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May 2020

BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION



INSIDE:

Bridging the Sustainability Gap

Cities embrace upzoning

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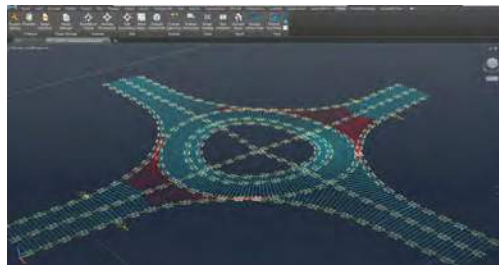
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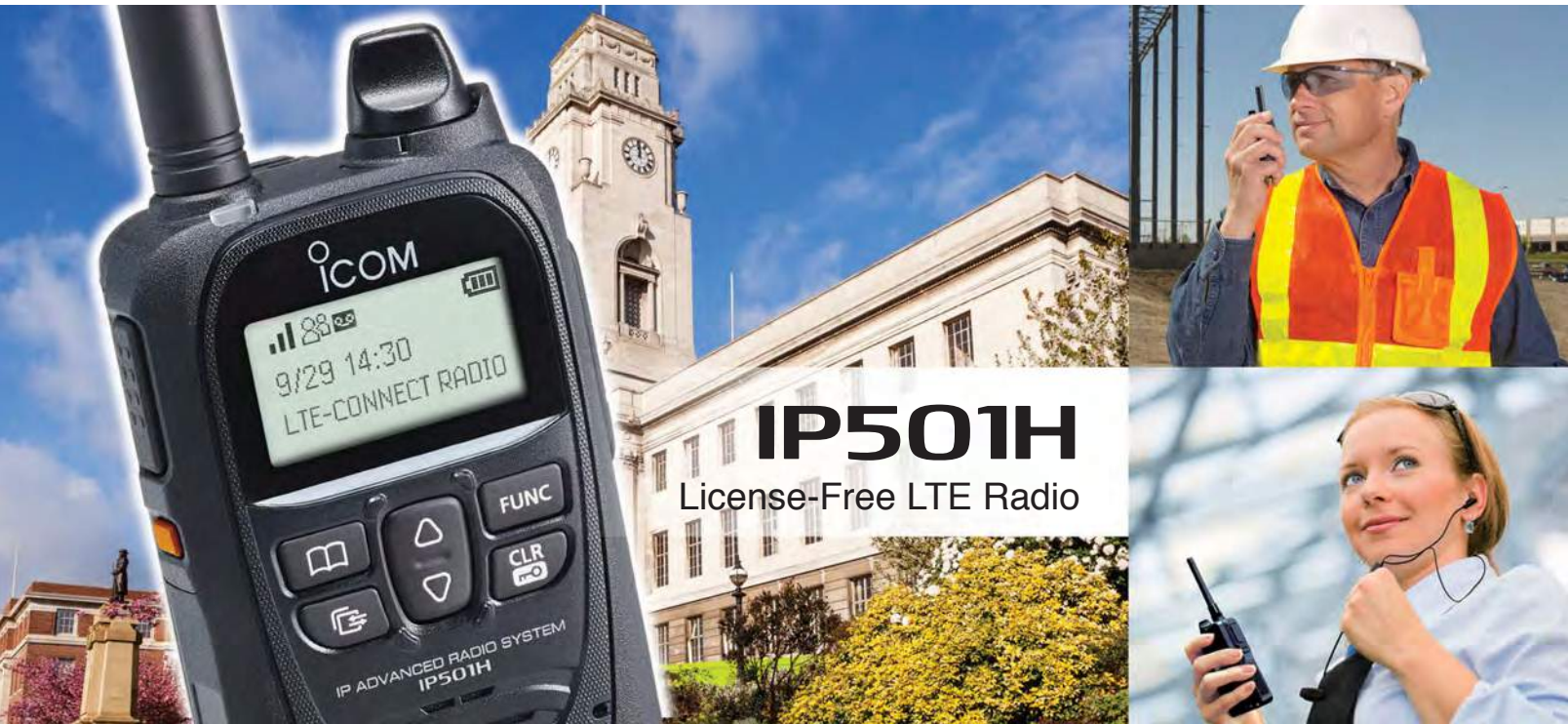
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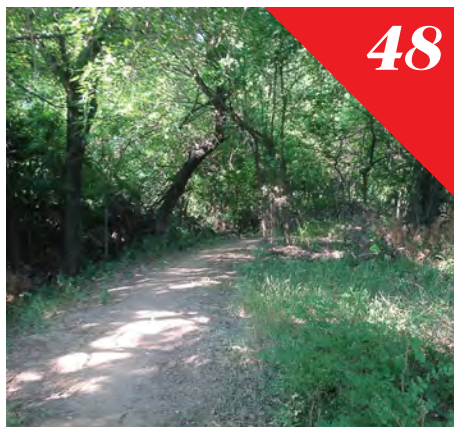
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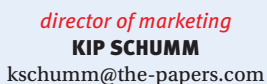
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Meet The Feature Writer



Janet Patterson is a city girl living her best life on a lovely lake in the heart of Indiana's Amish country with her husband, Tom, a native Hoosier. She has been writing since she started a school newspaper in the fourth grade in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio. Patterson began writing professionally for a small community newspaper at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware and has worked for publications on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware, in the Cleveland, Ohio, area as well as in northeast Indiana. Patterson is happiest when she's wordsmithing or spending time with her grandchildren.

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Supporting one another



Sarah Wright | Editor

I AM CURRENTLY WRITING THIS EDITORIAL mid-March in Indiana, where everything seems to be shutting down in order to stem the coronavirus' spread. With circumstances changing on an hourly basis, it's hard to forecast what to expect day to day, let alone months in the future. Still, I dread the economic impact the coronavirus and its shutdowns will cause, both to businesses and individuals who may have been laid off permanently or temporarily. So many industries have been hit hard.

Far from being an economist, I can't fully gauge what the long-ranging impact will be and I'm probably not alone.

As the pandemic started to ramp up in March, cities stepped forward to aid their

citizens and businesses. In San Jose, Calif., its city council approved a proposal to stop evictions. Palo Alto, Calif., was considering a similar approach, with a 60- or 90-day moratorium on evictions for commercial and residential tenants and long-planned initiatives being discussed. Seattle, meanwhile, allowed eligible businesses to defer business and occupation taxes, expanded its Small Business Stabilization Fund and provided technical assistance to business owners seeking relief from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

On March 16, 2020, The Brookings Institution noted in its article "How cities are helping workers and small businesses during the coronavirus crisis" by Joseph Parilla, "Local efforts will never be able to match the scale of federal relief packages, but they do have one advantage the feds do not: speed. And speed is of the essence. According to the JPMorgan Chase Institute, 47% of small businesses have less than two weeks of cash liquidity on hand, with restaurants and retail operating at the slimmest margins. According to OpenTable,

year-over-year restaurant visits are down 63% in Seattle, 61% in New York, and 53% in San Francisco due to COVID-19."

There is no doubt in my mind in the days, weeks and month after I write this more states, local municipalities and chambers of commerce will be stepping up to provide speedy assistance to fill in what federal support doesn't cover. We may have our differences as a country, but when faced with adversity, we come together and support each other.

This May issue focuses on building and construction, and it highlights projects cities are proud of in addition to building partnerships to spur economic development and how some cities are using ordinances to create the type of communities their residents want or to address the challenge of affordable housing. We are hoping it will provide a bit of positivity as we grapple with the ongoing battle to flatten the curve.

Stay well, everyone! **M**

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Bridging the sustainability gap:



Municipalities using hybrid work vehicles to accelerate their carbon reduction plans

By SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

When New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio issued a February 2020 executive order mandating the city would operate a fleet that was 100% electric by 2040, it marked the most recent in a series of announcements by major U.S. metropolitan areas that they would be proactively pursuing ambitious sustainability targets in the near term.

New York is not alone — major cities throughout the world have made similar commitments in recent years. In the U.S., Boston, Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis and the District of Columbia are just a few examples of cities who made the Bloomberg CDP Climate A List, a global collection of cities who have mandated at least a 50% emissions reduction from their respective baseline years.

As any municipal fleet manager knows, sustainability proclamations made by elected leaders require action on the part of department heads in order to carry them out successfully. Hitting targets like these can be very challenging to implement, given the current barriers to adopting battery electric vehicles on a broad scale. These include:

- High capital cost — All-electric fleet vehicles are currently priced well beyond their traditional gas- and diesel-powered counterparts, largely due to the high cost of batteries and other needed components for those propulsion systems.
- Insufficient infrastructure — Despite significant progress by utilities, EVSE technology providers and municipalities, a national

Hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric fleet vehicles have become a viable way for fleets to reduce their operational costs and lower their carbon footprint. They also deliver immediate financial and sustainability returns while creating longer-term demand for electric powertrains. (Photo provided)

electrified vehicle infrastructure capable of supporting an adoption rate comparable to internal combustion engine powered vehicles is still likely decades away.

- Limited product availability — While automotive OEMs are beginning to make significant investments to address market demand for all-electric vehicles at the consumer level, there is still a limited array of BEV work trucks available for fleet managers to consider, particularly those that would fall within the budget ranges of most municipalities. Vehicles that are available are typically not yet produced in volume, further limiting their viability in the near term.

If the demand for electric fleet vehicles is there, but the current landscape limits their immediate adoption, how can municipal fleets begin to move the needle forward on meeting their ambitious carbon reduction goals? The answer may lie with an EV solution that's been readily available for years.

Hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric municipal vehicles

Hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric fleet vehicles have become a viable way for fleets to reduce their operational costs and lower their carbon footprint, without being limited by many of the barriers facing their all-electric counterparts. They have become a staple for sustainability-minded municipalities of all sizes across North America, thanks to

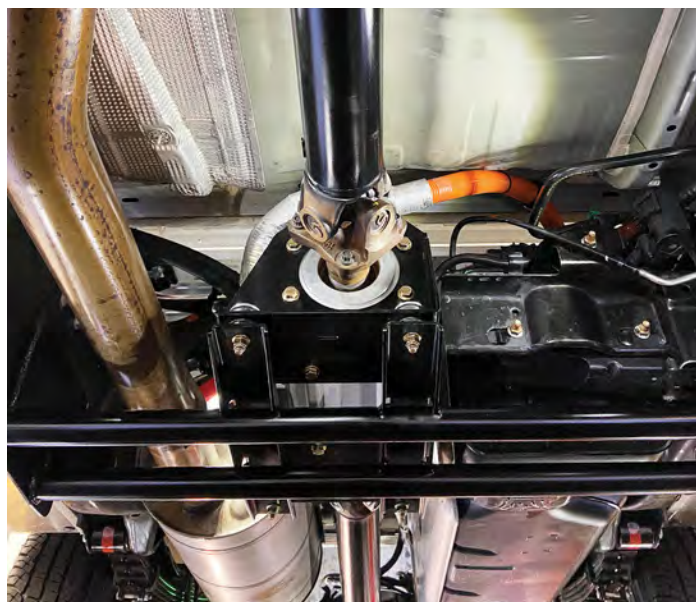
their ability to provide immediate value while effectively overcoming the most pressing challenges of battery electric vehicles.

- **Affordable without incentives** — Most hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles offer an affordable alternative to all-electric trucks, vans and buses. Whereas federal or state incentive programs are typically required in order to add even a single battery electric option to a municipal fleet, HEVs and PHEVs can provide a meaningful return on investment without incentives, even though they do qualify for many incentive programs to support their purchase.
- **No new infrastructure required** — Hybrid vehicles continue to leverage the factory OEM powertrain, so they are not exclusively dependent on their supplemental electric power to operate. They generate that supplemental assist power through regenerative braking, without needing to be plugged into any charging port. Plug-in hybrids also leverage the factory engine and regenerative braking while having additional battery capacity that can be supplemented by plugging the vehicle in when not in use. However, they're not dependent on a charging infrastructure to operate.
- **A wide range of vehicles and applications** — Because many hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric drive solutions are offered as after-market upfits, they can be installed onto a wide range of vehicles from multiple OEMs. As a result, municipal fleets have the ability to turn the vans, shuttle buses, pickup trucks and service vehicles they're already using today into electrified versions of those vehicles — saving gas and reducing their carbon footprint without disrupting performance or fleet operations.

EV accelerators

While some consider hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric drive solutions to be a bridge technology to an all-electric future, a better description might be that they are an accelerating technology that speeds the adoption of those long-term applications. In addition to their ability to immediately improve fuel economy and reduce emissions, hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric fleet vehicles offer a number of advantages that can actually accelerate BEV adoption as those technologies and supporting infrastructure continue to develop:

- Hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric fleet vehicles deliver immediate financial and sustainability returns while creating longer-term demand for electric powertrains. Adopting these technologies now can help drivers, maintenance teams and fleet managers become accustomed to operating and maintaining electrified vehicles immediately.
- A strong history of adoption and growing demand for these technologies has helped establish a strong installation and service capacity within the commercial vehicle industry. Aftermarket electrification providers like XL Fleet have built comprehensive networks throughout North America where customers can buy, install and service their electrified vehicles from the same location — often from the same dealer or upfitter they're already working with.
- Plug-in hybrids reduce the near-term infrastructure challenge at fleet facilities where numerous vehicles need to plug in overnight. PHEVs typically charge more quickly than their all-electric counterparts, so a single EVSE station can often charge multiple plug-in hybrid vehicles in the same time required to fully charge an all-electric vehicle. This maximizes shift efficiency and can help defer costly power system upgrades at the facility until BEVs are added.



Adopting these hybrid and plug-in hybrid fleet vehicles can help drivers, maintenance teams and fleet managers become accustomed to operating and maintaining electrified vehicles, aiding in more widespread use of EV technology in the future. (Photo provided)

Electrification without limits

For over 10 years, XL Fleet has provided municipal fleet managers with hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric drive solutions for a wide range of vehicles and applications. XL Fleet customers have driven well over 100 million fleet miles with the company's electrification systems installed on Class 2-6 vans, pickups, shuttle buses, delivery trucks and specialty vehicles from Ford, GM and Isuzu.

According to Eric Foellmer, XL Fleet's director of marketing, the company has experienced a significant increase in demand for its electrification systems over the past two years, but customer motivations have shifted from the company's early years in business.

