

# THE MUNICIPAL

*The Premier Magazine For America's Municipalities*

July 2020

## PUBLIC WORKS

### INSIDE:

Music on Main Street

Public works adapts to the pandemic

Cities invest in green streets



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22



## 17 Focus on Public Works



32

## 18 Focus on Public Works:

*Public works adapts in face of the pandemic*

## 22 Focus on Public Works:

*The pros and cons of green streets*

## 28 Focus on Public Works:

*Solving problems, one creative solution at a time*

## 32 Focus on Public Works:

*Martha's Vineyard town responds to climate change, beach erosion*

## 36 Focus on Public Works:

*Joining forces: Public Safety Executive Partnership proves successful*

## 40 Focus on Public Works:

*To the rescue: Public works departments assist other cities during disasters*

## 50 Public Safety: Cities

*nationwide deal with urban wildlife*

## 54 Water & Energy:

*Gardner, Kan., provides relief through utility bills*

## 58 Technology: Columbus,

*Ohio, tests out self-driving shuttle, connecting community and resources*

## 62 Parks & Environmental

*Services: McAllen casts off unflattering perception*

## 66 Streets, Highways &

*Bridges: Cities seek curbside balance*



50



58

### ON THE COVER

AirNetix of Smyrna, Ga., has developed a ruggedized outdoor wireless audio system called StreetSounds, specifically designed for "Music on Main Street." Nearly 100 customers have seen the benefits of StreetSounds, musically boosting festivals, parades, special events and the holiday season. The speakers also allow cities to broadcast announcements, such as weather alerts, Amber Alerts or other public emergency announcements. Learn more on page 10.





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## Meet our Staff

*publisher*  
**RON BAUMGARTNER**  
rbaumgartner@the-papers.com



*editor-in-chief*  
**DEB PATTERSON**  
dpatterson@the-papers.com



*editor*  
**SARAH WRIGHT**  
swright@the-papers.com



*publication manager*  
**CHRIS SMITH**  
chris@themunicipal.com



*senior account executive*  
**REES WOODCOCK**  
rees@themunicipal.com



*account executive*  
**Lalanya Bruner**  
lalanya@themunicipal.com



*graphic designer*  
**MARY LESTER**  
mlester@the-papers.com



*business manager*  
**CARRIE GORALCZYK**  
cgoralczyk@the-papers.com

*director of marketing*  
**KIP SCHUMM**  
kschumm@the-papers.com

*mail manager*  
**KHOEUN KHOEUTH**  
kkhoueuth@the-papers.com

# Departments

**8 Editor's Note:** *Public Works employees on the front line*

**10 From the Cover:** *Bring downtown alive with 'Music on Main Street'*

**12 Unique Claims to Fame:** *Thomas Edison National Historical Park, West Orange, N.J.*

**14 City Seals:** *Breckenridge, Colo.*

**16 Holiday:** *Independence Day*

**46 City Profile:** *Elko, Nev., holds diverse offerings*

**70 Conference Calendar**

**71 Product Spotlights**

**74 News & Notes**

**78 Top 10:** *Best minor league baseball towns*

**81 Advertiser Index**

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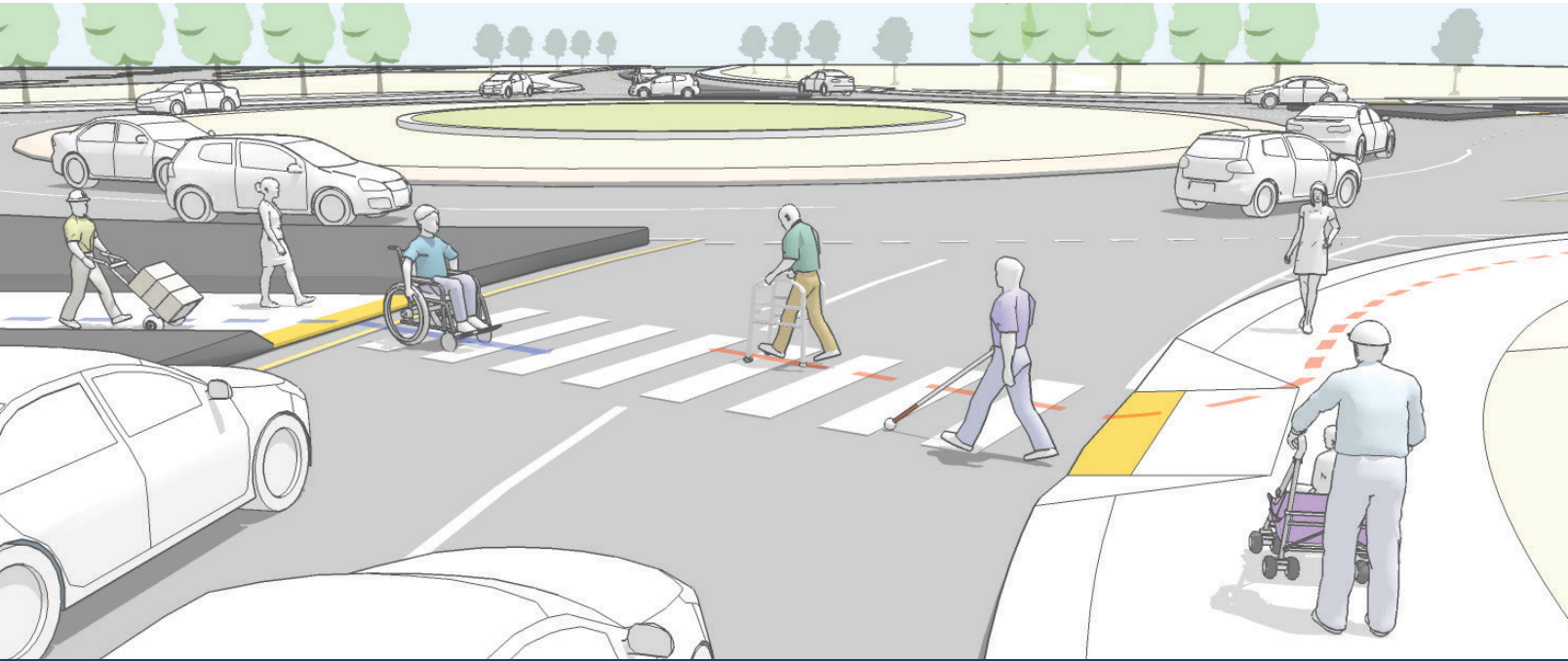
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PO Box 188 • 206 S. Main St., Milford, IN 46542  
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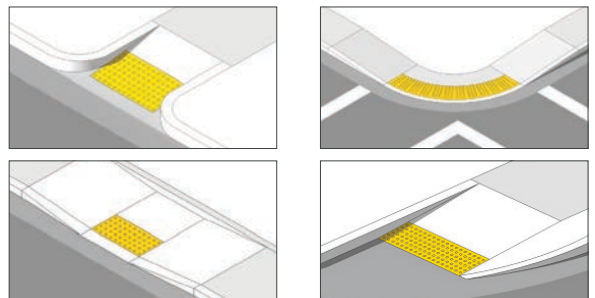


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# PUBLIC WORKS



## employees on the front line



Sarah Wright | Editor

**A** REEMERGING THEME IN THIS issue of *The Municipal* would be public works employees are often their communities' unsung heroes. While their work can fly under the radar and might not be quite as flashy as other departments', public works employees are essential. This is a point that has been driven home with the COVID-19 pandemic, during which public works crews served on the front line side-by-side with their police and fire counterparts. They kept their communities going in the most adverse conditions, some becoming personally impacted by COVID-19 through their efforts.

Writer Janet Patterson spoke with several public works departments across the U.S. as part of her "Public works adapts in face of the pandemic" article, which appears

in this issue. She asked each public works director how the pandemic was impacting their operations — from staffing changes to dealing with things that shouldn't be flushed following the great toilet paper shortage of 2020 — and whether ongoing projects were on schedule or not. What unfolded was a tapestry of creative solutions to reduce spreading the coronavirus, different project situations, including street work that was actually ahead of schedule, and above-and-beyond efforts to support their communities through the collection of masks and toilet paper.

2020 is throwing more punches than just COVID-19, and while rolling with them, departments are supporting their neighbors as well. Maggie Kenworthy shares how three cities in Tennessee and their public works departments came together to lift each other up after two became the sites of devastating tornados in March and April. It is so warming to see such neighborly kindness.

On the same theme of public works as first responders, Julie Young writes about Buckeye, Ariz.'s, Public Safety Executive Partnership, which brings public works

together with police and fire to craft an integrated, comprehensive response not only for public safety reasons but also to address the service needs of the departments' growing community.

In addition to these articles, we will focus on green street projects and Oak Bluff, Mass.'s, beach restoration project to combat erosion while spotlighting the Anacortes, Wash., Public Works Department, which has been tackling some innovative projects such as becoming the first entity in North America to install microduct into active water pipes.

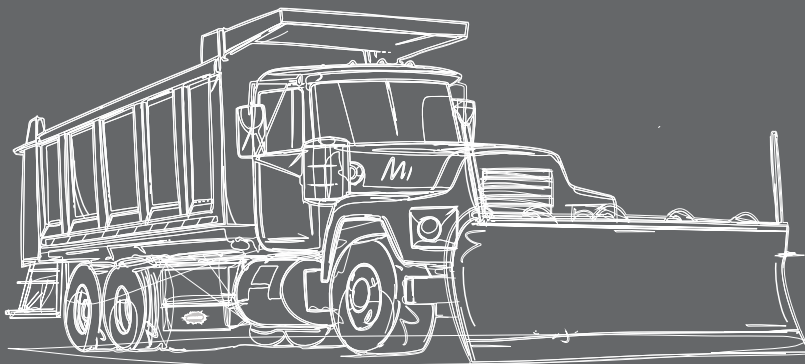
If you haven't recently thanked members of your public works department for all they do, definitely do so — they shouldn't remain unsung heroes. Whether completing capital projects, operating and maintaining necessary utilities, collecting trash, keeping facilities in tip-top condition or rescuing critters that became trapped in a storm drain, public works employees leave lasting impacts on their communities, and those efforts deserve to be recognized. **M**



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*StreetSounds' pole-mounted speakers blend into their surroundings while providing high-quality sound. (Photo provided)*

# Bring downtown alive with 'Music on Main Street'

By SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

**T**ODAY MORE CITIES ARE INVESTING IN THEIR DOWNTOWNS than ever before by completing a variety of streetscape and placemaking projects. While these updates generate a visually pleasing place to visit, cities shouldn't discount adding background music when crafting the perfect atmosphere for businesses, residents and visitors. However, if a streetscape project has just been wrapped up, public works departments are probably going to shy away from even the thought of excavation work. But what if a sound system was possible without digging or even stringing wiring from pole to pole? The dream certainly becomes more attainable and affordable with a new wireless solution.

AirNetix of Smyrna, Ga., has developed a ruggedized outdoor wireless audio system called StreetSounds, specifically designed for "Music on Main Street." The company has been selling the systems to small- and medium-sized towns across the U.S. and Canada since 2015.

Nearly 100 customers have seen the benefits of StreetSounds, musically boosting festivals, parades, special events and the holiday season. Having daily background music can encourage downtown visitors to sit a spell and simply enjoy their city's beautification efforts or support local downtown businesses. Such systems also have the benefit of mass notifications, whether for weather alerts, Amber Alerts or any other necessary public emergency announcement.

## A sound match

If you have a classic small-town Main Street, with a high concentration of shops, businesses and restaurants, plus ample outdoor seating, StreetSounds could very well be a match made in heaven, especially if you have a plan.



*A public works employee uses a bucket truck to install a StreetSounds pole-mounted speaker unit. (Photo provided)*

The first step is to determine where audio coverage is needed. The wireless audio system is designed to be mounted on existing streetlight poles from which it gets its AC power. Most small-town city blocks are between 250 feet and 350 feet long, with streetlight poles typically situated about 120 feet to 150 feet apart. This provides the perfect mounting location for the wireless speakers. Affixing the speakers in an alternating pattern, or zigzag pattern, can offer good audio coverage. Additionally, AC power must always be turned on, opposed to power that only comes on in the evening.



If the poles are not owned by the city, a pole attachment permission must be obtained from the owner, i.e., the local power company, similar to what is needed for holiday decorations or hanging baskets. The power company will take into account the size and weight of the speaker system as well as the power consumption.

Installation is typically done by public works personnel using either a bucket truck or ladders, depending on the height of the pole. A typical installation takes about 15 minutes per pole.

A StreetSounds network includes a single master transmitter into which the music or audio is fed. The master transmitter needs to be within radio range of at least one of the pole-mounted speaker units. It can even be located in an office somewhere on Main Street. Since the pole-mounted speaker units are “repeaters,” the signal is propagated from one pole to the next and can even go around corners and down side streets so the master transmitter does not have to cover all units directly.

### **Sound at work: Luck, Wis.**

The town of Luck, Wis., welcomed StreetSounds to its downtown a little over a year ago. “We always had a sound system,” Seth Petersen, director of public works, explained. “It was kind of homemade and not very good. During our Main Street rehab design phase, we looked at wired sound systems and also put in a conduit.”

By chance, the department heard of a wireless sound system, and after a quick Google search, it discovered StreetSounds. Petersen stated, “It was good luck!”

Once selected, the wireless sound system was approved by the board members, who appreciated its less expensive price tag compared to wired alternatives. Installation was easy, especially since the public works department had already placed brand-new light poles, which also hold the town’s holiday decorations and decorative flags. Since the poles and speakers are black, the department found black strapping and mocked one up: The results were favorable. The speakers simply blended in. Using computer remote access, a representative with AirNetix assisted with final configuration and made sure the network was functioning as it should.

“I was watching the mouse move, and then the next thing, it was playing music downtown,” Petersen shared, noting since then, “It has been very seamless.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, StreetSounds created an opportunity for the town of Luck to support and honor its high school graduates with a parade downtown. Petersen, through the use of his cellphone, played “Pomp and Circumstance” over the StreetSounds system as the graduates drove by and the community turned out to cheer them.

This is only one application of StreetSounds by Luck. Petersen shared the town plays classic ’50s music for two hours over lunch. The wireless sound system also enriches the holidays with kid-friendly Halloween music played in October, followed by Christmas music from Thanksgiving through Christmas and the winter carnival. The system is also used heavily during the Lucky Days Festival, playing both music and being used for announcements, especially during the parade.

“Someday I would like to play a movie or set up karaoke,” Petersen said, noting nothing has been determined yet for such events. “But it’s nice to have the option.”




*A typical installation of a pole-mounted speaker unit takes about 15 minutes per pole. Pictured, an employee with the city of Magee, Miss., installs one just above the city’s existing flag mount. (Photo provided)*



*StreetSounds can provide background music to downtown while also having the added benefit of being able to broadcast mass notifications, whether for weather alerts, Amber Alerts or any other necessary public emergency announcement. (Photo provided)*

And the new wireless system has been embraced by the community, with Petersen commenting, “Everyone has been happy. The old system was hard to understand, but the new system is so clear and sounds so good. Even a board member who deals with sound systems is amazed.”

Other nearby communities have noticed as well, and Petersen said he has fielded questions from them about StreetSounds. “It just sounds so good.”

StreetSounds inventor and AirNetix President Mike Hooper said, “Our biggest thrill is to watch the faces of our customers as they first turn on the music. Their ear-to-ear grin makes all of our hard work worthwhile.” 

For information, visit AirNetix LLC’s website, [www.streetsoundswireless.com](http://www.streetsoundswireless.com).





*A wooden sign beckons visitors to Thomas Edison National Historical Park, which includes his home, Glenmont, and laboratory and factory complex. (Amber Marie Photography/Shutterstock.com)*

By RAY BALOGH | The Municipal



*Thomas Edison purchased Glenmont, the home where he and his second wife, Mina, lived until he passed away in 1931. The home had 23 rooms when Edison purchased it. He added six bathrooms and wired the entire house for electricity. (Joseph Sohm/Shutterstock.com)*

**His family called him “Al.” His teachers called him “too stupid to learn anything.” But through a lifetime of stratospheric curiosity, unrelenting inventiveness and an unrivaled work ethic, Thomas Alva Edison has earned the invariable honorific uttered even now across the globe: “genius.”**

Edison, the youngest of the seven children of Samuel and Nancy Elliott Edison, averaged one patent every two weeks during his working years. He earned his first patent, an electrographic vote recorder, at age 22, and his genius, which he self-described as “1% inspiration and 99% perspiration,” yielded 1,093 U.S. patents and 512 international patents.

