

by Mary Zimmermann, Editor

Ten years ago, Scot Simpson arrived in River Falls to assume the mantle of city administrator. For some of us, the memory of our first day on the job can fade with time. For Scot, he recalls entering his office to find four blank walls and a couple of file boxes. It just so happened that his first day was also opening day of the new City Hall. "Basically," he said, "I came with the building."

Recently, I sat down with Scot to ask about his first decade in River Falls.

Where were you before River Falls and why did you leave?

I was city administrator in Lancaster, Wisconsin, a city of about 4,000 just north of Platteville, Wisconsin. I was actually contacted by a recruiter for the job here. To me, River Falls was like Lancaster on steroids. I was also interested in – and felt I could make an impact on – economic development and communications, two areas the City Council wanted to enhance.

What were some early challenges in RF?

The City had a structural budget deficit and the economy was not great. So, we needed to right size, which included fairly immediate adjustments in personnel and spending. But growth didn't stop, and we were able to turn the economic slump into an opportunity as we prepared to purchase Sterling Ponds and Mann Valley for future development – at below market rates.

You recently received a national mentoring award. What has mentoring meant to you?

Being a mentor helps renew the passion I experienced at the beginning of my career. It also gives me a constant reminder about why I do this work, helps with networking, and affords opportunities to learn some

of the latest things being taught in great graduate schools around the country.

Why did you want to become a city administrator?

The work is varied, interesting and impactful. Leadership and management matters. Working in local government allows you to quickly identify a problem, find partners to help you fix it – then get it done.

What would you be doing if you weren't a city administrator?

General manager of the Brewers.

What do you like best about your job?

I like it all. I like walking the trails. I like turning on the faucets in my house and knowing that a steady stream of clean water will appear. I like knowing that City staff will take care of whatever is thrown their way and that I helped get them ready and equipped to do so. I like working with a Council that is supportive, innovative, and has the courage to take risks while keeping an eye on the long term.

What are the accomplishments you are most proud of?

I'm proud of the public/private partnerships that have really situated us well for the future. I'm especially proud of the work we did downtown, encouraging Nash Finch to make a major investment in the Family Fresh remodel and helping Best Western remove barriers to restored solvency.

I'm also proud of integrating our municipal utilities into the City organization, which has resulted in long-term pay off financially and culturally as well as a significant increase in customer service. And, I am proud of helping to create the infrastructure and culture needed for businesses to flourish in our corporate parks.



I am especially proud that River Falls is an employer of choice for people seeking to make a difference in a supportive, fun, service-orientated, and productive work environment.

What do you hope your kids will remember about growing up in RF?

That they were safe and able to live their lives with a lot of freedom and less caution than in other communities. I hope they remember the walkability of our City and how close all the amenities were. I hope they can look at me and their mother [a teacher] and realize that there's a real value to serving others, that it takes multiple people to get things done, and that all good things come from teamwork and cooperation.

What are you excited about in the future?

I was lucky to have inherited talented, committed people. Now, after the announcement of several key retirements, I'm lucky to be able to build a new team that will lead us into the next decade. I'm also excited to complete Glen Park renovations and build/renovate our public safety facilities.

What is your one wish for the community?

That the community continues to maximize its work with key partners and experience more "Eureka" moments together.

Comings ...



Sarah Karlsson assumed her position as director of finance in March. Previously, she worked at Land O'Lakes where she had responsibilities in accounting, finance, and strategic business consulting. She is a graduate of the Carlson School of Management at University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, holds an MBA from the University of St. Thomas, and is a certified public accountant.

In the past two months, Karlsson has actively participated in several finance initiatives, budget reviews, and statutory reporting.

"She certainly fits well into our 'can-do' culture," said Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom. "We are very pleased to have her on board."

Karlsson grew up in a small community in Sweden and later moved to New Delhi, India, with her family. Currently, she lives in the Town of Clifton with her husband and three children.

She enjoys running, being outdoors, and keeping busy with kids' activities. She also volunteers her time on the Turningpoint Board of Directors, where she serves as treasurer.

... and goings



Joe Killian (right) retired on March 5 after 31 years of service in the City's Public Works Department.

