



Newsletter

February 2014

Come 'Celebrate the World' at Free International Festival This Month

On Sunday, Feb. 23, the Maryland Heights Centre will become a melting pot of world cultures at the annual "Celebrate the World: An International Festival." Now in its 13th year, the festival draws thousands of visitors from around the region for an afternoon of music, dance, crafts, food and more. The event is free and offers activities and entertainment for all ages.

The event kicks off at noon with the "Parade of Nations" opening ceremony led by local scout troops and country representatives. Two stages will feature live music and dance from around the globe from noon to 5 p.m.

Several artisans will be on hand to demonstrate their crafts, including ice sculpture, henna and wood carving. The festival will also offer an international marketplace, where vendors representing a number of different nations will sell jewelry, crafts, artwork and other items.

Ranken Jordan Pediatric Specialty Hospital, Saint Louis Art Museum and the St. Louis County Library will host special activities for youngsters and their parents in the children's area. And of course, the day wouldn't be complete without the delectable culinary delights of the "Taste of the World" refreshment area. Be sure to bring a few dollars to sample dishes from Argentina, Brazil, the Middle East, Nigeria and more.

Sponsors for this year's International Festival include the Maryland Heights Cultural Arts Commission and Missouri Arts Council.

Volunteers are still needed for the festival; please call Alicia Gay at (314) 738-2541 to find out more about how you can be involved.

A complete performance schedule and vendor listing will be available soon at www.marylandheights.com.

COUNCIL MEMBERS TO HOLD WARD MEETINGS TO DISCUSS PROPOSITION S

City Council members will host a series of ward meetings this spring to provide information and answer residents' questions about the proposed sewer lateral program fee increase, Proposition S, which will be on the April 8 ballot. All meetings will be held at the Maryland Heights Centre and will include a presentation by Director of Public Works Bryan Pearl.

- **Ward 1:** Council members Ken Gold and Don Hunt will host a meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 10. City Administrator Mark Levin will also be in attendance.
- **Ward 2:** Council members Kim Baker and Ed Dirck will host a meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 27.
- **Ward 3:** Council members Chuck Caverly and Michael Hachmeister will host a meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 26.
- **Ward 4:** Council members Jim Carver and Norm Rhea will host a meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 24.

CITY TO HOLD SECOND HOME IMPROVEMENT EXPO NEXT MONTH

Mark your calendars for the second annual Maryland Heights Home Improvement Expo on Saturday, March 29 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Due to the success of last year's expo, this year's event will be held in the auditorium at the Maryland Heights Centre, 2344 McKelvey Road.

Admission is free, and the event will feature local businesses that can help residents with spring home and garden projects. Workshops and demos will also take place throughout the day. More details will be available in early March at www.marylandheights.com.

LOBBY DISPLAY FEATURES WORK BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Works by students in the Fine Arts Club at St. Louis Community College will be on display in the Maryland Heights Government Center lobby through Feb. 27. The public may view the artwork from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. A free public reception celebrating the artists will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. on Feb. 6.

These unique and beautiful works of art include paintings, drawings, pastels and multimedia pieces. To preview samples of students' work and find out more about the St. Louis Community College Fine Arts Club Gallery Program, visit <http://stlccfineartsclub.tumblr.com>.

The Mayor's Message



Mayor Mike Moeller
878-6730

Last month, life as we know it came to a halt for several days when a major winter storm buried our region in snow. However, drivers in Maryland Heights were back on the roads in relatively short order,

thanks to our outstanding snow-clearing crews in the Public Works Department.

Starting with pre-treating the roads on the evening of Jan. 4, they worked nonstop through the afternoon of Jan. 6. Their efforts continued through the rest of the week, ultimately putting in 836 man hours and using 600 tons of salt and 5,700 gallons of calcium chloride to make sure our streets were as clear and safe as possible. As one person commented on our Facebook page, "Kudos to the street crews. I have been doing some errands all around St. Louis suburbia, and our roads in Maryland Heights are by far safer and cleaner."

Our record of fast, effective snow removal reflects our commitment to our mission: "We will provide superior municipal services in a safe and appealing setting in order to attract and retain residents committed to our city, thriving businesses, and premier hospitality venues." But this mission extends to all of our departments, and we are constantly working to improve the level of service we deliver to residents, businesses and visitors.

