



The City of Albert Lea

Volume 3, Number 2

Spring, 2005

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Notes from the Mayor, Jean Eaton...

Our City will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2006 - just one year away. Plans are in the works for the year-long celebration which will be co-chaired by Kelly Schultz and Carol Wolter. The committee is looking for volunteers, service clubs and non-profits willing to participate during this exciting celebration. For more information please call the Mayor's office at 377-4330.

Have you noticed that our downtown is alive with construction activity? The Hanson building has been demolished and will eventually serve as a parking lot for the Freeborn Bank Building. The council is working with several developers to explore ways to renovate and reuse this historic building. Thanks to the local developers who submitted proposals. The Lea Center building project sited for 37 apartments is moving forward and is following historic preservation guidelines. The Bible Book Store and InnoVision have exterior projects in process on Broadway.

Albert Lea has been chosen by "Site Selection" magazine (March 2005 issue) as one of the top ten cities in the U.S. sited for economic development growth as a "micropolitan" city in 2004. A micropolitan is a largely self-sufficient, rural, regional economy with under 50,000 people who attract industry or expand existing companies. The State of Minnesota also tied for sixth position out of 50 states along with Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and New York for proposed economic growth.

Congratulations Albert Lea and especially congratulations to our one-year-old Albert Lea Economic Development Agency for their efforts!

Jean Eaton

Hatch Bridge Project Underway

The city has closed Lakeview Boulevard from Sunset Street to Martin Road for construction.

Sorensen Brothers Inc. has been awarded the project consisting of removing and replacing the watermain, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer beneath Lakeview Boulevard and reconstructing the Lakeview Boulevard roadway between Wedge Street and The Fairway. Hatch Bridge will be removed and replaced with a 92 foot concrete slab - span bridge. Wedge Street will also be reconstructed.

The sidewalk will be closed for approximately three months during the construction of the bridge. During the project there will be times when boats will be unable to travel between Edgewater Bay and Fountain Lake. The completion date is set for October 31, 2005.

If you have any questions please call the City Engineering Department 507-377-4325.

Commercial Landscape & Building Design

A subcommittee of the Planning Commission has been meeting to set standards for site landscaping and building design within the commercial areas of the city and specifically along main roadways and freeways. The establishment of this committee was supported by the recommendations from Albert Lea Area Listens indicating an interest in better building design and landscaping to give the city a more attractive overall appearance. The committee is assisted by City Planner Bob Graham. For information contact 507-377-4315 or e-mail bgraham@city.albertlea.org.

Shared Use Trail

The City of Albert Lea is working on a proposed shared use trail that would complete the loop around Fountain Lake and eventually connect to the existing Blazing Star Trail. The proposed trail will be a ten foot wide bituminous paved path with lighting.

The first phase of this proposed trail system is from the Richway Drive boat landing along the channel to Pioneer Park. This segment is approximately 0.84 miles in length. The City will be applying for a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grant to pay for fifty percent of the construction cost of the first phase. The current cost for this segment is \$165,000.

The DNR grants will be awarded in July of 2005. If the City is awarded a grant, construction of the shared use trail will begin in late 2005 and be completed in 2006.

If you have any questions please call the City Engineering Department 507-377-4325.



**Albert Lea
Community Theatre**
Presents
"Proof"
April 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9

Utility Notice

Your November billing statement contained communication implying that the city's new public lighting utility was a result of a change in service from the city's local power company. Please understand that this new utility fee was prompted because of our community's need to update and expand existing public lighting systems. Albert Lea's local power company has been a good partner in our community and the level of service they provide has and will remain consistent and in compliance with regulatory tariffs.

Albert Lea Economic Development Agency

There is no better time in history to choose locating to Albert Lea. A number of companies have made the decision to do just that through relocations and expansions. More than 500 new jobs are expected to be created in our community in the next 18 months based on 2004 industrial activity. The job opportunities and capital investment of nearly \$70 million by our industry base in 2004 will be enhanced with the recent announcement by our largest employer, the Albert Lea Medical Center - Mayo Health System of 130 new jobs and capital investment of \$15 million to their campus. These new jobs have the opportunity to generate future medical services and capital investments to serve the needs of a changing population, of which Albert Lea will be affected.

The 2004 year is history and it can be book marked as a year which fueled our business optimism. Expectations are high for 2005. With growth comes change. How we choose to respond to change will affect future business expansion and relocation opportunities.

Zoo Man to Kick Off National Library Week

On Saturday, April 16, the Zoo Man from the Prairie Winds Zoo in Adrian, MN, will be holding two shows in the multi-purpose room in the City Center at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Senior Water Discount

Did you know the City offers discounted water and sewer rates to senior citizens (65+) and customers receiving social security benefits? If you're asking yourself, "Do I qualify?" read on.

For a single person to qualify, their annual income cannot exceed \$15,500. Add an additional \$1,500 per dependent - that's \$17,000 annually for a couple.

Cash assets cannot exceed \$15,000. Cash assets include your checking and saving accounts, CD's, stocks and bonds.

If you meet these criteria, call or stop by the Finance Department (where you pay your water bill) 377-4301. There is a simple form to fill out. You must reapply by June of each year to maintain the reduced rates.



Book Sale

Saturday, May 14 - 9 am to 4 pm

Sale will be held in the garage behind the Library on Fountain Street.

Pre-sale for FRIENDS members
Thursday, May 12, 4 pm-7 pm.

You must show your membership card.

Retirements

Fire Chief Richard Sydnes and Police Chief Tom Menning have both retired after 32 years of service with the City. We wish them well as they begin a new and exciting phase in their life!

Park 'n Rec Update

The Parks & Recreation Department will be moving their offices to the City Arena mid-April. Please call 377-4370 for more information.

The next Parks & Recreation Board Meeting will be May 11th at 5:15 p.m. Location and agenda to be announced.

City Auction

April 7th - 5:30 pm

Police storage shed - Frank Hall Park

Current auction items include city vehicles, police seized vehicles, and approximately 100 bicycles. More misc. items may be added.

Blazing Star Landing

The winner of the Land Between the Lakes Action Team contest to rename the Farmland site is Julie Schewe of Albert Lea. Schewe's submission, "Blazing Star Landing" was chosen by the committee for its consideration of the area and the city's goals for the site. For submitting the winning entry, Schewe wins a Pelican Breeze pizza cruise.

The study of environmental conditions on the site should be completed by the end of March 2005. The study will provide the extent and characteristics of contamination and calculate clean up methods and costs. With this information, the city will be in a position to market the property and apply for clean-up assistance if needed.

Landscaping for Wildlife and Water Quality

Homeowners: 6:45-9:00 p.m. Monday, April 18 - Elks Club

Real estate agents, developers, contractors and landscapers

8:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 19 - Elks Club

Call Freeborn County Environmental Services for information: 377-5186

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Utility Bills	377-4301
Building Permits	377-4340
City Garage	377-4377
Street Department	377-4378
Animal Control	377-5215
City Arena	377-4374
City Pool	373-3328
Civic Theater	377-4371
Senior Center	373-0704
Adult Library	377-4350
Children's Library	377-4356

The City of Albert Lea newsletter is published quarterly by the City of Albert Lea to keep citizens informed about services, programs and issues in the community. Comments or suggestions are welcome and should be sent to the City of Albert Lea, 221 E. Clark St., Albert Lea, MN 56007 or email us: info@city.albertlea.org.