

The Front Line

For and About the City of Des Moines Employees

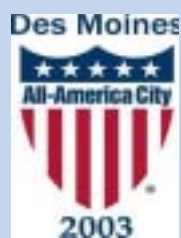


Volume 7—First Quarter - January — March -2005

Amelia Hamilton-Morris, Editor

City of Des Moines Mission Statement

To provide and maintain essential services that meet the collective basic needs of the citizens of Des Moines and to identify and seize opportunities for a higher quality of life.



THIS ISSUE

Sylvan Theater

AVID Authors

Street Resurfacing

Airport Key Projects

Eric Anderson: Top 25 Doers, Dreamers and Drivers 2004

Government Technology Magazine, the nation's leading publication focused on state and local government and education information technology markets has named City Manager Eric Anderson as one of America's *Top 25 Doers, Dreamers and Drivers for 2004*. "These are leaders who have showed that change in government is possible, despite the age-old belief that institutional barriers impede government reform. Using technology, these 25 men and women broke bureaucratic inertia to better serve the public, said Steve Towns, Editor of Government Technology

Magazine.

"Eric has this unique ability to look into the future and see how technology can help us operate more efficiently; and then, once the goals are clear, take the steps necessary to get us there," said Rick Clark, Deputy City Manager. "Like so many cities across the country, Des



(Continued on page 3)

City Leaders Fight to Save Block Grants !



In March, Mayor Frank Cownie brought together Iowa mayors and community leaders from across the state for a press conference to draw attention to the Bush Administration's proposal to eliminate federal block grants. Leaders said this would have a devastating impact on the people of Iowa. Holly Olson, VP of Neighborhood Finance Corporation was one of many to address the packed Council Chamber of over 100 people.

For the past 34 years, the City of Des Moines has received an entitlement grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide a wide variety of programs and services for low to moderate income households in the city. These are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and they are vital to our Community Development projects. The President's FY 2006 budget proposed to eliminate this program by folding it into an economic development program in the Commerce Department, which will be funded at half the current

Combined Charities Donations Reach an All-Time High

Donations reached an all-time high of \$121,708 for the 2005 Combined Charities Campaign. This year the City raised almost \$7000 more than in 2003 (the previous record-setting year) with 137 less employees. The Third Annual Combined Charities Chili Cook-off was also a great success. In addition to the regular judging, employees "voted" this year by donating spare change to the campaign on behalf of their favorite chili. This penny war raised almost \$450 for the eleven participating local charities. Congratulations to the chili cookoff winners in the Housing Services Department (penny war) and the Community Development Department (regular judging).

Public Works was

this year's top-giving department overall with \$21,275 - a tremendous 62% increase over last year. Parks and Recreation also had a remarkable 42% increase over last year's contributions. Overall, 13 of 16 departments increased their giving over the 2004 Campaign. Also worth mentioning, the City Manager's Office and the Human Resources Department both had 100% of their employees donate to the campaign. Special thanks to the campaign chairs and co-chairs in each department and to all the employees who participated in the campaign. For more information on the 2005 Combined Charities Campaign, visit the new City of Des Moines web portal at <http://cdmportal/Combined%20Charities/CombinedCharities.aspx>.

Public Works Recycling Study



Sr. Refuse Collector, Jeff Ellis, collects recyclables on Polk Blvd.

The Public Works Department wants to know how to increase participation in the city's recycling program. Beginning this spring, the Public Works

Department will be testing alternative methods for recycling in Des Moines with a grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and in cooperation with the Metro Waste Authority. The goal of the study is to design a system best suited to the needs of Des Moines residents in order to increase set-out participation rates as measured by the number of households participating and the weight of materials placed at the curb.

Public Works Director Bill Stowe said, "Simplicity and ease of use are required to increase participation and sustain residents' commitment to recycling." The study will determine if different variables are able to affect the residents participation either through curbside collection or at a drop-off location. Three test areas of approximately 350-400 households are participating in the study. The study will run for 12 months, and the results will help make strategic changes in the recycling program.

FREE FLICKS



Friday Evenings in May
FREE FLICKS
Simon Estes
Riverfront Amphitheater

Movies begin at Sunset (about 8:30 pm)

- May 6 **Batman (PG13)***
- May 13 **Stripes (R - edited version)**
- May 20 **Top Gun (PG)**
- May 27 **Uncle Buck (PG - edited version)**

NITEFALL ON THE RIVER



Thursday Evening Concerts
June 2 - August 4
Concerts at 7:00 p.m.