"There wasn't a job Joe couldn't do, whether it be sign making and line painting in the summer to snow plowing and snow removal in the winter," said Operations Director Mike Stifter (left).

"Fellow staff members often commented on Joe's knowledge of the community and its development over the years. This made completing projects that much more efficient."

Killian was especially known for his attention to detail and took pride in his work, according to Stifter. In retirement, Joe is most looking forward to spending more time with his family and enjoying recreational pursuits, either outdoors or in his workshop.



Don Hill relocated to River Falls from Keister, Minnesota, in June 2000 to take a job with River Falls Municipal Utilities. He retired in March after nine years at RFMU, first as a wastewater treatment operator and later as a water meter mechanic. Over the years the position evolved, and Hill worked on all aspects of the water utility as

well as the sanitary sewer collection system.

"Don remained the 'go to guy' for all things water meter-related," said Wastewater/Water Superintendent Ron Groth.

In retirement, Hill plans to spend time with his wife, Mary Jo, as well as his two daughters and their families. He enjoys biking, kayaking, and being physically active.

"Don was a great asset to the utility," said Groth. "His hard work and dedication will be missed. We wish him a long and happy retirement."



Buddy Lucero retired in April after 20 years as community development director. Prior to that, he was a land use planner for the cities of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Aspen, Colorado.

During his tenure in River Falls, Lucero took on many pivotal projects including the creation of the City's Comprehensive Plan; managing the Kinni Corridor Project and contributing to the project's master plan; and leading the development of a cooperative plan with the Town of Kinnickinnic.

"These plans and projects will guide the City for many years to come and are a huge contribution for the future of our community," said City Administrator Scot Simpson.

Lucero looks forward to relaxing, working in his garden, and cheering loudly for the Twins. His future plans include volunteering his services to local nonprofits and perhaps one day serving on a City board or committee.

Pollbooks plug in



Cheri Schmitt, chief election inspector for District 3, attends "Badger Book" training prior to the Spring Election.

In 2017, Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) developed an electronic pollbook, the Badger Book, to be used in Wisconsin elections. The "book" is used primarily to check in voters, process absentee ballots, and register voters on Election Day. Each process was chosen and designed based on feedback provided by clerks and poll workers from across the state.

The City of River Falls was selected by the WEC to participate in the Badger Book program for the Spring Election in April.

"While this system was only available to those voting in District 3," said City Clerk Amy White, "the City plans to supply all polling locations in the future and is seeking grants to cover the cost."

White reported that poll workers were very enthusiastic about the new system.

Police Department gets a new home

For the past several years, the River Falls Police Department has been looking for new space to accommodate its growing force and expanded operations.

In 2017, Police and other City staff began working with Wold Architects and Engineers to complete a feasibility study and make recommendations to address future space needs. Their plan plus recommendations for buildable property in River Falls were presented to the City Council in April 2018.

After the Wold report was received by Council, City staff evaluated the recommended locations and added another option: the purchase and remodeling of the old RiverTown Multimedia building in Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park.

"We realized it would suit department specifications – and at a much lower cost," said City Administrator Scot Simpson.

"It would also allow the department to move four years earlier than anticipated, accommodating our growing force and providing a more comfortable space for

community members to interact with staff and officers."

The City Council approved a \$1.5 million purchase agreement in October 2018. By performing an adaptive reuse of an existing structure, the reconstruction costs are expected to be in \$2-3 million range. In comparison, new building costs were estimated at \$10-12 million.

What happens now?

The School District of River Falls has leased the building through June 30, 2020, to accommodate Public Montessori Elementary School students during the 2019-2020 academic year while the old Academy Building undergoes its remodel. This summer, the district will use the building to host its Summer Kids Club program.

The Police Department plans to take occupancy in 2021 after remodeling and construction work are completed.



Meter upgrades coming soon: what to expect

On Jan. 8, 2019, the City Council approved a multi-year effort to modernize electric and water meters at every home and business in the City. The new metering system, called Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), will provide utility customers with personalized information on energy and water consumption as well as usage data and alerts, which can be used for budgeting, water leak detection, and identification of unusual trends in water and electric usage.