In the police department, delivering superior municipal services means reducing crime rates and solving those that do occur. Preliminary numbers for 2013 show decreases in nearly all major crime categories, including robbery, assault,

larceny and auto theft. Our detective bureau exceeds the national average for the clearance of Part One crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, vehicle theft and arson) and has done so for more than 20 years.

And while the MHPD has historically had excellent response times to both emergency and non-emergency calls, last year the department made changes specifically aimed at lowering response times, including the realignment of patrol sectors. As a result, our response time last year was under 4 minutes on 77% of emergency calls and under 7 minutes on 84% of non-emergency calls, an improvement over the previous year.

The Community Development Department has devoted considerable time and effort to developing resources that help homeowners maintain their properties (and property values), including the annual Home Improvement Expo and several informational guides. We recently implemented a new software program to help us better manage inspections and permits, which will ultimately lead to reduced wait times and improved service for both residents and businesses.

And of course, the City Council and I are currently working with architects to design a new community center, which will allow us to provide a larger, better-equipped facility and more recreation programs to our residents.

These are just a few of the ways we are working to provide superior municipal services to our community; all of our departments have similar stories to tell. And while we believe our quality of service sets our city apart in the region, we'll never really consider our mission accomplished. We will always be looking for ways to serve you better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "mike moeller".

Information Technology Division Keeps City Plugged In

Few residents would recognize their faces. Most of their work goes on behind the scenes. But without them, city government would be very inefficient.

The city's Information Technology (IT) Division maintains a staggering amount of equipment: roughly 200 desktop computers, 72 laptops, 92 printers, a phone system that includes 182 handsets, 75 mobile phones, 12 copy machines, 25 digital cameras and 29 computer servers. Their work covers the full range of government functions, from the most basic email exchanges to the complex communications systems used by the police dispatchers. Fortunately, Maryland Heights has on its IT staff four highly experienced, well-trained individuals who are up for the task of keeping the city connected.

IT Manager Gail Reader has worked for the city for 21 years, bringing with her a bachelor's degree in management information systems and a master's degree



Data Systems Technician Virtes Mori troubleshoots a computer problem in the detective bureau.

in business management. In addition to supervising the division's other employees, her primary day-to-day focus is managing the city's databases, such as Accela (used primarily by the Department of Community Development) and Eden (the city's accounting, budgeting and procurement software).

While she says keeping up with constantly evolving technology is one of the challenges in her line of work, "The rewarding

part is helping employees solve issues and come up with innovative solutions."

Technician Virtes Mori, with 27 years of service, is the Police Department's first responder for problems with its computers and software. She also handles problems with the city's phone systems, copy machines, printers and Microsoft products.

Mori, who holds an associate degree in data processing, has seen significant growth and change in the city's IT systems, particularly in the evolution of police software. As a result, she says continuing education and training is a standard job requirement.

Technician Eric Weber joined the city in 1997. While his undergraduate degree is in history, fellow employees know he is an indispensable resource when it comes to solving problems with the city's servers and network.

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Municipal Calendar

FEBRUARY		
2/6	7:00 p.m.	City Council
2/11	5:30 p.m.	Community Development Committee
2/11	7:00 p.m.	Planning and Zoning
2/12	6:00 p.m.	Public Improvements Committee
2/12	6:30 p.m.	Beautification Commission
2/17		Presidents Day (city offices closed)
2/19	6:30 p.m.	Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (MHC)
2/20	7:00 p.m.	City Council
2/23	12:00 p.m.	International Festival (MHC)
2/25	7:00 p.m.	Planning and Zoning
2/26	5:30 p.m.	Parks and Recreation Committee
2/26	7:00 p.m.	Ward 3 Meeting (MHC)

Meeting details subject to change. Verify at www.marylandheights.com.

MARCH		
3/3	7:00 p.m.	Board of Adjustment
3/6	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
3/10	7:00 p.m.	Ward 1 Meeting (MHC)
3/11	5:30 p.m.	Community Development Committee
3/11	7:00 p.m.	Planning and Zoning
3/12	6:00 p.m.	Public Improvements Committee
3/12	6:30 p.m.	Beautification Commission
3/19	6:30 p.m.	Parks & Rec. Advisory Comm. (MHC)
3/20	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
3/24	7:00 p.m.	Ward 4 Meeting (MHC)
3/25	7:00 p.m.	Planning and Zoning
3/26	5:30 p.m.	Parks and Recreation Committee
3/27	6:00 p.m.	Cultural Arts Commission (MHC)
3/27	7:00 p.m.	Ward 2 Meeting (MHC)

Residents Express Satisfaction with Sewer Lateral Program

For resident David Penning, the problems started in the laundry room.