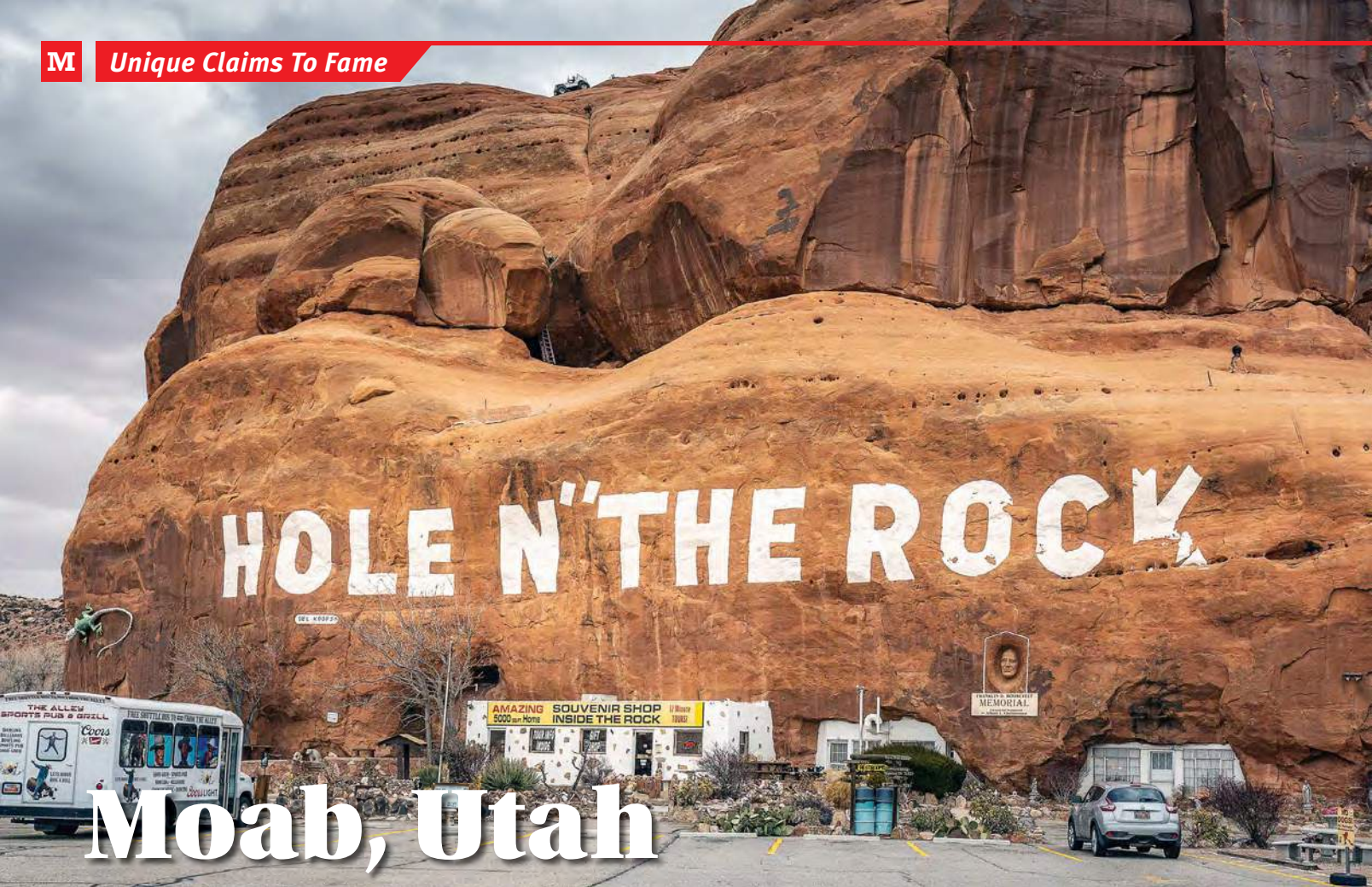
"Our customers have traditionally focused on the fuel economy of our systems and the amount of gas savings involved with implementing hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles," he said. "While return on investment is still important, over the past several years we're hearing a lot more from municipal customers that meeting sustainability targets is a much bigger driver of their interest. That's a great indication of where the industry is headed and speaks to the bright future of fleet electrification in municipalities everywhere."

Sustainability starts with hybrids

The transportation industry is slowly evolving to adapt to a future in which all-electric propulsion is the norm and not the exception. In the meantime, hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric fleet vehicles can complement BEVs as part of a comprehensive fleet electrification solution that can be adopted immediately and deployed for decades.

In doing so, these time- and fleet-tested technologies can help municipal fleet managers demonstrate — both to their constituents and their elected officials — that they are making progress toward the ambitious sustainability goals of their towns and cities. And that can help speed the adoption for everyone. **M**

For information, visit www.xlfleet.com.



Moab, Utah

By RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

Michelangelo was hailed as a prescient artistic genius for envisioning the image of David in a non-descript slab of marble.

In the early 1940s Albert Christensen noted a similar potential for a small alcove in a towering sandstone rock 12 miles south of Moab, Utah. His young sons used the natural indentation for adventures in outdoor sleeping until Christensen decided to make that cave the family home.

For the next 12 years, Christensen chipped, chiseled, blasted and excavated 50,000 cubic feet of the rock — enough to fill a box 36 feet on each side — transforming the inhospitable monolith into a comfortable 14-room, 5,000-square-foot home, the front adorned with his painting of the Sermon on the Mount and his sculpture of President Franklin Roosevelt.

The Hole N' The Rock was thus carved into the riveting annals of unique roadside attractions. The current owners, Erik and Wyndee Hansen, host 12-minute guided tours year-round and offer collateral entertainment to visitors, including:

- The Trading Post, selling locally made Native American pottery, jewelry, dreamcatchers and other unique gifts
- a general store offering ice cream, drinks and souvenirs

ABOVE: The rock face announces the entrance to the home. When the current owners, Erik and Wyndee Hansen, retouched the original sign, they considered correcting the punctuation. “We asked different family members and locals, ‘Should we fix it?’” said Wyndee. “Everybody said, ‘No, that’s how Gladys wanted it.’” (Shutterstock.com)

- a petting zoo with a host of exotic animals, including a double-humped camel, Vietnamese potbellied pig, wallaby, pygmy goat, albino raccoons, alpacas, zebra, bison and peacocks
- metal and stone sculptures and other kitschy exhibits, including a cactus made of bowling balls, a bull made out of tools and a two-story outhouse
- an aerial tram for a bird’s-eye view of the site

The house features a fireplace with a 65-foot chimney poking through the top of the formation; a huge concrete bathtub; shelves etched from the rock; examples of Christensen’s amateur attempts at taxidermy; and his wife Gladys’ extensive doll collection.

The original cave served as a way-stop encampment for cowboys early in the 20th century, and in 1945, Albert and his brother Leo expanded the site and founded the Hole N’ the Rock Diner.

Wyndee said in an interview with Country Living magazine, “It was a rough time. Many visitors who came into the diner in the 1950s



One of the kitschier sculptures adorning The Hole N" The Rock grounds is a Jeep made from license plates and other automobile parts. (IrinaK / Shutterstock.com)

didn't have any money. They had come to Moab to stake their claim during the uranium boom.

"Albert would give them a free meal and a couple cold beers and they'd go in the back and chisel away and help him. It was a community thing."

The Christensens lived in the Hole N" the Rock until Albert passed away in 1957. Gladys then commissioned an artist to paint the name on the rock face — erroneous punctuation and all — and opened a gift shop. She welcomed visitors for tours — sort of.

"It used to be, when she was alive, they'd be giving a tour and Gladys would be back there taking a nap on the couch," said Wyndee. On occasion, she would "invite some of them to stay for tea and sit down with her. She was just that type of a woman. This was her home, but that was the way she made her living."

Gladys passed away in 1974, but may still be living in the home. Anecdotal manifestations of her spirit add to the bizarreness of the tourist experience that averages 500 visitors a day and has totaled millions over the decades.

According to Wyndee, "Everybody who comes here just feels that she's still around somewhere," even though Gladys was interred next to her husband elsewhere on the property.

Wyndee reported a psychic told her at a reading, "She wants to know who moved her dolls." A staff member had rearranged the dolls during the holiday season, but thought she had put them all back. "The next thing, we were all running over to her bedroom to make sure all the dolls were put back in the right spot."

Some guests have caught momentary whiffs of fried chicken, Albert's dinner of choice, from his hand-carved deep fat fryer that hadn't been used in decades.




Ostriches, reptiles and tepees help provide an ambiance of the unusual and exotic at The Hole N" The Rock tourist attraction near Moab, Utah. (puuikibeach via Flickr, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

Gladys' other-worldly presence is a persistent individual phenomenon for Wyndee. "There are times I've been working here by myself and my nose fills up with this overwhelming stench of cheap perfume, enough to make my eyes water, for about 10 to 15 seconds.

"It's like, 'OK, Gladys, I know you're here, but I don't like that smell.' It's just kind of fun. I have this bond with Gladys and just feel like she wants me here, so I'm staying. She's pretty funny."

Hole N" the Rock, which staffs eight employees, is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Christmas.

According to its website, www.theholeintherock.com, house tours are \$6.50 for adults, \$3.50 for children 5-10 and free for kids under 5. Entrance to the zoo costs \$4.25 with free admission for children under 2. 



Providence, R.I.

The city seal of Providence, R.I., features a quartet of pilgrims in a canoe arriving at a green riverbank, two Native Americans standing at the water's edge — and an odd juxtaposition of language and culture encapsulated in the greeting, “What cheer?”

The scene depicts the arrival of Massachusetts Bay colonist Roger Williams, who left Salem, Mass., in 1636 to seek religious freedom. As the historical narrative goes, he was greeted on the far shore of the Seekonk River by friendly Narragansett Indians with the salutation, “What cheer, Netop?”

The greeting was a clipped form of the breezy old English verbal salute, “What cheery news do you bring?” “Netop” is Narragansett for “friend” or “neighbor.”

The initial amicability carried on for some time, with the Indians trading land that would become Providence for English goods and the two cultures coexisting peacefully.

The legend of the greeting has osmosed throughout the city of 162,956 residents. Many streets, buildings and business enterprises include Cheer or What Cheer in their names. A local punk rock marching band named itself What Cheer Brigade and a local watering hole, the What Cheer Tavern, opened in 2002.

Businesses past and present have assumed the name Cheer, including an airport, brewery, Ford dealership, ice cream parlor, laundry, printing company and record store.

Narragansett Beer, once New England's biggest lager producer, adopted “Hi, Neighbor!” as its slogan more than a century ago.

Providence, the capital and most populous city in the state, is one of America's oldest cities. Williams named the original area for “God's merciful providence,” to which he attributed his opportunity to settle in such a haven.

The municipality's residents ratified a city charter in 1831 and the seat of government was located in Market Square, the city's geographic and social center, until 1878, when Providence City Hall was built.

The city was one of the first in the nation to industrialize and first became noted for its textile manufacturing. Later it made a name for itself in the machine tool, jewelry and silverware industries.

The preponderance of the city's economy eventually shifted to service, and Providence has since become home to eight hospitals and seven institutions of higher learning.

From 1975 to 1982 the city invested more than \$600 million in redevelopment and revitalization. Densely populated, Providence ranks eighth in the nation in percentage of pedestrian commuters who use its more than 1,000 streets.

Since 1994 Providence has adopted five sister cities: Praia, Cape Verde; Florence, Italy; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Zhuhai, China; and Guatemala City.

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100,000 or 260,000

The number of households Portland, Ore., is expecting to grow by upon reaching 2035. To meet this population increase, the city is pursuing upzoning or mix zoning, though the project is on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Learn how cities are taking new approaches to zoning on page 20.

\$30 million

Merriam, Kan., is in the process of constructing its new 66,000-square-foot community center, which will better meet its future needs. The project costs about \$30 million and will be paid for using \$24 million in bonds and the implementation of a 10-year quarter-cent sales tax to pay for those bonds. The city already had \$6 million saved for the community center project.



Find out about this innovative community center on page 32.

2,000

Toyota has unveiled plans for a 2,000-person “city of the future,” where it will test autonomous vehicles, smart technology and robot-assisted living. Dubbed the Woven City, ground will be broken next year in the foothills of Japan’s Mount Fuji.

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/ces-toyota-big-smart-city/index.html>



30,000

Denver, Colo., anticipates a need for about this many affordable homes as more people want to live within the city.



Source: <https://denverite.com/2020/03/25/denver-says-its-constant-growth-and-construction-can-continue-despite-covid-19-but-the-economy-might-not-cooperate/>

Focus on: BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

241,000

The average pedestrian count every month in downtown Spartanburg, S.C. The city has utilized collaboration to not only improve its downtown but also the well-being of its residents.



Read how Spartanburg has harnessed collaboration to drive positive change on page 24.

25,000 square feet

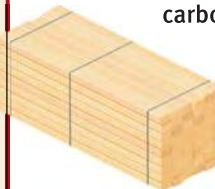
Somerville, Mass.’s, new zoning ordinance will require developments over 25,000 square feet to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification and developments over 50,000 square feet to achieve LEED Platinum certification.



Source: <https://scoutsomerville.com/leed-platinum/>

10 million to 68 million tons

A multidisciplinary team of researchers and architects predicts that designing mid-rise urban buildings with engineered timber — rather than relying mainly on carbon-intensive materials — has the potential to create a vast “bank vault” that can store within these buildings 10 million to 68 million tons of carbon annually that might otherwise be released into the atmosphere.



Source: <https://environment.yale.edu/news/article/can-wood-buildings-convert-cities-from-carbon-source-to-carbon-vault>



This photo is a duplex about the size of what would be allowable under Portland's Resident Infill Project. It has just one garage, which is consistent with the rules in RIP that seek to reduce dominant front garage doors. (Photo provided)



The detached garage on this property has been turned into an apartment — an accessory dwelling unit — which would be allowable under Portland's proposed Residential Infill Project. (Photo provided)

Creative zoning to meet housing needs

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

As housing shortages become more prevalent, cities and towns explore creative ways to address the situation. Some cities are doing this by changing zoning laws in what is commonly known as upzoning or mixed zoning.