Electric meter upgrades will begin in June 2019; the process is expected to take about three years. Door tags will be used to notify residents when upgrades will be occurring in their neighborhoods. Residents with newer homes will not lose power, though older homes may experience a brief outage during the upgrade.

New water meter installation will occur next. Depending on location, residents may experience a few months to a few years between the electric and water upgrades. Because staff need access to homes and businesses for the water meter installation, visits will be scheduled with each home/business owner. While on the premises, staff will also do a cross connection inspection to help find and correct any backflow problems.

As part of the new system, the City will be modernizing its bill payment website to provide customers with access to AMI's many new features. Using the new



With 55 years of combined experience serving the River Falls community, electric meter technicians Brian Hatch (left) and Virgil Johnson will lead the electric meter installation team over the next few years.

"MyAccount" website, coming later this year, customers will be able to see their daily usage within 24 hours and set high usage alerts that will let them know when more water or electricity than usual is being consumed.

Summer learning

by Tanya Misselt, Library Director



Let's be honest, reading isn't the only way to create learning experiences over the summer. Even librarians know that learning happens in

many ways. Spending time with family and friends, traveling, and engaging in creative activities like cooking, gardening, bird watching, and fishing can keep our bodies and brains active and healthy.

However, there is something uniquely important about reading. Reading can reduce stress, build empathy, grow our vocabulary, improve memory, sleep, focus, and brain function. Reading is one of the single best ways to add quality to your life.

During the summer months, it is especially



Youth Services Librarian Monica LaVold and children from April's Family Story Hour.

important to keep children reading to prevent what's called "summer slide," a decline in reading ability and other academic skills that are known to occur when children are not in school. Numerous studies show that during the summer the average student loses a month or more of academic-year learning.

So, this summer I urge you to take time to read, take time for yourself, and take time to engage with your children. I also hope that you take time to see what's going on at the library this summer by picking up program brochures at the Library or visiting our website, riverfallspubliclibrary.org.

all about town



Free summer sounds

Tuesdays, June 18-Aug. 6, 7 p.m.

Summer Concert Series

Melvin Wall Amphitheatre
UW-River Falls

Check uwrf.edu for schedule.

Fridays and Saturdays

June 21-Aug. 31, 7-9 p.m.

Music in the Park

Veterans Park, 101 North Main St.
Visit riverfallscab.org for info.

Where to look for what to do...



City of River Falls:

www.rfcity.org

City Parks and Recreation:

www.rfcity.org/recreation

Chamber/community events:

tourism.rfchamber.com/events

Community Arts Base:

riverfallscab.org

Library: riverfallspubliclibrary.org

School District Continuing

Education: rflerns.org

University of Wisconsin-River

Falls: go.uwrf.edu/cal

May 24-June 25

Wisconsin Regional Arts Program

Kleinpell Gallery, RFPL, Lower Level

Opening reception: June 4, 5-7 p.m.

WRAP workshop: June 11, 7 p.m.

More info at go.wisc.edu/WRAP



May 30, 7 p.m.

Author Spike Carlsen

Reading from "Building Unique and Useful Kids' Furniture"

RFPL, Lower Level

June 1, 10 a.m.

6th Annual Torch Run Bike Ride

Start/end in Glen Park (10-mile loop)

9 a.m. registration and shirt pick up;

\$15 per person includes shirt and cookout

Ride benefits Wisconsin Special Olympics

June 6, 6:30-8 p.m.

Reorganizing Your Kitchen for Healthy Eating

Presented by Valerie Cady, Winnow and

Spruce Organizing

RFPL, Lower Level

June 10, July 8, 3:30-6 p.m.

Maker Mondays

Join us for an afternoon of creative, hands-on fun in our pop-up makerspace.

All are welcome; children under 10 should bring an adult

RFPL, Lower Level

June 11, 7 p.m.

Work of Art: Creating an Artist Portfolio

Presented by Springboard for the Arts

RFPL, Lower Level

June 17, 6:30 p.m.

Author Lorna Landvik

Reading from "Chronicles of a Radical Hag"

RFPL, Lower Level

June 29, 7 p.m.