His last U.S. patent was awarded in 1933, two years after the 84-year-old died at his home, Glenmont, on October 18, 1931.

Edison was born in Milan, Ohio, on Feb. 11, 1847. When he was 7 years old, the family moved to Port Huron, Mich., where he spent the rest of his childhood. His mother, a devout Presbyterian with a formal education, taught him reading, writing and arithmetic at home, an education he supplemented by insatiable reading of





*One of Thomas Edison's hobbies was experimenting in his basement laboratory as a child. He carried that interest through his working years. The National Park Service maintains Edison's lab in its national historical park in West Orange, N.J. (Helen89/Shutterstock.com)*



*The manufacturing facilities in the park have been preserved with their original machinery. (Helen89/Shutterstock.com)*

scientific and technical books and conducting chemistry experiments in the basement of the family home.

Later in life, the Wizard of Menlo Park recalled, "My mother was the making of me. She was so true, so sure of me, and I felt I had something to live for, someone I must not disappoint."

Edison, always a diligent worker, sold candy, fruit snacks and newspapers on a train that rolled through Port Huron to Detroit. Eventually he printed his own newspaper, the Grand Trunk Herald, while riding the train.

He became a railroad telegrapher at age 15, taking messages, despite his already waning hearing, for trains and for the Union Army during the Civil War. Seven years later he moved to New York City and improved the existing stock tickers. He formed a company to produce the new technology in Newark, N.J., meanwhile making several improvements to the telegraph, including enabling it to send four messages simultaneously.

He married his first wife, Mary Stilwell, on Christmas Day, 1871; they had three children together. In 1876 they moved from Newark to Menlo Park, N.J., where he built his most renowned laboratory.

He invented the phonograph in 1877, and the first human voice to be recorded and played back was Edison's recital of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." The following year Edison and his employees, called "muckers," commenced work on the incandescent light bulb, an existing technology that he sought to make commercially viable.

He achieved his first patent on the project, "Improvement in Electric Lights," in October 1878, and patented his final incarnation 12 months later. Historians and legendmongers variously number Edison's "failures" in the process. Estimates range from 1,000 to 2,998 to 6,635 to 10,000. No one knows the exact — or even approximate — figure. In any event, Edison did not consider the experiments "failures." He referred to them as "steps" on the way to success.

In 1884 Stilwell passed away and one year later Edison met 20-year-old Mina Miller, whose father was an inventor in Ohio. Ever the devotee of Morse code — his first two children were nicknamed

Dot and Dash — Edison taught Mina the alphabet and they often communicated by that means when others were around.

One day he tapped into her hand: "Would you marry me?" She tapped back, "Yes." The two were married on Feb. 24, 1886, and they had three children together.

Mina wanted to live in the country, so Edison purchased a 23-room home on 13 1/2 acres in West Orange, N.J. The next year he built a nearby laboratory, one of the world's largest at the time and 10 times larger than his facility in Menlo Park.

He surrounded the laboratory with a factory complex that employed up to 10,000 workers at its peak during World War I. Edison worked for the military during the war, spending several months aboard a navy ship in Long Island Sound experimenting on techniques for detecting submarines.

Most of Edison's inventions fall into eight main categories, such as electric lights and power, sound recording, batteries, motion pictures, telegraphs and telephones. Some of his lesser-known inventions include:

- Pneumatic stencil pen, the forerunner of the modern tattoo gun
- Magnetic ore separator, to separate iron ore from less valuable ores
- Vacuum preservation of fruits, vegetables and other organic substances
- Concrete house and furniture
- The "spirit phone," which could allegedly contact the dead

The home, grounds, laboratory and manufacturing facilities have been preserved and are maintained as Thomas Edison Historical National Park administer by the National Park Service.

Glenmont, which contains its original furnishings, was designated a national historical site in 1955. The laboratory was declared a national monument the following year.

As this article went to press, the complex was closed because of the coronavirus pandemic shutdown. [M](#)

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## Breckenridge, Colo.

The town of Breckenridge, Colo., a home rule municipality with a population of 5,038, has one of the simplest city seals in the country: a silhouette of a snowcapped mountain in white and navy blue.

Breckenridge, the county seat of Summit County, is located at the base of Tenmile Range and centers much of its commerce on winter ski tourism. The first ski trails were cut in 1961 and the town hosts several annual winter festivals, including:

- Ullr Fest, named for the Norse god of snow
- International Snow Sculpture Championships, which attracts competitors from around the world to create works of art from 20-ton blocks of snow
- Winter Dew Tour, featuring prominent names in extreme snowboarding and skiing
- Imperial Challenge, the local version of a triathlon held on one of the nearby mountains
- The 5 Peaks, the longest ski mountaineering race in North America
- Breck Ascent Series, with races up the mountain
- Backcountry Film Fest, held every January

The end of the ski season is celebrated with the annual monthlong Spring Fever festival featuring various family activities.

During the summer, Breckenridge hosts three or four full-orchestra concerts a week and several art fairs downtown. Other summer diversions include mountain biking, hiking and fly fishing.

At the base of one of the mountains the town operates a fun park that includes zip lines, roller coaster, alpine slides, Jeep tours and scenic rides on the "Colorado SuperChair."

Breckenridge boasts one of the state's largest historical districts, a 12-square-block area that includes about 250 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and 171 buildings with points of historical interest.

The town was founded in 1859 by a cadre of gold prospectors, among them General George E. Spencer, to serve miners during the Pikes Peak gold rush. The town's mining district yielded 1 million troy ounces—more than 34,000 tons—of gold.

Spencer proposed naming the settlement Breckinridge, after John Cabell Breckinridge, then vice president under James Buchanan, in a successful attempt to entice the establishment of a local post office.

Two years later the name was changed to its present spelling as a communal act of rebellion when the vice president became a brigadier general with the Confederates during the Civil War.

For more information, visit [www.gobreck.com](http://www.gobreck.com) or [www.townofbreckenridge.com](http://www.townofbreckenridge.com). 



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*Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.  
We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be  
fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.*

— Ronald Reagan

**Happy Independence Day from The Municipal**



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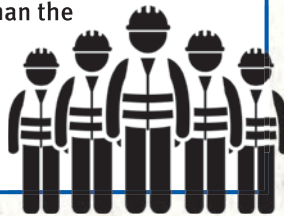
In a 10-year period, Shawnee, Kan., is expecting a cost savings of this amount per mile in milling, overlay and plowing through its Green Streets Initiative.

*Read how Monona, Iowa, and Shawnee, Kan., are adopting green streets on page 22.*

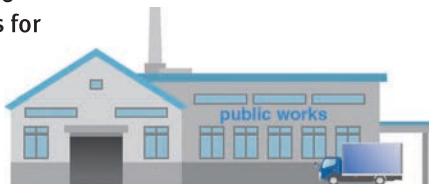
**10,000**

With only 10,000 of the usual 20,000 Virginia Tech students left in town and no commencement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Blacksburg, Va.'s, public works department was able to work on streets earlier than the normal June work schedule.

*See how public works departments around the country have adapted to the current pandemic on page 18.*

**\$11.4 million**

In February, Menasha, Wis., Common Council voted 7-0 to approve the construction bids for an \$11.4 million public works facility at 455 Baldwin St.



*Source: <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/local/2020/02/18/menasha-approves-construction-11-million-public-works-facility/4741313002/>*

**\$2.5 million**

Belfast, Maine, City Council approved a bond for \$2.5 million to pay for wastewater treatment plant improvements that include a ventilation system upgrade, new blowers to aerate wastewater, new sludge presses and the installation of a wood pellet boiler as a fossil fuel alternative.



*Source: <https://waldo.villagesoup.com/p/city-approves-wastewater-bond-gets-update-on-old-public-works-site-cleanup/1860180>*

Focus on:

# PUBLIC WORKS

**1.8 million pounds**

The amount of brush that city of Knoxville, Tenn., Public Works employees cleared while assisting Chattanooga, Tenn., after the latter was hit by a devastating tornado April 12.

*Read the experiences of three Tennessee cities and their public works departments as they assisted each other after devastating tornados on page 40.*

**530 gallons**

Anacortes, Wash.'s, public works department used 530 gallons of yellow paint and 480 gallons of white paint during 2019. Its streets and utilities division maintains 126 miles of roads, 3,622 street signs and 410 miles of sidewalks.



*Learn more about this public works department on page 28.*

**1,400**

Public works crews in Fairfax County, Va., were treated to 1,400 free meals thanks to local food trucks and food vendors.



*Source: <https://www.restonnow.com/2020/05/21/food-trucks-serve-free-meals-to-public-works-crews-in-herndon-fairfax-county/>*



# Public works adapts in face of the pandemic



By JANET PATTERSON | The Municipal

**Throughout the country, municipal public works departments have found themselves doing more than just wearing masks and social distancing to keep their operations running during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Whether the city has two public works employees or 200 the last few months have not exactly been business as usual.

In the town of St. Clair, Minn., the public works department consists of two employees, and the primary concern was to keep those two workers healthy. Without the pair, St. Clair's streets, parks, water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer would suffer, translating to pain for residents.

Around the country there have been standard practices with a twist, as social distancing, face masks, splitting shifts, changing lunchroom arrangements and altering workspaces were implemented to stem the spread of the virus.

"For one thing, we've installed foot pulls on every door here," said Jefferson City, Mo., Public Works Director Matt Morasch. "I can actually get from the front door of the building all the way into my office without ever touching a door handle, and it didn't cost a lot to do."

The public works department of 130 employees sprang into action making adjustments when the Missouri capital city's schools closed in mid-March. "Our public

works department is used to dealing with storms and other emergencies, so we've had some practice with staggering shifts and making adjustments."

Morasch said in addition to installing the foot pulls on the doors, the department changed working arrangements, moving some employees' workspaces from inside the building to headquartering them in their trucks, which are assigned to an employee to use exclusively.

While those who wear protective gear were well equipped, Morasch said the city enhanced any equipment that needed it.

Since transit is one of the department's responsibilities, Morasch said the city made changes that kept the buses running. One of the changes was to install liners around the drivers. Passengers enter and exit the buses at the back instead of the front, and fares were waived to avoid the need for drivers to handle money.

"We are trying to keep the drivers as comfortable as possible," Morasch added.

The city's wastewater system is also one of the public works department's responsibilities. With the shortage of toilet paper and the

**ABOVE:** Jefferson City, Mo.'s, public works department oversees transportation, and to keep drivers safe, liners were installed around them. (Photo provided)

increased use of disinfecting wipes, making sure that no objects clog the system was an issue that required some education.

"We put out press releases not to flush those wipes, and we've had no overflows."

Another concern for the wastewater system has been the disposal of kegs of beer that were left unconsumed when restaurants and bars closed.

"We've been teaching them the most responsible way to dispose of the beer," he added, further explaining the disposal of large quantities of beer can be detrimental to the wastewater system. For that reason, limiting the amount of beer being disposed and the timing of the disposal is important to wastewater systems in Jefferson City as well as other municipalities.

In addition to keeping its employees safe, Morasch said the city has tried not to cause additional stress to families of employees who may be dealing with child care issues or sick family members.

"We're allowing people to go negative on sick leave so that they don't have to worry about the need to stay home." He added flexibility and communication have been key to keeping the department running as smoothly as possible. "We've had to modify as we go."

Jefferson City has mostly been able to continue with public works projects; however, shortages of items, such as sewer pipe



because of the temporary closing of businesses in other parts of the country, has slowed some projects.

In Dunwoody, Ga., the state's stay-at-home order has reduced the amount of sales tax collected, while fewer visitors to the area meant a drop in hotel/motel tax revenue. The decrease in both has affected some capital projects, according to public works Director Michael Smith.

Dunwoody, a northern suburb of Atlanta, with a population just under 50,000, found that, because of the stay-at-home order, the low traffic volume made it possible to change traffic signal timing and remove lane closure time restrictions for construction on roadways. Smith said by observing recommended safety precautions to prevent spread of the virus, paving operations and other projects continued.

Stay-at-home also meant more people walking and biking Dunwoody's more than 65 miles of sidewalk. Smith said this led to "increased focus on bicycle and pedestrian concerns" for safety.

Parks maintenance climbed to the top of the projects the public works department is doing in Blacksburg, Va., since parks are closed during the stay-at-home period.

"(The closure) has allowed us to do annual maintenance work in closed parks and recreation buildings that normally occurs once a year in August," noted Kelly Mattingly, Blacksburg's director of public works.

Although many of the city's capital projects have been deferred because of budget concerns, he said Blacksburg utility crews have focused primarily on current projects, such as meter and water tap installations.

The city of 42,000 is home to Virginia Tech, which closed its doors in the spring, leaving only 10,000 of the usual 30,000 students in town. Because there was no commencement, Mattingly said the city has been able to work on streets earlier than the usual June work schedule.

Like other public works departments around the country, the Blacksburg department implemented procedures that discouraged employees from congregating at the end of a shift. "We closed all common areas such as lunchrooms, training rooms and other gathering spaces within buildings."

Vehicles are restricted to one occupant, and employees are sent home with pay in the event of inclement weather and if the workday ends 30 minutes before the end of a shift.

"This all avoids gatherings of employees," Mattingly added.

Like many cities around the country, Blacksburg's garage and administration building were closed to the public while office staff worked from home with VPN — or virtual private network — secure access connection capability.

Online meetings, like WebEx and Zoom, have become the norm for many public works departments to be able to gather and keep department communications open.

While many municipalities have been concerned about keeping employees on the job, there is also the concern about too many people in one place at one time. Like other cities, Crystal, Minn., split its staff into two shifts.

"This has been to provide more coverage in the city so that we can be quicker to respond to emergencies, such as water main breaks, sewer backups, etc., that may compromise where people are living," Crystal's Director of Public Works and city engineer Mark Ray said.



Employees Dan Estranero, left, and Christina Alberti wear masks from Santa Cruz's 10,000 Mask Project. (Photo provided)



Santa Cruz, Calif., implemented a 10,000 Masks Project that helped both Santa Cruz workers and residents reduce the spread of COVID-19. (Photo provided)

In addition to helping extend the department's coverage, Ray said it also ensured more separation of staff members.

Ray added the city has also been very intentional about providing the most appropriate protective equipment to public works employees. "We provided cloth masks to all staff to conserve higher-rated masks such as N-95 for higher-risk situations."

On California's central coast, the city of Santa Cruz's public works department implemented alternate week work schedules for parking services, wastewater collection, and fleet and street maintenance divisions to both reduce employee health risks and prevent interruption to essential public services. The city's sanitation, landfill and waste reduction staff have maintained their usual schedules with the precaution of limiting the number of people in changing rooms and other spaces, Janice Bisgaard, the city's community relations specialist, said. ►



The city of 64,000 implemented a 10,000 Masks Project that helped both Santa Cruz workers and residents reduce the spread of COVID-19. Public works employees have also been tasked with collecting and distributing related supplies, such as disinfectant and PPE, to all city departments.

Bisgaard pointed out that another of the added responsibilities the public works team has had is addressing “the needs of our unsheltered population.” The department has built and maintained shelters and health care sites to aid these city residents.

In places where the public works department is responsible for water and electric utilities, shutoff orders for unpaid bills have been suspended. Longmont, Colo., issued this statement to local residents, “In order to help Longmont’s residents care for themselves and their families, the city will not disconnect a customer’s utility services during this time. After the pandemic has passed, notice will be given before disconnects resume.”

Longmont Public Works also pointed out the need to consider the variety of weather during the pandemic, which began at a time when in some parts of the country winter and spring intersect. “Mobility throughout the community remains a priority. Street sweeping will continue as normally scheduled, and snow and ice control operations are being launched as necessary.”

