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July 2018

Public Works

INSIDE:

Fecon

**Welcoming diversity
into public works**

**Public works department
explores green infrastructure**

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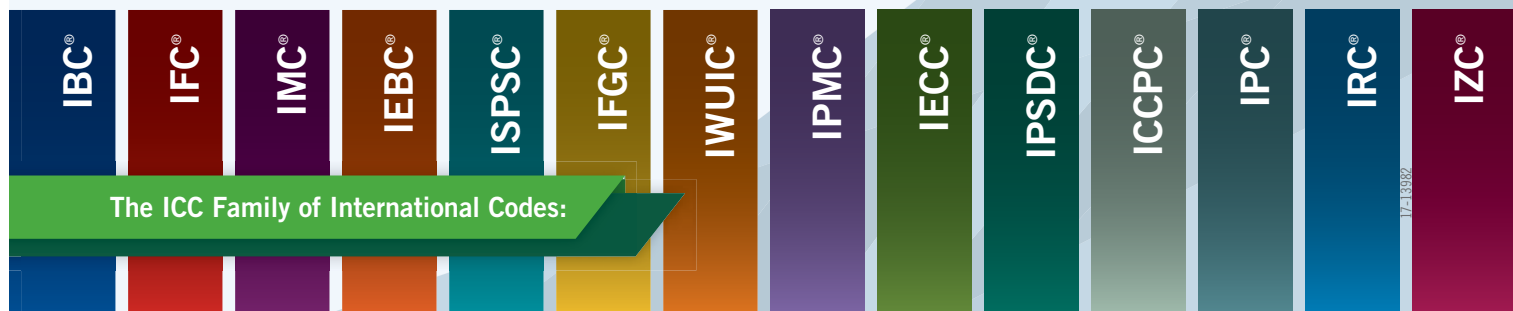


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ON THE COVER

Fecon's Stumpex removes stumps faster and more safely than traditional rotary stump grinders, and it can be mounted to a variety of equipment from traditional skid-steer loaders to hydraulic track and wheel excavators thanks to the new Stumpex EXC 20-ton model. Learn how Stumpex can make your stump removal projects easier on page 10.





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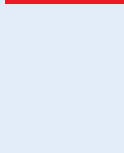
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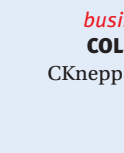
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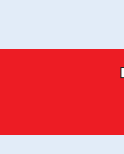
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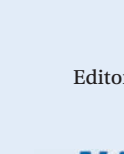
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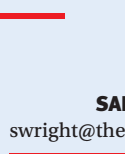


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Opportunities exist for those looking



Sarah Wright | Editor

WITH THE PROMISED \$250 billion infrastructure plan unlikely to be presented in 2018, cities are going to have to continue to look elsewhere for funding as they address infrastructure projects. There have been growing concerns about the state of the U.S.'s infrastructure, particularly after the American Society of Civil Engineers' report found \$1.5 trillion is needed to fill the infrastructure gap by 2025.

This gap is making itself felt in many ways across the country. In the low end of Appalachia, residents are contending with overflowing sewage systems — Pine Grove, W.Va., just dealt with this during this past Memorial Day weekend. A 2005 report commissioned by the Appalachian Regional Commission and conducted by the University of North Carolina's Environmental Finance Center noted the low end Appalachia had \$14.4 billion in wastewater

infrastructure needs. Yet many of the affected Appalachia communities not only lack funding but the credit ratings needed to secure loans.

Water systems have also been getting a lot of focus since the Flint water crisis, a disaster the city is still rebounding from. There appears to be some hope for funding when it comes to water infrastructure as the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed a bipartisan water infrastructure bill in May. Of course it will have to be passed by both the House and Senate, but that is looking promising.

The America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 would increase water storage in the West, address flooding and upgrade old drinking water systems, among several other components — such as improving transparency between the Army Corps of Engineers, stakeholders, Congress and local governments.

While the bill is promising, waiting on Washington to move might not be the best option, especially as the bandages many municipalities have been applying to their past-its-prime infrastructure will only last so long.

Hunting for other available funding opportunities like grants might be a better option to tackle infrastructure problems.



Writer Nicholette Carlson highlights Williamsville, N.Y.'s, East Spring Street project, which addressed stormwater concerns within that corridor. To realize its goal, Williamsville sought a variety of grants. Keeping an eye open for such opportunities can be beneficial. Williamsville not only corrected a problem, its revitalization efforts have brought people to that section of the city.

Still, it is reassuring to see something infrastructure related moving in Washington.

In addition to infrastructure-related topics, we will be sharing efforts to promote diversity within public works departments, a high-tech SUV that is making parking enforcement easier for a Wisconsin city and much more.

Happy Fourth of July, everyone!



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Safety, low maintenance draws buyers to the Stumpex

By DAVE MADDOCK | Product Manager, Attachments, Fecon Inc.

The Stumpex stump cutting attachment is a unique, patented design that removes stumps faster and more safely than traditional rotary stump grinders. The focus on safety in an operation that can be hazardous to operators and bystanders is the key to this product's success.

In operation, the first thing that you notice is how slow the blade is turning. "How could this possibly be getting any work done?" might be your first thought. But once the main blades engage, the results speak for themselves. On a typical 12-inch stump, the Stumpex can cut

from 8 inches above ground to 8 inches below ground in less than four minutes. One pass and you are done on stumps up to 24 inches in diameter. On very large stumps, multiple cuts can be performed and in certain conditions, cuts from different angles do the trick.

And because of its design, the Stumpex does not take extensive training before your operator is proficient in this application.

When it comes to safety, traditional high-speed stump grinders require significant and time-consuming site preparation before the operation can commence. The Stumpex does not require fencing, guarding or window protection. I've even watched as a city street department worker removed a stump with the Stumpex next to a new pickup parked on the street. A slightly nervous homeowner looked on but was soon pleased to know that all was well with his truck and his lawn. And,



LEFT: The Stumpex can cut from 8 inches above ground to 8 inches below ground in less than four minutes. (Photo provided)

RIGHT: People can safely walk past the Stumpex as it works since the attachment doesn't throw any debris. (Photo provided)

since the Stumpex doesn't throw any debris, the operator felt much safer, as well.

Consider the task of stump cutting in a municipal park. With the Stumpex mounted on a compact track loader, or CTL, not only is damage to the sod minimized, but cleanup of the stump takes only a few minutes. All of the stump material that is cut is still in the hole. Or, take cleanup after a storm. The last thing that municipal workers need to worry about is clearing the area so they can remove a stump. No need with the Stumpex, they can work alongside other cleanup crews without safety concerns.

The Stumpex can be mounted on traditional skid-steer type loaders, compact track loaders, rubber-tire backhoes and now, with the new Stumpex EXC 20-ton model, even hydraulic track and wheel excavators rated from 16-40 tons. The Stumpex does require a case drain line and is compatible with hydraulic flows of 17-42 GPM in addition to pressure up to 4,000 PSI on the standard model and 5,500 PSI on the EXC 20-ton model. The standard model weighs 1,368 pounds, and the EXC 20-ton model weighs 2,000 pounds.

Although safety is the key to this new design, low maintenance and operating costs are attributes that set this product apart from high-speed rotary stump grinders. With no carbide teeth to replace, the Stumpex has very low operating and maintenance costs. With traditional high-speed rotary stump cutters, the cost of replacement carbide cutting tools can soon eclipse the cost of the machine. With the Stumpex, keeping the main blades sharp only requires periodic touch-up with a disk grinder, and the nose cone is replaceable by the owner when it wears out.


The Stumpex is displayed at most of the trade shows where Fecon exhibits throughout the year. I have been amazed at the number of people that have come up to us and said, "I saw your videos on YouTube and your website and I couldn't believe it!" It really gets a lot of attention. The list of trade shows where Fecon products and the Stumpex will be on display is on the company website, www.Fecon.com. Look under "About" and "Trade-Shows."



The Stumpex can be mounted on everything from traditional skid-steer type loaders, compact track loaders and rubber-tire backhoes to hydraulic track and wheel excavators with the new Stumpex EXC 20-ton model. (Photo provided)

Our regional managers do a good job demonstrating the Stumpex, as well. We will ship a demo unit to our local dealer, attach it to a skid-steer or excavator for the demo and let the customer see for himself. It really is a product that needs to be seen to be understood.

This product has been so successful that there is still a wait list on new units, but that lead-time is decreasing quickly due to the significant investment that Fecon made late in 2017 to double production of the Stumpex. Buyers can even participate in a program where they can come to the factory to see their Stumpex assembled. They can then take it home when assembly and testing have been completed.

We at Fecon are very excited about the market response to the Stumpex, because we recognize that the market is always right. In fact, I believe that one of our municipal customers said it best when he commented that "the Stumpex is the safest, highest production, lowest total cost stump removal machine that I could find. And, our operators love it." 



Mystery Hole

Ansted, W.Va.

ABOVE: The entrance to The Mystery Hole still sports the kitschy design and trappings popular with the roadside attractions of yesteryear. (Photo provided)

by RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

Is the Mystery Hole just outside of Ansted, W.Va., a unique location where the laws of gravity have somehow gone haywire?

Or is it merely a cleverly constructed subterranean attraction designed to make visitors think so?

The real answer is one owners Will and Sandy Morrison are disinclined to divulge.

"You just have to see it to believe it," Sandy said cryptically, and Will claims to have turned down several million-dollar offers to reveal the secrets of the Mystery Hole.

Some of the weird phenomena include people appearing to stand on a slant, balls rolling uphill and furniture precariously balanced at impossible angles.

"This believe-it-or-not astounding experience has intrigued many people both young and old over the years," touts the website, www.mysteryhole.com.

"Many come time and time again just curious to know if they really did see what they thought they'd seen, or if their eyes were playing tricks on them. Yet some have gone away so bewildered they've headed in the wrong direction and became lost. Very often keys get locked in the cars because the occupants are too anxious to see the Mystery Hole and experience the laws of gravity in action."

The website even issues a lighthearted warning to visitors.

"You may not be able to contain yourself in the usual manner or refrain from making comments such as, 'It made my day,' 'I just love it,' or 'It stopped my headache.'"

"One lady said it changed her husband from an old grouch to a nice, sweet person, and some have even complained the admission price is too low and insisted on giving a tip.

"If at this point your heart is picking up tempo and you feel an urge to explore something very interesting and different, just drop everything right where you are, load up the family, friends and enemies and go for it. You'll see, feel and hear some of the most unusual things as you coast along on this short, sweet trip that will intrigue you for the rest of your life."

Carnival barker rhetoric aside, one of the site's conspicuously posted rules is meant to be taken seriously: "People with heart ailment, vertigo or high blood pressure: Do not enter." A disclaimer follows the caution: "Not responsible for accidents of aftereffects."