Background

The move to single-home-only zoning really boomed after WWII. An essay written by William A. Fischel of Dartmouth College's Department of Economics, "An Economic History of Zoning and a Cure for its Exclusionary Effects," mentioned increased public transportation and expanded interstate as one reason homeowners became adamant and vocal about protecting home property values. In some areas, exclusive single-family-home zoning was used as a means of redlining and segregation.

Prior to WWII, it was common in urban areas to see apartment buildings on the same street as single-family homes with a mom-and-pop grocery store, candy store or dry cleaner on the corner.

As Morgan Tracy, project manager for Portland, Ore.'s, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, said when he worked in the suburbs of Portland not long ago, a mixed-use concept like that "would've been mind blowing."

Now, with available development land shrinking, Portland; Minneapolis, Minn.; and other municipalities across the U.S. are taking action by changing zoning laws to address the problem.

The World Bank Group defines upzoning as a change to the zoning to allow higher value — from industrial to residential, for example — or more density by increasing floor area ratio or adding more units. Upzoning could be used as a kind of financial tool for urban regeneration as was done in Washington, D.C.

The city upzoned land adjacent to Union Station, "the city's major multimodal transit hub," and created a new 358-acre mixed-use neighborhood called NoMa, named for its location north of Massachusetts Avenue. According to World Bank Group, the city didn't have to invest in infrastructure because it incentivized landowners and developers to make upgrades to the neighborhoods. The development started around 2008, and by 2012, NoMa was contributing \$49 million more in property taxes annually.

Portland's Residential Infill Project

Portland's Residential Infill Project is currently on hold because of COVID-19. The city was two public hearings away from passing the zoning changes when city government came practically to a halt, and at press time, there was no way to know when life and city operations would return to normal.

Tracy said the project began in late-2015 or early-2016 to address three key issues: economic scale of new housing, general lack of rightsized housing — to match the number of people residing in the households — and narrow lot development.

He noted the city is expecting an increase in population of about 100,000 or 260,000 households by 2035 and the population of those over 65 is expected to double.

"There's a mismatch between existing stock and the population we're seeing," he said.

Housing for seniors is part of the issue, and Tracy said the local and national AARP chapters have been advocates of the RIP. Tracy shared an example of an older couple who live in a duplex in a historic neighborhood, but both units have two stories. They told him, "We love our neighborhood but it's getting hard." With this proposed zoning change, Portland will be able to add an accessory dwelling unit on for their older residents' living needs.

Portland wants to blend multifamily residential units with single-family residential units and blur the distinction between the pricing of each. The city has to take this action, with Tracy stating, "We are nearly built out — we can't annex any further. There's not much land for new development."

Most new development in recent times has been two to three lot developments. Within those zones where the changes are proposed, he said there are approximately 2,800 vacant lots and most development is splitting the property to build a second home.

One of the new tools proposed in the RIP is floor area ratio, which could encourage other types of development.

Tracy explained, "FAR, or floor area ratio, establishes limits on building size based on the lot size. It measures all the floor area of the building on all floors, not just the footprint of the building (that's controlled by building coverage limits). FAR serves two functions: 1.) Controls building mass to ensure that structures do not overwhelm the site and is proportionate to the lot size. Meaning as lots get larger, structures can get larger and conversely smaller lots means smaller buildings. 2.) Creates a market incentive for creating more units. How? Establishing a lower FAR for a single unit, but incrementally larger FAR for additional units.

"For example, a house is allowed .5 FAR. So on a 5,000-square-foot lot, this means 2,500 square feet of floor area. A duplex is allowed .6 FAR. So on that 5,000-square-foot lot, the duplex can be 3,000 square feet. (Or 1,500 square feet per each unit). Triplexes and fourplexes are allowed .7 FAR or 3,500 square feet in this example. That means the triplex units would be 1,166 square feet each, or the fourplex units would be 875 square feet each."

There will still be basic standards like height restrictions, setbacks, street facing windows, etc. "But architectural style is not part of the requirements and historic districts are different; they have their own set of rules," he said.



Housing advocates wave signs and show up in support of the Residential Infill Project at the January meeting of Portland's City Council. The city is a couple of public hearings away from passing this, which would allow for multifamily residences on what was exclusively zoned single-family. (Photo provided)

Oregon House Bill 2001

House Bill 2001 makes some of these zoning changes statewide, requiring cities and towns with more than 10,000 in population to allow at least duplexes to be built on single-family lots. The state's bill passed first in late-2019 while Portland's has taken about four years.

"We wanted to give people time to wrap their minds around it," he said.

However, with smaller municipalities, it might be different. Tracy said, "Without the state pressing their finger on the scale, it would be harder for them to get something like this passed."

Displacement risks

Tracy was asked by the planning commission to study how the zoning changes could impact low-income renters in single-family homes.

He said there were three types of displacements: direct displacement where the government comes in and takes the property for right of way; indirect where demolition has happened and redevelopment is high; and induced displacement where, for example, a light rail is put in and it reduces property values.

Portland concentrated on the indirect and looked at where redevelopment was most likely to occur and how much redevelopment was anticipated.

Tracy said if the city was projecting a need for 16,000 to 20,000 more housing units, that could be reduced to 4,000 with the Residential Infill Project and the construction of fourplexes. So the possibility is to create two to three units where there are now one or one and a half.

He admitted if you're the one being displaced, it's hard to see the benefits to the city, and it's usually the low-income renter who has the hardest time finding new affordable housing.

"We always had this difficulty discussing how this benefits the city as a whole when the impact is seen directly on your street," Tracy said. ►

Tracy considers this project a combination of upzoning and down-zoning at the same time as the city is increasing the unit density but the building density is reduced.

Pros and cons

Before WWII Portland had a lot of duplexes, courtyards and so on. Tracy said this has been a slow process for the city but an important one as it addresses future land use.

The project is “a better and more equitable way” to address its housing needs and helps the city plan for how the housing stock will meet the demands of the population in the future.

There are benefits to the climate because more capacity for housing reduces driving distances and encourages walking, biking and using public transportation, reducing the carbon footprint. It also saves energy since the city is reducing the square footage, requiring less heat. Tracy said Portland is still using a lot of coal.

Demographically, the plan increases the number of units for the mobility impaired and the city is asking that in a fourplex at least one unit be what he called “ADA light” — all on one level with a smaller square footage for older people, the disabled or families with small children. It will give people more options to stay in their neighborhoods and still meet their housing needs.

Affordability-wise, Tracy said there’s the saying that “the most affordable house is the one that exists today,” but since these multifamily housing options weren’t allowed before, he’d challenge that statement.

He said looking at the Bay area there are two ways the city can go: it can create more opportunity houses and have more people living in apartments who may not want to be and create enclaves of very expensive homes, or it could allow more multifamily option residences. Tracy believed this would also help with racial inequality. If a sixplex is developed, the city may ask that half of the units be available for low-income residents.

As for cons, Tracy has heard concerns, including there won’t be an availability of single-family homes, but they already exist. There are about 130,000 of them now. There were also concerns about canopy and open spaces being affected, but he said there are already existing codes to protect those things.

He added it doesn’t completely solve the housing crisis, but it is one tool to help.

Lessons learned

Tracy would advise other communities to “get it done fast” as the length of the project has been a real challenge. Portland started



Here’s another example of a side-by-side duplex that would be allowed within Portland’s proposed Residential Infill Project. (Photo provided)

the project under a previous mayor and council and now primary season is coming again. He also cautioned to “beware the scope!” Portland’s project started out very straight forward and expanded in multiple ways.

Portland first developed a stakeholder’s advocacy group with people from all parts of the city and several organizations, including developers, homebuilders, historical society representatives, senior citizen advocates, etc., and this group met monthly for over a year. The first meetings were more about educating everyone on the background of zoning in the city and where it wanted to go.

The stakeholder’s advocacy group brought people with very different viewpoints together — even those who usually tend to be adversarial — and was very helpful.

“It helps to have strong, bold leadership and community member support,” he said, adding he’s very thankful for all the staff in different bureaus and agencies who’ve been a part of bringing this together.

Tracy feels fortunate to have assets in-house like demographic experts, economical planners and historical experts. He advises if a city doesn’t have those assets at hand, it should reach out and develop those relationships.

Portland is “rounding the final corner” on getting this policy on the books. It just needs to hold those two public hearings so he expects as soon as full city operations are restored those meetings will happen. **M**

Portland’s Residential Infill Project creates more affordable housing

“Going back to housing costs, average sales prices for new construction are about \$239 per square foot,” Morgan Tracy, project manager for Portland, Ore.’s, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, noted.

- Typical new houses are about 3,200 square feet = \$765,000
- So the 2,500-square-foot house = \$598,000
- Duplex units = \$359,000 each, but the total building is about \$718,000
- Triplex units = \$279,000 each, but the total building is about \$840,000
- Fourplex units = \$210,000 each but the total building is about \$840,000

Minneapolis, Minn., is one of the first cities to pass zoning changes allowing multi-family residents in what was exclusively single-family zoning. The first step of its new policy went into effect Jan. 1, 2020. (Photo by Jason W. Wittenberg, City of Minneapolis)



In Minnesota: Minneapolis 2040

In October 2019, Minneapolis City Council adopted a resolution to approve Minneapolis 2040, which took effect Jan 1, 2020. Minneapolis 2040 has multiple goals for the city, including eliminating disparities, promoting growth in residents and jobs and increasing affordable and accessible housing.

Jason Wittenberg, manager of code development for Minneapolis, explained, “We’re taking a multifaceted approach to amend the text to allow duplexes and triplexes as one piece of an overall approach.”

This zoning change is part of a comprehensive plan that needs to be updated every 10 years.

Historically, Minneapolis has been zoned exclusively single-family homes, but it now has a tight housing market. In 2014, it took an initial step by allowing accessory unit dwellings, like mother-in-law units, citywide.

The city is now taking it further by allowing duplexes and triplexes. Wittenberg said some senior citizens have expressed the desire to downsize while also wanting to stay in their own neighborhoods, and they haven’t been able to.

“Hopefully, in the future, they’ll have that ability,” he said.

The zoning change is not focused on any one particular neighborhood, but the neighborhoods farther from downtown and those developed after WWII are the most exclusively zoned single-family.

Wittenberg said feedback from the public on these changes was mixed. “It was a fairly contentious process with some who expressed concerns about the character of their neighborhood changing, but others were very strongly positive that this was a good thing.”

He added some people were surprised by the number of people who were showing up at public engagements asking for options in housing.


When asked if the mixed-use zoning would allow for some commercial development, he replied that the city grew up along street car lines and there were some intermittent commercial properties.

“The goal is to increase the amount of land available for mixed-use development and to approach coming years’ development,” Wittenberg said.

The next step in the process, according to Wittenberg, is built form policies to address heights of buildings, setbacks, floor plans and dimension standards. A couple of years out in the plan are land use policies.

“One of the policies that receive a great deal of attention is the policy related to duplexes and triplexes. Specifically, in our lowest-density areas, it says, ‘New and remodeled buildings in the Interior 1 District should be small-scale residential. Individual lots are permitted to have up to three dwelling units. Combining of lots is generally not permitted. Building heights should be 1 to 2.5 stories,’” he said.

“The key point is we’re not deregulating everything and saying anything goes,” Wittenberg said, “but perhaps the city went a little too far segregating after WWII.”

Wittenberg advised those seeking to do something similar. “You have to have a real strong strategy for engaging the public—including those who are not normally included in typical engagement.” He added, “You don’t want to hear from just the people you typically hear from.” 



The Minneapolis, Minn., Lowry Avenue Bridge is shown in this photo with some of the city’s skyline behind it. Minneapolis’s recent zoning change is part of its 10-year comprehensive plan: Minneapolis 2040. (Photo provided)

Spartanburg, S.C., thrives on collaboration



By **AMANDA DEMSTER** | The Municipal

Nowadays, Spartanburg, S.C., is a growing, bustling city with a lively downtown area and an emphasis on all involved working together.

However, according to Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce CEO/President Allen Smith, things were not always so good. In fact, just a few years ago, visitors would have seen a very different city.

"We have really, in short order, gone from a very, very quiet downtown to a downtown now, per pedestrian counters we installed, that experiences 241,000 pedestrian counts every month," Smith said.

Getting there was not easy. It required careful study into numerous aspects of Spartanburg, and the findings were not pretty.

"If you'd have asked me five years ago, I'd have shared the stats and you would have said, 'You're crazy, there's no way that's going to happen between 2014 and 2019,' but it did,"

Smith said of the tremendous economic growth the city has seen. "One in four (downtown) businesses right now were not there 36 months ago."

One of the first things to do was to find out what people's perception of Spartanburg was. The feedback was not flattering.

"One thing we realized very early on was people, five years ago ... had no perception or a negative perception," Smith said.

Changing this perception would be easier said than done, but Spartanburg was up for the challenge.

A major contributor to this growth has been OneSpartanburg, a five-year initiative now in its third year.

Spartanburg, S.C., has ranked second nationally for economic growth. The city's OneSpartanburg initiative has brought different groups and organizations together to build a more attractive community, and it is drawing people and businesses downtown. (Photo provided)

OneSpartanburg recently released its year-three report, focusing on the areas of talent, economy, image and place. In each of these areas, different groups and organizations in Spartanburg have worked cooperatively to build a more attractive community, not just to live in, but to work and own a business in. A major component to that has been attracting white-collar jobs to the downtown area.

"We think downtown is the obvious place for a lot of those jobs," Smith said. "People want to walk to a job, people want to be close to amenities."

In addition, Spartanburg hopes to add up to 1,000 multifamily units downtown, 500 of which are already a reality.



Creating a place where people want to live and work has been prioritized by Spartanburg and the city is bringing everyone on board to accomplish this. (Photo provided)

“When you get 1,000 multifamily units, that’s 1,500 (to) 2,000 people living downtown. That’s a small town unto itself,” Smith said. “When you hit that threshold, a world of economic opportunities can open up to you. Retailers and restaurants that wouldn’t even look at your community suddenly are interested.”

Early on, those who most wanted to see Spartanburg prosper realized that the key would be collaboration. As a result, one aspect of the city rarely functions without others working closely with it.

“We’re collaborative,” Smith said. “So, we have the only model really in North and South Carolina. I oversee tourism development for the entire county and economic development for OneSpartanburg, all under one roof.”

As another example, the Chapman Cultural Center houses eight arts-based nonprofit organizations.