Wisconsin 132nd Army

National Guard Band

Free public concert

Abbott Concert Hall, UW-River Falls



July 8-Aug. 10

Beyond Words: Visual Narratives

from the Block Book to the Graphic Novel

National traveling exhibit

Kleinpell Gallery, RFPL, Lower Level

July 12, 19, 26, 9 a.m.

Fit Fridays: All-Levels Yoga

Presented by Inspiring Actions Yoga Studio

For ages 16+; registration required

See RFPL website for details.

RFPL, Lower Level

July 12-14

River Falls Days

Heritage Park/Downtown



July 13, 10 a.m.-noon

Kiddie Parade and Petting Zoo

10 a.m., parade registration

10:30 a.m., parade start

(RFPL=River Falls Public Library)

July 18, 7 p.m.

Comic Book Space Persons

Presented by Reverend Matt of Reverend Matt's Monster Science

For adults and kids (accompanied by a caregiver)

RFPL, Lower Level



Aug. 15, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Customer Appreciation Event

City Hall, 222 Lewis Street

Sponsored by RFMU. All are welcome!

Aug. 27-Sept. 20

Treehouse Magic

A treehouse-themed adventure exhibit
Kleinpell Gallery, RFPL, Lower Level

Sept. 4

Fall semester begins

UW-River Falls

Sept. 6-7

55th Annual Falcon Frontier Days Rodeo

Sept. 6 at 7 p.m.; Sept. 7 at 1:30 and 7 p.m.
UWRF Campus Farm, Cemetery Road and Wasson Lane

Sept. 7, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

24th Annual Art on the Kinni

Heritage Park, 232 West Maple St.

Sponsored by Community Arts Base

Sept. 14-15

Bacon Bash

Heritage Park/Downtown

Summer library sampler

Visit riverfallspubliclibrary.org for even more summer fun!

Programs for kids

(pre-K to grade 5)

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

RFPL, Lower Level

- June 12: Science Tellers
- June 19: Driftless Stargazing
- June 26: A Universe of Stories
- July 3: No program
- July 10: Christopher Mick:
NASA educator
- July 17: Tom Pease: Musician
- July 24: Traveling Lantern Theater
- July 31: Pint-Size Polkas

Programs for teens (grades 6-12)

Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

RFPL, Lower Level

- June 12: Universe Mini-Paintings
- June 19: Comic Book Magnets
- June 26: "Hidden Figures" Movie
- July 3: No program
- July 10: DIY Kinetic Sand
and Moon Dust
- July 17: Dot Painted Mugs
- July 24: String Art Constellations
- July 31: Galaxy Bath Salts
- August 7: Create-Your-Own
Galaxy Pudding Cups

Lego afternoons (grades K-5)

Mondays: June 17, July 1, July 15,
July 29, August 12, 4-5 p.m.
RFPL, Children's Program Room



Adult book clubs

Second Tuesday

May 14-Sept. 10, 6:30 p.m.

West Wind Supper Club

709 North Main St.

Books and Beans

May 28-Sept. 17, 10:30 a.m.

RFPL, Library Board Room

Book Club in a Bar

Ages 21+

June 18, July 9, Aug. 13 (ticketed event)

Location varies; check website

Young Adult Lit. for Adults

May 15, June 19, July 17, Aug. 21
6:30 p.m.

Junior's Restaurant & Tap House

414 South Main St.

More grown-up fun

Coloring for Adults

May 22, June 26, July 24, Aug. 28,
Sept. 25, 6-8 p.m.

RFPL, Storytime Room



Severe weather warnings



Severe weather warning sirens will be tested on the Mondays listed below. Should severe weather occur on these dates, the test

siren will sound the next day (Tuesday).

- May 20, 1 p.m.
- June 24, 1 p.m.
- July 22, 1 p.m.
- Aug. 26, 1 p.m.
- Sept. 23, 1 p.m.

Sirens are used for severe weather warnings, as well as for other situations when people should take shelter. Weather-related sirens are triggered when the National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning, and/or if there are reports of sustained straight-line winds in excess of 70 mph. It is important to note that the City does not sound an "all clear" after an actual activation of the warning system.