The Mystery Hole is one of a dwindling number of holdovers from the era of kitschy roadside diversions back in the day when gasoline prices were reasonable and automobile travel reigned supreme.

The site's kaleidoscopic jumble of colors and incongruous images match the delightful hyperbole of the attraction's website. Depictions of a clown and black bear greet visitors to the rainbow-colored quonset hut and the adjoining gift shop and a Volkswagen Beetle is placed so it appears to have crashed into the building.

The gift shop offers T-shirts, hats, bumper stickers, shot glasses, coffee mugs, postcards and a host of West Virginia souvenirs.

The Mystery Hole is situated near the New River Gorge, site of the famed New River Gorge Bridge and a mecca for rafters.

"We are only two miles from Hawk's Nest State Park," said Sandy. "This whole area is for tourists."

Sandy said "thousands and thousands" of visitors have enjoyed the Mystery Hole during the Morrisons' tenure, now in its 20th season. They bought the place in 1999, becoming the second owners of the attraction "discovered" by Donald Wilson in 1972. He closed the Mystery Hole in 1996 and died shortly thereafter.

For years the property was subject to vandalism and deterioration and the Morrisons invested a substantial amount of resources and elbow grease into restoring the site while preserving the character some have described as "cheesy, tacky, corny, authentic and as a result utterly brilliant," according to Yelp contributor Donal F.

Nearby Ansted, with a population of 1,404, does its share in promoting the attraction and benefits in return from tourists heading into town for gas, food and lodging.

The 15-minute guided tours are \$7 for adults and \$6 for children 11 and under. The Morrisons will open the attraction on their off days for tours of 20 or more visitors.

The Mystery Hole and gift shop are open 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. but the days of operation vary by the month:

- May: Friday through Sunday
- June, July and August: Thursday through Monday
- September: Saturday and Sunday
- October: Friday through Monday

The attraction is open Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day.

The Mystery Hole is currently up for sale, according to Sandy. "We do well," she said, but noted it was time for her and Will to move on. 



The remnants of a Volkswagen Beetle ostensibly crashed into the quonset hut is just one of the intriguing oddities on display at The Mystery Hole. (Katherine Bowman via Flickr, creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)



The New River Gorge Bridge, one of the world's longest and highest steel arch bridges, spans the New River in the Appalachian Mountains a few miles southeast of The Mystery Hole. (bobistraveling via Flickr, creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)



RIGHT: Two patrons of The Mystery Hole near Ansted, W.Va., seem to defy the normal laws of gravity. Whether natural laws are actually suspended or whether the room is just cleverly constructed is a question the attraction's owners prefer to remain unanswered. (Photo provided)



Murrysville, Pa.

Murrysville, Pa., is known for two record-breaking occurrences, both of which are represented on its city seal.

The first arose quite by accident.

In the 1870s local resident Josh Cooper was boiling maple syrup in the woods of Murrysville, a ubiquitous sight in the region.

Cooper's heat source, however, differed from the others. His pot was heated by a steady stream of invisible fuel arising from the ground.

Cooper gave the phenomenon little thought, but enterprising innovators took notice of the abundant fuel source and developed the nation's first commercial gas well industry. For many years the Haymaker Gas Well remained the largest commercial gas well in the world.

The well was drilled in 1878 and when the gas deposit was first tapped the resultant explosion started a fire — with 100-foot flames — that burned for a year and a half before being brought under control.

The second event was quite deliberate. In 1933 local Boy Scout troops cultivated and landscaped an 850-foot living sign made entirely of spruce trees spelling out the word Murrysville.

The Y in the name points directly to the Haymaker Gas Well.


The project was designated in 1947 by "Ripley's Believe It Or Not" as the world's largest arboreal sign. Though its status has been eclipsed by larger signs, the area is still regular maintained. In 2015 a group of Amish workers cleared brush around the sign, which is situated on the side of a steep hill at the municipality's entrance.

The seal also contains the designation, "Gateway to Westmoreland County," as declared in 1977 by Murrysville's then Mayor Walter Dollman Jr. and the local chamber of commerce.

Murrysville was founded by Irish native Jeremiah Murry. He established the town in 1820, purchased several hundred acres, subdivided the land into lots and streets and sold the parcels to incoming settlers.

Murrysville, population 20,042, is located about 20 miles east of Pittsburgh and shares borders with eight other communities. The Borough of Export is wholly surrounded by Murrysville, but operates as a separate municipal entity.

The city hosts several annual festivals, including an Easter egg hunt, health fair, Community Days and Light Up Night in December, when volunteers place luminaries around the M of the tree sign.

For more information, call (724) 327-2100 or visit murrysville.com. 



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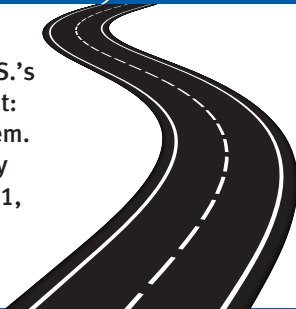
19.5%

Saint Paul, Minn., discovered that this percentage of its approximate 3,000 employees were people of color. This figure did not match the approximate 40 percent of residents who are people of color. This led the city to examine its hiring practices.

Learn more about how Saint Paul's public works department efforts to welcome a diverse workforce on page 18.

**46,000 to 47,000**

The current mileage of the U.S.'s greatest public works project: the interstate highway system. When the interstate highway initiative wrapped up in 1961, it did so with 41,000 miles.



We look back at this massive project on page 30.

1,623

The number of potholes patched or filled by Walker County Public Works in Tennessee since January. To help identify roads with potholes, the county unveiled a mobile app, allowing residents to report potholes.



Source: www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2018/may/28/walker-tackling-pothole-problem/471861/

\$100 million

The amount of money Elk Grove Village, Ill., has invested in infrastructure and facility improvements within the last decade. One of its most recent projects was a \$6.6 million upgrade to its public works facility.



Read more on page 20.

1.5 billion

Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton signed a bill funding \$1.5 billion in public construction projects this past May. Despite signing the bill, Dayton noted that it was "woefully inadequate" for college campuses, aging state buildings and mass transit.



Source: www.twincities.com/2018/05/30/mark-dayton-signs-public-works-borrowing-bill-despite-reservations/

\$500,000

Williamsville, N.Y., received a grant for this amount from the State Historic Preservation Fund to complete the stabilization and restoration of a historic water mill. This was one part of its award-winning Spring Street project, which utilized green infrastructure to address stormwater concerns.



Read about the overall project on page 24.

\$100,000

Appleton, Wis., made a nearly \$100,000 investment to streamline its parking enforcement efforts, with funds going toward an SUV and high-tech equipment for the vehicle that included four protruding cameras, two contour-measuring lasers, a GPS antenna, an onboard computer, image and symbol-recognition software and a printer.



Learn more on page 28.



A wide range of workers can be an asset to your public works department

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

They say that birds of a feather flock together, but if there are no creatures who share your call or plumage, it can be difficult to find your place in the nest — even if you represent a significant portion of the overall tree. That is why the American Public Works Association is encouraging its chapters all across the nation to incorporate more diversity into their workplaces in order to more accurately depict the communities they serve.

According to the APWA's Diversity Resource Guide (2013), "Diversity is neither an affirmative action nor an equal opportunity program." Rather it is the conscious recognition of the various ways in which people differ from one another. The APWA believes that having a diverse workforce is not only the right thing

to do, but also a matter of survival, prosperity and productivity. By creating a more diverse staff and an enriched environment where all opinions and insights are encouraged and valued, they can have a better understanding of the wants and needs of their customer base. Put simply, diversity is good for business.

"Saints" be praised

The city of Saint Paul, Minn., has approximately 3,000 employees across 600 job titles and 13 departments, and when former Mayor Chris Coleman examined the demographics of his constituency with the demographics of his city employees, he noticed something was severely out of alignment. Approximately 40 percent of Saint Paul residents were people of color, but they only represented 19.5 percent of the city's workforce. In order to make sure that his community would continue to thrive and grow, he announced a concerted effort to diversify the various departments, and it is a decision that the city continues to take very seriously.

LEFT: Members of the Saint Paul, Minn., Public Works Department pose before a community parade. The department has taken steps to develop a more diverse workforce. (Photo provided)

RIGHT: A diverse workforce can develop a deeper connection between city departments and the community that they serve. Pictured is a photo collage of Saint Paul's public works at a community parade. (Photo provide)

Ellen Bials, administrative programs manager for the Saint Paul Public Works Department, said the mayor's edict caused her department to examine how it was recruiting, hiring and retaining qualified workers while also making sure diverse candidates were encouraged to apply.

"I think, in the city of Saint Paul, there was a history of people hearing about open positions through existing employees and the broader community was not aware that these opportunities were available," she said. "It wasn't intentional exclusion, but we realized that we had to make a real commitment to diversity in our hiring practices and an effort in retaining these candidates after they were employed."

That isn't always easy. According to Beverly Farraher, operations manager and engineer for the city of Saint Paul, one of the barriers to talent acquisition is the lack of visible role models in organizational positions. When well-qualified people do not see anyone on staff who looks like them, it can prevent them from applying for the job.

"You have to find some forerunners and make sure that they are visible to applicants so that they will know they are welcomed on staff," she said. "You have to be mindful of your short-term recruiting strategies as well as your long-term recruiting strategies and do a lot of community outreach to spread the message that diversity is encouraged."

Benefits outweigh the barriers

Once a department overcomes the barriers to procuring a varied talent pool, the outcome is worth it. Farraher said a diverse workforce is a benefit to any organization because it can introduce a wide range of skill sets to the department and improves the way employees may tackle a project.



"I enjoy problem-solving with people who don't agree with me, or who may agree with me but in a totally different way," she said. "Sometimes the lack of diversity is apparent when everyone is agreeing a little too much."

A diverse workforce also enables a department to evolve and change the way it does things based on demographic changes in the community. When Saint Paul struggled to plow some of its streets because residents were not moving their cars, the diversity in its department helped them realize there were a number of reasons for the lack of compliance. Many of the residents are renters who do not remain in the area long term and are unaware of the rules from one year to the next. Others do not speak English, cannot read supplied literature and are hesitant to answer the door to officials trying to help alert them of the rules.

"There are some people who are very distrustful of the government for one reason or another, so we have to consider that as well," Bials said. "We worked to translate some of our brochures into other languages so that residents know what is expected of

them, we work with churches to help get our message across to their congregations and, in some cases, we go door-to-door making sure that the people we send are not an intimidating presence."

Bials said recognizing and fostering diversity in a community is a challenge and will always be a work in progress because the population evolves over time.