But work hasn’t been just wastewater, bus routes and Zoom meetings during the pandemic. In Minnesota, Crystal’s public works



*The Santa Cruz Wastewater Facility collected more than 7,000 rolls of toilet paper to include in weekly Healthy Food Program grocery bags. (Photo provided)*

employees helped organize birthday brigades for children whose birthday parties have been cancelled in the days of staying at home.

The Santa Cruz Wastewater Facility collected more than 7,000 rolls of toilet paper to include in weekly Healthy Food Program grocery bags. Bisgaard said the distribution “supported the Santa Cruz County stay-in-place order while reducing the use of toilet paper alternatives that caused sewer blockages and spills.” **M**

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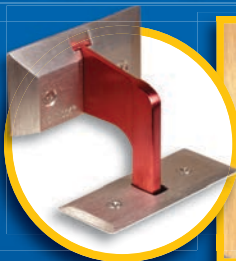
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*A completed green street project in Monona, Iowa, was improved with permeable pavers. The project was completed in 2016. (Photo provided)*

# The pros and cons of green streets

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

**Some cities are said to have streets paved with gold — these cities have “green streets.” City officials in Monona, Iowa, and Shawnee, Kan., were happy to share the pros and cons of having green street projects in their cities.**

Monona completed two green street projects and was able to capitalize on funding so the city only paid a fraction of the project’s cost.

Jon Biederman, PE, LSI, branch manager of Fehr-Graham Engineering & Environmental, Monona’s engineering firm, explained in 2013 the city had a State Revolving Fund loan for improvements at the wastewater plant and the Department of Natural Resources was holding out a special prize — adjustable interest rates that would allow funding for a separate water improvement quality project. Biederman said it wasn’t a grant but basically enabled the city to get a free project.

“The timing was such that they fit into that and were the first sponsored project in the state,” he said.

The first project was the parking lot at the aquatic center. Biederman said the center was new, but “the lot was rough — it had steep slopes, crushed stone and no organization to how people parked.”

The aquatic center is right next to a stormwater quality improvement project so it fit within the framework to get the sponsored project funding. Monona put in permeable pavers and used pavers for striping in between spaces instead of painting stripes. “We were able to make a smaller footprint and park more cars,” Biederman said.

With the permeable pavers, any water in the lot or oil, transmission fluid or metals that might fall off a vehicle are all taken below in the



*Bulldog Boulevard in Monona, Iowa, is prepped for permeable pavers in a green street project. Bulldog Boulevard was the second of two green street projects made possible through a sponsored project in conjunction with a State Revolving Fund. (Photo provided)*

ground stone base where it treats the water and releases it very slowly. By greatly reducing runoff, it improves water quality.

Biederman said the pavers require a little more maintenance but not having to paint and repaint stripes every couple of years probably balances it out.





*The aquatic center parking lot in Monona, Iowa, was a crushed stone and dirt parking lot prior to becoming a green street project. Engineer Joe Biederman said it certainly didn't match the nice, new aquatic center. There was also no organization to the way people parked. (Photo provided)*

"I think about 90% of this project was covered by the sponsored project," he said.

This project was completed in the summer of 2014 and the cost was \$260,907.02, and the SRF sponsored project paid \$245,000 so the city's portion of the cost was \$15,907.02.

The second project was a couple of years later. The city received another SRF loan for a wastewater improvement and was able to improve an adjacent street to the aquatic center, Bulldog Boulevard. The street had been marked for improvement, but the city wasn't able to do concrete or asphalt, so when able to pull it into the wastewater project, it became more affordable. This project was completed in 2016 and the total cost was \$205,526.99. Biederman wasn't sure the exact amount but thought SRF paid for about \$150,000-\$175,000 of that cost.

According to Biederman, permeable pavers can be plowed just like any road, but sand can't be used because it would get into the cracks. Deicer and salt can be used. As for other green infrastructure projects in Monona, he said the only thing that he was aware of was the city had put a stormwater management ordinance in place.

Biederman admitted the permeable pavers cost more, but in some instances, cities may be able to reduce the cost in other ways.

Monona City Administrator Barbara Collins shared the benefits of a green street project, including the visual appeal of the pavers and controlling the dust of a gravel road and parking lot.

"The great stormwater management benefits of the pavers and the financial aspects of running the costs through our SRF loan — getting two projects for the price of one," Collins said. "There really aren't any disadvantages. If I had to list something, it would be that there's some maintenance to the permeable pavers. You have to have a vacuum sweeper to go over it occasionally to suck up any dirt that may clog the small rocks between the pavers."

Collins added if a city applies for a SRF loan and the sponsor project is still being offered, "I would really look around the town to see where you could do the project."



*The permeable paver parking lot at the aquatic center in Monona, Iowa, has different colored pavers used as stripes between parking spaces and for distinguishing the handicapped spaces as well. Doing so cuts down on the cost of having to repaint those lines and symbols every couple of years. (Photo provided)*

#### **Shawnee, Kan.**

Shawnee has just begun its green streets projects with a couple of trial projects starting construction soon, aimed at spurring development on its west side. Assistant City Manager Caitlin Gard, senior development engineer Raegan Long and community development Director Doug Allmon are spearheading this project and said city officials and planning boards have praised their plans.

Gard said over the course of the past year, the city started working on a strategic plan, something it hasn't had until now. Shawnee is a large geographic area of about 42 square miles with a population of about 68,000; it's not very dense, but it has board demographics — physically and in terms of age and income. Some of the city would also be considered rural.

As thoughts focused on Shawnee's future, Long and Allmon were brought into the planning process. A couple of the things they looked at included how to promote development and get infrastructure installed; how to get a comprehensive plan for a land use guide in sync with how they wanted the city to be; and then they considered whether or not all the streets needed to be the same.

Long said everyone considered what they wanted the street to feel like when drove on. Finding cost savings was another discussed topic. "Not having much of a tax base (in that part of town) makes it difficult," she said.

There were a lot of flood plain issues and a lot of rocky material in western Shawnee, making it difficult for large developments. When looking at ways to save, not installing curbs and gutters or a traditional enclosed storm sewer system would cut costs. Instead, more of a ditch system approach was examined, where water would flow through a creek system and out to the Kansas River. Most of western Shawnee has residential enclaves where the streets were never properly engineered and site distancing is difficult, according to Long. ►



She said a big priority for the green streets project was “incorporating our trail system into the green streets providing connectivity to parks, subdivisions, even schools.”

“We’re known for our trail systems and our outstanding park department. Every one-third of a mile has green space, parks or trails, and we want more connectivity to the trails,” she said.

Shawnee also plans to reduce the lane width; instead of the traditional three-lane road with a center turn lane, it would reduce the lane width on these green streets. Narrower streets reduce pavement, which saves on costs, labor and maintenance as the city is plowing one-third less. Green streets also provide better water quality by decreasing runoff.

“The big picture for us was recreational use and sustainability. We’re hoping to encourage economic development in a most cost-efficient way,” Long said.

Gard said the cost estimate for construction of 1 mile of road was \$5.48 million versus the cost of a mile of green street at \$3.38 million. That’s a savings of \$2,104,080 in construction due to eliminating curbs and gutters, one lane and enclosed storm sewer. Over a 10-year period, a cost savings of \$19,490 per mile in milling, overlay and plowing has been estimated.

Long said Shawnee is incorporating the green street projects into the comprehensive plan for 2021, but it has a couple of trial projects to be completed this year, and the first is starting construction next month.

Allmon said, “Part of the profile that’s different from a typical ditch-style road is that we’re including trails and connector streets adjacent to the ditch using sidewalks and multimodal as part of the street section.” This should make them more useable for residents.

According to Allmon, many of these streets were annexed into the city from the county, and as they were developed, it happened “almost piecemeal with no connectivity. In many cases, the horizontal and vertical alignments were not safe for some of the travel capacity we’ll be experiencing.”

He said in the past when development started, Shawnee required that streets be developed to the highest standard, but that meant sometimes only one side of the road was improved or that there was no connectivity to the collector or arterial road. Ultimately, planners



*This fire truck gives a drainage demonstration at Monona, Iowa’s, aquatic center parking lot, which was improved with permeable pavers that allow water to seep down into the base. (Photo provided)*

decided to have a more strategic plan and make sure the road is developed to the best extent and that improvements are made on both sides of the road.

As far as benefits, Long stated, “Hopefully, (there will be) more economic development. If we enhance the businesses and restaurants in the western portion of Shawnee, people will stay local.”

Stormwater treatment and quality is also a benefit as the temperatures are kept down since it’s not going through an enclosed system and, instead, flows more naturally through the ditches. More improved streets mean better walkability and quicker response times from police and fire. A long-term benefit is the discovery that there’s no need to overbuild roads if not necessary, creating extended cost savings.

“We’re not building ultimate roads and having them go nowhere,” Allmon said.

As for disadvantages, Allmon noted, “This is an interim solution. If density increases or changes, they may end up having to widen the street someday.”

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*Clare Road in Shawnee, Kan., is one of the inherited county roads that was annexed into the city; it is on the list of streets that are likely to be improved in the city's recently approved Green Street Initiative. (Photo provided)*

It is possible that in 50 years Shawnee may have to go back and widen the road, which might be costly; however, Allmon said because of the city's study, this is not expected to occur. Still, some measures are being taken just in case. Shawnee is acquiring the ultimate right of way now, and any trees or utilities will be placed outside of a possible widening of the road.

Long said another potential disadvantage is the mowing of the ditches and how it'll look, but every subdivision has a homeowners association, and the HOA will be responsible for mowing and maintaining the ditches.

"The city may have to go in and re-ditch at some point," she said, but that's not unusual.

Gard said there's also an educational piece to this project. "For so long we've said curbs and gutters were better."

So if residents are questioning their omission in these new green streets, they can be shown the amenities that are a part of the design, including streetlights and walkability.

Allmon said part of that educational piece is letting people know with green streets there's not as much disruption. "With this we have the flexibility to plan around obstacles, we can engineer around them so it's not as significant an impact as a true curb-and-gutter street."

Long added the green street project can use recycled asphalt or crushed aggregate as a base and the streetlights will be LED.

"This is great safety improvement as well," Allmon stated. "Those inherited county roads are real narrow and unlit, so from a safety standard, this is big."

Finally, Long noted, "We're striving to make it as green as possible. Each green street is unique."

When it comes to initiating green infrastructure in your city or town, it may mean looking around your city with green-colored glasses. 

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*Anacortes, Wash., has a working waterfront that has cultivated a strong maritime industry. The city aims to strengthen that industry while crafting a vibrant community people want to live in and visit. (Photo by Del Zane)*

# Solving problems, one creative solution at a time

By SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal



*Mayor Laurie Gere and Washington State Rep. Rick Larsen talk about the fiber project. (Photo provided by city of Anacortes)*

**A city on an island, Anacortes, Wash., is home to approximately 17,000 residents and has a working waterfront with a strong maritime industry that employs fishermen, ferry workers and fish plant workers.**

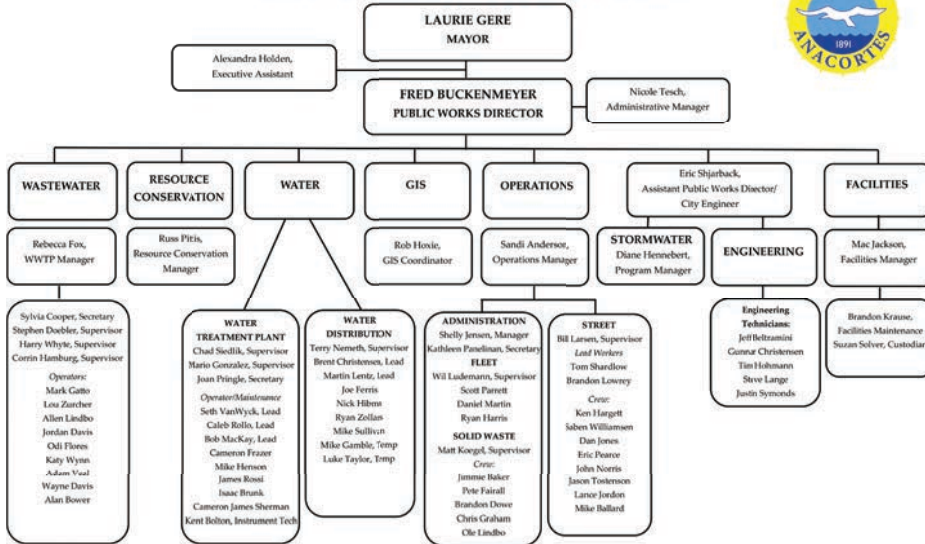
Creating a sustainable maritime economy has been a major focus for the city, with Mayor Laurie Gere noting in her 2019 State of the City remarks, “Our strategic plan was built to support and grow all of our existing maritime business with providing infrastructure, technology and workforce development. We are seeking high tech, marine oriented businesses that use technology and provide living wage positions.”

In addition to creating a dynamic, robust local economy, Gere and the city council are pursuing several other priority issues aimed at furthering citizens’ quality of life. In all these missions, Anacortes Public Works and its approximately 80 employees are hustling to satisfy their community’s needs while staying on top of regulations and codes.

Leading the effort is public works Director Fred Buckenmeyer, who challenges his team with annual goals that feature tag lines like



## CITY OF ANACORTES



**LEFT:** This graph outlines the organization of the Anacortes Public Works Department, from Mayor Laurie Gere to Public Works Director Fred Buckenmeyer and each of the divisions. (Graph provided)

the community. “We have between 150 to 200 customers and are trying to get to 7,000 when (the system) becomes self-sustaining. So far, we have a 35% connection rate.”

Thirty-three miles of fiber optic backbone has been installed since the two-year pilot project was authorized in the 2019-2020 biennial budget. The three pilot areas included the commercial business district, old town, and along and slightly west of M Avenue between 24th and 32nd streets. Service was first offered to businesses in the Central Business District in late September 2019, with Barrett Financial becoming the first privately owned building to receive fiber optic internet service from Anacortes.

Fiber deployment continued this March when Robinson Brothers Construction extended the backbone of the fiber optic cables from the library to the Multiport Service Terminals; city staff then followed up with the installation from MST to the customer premise. Buckenmeyer explained four public works employees in the water division were cross-trained as fiber installers and are certified splicers and installers. Currently, the goal is to have around 2,300 premises with the city’s fiber optic network available for connection by the end of 2020.

COVID-19 has further highlighted the benefits of having fiber optics available to the community, especially since during the pandemic, all manner of learning and business were conducted via various telecommunications technologies. In a world without COVID-19, Buckenmeyer estimated having available fiber optics would entice businesses to locate to Anacortes, but as it is, most companies are pressing pause on such endeavors.

Since the fiber project began, Anacortes Public Works Division has fielded calls from other cities in Oregon and even Kentucky, and Buckenmeyer advises such cities, “To pick something small and try it out. It’s hard to describe how simple (the fiber) is until you try it. You end up saying why didn’t I think of that.” ▶



Fred Buckenmeyer, public works director, left, and Washington State Gov. Jay Inslee look at the CRALEY Group Limited pipe-in-pipe method. (Photo provided by city of Anacortes)

“What’s the problem we’re trying to solve” or “Get it done.”

“Fred’s strong leadership asks what’s the problem and let’s fix it,” Nicole Tesch, administrative manager for the public works division, said, noting this approach has led the department to fill needs in innovative and creative ways.

One example of this ingenuity is turning heads across the U.S. after the project was featured in the APWA Reporter’s January 2020 issue. Anacortes became the first entity

in North America to install microduct into its active water pipes using the CRALEY Group Limited pipe-in-pipe system. This method proved cost effective while reducing environmental impact by negating the need for new lines through marine waterways, fragile wetlands, private properties and flood-protection dikes along the Skagit River.

“It started as a public works project to replace our radio telemetry system,” Buckenmeyer explained, adding while doing that, public works was able to bring broadband to





*Members of the streets and utilities division lay asphalt. (Photo provided by city of Anacortes)*

Tesch added, “Fred’s thinking outside the box on how can we solve the radio telemetry problem and bring operations up to the 21st century was vital.”

