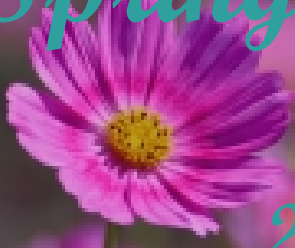


Spring



2013

Columbia Quarterly

CITY OF COLUMBIA

www.columbiaillinois.com



Mayor Hutchinson

It's spring time again! Time for spring cleaning, getting ready for summer and working on the city's budget. The city's department heads continue in their efforts to operate their departments more efficiently and more effectively— they've done a great job during these difficult economic times in accomplishing more with limited resources. It's a constant challenge to deliver quality city services—this has been especially true during recent years when uncertain economic conditions have impacted the city's revenues. However, Columbia is doing well thanks to the cooperative spirit shown by members of the City Council, the hard work and management skills of the city's department heads and the dedication of the city's employees in performing their duties. I look forward to the city's continued growth and development.

Residential growth (as measured by new home starts) continues to improve—over 50 building permits were issued for new residences in 2012—this represents an increase of over 15% from 2011. How are we doing commercially? Well, Main Street is vibrant and it continues to improve; restaurants around town are busy and shops are doing well; car dealerships had a stellar 2012 and sales continue to improve; and over 20 new businesses opened in Columbia in 2012. These areas of growth project a progressive image for our community and help stabilize our revenue base through increased sales tax receipts. Thanks for patronizing Columbia's businesses and other local merchants through the "Think Monroe County First" program.

Additionally, we continue in our efforts to improve our parks, trails, streets and sidewalks—planning continues in each of these areas as we constantly strive to increase the quality of life in Columbia for our residents and visitors.

The City Council recently passed an ordinance to allow residents (and small businesses) not currently participating in the city's electricity aggregation program to join so they can take advantage of Homefield Energy's fixed cost of supplying electricity (\$.0408/kilowatt hour through May 2014) — this rate has resulted in electricity supply savings to most city residents of 20-30%.

Columbia's future is very bright. The relationship between the City Council and the School Board is fantastic—citizen involvement is terrific and Columbia has been recognized throughout the region and state for its volunteerism spirit. Your suggestions help make our community a great place to live and work.

Don't forget to visit the city's website (www.columbiaillinois.com) to check out our upcoming events—if your group has an event planned, feel free to contact City Hall to have it listed on the city website calendar.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat, please contact me at 281-7144 ext. 109, at home at 281-5199 or khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com.

Sincerely, Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor

COLUMBIA SISTER CITIES TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH GEDERN, GERMANY

Fifty-two visitors from Columbia's Sister City of Gedern, Germany will be arriving on May 10th for a ten-day visit. The Sister Cities of Gedern and Columbia take turns hosting the official visit every two years. Visitors learn about the culture, history and day-to-day life by staying with their host family. The two Sister Cities will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of their partnership with a full schedule of activities. The community is invited to join the visitors and hosts at a special 20th anniversary celebration (Dinner and Dance) to be held on May 18th at Turner Hall.

Twenty-five students from Gedern, who will be here at Columbia High School for 3 weeks in April, will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of ongoing student exchanges which have taken place almost every year in alternating sites. The students live with their host families, attend classes at CHS and participate in local and regional field trips. The German students prepare for the trip by developing power-point presentations in English which they present here to classes at all the schools in Columbia, both public and parochial. The community is invited to hear three of these presentations at the Sister City Spring Membership Dinner Meeting on April 18 at the Legion Hall. **Please call Barb Miller (281-3931) for ticket information to both of these events.**



We welcome new members and invite the community to learn more about Sister Cities by visiting our website: www.columbiasistercities.com or www.facebook.com/columbiasistercities

REDUCE, REUSE & RECYCLE EVENT APRIL 20TH (10 am—3 pm)

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE ACCEPTED:

NICE TWICE: Gently used clothing, shoes, furniture, toys and household items.

COLUMBIA LIBRARY: Gently used books. Encyclopedias and text books will NOT be accepted.

RELIABLE SANITATION: Glass, plastic, cardboard, aluminum and large non-recyclable items (not larger than a recliner).