"Still, when you have a diverse workforce, you can meet those challenges and changes in new ways," she said. "We have seen some success, but it's not at the level that we would like to see yet so we are constantly going back to the drawing board and learning to think in different ways."

Farraher agreed that everything evolves, but when a department is intentional about diversity and is committed to training others to welcome differing opinions and ideas into their workplace, it creates a polite, respectful and dynamic organization that is committed to the community it serves.

"I personally believe that we are making headway ... but it is work that will never end," she said. **M**



Potential bicycle paths connecting the village to surrounding cities and additional points of access to existing trails are being explored by Elk Grove Village. Pictured is the Busse Woods Trail System, one of the village's most popular trails. (Bohao Zhao via English Wikimedia, creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en)

Elk Grove Village embarks on full docket of community improvements

By CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

Elk Grove Village, Ill., might be a small community, but its members have big love for their hometown and even bigger plans for the future.

In the last decade, more than \$100 million in infrastructure and facility improvements have been invested in the Elk Grove community in order to ensure that its 33,000 residents have the best quality of life. As a result of those investments, the village has seen an increase in business development activity and a surge of private sector reinvestment in the last few years.

While these developments have happened organically and are encouraging, city officials decided as the village's 60th

anniversary approached, it was time for a major overhaul of some of the community's most vital capital projects. Elk Grove 2025 — a long-range capital improvement plan, which includes public facility improvements, road improvements, streetscaping, bicycle and pedestrian projects and drainage projects — was born.

The first project on the facilities list has recently been completed, as the \$6.6 million upgrade to the public works facility wrapped up in January.

According to The Daily Herald, improvements to the 37-year-old building included a facade overhaul, interior renovations, a new salt barn and more storage space. A small plant nursery is also planned for the site.

One of the most useful features of the upgrade, however, is the addition of a second village salt dome to the building. The dome will allow snowplows to be quickly and efficiently refilled when battling inclement weather.

Work on a second public works facility is expected to begin in the near future, with an anticipated completion in 2020.



Pictured is a planned corridor beautification project that Elk Grove Village will be undertaking. (Photo provided)

Next on the list of facilities upgrades and improvements is an overhaul of the village's fire station, which hasn't seen improvements in nearly 40 years. A list of expected improvements, including a new roof, parking lot reconstruction and repairing damaged sewage pipes, are outlined in Elk Grove 2025's newsletter, and the anticipated completion for the project is listed as 2018. A second fire station will see a fresh facade and minor infrastructure upgrades.

The newsletter outlines a number of drainage issues throughout the city, including flooded sidewalks and the need for a new bridge. Both problems are slated to be addressed during Elk Grove 2025's lifespan.

In addition to already-constructed bicycle and pedestrian overpasses, potential bicycle paths connecting the village to surrounding cities are being explored, as well as a number of new access points to walking and jogging trails.

Street rehabilitation is a major Elk Grove 2025 priority as the village boasts more than 180 miles of roadway. Nearly 55 miles of that roadway had been resurfaced at the time of Elk Grove 2025's announcement, but the Village will be rehabbing a number of major roadways in addition to regularly scheduled annual roadway maintenance.

In addition, two major intersection improvements, new streetlights in various locations and a number of streetscape beautification efforts are planned. Six busy corridors within the village are being reviewed to determine ways to streamline and beautify both right-of-way and center medians.

While the plans are vast, village residents need not worry about potential financial burden.



ABOVE: Pictured is the Village Greenway, which Elk Grove Village rehabilitated in 2009. With its Elk Grove 2025 plan, the village will continue to invest in community improvements. (bogdanstepniak via English Wikimedia, creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en)



LEFT: Village officials and public works employees cut the ribbon at the newly renovated public works facility. (Photo provided)

According to a document in Elk Grove 2025's newsletter titled Funding Elk Grove, the village's capital projects fund has an unreserved fund balance of more than \$700,000. While that can put a dent in the projects, additional funding is necessary in order to make the capital improvements the village desperately needs.

According to village officials, a combination of a one-time transfer of \$7 million from the Elk Grove's general fund, a \$60 million capital bond issuance using revenue from the electric utility tax, a 1 percent increase to the village's telecommunications tax and a one-cent increase to the natural gas use tax and grant funding will cover the project.

This translates to only a \$20.45 increase in taxes for the average homeowner per year.

According to the newsletter, village officials are confident in the Elk Grove 2025 plan and firmly believe reinvesting in the community is the right choice.



ABOVE: Elk Grove Village, Ill., completed renovations on its public works facility this January. These renovations were a part of the village's Elk Grove 2025 plan, which features many community improvements. (Photo provided)

"The Village has taken bold steps over the last several years to invest in our community," the newsletter reads. "Overall, we have worked diligently to become a national destination for business activity, and we made this long-term investment to create a win-win scenario for business and the Village ... we firmly believe that when we invest in our community, we lay the groundwork for success of our businesses and residents." **M**



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Williamsville, N.Y., provides better stormwater management by going green

By NICHOLETTE CARLSON | The Municipal

“The project took what was a sea of asphalt and turned it into a place where people want to be, where it is safe to walk and where stormwater is no longer collecting from Main Street, down East Spring Street and running off into Glen Park but being collected in planters prior to being released,” Lynda Juul, Williamsville, N.Y., administrator, said.

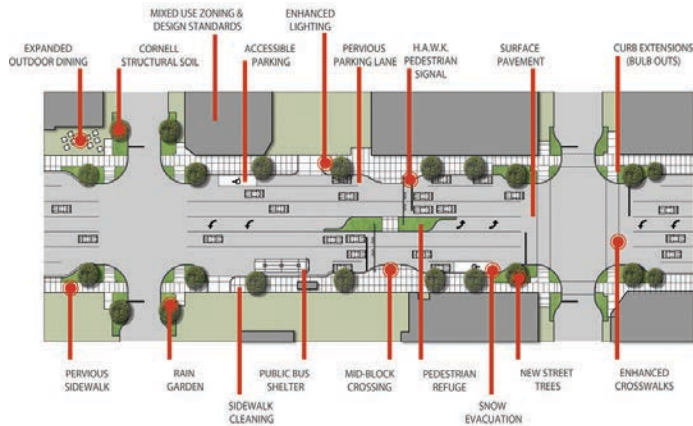
To start the project had to be identified as a priority in the village’s comprehensive plan. Further planning was completed between 2007 and 2017 and the “Picture Spring Street” initiative was launched in order to

educate the public and generate feedback. A project charter was adopted by the village board of trustees and it formed a 48-person committee.

Several rounds of funding were pursued requiring coordination and planning among various officials, consultants and higher elected officials. Request for proposal processes were gone through in an effort to seek multiple private sector partners before the current owner, Sweet Jenny’s Ice Cream, was identified and selected.

The project secured funds for green infrastructure and streetscape with permeable pavers, a subsurface water filtration and collection system, bioretention swale and

Picture Main Street, Williamsville, NY



This design shows the various changes along the road for the Picture Main Street initiative. These not only included rain gardens but also new crosswalks, sidewalks, street lighting and more. (Photo provided by the village of Williamsville)



The historic Williamsville water mill was restored as part of the East Spring Street Project. It was purchased by Sweet Jenny's Ice Cream, and a plaza was built for events and gatherings to help make it a hub of the village once more. (Photo provided by the village of Williamsville)



Along each side of East Spring Street, planters were designed and placed to more effectively manage the flow of stormwater, reducing erosion and sedimentation. These allow stormwater to be filtered naturally before ending up in the creek. (Photo provided by the village of Williamsville)

included a build-out of the public plaza area and creation of an inviting gathering and event space.

Project overview

The overall goal for the East Spring Street Project was to take an underutilized road and transform it into a vibrant "B street" of activity. The timeline estimated was that everything would be completed between the spring of 2015 and the fall of 2016. After it was completed, the transformation would serve as a model of both green infrastructure and stormwater management.

This project would then allow "dead areas" to become a hub of activity all centered around the restored 1811 water mill, including a village square pedestrian plaza where residents could hold a farmer's market or other events. Here, in the heart of the village, there would also be opportunities for small shops and infill development near the rushing waters of Glen Falls. ►

Project funding

- In 2005 the village paid \$450,000 with no technical match to the grants.
- A \$50,000 grant was received from Senator MaryLou Rath through the NYS Parks.
- Assemblyman Jim Hayes also assisted in providing a \$50,000 grant.
- The NYS Parks also provided a grant in the amount of \$150,000.
- In 2016 the water mill was sold to Sweet Jenny's Ice Cream, which currently holds an ice cream shop and comic book store.
- In 2008 a restoration grant was applied for, and \$100,000 was awarded through a Environment Protection Fund grant. These EPF grants require a 50/50 match.
- In 2009, the EPF awarded \$97,210.
- The EPF grant then awarded the project \$244,824 in 2010.
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Program grant provided \$1,902,180 with a \$634,060 match.
- The NYS Environmental Facilities Corp. Green Innovation grant provided \$799,160 with a \$88,796 match.
- State Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer secured \$250,000.
- A grant to build out the public plaza area provided \$250,000, which would also create a space for gatherings and events.
- In order to complete the stabilization and restoration of the historic water mill, a \$500,000 grant was received from the State Historic Preservation fund.



A sign that explains the problem, changes and solutions sits atop the overlook at Glen Park. It outlines the green innovations the village completed in order to better its stormwater management. (Photo provided by the village of Williamsville)

Large scale green infrastructure was planned for this project, which would utilize traditional gray functions such as pipes and drains but allow the majority of the stormwater to be captured and released back into groundwater aquifers, such as wetlands, retention ponds and bioswales, after undergoing natural filtration.

Previously stormwater management involved the water flowing directly over the top of the bedrock ledge at the mill to the creek below. This would then cause erosion of the bedrock and extreme sedimentation of the creek. In order to reduce the impact to both, the new design featuring green infrastructure was built.

The site's rock depth was deep enough that it allowed water to be slowed and cleaned in the rain gardens before eventually out-falling beyond the mill to Ellicott Creek.

Runoff easily escapes over the edge of the bedrock ledge where the mill was thanks to the steep slopes of East Spring Street. In order to decrease the amount of water

flowing over the edge, particularly during large storm events, a series of rain gardens were placed on the curb edge of East Spring Street. Curb inlets allow stormwater from the street edge to enter so that it can then be directed to the planting medium. Sidewalk stormwater can enter also with the help of wall inlets.

When the area in front of the mill becomes shallower, it allows for a lateral pipe to feed adjacent trees with stormwater from the raised planters on East Spring Street. This means the trees can be planted in structural soil and simply be fed with stormwater.