Even with its focus on bringing in white-collar jobs, Spartanburg has not forgotten its blue-collar history. Through all of the growth and changes, Spartanburg has managed to maintain part of its identity as a manufacturing town. For example, the BMW plant located there manufactures 1,400 cars a day.

“We still have that culture, that mill town kind of personality, where we’re authentic,” Smith said. “It’s blue collar, it’s genuine, there’s not a lot of flash, there’s not a lot of sizzle.”

Creating equal opportunities for minority groups is another priority for Spartanburg. Because of this, two summers ago Spartanburg funded the Racial Equality Index to take a long, candid look at where inequities in the community lay.

Once again, the findings were not flattering.

According to Smith, the study showed the white population was earning double what the African-American population was earning. Members of the Hispanic population were three times as likely to live in poverty and the black population, twice as likely.

“In the Deep South, in South Carolina, we funded a racial equality index that every community kind of knows what their community stats are, but if you were pressed to ask community leaders, what’s white per capita income versus black, or Hispanic versus white, the REI breaks that down,” Smith said.

Health, infant mortality, life expectancy and other factors were also taken into account for each group.

“The things we kind of knew, but we’d never seen it through a data lens,” Smith said. “We were up front about things that were less than flattering.”

As a result, Spartanburg has begun moving in a direction that will hopefully provide more and better opportunities for minority residents.



Spartanburg hopes to add up to 1,000 multifamily units to its downtown; so far, 500 are in place. (Photo provided)

Spartanburg Academic Movement

While economic growth is desirable, a key to growing, attracting and maintaining a strong workforce is education. For this purpose, the Spartanburg Academic Movement has formed.

SAM’s main purpose is to look closely at local entities that have a hand in Spartanburg County’s youngest residents’ growth and development, from hospital neonatal units to the several colleges and universities in the area, what SAM representatives call a “cradle-to-career” approach.

“The Spartanburg Academic Movement is a convener of community resources around identified means,” SAM Director of Communications Kim Atchley said. “We do research, we find out where there are gaps and needs within the spectrum of cradle to career achievement and then we identify partners, those who are best poised to fill those needs.”

A common misconception is that SAM provides programs for local schools, but that is not the case, according to Atchley. Rather, she said, SAM is a behind-the-scenes organization that identifies local needs in the education sector, then works to match available resources that can fill those needs.

Smith is also a member of the SAM board and explained the approach in his own words.

“We’re really looking at talent development in the long term and that’s critical to economic growth,” Smith said.

SAM formed in 2013 from two earlier community efforts, the Children’s Services Alliance focusing on kindergarten readiness and CollegeHub, focusing on higher ▶



Spartanburg Academic Movement does research and finds where there are gaps and needs within the spectrum of cradle to career achievement. It provides much-needed data while also identifying partners best poised to fill any gaps. (Photo provided)

education. SAM is one of a number of organizations nationwide that make up the StriveTogether network.

One of SAM's earliest efforts was identifying needs in the area of kindergarten readiness. For this, SAM uses what it calls the Early Development Instrument.

"There was no measurement for how our community was actually helping to create that kindergarten readiness," Atchley said. "So what our collaborative action network did, they identified a tool for measuring kindergarten readiness."

SAM does not just focus on the city of Spartanburg, but on all seven school districts throughout Spartanburg County. They recently worked with the most poverty stricken to find out what their greatest needs were.

"Two superintendents came to us and said, 'Listen, we need help figuring out what's going on in our highest poverty schools,'" Atchley said.

On the municipal side, SAM has partnered with local organizations that have a hand in children's education but are not necessarily directly affiliated with the schools.

Local partnerships include, but are not limited to, schools, libraries, the United Way, the city, the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce and multiple nonprofits.

Another example is a children's museum in South Carolina's Upstate.

Atchley said, "When they were looking at bringing a branch of their operations to downtown Spartanburg, they came to our organization and said, 'What does Spartanburg need?'"

One of the biggest needs was an improvement in developmental screening for children before they ever start school.

"The museum listened to that and has provided the tool for parents and caregivers to complete the ASQ-3 (Ages and Stages Questionnaires) screening in the museum," Atchley said.

Spartanburg City Manager Chris Story is a strong advocate for SAM. As a parent, Story appreciates the approach SAM takes in its efforts to improve education for local students.

Story cited a developing project with the working title, Hello Family, which he describes as, "a continuum of services that would be available to every household in the city, beginning in the prenatal time and extending through a handoff to the school system."

This would involve things like home visits by nurses, education and support for parents and just creating a high-quality early learning environment.

While Hello Family is a city project, SAM has provided valuable input. "They've really helped us shape and design the Hello Family initiative we hope to launch this year," Story said. "We have raised \$7 million total to be directed to providing evidence-based support in the early childhood space and I don't think we would have been able to identify and structure that arrangement without the data and the awareness SAM has helped to bring to the community."

In true Spartanburg fashion, the city and SAM have worked closely in other ways, as well. SAM representatives recently attended a city council planning retreat, where they were able to show how to use data to track key points in a student's education and how those points affect the rest of that person's life.

"The emphasis on data and best practices is terribly important because a lot of community leaders, we approach things like that from our own point of view, and without good solid data and structure, we end up chasing the wrong strategies and SAM prevents that," Story said.

In addition, SAM has been able to identify important educational benchmarks, such as third-grade reading or middle school algebra.

"We're now having information coming to us from the National Student Clearinghouse, which provides feedback on where our county's graduates go once they leave our high school," Atchley said.

Once again, SAM's purpose is not to create programs or design new curricula. It is not to change what is being taught, but rather to use data to influence how it is being taught.

"It's teaching teachers and students a different way to interact in the classroom," Atchley said. "It's not changing the content, it's changing the action of teaching in the classroom."

The question still stands: What does all of this mean for Spartanburg's economic development? Smith answered that in a few words.

"It's all cyclical and it's very hard to have one without the other," Smith said.

The "one" refers to a qualified workforce. The "other" refers to quality education. While SAM's focus is on improving the quality of education, not necessarily keeping students local after college, that could end up being one of the byproducts over time.

"It's simple what we want to do," Atchley said. "We want to improve students' long-term economic mobility."

Spartanburg recently ranked second nationally for economic growth.

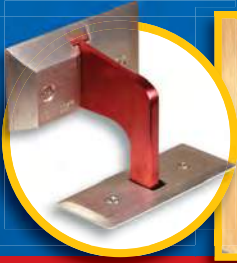
"What I'm proud of is being a part of a community that is taking a people first approach," Smith said. "A community that says, 'We can't move forward at all if we don't take everyone with us.'"

To learn more about Spartanburg, visit www.cityofspartanburg.org, www.visitspartanburg.com and www.spartanburgchamber.com.

For a comprehensive look at the Spartanburg Academic Movement, visit www.learnwithsam.org. 

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Do you still want fries with that?



Communities are changing their policies on fast food drive-thrus

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

While it only takes a couple of minutes to receive your order at a local fast food franchise, customers in some communities may have to forego the added convenience of whipping in and out of the drive-thru lane on their way to work, the kids' soccer practice or home after a long day. A number of U.S. cities are changing their policies regarding chain restaurants going so far as to pass ordinances that ban or severely restrict establishments known for their drive-thru service.

"There are a number of reasons that communities do this," said Barry Glantz, mayor of Creve Coeur, Mo. "For us, it was about striking the right balance between the residential and commercial areas while reducing car emissions, traffic, noise and litter ... not necessarily in that order."

A balanced community

Creve Coeur's ordinance restricting drive-thru restaurants began a few years ago when the community updated its comprehensive plan to make the city more pedestrian friendly, pet friendly and sustainable. They decided to allow only one drive-thru restaurant in every commercial development while prohibiting all stand-alone drive-thru restaurants with no counter or sit-down service.

"The drive-thrus have been only one component of meeting the objectives that we set forth and we have gotten mixed messages as to how it has been received," he said. "As a matter of fact, we are going back to look at the ordinance and see if we need to revise it."

While there are some obvious advantages to curbing the number of drive-thru restaurants in the community, such as the ability to lower the noise pollution and litter that impacts nearby residential areas, but there is a downside as well. Franchises without drive-thru service

do not perform as well as those that include it, which means fewer franchisees choose Creve Coeur as a place to set up shop.

"I think for the most part, residents are satisfied with this setup, but there is a demographic that likes the convenience of the drive-thru window," Glantz said. "Parents like it when they can pick something up without having to get the kids out of the car, and I don't know that we anticipated that two or three years ago when the ordinance passed."

Glantz said it is the local government's responsibility to maintain some flexibility when evaluating the effectiveness of a decision and decide if it needs to be adjusted over time. While an ordinance such as this one may seem like a logical option, it isn't set in stone and it's always important for community leaders to keep an open mind.

"It's really easy for politicians to say we aren't going to allow this or that, but instead of taking extreme approaches, we should step back and really analyze the potential benefits and downfalls. When done correctly and with care for the existing balance, you can strike a win-win situation."

What the people want

Part of the New York Metropolitan Area, the borough of Fair Haven, N.J., is a community of 6,000 along the Navesink River that originally



Creve Coeur plans to keep an open mind on its drive-thru ordinance, weighing its potential benefits and downfalls. Overall residents have been satisfied with it, though parents like being able to pick food up without having to get the kids out of the car. Pictured, children play at Millennium Park's playground. (Photo provided)



Creve Coeur, Mo., has an ordinance restricting drive-thru restaurants, having added it when the community updated its comprehensive plan a few years ago. This was done to be more pedestrian friendly, pet friendly and sustainable. (Photo provided)

adopted a ban on fast food in 1973. The ordinance withstood a legal challenge from McDonald's but 18 years ago was inadvertently repealed. In 2019, the ordinance was revisited to protect the community's small-town ambiance; however, like Creve Coeur, it does allow for drive-thru bank windows and drive-thru pharmacies.

"We are a 1.6-square-mile town bordered by a river that is populated by a small and affluent community who doesn't want a lot of fast food chains," said Fair Haven Mayor Benjamin J. Lucarelli. "They didn't even want a Dunkin' Donuts installed at a local shopping center."

While a number of communities have banned drive-thru windows in order to curb emissions that come from idling cars, cut litter and improve healthy eating habits and pedestrian safety, researchers are conflicted as to what kind of long-term impact ordinances such as these have on the public health. Studies in Canada show that there is some promise in these types of bans; the data is inconclusive in the U.S. Los Angeles, for example, actually saw a rise in obesity when it enacted a 2008 regulation that prohibited opening or expanding stand-alone and drive-thru restaurants in the area.

Of course for other cities, the real concern is aesthetics. Lucarelli said Fair Haven prides itself on being a biking and walking community that doesn't have the traffic to support a drive-thru restaurant and likes to maintain a certain image. However, that doesn't mean its citizens have to give up the convenience factor that is associated with these establishments.



Fair Haven, N.J., prides itself on being a biking and walking community that doesn't have the traffic to support a drive-thru restaurant and likes to maintain a certain image. (Robert Sarnowski/Shutterstock.com)

"It stands to reason that if you have two pharmacies, the one with the drive-thru is probably going to get the lion's share of the business, but thanks to curbside concierge service, people can call in their order ahead, text when they arrive and have it delivered to their car without having to get the kids out," he said. "It's the next evolution of convenience and one that our residents are starting to enjoy, so there are options out there for communities that want to do away with the drive-thru window. **M**

On the Web

Los Angeles study source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2019/10/10/765789694/why-u-s-cities-are-banning-new-fast-food-drive-throughs>

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New Merriam Community Center



By JANET PATTERSON | The Municipal

Summer will hold new delights for residents of Merriam, Kan., when the city's new community center opens.

The 66,000-square-foot center will have something for everyone, according to Meredith Hauck, assistant city administrator and project manager for the \$30 million project.

Merriam, a first-ring suburb of the Kansas City metropolitan area, has a population of 11,000.

Hauck said the conversation about a new community center began in 2014 when it was clear the community center structure that was built in 1911 no longer met the needs of 21st century Merriam.

Describing the discussions about the center as “significant,” Hauck said years of study, community meetings and the completion of a master plan led voters in September 2017 to approve the issuance of \$24 million in bonds, and the implementation of a 10-year quarter-cent sales tax to pay for the bonds. The city already had \$6 million socked away toward a community center project, Hauck said.

When asked about a town the size of Merriam saving that kind of money and paying for a project of this size, Hauck explained that 80% of the city's sales tax comes from visitors to Merriam. Not only is it located on



The new center has several aquatic elements, both indoor and outdoor. (Rendering provided)

Interstate 35, the city is home to an IKEA store and several car dealerships. Merriam, she said, leads the state of Kansas in sales taxes because of the retail businesses there.

Located in northeast Johnson County eight miles south of Kansas City, Merriam's roots go back to the early part of the 19th century when Shawnee Indians were relocated there from their settlements in Ohio and Missouri. When David Gee Campbell migrated there from Tennessee, he bought land from one of the Shawnee women and the people of the area named the town of 20 homes, a hotel and a store, Campbellton.

In 1870, the first railroad station was built in Campbellton and the name of the town was changed to Merriam in honor of Charles Merriam, a one-time secretary/treasurer of the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad.

“Merriam is a very active and engaged community,” she added.

The community center will reflect that with amenities such as a walking/jogging track, full-size gymnasium, fitness center, group exercise classroom and both indoor and outdoor aquatics features. The indoor aquatics area will have four 25-yard lap lanes; a tall slide and a family slide; a lazy river;

designed to meet 21st century needs



ABOVE: The new Merriam Community Center is well on its way to being completed for the summer. At 66,000 square feet, it is designed to satisfy the city's current and future needs. (Photo provided)



LEFT: Pictured is a rendering of the community center's courtyard at nighttime. (Rendering provided)

zero-depth entry; splash and play features; and a therapy pool. The outdoor aquatics area features eight lap lanes, two one-meter diving boards, splash and play features as well as shade structures and an on-deck concession cart.

In addition to meeting and event space large enough for 250 banquet guests, two birthday party rooms, a child watch area, a lounge area with coffee service, social gathering areas with free Wi-Fi and an outdoor courtyard for events and casual gatherings, the center will also have an art gallery.

Hauck said art is important to the culture of Merriam, so the art gallery that has been a part of the old community center will move to the expanded space in the new center. In addition to featuring new art every month with an opening reception on the first Thursday evening, Merriam has an active artist group. The city also hosts a large high school visual arts competition every year as well as an annual juried art exhibition that draws artists from all over the United States.