Simon Estes Riverfront Amphitheater
\$8.00 per person / 10-concert Season Pass \$72
Children 12 and under free with paid adult ticket.
www.dmparks.org <http://www.dmparks.org> or
CALL (515) 237-1386.



Des Moines Parks and Recreation and Polk County Conservation Board are providing an exciting new series Nature Classes in local parks and community centers. Choose from map and compass reading skills to bird basics. You can volunteer for a park cleanup or take part in discussions on environmental issues. Find an activity that is "Naturally Fun" for a lively summer afternoon with the family. CALL (515) 323-5300

(Continued from page 1)

amount of CDBG and will not be nearly as flexible.

The City has received over \$5 million each year through CDBG and has used it to rehabilitate affordable owner-occupied and rental housing, start up and expand businesses, replace worn curbs, sidewalks and paving, provide job training, child care, transportation, homeless services, code enforcement, demolition, commercial and residential redevelopment, neighborhood site offices, senior services, community centers, increased police services, neighborhood planning, new housing construction, and many other needed services.

All of these programs have to be developed with citizen input and benefit lower income residents. CDBG provides flexibility and local determination not found in any other federal program. Also, for every dollar of CDBG money spent, an-

other three dollars is leveraged from other public and private sources such as banks, Polk County, foundations, and United Way.

Programs to revitalize neighborhoods, increase the self-sufficiency of vulnerable households and improve the quality of life will be drastically affected, if CDBG is eliminated. Join the Mayor, City Council and city management to let the President and Congress know that CDBG works and is an important resource for cities struggling to provide needed services and opportunities for all residents.

CALL TODAY
Senator Harkin
(515) 284-4574;
Senator Grassley
(515) 284-4890
Congressman
Boswell
(515) 282-1909
President Bush
(202)-456-1111

(Continued from page 1)

Moines has been faced with significant budget reductions. The use of technology has made us more efficient and more able to maintain services; and, in many cases, increase efficiency in our operations," Clark added.

"It is a genuine pleasure to work with a City Manager who has a keen understanding of what technology can mean to an organization and a vision of what is possible when that technology is applied properly," said Michael Armstrong, Chief Information Officer and Director of the Information Technology. "I'm really glad to see him get this recognition for his leadership in this area," Armstrong added.

The City has more than 1,400 computers, and a fiber network that connects more than 70 City and County buildings. The city has successfully implemented ERP (HR & Financials), Automated Permitting and Licensing, CRM (Citizen Relationship Management) and many other systems during Anderson's tenure. Des Moines has achieved a position of technology leadership, and has improved both productivity and accountability as a result of these systems. Below is an excerpt from the online magazine story on Anderson:

Managing With Technology

Eric Anderson speaks about technology more passionately than some CIOs. "Information technology can't be something you just give lip service to," he said. "It has to be part of your vision for how you're going to work and how you're going to accomplish the mission of your organization. It has to be part of absolutely everything."

That conviction helps explain why Des Moines consistently earns recognition for innovative and effective use of technology, culminating last year with a top finish in the Center for Digital Government's Digital Cities Survey.

Anderson and Des Moines CIO Michael Armstrong -- named to Government Technology's Top 25 for 2002 -- teamed

to create a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure that includes an enterprise seat management program for desktop technology and a citywide network that experienced less than 30 minutes of unscheduled downtime in 2003.

Things weren't always this good, however. Anderson didn't even have a PC on his desk when he joined the city government in 1995 -- neither did other managers. "We had old batch processing. We didn't have any kind of integrated systems," he said. "It was very rudimentary."

Determined to break with the past, Anderson formed a committee to create a strategic technology plan -- and he excluded the city's existing technologists from that group. "It was done by department heads, managers and front-line people," he said. "That was a great committee, and they came up with an absolutely terrific plan."

Anderson acknowledged the process was "wrenching" for what was then known as the city Data Processing Department, but the results were worth the pain, he said. The city hired Armstrong in 1997 to implement the plan, and Des Moines has made steady progress since.

Unlike some of his peers, Anderson frequently attends IT conferences to sharpen his skills. "Knowledge of technology is fundamental; it's a prerequisite to good management," he said, adding that public officials should take a long-range view of IT planning and deployment.

"Technology is something you build, then rebuild, then rebuild again," he said. "It's not our task to finish the job. It's our task to keep it going."