These warnings serve as a reminder for community members to familiarize themselves with safe practices during severe summer weather. Here are some sources to help recognize, prepare for, and survive weather emergencies.

National Weather Service
weather.gov/safety

Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services
dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate/toolkits.htm

River Falls, WI
www.rfcity.org/weather

Residents may also contact the River Falls Police Department at 715-425-0909 with weather-related questions or concerns.

Recognizing public safety excellence

Each year, an award for a City of River Falls public safety employee – rotated between Fire, Police, and EMS – is presented by American Legion Post 121. This year, **Firefighter Carl Gaulke** was the recipient, receiving his award at the Legion's annual recognition banquet.



Gaulke joined the Fire Department in 1972 and has been actively serving for 47 years. In 1991, he was presented with the Firefighter of

the Year Award in recognition of his selfless dedication and hard work.

"Carl constantly maintains a sense of enthusiasm about serving his community and the department," said Fire Chief Scott Nelson. "He quietly does whatever is asked of him. He's a model for other members to follow."

Gaulke retired as general manager of River Falls Municipal Utilities in 2012. An active community volunteer, he has been a Mason for 22 years, Shrine member of the Zor Roadrunners, treasurer of the United Methodist Church, and supporter of UW-River Falls Football and Hockey.

Police Officer of the Year



Officer Chris Kober received the River Falls Police Department's Officer of the Year Award at the April 22 City Council meeting.

He has been with the department since 2011 and is currently assigned to the patrol division. He is a field training officer, Glock armorer, tactical fitness instructor, and a member of the department's uniform and equipment committee.

"Chris is a leader among his peers," said Police Chief Gordon Young. "He goes above and beyond his call load to assist others. We are proud to have him working for the City."

During his off time, Kober volunteers as a coach for elementary and middle school football, baseball, and basketball.

Firefighter of the Year



Justin Wilson received the River Falls 2018 Firefighter of the Year Award at the department's annual banquet on Jan. 19. Awardees are chosen by a

committee of past award winners.

Wilson, who has always wanted to be a firefighter, has been with the department six years and, says Fire Chief Scott Nelson, "continues to positively impact the community and those around him."

As one of the new firefighters, Wilson has "come a long way and shown a lot of leadership qualities within the department," said Chief Nelson. "He has a way of bringing people together."

Wilson often volunteers to help with events such as the Fire Department's annual open house or the kids' water fight during River Falls Days.

Glen Park renovations continue

Ross Associates of River Falls began construction of the new \$1.9 million Glen Park pavilion in September 2018. Pavilion completion remains on schedule for fall 2019 despite extreme winter weather. The building has a strong emphasis on aesthetics focused on providing quality event and community space, as well an attached storm shelter. Below are some building highlights:

Event space

- Glass overhead doors and exposed timber columns and beams
- Indoor seating for 80; outdoor plaza has seating for approximately 150
- Food serving and preparation area
- Two entrances from either side of park

Storm shelter

- Main level restrooms, drinking fountain, and storage space
- Main level ADA accessible safe room space
- Lower level "non-programmable" safe room to accommodate 248 people
- Exterior design that complements the event space and park improvement plans

A contract for \$2.5 million in other Glen Park site improvements was awarded to Haas Sons Inc. of Thorp, Wisconsin, by the City Council in February 2019. These improvements, which have begun and will also be completed in fall 2019, include a splash pad, parking and circulation improvements to enhance safety, trails, sidewalks, and receiving areas for future play equipment upgrades.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Glen Park will largely be a construction site this summer. Access will only be available to the Pickleball courts to the west side of the park and open shelter to the east. The Swinging Bridge will not be accessible in June, due to planned maintenance and repairs. Residents are requested to be very careful around the construction zone as well as streets leading into and out of the park.



Fitness trail coming to DeSanctis Park

Leadership River Falls, a year-long program sponsored by the River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau, provides opportunities for participants to explore community issues and avenues for involvement. Toward that end, each year's class works together on a project to enhance the community.