Prior to this project, the roadway had three drainage inlet structures that were clogged and not functioning properly. As part of the project, those lines were cleaned so that surface water could drain to these structures. The outfall for these pipes can then be directed to a series of terraced rain gardens as part of a bedrock wall stabilization effort. Water from drainage inlets and excess water from raised planters along East



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Spring Street is slowed down and cleaned by the terraced planters before emptying into the creek area near the mill building.

The north and south sides of the roadway are lined with rain gardens. Several rain gardens on the south side of the street catch water diverted from parking areas. Water that gets past these gardens is channeled to the rain gardens on the north side of the road. Shrubs, perennials and grasses are planted along the south side rain gardens in order to emphasize that side of the roadway's pedestrian walk. The north side rain gardens include trees, shrubs and perennials, which allows the view and feel of the park to extend into stormwater management.

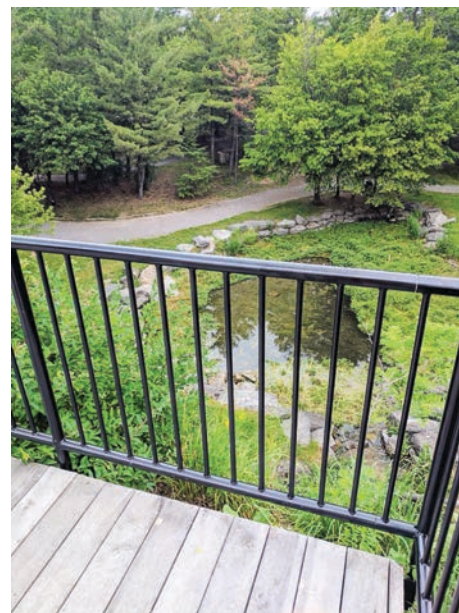
On Rock Street rain gardens and green spaces will better define pedestrian walkways while also providing necessary stormwater management. These gardens are able to rely on infiltration as well as overflow piping from the previous stormwater system.

In order to help collect stormwater, a greenwall was installed adjacent to the mill.

Sidewalks, street lighting and an overlook looking into Glen Park were also installed.

"Both the village community and the regional community love the project. Business owners who border the project had to endure a trying period during construction but have now reported up to a 45 percent increase in sales due to the investment in the area," Maggie Winship, director of community development, states. "In addition, several properties have been purchased in the area and the new owners are investing in renovations and improvements."

The success of the project can best be seen in two ways. In 2017 the American Public Works Association New York chapter awarded the East Spring Street Project the environmental project of the year award. Officials are also using this technique on more streets throughout the village. "Currently the village is undertaking a similar green infrastructure project on South Long Street and Village Square Lane, restoring the right of way in an area surrounding a village park," Winship concluded. **M**



The planters and other innovations do not only provide valuable stormwater solutions but also help to connect Glen Park with the new pedestrian walkways. (Photo provided by the village of Williamsville)

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Appleton, Wis., updates parking strategy with high-tech SUV

By LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

They say necessity is the mother of invention. While the city of Appleton, Wis., did not invent the innovative parking enforcement solution it recently adopted, it's an example to other municipalities of how the right technology can boost productivity.

Last fall, the city made a sizable investment, in hopes that it would aid staff's efforts in enforcement. According to Paula Vandehey, Appleton's public works director, the city made a nearly \$100,000 investment, as approved by the city council. The breakdown included \$30,000 for the SUV and \$68,000 for equipment, including four protruding cameras, two contour-measuring lasers, a GPS antenna, an onboard computer, image and symbol-recognition software and a printer.

Vandehey said the city purchased the vehicle on its own and had it outfitted. The style and size are up to the individual community, she noted. The drive-by system known as autoChalk is made by Canadian firm Tannery Creek Systems. According to the company, "autoChalk recognizes infracting vehicles by using a combination of license plate recognition and vehicle recognition technology to accurately determine plate, color, contour and length of each scanned vehicle." The

company has deployed similar systems in Santa Barbara; Madison, Wis.; Fredericksburg, Va.; and other cities.

Appleton's virtual chalking parking enforcement vehicle has been a boon to the city because it addresses a common problem. Vandehey said the city has a great deal of time-limited parking. With limited staff and resources, it was difficult to monitor and ticket as necessary.

She also said they were also looking at adding additional parking but couldn't justify the additional coverage. Parking enforcement staff have the responsibility of enforcing all Appleton ordinances and all Wisconsin state statutes pertaining to parking, according to the city's website. They issue citations using



Appleton, Wis., purchased a SUV and decked it out in high-tech gear that allows its public works department to more effectively enforce parking ordinances. (Photo provided)

hand-held computers for such infractions as loading zone violations, no-parking zones, expired time zones, handicapped parking and expired parking meters.

"With the old technology, we knew we weren't able to do it justice," she said.

Now, she said the city can make the rounds in a fraction of the time, increasing efficiency.

The city also made the move after looking at the results of a 2015 downtown parking study prepared by a parking consultant group. Vandehey said newer enforcement technology was among the recommendations, with her adding that they have slowly implemented others. In the report, Walker Parking Consultants writes, "Proven technology advancements in the parking industry can improve the patron experience and financial performance of a public parking system. Outcomes often include more efficient use of public assets, a higher level of customer service and reduced direct labor costs."

To that end, the city rolled out the mobile application PassportParking last summer. This platform allows users to purchase parking using a debit or credit card, monitor and receive notifications when their sessions runs low, view all parking history, extend time remotely and add funds to pay for parking through the in-app wallet feature. The app is now available at 800 metered parking spaces through the city. On the back end,

apps like this help city offices and employees share real-time data about what's happening within their various transit and parking systems. Additionally, it makes decisions about where to dedicate more law enforcement, personnel, money and resources easier.

Regarding the move to purchase the vehicle and technology, financial responsibility and transparency to taxpayers, of course, also entered into the equation.

"Parking utilities are all user-funded," she said. "Therefore, taxes don't go toward funding the vehicle."

Speaking of money, while Vandehey said they don't track revenue from citations on the enforcement side per se, they have seen other promising intangible results — and that's a win.

"We are definitely getting people more aware of the parking time zones," she said. "People aren't violating (the ordinances) as much. The main point is that you are getting people to follow the rules."

Currently, metered parking hours are set at 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with Sundays free of charge. Overnight parking is permitted by request for mornings between 2-5 a.m.

Looking to the future, Vandehey said likely next steps pertain to public awareness and education. She said her department tried to get the information out to the public in a



The SUV's \$68,000-worth equipment includes four protruding cameras, two contour-measuring lasers, a GPS antenna, an onboard computer, image and symbol-recognition software and a printer. (Photo provided)



Prior to hitting the road, the city of Appleton, Wis., made sure to spread public awareness of the new high-tech parking SUV. (Photo provided)

timely manner, to quell fears. But there still remains some opportunity for fine-tuning.

"We probably should have adopted additional signage on the vehicle to help people identify (it as part of the city fleet)." **M**

The greatest public works project?



By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

In 1919, Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower was part of the Transcontinental Motor Convoy, where 80 military vehicles drove from Washington, D.C., to California to test the usability of the United States road system. This was far from the straightforward task that it is today.

Along the way, Eisenhower documented his travels in a series of reports, which can be found on [Archives.gov](https://www.archives.gov). The farther west the convoy went the worse the road conditions seemed to be.

He described the road in Maryland as “of concrete, and excellent in all ways, except that it was a little narrow for convoy work.” A “great portion” of the roads in Indiana and Ohio were paved. He wrote that the dirt roads in Iowa were “well-graded and good in dry weather.” Unfortunately for the convoy, they were also undrivable when wet. By the time he and the convoy reached western Utah, he wrote that the roads were mostly “impassible” for heavy vehicles.

These lessons he learned traveling with the Transcontinental Motor Convoy stayed with him through his time as the supreme commander of the Allied Forces during World War II. It was there that he saw the significant advantage German forces had thanks to the efficiency of the Autobahn.

By the time he was president, he knew that America was in desperate need of an equally dynamic highway system. This is where the motivation for the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 came from.

“There are no cons,” said Doug Hecox, the spokesman for the Federal Highway Administration. “I don’t know of any academic that will argue that. It’s only been a positive for the United States and certainly for its economy.

It moved us from an agricultural economy to a world power. It united the United States in a way that no laws were able to do. It gave the United States the quality of life that it has today, which is the envy of the world. We’ve become synonymous with freedom. ‘The open road’ is the epitome of that freedom.”

This more than 41,000 interstate highway initiative created the roadway infrastructure that the United States still relies on today. The project was completed in 1961.

“Now, as a nation, we have about 4.1 or 4.2 million miles of public road,” Hecox said. “But the 41,000 miles has, over the past 60 years, grown only slightly, so it’s only about 46 or 47 thousand miles of interstate.... It connected the United States in a way that it wasn’t before. You had a few very small highways that were connecting states, but they were done inconsistently from one state to the other, and they were all too small.”

Initially, the thought was that the only way to fund the project was tolling, but instead, bonds were used. According to the U.S.

LEFT: *Interstate 90 stretches from Washington to Massachusetts. Prior to the creation of the interstate highway system, travel between states could be problematic with road conditions varying wildly. (Photo by Andrew Mentock)*

Federal Highway Administration's website, the bonds were retired by the federal gas tax, which was dedicated to the interstate system for a 30-year period.

Today, upkeep for the interstate system is still largely paid for by federal taxes to gasoline and diesel.

"It's constantly changing," Hecox said. "It's been changing for 60 years. We're constantly improving it, we're making it safer, better and finding new ways to repair it every year constantly. The states maintain it and we help provide federal funding to make it easier for them. But trying to find better materials that can reduce the amount of time we have workers out would be a good thing."

According to Hecox, one of the biggest breakthroughs, when it comes to road construction, happened within the past decade. It is warm mix asphalt, which can be applied in lower temperatures than typical asphalt can.

"(It's) asphalt that doesn't need to be poured when it's super hot," he said. "It can be poured when it's warm, which means we can now do asphalt work in colder weather, so we've expanded the construction season, which means we can do more work throughout the year than we could before and it also minimizes the amount of highway work that's taking place in June, July and August, by spreading it out."

Advances are also being made to the strength of concrete, making it more durable.

However, even given all the advancements in technology, updating and keeping the interstate system could be exponentially more difficult in the future, now that fuels such as hydrogen and electricity are growing in popularity.

Vehicles that run on gasoline also require much less gasoline than they used to. Today, it's not uncommon for a vehicle to use only one gallon of fuel per 40 to 50 miles. According to Hecox, when the interstate system was first being built, many vehicles were only traveling 10 to 11 miles per gallon.