WEB INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGIES (WITS): Computer equipment, TVs, phones, household electronics, audio/video equipment, lawn mowers & batteries. There is a suggested drop-off (tax deductible) donation of \$5 for computer monitors, laptops and TVs. A \$5 fee is required for appliances larger than a microwave and all Freon-containing devices.

SECURE DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION SERVICES: (10 am—1 pm only) Shredding paper documents while you wait. Thanks to Columbia National Bank and Midland States Bank for sponsoring this service.

NOT ACCEPTING:
Paints, household chemicals and tires.

CITIZEN INPUT NEEDED FOR REVISION OF COLUMBIA'S "MASTER PLAN"

How do you feel about the rate of residential growth in Columbia? If you move within the next few years, in what type of housing would you like to live? How important is a vibrant Main Street to Columbia? How would you rate the amount of park space in Columbia?

These are just some of the questions that members of Columbia's Plan Commission are posing to residents of Columbia as the advisory group begins revising the City's Comprehensive Plan — the "master plan" document that guides future development. Last revised in 2005, the plan is being updated to reflect changes in the community as well as in the local, regional and national economy.

To kick off the current revision, members of the Plan Commission are seeking responses to a Community Survey during the month of March. Columbia residents can complete the survey online following instructions available on the City's website, or they can participate by picking up, completing and returning a paper copy of the survey available through the Clerk's Office at City Hall. Individual responses will be kept confidential, but the aggregate responses will be compared to those from a similar survey in 2005 and survey results will be incorporated as part of the public input helping to shape the updated plan.

For more information about the Comprehensive Plan revision, please visit the City's website or contact Paul Ellis, Director of Community & Economic Development.

"Explore Columbia" Reaches Conclusion

What: Final Public Hearing for the "Explore Columbia" plan
 When: Monday, March 18th, 6:45 p.m.
 Where: City Council Chambers, Columbia City Hall

"Explore Columbia", the community's first comprehensive effort to improve walking and bicycling conditions, is nearing conclusion this month. The City of Columbia, in partnership with the Heart-Lands Conservancy, is wrapping up the process of creating the final "Explore Columbia" plan, a copy of which is available from the City website or from the City Clerk's Office. After seeking broad community input and with reviews by the City's Play Commission and Plan Commission, the final plan will be considered by the City Council on Monday, March 18th.

Local residents are encouraged to review the final draft document in advance, and then offer their thoughts to members of the City Council before the final vote on the plan that evening.

When completed, this plan will make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to safely and comfortably reach parks, schools, shopping areas, and other important community destinations on foot, by bike, or through other alternative means of transportation. The plan will detail locations and conditions of sidewalks, multi-use trails, bike lanes, and other routes and it will enable the City to apply for funding to complete these projects.

This planning effort is being funded by a federal planning grant administered through the Illinois Department of Transportation; other partners include Trailnet and James Pona & Associates.

WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

Bare Hands Crossfit 223 N. Main St. Fitness classes/personal training	The Corner Reef 304 (Rear) N. Main St. Marine aquatics (coral/fish)
Columbia Learning Center 222 S. Rapp Ave. Kids - tutoring/speech therapy	Fashion Attic 4 Kids 103 W. Gundlach Resale kids consignment shop
Knott So Shabby 235 N. Main St. Refurbished furniture & decor	Obregon & Associates LLC 102 S. Main St. Full service accounting firm

CITY WIDE YARD SALE — APRIL 19TH & 20TH

Yard sale permits are not required on April 19 & 20. A "Yard Sale Directory/Map" (listing yard sale, time, location and items for sale) will be available on the city's website or a copy can be picked up at the Clerk's Office on April 18, 19 or 20 during normal business hours. To be listed on the directory, please complete the "Directory Form" (available on the city's website www.columbiaillinois.com) and return it to the Clerk's Office or e-mail the form to Jackie Hausmann jackie@columbiaillinois.com. **Directory forms must be turned in by Mon., April 8 to be listed on the directory.**

**UTILITY BILL
DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Don't forget you can sign up for direct debit payment of your monthly utility bill. This is a free service and can be initiated by completing a direct debit form which is available at City Hall.

ANNOUNCING CREDIT CARD ACCEPTANCE

The City of Columbia offers credit and debit payment options through GovPayNet which accepts MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover cards for payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online (www.govpaynow.com) or by phone (1-888-604-7888). You may also make payments at various City offices or through the City's website; click on the GovPayNet logo and follow the instructions. A service fee to GovPayNet is assessed on each transaction.