The approach also made funding available for broadband. “Without that kickstart, without that public works backbone that initial money is hard to come by,” Buckenmeyer stated.

This spring the Association of Washington Cities named Anacortes as one of the five cities to win the organization’s Municipal Excellence Award, which honors cities that put creative ideas to use for their communities. Anacortes was honored for its installation of fiber into active water lines.

However, the fiber project is only one creative solution the public works team is pursuing.

“The city of Anacortes Public Works is continuing to provide its basic public works services in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic,” Buckenmeyer shared. “The pandemic has caused a slight delay on timeline for projects but not much has changed to our commitment to these goals.”

A pavement management plan is being implemented that will upgrade the pavement condition of Anacortes’ street system. The

streets and utilities division maintains approximately 126 miles of roads, 3,622 street signs and 410 miles of sidewalks. This new management plan will make that mission easier and allow for better service to residents.

“It’s not just a sidewalk. It leads to the flowerbed that leads to a neighbor’s house,” Tesch said. “We like to make an extra effort to serve the community.”

A new asset management program and ArcGIS mapping system is also being unrolled. The GIS/Cartograph division’s work is used by virtually every city department for numerous tasks. Community members also benefit since they are able to view interactive web mapping of everything from real estate to restaurants to cemetery mapping, the latter includes headstone images and obituaries when available.

Two ongoing projects are constructing a new wastewater plant outfall pipeline and completing the final elements of an upgrade to the city’s regional water treatment plant, which is located near Mount Vernon on the east bank of the Skagit River and serves 40,000 to 60,000 people within the region. In 2013, the city essentially replaced the previous water plant, which had been built in the ’70s, with a new one on the same site.

System improvements to the water treatment plant included an intake pump replacement; controls modifications to improve reliability of the plant’s extensive instrumentation and control network; filter bay regrouting; the installation of a second raw water pipeline underneath the Skagit River between the water treatment plant and intake station; the addition of a second clearwell; and a conversion to liquid chlorine from chlorine gas.

The plant had a 100% drinking water compliance rate in 2019 and has been honored by the Washington State Department of Health with The Most Innovative Water System Award in 2019.

“We’ve also brought into our water system a ShakeAlert notification system,” Buckenmeyer said.

He explained this system, developed by the U.S. Geologic Survey, detects significant earthquakes using thousands of sensors along the West Coast and sends out alerts so quickly they reach people seconds before shaking arrives. The system can automatically shut down Anacortes’ reservoir and waterlines to protect the city’s water system.

## Quick Anacortes Public Works stats

Here are some stats from the Anacortes Public Works Department’s fiscal year 2019 report.

- 160 miles of water pipe maintained
- 10,000 samples collected for water quality
- 33 miles of fiber optic backbone installed
- 392 pieces of equipment overseen by the fleet division, with the average age of nine and a half years.
- 36.57 tons of garbage collected during spring and fall cleanup
- 8,000 weekly garbage pickups with two drivers and two trucks
- A recycling average of 64%, compared to the county average of 52%
- 126 miles of road, 3,622 street signs and 410 miles of sidewalks maintained
- 530 gallons of yellow paint and 480 gallons of white paint was used by the streets and utilities division during 2019
- 45 ADA ramps replaced throughout the city
- 4,000 feet of waterline replaced
- 1,000 miles of sanitary sewer rehabilitation
- 1,166 fire hydrants owned and maintained by the city





*A future project will use the pipe-in-pipe technology to run fiber optics under Deception Pass Bridge, which connects Whidbey Island to Fidalgo Island, the latter of which Anacortes calls home. (Shutterstock.com)*


Having lead time, even four minutes, can help maintain a continuation of operations. Another plus is notices can be sent to laptops, desktop computers or phones, and these devices can sense where the person is located and provide the best course of action.

"If you have four minutes and are sitting at your desk, you can get up and go outside to safety," Buckenmeyer said.

The fire department benefits as well, according to Tesch. She noted tremors can knock the department's garage doors from their

tracks, which could delay response times. With a warning, the department can make preparations to avoid having their apparatuses trapped in the event of an earthquake. The system also shows promise for mass notifications to schools.

Anacortes Public Works is proud to be a part of the U.S. Geologic Survey's pilot program for this technology. Buckenmeyer is equally as proud of the team and department as a whole.

Buckenmeyer stated, "We are so proud of our staff and how they find ways to serve the city of Anacortes in innovative ways." 



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An aerial photo of Oak Bluffs, Mass., including the North Bluff beach area. (Shutterstock.com)



# Martha's Vineyard town responds to climate change, beach erosion

By AMANDA DEMSTER | The Municipal

**Martha's Vineyard has long been a destination spot for tourism, the allure of the island drawing visitors and summer residents from hundreds of miles away.**

Beneath all of the serenity and beauty, however, lies a problem that remains a reality year-round: erosion.

Due to climate change, the beaches of Martha's Vineyard are at risk for disappearing, taking the island's tourism industry with them. To prevent this, island towns like Oak Bluffs are taking action.

"Tourism is the main island industry, and Oak Bluffs, we're a very seasonal, resident-vacationer and tourist-centric town," Elizabeth Durkee, the conservation agent for Oak Bluffs who headed up the Martha's Vineyard Coastal Resiliency Project, said. "So it's important

that, while we still can, we need to protect our beaches because that's what people come here to enjoy."

In 2015, the Martha's Vineyard Commission created the hazard mitigation plan for seven towns on the island, which included Oak Bluffs. Concerned about severe weather-related damage to beaches and roads, the town wanted to take things a step farther.

In November 2018, Oak Bluffs applied for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant from the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. With this funding, the town was able to conduct two community

resilience building workshops, building upon the 2015 plan, as well as a 2016 coastal vulnerability assessment and adaptation plan.

"As an island community, we're really in the bullseye of climate change and were taking it very seriously," Durkee said.

By March 2019, project consultants Dodson & Flinker, Landscape Architects and Planners had compiled the findings into a report, which they presented to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Work was underway fairly quickly after that.

"There were five identified priority actions in the report and one was to protect Seaview Avenue," Durkee said. "We applied for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program action grant to renourish the North Bluff beach."





*Sand is placed to shore up Oak Bluffs' North Bluff beach. The town is taking action now to ensure the longevity of its beaches, which drive tourism, in the face of ongoing climate change. (Photo provided)*

The North Bluff includes a road running above the beach, between the harbor and the steamship authority hub. It is busy with people dropping off ferry passengers and day-trippers arriving on the island.

"The North Bluff project is a really great example of a coastal adaptation project," Durkee said. "If that coastal bank had collapsed and if that seawall had collapsed, it would have been a transportation nightmare."

Part of this project involved rebuilding a failed seawall. The new seawall, Durkee explained, is 4 feet higher, with a pedestrian boardwalk on top that has become quite popular.

"Coastal armoring is not considered the best protection," she said. "But if you've already got a seawall in place, it's important to make sure you protect what's behind it."

The project also included a state-built, ADA-accessible fishing pier.

"Almost all of this huge project is a really great example of protecting the coast, adding amenities and increasing the recreational value of the site while protecting the road," Durkee said. "The beach nourishment is designed to protect the seawall and provide recreational benefits for the town."

Besides the North Bluff project, other work has also taken place throughout the town.

"Rehab was performed on some old timber growings on the beach to help to keep the sand in place longer than it might otherwise stay," Durkee said. ▶



*Pictured is the newly completed beach and timber groins in Oak Bluffs, Mass. (Photo provided)*



*This photo shows the site before the beach nourishment took place. (Photo provided)*

## On the Web

To view Oak Bluffs' complete vulnerability report, visit [www.oakbluffsma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3599/Oak-Bluffs---MA-Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-Report](http://www.oakbluffsma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3599/Oak-Bluffs---MA-Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-Report).





*This postcard, estimated to be from the '60s, shows the old beach. (Photo provided)*



*Prior to the North Bluff renourishment project, an old seawall had failed due to erosion. (Photo provided)*

The harbormaster applied for and received a grant through the Coastal Zone Management Coastal Resiliency Program to conduct a study on harbor resiliency, which began earlier this spring.

Another priority Durkee pointed out is protecting the town's fresh-water supply. Likely this will involve raising a causeway that will protect well sites from saltwater intrusion.

The Martha's Vineyard Commission, Regional Planning Agency and town of Oak Bluffs applied for and received the MVP action grant to develop an island-wide climate adaptation master plan. Plans are to apply for a second round. Of course, this will greatly benefit Oak Bluffs, as well as the other towns.

"All the island towns have done the MVP project, so the identified priorities from each town will be looked on as priorities for the master plan," Durkee said.

It does not stop here, however. Oak Bluffs is applying for another MVP action grant to finish designing an enlargement for a culvert along Farm Pond Road as well as beach nourishment in front of the culvert between Farm Pond and Nantucket Sound on Seaview Avenue.

Pertaining to climate change-affected weather, the Martha's Vineyard Commission and town of Oak Bluffs has also applied for a coastal resiliency grant for a storm pathways study. This will help identify where flood waters are anticipated to go as sea levels rise and storms become stronger.

A threat many people may not think of on an island is wildfires. Yet, Martha's Vineyard has its share. With woodlands in the middle of town, Oak Bluffs is no exception.

"It's not all coastal resiliency," Durkee said. "There are other issues we're concerned about."

All of the above serve mainly as an overview of some of the community resilience building workshop's findings and of projects that have taken place thus far.

Prior to the MVP program, Oak Bluffs performed a vulnerability study, which was ultimately rejected due to lack of public and stakeholder input.

"The public and stakeholder input is really important," Durkee said. "It was a good exercise. There's a lot more that we need to do to, but we're trying to check off the priorities and get things done. We're a very vulnerable island and town."

Even with all of the work that has taken place, there is still a sense of urgency when it comes to coastal preservation.

"In this last year, the amount of activity going on in regards to climate adaptation really exploded, and there's just so much going on," Durkee said. "We need to become aware that we need to address this now, because it's starting now and roads are flooding in storms, and the sooner we do these things, the less expensive they're going to be as well."

While climate change is a known threat, there have been other unforeseeable factors affecting Oak Bluffs and Martha's Vineyard. In March, coronavirus-related shutdowns began, including a ban on construction in Massachusetts.

"The North Bluff project was wrapping up just about the time construction bans went into place, so that worked out OK," Durkee said. "Other than that, we are just kind of concerned about whether anybody is going to be able to use the beach this summer."

Typically, the Martha's Vineyard tourist season lasts Memorial Day through Labor Day, with some people arriving as early as April and staying as late as October or November. July and August, Durkee said, are the peak time for tourists and summer residents.

As of press time this spring, a lot of uncertainty hung in the air as to whether Martha's Vineyard would even have a 2020 tourist season.

"This virus situation is obviously affecting the summer season," Durkee said. "Businesses are closed and we don't know how many people are going to be coming, or if people are going to be coming."

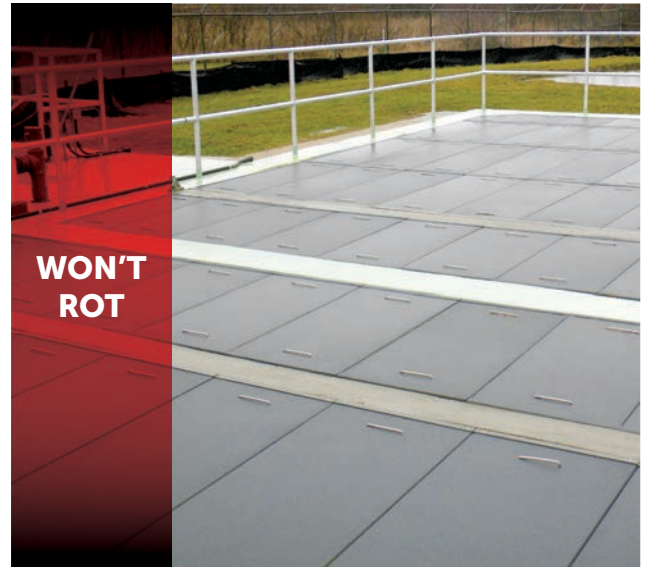
This is only a small reflection of the uncertainty surrounding all coastal areas as the effects of climate change progress.

"This is a prelude to what we're going to be seeing in the future with climate," Durkee said. "Will people still want to come to an island resort?"

For now, destinations like Martha's Vineyard and coastal towns like Oak Bluffs are doing the best they can to preserve what they have. **M**



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*The Public Safety Executive Partnership is all about better serving the community and satisfying needs as Buckeye, Ariz., continues to rapidly grow. (Photo provided)*

# Joining forces: *Public Safety Executive Partnership proves successful*

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

**President Ronald Reagan once said, “There is no limit to how much good you can do, if you don’t care who gets the credit.” It’s a mantra that the Public Safety Executive Partnership in Buckeye, Ariz., takes very seriously, and it’s one of the reasons as to why it’s been so successful.**

“It isn’t about glory or credit; it’s about the public we serve,” said Scott Lowe, public works director for the city of Buckeye and founding member of the PSEP.

## **A unique partnership**

The PSEP is a collaboration between Buckeye’s police and fire departments as well as

the public works department and is designed to provide an integrated, comprehensive response to public safety and service needs of the community. The concept of a partnership between the police and fire departments began in 2005 and was expanded to include the public works department when Lowe was

hired on as the director in November of that year.

Lowe said the PSEP was a natural fit for all three entities and has become part of the official organization of the city. It is referred to in the city code, part of the emergency operations plan and was presented at PWX 2019.

“This was the second time we made this presentation to the APWA,” Lowe said. “The first time was in New Orleans in 2008, but we thought it was time to bring it back... especially when the APWA has been making a more concentrated effort to promote the idea that public works are indeed first responders.”





*Public works employees in Buckeye, Ariz., close off a street. Since public works employees are certified flaggers and traffic control technicians, having a good working relationship between them and police and fire departments can streamline emergency operations. (Photo provided)*

In addition to explaining the concept of the PSEP at the expo, the updated presentation offered attendees examples of how the three departments work together toward a common goal. Construction projects require extensive traffic control, detours, flagging operations, etc. Although the police and fire departments are trained in traffic control, public works employees are certified flaggers and traffic control technicians, thus they have the necessary tools, such as barricades, electronic signs and more, that can be put into place in a matter of minutes.

“Our involvement in providing these services makes for a much more efficient and safe incident command area for the public safety operations that are occurring at a particular location on a street,” Lowe said. “Public works has professionals that are equipped and ready to respond.”

Larry Hall, chief of the Buckeye Police Department, said what makes the PSEP such a successful endeavor is the fact that all three leaders have a desire to solve problems, share information and work together for the benefit of the people in the community. The team meets to discuss various scenarios and then practice those scenarios so that when the time comes, they operate as one to execute their emergency plan of action.

“By working together, we become more efficient and effective and provide better service to the people,” Hall said. “There’s... an understanding by the team of the ‘big picture.’ It’s not about one entity or department. It’s about coming together, sharing resources and completing the mission.”

#### **Leave your ego at the door**

Bob Costello, chief of the Buckeye Fire-Medical-Rescue Department, said the departments that comprise the PSEP have similar, but different missions within the community, and although they strive to support each other in those respective missions, challenges do arise.

“Perhaps the toughest is overcoming personalities,” he said. “We were very lucky when the partnership started, those involved were



*Through the Public Safety Executive Partnership, a strong relationship has been cultivated between Buckeye Fire-Medical-Rescue Department, Buckeye Police Department and Buckeye Public Works. (Photo provided)*

able to leave their egos at the door, work together and support each other.”

Costello said the relationship has remained strong enough that as new directors become involved in the departments, there is an expectation that the relationship will be maintained. With Buckeye listed as the fastest growing community in the U.S., there are extreme challenges, which make the PSEP relationship even more critical. ►





*Buckeye, Ariz.'s, Public Safety Executive Partnership brings together the city's public works, police and fire departments. The team meets to discuss various scenarios and then practice those scenarios, so when the time comes, they operate as one to execute their emergency plan of action. (Photo provided)*

"It supports the idea that we all need to be there for mutual support," he said.