The creation of the interstate highway system connected the U.S. in a way it had not been before its completion in 1961. Today, the system has grown to between 46,000 and 47,000 miles of interstate from 41,000 miles. Pictured is the Indiana Toll Road portion of Interstate 90. (Photo by Andrew Mentock)



The creation of warm mix asphalt has expanded the road construction season, aiding in the maintenance of the interstate highway system. (Photo by Andrew Mentock)

"You just have less revenue pour into the kitty to pay for the highway system that more and more people depend on," he said.

Solving this problem won't be easier either. Hecox said that many American politicians have been aware of this problem for years,

but have yet to come up with a plan to pay for the interstate system in the future.

"That's the \$64 trillion question Congress has been wrestling with for at least the past decade," he said. "It's a difficult public policy issue. It's one with no easy answers." **M**



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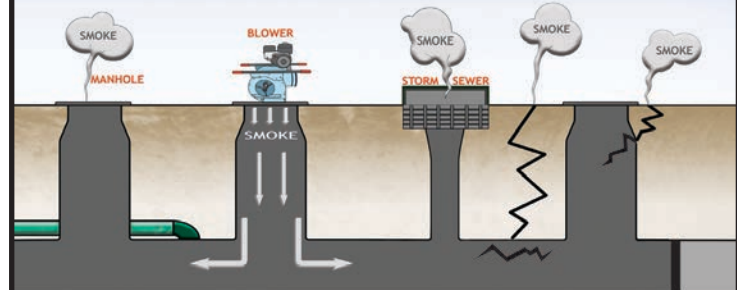
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A veterans group marches in Barton City, Mich.'s, Fourth of July parade. The city is known as having "The Biggest 4th in the North." (Photo provided)



Barton City Volunteer Fire Department gets in the Fourth of July spirit during the Fourth of July parade. (Photo provided)

Barton City's magnificent night sky on the Fourth of July

By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

Did you hear that police arrested two kids yesterday? One was drinking battery acid and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off...

Bad fireworks jokes aside, we have a great summer story for you about Barton City, a little tiny entity in upper Michigan. And this itty-bitty unincorporated community in Alcona County boasts a grand total population of only 450 in a 2016 census.

But for two days in July, Barton City comes alive and becomes very populated thanks to its national claim to fame as the "Biggest Little 4th in the North."

Alcona County, which covers a multitude of nine cities, towns and villages, sits right in the center of Huron National Forest, and Bill Lossing of Barton City has stepped forward to share his eight years of volunteering experience with the holiday, which first became Barton City-renowned in the early '60s.

Lossing, retired from 29.7 years with the automotive industry, is a dedicated volunteer tasked with planning the fireworks each July and a few other events during the year.

"Because Barton City has no mayor or town manager, we are under the jurisdiction of Alcona County and have township supervisors for the two townships, which split Barton City roughly in half," said Lossing. "Jim Burger takes care of Millen Township and Rodney Cordes of Hawes Township — both of whom grew up in the area.

"I'm new here, having only resided in Hawes Township since 2005."

The festivities run on July 3 and 4 this year with fireworks on the actual Fourth. Because the two-day event is so large for such a tiny



Bill Lossing, volunteer and president of Barton City Improvement Association

town, one of Lossing's biggest challenges is finding volunteers and raising money.

"The Barton City Improvement Association, of which I am president, sells advertising space in our annual booklet and accepts donations from anyone willing," said Lossing. "I order the fireworks, help set the show and then go watch the show. Everyone associated with the BCIA is a volunteer. We have no paid help for any event we sponsor.

The yearly booklet that Lossing referred to is an annual collection of paid advertising, good wishes, Fourth of July pictures from previous years, pictures from other local



Volunteers prep for the fireworks display that occurs July 4. (Photo provided)



Alcona Community Schools football players hand out frozen treats to parade spectators. (Photo provided)

events, schedule of events and pictures from the previous parade.

"As for volunteer selection, we have a core of people who direct the operation, and also, some people who have volunteered for many years," said Lossing. "Beyond that, we continually try to recruit new volunteers for every year. You can never have too many people willing to work — many hands make light work."

Some of the duties the volunteer clan has been tasked with include cooking and serving food, entertaining kids, supervise the food and beverage areas, cleaning up the park and the fireworks areas.

So far, the event has had a good safety record, with no accidents that Lossing is aware of.

"As for the parade attraction, a parade setup area is necessary and could be a school or shopping center," said Lossing. "We do the routing of the parade after passing through the viewing area. The parade route has not been changed in the last 13 years."

Some of the family activities at the occasion include a horseshoe tournament, goldfish races for kids, a grease pole, a sawdust pile, sack races, three-legged races, a beer tent, a cook shack, a vendor area and clowns, according to Lossing.

"Also, alcoholic beverages are served in an enclosed area with a state of Michigan event license," Lossing said. "Individuals bringing alcoholic beverages into the park where the day's festivities are centered are allowed."

As for fireworks, Barton City has worked with Wolverine Fireworks Display Inc. Jenny Campau, display manager for Wolverine Fireworks Display, noted, "Our fireworks assortments offer a wide variety of effects so no two shows are ever the same from year to year."

"There are some local individuals who set up and electrically discharge the display. We have had one of our long-time technicians go up and work with them/train them on use of the firing system for the past few years, but they should be on their own completely after this year. They have attended our safety training classes and have become 'Wolverine Technicians.'"

For city professionals who may be contemplating setting up their own municipal fireworks programs — what should they be aware of?

"Government safety regulations, permits that may be required, number of people required, safe location for ignition and fallout, cost of fireworks and the amount of planning time required to raise money and organize the event," recited Lossing. "About a week after the event we begin planning for the next year. Also, the place of ignition is on the ground and a minimum of 500 feet from the nearest spectator area and fallout is over a lake."

"Each handler of fireworks has to complete a safety course and is then certified by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Because we light the fireworks on federal land we must get a permit from the



Festival participants enjoy the food available during Barton City's two-day Fourth of July celebration. (Photo provided)

United States Forest Service. Some people come from local towns, which may or may not have their own fireworks displays, but many come from farther away in Michigan and other states because they may have ties to this area."

Asked if he ordered the same fireworks each year or tried out new ones, Lossing, who spends approximately \$5,000 annually for fireworks, said he allowed the fireworks company to select the fireworks within Barton City's budget because they have worked with him for many years and, "they understand our needs, and occasionally we will try the new fireworks offered by the company."

Finally, Lossing said he gets the most satisfaction on the Fourth of July when people tell him those were the best fireworks they had ever seen. **M**



P3s encourage innovation, new outlooks

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

MOST CITIES CULTIVATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE private sector in one shape or another, whether they are seeking private sector bids for a construction or repaving project or outsourcing IT services. Sandy Springs, Ga., meanwhile, is taking public-private partnership to a new level by embracing a P3 model of government, which has seen much of its city services outsourced to the private sector. A trailblazer in more ways than one, Sandy Springs has set an example many other fledgling Georgia cities are following.

"P3s are our claim to fame," Sandy Springs Mayor Rusty Paul said. "It started when we started the city in December of 2005. We had the opportunity to rethink how we wanted to provide city services."

Of those possibilities, one was the traditional approach in which the city of Sandy Springs would hire employees and set up departments. The second approach would be the adoption of a public-private partnership model; for this approach, the city first had to establish whether or not there would be enough private-sector bidders in order to create a truly competitive marketplace that would enable the city to secure the best price and value. The third approach was a combination of both methods.

"We leaned toward the total P3 model but decided to keep public safety traditional," Paul said, noting while the city maintains police and fire departments, it does outsource its ambulance service.



Mayor Rusty Paul checks out construction work at the new city hall. The project wrapped up on schedule and within the city's budget. (Photo provided)

LEFT: Pictured is a rendering of Sandy Springs, Ga.'s, new city hall, which also includes the Sandy Springs Performing Arts Center. Like much of its operations, the project was completed using public-private partnerships. (Photo provided)

RIGHT: Workers pave Galambos Way, the roadway that Sandy Springs City Hall calls home. (Photo provided)

In fact, beyond police and fire, the city only has eight employees: the city manager, two assistant city managers, the city clerk, the city manager's executive assistant, finance director, court administrator and the human resources director. While this might leave the impression that city hall is a vacant space, Paul noted Sandy Springs' city hall is like walking into a beehive with about 135 people all working.

"We've been doing this for 12 years, and it's worked extremely well for us," Paul added. Communication has been key to that success, with Paul noting operations are seamless because everyone reports to the city's senior management, including the city manager and the assistant city managers.

While not all cities take P3s to the level Sandy Springs has, Paul said it's not that major of a leap, especially since cities are already used to managing contracts and working with contractors. P3s have brought another benefit to the city of Sandy Springs, largely thanks to the rebidding every five years.

"What city every five years out requests to have its operations accessed from top and bottom?" Paul asked, noting through Sandy Springs' rebidding process, it does just that: Asking members of the private sector to access city operations from top to bottom for free, with the key question being "How could you do it better?"

With 12 years of using P3s under its belt, Paul said the city has held the costs of government services in check, even reducing them by 10 percent. There were some concerns through the rebidding process that costs would increase; however, Paul said, "The costs are coming in lower. We're staying fairly close to even because of competition."

With \$1 million in contracts available, potential contractors have to show Sandy Springs how they can do things better, which encourages bidders to pursue innovative and new solutions that increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of city government.

With this long history of outsourcing, it's not surprising Sandy Springs once again turned to the private sector when it came time to create a city hall and, by extension, an anchor for a freshly created downtown — a step many newly minted Georgia cities are taking.

For Sandy Springs, the project includes not only a city hall but also a 1,100-seat performing arts center, which will be managed by a private contractor, a smaller theatre that can also double as a location for city council meetings, an on-site park and a mix of residential and retail components. City hall will also be able to adapt to future technologies.

Paul noted it can be a struggle for cities stay on top of technology changes. "Technology is developing so rapidly. The private sector ►



RIGHT: The operations of the performing arts center will be run by a private company in keeping with Sandy Springs' history of utilizing public-private partnerships. (Photo provided)

is so much better with technology, and they are incentivized to bring (the latest technology) to us. It keeps us on the cutting edge.”

Partners for the project included Carter/Selig; Rosser International; jB+a; Holder Construction; and Spectra. Paul said contractors kept the project on schedule and within the budget, two aspects incentivized by the city with bonuses and fines.


“The private sector gets it; they work with budgets,” he said.

The city council approved the site development plan for the project in September 2014, and the ribbon cutting for the new city hall was held May 7, 2018.

Paul noted Sandy Springs’ approach isn’t for every city, particularly for well-established legacy cities; however, even if a P3 model like Sandy Springs is not possible, Paul said incentivizing city employees can prove just as beneficial as incentivizing public sector partners.

“What innovations have (employees) been sitting on? If you give the right incentive and actually ask them what they could do better, you might be surprised,” Paul said. “If you let them (city employees/departments) bid on projects, you will find they are a fount of information and ideas.”