The 2018-2019 Leadership River Falls class has chosen to install fitness stations in DeSanctis Park, 1543 Roosevelt St., this summer to encourage healthy habits and prevent and combat child and adult obesity.

The class is currently planning and fundraising for 10-20 fitness stations strategically placed alongside the park's established walking trail. Each station is made from weather-treated pine and galvanized steel and is accompanied by a sign describing the activity. Questions? Email rf.fit.trail@gmail.com or call the Chamber at 715-425-2533.

Chinese language initiative

Students at the River Falls Public Montessori Elementary School will learn basic Mandarin Chinese during the 2019-2020 school year through a pilot program developed by UW-River Falls and the Department of Education in Heilongjiang Province, China.

During the project, experienced teachers fluent in Chinese and English from Heilongjiang Province will be placed in lower elementary classrooms to teach Chinese language components and assist with enrichment instruction in subjects related to culture, art, music, and history.

The pilot project was developed through the Wisconsin Language Roadmap Initiative in consultation with agency, educational, and government partners in both countries.

Coming soon

International Education Summit

UW-River Falls is organizing a weeklong series of events, **Nov. 18-22**, focused on global learning and internationalization. Events and activities will include speakers, theatre, art, international cuisine, presentations, facility tours of internationally used products – both on campus and throughout the community. For more information, visit uwrf.edu/International-Summit.

2019-2020: Year of Somalia

During the 2019-20 academic year, UW-River Falls' "Year of" initiative – created in 2013 to allow faculty, students, and community participants to break down stereotypes and connect across cultures – will focus on Somalia. Watch for information about events and activities on UWRF social media channels and in the River Falls Journal.

Investing in the future

UW-River Falls is seeking support from the State of Wisconsin for a Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech). The university is intentionally growing its capacity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and fostering a culture of undergraduate research and innovation.

The SciTech building, to be constructed on the current site of Hagestad Hall, will house the departments of biology, chemistry,

physics, and psychology/neuroscience, providing modern laboratory spaces for instruction and undergraduate research. In line with UW-River Falls' commitment to innovation and partnerships, SciTech will also include a university-business collaboration hub to support internships and incubation of joint research projects. Visit www.uwrf.edu/scitech to learn more and to become a SciTech advocate.



The SciTech building will provide new collaboration spaces and instructional labs, increasing undergraduate research opportunities. Photo credit: UW-River Falls

Campus improvement update

The interior is taking shape and landscaping is underway at Rodli Hall, transforming the building to serve as the core for student-centered services such as Admissions, Career Services, Counseling, and Financial Aid. Construction should be complete in October with departments moving in in early January 2020.

The May Hall renovation project will begin this summer with the demolition

of the Emogene Nelson Building located at the intersection of S. Main Street and East Cascade Avenue. Demolition will be complete this summer with construction of a new lobby/elevator addition taking place in the fall. Interior renovation of May Hall will begin in January. The project should be complete in time for the fall 2020 semester.

Beautifying downtown since 1989

This year, the River Falls Main Street Business Improvement District (BID) celebrates 30 years of fostering business development and retention in the City's downtown area.

BID volunteers work with business owners on façade improvements, signage, and beautification projects, which include tending the hanging flower baskets on Main Street and the Second Street gardens. The BID is also responsible for Main Street benches, trash receptacles, murals, and wayfinding signage (coming soon). In addition, the BID helps businesses and organizations put their best feet forward during River Dazzle (November) and Music in the Park (summers).

"Our mission has always been to improve and vitalize our Main Street area," said president of the BID Board, Joleen Larson. "Our work helps keep our downtown relevant."

Larson said the Board couldn't do its work without its many partners, including the business and property owners in the district, the City and its various committees and departments, the Chamber, Community Arts Base and, most recently, the Art Department at River Falls High School.

"Without the BID, we wouldn't have the attractive, welcoming downtown we



have today," said Amy Peterson, the City's development services director. "It is a real asset to the community and one we are so fortunate to have."

The BID currently seeks volunteers to serve on its board of directors. Members are required to either own or work for a business/property located in the BID. According to Larson, interested persons should send an email to Mayor Dan Toland at dtoland@rfcity.org outlining their interests and experience. Volunteer gardeners are also always welcome, said Larson, and can email info@rfchamber.org to leave their contact information.