It also means that the program is always subject to change and must evolve as the needs dictate. In the 14 years that the PSEP has been in existence, the concept has evolved. Lowe said they have implemented a formal emergency operations plan and Emergency Operations Center, and they will constantly

work to hone the PSEP so it can maximize the departments' abilities when they are called to action.

"I have always considered the role (that) public works plays in the operations of a city as the 'unsung heroes' of the community," Lowe said. "Let's face it; the ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking ceremonies for major projects that a city undertakes usually never

include pavement preservation projects or stormwater pipe excavations, but they do happen for new fire or police stations. That is all good, but bringing public works into the public safety arena helps build professional camaraderie and respect among these vital departments."

Hall agreed, "(When) you work together and do not operate in a silo, you will accomplish more and have more job satisfaction at the end of the day when you collaborate." **M**







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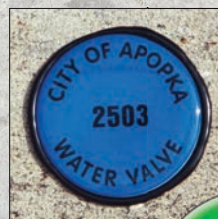
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# To the rescue:



*The Easter Sunday tornado that struck Chattanooga was one of at least 105 tornadoes that touched down on that same day throughout the U.S. (Photo provided by city of Chattanooga)*



*Pictured is one of the Chattanooga city trucks that responded to the Mt. Juliet tornado; a month later, these same trucks would be cleaning up after a tornado struck Chattanooga. (Photo provided by city of Chattanooga)*



*Knoxville sent crews of seven, which included knuckle boom operators, chainsaw operators and a supervisor to help clean up tornado debris in Chattanooga. (Photo provided by city of Knoxville)*

## Public works departments assist other cities during disasters

By MAGGIE KENWORTHY | The Municipal

**In March, the city of Chattanooga, Tenn., decided to send a public works crew to assist Mt. Juliet with cleanup efforts after it experienced a tornado. But, representatives of Chattanooga had no idea that a little over a month later, they would receive similar help from a neighboring town after experiencing their own natural disaster.**

On March 2, a tornado entered the Mt. Juliet area, producing EF-3 damage in a 6-mile radius, according to the National Weather Service.

As soon as representatives of Chattanooga heard about the damage, they volunteered to send a crew to help clean up the destruction. Ricky Colston, director of citywide services

in Chattanooga, explained that the city sent five knuckle booms and multiple chainsaw crews to help clean up debris over a two-week time span.

"This is the first time that we've actually went and assisted in a way like this during a disaster," said Colston.

Ed Hagerty, mayor of Mt. Juliet, described the help from Chattanooga as amazing.

"The morning after the tornado, I got an email from the city of Chattanooga. The only notation on it was the subject line, which said, 'heading your way.' I was curious. I opened the email. No message inside, only a picture of a very large truck ... I nearly broke down and cried. A day or two later, I saw that truck in a neighborhood where I was helping citizens with the recovery of their belongings."

Joseph Wormsley, manager of water quality, was one of the city employees who traveled from Chattanooga to Mt. Juliet to assist.





*Chattanooga employees responded over a two-week time span to help Mt. Juliet clean up after the tornado. (Photo provided by city of Chattanooga)*

“It reminded me of 2011 of what we had when it hit here. It was a lot of people just in shock, I guess you could say,” said Wormsley. “(The Chattanooga employees) were happy to be able to help someone.”

Unfortunately, Chattanooga later experienced its devastating tornado April 12. The EF-3 Easter Sunday tornado was one of at least 105 tornados to touch down across the United States that day, according to the National Weather Service.

After the tornado struck, the city of Knoxville quickly returned Chattanooga’s good deed and volunteered its help.

“It’s a little ironic because Chattanooga actually went out and helped (Mt. Juliet) for their tornado, and then we had to turn around and go help Chattanooga for theirs,” said Chad Weth, public service director of Knoxville. “It was great to be able to help. They would hopefully do the same things for us.”

The city of Knoxville sent a seven-man crew, including knuckle boom operators, chainsaw operators and a supervisor. One crew was sent to help during the first week after the tornado and another crew was sent to help again the following week.

“Once we got down there and saw the magnitude of their needs, I think it was pretty clear that we were able to help,” said Weth. “Our guys picked up over 1.8 million pounds of brush and didn’t even leave the neighborhood. It was quite a devastating tornado for that neighborhood that they were working. That’s a lot of brush in nine days, and then to think about that being within a few square miles — it’s pretty amazing to think about.”

Colston and the rest of Chattanooga were extremely grateful for all the help from Knoxville.

“They just helped us out tremendously,” said Colston. “We just can’t say enough about what they did for us. Not only did they come to help, but they didn’t stop helping until we stopped. They worked with us the entire time, and they were just great to work with.”

Not only did Chattanooga receive help from Knoxville, but the Tennessee Department of Transportation also helped assist with cleanup efforts. TDOT provided dump trucks, which allowed for debris to be



*Pictured is one of the city of Knoxville Public Service trucks that responded to the Chattanooga tornado. (Photo provided by city of Chattanooga)*

cleaned up and moved quickly. After two weeks of initial cleanup, Chattanooga was able to enlist the help of a private contractor to take over the job.

“A lot of our roads were just impassable. There was just no way to even get through,” explained Colston. “By them being here, it helped us to get our roads open a whole lot sooner so that our power companies, our phone companies, our gas companies could actually get to the places that they needed to get to, to get service back to these people.”

When it comes to organizing a crew quickly to respond to a natural disaster like this one, Weth said it all starts with being a good neighbor.

“The first thing I would say is just be a good neighbor and reach out and offer to help,” said Weth. “When I mentioned it to my administration, they were very supportive, in hopes that if it happens here, Chattanooga would do the same thing for us.”

Not only did the Knoxville crew get to help out Chattanooga in its time of need, but it also gave the employees a firsthand look at tornado cleanup efforts. The hope is that if Knoxville encounters a tornado in the future, its department would be better able to handle the cleanup process.

“It was a good experience for our guys to see, you know ... it helps you be thankful for what you have, because those people that they were helping had lost everything,” continued Weth. “I would help out anytime a neighboring city or county needed assistance.”

In the end, the neighborly assistance Tennessee experienced this year was all about being prepared to help others who are in need.

“This really shows why we are called the Volunteer State,” concluded Colston. **M**



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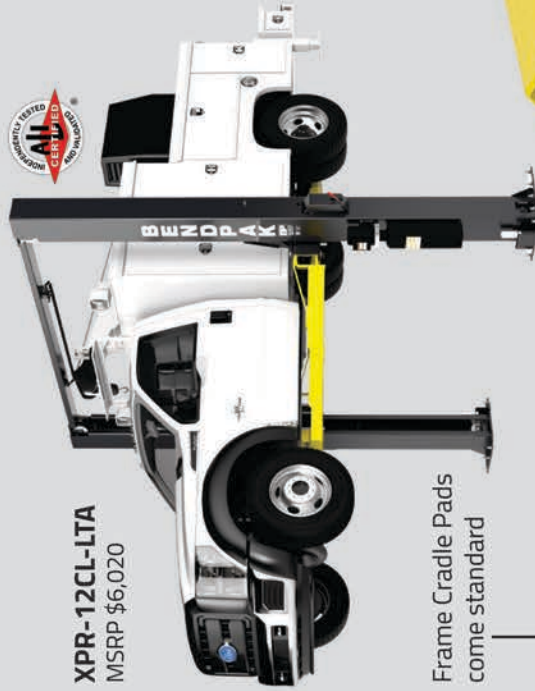
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# Elko, Nev., holds diverse offerings

By LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

**What puts a city or town on the map in 2020? Many factors go into the equation, and it seems Elko, Nev., has cracked the code when it comes to livability.**



*Elko, Nev.,  
City Manager  
Curtis Calder*

After securing the honor of “The Best Small Town in America,” in the 1990s, the city of Elko earned the moniker of “best city to live in” within the state of Nevada in 2019. Elko was ranked so highly because of its high household income, low cost of living and rapid population growth.

This comes as no shock to City Manager Curtis Calder, who’s been with the municipality for more than two decades. He’s watched Elko grow over the years in terms of population and economic prowess. The city of Elko is the county seat of Elko County, the fourth-largest county in the state, though it’s not

densely populated. The total county population is 55,116, whereas the city’s population makes up almost half of the county with about 22,000 residents.

Speaking of geography, Calder said Elko benefits from its position relative to other major cities, en route to Reno and Salt Lake City, Utah on Interstate 80. Beyond its location, Calder said Elko’s landscape is enriched by another element — quite literally.

“The primary industry in the Elko region is gold mining, which requires a large secondary support sector (i.e., equipment vendors, contractors,

engineers, etc.),” he said. “Nevada is the highest gold-producing state in the nation, with the bulk of activity occurring just outside of Elko. Other industries include gaming, tourism, ranching and outdoor recreation.”

According to Calder, the economic base, in part, has contributed to its positive trajectory.

“High-paying jobs within the mining and/or support industries provided a solid economic foundation, drawing new retailers, restaurants and hotels to the city of Elko,” he said.

The pro-business climate is another factor in its vitality. In his words, Nevada is tax friendly, which makes Elko an attractive option for new business and industry. The city of Elko also owns and operates the Elko Regional Airport, which provides daily commercial air service to Salt Lake City — enhancing the region’s connectivity.

All of these are wins in terms of quality of life, especially when you consider some areas around the nation are just now bouncing back from the Great Recession.

“Due to a strong natural resources-based economy, the city of Elko weathered the 2008-09 recession much better than most parts of the state and country,” he said. “Housing values remained stable, providing a diverse and reasonably priced housing inventory.”

That remains the case today, according to Calder. Affordability coupled with “a small-town feel with big city services and amenities,” add to its appeal. For instance, Elko is home to Great Basin College, a two- and

**ABOVE:** Elko, Nev., offers sweeping views, and its landscape makes it an ideal location to hunt, fish, camp, hike, mountain bike, ski or snowmobile. Pictured is the Humboldt River. (Photo provided)





*One of the many events Elko hosts is the Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival, which is currently scheduled for July 23-26 unless COVID-19 requires its postponement or cancellation. (Photo provided)*



*Via Interstate 80, Elko is conveniently located between Reno, Nev., and Salt Lake City, Utah.*



*Industry has provided a solid economic foundation for Elko. Its main industry is gold mining, which requires a large secondary support sector that includes equipment vendors, contractors, engineers and others. (Photo provided)*

four-year college offering technical and traditional degrees and is part of the larger Nevada System of Higher Education.

The fiscal case for Elko represents just one dimension, however. You can't have a thriving scene without recreation, arts and entertainment—and there's no shortage of that here. Known as the "gateway to the Ruby Mountains," Calder said the area offers a diverse amount of outdoor recreation. Think hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, mountain biking, skiing and snowmobiling.

History comes alive here, too. "Elko is also home to the California Trail National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, which tells the story of westward migration and the subsequent settlement of the western United States," said Calder. "Portions of the original California Trail and Transcontinental Railroad are easily accessible on public lands."

Speaking of accessibility, Elko welcomes people from a variety of customs and cultural backgrounds to its facilities, under normal circumstances barring a health crisis like COVID-19. Gatherings synonymous with Elko include the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the National Basque Festival and Elko Mining Expo. These large events bring thousands of people to Elko every year, as do smaller regional events such as the Elko County Fair, Silver State Stampede and the Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival.

Calder said all of these strengths are only enhanced by what he refers to as "a stable and nonpartisan council leadership."

"Although most council members over time have had politically conservative beliefs, all have been open to new ideas and public participation,"

he explained. "Upper management of the city has provided continuity, with the same city manager at the helm for nearly 17 years. The city of Elko has managed their finances well, using debt very cautiously. The city has invested heavily in public safety, street maintenance and recreation."

All of this foresight bodes well for the future of Elko, if you ask Calder. "Like every municipality, the city of Elko is now dealing with the (consequences of the) COVID-19 public health crisis and the resulting economic fallout," he said. "Fortunately, the city is well positioned for the economic challenges before us and is prepared to make necessary adjustments, including reductions in service levels and/or the deferral of capital projects." **M**





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A photograph of a moose standing in a forest. Its large, velvet-covered antlers are caught in a hammock that is strung between two trees. The moose is looking down, and the background is filled with green foliage and tree trunks.

*A moose stands in a Jackson, Wyo., backyard, its antlers entangled in a hammock after it attempted to rub on a tree. (Photo provided)*

# Cities nationwide deal with urban wildlife

By AMANDA DEMSTER | The Municipal

**As urban areas continue to expand, animals often find themselves sneaking into human-populated areas, often lured by the delicacies found in garbage cans, bird feeders and back porches.**

When animals become too brave, however, problems can arise, and cities nationwide find themselves continually educating the public on how to respond — and how not to respond — to urban wildlife.

## **Boulder, Colo.**

Over the years, Boulder residents have learned to get along with a variety of potentially dangerous wildlife species, including black bears and mountain lions. The city of Boulder has adopted a comprehensive urban wildlife management plan to help its residents coexist safely with these furry visitors.

Ironically, according to Valerie Matheson, senior urban wildlife conservation coordinator, the first phase of the plan did not pertain to black bears or mountain lions, but rather to prairie dogs.

“It started in the late ’90s, where a lot of prairie dog colonies were getting poisoned,” Matheson said. “There were some areas where we could protect prairie dogs and some where we could not, and there was a lack of efficiency with every plan going forward.”

As far as public opinion, Boulder was a city divided. Some wanted the prairie dogs left alone, while others were concerned they would hinder local progress and development.

“What the plan allowed us to do was look at the entire city and identify, through community outreach and public input, where were our best opportunities for protection,” Matheson said.

There are roughly five prairie dog colonies inside Boulder’s city limits. Of those, two are identified for long-term protection, while the rest are under interim protection, meaning they will be left alone until the space is needed for development.

When development does happen, a six-step decision-making process takes place to evaluate the safest ways to move the colony. For some projects, passive relocation may take place, where the prairie dogs are moved temporarily. If, however, a workable solution cannot be found, the prairie dogs are euthanized.

“It is definitely a last resort,” Matheson said.

Every now and then, prairie dogs find their way onto private property. This typically happens when a colony is living in a park or other location near people, and the population spills into yards and other areas where the animals can cause damage to landscaping and infrastructure.

In those cases, the city works with the property owner to find ways to discourage the prairie dogs from encroaching, such as filling in diggings or constructing a barrier.





*A mountain lion pays a visit to a Boulder, Colo., home. The majority of such sightings occur in areas of the city near the mountains. (Photo provided)*

As far as large carnivores, there is no practical way to keep black bears and mountain lions out of city limits. The majority of sightings happen in areas of the city near the mountains; however, it is not unheard-of for them to travel farther into town.

"It's probably, on average, one lion report a week," Matheson said. "And for bears, we'll get anywhere from a couple of hundred to 500 bear sightings a year."

With such a large number of sightings, it would seem natural for bear- or lion-related injuries to be fairly common. However, according to Matheson, they are not.

"It's really rare," she said. "We haven't had injuries or attacks in the urban area."

This does not mean there have not been injuries outside of town. In 2005 a mountain lion attacked a 10-year-old boy west of Boulder, causing injuries. In another instance, a female black bear knocked down a man who had unknowingly come between her and her cubs. The man suffered scratches but was otherwise OK.

Again, the best way to prevent wildlife injuries is to maintain a safe distance. Boulder continually educates its residents on how to coexist with wildlife safely. The biggest component is not feeding the animals.

City of Boulder Police Department Animal Protection Supervisor Jane Boswell pointed out that, in addition to state and federal regulations, Boulder has its own municipal code to prevent residents from feeding the wildlife, and anyone caught doing so must pay a fine.

Birds and fish are the exception.

Boulder residents cannot claim ignorance for feeding wildlife.

"We do a lot of education," Boswell said. "There are a couple of components to that. Depending on what season it is, we'll do press releases."

For example, in the springtime, press releases go out informing the public about common baby animal behavior and warning them to leave baby wildlife alone. Social media, mobile apps and school programs have also been successful in getting the word out.

"We thought if we could reach out to the children, that teaches them what they should be doing and what they shouldn't be doing, and they can help spread the word to their parents," Boswell said of the school programs.

## By the numbers

Below is a breakdown of wildlife-related calls the Boulder, Colo., Police Department received from June 1, 2017, through May 31, 2018.