Looking through a P3 lens can bring value to the community as whole, providing a platform for city employees to be innovators, better serve residents and be fiscally inventive while not losing quality.

“It is valuable to reexamine your approach and look through a P3 lens,” Paul said. 



Pictured is an interior shot of the new city hall/performing arts center. (Photo provided)

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Not as wild west as you might be picturing



By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

Even though the small town of Kennesaw, Ga., is a suburb of Atlanta, it's been seen as a modern version of the wild west, except there are no tumbleweeds rolling down Main Street. What Kennesaw has in common with the wild west is a reputation for having a significant number of citizens who are armed with guns.

This reputation comes from the ordinance Sec. 34-21, that was passed in 1982, mandating that residents of Kennesaw own a gun. The ordinance was implemented in response to a law in Morton Grove, Ill., banning handguns the year prior.

Yet, according to Lt. Craig Graydon, who has been with the Kennesaw Police Department since 1986, the law has never been enforced—despite what the media has reported on this topic.

“I think initially, for the first few years after the ordinance was passed, I think there was a little bit of sensationalism, where they tried to portray Kennesaw as kind of a wild west town, where everyone was walking around with guns strapped to their hips,” Graydon said. “And that’s not Kennesaw at

all. Kennesaw is pretty much your normal suburban community. You really couldn’t tell from driving through Kennesaw that it’s different from other communities, as far as gun ownership.”

In addition to not being enforced, Graydon also says that there were several loopholes put into the ordinance that would prevent a resident from needing to own a gun. This includes morally opposing gun, being unable to afford a gun or legally being prevented from owning a gun.

That has not prevented residents from adhering to the gun law and attribute the city’s low crime rate to the ordinance.

“Pretty much everyone I know takes the law seriously,” said Joshua Naanes, 26, a resident of Kennesaw for the 20 years. “There’s

ABOVE: Kennesaw, Ga., passed ordinance Sec. 34-21 in 1982, which mandates that residents own a gun; however, the city included plenty of loopholes so residents actually don’t have to own one. Pictured is Kennesaw’s Main Street. (Public domain)

not a lot of crime in Kennesaw, because most people know that they will be staring at the wrong end of a barrel if anything goes wrong. The only people I know who don’t really take it seriously are people who don’t own guns or the people who are against guns in the first place.”

According to statistics from the city’s website, there is roughly a two percent crime rate and only one murder has been committed in the last five years.

While this may make the gun ordinance sound appealing, local law enforcement isn’t convinced that it’s the sole cause of the low crime rate.

“I think it has some impact,” Graydon said. “It may be somewhat of a psychological deterrent or something like that. It’s hard to say how much of that has impacted the gun law, but I think the main things is the great relationship that we have with our



People check out food options during the 2016 Great Southern Food Truck Rally in Kennesaw, Ga. (Blulz60/Shutterstock.com)



Due to the nation's conversation on gun violence, Kennesaw, Ga., has been fielding a lot of calls in regards to its gun ordinance. While the city experiences a low crime rate, it is unsure how much of an impact its ordinance mandating gun ownership has on it. (Public domain)



Not all citizens own guns, and over the years, Kennesaw has grown, cultivating a diverse community. It is also the location of Kennesaw State University, which has a population of about 25,000 students. Picture is the university's University Village. (Rob Hainer/Shutterstock.com)

community—more than anything else. I think the law may have some impact, but I can't tell how much."

Naanes also believes that the coverage of the gun ordinance by the media has actually helped make Kennesaw safer.

"I feel like every couple of years there is a news article or some kind of media article that talks about the gun laws here in Kennesaw,"

he said. "When people figure out that it's against the law to not own a gun, I feel that helps with crime rates in Kennesaw. People from Kennesaw tend to get a lot of questions when an article gets released, or they figure out that the law is real. Most people don't believe it at first."

While Kennesaw likely has the most covered gun law ordinance in the United States,

there are a few other cities that also have similar laws.

Other cities and towns that are listed as having a law mandating gun ownership are Virginia, Utah and Nucla, Colo.

Nelson, Ga., passed a similar ordinance in April of 2013 but was sued by The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence and the city council unanimously agreed to amend it—clearly outlining a resident's right under the Second Amendment to not bear arms.

Also in 2013, Gun Barrel City, Texas, once passed a nonbinding ordinance urging its residents to buy and own a gun in order to show their support to the Second Amendment. While the vote may have attracted the town and the Second Amendment attention, many Gun Barrel City residents were already gun owners.

This was also the case for Kennesaw.

"I don't think it has a huge impact on the culture," Graydon said. "The town has changed so much. We're a very diverse community. We have a university with a population of almost 25,000 students. We have quadrupled our population here (since 1982). I don't think it impacts the culture at all as far as now. I know even when it was passed, the majority of the people who lived in the area at the time were probably gun owners already because they were hunters and sportsmen, so I don't think there was a significant increase in the number of gun owners in the area once the law was passed." **M**

Encouraging economic development: Improve marketing and communications



by TROY KIDDER | TROY ... Pure Blue Creative LLC

One definition of a municipality is “a center for the exchanging of goods and services.” In other words, it’s people and money. Chances are you’re already doing a great job serving the people. You keep the roads repaired and clean, provide safe water to drink and use... not to mention oversee safety services such as police and fire prevention. The list goes on and on.

All of these contribute to a foundation that fosters an environment of economic development and growth. That ought to be enough; however, there’s more to do: communications and public relations.

Not only do newsletters, websites and videos, done in excellence, improve your image and function within the community, they contribute greatly to the economic development of your municipality.

First, communication creates a “buzz” by making folks aware of all the great services provided by you and your team. Hey, if you don’t toot your own proverbial horn, how

will they know? And it’s bigger than that: When people feel safe and the town is running smoothly, it will certainly blossom economically.

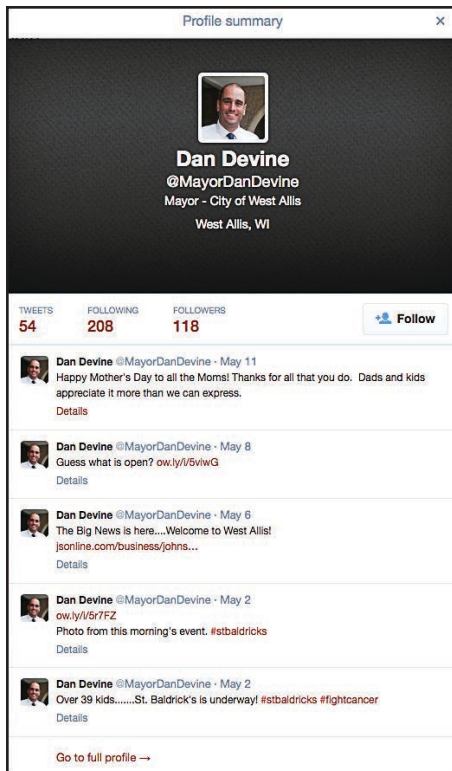
In today’s world good communication and marketing must be continual and take place through several different mediums in order to keep the economic fires burning. The great thing about the digital world is that it not only can benefit you locally, but internationally as well. On the Web, anyone can visit your town or city at any time.

Once again, it’s important to note that the medium is the message. Not all

ABOVE: Elected officials and city administrators strive to create an environment of economic development and growth. Communicate your successes using a professional public relations and communications professional, knowledgeable in different media platforms. (Shutterstock.com)

websites or videos are helpful. Websites must be well-written, well-edited and easy to navigate. There should be clear, crisp photos of community members enjoying your safe and friendly town.

Videos should be no more than three minutes in length and skip the voice-overs. That’s where it can really help to hire a professional firm that offers turn-key services, so you can stay on task with the literally hundreds of other things you need to do.



Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, can help articulate a city's desirability; however, they also require caution. A marketing and communications professional can ensure that these types of media are managed in a way that invites positive feedback. (Shutterstock.com)

The value of this will pay continual dividends. Remember, enterprising people are constantly looking for safe towns and safe schools to raise their kids, find good jobs and build businesses: places that have a flair for the future with a foundational understanding of everyday goodness. A well-produced website with a professional video can articulate this.

Regarding safety, you may want to add staff training for crisis prevention and crisis management: alertness should be a part of the program. Companies such as Kidder Crisis Communications can offer training as well as a 24/7 direct hotline for any incidents or crises that may occur. It's appropriate to communicate these programs and training events through your marketing and communication channels discussed earlier. Folks want to know that you are proactive — it's great strategy and great PR.

Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, can help as well; however, they also

“When people feel safe and the town is running smoothly, it will certainly blossom economically.”

require caution. These types of media simply cannot be done haphazardly if you have a high expectation of positive feedback. There is a professional art to social media and it should only be done as a small portion of the communication and marketing plan.


Social media can produce even more trouble than it's worth in some cases, including legal issues for towns, cities and schools, if not addressed properly. There are an awful lot of nonprofits, schools, municipalities and the like out there that think by just having a presence on social media they are in tune with the times. Chances are they are doing more damage than good.

Great municipalities don't just happen; they are planned. The same is true of



Not only do high-quality newsletters, websites and videos improve a city's image and function, they also contribute greatly to its economic development. Create a “buzz” by making folks aware of all the great services provided by you and your team. (Shutterstock.com)

communications and marketing. So as you continue to do an admirable job of serving your municipality, creating a safe environment for people to live and prosper, please keep in mind that communications must be ongoing. It must be done in excellence

in several mediums, especially in today's digital world, or growth will be hindered and economic opportunity lost. All in all, the digital world offers great opportunity to promote your excellent community. 

Troy Kidder is a former assistant town manager, former school teacher and a communications and marketing professional. He serves communities across the country with communications and public relations solutions. His websites are purebluecreative.com and kiddercrisiscommunications.com or contact him by email at troy@purebluecreative.com.

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Autism can affect a person's ability to communicate and interact with others, so becoming informed about various ways to approach people with autism will help in de-escalating situations. It not only puts the individual at ease but helps first responders do what they need to. (Shutterstock.com)

A photograph of two hands, palms up, holding a heart shape made of many small, colorful pieces of clay or dough. The background is a rustic wooden surface.

First responders strive to increase awareness of autism

By ELISA WALKER | The Municipal

As situations arise where first responders are necessary, it's important for them to understand how to approach individuals diagnosed with autism. Individuals with autism are unique and cannot be learned about strictly from textbooks. Every person with autism is different in the ways they communicate and interact with others. As the saying goes, "You meet one individual with autism, you've only met one."

Communicating and interacting in new ways

First responders can come into contact with individuals with autism for various reasons — from medical emergencies to worried parents of missing children. Often, if they're uninformed on the different ways autism is presented, it can escalate and send an already intense situation spiraling out of control.