The Johnson County library system is partnering with the city of Merriam to construct a new library adjacent to the community center. The new Antioch branch will replace the building that was the first library in the county, constructed in the 1956.

The new community center campus will also include a \$6.6 million parking structure.

The construction of the new center began in late 2018 and is expected to be complete by this summer. "We won't be quite ready by Memorial Day, but sometime shortly after," Hauck said.

Next on the city's agenda will be creating a plan for the former community center, which has served Merriam for more than a century, first as a high school and then as the first location for Johnson County Community College. "The building has a pretty rich history," Hauck added.

Not only is the history important to the city and residents who graduated from there, the location in the heart of downtown makes it an important landmark. In November 2018, the Merriam City Council appointed nine volunteer residents to serve on a steering committee to guide the work of determining the future of the building.

The committee's recommendation presented in August 2019 is to keep as much of the existing 1911 building as structurally possible. The rest of the building is expected to be demolished to create space for an amphitheater area, playgrounds and green space. **M**



Rapid City welcomes development after a banner 2019

Rapid City, S.D., is living up to its fast-paced name. This municipality, known as the gateway to the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore and the home to the Journey Museum and Learning Center, plus the Reptile Gardens Zoo, has achieved much in its progressive forward march.



By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

Ken Young, AICP, and director of community development, doesn't use the word "boom" in regards to his city's recent development but rather prefers to call it continued strong growth.

"Several factors would be involved, of course," said Young. "One of note would be the announcement last year of the new bomber testing and training at nearby Ellsworth Air Force, which will create new jobs and development activity over the coming several years. Another is a response to a strong need for more housing in the area."

Rapid City's Vicki L. Fisher, planning manager of the Current Planning Division/Department of Community Development, applauds the continuing growth.

"We are excited to see the number of residential and commercial lots that are anticipated throughout our community either directly or indirectly related to the expansion at Ellsworth Air Force Base," said Fisher.

She added, "We have been receiving master plans for large acreage developments, particularly in the eastern portion of the city. To date, the accumulated master plan(s) show an excess of 2,000 additional residential lots to be developed in phases over the next 10 years. The residential lots include a diversification of housing for single-family, townhome and apartment development. Along with the residential development, the master plans include areas around arterial streets with future commercial and/or industrial development to provide services to the growing residential areas. This is an exciting time for Rapid City. Even with the health

TOP LEFT: This rendering shows the mixed-use project at Sixth and St. Joseph streets, which will feature 54 loft apartments, a hotel and a conference center with ground-floor retail shops. (Photo provided)

BOTTOM LEFT: Pictured is a rendering of Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's newest arena. It will feature all the amenities necessary for modern-day entertainment. It is the single largest building permit issued in Rapid City. (Photo provided)

concerns gripping our nation, city staff is here to ensure timely reviews and approvals for these projects.”

The city is the county seat of Pennington County and was named after Rapid Creek, where the settlement developed. It is located on the eastern slope of the Black Hills mountain range. Some of its tourist attractions include South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rushmore Mall and Berlin Wall in Memorial Park. It also boasts Watiki Waterpark and Bear Country USA.

Community development highlights in 2019 include:

- Total building permits issued were 3,974 — up 7.2% over 2018
- Total permits valuation was \$330,164,418, making it the fourth year it was over \$300 million
- Fifty-four new subdivision plats approved, creating 244 new residential lots
- New developments, including downtown apartments, Ascent Innovation business incubator and Kmart site redevelopment
- Ten transportation studies and plans through the area metropolitan planning organization
- Ten new projects funded through community development block grants for housing and services

There was also a permits system upgrade with the city’s TRAKiT permitting system being updated to provide many benefits, making services quicker and easier, including:

- Online payment and some self-issued permits
- Digital submittal and review of permits and plans
- Reduced cost to all parties by not requiring paper plans
- Continued public access to TRAKiT information

More of the 2019 banner year included expansion of residential, commercial and industrial development throughout the community. This was comprised of 120 platting applications to potentially create 926 lots. Fifty-four final plats were recorded creating 244 residential lots, 26 commercial lots and 11 industrial lots.

Currently, new downtown apartments are developing and will enhance livability including:

- Mixed-use project ability of the downtown, including 54 loft apartments at Sixth and St. Joseph streets to be developed by Lloyd Companies
- Four-story mixed-use building with apartments at East Boulevard and Kansas City Street
- Redevelopment of the old Imperial Inn site on St. Joseph Street to include residential areas

On long-range planning, significant projects are planned for 2020:

- Develop a strategic housing plan
- Develop and adopt ordinances that implement the strategic housing plan
- Continue the planning process to update the historic context document and historic preservation plan
- Online improvements to Plan Rapid City, the city’s comprehensive plan, to create a more user-friendly, interactive resource
- Update the 1998 annexation policy
- Update administrative processes of the tax increment financing program
- Complete the promenade corridor study
- Digitize/map all Rapid Transit routes and stops, enable access of Rapid Map
- Create a sidewalk connectivity map



Rapid City, S.D., hosted a Coffee with Planners event as part of push for community engagement and discussion on a variety of topics from the definition of what an Airbnb is and who really pays for road improvements to the city’s dark sky initiative. (Photo provided)

- Work with public works and the traffic division to obtain and implement permanent traffic count stations
- Create a mapping database for master plans

Rapid City Code Enforcement Division had 1,436 cases opened in 2019. Of these cases, 1,155 — or 80% of the total — involved abatements; this included snow and ice removal, debris cleanup, mowing and trimming and dead tree removal.

Code enforcement accomplishments:

- Assisted in completing three demolitions of substandard derelict houses and structures
- Continued focus on proactive efforts on the city core and main thoroughfares
- Number of open cases were down just slightly from 2018 even with an intense snow and growing season
- Continued community outreach through the media and presentations. This may be contributing to more public awareness of city ordinances and lower infraction numbers

According to Ted Johnson, city engineer, the potential development of property and creation of platted lots and building sites will require the extension of some services.

“The city has adequate water and wastewater plant and production capacity to serve the identified development areas, but the new developments will require the installation of water and sewer mains, storm sewer improvements and street improvements to serve the corresponding development area,” said Johnson.

“Creation of the developments also needs to account for and include the installation of private utilities, including electric power, natural gas and communications infrastructure. Installation of the noted public improvements is driven by the extent of the development and is generally the responsibility of the developer and/or owner of the development. All improvements are required to comply with the city’s approved design criteria and standards to protect the health and safety of the residents and population.” ▶

The city has accomplished a lot in the space of just a year. According to Fisher, the building growth began at the start of 2019 and has continued at a steady pace throughout the year.

"In anticipation of this growth, public works staff has had to evaluate and prepare for the increased demand and need for city utilities, drainage containment and street construction(s)," noted Fisher.

"As I previously mentioned, it is anticipated that much of this development being proposed is to prepare for the needs associated with the expansion of Ellsworth Air Force Base. It is also fair to say, that a significant percentage of the proposed development was already being prepared by the developers before the announcement of the expansion and the timing for the submittals fell within 2019."

The city has an adapted comprehensive plan that identifies appropriate existing and future uses throughout it and within 3 miles of its city limits, Fisher said.


"When receiving master plan(s) for potential future development of an area, community development staff works with the developers to ensure compliance with the plan," said Fisher. "In some instances, this includes the creation of public lots to secure future community service sites for such things as future fire stations, parks and utility lots."

At the time of this interview, Fisher was the only person in the office and gave a quick nod to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Many staff members are able to work from home due to the nature of our duties," said Fisher. "We have requested that they do so to limit the number of staff in the building. It is working very well. We use



Dakota Market Square will revitalize an old Kmart. According to a KOTA TV report, businesses expected to move in include a salon, gym, office spaces, sports bar, dollar general and pawn shop. (Photo provided)

teleconferencing and conference call availability to conduct business. Our goal is to ensure that we accept and process all permits and applications in the same timeframe as before COVID-19. We have had to become creative on how we receive and share documents. The good news is that it is working!" 

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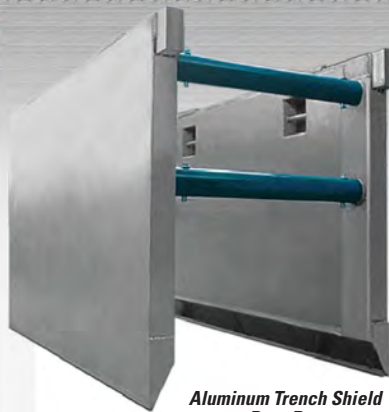
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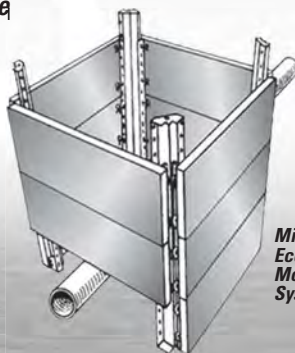
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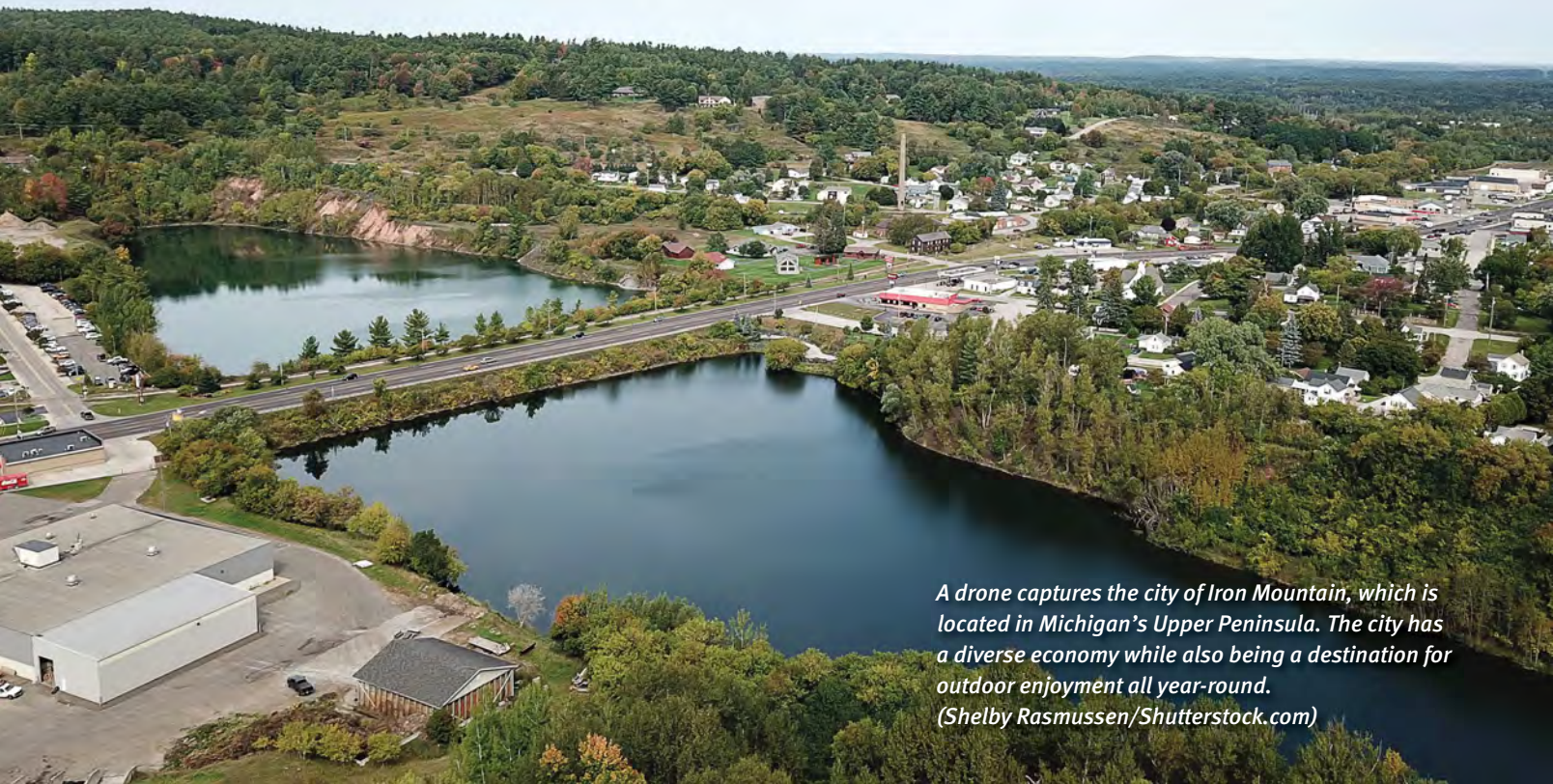
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A drone captures the city of Iron Mountain, which is located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The city has a diverse economy while also being a destination for outdoor enjoyment all year-round. (Shelby Rasmussen/Shutterstock.com)

Iron Mountain enjoys diverse industries, outdoor activities

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

Bordering three Great Lakes and covered with forests, Michigan's Upper Peninsula is 30% larger than the state of Maryland in terms of landmass but with a population 20 times smaller. While the 5-mile-long Mackinac Bridge is the more celebrated entrance to one of America's most popular destinations for exploring the great outdoors, the city of Iron Mountain, off of US Route 2, is considered the gateway to the Upper Peninsula, at least for those driving through Wisconsin.

As a former mining town, Iron Mountain's population has been in a steady decline since the 1930s.

Today it's a city of little more than 7,000 people, but what makes it stand out from many of the other Upper Peninsula cities is that it relies on a number of different industries.

"For a U.P. community, we have a good mix of employment as far as manufacturing, health care, technology," said Jordan Stanchina, Iron Mountain's city manager for the last decade. "You don't see much manufacturing anymore, and our county is pretty fortunate to have quite a bit of that and good, good manufacturing jobs, too.

"Some places, if they lose one company or one plant, the whole area is in trouble. We've got pretty good diversity as far as that works, and they're all successful."

It's at the point where Iron Mountain's biggest issue is not having enough employees. There's plenty of work to go around.

Two of the biggest manufacturers in the area are BOSS Snowplow and Systems Control. When it comes to health care, Dickinson County Hospital and a Veterans Affairs hospital are also located in Iron Mountain.