The department responded to calls pertaining to the following animal species:

- Bats
- Bees
- Birds of prey
- Bears
- Bobcats
- Corvids
- Coyotes
- Deer
- Ducks
- Foxes
- Geese
- Insects
- Marmots
- Moose
- Mountain lions
- Prairie dogs
- Rabbits
- Raccoons
- Rats
- Songbirds
- Skunks
- Squirrels
- Turtles
- Voles

A breakdown of the call types is as follows:

- Assist: 1
- Baby wildlife: 38
- Conflict: 83
- Dead on arrival: 143
- Nuisance: 163
- Possible rabies exposure: 7
- Sick/injured: 232







*In Jackson, Wyo., an ordinance requires bird feeders to be at least 10 feet off the ground and 4 feet out from the tree trunk or support post so bears can't help themselves. (Photo provided)*

### **Jackson, Wyo.**

Jackson is another city that shares space with a variety of wildlife species, and Jackson Hole, the valley where Jackson is located, is a popular place for wildlife enthusiasts. Unfortunately, these animals often wander into city limits.

According to Mark Gocke, Wyoming Game and Fish Department public information specialist, Jackson and Pinedale regions, wildlife calls are varied.

"We get calls involving everything under the sun, it feels like," Gocke said.

Much of this depends on the time of year. For example, Gocke said, grizzly bears and black bears come out of hibernation in the springtime, and that is when the sightings typically begin. Activity tends to pick up in the fall as bears spend most of the day eating, trying to put on fat for hibernation.

One of the biggest bear attractants year-round is garbage. A 2009 county ordinance calls for residents to use bear-resistant garbage cans. Another ordinance requires bird feeders to be at least 10 feet off the ground and 4 feet out from the tree trunk or support post.



*Jonathan Kidd, animal protection officer with the Boulder, Colo., Police Department, holds a snake. (Photo provided)*

"We try to clean up areas that have an attractant," Gocke said. "If it's chronic, where a bear keeps coming back, we will capture the bear and try to relocate it outside of town."

Euthanasia is a last resort for bears that have become a nuisance or dangerous.

Fall tends to bring moose into Jackson. September is the breeding season, when bulls actively seek out mates and can become more temperamental than usual.

"Moose, they're generally pretty docile, but they can really hurt somebody," Gocke said. "They're really big, over 1,000 pounds, with antlers."

The biggest danger, however, is to the animals. Moose tend to rub their antlers and end up getting caught in swing sets, fencing, hammocks and even Christmas lights.

"People are stringing Christmas lights in their conifers, and a moose comes and rubs its antlers on the tree and pretty soon it has all these lights tangled up in its antlers," Gocke said.

In these situations, the moose is tranquilized so officers can safely disentangle it.

Tangled antlers are not the only hazard humans pose to wildlife. Cars are also a major threat. Cities and counties do their best to curb the number of roadkill incidents.

"They have purchased electronic message signs that you see on the side of the road," Gocke said. "They put them in strategic locations to warn motorists to slow down, especially during migrations."

Not feeding wildlife tends to be a touchy subject in Jackson, despite city and county ordinances.

"There's a fair bit going on where people are saying, 'Nobody's telling me I can't feed these moose or these elk or these deer,'" Gocke said. "That's a problem because you're drawing wildlife into developed areas, and they get hit by cars and chased by dogs and tangled up in fences."

Fines are in place, Gocke said, but many residents have become clever about hiding their animal-feeding activities.

"Some of the real dedicated feeders will do it in a way that's not visible from the road," he said. "And county and town officials don't have the right to go looking on someone's property."

Despite all of this, Gocke said there are rarely reports of wildlife harming people.

"I've heard of pets getting stomped by moose, but not people," Gocke said. "Bears, I can't even think of an instance where a bear has attacked a person in their yard or in a developed area."



In Jackson, Gocke said, there is strong cooperation between the city, county and state when it comes to urban wildlife calls.

"Our coordination with the town, whether it's the police department or county sheriff's office, is really good," Gocke said. "For our town, we only have two game wardens that respond to a lot of our calls, and then we have a large carnivore biologist who handles a lot of the bear conflicts, and other people will pitch in."

If someone calls 911 for a wildlife situation, anybody could end up responding — the city, county or game and fish department.

"A lot of times, we're on-site with everybody: a police officer, sheriff's officer and a game warden," Gocke said.

Gocke believes this willing cooperation between departments goes a long way.

"That makes a big difference; it really does," he said.

### Cities in Arizona

In Arizona, the state, rather than individual cities, is responsible for urban wildlife problems. In turn, according to Darren Julian, Arizona Game and Fish Department Region VI urban wildlife specialist, the state relies heavily upon municipalities to help them get the word out about urban wildlife management.

Julian's region consists of the Phoenix metropolitan area but overlaps into smaller cities as well.

Coyotes are one of the biggest urban wildlife pests in Julian's region. Others include bobcats, gray fox, mountain lions and a pig-like animal called a Javelina.

"Coyotes have figured out where people are, where food sources are," Julian said, adding coyotes seldom attack humans.

"More of the things I end up dealing with are the chronic nuisance issues, pet concerns, livestock like backyard chickens," he said. "Rarely it becomes a human issue, then that's when our wildlife managers are involved as well."

Springtime is coyotes' "pup-rearing" time, when adults are more willing to take chances to secure food for their young.

"We also see some defense of den space, although that's kind of gone down," Julian said. "Coyotes have figured out humans are not a threat at this point."

Since 1997, there have been 22 reports of coyote bites or scratches in the Phoenix Metropolitan area, and nearly all of those can be attributed to people feeding the coyotes.

"I tell people there's bad feeding and there's terrible feeding," he said.

"Bad feeding" is leaving food out for the animals. "Terrible feeding," he added, is directly offering the coyote food, which in essence rewards it for coming close to humans and teaches it to see them as a food source.

"That's when people get bit," Julian said.

Successful mitigation of wildlife concerns often depends on a good working relationship between city and state. Scottsdale is one example.

"We have a good working relationship with them, mainly their parks department and their open-space natural preserves," Julian said.

In one instance, the state worked with these entities to outlaw the feeding of all wildlife in city parks.

"So basically, you can't go feed the ducks," Julian said. "There were some big issues with that. There were getting to be some aggressive geese, water quality issues, that kind of thing."



*Not all problems from urban wildlife come from predators. A town in Arizona was overrun by cottontails and a few jackrabbits to the point the community was asking the Arizona Game and Fish Department to bring in coyotes to take care of them. (Photo provided)*

Paradise Valley is another example.

"The chief of police was very beneficial in testifying before the state legislature to get a law passed, a ban on feeding wildlife," Julian said.

Paradise Valley was the first city in Arizona to have a city ordinance banning the feeding of coyotes, Julian said. The ordinance was passed before 2006.

A 2006 Arizona state law makes it illegal for people in cities of 280,000 population or larger to feed wildlife, with the exception of birds and tree squirrels. Unfortunately, this law does not pertain to smaller cities, and some people tend to feed whatever wanders into their yards, including larger animals like elk and deer.

"We're still trying to figure out how to move forward with that," Julian said. "We have no authority telling them how to treat elk and deer at this point."

Overall, Julian said the department has had great success in building partnerships at the community level. He named Sun City and Sun City West as examples, plus retirement communities and homeowners associations.

"There's usually a point of contact within the community that deals with wildlife issues," he said. "They're kind of a gatekeeper, if you will. They look at what's going on, they have the pulse of their community and usually when things start getting a little crazy, we will come in and do a large public meeting."

While urban wildlife management has largely fallen to the state, in the past there was some thought of handing it over to the individual municipalities to handle.

"The issue with that is that we've owned it to this point; we can't just say, 'Here, you own it,'" Julian said. "So, it becomes kind of a hard question. If any city wants to take on more authority, we will gladly give it to them (and) work with them." 



# Gardner, Kan.,



## *provides relief through utility bills*

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

**On the Kansas side of Kansas City's metropolitan area is Gardner, one of the poorest cities in Johnson County, according to Mayor Steve Shute. With an estimated population of just over 21,000 people, the largest employers are United School District No. 231 and the local Walmart.**



Gardner, Kan., Mayor Steve Shute

"Gardner, which is on the southwest corner, it used to be a farm town until recently, does not have nearly the amount of per capita income that other parts of the county have had," Shute said. "This shutdown has actually had a significantly greater impact on our world."

Because of these limiting economic factors, Shute knew that when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the middle of March, there was little he could do to help prop up the economy, even as residents, who travel to Kansas City and other suburbs for work, lost their jobs.

Fortunately for the people of Gardner, Shute and the city council were willing to think outside the box, focusing on the advantages the small, economically challenged city does have.

"We are the only municipality in Johnson County and one of the few in the state of Kansas that owns their electric utility," Shute said. "We've had a very good, efficient operation of our electric utility for

*With the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on Gardner, Kan.'s, residents and local economy, the city opted to eliminate April electricity bills; something it was able to do since it owns its electric utility. (Photo provided)*

many years. As a result, we had built up a pretty significant fund balance in our electric development fund. The total was something north of \$15 million in our fund."

This gives Gardner the control and financial flexibility necessary to forgive all electricity bills. After the topic was discussed amongst the mayor, city council and the finance officer, a decision that was executed at the end of March, just a few weeks into the pandemic, to eliminate the April electricity bills, which cost the city about \$100,000 in total revenue.

"We had a discussion because there had been some concerns from some folks in town that were getting absolutely hammered on their electric at the same time they were losing their jobs," Shute said.

In several instances, residents had already been issued their April utility bill. This required the billing department to rebill all of those customers at \$0.

This decision provided direct relief to the people of Gardner, who now had extra money for groceries. Businesses also received free electricity for 5,000 kilowatt-hours, which Shute said virtually eliminated the electricity bill for every small business.

Residents and businesses on an "even-pay" plan, which are those that make a flat payment for their electricity every month, also had their bills forgiven.

"We have several customers that their electric bills go up and down by season," Shute said. "What we do is we set them up on what they call an even-pay plan. It spreads out those up-and-down payments so that you're just paying a flat rate every month. We also call it budget billing."





*Being nimble and responsive have been key components of Gardner's response to COVID-19. This approach has seen the use of electric bill forgiveness and the posting of a police officer who is dedicated to responding to domestic violence calls. Pictured is the intersection of Gardner's Main and Center streets. (Photo provided)*

Another significant way Gardner is working to assist its residents is by having a police officer dedicated to responding to domestic violence calls.


"That's the other piece, too," Shute said. "The psychological toll that's being dealt by the coronavirus is hurting a lot of our families, just because, you know, they're cooped up in their houses, and some people, for example, might be in abusive relationships. They can't get away from their abuser. We have taken the practice step of adding police department resources to be able to focus on and try to neutralize some of that."

But Gardner almost wasn't in such a great position to help its residents. Back in the mid-2000s, there was a discussion as to whether Gardner should sell its electric utility or not. Ultimately, the people in

charge at the time decided to keep it, and Shute is glad they did.

That decision allowed Gardner to care for its residents in a way other cities could not.

"The best thing that we can do for our citizens is to be nimble and responsive," he said. "What we did with their electricity bills is a demonstration of that. We are nimble; we were responsive. That's one of the nice things about being a smaller community is that we can do that. We have a community spirit that is second to none out there.

"We have a really tight-knit town. People know other people. They will respond at a moment's notice to help out their fellow citizen here. That's the embodiment of what I like to call 'Gardner strong.'" 



*A smaller community, Gardner does not have the amount of per capita income that other parts of Johnson County have had, making the pandemic even more challenging for the community. (Photo provided)*



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While 14 routes were considered as part of the shuttle project, ultimately a route including St. Stephen's Community House and a residential area was chosen. Autonomous technology is not yet advanced enough to work with the city's original route choice. (Photo provided by the city of Columbus)

# Columbus, Ohio, tests out self-driving shuttle, connecting community and resources

By NICHOLETTE CARLSON | The Municipal

**In February 2020, two self-driving shuttles were launched in Columbus, Ohio, to operate in a residential setting. These autonomous shuttles were designed to provide free transportation for up to 12 people. Each shuttle can accommodate strollers and wheelchairs and has four stops. The shuttle stops to pick up passengers every 12 minutes and the entire route takes 24 minutes to ride from the first stop to the last stop.**

A high emphasis on autonomous and connected vehicle demonstrations was part of the 12 vision elements of a U.S. Department of Transportation program, which led to the city opting for autonomous technology for the upcoming project. The USDOT partnered with the Paul G. Allen Foundation and Vulcan and awarded the city two grants, one of which had a high priority emphasis on impacting climate change. During the grant project development, priorities of each grant were incorporated into the shuttle program. Since reducing emissions was such a high priority of Vulcan, the autonomous shuttle was proposed to also be electric.

Columbus envisioned the program in 2016 with its grant application. These shuttles were anticipated to provide residents with short-distance trips compared to traditional transit and expand people's reach within their community. The city then began to research various routes for the autonomous shuttle. While collaborating with stakeholders in the project, 14 different route options were evaluated. While each route considered served a variety of different uses, stakeholders and partners wanted these autonomous shuttles to serve a purpose and help connect people to the things they need.



Originally the route chosen for the self-driving shuttle connected a neighborhood with offices, restaurants, retail shops and recreational experiences in a retail development. This would have connected Linden residents with jobs at Easton. However, after seeking feedback from the industry, the city discovered this route would not work. Mandy Bishop, program manager for the city of Columbus and Smart Columbus, explained the proposed route was too technically challenging, and “it became clear that the current technology was not capable of operating in the proposed route that had some streets with speeds of 35 mph but were being traveled at 40-45 mph.”

The city then began the process of choosing another route, keeping in mind that one of the goals of the project was to demonstrate how technology could be used to solve real-world problems. “The project team revisited the goals of the program and developed alternate routes with project partners to find the right one,” Bishop described. “We heard about the first mile/last mile gap between our bus rapid transit line and St. Stephen’s Community House, a community resource, and we were able to develop a route connecting the two and traveling through a residential neighborhood.”

In December 2018, the new route and autonomous shuttle project was put to bid. The contract was signed in June 2019. It took approximately six months for the federal exemption process, route planning and testing before the shuttles officially launched in February 2020.

Unfortunately, these smart shuttles only had a short run time. Between the launch on Feb. 5 and their emergency stop due to an incident on Feb. 20, approximately 50 people rode the shuttles. “Ridership was low due to the February launch in poor weather conditions, and we were out of service several days,” Bishop said.

However, despite still working out a few kinks, the community remains excited about the self-driving shuttles. Community members were excited not only about the launch of the shuttle, but also the prospect of connecting their community to goods and resources as well as offering a transportation alternative.

Prior to the emergency shutdown, there was signage on the shuttle indicating to passengers that they should prepare for sudden stops. Grab bars and handles were available for riders, particularly if the person was standing.

After a safety evaluation was conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, certain improvements were recommended. The NHTSA oversees the importation of vehicles and grants waivers, which allowed the city to operate automated vehicles on public roadways. Following the incident, the NHTSA issued the order to Columbus to stop passenger service and are in charge of approving the service plan in order to return to service.

“During the shutdown, the city convened an incident review panel to evaluate the operation and documentation around the deployment to determine if improvements could be made,” Bishop explained. The city is working with Easy Mile, the shuttle’s importer and programmer, to implement recommendations accepted by both the NHTSA and Smart Columbus.

One of the implemented changes is that standing passengers are no longer permitted, apart from the vehicle operator. Each of the six seats in the shuttle must also be equipped with lap belts. The shuttle’s operator must wear a tethered vehicle controller in order to restrict his or her freedom of movement in case of a sudden stop. Shuttles must ensure they include highly visible signage as well as periodic audible messages



*The city of Columbus, Ohio, held a ribbon cutting this year for the release of its self-driving, electric shuttles. The shuttles were launched Feb. 5, 2020. (Photo provided by the city of Columbus)*



*The city was awarded two grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation, in collaboration with the Paul G. Allen Foundation and Vulcan, which helped to fund the shuttle project. Easy Mile was chosen as the importer and programmer of the shuttles. (Photo provided by the city of Columbus)*

warning passengers that this is a research and demonstration vehicle that may make sudden stops and remind them to fasten their seat belts.