To continue making their community in Allentown, Pa., a safer place Autism Resource Community Hub of Lehigh Valley, a program of the nonprofit organization Elwyn, continuously reaches out to inform, train and host events that specialize in spreading autism awareness and safety.

While there are various events held, Autism Safety Day brings first responders, individuals with autism and their families together in a relaxed environment. The event allows them to interact in a way that makes families more comfortable while educating first responders on the many ways autism is presented in each individual. Meeting several first responders in a de-stressed way can help individuals with autism in the long run so they don't associate a uniformed person with a bad situation.

"ARCH of Lehigh Valley and local first responders' partnership began through numerous situations that have occurred in our community when first responders were involved with children diagnosed



First responders are trained to adapt to different situations, knowing that none of them are likely to be the same, but typical responses to individuals with autism aren't always correct. In training, first responders can gain the ability to recognize signs of autism. (Shutterstock.com)

with autism,” explained Parent Partner of ARCH of LV Robin Urenko. “There are many components to autism, presenting itself differently depending on the individual. We’ve received positive feedback from both families and first responders in the community about our safety day event.”

Families in Lehigh Valley and surrounding areas have been impressed with how knowledgeable first responders are, something that wouldn’t have been heard five or 10 years ago. Whether it was lack of awareness, information or both, first responders have come a long way in extending their understanding.

Representatives from the surrounding areas also attend ARCH’s safety day event, gathering as much information as they can to take back to their department and share knowledge. Some representatives have even taken the information they’ve learned from events to present at national conferences, reaching a greater audience to create a larger impact.

Training is another educational opportunity ARCH offers to departments upon request. A variety of topics are covered in the training, from discussing triggers and queues to sensory sensitivity and communication with nonverbal individuals. As many tools as possible are provided, including different strategies, so first responders can be as prepared as possible when the situation arises. Because of the initiative of the partnership in Lehigh Valley, the community has seen improvement in the awareness of first responders.

“I know this is an issue departments are striving to be more aware of and more responsive to,” commented William Johnson, executive director of National Association of Police Organizations. “Leadership on all levels of agencies would benefit by meeting with and

learning from their community’s advocacy groups to learn about the condition and various manifestations of autism. There are different ways that a person with autism may behave or respond that may be a little different than ways other citizens respond.”

Another challenge that Johnson addresses is if a child with autism goes missing, it’s important to note that they may be attracted to hazardous things such as bodies of water and roadways. The child may find those areas appealing and be drawn toward them. While that is only one example, it means that officers should prioritize those areas to be searched in an effort to prevent any possible harm.

When it comes to training, first responders receive loads of information within a limited amount of time, which can ultimately pose as a challenge. Having a representative relay the information back to the department becomes beneficial for all parties and brings the community together. Patience is a necessary component when it comes to learning about autism and approaching situations that involve an individual with autism.

“It is our mission to reach out to first responders as this is an important community concern,” stated Urenko. “First responders are receptive to information and training; however, resources are limited due to the demands of their positions. When first responders gain knowledge, share and implement it with each other, our community benefits.”

By partnering with local advocacy groups, meeting individuals with autism and their families and looking into a variety of training methods, including online or video training, first responders can keep up to date on the latest techniques to be effective in situations. There are many more resources to take advantage of today than there were a few years ago. **M**

The Shaker Heights' Soofa smart benches have sparked revitalization in not just Hildana Park, but also the surrounding neighborhood of Moreland. (Photo provided)

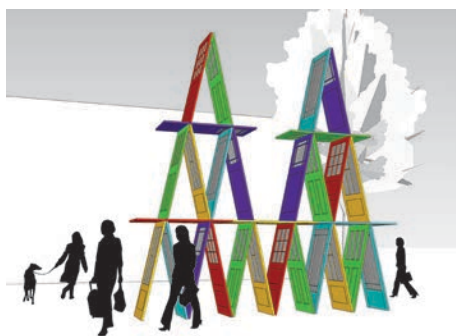


Everything that we do must be fun: *The mantra that even fits new park benches*

By ABBEY MCLAUGHLIN | The Municipal

In her position in the housing department of her local government, Kamla Lewis didn't expect to work on a community-changing park project, but that was exactly what Shaker Heights, Ohio, needed. A neighborhood dated more than 10 years was collapsing among countless foreclosures and outdated parks needed their city to advocate for them, and Lewis was the one to do it. The first step was asking the community what they needed.

"We had a series of community conversations and did a survey about how they particularly wanted to utilize the public spaces," Lewis said. "The number one thing we heard was that they loved their existing parks but felt that they were very dated and focused either on totally passive space with no amenities or that they only had playgrounds aimed for



Since the inclusion of benches in the park, Shaker Heights residents have stepped up in a big way to see other updates to the parks, including the inclusion of art. A local multi-media artist Scott Goss submitted this winning proposal in the Gateway category. His piece would feature 29 welded steel doors, each modeled after a front door found in the Moreland neighborhood. Together the doors would create an uppercase M, for Moreland. Another local artist, Charlotte Lees, won the colorful, sculptures historic markers category. (Photo provided)



Local teenagers test out temporary benches in Hildana Park, which previously had none. The temporary benches were widely used and appreciated. (Photo provided)

children. They wanted parks that appeal to all age ranges and all groups of people.”

The results of these inquiries led to step two — architects and a variety of designers walking through the parks with local youth to identify what they liked about the parks and what could be improved.

One particular park — Hildana Park — was put in focus. It is a beautiful gateway to the neighborhood but didn’t even have a bench. It hadn’t been updated in well over a decade. The youth built temporary benches in the park, and they were immediately used and appreciated.

“It became very clear that seating was going to be a very simple thing to do in this neighborhood to improve it,” Lewis said.

The invention of the smart benches was the product of a massive team of designers, architects and seemingly unrelated departments. Lewis helped implement the concept with the company Soofa, which specializes in these devices.

The smart benches were first piloted in Boston, where they underwent an entire year in all elements, users and communities — and they thrived. Even in the winter, the city was able to gather enough sunlight to power its benches.

The benches in Shaker Heights are strategically placed in the park across from a bus stop so they can be utilized by people on many different schedules, of varying interests and of a wide age range.

“It’s become a family place,” Lewis said. “One mother said her young daughter and her friends like to ride around on their bikes and then that’s their end up spot. They put down their bikes, sit down and chat while they charge their phones.”

The park and the park benches have been a big hit in the community. Most recently, a call for artists was advertised. Residents want to see local art put in their beloved park. Other residents have since organized block parties in the park, and more projects are on the way. A team of women are spearheading a youth project to design mobiles that hang from trees. Others would like to do anniversary tree plantings there in order to meet the community’s need for shade.

“It’s really become an entry point to everything in the neighborhood revitalization project,” she said.

The project implementation has not been without its own challenges. Though few obstacles have prevented progress, the

simple task of benches has a steep learning curve.


“I’m the housing person ... I had to educate myself so I could educate all the other departments that were going to be responsible for it,” Lewis said.

Departments involved included public works, city planning, recreation, police, marketing and other utility companies.

“There were a lot of logistical, practical and financial barriers in the planning,” Lewis said. “One issue was safety — do we want residents using these at nighttime? Do we need to close the park? The company we worked with was excellent in providing answers to those questions, pairing us with people who had done it.”

The Moreland neighborhood in Shaker Heights has now had the benches for a full year without any problems. The community mantra makes these benches especially fitting: “Everything that we do must be fun.”

The benches have led to other community developments — even in Lewis’ field. A developer is working on new houses in the neighborhood, the first one built right across from the park. Lewis put it best:

“When the neighborhood embraces something, it leads to amazing results.” 

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Waste not, want not when it comes to road care

By CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

As cities across the East Coast saw record-setting snowfall last winter, salt mines struggled to keep up with the demand for rock salt to clear roadways.

The tried-and-true product not only melts the snow, but deices roads and provides a level of safety necessary for municipalities to operate on a daily basis during cold winter months. While the benefits are apparent, the toll the use of rock salt takes on the environment has lasting effects. So, what if there was another way to provide the same service, or at least make the current supply of rock salt last longer, without further harming the environment, all while saving local governments a few dollars?

Enter beets, pickle juice, cheese brine and vodka.

That's right — municipalities are using locally sourced byproducts to make their salt supplies last longer.

"Being in Wisconsin, cheese is obviously a large local industry," said Emil Norby, Polk

County Highway Department's highway commissioner. "Back in 2008, we started looking for alternatives to salt for deicing and snow control. We couldn't afford our own brine maker, so thought up the idea to partner with a local dairy that soaks its cheese in brinewater. After the salinity was tested and it was determined it would probably work, we decided to give it a try."

During winter 2008, the county tested the solution and found that adding the brine to salt or sand in the spinner before it's released saved it 30-40 percent of salt usage. Norby said this is because the brine thins the solution and allows the salt to activate faster, which ultimately saves the county product and is helpful with budget.

"When you use rock salt in the traditional sense, you're losing at least 30 percent of

ABOVE: As municipalities seek to lessen salt usage, more might be drawn to byproducts in their own backyards. Polk County Highway Department has been mixing cheese brine with salt and sand since 2008. (Photo provided)

what you're putting on the roads," he said. "You've got to remember you have salt that bounces off the roads, falls into ditches or gets kicked around before it takes effect. We really wanted the salt to be more wet so it would hit the road and stay there, and this seems to be the solution."

While rock salt has been the primary mode of deicing and winter roadway control since the 1950s, the environmental trade off has been front of mind for environmentalists in recent years.

According to an LA Times article, Xianming Shi, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at Washington State University who has researched environmentally sustainable and cost-effective winter road treatments for more than a decade, said impacts of rock salt usage include killing vegetation along roadsides,



Polk County, Wis., looked to a local dairy as it tried to lessen its salt usage each winter. By creating a mixture of cheese brine and salt or sand, Polk County has saved 30-40 percent on its salt usage in 2008. (Photo provided)

corroding steel bridges, concrete pavement and cars and high levels of salt in groundwater.

"The challenge has been for highway agencies or local road agencies that they really cannot stay away entirely from chlorides (salt), because that's the cheapest solution," Shi said in the article. "In the short run, the focus has been how to use less chloride without sacrificing level of service."

That's where municipalities have turned to byproducts.

Not only do they tend to be environmentally friendly and biodegradable, a partnership can typically be worked out where both entities benefit, and the waste material helps the rock salt supply stretch longer.

"The cheese brine itself can't be used alone," Norby said. "It doesn't act as a deicing agent, it just allows us to use less salt per road than we used to. It stretches the supply so we can be more efficient, lose less product and recycle the waste in a useful way."