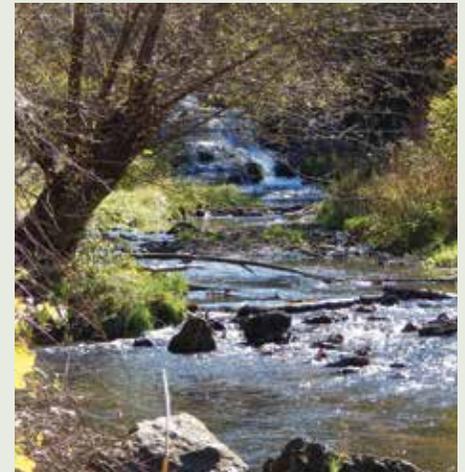


Kinni Collaborative gears up

Picking up where the Kinni Corridor Project Committee left off is the newly-formed Kinni Corridor Collaborative, a fully incorporated nonprofit organization.

The mission of the group is to:

Work collaboratively with public and private organizations and individuals to assemble the technical and financial resources needed to implement the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan while preserving the ecology and beauty of the Kinnickinnic River.



Twenty-five community volunteers attended the official kick-off meeting on Jan. 24 and have since met monthly to bring technical and financial resources together to build the organization, prioritize fundraising and implementation plans, and build partnerships.

A recruitment for potential board members ended in April; however, anyone interested in serving the organization may contact the collaborative at www.kinniCC.org or info@KinniCC.org.

Recycling don'ts

It's hard to know sometimes what goes in the recycling bin each week for curbside pickup and what doesn't. Here are the top five recycling "don'ts."



Plastic grocery bags can get caught in the recycling sorter and the whole system must be shut down to pull them out.

Many larger stores have special collection bins for these bags. Better yet, use a reusable cloth or canvas bag!



Pizza and bakery boxes can only be recycled if completely free of food waste. Clean pizza box lids can be torn off and recycled.



Due to the plastic coating applied to prevent leaking, **paper coffee cups** cannot be recycled. Your best bet is to refill your own mug.



Recycling Styrofoam (polystyrene) requires highly-specialized equipment that single stream recycling facilities do not have.

Packing peanuts can sometimes be taken to a UPS Store to be reused.

Shredded paper gets mixed up with the residue or glass at recycling facilities and cannot be recycled.

See kab.org for more recycling and reuse tips.



Keeping our Kinni clean

by Crystal Raleigh, Senior Civil Engineer



The City of River Falls is a leader in stormwater management, but we need the community's help to keep our Kinni clean.

Here are some things you can do:

Be careful with grass clippings

Grass clippings in the street are a major contributor to excess phosphorus in the river. Mulch your grass clippings in your yard or bring them to the City Compost Site.

Pick up after your pets

We love our pets here in River Falls but they sure can make a mess. Even small amounts of pet waste can have a big impact on water quality.

Rain barrels

The City has rain barrels available for purchase to help keep that rain on the

land where it falls. The barrels are just \$20 and can be purchased at City Hall during business hours.

Direct rain gutters to the grass

When rain spills out of gutters onto hard surfaces like sidewalks and driveways, it likely flows directly to the street and into the storm drains, picking up pollution on its way and carrying it to the river. Directing your gutter to grassy areas allows rain water to soak in, recharge our groundwater supply, and keep the river cleaner.

Adopt-a-Pond

Assemble your friends and adopt a stormwater pond in River Falls. By adopting the pond, you agree to picking up trash and looking it over just twice a year. This gives our stormwater staff extra eyes in the field. To recognize your contribution, we'll place a sign at your pond. See www.rfcity.org/adopt for more information.

Emerald Ash Borer update

by Nate Croes, City Forester



Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a small green insect native to northeastern Asia, was introduced to the United States in approximately 2002

in Detroit, Michigan. Since then, the flying insect has spread to Hudson, Wisconsin, and poses a serious threat to over 2,000 public trees and countless more private trees in our community.