Pictured is a large roadside statue of a miner at the Iron Mountain Iron Mine. (ehrlif/Shutterstock.com)

But like almost every other city in the Upper Peninsula, Iron Mountain also depends on tourism, which has a year-round economic impact from action sports enthusiasts.

One of the biggest attractions is the Pine Mountain Ski Jump, which is one of the largest artificially created ski ramps in the world. Every year, the Kiwanis Ski Club hosts a ski jump competition that attracts more than 20,000 spectators.

In Iron Mountain, there's also an abundance of trails, which are used for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter and ATV riding in the summer.

About three years ago, Iron Mountain decided to help boost tourism by allowing snowmobiles and ATVs to drive in the city, including on its Main Street.

"There's access to snowmobile trails that you can start at a hotel and basically end up anywhere in the U.P. if you wanted to and a lot of Wisconsin," Stanchina said. "During the summer four-wheeling, which replaces the snowmobiling, we actually allow four-wheelers on the streets; instead of having to trailer up and go a little bit out of



Iron Mountain Iron Mine harkens back to the past when Iron Mountain, Mich., was a mining town. Today, it operates as tourist attraction and offers underground tours. (ehrlif/Shutterstock.com)

the city limit, you can just drive your four-wheeler right to the trail. We've tried to accommodate those kinds of activities."

This extra traffic benefits downtown retail businesses and hotels, an area that Iron Mountain is actively investing in as the city updates its master plan.

"We're looking at concepts that will make it more developer friendly," Stanchina said. "We're always working on that, but we're trying to implement more of that kind of stuff. Also, it's another reset to see what direction residents would like things to go and there's a big push to improve downtowns right now. We've been pretty active with that, providing incentives and tax abatements and things like that to get some of the buildings fixed up."

This push has increased the number of vacant buildings downtown being renovated. Because more people and businesses are now congregating in a central location, Stanchina said the master plan will also address the increased need for additional parking spaces and structures. Initially, the goal was to have the master plan finalized by the summer, but due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, other projects have become more of a priority.

In addition to the skiing and ATV trails, the Iron Mountain area also has old caves to explore. The city also hosts several festivals and events in the summer and fall, which attract visitors from all over, especially people from Wisconsin and the western portion of the Midwest. Stanchina said Iron Mountain and its residents have more of a connection to Wisconsin than it does to the majority of the people in their own state.

"I interact with Wisconsin far more than I've been to lower Michigan," Stanchina said. "I think last year when our boy's basketball team made the state finals, that was the first time I've been in the lower Michigan in probably like 10 years." **M**



Irving Police Chief Jeff Spivey talks to a community member during a ShopTalk visit at a barbershop. (Photo provided by Irving Police Department)

Irving Police Department uses barbershops to improve community relations

By MAGGIE KENWORTHY | The Municipal

In Irving, Texas, it's not uncommon to drive by a barbershop and see on-duty police officers inside. But no, these officers aren't making arrests or gathering statements. Instead, they are improving community relations, one barbershop conversation at a time.

The idea for the ShopTalk program originated after five officers were killed and nine others injured in the 2016 Dallas police shooting. It was then that Irving Police Officer Jonathan Plunkett talked to Police Chief Jeff Spivey about improving police relationships with the African-American community.

"Going into the barbershop, they have a lot of negative conversations going on about the police — a lot," Plunkett told Spivey. "We should be going into the shop and talking in the barbershop.

Start talking to the customers and the barbers and just try to educate them somewhat and give them an opportunity to voice their concerns about the relationship between the police and community."

What was later called the ShopTalk program started in just one Irving barbershop. But four years later, the program has spread to 21 different shops and beauty salons. And now, other departments are looking for ways to use the program in their own communities.

Spivey describes the concept behind the program as “simplistic.” There is no set schedule for the visits; officers stop by participating barbershops around once a month when they have downtime in their schedules.

“(We) go into a barbershop and sit down and say, ‘Hey, tell me what’s going on and what questions you have for me.’ If we’re not going to talk about policing or the latest viral video involving police officers, then let’s talk about what’s going on in sports,” said Spivey. “It’s about establishing trust relationships that will benefit us all in the long run.”

According to Plunkett, this is a way to show the community that officers are people, too. But, these relationships take time and trust to build.

“When we walk in, we’re walking in uniform and some of the customers are nervous. They’re like, ‘What’s going on?’” said Plunkett. “But once we are in the shop and we’re actually talking, everything is calmed down, everything is quiet, and they’re listening, they’re talking to us, and a lot of them are really engaged in the conversation. Sometimes it may take a little while to have the customers engaged because it’s different... So it’s a matter of breaking that ice. It’s a matter of breaking the ice with the customer and it’s a matter of breaking the ice with some of the officers, also.”

The residents of Irving aren’t the only ones benefiting from these improved relationships.

“The other part of this, something that I fully expected to happen, was the impact it’s having on the police officers who are involved in the program,” said Spivey. “They’re getting to know the shop owners and customers in a setting that’s very different than how they would normally encounter these owners and customers. They’re not encountering them in an enforcement standpoint or on a call where they’ve been a victim or a suspect in a crime or a witness in a crime. They’re encountering them in an environment where the customers and the shop owners are very comfortable and relaxed. It’s really helped my police officers develop a better understanding of cultural differences, of similarities in what people like and what people don’t like... It’s really worked both ways to break down barriers that tend to exist between our two communities.”

The program does go beyond the conversations inside the barbershops. Once a quarter, Spivey hosts a ShopTalk luncheon where barbershop owners, community representatives and officers come together. Barbershop owners can share what questions or concerns their customers are having. This allows the barbershop owners to continue the important conversations with their customers, even when officers aren’t in the shops.

These luncheons are also a chance for new officers to get introduced to the ShopTalk program.

“My thought is if I can get them bought in from the very start of their career, that they’re the ones who are going to keep this program going after I retire, after Officer Plunkett retires,” said Spivey. “It’s really the newer officers who are going to keep this program going and growing. Getting them involved at the very front end of their career, where they see the value in it and are bought in, is really important.”

In addition, the ShopTalk program also hosts block parties, back-to-school events and holiday toy drives throughout the year.



Officer Jonathan Plunkett, far left, and Officer Goodman, far right, pose with a barbershop owner and community children. (Photo provided by Irving Police Department)



Each quarter Irving Police Department hosts a luncheon for the ShopTalk program. Pictured here are Irving Police Department officers along with barbershop owners and Irving Mayor Rick Stopfer. (Photo provided by Irving Police Department)

The program has received recognition and awards from local organizations like the Irving-Carrollton NAACP and national organizations such as the Attorney General’s Award for Distinguished Service in Policing.

All of this success has led to the program’s partnership with One Community USA. This nonprofit organization is working with the ShopTalk program to expand it outside of Irving. One Community USA also helps to provide scholarships to barbershops and salons in neighboring cities.

“We’re not expecting (ShopTalk) to solve all of our bad history in our country in one meeting,” said Spivey. “But it’s worth the fight, and we’re going to continue to work on making that relationship better.” **M**

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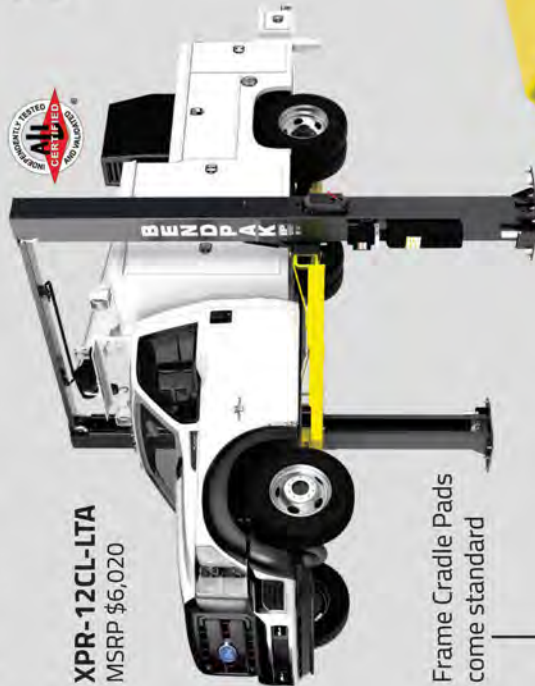
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Dockless bikes and scooters: Avoid being clueless



By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

Now that spring is finally here, people are coming out of their musty winter caverns and enjoying pure, warm sunlight again, including venturing into the heart of their cities.

Those who work in offices yearn for the outdoors, especially folks who live in the suburbs and other crowded places. One way to get the most out of this exuberant season is to travel by bike or standup scooter downtown, and this enjoyable pastime is often available in cities and towns who partner with e-vehicle businesses.

Cities desiring healthier citizens embrace these newer modes of e-transportation that offer pollution-free exercise, fresh air and a reduction of traffic congestion.

Maggie Green, public information officer with public works of Kansas City, Mo., was enthusiastic about such a program and volunteered her expertise on

the subject of additional modes of transportation. Her city began a yearlong pilot program last year.

“We have three providers operating in KCMO currently in a yearlong pilot program that started on May 9, 2019,” said Green. “Spin and Bird are both dockless scooter companies, and Ride KC Bike and Ride KC Scooter use lock-to technology on both bikes and scooters that can be locked anywhere — so long as permitted.

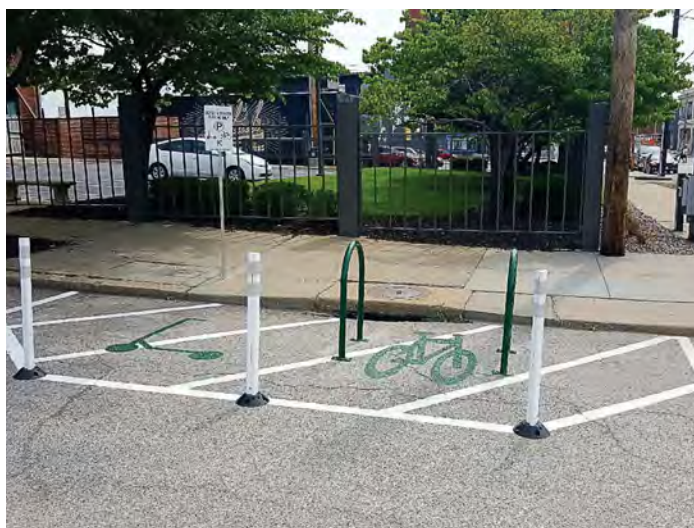
The first e-scooters arrived in KCMO in the summer of 2018, according to Green, and the staff acted quickly and intentionally to develop an interim operating agreement to keep the scooters on the ground through the busy season. In winter 2018-2019, staff developed the structure

Educating residents has been key to reducing parking infractions and ensuring people understand how the program works. Pictured are scooter e-bikes as part of an outreach effort at First Fridays. (Photo provided by KCMO Public Works)

for a pilot program and micromobility pilot operating agreement, in which companies were encouraged to apply through a competitive request for proposals process. The pilot kicked off May 9, 2019, and ended April 30, 2020. As of press time, Green and her staff are currently working on wrapping up the existing pilot program and determining next steps.

There were challenges, to be sure, according to Green, who bulleted some examples:

- **Flexibility:** Traditional planning does not account for emerging disruptive technologies; staff had to act swiftly to make sure there was a process and



Pictured is a micromobility parking hub at 19th and Baltimore streets in Kansas City, Mo. Such hubs are popular for on-street parking in or near bike lanes. (Photo provided by KCMO Public Works)



Two women participate in a Bird scooter safety event in Kansas City, Mo. (Photo provided by KCMO Public Works)

regulations for scooters operating in KCMO.

- **Ongoing management:** KCMO does not have a dedicated staff person to this program. Instead, this is the program being led by a multi-department group that tracks various components of the program. A program coordinator would allow for a more streamlined management approach both internally and externally with the partner companies.
- **Supporting infrastructure:** KCMO is working to build a bike lane network, as well as add scooter parking hubs to support this transportation mode. The more micromobility infrastructure, like bike lanes and end-of-trip facilities, available, the better — for safety, network connectivity and providing adequate infrastructure for riders.
- **Enforcement strategies:** The city has encouraged riders to not park on sidewalks or blocking ADA ramps; use safe riding behaviors and not ride on sidewalks. Both the city and its partner companies are working to address these issues.

Kansas City B-cycle, now RideKC Bike, is the city's docked, kiosk-base bike share system that launched in 2012. It's operated by nonprofit BikeWalkKC in coordination with RideKC, the city's transit system. The nonprofit has expanded to include

dockless, lock-to technology for e-scooters and e-bikes as of the start of the pilot program in May 2019.

The city is developing policies for this event, Green noted.

"KCMO's approach to scooters and e-bikes has been intentional, incremental and equitable," said Green. "We launched a yearlong pilot program to learn more about how the scooters would interact with KCMO's infrastructure, market, weather, demographics and existing rules and regulations.

"Each company signed an operating agreement for the pilot program that outlines reporting requirements; fees; data sharing and privacy; equity and inclusion; education and outreach; and program operations. We've met/had calls with each company several times over the course of the pilot to check in, make adjustments and hear feedback about the program."

What are the advantages of docked vehicles to undocked vehicles in KCMO? According to Green, dockless provides autonomy of being able to use the device and park it in any appropriate space without having to worry about locking it up. Lock-to requires the scooter or bike to be locked to a bike rack, pole, etc.; this can alleviate some of the parking compliance issues experienced, such as scooters blocking ADA ramps, transit stops, middle of sidewalk, etc. On-street mobility parking

for both vehicles is often sought in or near bike lanes.

Dockless scooters can be disruptive to traffic by zipping in and out without warning or regard for others. They can clutter sidewalks and block wheelchair ramps and weave through crowds. They can ignore traffic rules. The list goes on.

Green noted the city's multi-departmental team continues to meet to work through opportunities and challenges with scooters and e-bikes in KCMO for residents and visitors.

Kansas City has the unique distinction of being the first to offer both electric bike and electric scooter options that are fully integrated with the regional transportation system.

Rules for riders may include wearing helmets, riding in certain marked areas — not on sidewalks or parkways — and not blocking access to sidewalks or building entranceways when parking. Each city must set its own rules and regulations, including licensing, in addition to the rules that come with each e-vehicle.