VOTER REGISTRATION

MOVED WITHIN THE CITY OF COLUMBIA

If you have moved within the City of Columbia, you may call the Monroe County Clerk's Office at 939-8681 to change your address or you may complete the Transfer of Registration form on the back of your current Voter Registration card and mail it to the Monroe County Clerk's Office. Either way, a new Voter Registration card will be mailed to you.

MOVED FROM ANOTHER ILLINOIS COUNTY, MOVED FROM OUT OF STATE, NAME CHANGE BY MARRIAGE, NEW REGISTRATIONS

The last day the City Clerk's Office can register voters for the April 9th Consolidated Election is **Tuesday, March 12th**. Two forms of Identification (Driver's License with current address, current utility bill, bank statement, tax bill, car/homeowner's insurance) are required and registration must be made in person. Your Social Security number is also required on the registration form. The City Clerk's Office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon.

Questions? Call the Clerk's Office at 281-7144, ext. 100. J. RONALD COLYER, COLUMBIA CITY CLERK

News from Columbia School District



It is hard to imagine that we are already in the third quarter of the 2012-2013 school year. We continue to experience both academic and extra-curricular success. Everyone within Columbia CUSD 4 is proud of our students!

Columbia High School has 24 accomplished Illinois State Scholars. These students have proven to be among the top ten percent in the State of Illinois. These scholars include: Pavle Chkautovich, Katherine Colbert, Brendan DePoy, Gina Fahnestock, Julie Gleason, Kevin Hawickhorst, Allyson Heller, Zachary Hollis, Alexander Howard, Jamie Lanman, Nathaniel Leingang, Hannah Longust, Micaela Mytyk, Madison Norris, Max Pansing, Matthew Riley, Nicholas Rodenberg, Amy Rzepczynski, Logan Santanello, Benjamin Schmidt, Rebecca Thompson, Tyler Thornhill, Erika Varel, Erica Weilbacher.

Likewise, both Parkview Elementary and Columbia Middle School have again received the 2012 Academic Excellence Award from the Illinois State Board of Education. This prestigious recognition is awarded to only those schools where 90% of students met or exceeded state standards in both reading and math for three consecutive years. However, this accomplishment will be more difficult to obtain next year. The State Board of Education has recently decided to increase the grading scale of the ISAT test to determine which students meet and/or exceed. An analogy is that currently our student grading scale is 90%-100% to earn an "A." Changing this scale to 95%-100% to earn an "A" would cause a drop in those students in the "A" category. Our students will continue to excel, even under the more stringent cut scores.

Four-Peat! This is the cheer that we currently hear around the district. The Columbia Cheer Team, under the direction of Robbie Walters, has won its fourth straight Competitive Cheerleading State Championship. This year was even more of an accomplishment since the state enrollment classifications have changed. Our team moved up a class to medium sized schools, yet still took top honors. The success of this program will go down in our record books! In other state action, we are proud to announce that Cameron Touchette secured an impressive 7th place finish at the IHSA State bowling series. We cannot say enough about our student athletes and their commitment to their respective programs.



Hands Up!

City Launches New "Volunteer Matching" Website

The City of Columbia has launched a new online "match-maker" website designed to link volunteers with opportunities that

suit their individual areas of interest. Appropriately, the service was created, and will be maintained, by volunteers!

The address for the new website is <http://www.columbiailvolunteers.org>

In 2010, Columbia Mayor Kevin Hutchinson brought together local leaders to form an Ecumenical, Civic and Social Improvement Group, an informal but regular gathering of people who have the mission of helping other people. This group meets monthly in order to foster closer cooperation and better communication among the community's churches and other not-for-profit groups. That same year, the City of Columbia received recognition from Illinois Governor Pat Quinn through the Home Town Awards program as a center for volunteerism.

In 2011, the Ecumenical, Civic and Social Improvement Group conceived the idea of a website to connect volunteers with local opportunities. After some months of discussion and effort, the website has become a reality, largely due to the technical expertise of Manav Misra, a Columbia resident employed by Vision Web who has been contributing time as a volunteer. The website has been designed by Manav, it is maintained through his volunteer efforts and it is managed day-to-day by City staff working in concert with the Ecumenical, Civic and Social Improvement Group.