In coordination with Easy Mile, importers and operators must work together to provide more rigorous training for shuttle operators, focusing on passenger safety and emergency response scenarios. Importers are required to ensure that the subject vehicles receive a software update to address specific technical conditions that led to the sudden, unexpected stop, which led to the incident causing NHTSA to issue an emergency stop service order. Operators and importers must also work together to generate a plan for the continued evaluation of operator performance in the project.

The USDOT grant program included \$17, 873,000 in local funds. This program used \$1,175,000 in local funds.

It is expected that shuttles would have ceased passenger operation due to COVID-19, even if they had not already experienced an emergency stop. Return to service is based on a number of factors, including consultation with health professionals and the mayor’s office in order to guide the decision. Bishop stated, “For current scheduling purposes, we have placed a hold date in September 2020.” **M**



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# McAllen casts off unflattering perception

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal

**Civic pride encourages competition among cities for enviable titles and distinguished awards while hoping such acclaim will draw in new residents, businesses and tourists to their hometowns.**

A mortified southern Texas town, however, walked off with a humiliating title in 2012 and again in 2013 that it isn't proud of. In 2018, it suffered a third indignity.

McAllen, Texas, took the prize for a dubious title in 2018 when a Gallup Poll named the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan statistical area as the most obese in the nation. Poor McAllen was further shamed in a WalletHub.com study as having the highest share of obese adults at 44.9%; that is 2.5 times higher than in San Francisco, which had the lowest obesity rate of 17.85%. Additionally, the study also found that this metro had the highest share of physically inactive adults at 36.9%. And McAllen was

ranked as the third fattest city in America for that year.

McAllen Mayor Jim Darling had a lot to say about his city's unpopular designation. "When the McAllen MSA was rated the fattest city in America in 2017, the rating was upsetting not simply for what our community perceived as untrue, but also because we felt that the methodology used then was skewed to get a certain result," said Darling. "That spurred us to want to change the perception that McAllen and the surrounding communities included in the MSA are obese."

The participation in the It's Time Texas Community Challenge, a free eight-week health competition, is only a small part

*Families participate in the McAllen Mayor's Walk for Wellness 2020, an event hosted by Mayor Jim Darling. The event earns points in the Community Challenge. (Photo provided)*

of the efforts that the city of McAllen has made to inspire and encourage the community and its residents to live active, fit and healthier lives.

To have the McAllen MSA receive the same distinction again in 2020 was frustrating, and although the methodology used was different this time, it was still viewed as a biased study.

The Mayor's Wellness Council was born in 2018 to have a community-wide effort to impact the obesity perception. However, ultimately, the city's and the Mayor's Wellness Council's goals are to impact residents' lives in positive ways so those who do need to make a change to live healthier will feel inspired and have the tools to do so.





Mayor Jim Darling, left, poses with a participant in the Mayor's Walk for Wellness 2020 as part of the It's Time Texas Community Challenge. (Photo provided)



A boy holds RGV Fit sticker, which is earned by medal winners in the 2020 RGV Fitfest. This event sees hundreds of Rio Grande Valley residents participate in a day of health at Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council in Weslaco, Texas. (Photo provided)

Tracy Walker, senior director of marketing and events with It's Time Texas, organizes the annual living healthy challenge.

It's Time Texas, headed by Dr. Amy McGeady, promotes statewide health and fitness throughout Texas. Community participation is open to all Texans who log their fitness miles, minutes and healthy eating habits. There are also group initiatives online to score points at [ittcommunitychallenge.com](http://ittcommunitychallenge.com).

"We're dedicated to empowering Texans to live healthier lives and build healthier communities," said Walker. "The It's Time Texas Community Challenge is in its seventh year and thousands of Texans participate each year in the eight-week living healthy challenge. More than 432 Texas communities and 251 school districts were represented. Participants earn points based on logging healthy activities such as participating in healthy group activities, taking healthy selfies, consuming more water and eating more nutritious meals.

"McAllen has won top honors in the large community category for the third straight year in a row! They've held the title since 2018. For two years Mayor Darling has played an instrumental role in bringing the Mayor's Walk for Wellness and 5K to fruition in partnership with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, in collaboration with

more than a dozen other RGV communities, leaders and community members."

In a 2019 Gallup and Sharecare's Community Rankings for Healthy Eating report, McAllen ranked fourth out of 40 cities across the U.S. with the healthiest diets.

The region's participation in the Community Challenge and commitment to creating a culture of health in the Valley is based on local leadership in every sector, including schools and municipalities, and that's why McAllen continues to show up strong in its category. It leads by example and residents of McAllen should be proud of that because it shows.

"Winning this prestigious award for the third year in a row is a source of pride for McAllen residents," said Walker. "The work being done on the community level, in schools and in workplaces to change hearts and minds for better health is striking. Families are realizing that chronic disease does not have to be a way of life. Residents are taking their health into their own hands."

In the beginning, the city of McAllen made a concerted effort to provide infrastructure and activities for its community to be able to get active in 2014. Under President Barack Obama's administration, the city of McAllen completed the five goals established under First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!

Initiative," and later it became the first city in the United States to reach All-Star status.

"As part of these activities, we partnered with McAllen (Independent School District) to help sponsor, participate and promote the Kids Marathon, an initiative to encourage all elementary and middle schoolers to run or walk 26 miles from September to January," said Darling, adding that as a municipality, more than 34 miles of hike and bike trails have been developed throughout the city. There are also 89 parks with plenty of green space; some of these parks even feature free workout equipment.

"For the past seven years, the city of McAllen has hosted the McAllen Marathon, a Boston-qualifier, which features thousands of runners from not only McAllen and the region, but also throughout the United States and Mexico," said Darling. "As part of the McAllen Marathon, the parks and recreation department hosts six races, including the marathon, half-marathon, relay marathon, 10K, 5K and the Kids Marathon Final Mile. The McAllen Parks and Recreation Department also hosts various sports leagues and other group activities programming throughout the year."

Keep McAllen Beautiful, a nonprofit, has hosted the annual Arbor Day event that features a 5K run, a 25-mile or 62-mile bike event and a kids' 1-mile run for the ►





Commissioner Omar Quintanilla, who holds the right side of the sign, poses with people who have turned out for a It's Time Texas walk. (Photo provided)

past nine years. The event also features a kids' bike rodeo where children learn about bicycle safety and vendors host educational booths regarding health and well-being. Past participants have included Rio Grande Regional Hospital as well as Texas A & M Healthy South Texas, both there to provide diabetes education.

As part of the ITTCC, the city of McAllen hosted free yoga in the park and walk with the mayor and commissioners events.

According to Jolee Perez, director of employee benefits for McAllen and an executive committee member of the McAllen Mayor's Wellness Council, in January 2020, the city went all out for a third year in a row during a statewide health challenge to continue battling the perception of those unpopular rankings. Perez acknowledged that while there were those in the community with heart conditions, diabetes and obesity, there is more than an equivalent number of highly motivated individuals engaged in their health. The environment

in McAllen is one that promotes nutrition, fitness and healthy lifestyle opportunities for its citizens.

The extra pounds inflated the cost of living where obesity-related medical treatment was at \$190.2 billion annually.

As Darling pointed out, while obesity is prevalent in the Hispanic population, of which McAllen is 88%, what has been a harder challenge to overcome is the perception that McAllen is an obese city.

"The high number of diabetes in the community—in any community—is concerning," said Darling. "As Americans, we are all dealing with chronic health issues related to being overweight. As a nation, we should all be doing something to address those issues."

"But also know that singling out McAllen as an obese city was inaccurate, to say the least. Everywhere I go, I see hundreds of people working out, whether they are running, walking, cycling, participating in sports, are gym members or finding other

ways to stay active, eat healthy and manage their health."

For the 2020 competition, McAllen, as a community, submitted 29,539 healthy activities and logged 94,265 minutes of healthy activity during the Community Challenge, with more than 3,500 residents participating. This means that McAllen is responsible for submitting more than 10% of the total healthy activities and 10% of the total participants for the entire state ITTCC, which included tracking fitness activities, water consumption, healthy dietary choices and healthy group and community events attended.

Other factors that lead to diabetes and its related complications are much more difficult and nuanced to simply change overnight. These include such factors as poverty and access to affordable healthy, fresh foods. However, the work of numerous organizations in the community, of which the city of McAllen encourages and participates in, is working to help make that change.

"As part of the initiatives of the Mayor's Wellness Council, we have developed a website that can be used as a resource for our community to help them find ways to get started on their fitness journey or to find new events and activities to continue staying active," said Darling. "We are partnering with different government organizations, agencies, private businesses, educational institutions, hospitals and health advocacy groups throughout the community to work to address those health issues. During cooler weather, the walk with the mayor and commissioners events will be a staple of the free activities offered to the community."

McAllen, at the time of this interview, is currently slowly entering Phase 2 of the Texas reopening caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its local newspaper is working on a story about the rise in bike sales in town during the shutdown.

"Our trails and open spaces in the parks (though play equipment is currently closed) are being utilized by our residents to the utmost extent while practicing social distancing," concluded Darling. "Additionally, our McAllen Parks and Recreation Department provided virtual exercise and activities for their group members to continue their dancing, karate and other fitness activities as well during the pandemic." **M**



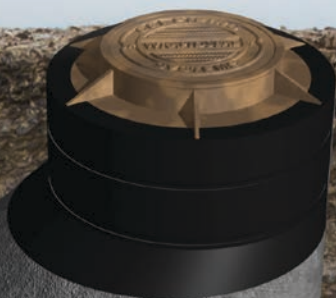


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Currently without a curbside management program, Bellevue, Wash., is about to launch a pilot project on 106th Avenue Northeast as part of the Smart Cities Collaborative. (Shutterstock.com)



The El Paso's Park 915 app, powered by ParkMobile, means residents and visitors don't have to drive around to find a free parking spot. (Shutterstock.com)

# Cities seek curbside balance

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal

**Traffic has been increasing phenomenally in cities, and planners have had to make adjustments with their curb space in order to accommodate pedestrians as well as vehicle parking, ride-hailing services, micromobility services, trash collection, loading zones and front stoops. Waiting areas, sidewalk cafes, transit hubs, freight/delivery zones and taxi stands are particularly popular spaces that require such management.**

As cities grapple with curbside management, Bellevue, Wash., currently has a curbside pilot project underway, while El Paso, Texas, has completed curb projects under its belt.

## Bellevue

David Grant, public information officer with Bellevue's transportation department, shared what was to come in his curbside-stressed community, as of May 2020.

"Just to clarify, Bellevue has not yet implemented a curbside management program, but we are about to launch a pilot project on one of our downtown streets as part of the Smart Cities Collaborative, a group of cities doing similar curbside studies in 2020," said Grant

"As the curb becomes more dynamic, it will be important for cities to emphasize their

transportation planning and policy goals to help guide overall decision-making," said Chris Iverson, the project manager for the 106th Avenue Northeast Curbside Management Pilot in Bellevue. "The curbside has been historically dedicated to parking and auto uses — similar to how streets have been designed for vehicle throughput. It will take a change of policy to change that mindset. The curb should eventually reflect what cities want to become, whether that's a staging ground for micromobility or other sustainable transportation choices, an activity hub for food trucks or 'parklets,' or a dynamic zone to optimize traffic for rideshare and freight activities.

"Cities should also consider creating curbside master plans that identify modal priorities for specific streets, so that specific



The Park 915 app, powered by ParkMobile, is available at 2,000 parking spots in the city of El Paso.

corridors and their curbside master plans that identify modal priorities for specific streets — so that specific corridors and their curbside areas eventually can become what cities want to see."





*Bellevue, Wash., will be launching a curbside pilot on 160th Avenue Northeast to learn how to best manage multiple uses. Pictured is a delivery truck along a loading zone on 106th Avenue Northeast. (Photo provided)*

Because the project had not yet launched at the time of this writing, Iverson's challenges have been primarily in the planning phases.

"For example, we initially wanted to test out an RFID-based (radio-frequency identification) technology to monitor vehicle dwell times at specific sections of curb," Iverson said. "That has been scaled down due to practical and legal considerations."

As for products that will be used in the project, he said, "Bellevue will use several products from different vendors to monitor and study curbside usage. Vendors include Automotus, Cleverciti and a proprietary camera system from the University of Washington."

For other cities, Iverson recommended, "In addition to setting good long-range plans for the curbside, try testing out different uses in a pilot project. Most people think about the curbside as a parking zone, and a creative pilot project will help show the community what other options are possible."

## El Paso

El Paso, Texas, has been using ParkMobile, which is available on both Android and Mac devices, said Paul Stresow, assistant director of the International Bridges Department, which oversees the Parking Meter Division.

Jeff Perkins, CMO and head of product at ParkMobile, explained how ParkMobile's Park 915 application works.

"What's unique about the Park 915 app is that it visualizes sensor data from the meters in the city," said Perkins. "So it shows you in real time where the open spots are on the street. If there's a green dot on the map, that means a spot is open. If it's a gray dot, that means the spot is taken. The data is all real time. So as soon as a car parks, the green dot turns to



*In El Paso, a ParkMobile decal encourages residents to use the Park 915 app to pay for parking "on-the-go." (Photos provided)*

gray. You can pay for it with your mobile device; it will alert you when your time is about to expire so you can immediately add more money to the meter from your device.

What drew El Paso to Park 915? Stresow said, "It allows the public to find parking-available parking spaces without having to drive around as much. The app permits the public to better utilize available parking spaces, which might otherwise go unused. We are still working on managing all of the competing interests and revamping and updating ordinances to reflect the best management of available curb space, specifically in our downtown area."

According to Stresow, El Paso's feedback has been positive, specifically on the Park 915 app's ease of use and the functionality of being able to find a parking space; be guided back to your car after an event, meeting or shopping/dining excursion; add time to a meter remotely; and use the app in other cities, airports or universities throughout the U.S.

"Cities need to balance all needs and monetize the curb to control abuse and ensure that all stakeholders have the access needed to do business," said Stresow. "Multiple use of spaces is one creative way that cities are balancing their competing stakeholders' needs. Creating specific ride-sharing zones ... with delivery zones, limiting freight deliveries to hours when the demand for spaces is not as great, creating vendor permits for use in high-demand zones also contributes to better management of the curb."

"Much like ride-share zones, specific areas/zones for food trucks can also be employed. Although many cities that created such zones are starting to move away from specific food truck only zones. COVID-19 may change how cities currently think about managing the curb. Ride-share services' use was increasing exponentially before the crisis, but now may not see as quick growth as they had in the past. More people may gravitate back to cars, while public transit and ride-sharing may see flat growth or declines in growth for a while." M

## On the Web

Learn more about Bellevue, Wash.'s, 106th Avenue Northeast Curbside Management Pilot at <https://bellevuewa.gov/citygovernment/departments/transportation/projects/neighborhood-projects/106th-ave-curbside-pilot>.





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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.