Police are now using a computer aided dispatch system with GPS tracking for all emergency vehicles and soon will have mobile data computer terminals in their squad cars to access records and information. City department utilizes computer technology for issuing all city permits, accounting, payroll, processing requests for service and the digital cable TV channel.

Summer Fun in Parks

Youth tennis lessons at Waveland Tennis Court – Ten sessions available and each class runs for 5-days for boys and girls 9-18 years old. Level I for beginners and Level II for intermediate skills classes held for 90 minutes. Limit of 12 students per class and the cost is \$35 per student/session. Registration fees are due two days before the start of each session. Register for as many sessions as you want.

Pee-Wee tennis for kids ages 6 to 8. It's fun, social and good for friends! Group lesson format where the participants will learn some basic fundamentals of tennis. Instruction and games will be the basis for this week of tennis. Class size limited to 12. Children need 23" tennis racquets and they are available for purchase (\$12.00) the first day of each session. Choice of three hourly groupings available per session: 9:00-9:55 a.m.; 10:00-10:55 a.m., or 11:00-



11:55 a.m. Cost \$20 per child.

USA Tennis NJTL

Free tennis lessons through the USA Tennis NJTL program for children ages 9 to 14. The traveling five-day instructional lessons require no pre-registration, simply show up five minutes before the lessons begin. The instructor will bring all the necessary equipment. Emphasis is on tennis as an introductory sport. Children should wear tennis or gym shoes while participating on the tennis court. Visit our website at www.dmparks.org for registration forms or call 237-1405.

Wading Pool Program

Park wading pools, located throughout the city offer supervised water play for children ages 10 years and under. It is a great opportunity for your child to meet other children, have fun, and build water confidence. Parental supervision is appreciated. Wading pools open June 15 and close for the season on August 19, 2005. Hours are Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wading Pool Locations:

Ashby Park	Jordan Park
Ashfield Park	ML King
Chesterfield Park	Sayers Park
Columbus Park	Sheridan Park
Drake Park	Stone Park
Grandview Park	Tower Park
Greenwood Park	Union Park

Youth In Parks Summer Camp

Youth in Parks (YIP) is a structured, safe program targeted to meet the needs of youth going into grades 6th to the 9th. Youth learn new skills, explore the environment, help the community, expand their leadership skills, make new friends, and have fun! Activities include volunteering, parks projects, college campus & business tours, games, and more! Activities includes swimming, bowling, lazer-tag, movies, go-cart rides, mini-golf, roller-skating, etc. the program is located at Archie Brooks Community Center, 2100 SE 5th Street. The cost is \$60.00 per week per child and includes all activities. Weekly Sessions are from June 13 to August 19, 2005. Call 248-6315.

Airport Forges Ahead With Key Projects

Des Moines International Airport's main Runway 13/31, will be closed starting April 18, 2005 for a complete rehabilitation. During this time, Runway 5/23 will be open and used for all airport operations. The project includes the installation of a new runway lighting system, new runway shoulders, and the complete overlay of the existing runway surface. The project will be paid for by two grants that will cover the cost of the 11.3 million dollar con-

tract. Completion is scheduled for early October 2005.

The passenger screening area of the airport is expanding. Over 18,000 square feet will be added to the upper and lower levels of the "stem area" that connects the terminal side of the airport to the concourse/gate area. This is the area that contains the security-screening checkpoint that passengers proceed through for clearance into the boarding gates and is officially monitored by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Two new security lanes will be added to the existing two lanes, doubling the capacity for passenger screening. Other new features include a new freight elevator, two new escalators, two new restrooms, space for TSA locker and break rooms, training and staff areas. The project is moving forward quickly and should be open prior to the Thanksgiving peak travel period.





Dayton Duncan

Monday, April 18
7:00 PM /State Historical Building
What Lewis and Clark Mean to America. Dayton Duncan is an award-winning writer, documentary filmmaker and the author of nine books. His

most recent work is *Scenes of Visionary Enchantment: Reflections on Lewis and Clark*, a collection of essays released in conjunction with the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. Moderator: Dr. Jerome Thompson



Don Harstad, Mystery

Wednesday, April 6
7:00 PM
Temple for Performing Arts
An AViD Encore Appearance. Popular Iowa author Don Harstad kicks off our 2005 series with a return engagement to talk about his many best-selling mysteries, including his most

recent book, *A Long December*, just released in paperback. Don't miss this chance to meet Don in person and hear an update of his career since 2001.