With COVID-19 in mind, each e-vehicle company is taking critical measures to keep its riders safe. Spin, for example, keeps updated with World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local public health agencies guidelines. To ensure a safe ride, Spin is increasing cleanings of its ►

vehicles as soon as they come back to the warehouse. Its employees are required to wear gloves when cleaning the vehicles. Riders are also recommended to use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before and after the ride.

Riders are asked to educate themselves on what to do in emergencies or accidents; how to do minor repairs; and know when to bring the e-vehicles back for charging support. Spin's cost is \$1 for every 30 minutes, which its cellphone app will track. Riders will learn how to enter their passwords, how to unlock their vehicles and what to do if their vehicles do not unlock.

Green said there had been no widespread thefts of bikes or scooters, but that one would have to check with the scooter companies directly to see if they have had any issues. Also, few injuries have been reported on either e-vehicles, with four-month records showing only 19 accidents. Most injuries are abrasions or bruises. Scooters can travel up to 15 mph.

Cities interested in beginning such a program for their residents over the age of 18 and visitors can Google scooter/bike companies, such as Bird, Spin, Skip Scoot and Lime, to see which company is a good fit for them and what their fees are.

Let your residents go green while enjoying one of these al fresco options to enjoy the warm-weather months. **M**



SPIN scooters stand ready for use in Kansas City, Mo. (Photo provided by KCMO Public Works)

On the Web

To learn more about Kansas City, Mo.'s, scooters and e-bikes, visit www.kcmo.gov/programs-initiatives/scooters-and-ebikes.

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Midwest City turns floodplain into mountain bike hub

Phase one of Soldier Creek Industrial Park Trails, which includes 3 miles of unpaved trails, was built in 2016 on 77 acres of floodplain property owned by Midwest City. (Photo provided)

By LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

There's much more to trail systems than their face value. For instance, grassroots advocacy organization Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has released research in October 2019 that found active transportation infrastructure, like trails, currently contributes more than \$34.1 billion to the U.S. economy annually. City leaders in Midwest City, Okla., agree as they're experiencing the fruits of their efforts to turn a floodplain into an area amenable to recreation.

Phase one of Soldier Creek Industrial Park Trails, which includes 3 miles of unpaved trails, was built in 2016 on 77 acres of floodplain property owned by Midwest City.

For Brandon Bundy, community development city engineer, the project was personal in a way.

"(Project manager Pete Singleton) and I have an interest in mountain biking," he said. "At the time, I was the assistant city engineer and Pete was working in another department. And I think we were trying to kill time during our lunch hour one summer day and we talked about maybe we should do a little mountain bike trail and build it ourselves."

Instead, they decided to go the formal route and approach the city's grants manager, Teri Craft, about their idea. It turns out there was some funding available for such an endeavor. Craft was able to

secure funding, and before long, the city was able to move the project forward. The Recreational Trails Program is a state-administered, federal aid program managed through the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the Department of the Interior.

However, according to Bundy, it didn't come without some preparation on their part. For one, there's an oil well on the city's property and it has a bridge across the creek. The city didn't necessarily have permission to use it, so they approached the oil company and came to an agreement.

"To use the bridge we were responsible for the superstructure," Bundy said. "And they would be responsible for the bridge itself. And so we had to hire a contractor to build a railing on it. So that was one way that we saved a lot of money by utilizing that existing



Midwest City posted a video to its YouTube channel of the SCIP Trails' ribbon cutting. It is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTVNlqQPpUA. (Screenshots from YouTube)

bridge. And I think we got lucky because the oil company was willing to work with us."

Singleton said Midwest City was also able to rein in costs another way. It was able to upcycle a previously used bus shelter as a kiosk. On the subject of cost-savings, Bundy said the trail building itself was done under a design-build contract. Midwest City was able to get creative and save money to devote to other related expenses. For example, the field required a lot of maintenance and the city didn't have the resources to devote to mowing.

"So I was looking for a way to help," Bundy said. "And so I thought, well, there's some highways that have wildflower habitats. What if we designate that area as a wildflower habitat? And so we used the remaining grant funds to buy a bunch of wildflowers and it kind of morphed slowly into a butterfly habitat."

That's where advocate Katie Hawk comes in to play. Hawk is director of marketing and external affairs with the Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma. Her chapter is a founding member of the group Okies for Monarchs. She said this project is significant because of its impact on the local ecosystem.


"I know that for pollinators, if you plant it, they will absolutely come and eat it," she said.

This is especially critical as populations are dying out every year. In regards to this project, Hawk said she was happy to see several stakeholders come together on the same page about this conservation issue.

"We at Okies for Monarchs don't just focus on municipalities," she said. "We work with everyone from oil and gas companies to schools, churches — anyone and everyone who's willing to get their hands dirty and help save the pollinators."

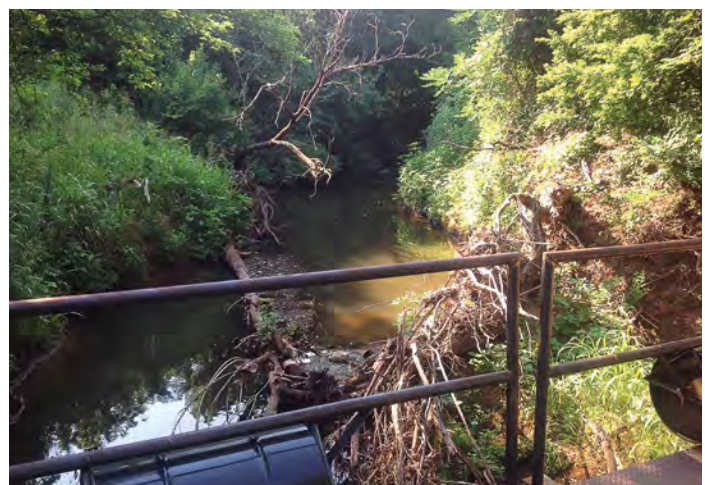
To that end, it educates these groups about which plants are best for pollinators and when to plant those seeds based on the pollinators' migratory patterns.

Speaking of timing, Bundy said Midwest City is in the process of doubling the trail system from 3 to 6 miles.

"So by the second phase, we'll really be able to get ourselves on the map in terms of popularity, not that it's lacking popularity, but it will really become a spot where people will truly want to recreate," Singleton said. 



To save on mowing costs, Midwest City, Okla., opted to create a wildflower habitat perfect for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. (Photo provided)



Midwest City came to an agreement with an oil company to use an existing bridge over the creek. The city is responsible for the superstructure while the oil company is responsible for the bridge itself. (Photo provided)

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Wellness incentive program gets city employees up and moving

By NICHOLETTE CARLSON | The Municipal



The city of Copperas Cove, Texas, continues to place an emphasis on wellness and has created an incentive program for city employees called CoveFit. The program was started in 2015 and Eddie Wilson, Copperas Cove police chief, has acted as the city's wellness program chairman for the past five years.

"A healthy workforce results in a more productive workforce with less absenteeism, fewer accidents, lower health care demands and greater overall savings by reducing the incidence of disease and disability," Wilson explained. This inspired the city to launch the first wellness initiative in 2013, in which participants needed to complete six events in order to receive incentives.

This program, however, was not widely received since one of the six events was participation in a 5K race and many employees did not wish to participate in a 5K. This led city officials to reevaluate the wellness program in order to reach a wider majority of employees. Human resources and a committee of 10 employees from different city departments evaluated various wellness programs and employee surveys in order to come up with their own unique program, CoveFit.

Wilson stated, "City employees are encouraged to participate in wellness programs that help identify and reduce health risks before serious health problems occur or allow better management of existing health problems." City employees and city-insured dependents

LEFT: Georgette Hurt brought her granddaughter along for a walk/run at the City Employee 5K. (Photo provided)



Copperas Cove, Texas, now has over one-third of its city employees participating in 5K races since implementing the CoveFit wellness incentive program. Pictured, from left, are Eddie Wilson, Diana Timmerman, Corey Schmidt and Lisa Wilson at the Polar Run 5K. (Photo provided)



Another way to earn points for your team when participating in CoveFit is by attending various wellness opportunities and seminars. Pictured are city employees attending a CoveFit Lunch and Learn Seminar on fitness and wellness. (Photo provided)

are able to access screenings, follow-up assistance, educational resources and classes that promote healthy lifestyles, nutrition and exercise.

CoveFit program members can compete in teams of three or four and be a combination of full-time employees, part-time employees or dependents, but they must all complete the same events. Proof of participation in an event must be sent to human resources or a committee member. Completion of activities earns the team points, which accumulate toward receiving incentives.

Activities to earn points include preventative health such as eye exams, dental exams, immunizations, an annual wellness screening, biometric screening, consultations, attending the health fair and preventative cancer or health screening. Healthy lifestyle activities, such as completing a tobacco-free course or completing the 120-day weight loss challenge, can gain teams points. Events and activities that promote exercise, such as individual exercise, group fitness classes, participation in a high endurance race, participation in a competitive sports league, races, pedometer challenge and a 10K walk or run, are also included in earning points. Reasonable alternatives can be provided if members are unable to complete suggested activities.

Incentives for completing such activities to collect points include a \$25 insurance waiver, a shirt and an elite award. Once a team reaches 75 points, they earn a wellness day off. The city contributes cash incentives in amounts ranging between \$100 to \$500 that can go toward an employee's health savings account, flexible spending account, ICMA 457 account or their paycheck for earning specific point totals. The top four teams with the highest scores are rewarded with a CoveFit polo.

Program participation continues to see an increase over the years. "Although the program is strictly voluntary, the effort put into educating and motivating employees has resulted in a program participation rate of around 50-60% annually," Wilson boasted. "The new program year started in October 2019, and 180 of the 290 total employees have already signed on. This is the highest rate of participation so far."

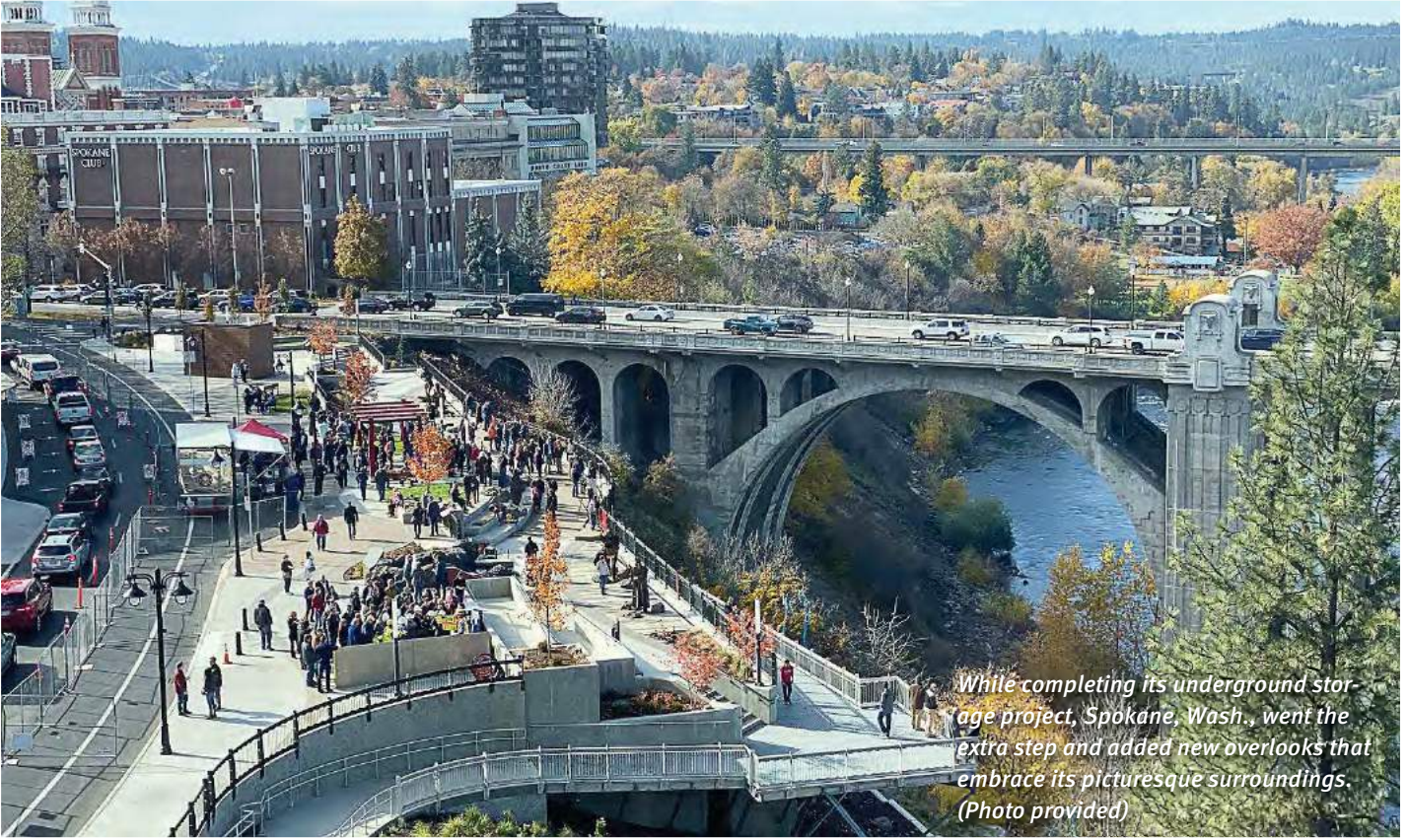


The CoveFit team of Kevin Keller, Kevin Miller and Joaquin Salazar celebrates after completing the Average Joe's half marathon. (Photo provided)

In previous years, the maximum number of individual points needed to collect all incentives was 100. However, during the last program year, 12 employees and one dependent earned over 200 points, meaning the top two winning teams were able to earn over 200 points. This year, in order to reach the elite tier, teams must reach 200 points.

While many organizations have been struggling lately with large increases in health care premiums, Copperas Cove has not been suffering the same struggle. The city's work with CoveFit actually helped to reduce premiums in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2018, there was only a 1.5% increase. Reduction in insurance usage rates has also been seen after employees were provided education on how to use their health insurance.