## JULY

**July 6-9 IMSA Forum and Expo (CANCELLED)**

Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nev.  
[www.imsasafety.org](http://www.imsasafety.org)

**July 12-16 Florida Fire Chiefs Association Executive Development Conference (POSTPONED)**

Boca Raton Resort & Club, Boca Raton, Fla.  
[www.ffca.org](http://www.ffca.org)

**July 17 Municipal Association of South Carolina 2020 Annual Meeting**

Virtual  
[www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)

**July 15-17 ARTBA Public-Private Partnerships in Transportation Conference**

Webinar  
[www.artba.org/training-events](http://www.artba.org/training-events)

**July 17-20 NACo Annual Conference & Exposition (CANCELLED)**

Orlando, Fla.  
[www.naco.org/events/nacos-85th-annual-conference-exposition](http://www.naco.org/events/nacos-85th-annual-conference-exposition)

**July 18-20 Mayors National Youth Summit (POSTPONED: TBD)**

Portland, Ore.  
[www.usmayors.org/meetings/](http://www.usmayors.org/meetings/)

**July 20-23 NAPO's 42nd Annual Convention (POSTPONED: Oct. 19-20)**

Cleveland, Ohio (MOVED: Marco Island, Fla.)  
[www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org)

**July 23 Alabama League of Municipalities Annual Convention**

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center, Montgomery, Ala.  
[www.alalm.org/AnnualConvention.aspx](http://www.alalm.org/AnnualConvention.aspx)

**July 26-30 CADCA Mid-Year Training Institute**

Virtual  
[www.cadca.org/events](http://www.cadca.org/events)

**July 30-Aug. 1 Louisiana Municipal Association 83rd Annual Convention**

Raising Cane's River Center, Baton Rouge, La.  
[www.lma.org](http://www.lma.org)

## AUGUST

**Aug. 6-10 ACA 150th Congress of Correction**

Cincinnati, Ohio  
[www.aca.org](http://www.aca.org)

**Aug. 8-11 Tennessee Municipal League 81st Annual Conference (CANCELLED)**

Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, Tenn.  
<https://www.tml1.org>

**Aug. 5-11 Florida Fire Chiefs Association Development Conference (POSTPONED: TBD)**

Sheraton Panama City Beach Golf & Spa Resort, Panama City Beach, Fla.  
[www.ffca.org/events](http://www.ffca.org/events)

## AUGUST

**Aug. 9-12 ITE 2020 90th Annual Meeting and Exhibit (NEW SCHEDULE: Aug. 4-6, Aug. 11-13 and Aug. 18-20)**

Virtual  
[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

**Aug. 10-14 WasteExpo Together Online**

Virtual  
[www.wasteexpo.com](http://www.wasteexpo.com)

**Aug. 12-15 South Atlantic FIRE RESCUE Expo (CANCELLED)**

Raleigh, N.C.  
[www.southatlanticfirerescueexpo.com](http://www.southatlanticfirerescueexpo.com)

**Aug. 13-15 Florida League of Cities Annual Conference**

Diplomat Beach Resort, Hollywood, Fla.  
[www.floridaleagueofcities.com](http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com)

**Aug. 17-18 Fire-Rescue Med 2020**

Phoenix, Ariz.  
[www.iafc.org/events/frm](http://www.iafc.org/events/frm)

**Aug. 17-19 StormCon**

Seattle, Wash.  
[www.stormcon.com](http://www.stormcon.com)

**Aug. 18-19 Midwest Security & Police Conference/Expo**

Tinley Park Convention Center, Tinley Park, Ill.  
[mspce.com](http://mspce.com)

**Aug. 19-21 Arkansas Municipal League 86th Annual Convention**

Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Ark.  
[www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org)

**Aug. 19-21 FRI 2020**

Phoenix, Ariz.  
[www.iafc.org/events/fri](http://www.iafc.org/events/fri)

**Aug. 23-26 NIGP Forum**

Chicago, Ill.  
<https://nsite.nigp.org/2020annualforum/home>

**Aug. 31-Sept. 2 APWA PWX (CANCELLED: Digital online experience being planned for dates)**

<https://pwx.apwa.net/>

**Aug. 31-Sept. 3 Florida Recreation & Park Association's 2020 Vision Possible Conference**

Omni Orlando Resort at Championsgate, Championsgate, Fla.  
<http://www.frpa.org/conference/confgeneral>

## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 1-4 League of Arizona Cities and Towns Annual Conference**

Glendale, Ariz.  
<http://www.azleague.org/103/Annual-Conference>

**Sept. 13-16 Missouri Municipal League Annual Conference**

Sheraton Crown Center, Kansas City, Mo.  
<https://mocities.site-ym.com/page/AnnConf>

To list your upcoming conference or seminar in The Municipal at no charge, call (800) 733-4111, ext. 2307, or email the information to [swright@the-papers.com](mailto:swright@the-papers.com).



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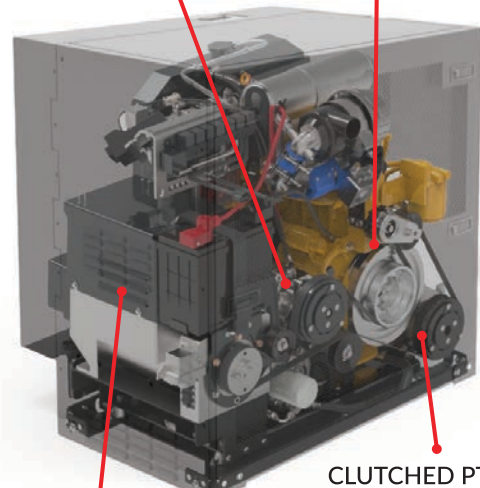
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## Find financial flexibility with tax-exempt municipal leasing contract

You can't afford not to take advantage of tax-exempt municipal leasing. Recently awarded by Sourcewell, NCL Government Capital offers financing solutions unique to municipalities and public education.

Through the NCL contract, Sourcewell participating agencies can access a broad variety of assets, commodities, equipment and improvements, as well as related services, including delivery, end of lease, asset or contract management tools, or similar services.

Agencies always need to focus on budgets, said Sourcewell Contract Administrator Dave Duhn. Spreading the cost of a significant capital asset over its useful life is something many agencies are looking to do.

"Using a tax-free municipal lease can increase buying power by five to six times," Duhn added, "and it gives participating agencies the ability to access both operating and capital budgets to get the equipment they need, when they need it."

Following a competitive solicitation process, Sourcewell awarded the cooperative purchasing contract to NCL, providing access to competitive, equipment-financing programs for municipalities and public education entities across the nation.

NCL Government Capital | 011620-NCL

Tax-exempt municipal, Fair Market Value, Terminal Rental Adjustment Clause, and Flex Plus leasing; options for PO only, deferred payments and customized terms.

This contract is now available to all Sourcewell members throughout the United States. Purchasers from participating agencies—public or nonprofit—save time and money by streamlining the procurement process with cooperative purchasing.

## NAFA announces Bill Schankel, CAE, as new chief executive officer

**PRINCETON, N.J.**—NAFA Fleet Management Association announced Bill Schankel, CAE, as its new chief executive officer.

Schankel has served as NAFA's interim CEO since August 2019. He joined the organization in September 2017 as NAFA's chief of staff and operations.

The selection of Schankel caps an extensive search process facilitated by JDG Associates, a nationwide executive search firm, which specializes in placing association executives who will achieve immediate and long-term goals. The process started with a large initial prospect pool, which was narrowed by stages to a group who interviewed with NAFA's executive search committee, and then to a final round who met with board of directors' leadership.

"NAFA's board of directors conducted an exhaustive search to fill the CEO position and interviewed many highly qualified candidates," said NAFA President Patti Earley, CAFM. "It was our determination that Bill not only exemplified the qualities we were searching for, but also understood the unique challenges of moving our association forward during times of uncertainty. His commitment to action-based and results-based strategies assures that NAFA will continue to lead the way for the fleet and mobility industry."

Schankel has had oversight in NAFA initiatives, such as moving the Certified Automotive Fleet Manager Program and Exams online,

spearheading a refresh of the education materials to reflect recent innovations in fleet to better serve members and leading staff and member leaders in expanding NAFA's reach and value to the fleet industry.

## VMAC makes 2020 list Of Best Workplaces in Canada

**NANAIMO, B.C., CANADA**—VMAC is being recognized as one of the Best Workplaces in Canada, joining the top 50 organizations in the nation.

To be eligible for the Best Workplaces in Canada list, organizations must be Great Place To Work Certified in the last 12 months, which requires coworkers to complete a confidential Trust Index Survey. In the survey, employees must agree over a myriad of criteria that their workplace is a "great place to work."

"It's an honor to be named one of Canada's Best Workplaces," said Tod Gilbert, VMAC's president. "This recognition is particularly meaningful as it was decided by our co-workers, who collectively agreed that VMAC is a great place to work. To be named as one of the top 50 organizations in the country is validation that VMAC's success is due to our extraordinary people-centric culture."

The Canada's Best Workplaces list includes organizations from across Canada in diverse industries, including manufacturing, professional services, finance and insurance, healthcare, technology, retail and hospitality and more. What each organization has in common is a commitment to invest in their people, and their unwavering commitment to create a wonderful and rewarding workplace for all.


This latest Best Workplaces in Canada achievement comes just one month after VMAC was named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies for the second year in a row.

## NAFA announces opening of nominations process for 2021 board of directors

**PRINCETON, N.J.**—NAFA Fleet Management Association, the vehicle fleet industry's largest membership association, announces it is seeking candidates for its 2021 board of directors. The process began June 1, 2020 and concludes Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. To be considered, nominees must complete a candidate consideration form, available online at <http://www.nafa.org/BoardCandidate>

The association seeks forward-thinking professionals to help shape the future of the fleet industry. They should have a passion for fleet management, strong strategic and critical thinking skills along with a consensus building approach to problem solving. The NAFA board helps shape the future of the profession and set the agenda for the industry to achieve high levels of performance. All fleet managers and suppliers whose NAFA memberships are in good standing are eligible to be considered for the NAFA board of directors. Retired members, honorary members and students are not eligible.

The deadline for submitting completed candidate consideration forms is Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Candidates are not permitted to campaign for office. NAFA's nominating committee will review all submissions and candidates will be notified by Dec. 4, 2020. Individuals elected to the board of directors begin their terms at the first board meeting of 2021.

For more information, contact NAFA CEO Bill Schankel at [bschankel@nafa.org](mailto:bschankel@nafa.org). 

News releases regarding personnel changes, other non-product-related company changes, association news and awards are printed as space allows.

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# Best minor league baseball towns

While COVID-19 has waylaid many minor league baseball teams' seasons, we still wanted to honor America's pastime this July in addition to the towns that host teams. On Sept. 24, 2019, SmartAsset posted the 2019 edition of its "Best Minor League Baseball Towns."

The website noted, "While Major League Baseball is what you are most likely to see on television, baseball fans in cities across the country flock to the ballpark to watch the stars of tomorrow hone their craft in Minor League Baseball."

So for the sixth consecutive year, SmartAsset analyzed the data to find the best minor league baseball towns in America using nine different factors, which

were under two umbrellas: game-day experience factors and quality of life factors. The nine factors include average attendance; average attendance as a percentage of maximum capacity; win percentage; minor league class; violent crime rate; property crime rate; income after housing; unemployment rate; and dining and entertainment establishments.

Round Rock, Texas, home of the Express, a Triple-A affiliate of the Houston Astros, came out on top with the 11th highest attendance, an average of 7,849 fans per game, a decent winning record of 60% of its games in 2019, among other factors. Texas, in general, did well in the rankings:

**1. Round Rock, Texas**

Round Rock  
**Express**

**2. San Antonio, Texas**

San Antonio  
**Missions**

**3. Frisco, Texas**

Frisco  
**RoughRiders**

**4. Columbus, Ohio**

Columbus  
**Clippers**

**5. Des Moines, Iowa**

Iowa  
**Cubs**

**6. El Paso, Texas**

El Paso  
**Chihuahuas**

**7. Amarillo, Texas**

Amarillo  
**Sod Poodles**

**8. Portland, Maine**

Portland  
**Sea Dogs**

**9. Durham, N.C.**

Durham  
**Bulls**

**10. Reno, Nev.**

Reno  
**Aces**

Source: [smartasset.com/checking-account/best-minor-league-baseball-towns-2019](https://smartasset.com/checking-account/best-minor-league-baseball-towns-2019)





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**A**

AirNetix LLC . . . . .	Cover, 10-11
Air-tow Trailers. . . . .	82
All Access Equipment . . . . .	80
Alumitank. . . . .	48
Andy Mohr Ford . . . . .	26

**B**

BendPak Incorporated . . . . .	45
Buyers Products Company . . . . .	83

**C**

Calhoun Super Structures . . . . .	73
CBI Systems . . . . .	44
CCI Piping Systems . . . . .	65
Central Life Sciences. . . . .	26
Clearspan Fabric Structures . . . . .	25
Ctech Manufacturing. . . . .	69
Curbtender Sweepers, LLC . . . . .	56
Custom Products Corporation . . . . .	61

**D**

das Manufacturing . . . . .	39
-----------------------------	----

**E**

Ebac Industrial Products Incorporated . . . . .	65
---	----

**F**

FCAR Tech USA, LLC. . . . .	57
Fluid Control Services . . . . .	31

**G**

Global Environmental Products . . . . .	27
---	----

**I**

Icom America Incorporated . . . . .	5
Imel Motors Sales . . . . .	68

**J**

Jamar Technologies. . . . .	39
-----------------------------	----

**K**

KM International . . . . .	2
----------------------------	---

**L**

LaMotte Company . . . . .	73
Land Pride . . . . .	14
Lube-A-Boom. . . . .	24

**M**

Midwest Sandbags LLC . . . . .	68
Mile-X Equipment Incorporated . . . . .	75
Monroe Truck Equipment . . . . .	79
Muncie Power Products . . . . .	9

**N**

National Construction Rentals . . . . .	60
New Leader Manufacturing. . . . .	42-43
Nightlock Door Security . . . . .	21

**O**

Olsson . . . . .	65
Omega Industrial Products. . . . .	72

**P**

Palfinger North America . . . . .	38
Pep Boys . . . . .	20

**R**

Rapid View LLC. . . . .	BACK
Robinson Metal . . . . .	60

**S**

Sea Electric . . . . .	75
Sign Guardian . . . . .	75
Streamlight . . . . .	21
Strongwell . . . . .	35
Super Products LLC . . . . .	15
Sweeping Corporation of America . . . . .	77

**T**

TrafFix Devices Incorporated. . . . .	49
Transoft Solutions . . . . .	7
Trinity Highway Products . . . . .	77

**U**

Uline. . . . .	39
Unique Paving Materials. . . . .	3

**V**

VMAC Air Innovated. . . . .	72
-----------------------------	----

**W**

Waste Expo . . . . .	76
----------------------	----

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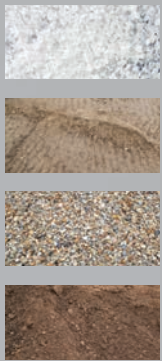
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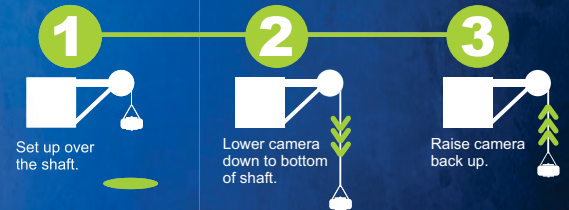


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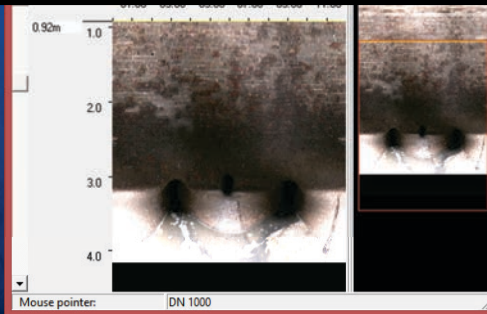
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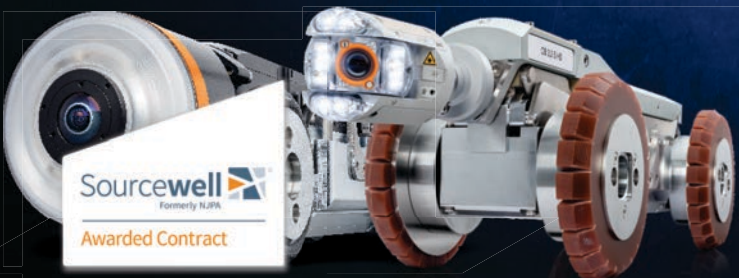
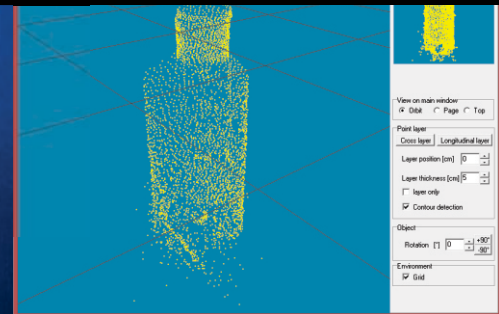
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