Moderator: Michael Gartner



Cokie Roberts

Friday, April 8
7:00 PM
Hoyt Sherman Place Theater
Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation. Well-known NPR news analyst **Cokie Roberts** will share highlights from her career and speak about her recent book that explores the

lives of the women behind the men that wrote the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Moderator: Katherine Perkins



Peter Hedges

Tuesday, April 12,
7:00 PM
Scottish Rite Temple Auditorium
Home Grown Writing. West Des Moines native Peter Hedges returns to Iowa to talk about his successful writing career. His works include the books *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* and *An Ocean in Iowa*, as

well as the plays *Baby Anger*, *Good as New*, *Imagining Brad* and the movie *Pieces of April*. Moderator: Jim Autry



Elizabeth Berg

Wednesday,
April 20 at 7:00 PM at Sheslow Auditorium, Drake University Campus. *An Evening with Elizabeth Berg.* Book groups and Oprah's Book Club fans won't want to miss this opportunity to meet and listen to this best-selling writer as she promotes her newest book, *A Year of Pleasures*.

Moderator: Mary Brubaker



Luis J. Rodriguez

Monday, April 25
7:00 PM
Hoyt Sherman Place Theater
Celebrating the Word: Spoken, Performed, and Sung. Author **Luis J. Rodriguez** will speak on how words, language, story, and voice helped him overcome issues of drug addiction and gang violence to eventually become a successful writer/poet/editor. Moderator: John Paul Chaisson-Cardenas.

The tradition continues in 2005 as the library offers its fifth annual AViD Author Series featuring FREE evening programs by six nationally recognized authors. Since its inception in 2001, the AViD program has presented a diverse collection of authors, genres, and cultures. AViD authors visit local schools and colleges, attend private and/or public receptions, and enjoy Des Moines hospitality. The 2005 AViD Author Series is made possible with funding from the Des Moines Public Library Foundation with support from Humanities Iowa and Barnes & Noble Booksellers.

Sylvan Theater Returns

Greenwood Park's Sylvan Theater will once again make its debut as an entertainment venue this summer. Originally built in 1931 "for dramatic and religious programs," the outdoor amphitheater has been renovated by the Park and Recreation Department with an emphasis on the facility's historic past. Due to its cozy neighborhood setting, bench seating and capacity of 500, Sylvan will serve weddings, business, public & private events. For reservations call Parks at 515-237-1386.

The Sylvan is nestled in the woods of Greenwood Park, located just off Grand Avenue on 45th Street. It has a 500+ capacity bench seating and a stage. The benches are made of Red Balau; an Indonesian wood that is naturally resistant to decay and is fire resistant. The wood is completely free of knots, dense and resists damage from scratching and gouging. It will weather to a soft gray color and requires no finish to preserve it. The stage is the original concrete that was installed in the 1930's and is in very good shape. It is approximately 22' by 60'. There are electrical outlets at each end of the stage however the



stage is not large enough to accommodate major concerts.

The atmosphere is reminiscent of the early 1900's with special lighting in this neighborhood setting. The Sylvan Theater will serve a considerably different purpose than the Park Department's Simon Estes Amphitheater which overlooks the Des Moines River in downtown Des Moines. It is well suited for small music venues, weddings, as well as public, business and private events.

The facility will be available free of charge for public events which have no admission fee. Events that have a closed audience with no admission fee (i.e. weddings, company picnics) will be charged a rental fee of \$100/day and those held for financial gain by a business, agency or individual will be charged \$250/day. For additional information regarding policies, availability or to reserve the theater, call Des Moines Parks and Recreation at 515-237-1386 and press "1" for shelter reservation.

Public Works Reviews SCRUB Program

To reduce abuse, increase efficiency, and control costs associated with the City's annual SCRUB (Spring Cleanup to Remove Urban Blight) Program, the Public Works Department has collaborated with both the Des Moines Neighbors and the Neighborhood Revitalization Board to consolidate low-volume SCRUBS. Neighborhood leaders were asked to work together to select dates and locations for joint SCRUBS. To date, consolidation efforts have resulted in a reduction from 34 SCRUB sites in 2004 to 20 sites in 2005. The Public Works Department will also introduce, under special arrangements with the Metro Waste Authority,



Residents take part in SCRUB Program.

use of their transfer station located at 4198 Delaware by residents on two separate Saturdays this year. The transfer station offers convenience and ease of unloading. Public Works Director Bill Stowe says, "By working together now, neighborhoods will help ensure continuation of the SCRUB Program in the future."