“I noticed that occasionally water would back up in our basement, especially during the spin cycle of the washing machine,” he said. “Then water started backing up in our dishwasher too.” When the backups continued even after he bought and installed a new dishwasher, Penning knew it was time to call a plumber. Upon inspection, the company informed him that his sewer lateral was damaged. Fortunately, they also told him about the City of Maryland Heights’ sewer lateral insurance program, which covers repairs to residential sewer lateral lines up to \$10,000.

Applying for the repairs was easy, according to Penning, who contacted program coordinator Joe Hunter to get the ball rolling.

“Joe was very informative,” Penning said. “I filled out the paperwork and within a week they had someone out to the house to videotape the sewer line. Once they confirmed the damage, they had someone out here within two weeks to fix it.”

Penning was extremely pleased not to have to worry about the additional

expense of the repairs, which would have cost him about \$2,350.

“It was a pleasant surprise to find out that the city would pick up the bill,” he said. “Not many people have thousands of dollars just sitting around to take care of something like this.”

Resident David Floyd described a similar experience with the city’s repair program. He’d noticed that his sewer had been backing up recently, so he had his son-in-law—who happens to be a plumber—take a look at it. When his inspection revealed damage, the Floyds knew it was time to call the city.

“Several of our neighbors had similar problems, so we knew the city’s sewer lateral repair program was available to help,” he said.

Floyd filled out the necessary paperwork and soon had a repair crew at his home. “They got out here really quickly and got the job done within three or four hours,” he said. “And they aren’t even finished yet—they’re coming back in the spring to resod the areas that had to be dug up. They really did a great job.”

Like Penning, Floyd expressed relief at

not having to worry about how to cover the repair costs: “It would have been very expensive if we’d had to pay for it ourselves.”

Penning and Floyd are among more than 700 residents who have benefitted from the city’s sewer lateral insurance program, which was established by voters in 1999. Residents pay \$28 per year as part of their annual property tax bill to fund the program.

In recent years, program costs have outpaced revenues, causing a funding imbalance. On April 8, Maryland Heights voters will be asked to increase the annual fee to \$50, which would allow the city to continue operating the program at current levels. Without the increase, the City Council would have to consider changes to the way the program operates, such as putting some homeowners on a waiting list until funds became available for their repairs or asking homeowners to pay a share of the repair costs (currently, the program covers 100% of repairs up to \$10,000 and 50% of repairs above that amount).

For more information about the program and the proposed fee increase, visit www.marylandheights.com/sewerlateral.

Voter Registration Deadlines are Quickly Approaching

Unregistered voters who wish to cast a ballot in the April 8 election are running out of time to register: The deadline is Wednesday, March 12.

The St. Louis County Election Board maintains more than 600 registration sites, including most city halls, libraries and schools in addition to Special School District facilities, local branches of St. Louis Community College and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. State

election laws also provide for registration by mail, at all motor vehicle registration offices and all state offices providing public assistance.

Voters who have changed their name or address since the last election must notify the Election Board, either in writing or in person, at any of the above registration sites. This must also be done by March 12 to ensure that the voter receives a postcard notification of their new poll-

ing place and listing in the polling place binder.

To register to vote in St. Louis County, a person must be a U.S. citizen, be 18 years old by election day and be a resident of St. Louis County.

For more information about your registration status, or for the location of your nearest registration site, call (314) 615-1822.

Council Approves Fund Transfers, Conditional Use Permits

The following is a summary of action taken at the Dec. 19 City Council meeting. The Jan. 2 meeting was cancelled. For complete meeting minutes, visit www.marylandheights.com.