Since implementing a wellness program, Wilson announced, "Employees have gone from zero participation in 5K race events seven years ago to more than a third of employees completing at least one race annually. This is a number Copperas Cove is proud of considering only around 17% of the general population participates, according to Statista." He continued to describe the benefit many participants have experienced, "Many employees are also completing multiple annual races to include 10Ks and half marathons. Three employees just recently completed their first ever full marathon. Every year has seen increases in other event categories as well." **M**



While completing its underground storage project, Spokane, Wash., went the extra step and added new overlooks that embrace its picturesque surroundings. (Photo provided)

Storm and wastewater project contributes to beautification efforts in Spokane

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

With heavy rainfalls a normal part of life in the Pacific Northwest, one of Washington's largest cities recently completed a roughly \$190 million project to protect the health of its river.

As part of an initiative to clean the Spokane River, the city of Spokane installed 16 million gallons of underground storage to prevent storm and wastewater overflows.

"This wasn't a single project; it was more like a program," said Marlene Feist, the city of Spokane public works director of strategic development. "We have been working for a number of years to address overflows from our combined sewers in our community. About half of our community still has combined sewers. The Northside was separated in the 80s, but it wasn't possible to separate other parts of the city because of the amount of rock in our community."

To get the desired amount of storage, Spokane needed to install several storage tanks of a variety of different sizes.

"Our program included the installation of about two dozen underground storage tanks that hold up to 16 million gallons of wastewater at a single time," Feist said. "The tank sizes range from about 10,000 gallons to over 2.4 million."

By greatly reducing the amount of storm and wastewater that can overflow from the city into the river, Spokane will dramatically decrease the amount of pollution that spills into it every year.

While this project is greatly important to the city officials and residents, parts of it were also mandated.



Spokane's underground storage project to reduce storm and wastewater overflows included a variety of tank sizes, which ranged from about 10,000 gallons to over 2.4 million. (Photo provided)



The underground storage tanks are a part of a bigger program called the Cleaner River Faster, an integrated plan to improve the health of the Spokane River. (Photo provided)

"Most cities that have combined sewers are under some sort of regulation to stop overflows to reduce overflows to their receiving water body," Feist said. "We've had our permit requirement for some time to manage those overflows. In addition, we have a total maximum daily load on our river for dissolved oxygen and nutrients basically."

Still, even with the city having no choice but to complete some of this work, it went the extra mile and city officials did not drag their feet.

"We're trying to meet our requirements under our TMDL data requirements for our discharge permit," Feist said. "Also, we're adding other components like the stormwater component, which is voluntary. A lot of other communities have gotten consent decree to do this work under court order to buy more time. The city decided that it was going to complete the work timely."

This is all part of an even bigger program called the Cleaner River Faster, an integrated plan to improve the health of the Spokane River, which was adopted by the city council in 2014.

In total, the project will cost several hundred million dollars.

"In addition to the storage tanks, we are installing an additional level of treatment at our wastewater treatment plant," Feist said. "We're adding membrane technology usually used for drinking water treatment at that plant. That should be operational in 2021. We're also working to reduce stormwater from our systems."

To pay for the project, which is the largest infrastructure project the city has ever undertaken, Spokane had to get a little bit creative. In addition to using an enterprise fund, the city also sold different types of bonds, took out loans and more.

"Well, these are projects of utilities," Feist said. "So it's an enterprise fund. It's paid for ultimately by ratepayers' dollars. We did sell \$200 million of green bonds in the market. We did revenue bonds in 2014 to help pay for the program. We had also saved money, anticipating these costs. So we had some money put aside, and we also had \$85 million in SRF (state revolving fund) loans and we've gotten some grants for some of the stormwater components."



During its storm and wastewater project, Spokane aimed to leave things better than they were, leading to several above-ground improvements. (Photo provided)

Residents will be paying off the bonds until 2034, but this is a project that needed to get done and it's ultimately a generational investment into the city's future.

One of the elements we included with this plan was to develop above-ground improvements when we were doing below-ground infrastructure," Feist said. "On top of these tanks, we have added a couple beautiful public plazas. We created a playfield for a charter high school that had no place for their students to have gym class or outdoor activity time. We created new overlooks. We've improved portions of our Centennial Trail. Part of this project was to leave things better than they were, if you will." M



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EDITOR'S NOTE: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, readers are encouraged to verify their conference's status. The Municipal has updated entries' statuses with information available as of press time; however, as the situation is still fluid, plans may change rapidly.

MAY

May 3-5 NYCOM Annual Meeting (POSTPONED: TBA)

Sagamore Hotel, Bolton Landing, N.Y.
www.nycom.org/training/annual-convention

May 4-7 WasteExpo (POSTPONED: Aug. 10-13)

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La.
www.wasteexpo.com

May 5-7 CityVision Annual Conference (CANCELLED)

Wilmington Convention Center, Wilmington, N.C.
www.ncim.org

May 11-14 Advanced Clean Transportation Expo (POSTPONED: TBA)

Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, Calif.
www.actexpo.com

May 15-17 Lancaster County Firemen's Association (CANCELLED)

Pennsylvania Farm Show & Expo Center, Harrisburg, Pa.
www.lcfa.com

May 16-19 Alabama League of Municipalities Annual Convention (POSTPONED: TBA)

Tuscaloosa, Ala.
www.alalm.org/AnnualConvention.aspx

May 18-21 Government Fleet Expo & Conference (GFX) (POSTPONED: TBA)

Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif.
<https://www.governmentfleetexpo.com/>

May 27-29 Fifth Annual North American Active Assailant Conference (POSTPONED: TBA)

Woodside Bible Church, 6600 Rochester Road, Troy, Mich.
www.facebook.com/North-American-Active-AssailantConference-2110431222523951/

May 31-June 3 EUFMC 2020 (CANCELLED)

Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Center, Williamsburg, Va.
eufmc.com

May 31-June 3 IPMI Conference & Expo (GOING VIRTUAL: June 1-2)

www.parking-mobility.org/ipmi-meetings-events/ipmi-conference-expo/

May 31-June 4 CTAA Expo 2020

Louisville, Ky.
<https://ctaa.org/expo/>

JUNE

June 1-4 CleanPower Expo

Denver, Colo.
www.cleanpowerexpo.org

JUNE

June 3-7 International Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference

Hilton Baltimore, Baltimore, Md.
<https://www.iafc.org/events/hazmat-conf>

June 10-13 NYS AFC 114th Annual Conference & Fire 2020 Expo

The Oncenter, Syracuse, N.Y.
<https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2020>

June 12-15 U.S. Conference of Mayors 88th Annual Meeting

Austin, Texas
www.usmayors.org/meetings

June 14-17 Prima 2020 Conference

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn.
<https://conference.primacentral.org/>

June 15-18 NFPA Conference & Expo

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.
www.nfpa.org

June 16-19 SIMA 23rd Snow & Ice Symposium

Hartford, Conn.
www.sima.org

June 17-19 Arkansas Municipal League 85th Annual Convention

Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Ark.
www.arml.org

June 23-24 Thirty-fourth Annual Police Security Expo

Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic, N.J.
www.police-security.com

June 23-25 Safety 2020

Orange County Conference Center, Orlando, Fla.
<https://safety.assp.org/>

June 23-26 Colorado Municipal League Annual Conference

Westminster, Colo.
www.cml.org

June 23-26 Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference

Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.
wacities.org

June 24-26 League of Minnesota Cities Annual Conference

Saint Paul RiverCentre, St. Paul, Minn.
www.lmc.org

June 26-30 Georgia Municipal Association Annual Conference

Trade Convention Center, Savannah, Ga.
<https://10times.com/gma-annual-convention>

June 28-July 1 Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference

Ocean City, Md.
www.mdmunicipal.org

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National Public Works Week: 'The Rhythm of Public Works'

APWA has announced "The Rhythm of Public Works" as the theme for the 2020 National Public Works Week, May 17-23. This year's poster challenges APWA's members and their citizens to think about their communities as a symphony of essential services, working in concert to create a great place to live. Every community has a rhythm, a heartbeat that reflects its essence and tempo of life.

Public works keeps a community's rhythm moving by providing an orchestra of infrastructure services in transportation; water, wastewater and stormwater treatment; public buildings and spaces, parks and grounds; emergency management and first response; solid waste; and right-of-way management. Public works provides the harmony needed for collaboration with all the stakeholders in capital projects, infrastructure solutions and quality of life services.

About the artist

Based in a small studio nestled in the Lake District mountains in the United Kingdom, Neil Den combines elements from mixed media and photography, interlaced with complex vectors. His pieces always hit the brief for clients around the world, from Nike to P&G, Prada to Google. Working through his rep, Lemonade Illustration Agency, Den is always hungry for the latest commissions and trends.



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The right grease can improve fleet operations



Jonathon Roberts | Guest columnist
Vice President,
Lube-A-Boom

PROPER LUBRICATION OF YOUR EQUIPMENT MAY NOT BE the most glamorous topic, but it is arguably one of the most important parts of your maintenance routine. Proper selection of an appropriate grease will potentially end up saving your company thousands of dollars in maintenance costs, keep your fleet running in the field longer and make your equipment safer. These are goals everyone can get behind and strive for. But how exactly can grease do all of this for you? While brief, these few key items will give you the tools needed to begin selecting the correct lubricants for your equipment.

Grease comes in a wide variety, which might surprise many people. There are different color greases, different viscosities, different additives, different bases and different textures, just to name a few. Nearly every component on your equipment will require a different type of grease. It is important to recognize that fact to properly maintain the components of your equipment and maximize the field time of each machine in your fleet so you do not need to pay for costly replacements parts sooner than you should. That begs the question, what makes a grease better than others?



Aerosol greases will cover your equipment thoroughly and can help prevent the underapplying or overapplying of grease. (Photo provided by Lube-A-Boom)

A lot of that answer boils down to lithium complex grease versus calcium sulfonate grease. Lithium complex greases are generally cheaper, multipurpose greases that are used in a variety of ways. Lithium complex greases generally do not have very high heat and pressure ratings, meaning that if you apply them to a component — like a boom — that is constantly moving and producing higher heat and pressure, the grease will burn off quickly and not provide the lubrication needed to protect that component. This means the operator will need to relubricate more often — costing your company money in downtime — or the

component simply will wear much quicker — costing your company money in replacement parts.

How can you prevent this? The answer is with calcium sulfonate-based greases. Calcium sulfonate-based greases generally are more durable and perform at higher heat and pressure rating than lithium complex greases. When lubricating components such as a boom, a calcium sulfonate-based grease is more desirable than a lithium-based complex.

You also need to look at the purpose of the component and match that with the appropriate specialty grease that is on the market. For example, if you are using your bucket truck to cut tree limbs back from power lines, you are likely not going to want a traditional wet, tacky grease applied to your boom. The wood chips and shavings from the tree trimming will stick to your boom and potentially cause corrosion. Rather, you will want a dry film grease applied to your boom so the debris from the tree trimming won't stick to your boom and cause other maintenance issues. Similarly, you would not want to use a traditional grease for something like a hydraulic hammer to keep the hammer lubricated. In that case, you would want to use a chisel and hammer paste that has extra solid additives in the grease — usually graphite and copper — to provide adequate protection and lubrication to that piece of machinery. Ultimately, all greases are not created equal and each component on your equipment requires a specialty grease.

Once you have selected the appropriate grease, it is important to properly apply the grease to your equipment. This is an often overlooked piece of the puzzle. If you apply too little grease, you will need to reapply more quickly and you will likely experience more wear and tear on your equipment. This fear of underapplying grease will lead people to overapply grease. Overapplying grease can be just as bad for your equipment as underapplying. It can cause significant buildup issues that wear parts down and cause more dirt and debris to stick to your equipment than necessary. A nice thin film of good grease should be all you need.

How can you avoid either underapplying or overapplying grease and achieve that thin film? The easiest way is to use an aerosol grease. Aerosols are great because they conveniently provide an effective spray that helps ensure you properly apply your grease. The added bonus is that aerosol cans are lightweight and can easily fit just about anywhere, so your operators can apply grease as needed in the field. Most aerosol greases will cover your equipment thoroughly until a full maintenance program is scheduled. Again, this keeps your equipment in the field longer with less downtime for maintenance at the shop. Finally, a reputable grease company should not lose the integrity of its grease through the aerosolizing process. Therefore, the aerosolized grease you purchase should be just as effective as the grease from a bucket or cartridge.

Alternatively, grease guns systems are excellent for applying traditional grease from a bucket or cartridge. These systems can be either hand pump, pneumatic or battery powered. No matter which system fits into your budget, grease guns are excellent for properly applying grease.

All of this could seem overwhelming, confusing or just simply not necessary. If you find yourself having more questions than answers about proper lubrication practices, or are wanting to try and save your company money by improving maintenance processes, don't be afraid to call and ask people in the grease industry questions. **M**



Grease comes in a wide variety, which might surprise many people. There are different color greases, different viscosities, different additives, different bases and different textures. (Photo provided by Lube-A-Boom)



Proper selection of an appropriate grease will potentially save your company thousands of dollars in maintenance costs, keep your fleet running in the field longer and make your equipment safer. (Photo provided by Lube-A-Boom)



A worker applies a dry film grease. Dry film grease applications can prevent debris from sticking to your boom and causing other maintenance issues (Photo provided by Lube-A-Boom)

Jonathon Roberts is the vice president of LUBE-A-BOOM, a company based in Indianapolis, Ind. LUBE-A-BOOM is a leader in providing specialty lubricants to the lift industry for telescoping boom cranes, aerial lifts, tele-handlers, forklifts and a multitude of other types of equipment and applications. Roberts graduated from Butler University in Indianapolis and the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. Prior to attending university, he worked closely with the founder of LUBE-A-BOOM, Harley Wilson.

U.S. cities best positioned for economic advancement in the new decade

LendEDU analyzed a variety of socioeconomic factors like recent income growth, population changes and educational attainment levels for hundreds of cities in the U.S. and released its ranking of how well positioned each city is for economic advancement in the new decade.

The site noted, “The 2020s will inevitably bring drastic changes that will impact the lives of millions of Americans; this list estimates which places in the U.S. will experience the most profound economic changers, whether for better or worse, over the next 10 years.”

To compile the list, LendEDU used two data sources, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In total, 380 of the largest metropolises were examined as part of the study, with their average scores across data points determining rankings. Those points included the percentage of 18-24 year old population with at least an associate’s degree; net business openings; net population change; percent change in income; number of residential building permits; percent change in employment to population ratio; and percent change in unemployment rate.

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