Dave Bair Retires



Dave Bair
Fleet Services Administrator.

The Public Works Department invited City staff to bid farewell to long-term employee Dave Bair on January 28, 2005. Dave retired after 33 years of service wherein he held the management positions of

Chemist, Assistant Wastewater Treatment Plant Administrator, Sanitation Administrator, and finally, Fleet Services Administrator.

Under Dave's direction, the City in-sourced Fleet Services operations at an estimated savings of nearly \$500,000 per year. The Public Works management staff was pleased to present Dave with a lambskin leather jacket embossed with the Department logo. Dave's immediate plans following retirement involve relaxing, traveling, and hobbies. His wife, Candi, plans to work an additional year or two. Public Works Director Bill Stowe said, "Dave always represented the very best of Public Works through his commitment to the Department, to the City, and to Des Moines residents."

W A T C H

City Spotlight
with Mayor Frank Cownie



3:30 p.m.

Monday

6:30 p.m.

Wednesday & Sunday

8:30 p.m.

Friday & Saturday

Service Plus

*Recognition of the
extra effort given by
City Employees.*



On February 17th, Sr. Refuse collector Ron Hudson discovered a young girl who appeared to be 4 to 5 years old, wondering around in the 100 block of E. Philip St. dressed only in a night shirt and shoes. The approximate temperature was 32 degrees. Ron stopped and put his coat on the girl and then asked a neighbor if they knew her. The neighbor didn't know her so Ron kept the girl warm until his foreman, Tony Gardner, arrived. The Police were called and Tony kept the little girl, Katie, in his truck, gave her crayons and paper and talked to her until the police and her parents arrived a short time later.

On January 11, 2005, 10 year old Jacob I. Hibbard, wrote the Public Works Department to say:

Thank you for your time. I would like to thank you for your work. You did a great job. The roads were done well and not as many accidents happened. During the ice storm your trucks were out sanding and salting. My family had peace of mind knowing my dad would travel in safety to work and back. We had no problems with driving.

On October 14, 2004, Troy Peterson wrote the Public Works Department to say:

Thank you for the prompt turnaround in getting back to me on this issue (a small cavity in front of Mr. Peterson's property at 1144 - 36th St). I had been increasingly concerned, because I did not know if anyone at the city was even aware of the sewer problem and planning on repairing the problem. It appears that you are quite on top of this and moving things along to the best of your ability and I appreciate your efforts.

City Plans to Pave Its Way to Greater Customer Satisfaction



Public Works resurfacing crew members (left to right), Jim Deeds, Tony Chiodo, Frank Edwards (driving), Tracy Thorpe and Gordon Trenhaile

Recent customer survey results revealed a need for additional street improvements. Those improvements will be underway this year thanks to nearly \$5 million in gaming funds committed

Meredith Trail Opens

In March the Parks and Recreation Department opened the Meredith Trail connecting Gray's Lake Park to downtown Des Moines. The Meredith Trail is a 1.9-mile multi-use recreational trail that leaves the southeast corner of Gray's Lake Park and follows the Raccoon River to the former SW 5th St/Jackson St Bridge. The bridge has been renovated for trail use and it takes the trail across the river to the north side of the Raccoon River and follows the north side of the Raccoon River to the confluence of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers near Principal Park.

Trail amenities include emergency phones and lighting. The Meredith Corporation Foundation plans additional trail amenities and trail segments scheduled for completion later this summer as part of a donation.

Funding for the trail has been provided in part by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP) Program, Iowa Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Meredith Corporation Foundation.

by the City Council for street resurfacing projects.

Using state-of-the-art pavement condition index data, the Public Works Department, in conjunction with the Engineering Department, has identified the streets to be included in programs to be completed either under contract or by the Public Works resurfacing crew. Some of the major roadways to be included in the first round of paving this spring are:

- ◆ University, 48th to 55th
- ◆ Park Avenue, Fleur to 42nd
- ◆ Cottage Grove, 35th to 42nd
- ◆ Easter Lake Drive, Indianola to SE 34th
- ◆ and Williams, University to Easton Blvd.

Resurfacing helps to ensure the roadways are not only sound and serviceable, but also provide a smooth ride. Public Works Director Bill Stowe said, "This year residents will witness the most extensive street improvement program ever completed in the City of Des Moines."



SW 5th Street /Jackson St. Bridge on the Meredith Trail



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