- Approved a Retail by the Drink and Sunday by the Drink liquor license for the Kluckin' Chicken
- Approved an agreement with Ameren Missouri in the amount of \$7,742 to replace seven street lights on McKelvey Hill Drive
- Approved a five-year contract with Tech Electronics to provide maintenance services for the city's telephone system
- Approved the purchase of one 2014 Chevy Tahoe in the amount of \$30,708
- Amended the 2013 Stormwater Fund Budget by transferring funds between capital improvement projects
- Increased the 2013 General Fund Budget by \$9,310 in the Government Center Maintenance Program to provide for additional costs related to the Government Center roof repair
- Increased the 2014 budget by transferring \$250,000 from the Reserve Fund to the Community Center Construction Fund to cover the cost of topographical surveys, geotechnical surveys, minor traffic studies and other site work necessary for the architects to complete the design
- Approved a contract with Taylormade to replace playground surfacing at Vago Park
- Approved an agreement with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission related to the installation of city limit signage
- Executed Change Order #1 with Karen brock Excavating for additional construction services related to the Heights Area Stormwater Improvement Project
- Approved the purchase of rights-of-way and temporary slope construction licenses in connection with the Progress Parkway Improvement Project (Westport Plaza Drive to north of Kimler Drive)
- Approved a construction services contract with J. H. Berra for the 2920 Galaxy Place Stormwater Improvement Project
- Enacted a conditional use permit for an extended stay hotel at 25-37 Progress Parkway
- Repealed Conditional Use Permit Ordinance 2010-3344 and enacted a new ordinance in lieu thereof authorizing the existing athletic fields and a light standard capable of accommodating wireless communication antennas at 2805 Fee Fee Road
- Repealed Ordinances 2010-3410 and 2012-3659 and enacted a new conditional use permit ordinance in lieu thereof authorizing a Humane Society with a private park at 11660 Administration Drive and 2222 Schuetz Road

New Youth Programs Include Ga Ga Ball, Basketball League

By now, the winter doldrums have set in and most parents have run out of ways to keep their active children entertained. Fortunately, the city has two new programs for young residents: Ga Ga Ball and an instructional basketball league.

In Ga Ga Ball, players in grades 3 to 5 attempt to strike their opponents below the knee using soft, Nerf-like balls, while at the same time avoiding being hit themselves. One-game sessions will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 21, March 21 and April 18. Games will be held in the Remington Traditional School gym. The fee for each session is \$5 for residents and \$6 for non-residents; players may register for one or more sessions.

The Instructional Youth Basketball Skill and Scrimmage League, for players ages



6 to 7, teaches basic skills, including dribbling, passing, shooting, fouling, out-of-bounds and lane violations. The first two weeks of the program will be spent learning the rules of the game. During weeks three through six, the first 30 minutes of each class will be spent reviewing basic rules and skills, followed by 30 minutes of scrimmage. The session runs from March

22 through April 26. Games are played at the Remington Gym starting at 1 p.m. and continuing throughout the afternoon. Registration is \$45 for residents and \$55 for non-residents and is due by March 14.

For more information or to register, visit www.marylandheights.com or call (314) 738-2599.

POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HOLD COMMUNITY DRUG AWARENESS SEMINAR

No community—even one as safe as Maryland Heights—is immune to the problems of drug abuse and addiction.

In an effort to help educate the public about local and regional drug trends, the Maryland Heights Police Department will host a free community drug awareness seminar at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 3 in the Municipal Courtroom at the Maryland Heights Government Center. Parents, teachers and interested residents are encouraged to attend.

“We want to raise awareness and educate the public about drug trends in the region and in our community,” Chief of Police Bill Carson said. “For example, we’re still seeing a high number of heroin-related deaths in the St. Louis area, and in 2013 we had two heroin overdose deaths take place several months apart at the same residence in Maryland Heights.”

Members of the MHPD’s Community Response Unit (CRU) will discuss the types of drugs being sold and used in the area and identify groups most at risk. The event will include a public question-and-answer session. Information will also be available about the free, confidential youth drug testing program offered by the MHPD in partnership with St. Louis County’s Lakeside Center.

For more information about the community drug awareness seminar, please contact Officer Steve Osterloh at (314) 738-2330 or Officer Bob Heitert at (314) 738-2337.

City’s Karate, Self-Defense Programs Under New Leadership

With the new year, the city began a new partnership in the Parks and Recreation Department: the city’s karate programs are now under the direction of Sensei Stephanie Faulkingham, owner of Gateway Shido-kan Karate. Faulkingham will lead karate and self-defense classes for students ages four to adult.

Faulkingham began her karate training in 2003, but her roots in fitness and self-defense run much deeper.

“My dad was a boxer and body builder and trained in martial arts, so I had some very informal training with him,” she said. “I was always encouraged to learn how to protect myself.”

Not long after she began taking classes, Faulkingham was helping to lead them.

“I started helping teach classes shortly after I took my first rank test, mostly helping with the basic moves and keeping tabs on all the kids,” she said. “As my rank increased, I helped more and more, and started teaching more independently at the Maryland Heights Centre in 2005 under the guidance of my teacher, Shihan Basinger.”