ON THE HORIZON - ROADWAY AND BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



Engineering work associated with three separate roadway improvement projects is moving toward completion. After the engineering work is complete and IDOT approval is received the projects will be advertised and bids received. The three projects are (i) the Cherry Street Improvement Project from Main Street to Liberty Street with a complete rebuild including a concrete street, sidewalks and storm sewers; (ii) the Main Street Streetscape Project from Cherry to Oak to include new sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, street lighting and landscaping; and (iii) the Valmeyer Road Bridge Rehabilitation Project to include the removal and replacement of the deck and beams (superstructure) of the existing bridge. It is anticipated the Cherry Street and Valmeyer Road Bridge projects will be on the June IDOT letting resulting in a late summer into early fall construction. The Main Street Streetscape project will probably be on a later IDOT letting meaning fall construction. As with all roadway construction projects there will be road closures and construction work closures in the area of the work. Your patience and consideration is greatly appreciated as the street and bridge infrastructure of the City is improved and maintained.

BUDGET TIME

The City is in the process of preparing the budget for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2013 and ending April 30, 2014. At Committee of the Whole meetings from now until mid-April, City Administrator Al Hudzik and Accounting Manager Linda Sharp will discuss various components of the budget. Topics covered will include projected revenue, projected expenditures, capital projects, equipment purchases, cash flow projections and fee schedule adjustments. The budget will be posted for public inspection in early – mid April.



City of Columbia
208 S. Rapp Avenue
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Columbia, IL 62236

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Upcoming Events

For more details on items listed below, call 281-7144 or visit the city website calendar at www.columbiailinois.com.

BOOSTERS 5K/1 MILE FUN RUN

March 9, 8 am: Columbia High School



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS

March 10: (Spring forward)

RECYCLE ELECTRONICS, APPLIANCES & BATTERIES

March 16, 10 am—4 pm:

Drop-off located at the Public Works parking lot.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY DOG PARADE

March 17, 2 pm: Dress up your pooch for this fun St. Pat's Day parade down Main St. starting at the ICS playground and ending at Metter Park—prizes; Helping Strays HSMC adoption event Sponsored by CROWN.



HISTORIC MAIN ST. BUNNY SHOP:

March 21—23: Free Easter egg with purchase at participating Main St. businesses (while supplies last). Each egg contains a special coupon — the "EGGSTREAM" egg wins lots of great prizes.



CENTURY 21 EASTER EGG HUNT

March 30, 10:30 am: Ages 10 & under at the City Park.

A CAUSE FOR PAWS

March 23, 5:30 pm:

Dinner Auction at The Falls sponsored by the Helping Strays HSMC.



CLERK'S OFFICE CLOSED

March 29 & 30:

Good Friday / Easter Holiday



CITY WIDE YARD SALE

April 19 & 20:

See page 2 for details.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE EVENT

April 20, 9 am—3 pm:

Columbia High School parking lot. See page 1 for details.



RECYCLE ELECTRONICS, APPLIANCES & BATTERIES

May 18, 10 am—4 pm:

Drop-off located at the Public Works parking lot.



SISTER CITIES 20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER/DANCE

May 18, 6:30—11 pm:

Music by the Smash Band at Turner Hall



MAIFEST

May 19, 2-6 pm: Food & refreshments, music by the Sofa Kings at the Sand Bank School House.



LARGE ITEM TRASH PICK-UP

June 4 - residential pick up: See website for complete list of acceptable items.

LIBRARY EVENTS



BOOK SIGNING

April 6, 1-3 pm: Featuring Malinda Bertels' "Just Pete" describes the widespread effects of bullying.

LEGO STORY TIME

Every Tuesday, 4-4:45 pm:

Come build a love for books — all ages that love to build are welcome.

LIBRARY PRESCHOOL*

Every Wednesday, 9:30-11 am:

3 to 5 years of age

TOT TIME *

1st & 3rd Thursday, 10-10:45 am:

18 months to 3 1/2 years of age

STORY TIME *

2nd & 4th Thursday, 10 am:

3 1/2 to 5 years of age

* Registration required

www.columbialibrary.org for more details.



The City of Columbia is proud to print the Quarterly on recycled paper