The cold temperatures in January and February helped reduce the EAB larvae populations that made it through the winter. This gives tree owners more time to make decisions about how to manage their ash trees before EAB populations rebound.

There are two options to combat EAB: 1) Preventative chemical treatment, which can be expensive and needs to be reapplied every two to three years; or 2) remove the tree and replant with a non-ash species.

CONTINUED PAGE 15

Sewer Line – What am I responsible for?

By Kevin Westhuis



Did you know that if you own a home or business in River Falls you also own and are responsible for the sewer line that goes from your

structure out to the main sewer line in the street? It is not uncommon for a customer-owned portion of the sewer line to be 100 to 200 feet.

Part of this responsibility may mean cleaning and repairing damage from sewer line backups into your basement should the backup originate on your portion of the line. There are even times when you may have to rely on your insurance for anomalies in mainline backups.

My recommendation to property owners is to consult with your insurance company to find out what coverage you have for sewer backups. Backups don't occur often, but, when they do, they are messy and can get very expensive. Make the call a priority, especially if you aren't sure of your current backup coverage.

One way you can help keep a healthy sewer system is to make sure that you are only putting the three P's down the toilet: pee, poo, and paper. And that is it! No "flushable" wipes, as they do not break down and really clog up the system.

Remember: Know your insurance coverage on your sewer system and, please, "No Wipes in the Pipes!"



Stay tuned for osprey sightings

River Falls reached new heights in March when it joined community partners to install the City's first osprey platform. The nest, constructed by Jim Higgins, a member of the St. Croix Valley Bird Club, sits atop a 55-foot pole located on the grounds of the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Low-interest business loans available

Low interest loans are available for existing or prospective businesses in the City's commercial district. These funds can be used to purchase property, renovate existing property, or for operating costs. The interest rate can be as low as 0% for façade grants, or 4% for general business improvements.

Business owners may request a loan of up to \$50,000 to finance improvement projects. Past program participants have completed new building construction and improvements to existing structures, some increasing property value by more than 20%.

In addition, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) offers both a façade loan at 0% and up to



\$30,000 for a micro loan at 4% interest. The application process is very easy with minimal paperwork. Additional information can be found at www.rfcity.org or at wcwrpc.org.

Emerald Ash Borer... from page 14

Once an untreated ash tree is found to be infested with the insect, the tree will die and become hazardous.

The City's Emerald Ash Borer action plan has been implemented. Initial steps involve preemptively removing select smaller ash trees, which are less than 12 inches in diameter. Ash trees in the boulevard scheduled to be removed will be clearly marked to notify the residents in the surrounding area.

The City allows adjacent homeowners to treat their trees in the public boulevard; however, the treatment must be documented with the City and kept current, so no treated trees are mistakenly removed. Please visit www.rfcity.org for more information.

Connect with us!

Frequently called numbers

General information: 715/425-0900

Utility Department: 715/425-0906

Police Department: 715/425-0909

Public Library: 715/425-0905

Municipal Court: 715/426-3429

Garbage/Recycling: 715/425-0900

Parks and Recreation: 715/425-0924
715/426-3422 (cancellations)



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Emergency Medical Services
Fire Department
Kleinpell Gallery
Municipal Utilities
Parks and Recreation
Police Department
Public Library



Check out our new videos!

[YouTube.com/user/cityofriverfalls](https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofriverfalls)

City of River Falls

Mission: *To coordinate and deliver essential services and ensure a sustainable future.*

Vision: *A distinct, vibrant, and safe community with an abundance of nature and easy access to metropolitan amenities. A place where families, students, and businesses flourish.*

CitySource is published three times yearly and mailed to all River Falls residents. It is also available at www.rfcity.org.

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Comments or questions? Send an email to mzimmermann@rfcity.org.



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River Falls State Bank employees (and their four-legged friends) helped plant two shade trees April 25 at the new River Falls Dog Park in celebration of Arbor Day and the Wisconsin Bankers Association's Power of Community Week.

(Left to right) Jess Schlinsky, Todd Schultz, Nate Croes (City Forester), Laura Bower, Karen DesLauriers, Wendy Querna, and Laurie Rohde.