According to Faulkingham, karate is unique among exercise programs because it gives students confidence in their ability to defend themselves in dangerous circumstances, while at the same time improving physical fitness.

“I think the biggest benefit from taking karate is having less fear,” she explained. “We all know that there are dangers everywhere in the world, but when we prepare ourselves mentally and physically to protect ourselves, then we have more control. I know that if a dangerous situation finds me then I have a better than average chance of making it



out. This knowledge is very liberating and calming.”

Though the skills she teaches are serious, Faulkingham’s classes put equal emphasis on safety and having fun.

“It is important to me that each student’s long-term health is not compromised by training, so we do our best to make sure that joints are not strained and any injuries are not aggravated during class,” she said. “Karate is designed to cause pain. A lot of responsibility comes with that kind of knowledge; we spend time learning when and where it is appropriate to use these skills.”

A full list of the city’s karate and self-defense classes is available in the city’s parks and recreation activity guide, posted at www.marylandheights.com. The city offers a 10 percent discount for multiple family members enrolled in these programs.

Law Requires Drivers to 'Move Over' for Emergency Vehicles

Snow has hit our region hard this winter—highway workers are plowing away as I write this article—so I thought this would be a good time to talk about Missouri's "Move Over Law" as it applies to drivers.

All of the plows have signs on them directing drivers to stay 100 feet behind the vehicle, but needless to say, many drivers fail to follow these guidelines. Getting hit by a plow can cause significant damage to your vehicle and could cause severe injury or death. Collisions with snow plows also block the roadway, causing already-congested highways to become parking lots.

On the news, we occasionally hear stories like, "Emergency worker struck while treating an accident victim roadside" or "Police officer killed in his vehicle while on a traffic stop." What do these incidents have in common? They were caused



by drivers violating the "Move Over Law."

Recently, a reporter from a local news agency asked me about the law: "What do the violators say when you explain why you stopped them?" The answer I gave was that most violators say they didn't know they had broken the law.

Under Missouri law, when an emergency

vehicle (such as a police car, ambulance or fire truck) is moving and has its siren and red lights activated, drivers are required to yield to it by pulling to the right side of the roadway and stopping. When an emergency vehicle is parked on the side of the road with its emergency lights activated, drivers passing it are required to move to another lane if possible; if they are unable to move over, they must slow down and pass it with caution.

In the first 10 days of 2014, the Maryland Heights Police Department wrote 11 tickets for failure to yield to an emergency vehicle, with five of them issued on major highways (I-270 and Hwy. 364). By obeying the "Move Over Law," you'll avoid getting one of these tickets. More importantly, you may also prevent yourself or someone else from being hurt or injured in an accident.

Officer Steve Osterloh

IT, from page 3

During his tenure, Weber has seen significant growth in the city's operations and his role in keeping them going.

"When I started here, we had two servers," he said. "We had no Internet connection and were using Windows 95 and Word Perfect. We now have multiple buildings, multiple Internet connections, wireless access in most of the buildings, people working remotely over cellular networks, 29 servers and point of sale systems. We are also making more services available over the Internet."

And while the improvements in technology make it easier for most city employees to do their jobs—for example, code enforcement officers use tablets in the field to send data back to the Government Center—these changes can make

his job more challenging: "As technology gets more user-friendly for the end user, the complexity of it scales dramatically behind the scenes."

Technician Tim Woodard has worked for the city since 2006. His resume includes studies in Computer Networking Technology at Ranken Technical College, as well as significant additional training, since "Being in IT requires constant learning about new technologies, software products, and security practices."

A typical day for Woodard could include maintaining the health and security of servers and network equipment by applying patches and updates and assisting users with issues related to computers, tablets, smart phones and software.

"We're a small enough department that we overlap on quite a few duties, though

lately I do focus more on wireless and virtualization technologies," he said.

As we often hear in the news, threats to online security are common, and one of Woodard's biggest challenges is "keeping up on the latest technology trends and protecting the network and data from the security holes created by all the gadgets that we use these days, like smart phones and thumb drives."

Like his coworkers, Woodard says that the one constant in his line of work is change.

"To keep up with the growth of the city, we're constantly expanding the network and supporting systems, which requires research into new technologies and products, studying the best implementation practices of those technologies and products and tailoring those best practices to fit our organization," he said.



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