Polk County isn't the only entity taking advantage of local waste products on its roadways. Lincoln, Neb., uses beet juice. A company in the United Kingdom specializes in taking plastic from landfills and melting it into pellets that can be used to fill potholes. Research is being conducted to see how vodka can be used as a deicing agent.

"I've gotten calls from as far away as Germany, Canada and all over the U.S. wanting to know how they can utilize their local byproducts," Norby said. "They want to know how they can get this to work in their neighborhoods so that goes to show this is something we're all thinking about."

As far as challenges, Norby said the transition from traditional rock salt to the cheese brine-rock salt mix has been fairly smooth. The county currently uses between 20-35,000 gallons of brine per winter season, depending on the severity of the weather.

"We've not had any negatives in the process, really," he said. "We've learned the ratio of cheese brine to rock salt to keep our machines from clogging, and luckily we haven't noticed any molding or smells from the brine. The toughest part has probably been driver education, but they're noticing the impact the brine makes and they're on board."

No matter how hard he tries though, Norby can't avoid the jokes from surrounding counties.

"I mean, we're in Wisconsin and we're using cheese on our roads—getting ripped on for that is to be expected. But we can handle it." **M**



ABOVE & BELOW: Pictured are roads in Polk County, Wis., that have been treated with a cheese brine mixture. (Photos provided)



Polk County Highway Department uses between 20,000-35,000 gallons of brine per winter season. It has found a ratio of cheese brine to rock salt that prevents it from clogging up the machines. (Photo provided)



Living “off the grid” by choice or circumstance

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

Living off the grid—the power grid—is a term used to encompass those individuals who either by choice or circumstance are not living with city-provided services such as electricity, heat, water and, in some cases, sewer.

There are varying levels of living off the grid: some choose solar or wind energy versus conventional electricity to power their homes, which is becoming more acceptable, while others are more extreme and include not being connected to city water and sewer.

Most people who choose to live off the grid—either for financial or environmental reasons—do so outside of city limits because most municipal zoning ordinances require those living in the city limits to be connected. Although still rare, there have been some cases cropping up creating disputes between those who feel they should have a right to live as they choose and city officials concerned with the public safety of all citizens.

Two such cities that became entangled in legal disputes are Cape Coral, Fla., and Huntsville, Ala. City officials from Cape Coral said its sole case created such negative repercussions that it didn’t want to revisit it.

Some cities, meanwhile, have changed their ordinances in recent years to promote a more sustainable lifestyle, which is what many who want to live off the grid are seeking.

However, a more common and growing problem for many cities and towns is the homeless population, several of whom create “tent cities” within city limits.

Then there’s a third, also not so common scenario where individuals because of mental health issues disconnect from city services.

Traverse City, Mich., code enforcement officer Michael Trombley said while they haven’t had any people requesting to live off the grid, they did have a case awhile back of an 80-year-old woman with mental health issues who intentionally had her power and water shut off.



While Pigeon Forge, Tenn., hasn’t had many requests from individuals seeking to live off the grid, it is a favorite destination for people wanting to get away with its cabins and RV parks. (Photo by Anita Bias)

“She had been living like that for a couple of years,” Trombley said, “bringing in jugs of water.”

Trombley said in her case it wasn’t a financial issue.

According to an article in Home Power Magazine in 2013, as of that year there were at least 180,000 families living off the grid in the U.S., and it said the numbers increase each year.

Tennessee “off the grid” friendly

In a list of best places to live off the grid (see sidebar), Tennessee was listed as number one. Pigeon Forge, Tenn., Assistant City Planner Karl Kreis said the city has not had a lot of requests for people wanting to live off the grid.



LEFT: This female volunteer from SEED Knoxville, a nonprofit organization that the Knoxville Office of Sustainability has partnered with, explains some of the city's sustainable programs to a resident. (Photo provided by SEED Knoxville)

"One thing that does occur a lot is people wanting to hook up an RV — we do have a lot of RV parks — even year-round," he said.

Pigeon Forge's Community Development Director David Taylor said the city's codes require that "if service is available, they have to connect."

Taylor added that Pigeon Forge would "encourage solar power," and it does have areas where chickens are allowed, though he noted, "They already had chickens and then were annexed into the city."

Nearby Knoxville, Tenn., has been very proactive in becoming a more sustainable city with changes in the way that city employees do certain things and also by changing ordinances to

encourage residents toward a more sustainable lifestyle.

Sustainable living has several definitions: living within resources of the planet without damaging the environment, reducing harm to the planet and reversing harm that has already been done and renewing resources at a rate of growth more than is consumed.

Knoxville has enacted a number of programs within its 2007 Energy & Sustainability Initiative, including the launch of a partnership with a community group called SEED Knoxville, or Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development, to provide door-to-door outreach to engage residents in energy efficiency and recycling. SEED Knoxville is a green community development nonprofit focusing on creating and sustaining jobs for Knoxville urban young people as well as ensuring clean energy technologies are available for low-income residents.

"This canvassing model is a win-win: students canvassing is part of SEED's Career Readiness Program, and they practice communication skills while helping us increase

awareness about our programs," said Director of Sustainability Erin Gill.

"The Office of Sustainability aspires to actively listen to ideas and suggestions from residents and businesses for how to improve the environmental, social and economic health of Knoxville," said Gill. "We also seek to encourage and celebrate the efforts of many individuals, businesses and organizations who are taking action alongside us to advance sustainability projects that benefit our citizens."

One program called KEEM — Knoxville Extreme Energy Makeover — launched in August 2015. It has provided whole home energy upgrades to nearly 1,300 low-income homes and educated more than 1,700 on how to save on utilities, according to the Energy & Sustainability Initiative report.

To control invasive species the city contracted for goat labor, which Knoxville officials state has proven to be an effective, nontoxic way to eliminate unwanted vegetation. They've used the goat labor to clean up kudzu in Fort Dickerson Park and also at Williams Creek.

While the city currently doesn't allow for residents to keep goats, Gill said, "We have worked closely with our animal control board to revise this policy and will actually be taking a proposed ordinance revision to the city council on June 5 to allow this option in the future."

Also in 2015 city officials approved updating the zoning codes "to remove barriers and better accommodate urban agriculture," including community gardens, market gardens and seasonal produce stands. Besides gardens, urban agriculture also includes beekeeping, composting, keeping domestic chickens and hydroponics. ▶



This cute goat is a weed-eating machine and gets contracted by Knoxville to control weeds and invasive species on city property. Director of Sustainability Erin Gill said they are proposing an amendment to the city ordinance to possibly allow residents to keep goats for this reason in the near future. (Photo provided by city of Knoxville)



Knoxville has a full-fledged sustainability program that includes using LED lightbulbs. (Photo provided by Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee)

There are certain regulations city residents have to abide by to have compost piles, beehives, chickens and greenhouses on their properties. While it does not address people who choose to live completely off the grid, it does encourage those residents who wish to live a more eco-friendly life.

Kreis of Pigeon Forge also said that more and more people are having chickens and beehives in the city. "They have to send a notice to their neighbors and follow certain criteria."

Homelessness increasing

Homeless people, on the other hand, are living off the grid more by circumstances in their lives versus by choice. Bankruptcy, health issues and alcohol or drug addiction are some of the reasons people find themselves without a home, and many city officials will admit that it's a growing problem in their community.

Now whole communities of homeless people are living in tent cities or congregating in other areas of cities. Trombley of Traverse City said homeless people living in tents have been growing in his city. He said for years a group of 10 to 12 churches formed a group he said was called Goodwill Outreach and would take turns each week hosting the homeless from Thanksgiving to the end of April.

He said each evening a big U-Haul filled with mattresses and Tupperware tubs for their personal belongings would show up to hand those items out and returned at 7 a.m. the next day to pick them up.



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Trombley said a couple of years ago the city sold them a vacant building, which became the Goodwill Homeless Center. Churches still provide food and the homeless can utilize the center to do laundry, take showers, etc., as long as they are out during the day-time hours. In the summer they are provided tents and there are wooded areas within the city where they camp out.

"There are a couple of areas kind of designated (for the homeless) wooded and swampy areas. It's not condoned," Trombley said, "but it's kind of like if you don't bother us, we won't bother you."

Under the leadership of Mayor Madeline Rogero in 2014, Knoxville adopted its "Plan to Address Homelessness," and the Knoxville-Knox County Homeless Coalition was given the responsibility to develop community-wide standards of care and outreach and placement for the homeless. The city partnered with many agencies to assess and address the needs of the homeless in its community, and that effort is ongoing.

Mayor Rogero stated in the introduction the 2017 City of Knoxville Energy and Sustainability Initiative update, "As mayor I'm entrusted with an opportunity and an obligation to leave Knoxville a better place than I found it — stronger, safer, healthier and more equitable city that can thrive over the long term. For me that responsibility includes protecting the environment and addressing climate change, while also strengthening the economy and improving quality of life for local residents."

Whether it's a growing homeless population or a growing concern for the environment, if off the grid living hasn't reached your community as of yet, chances are it may very well in the future. **M**

Best states to live off the grid in

On Aug. 31, 2017, Backdoor Survival posted a list of best places to live off the grid using the criteria of climate, rainfall and water access, laws and building codes, power, road access, community, environmental threats and costs. The states topping the list were:

- 1.) Tennessee
- 2.) Oregon
- 3.) Alaska
- 4.) Nevada
- 5.) Kentucky
- 6.) Texas
- 7.) Ohio
- 8.) Idaho
- 9.) Missouri

Source: www.backdoorsurvival.com/best-places-to-live-off-grid

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JULY

July 13-16 2018 NACo Annual Conference

Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center,
Nashville, Tenn.
www.naco.org

July 13-17 National Association of Police Organizations 40th Annual Convention

San Diego, Calif.
www.napo.org

July 13-17 Florida Fire Chiefs Association Executive Development Conference

Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort and Spa, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.
www.ffca.org

July 15-19 Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Mid-Year Training Institute

Gaylord Palms, Orlando, Fla.
www.cadca.org/events

July 18-20 Public-Private Partnerships in Transportation Conference

Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C.
www.artba.org

July 19-22 Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting

Marriott Hilton Head Island, Hilton Head Island, S.C.
www.masc.sc

July 28-31 IMSA Forum & Expo

Orlando, Fla.
www.imsasafety.org

Aug. 8-11 Fire-Rescue International (FRI 2018)

Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas
www.iafc.org/events/fri/about

AUGUST

Aug. 12-16 StormCon

Hyatt Regency Denver,
Denver, Colo.
www.stormcon.com

Aug. 14-15 Midwest Security & Police Conference/Expo

Tinley Park Convention Center,
Tinley Park, Ill.
mispce.com

Aug. 16-18 Florida League of Cities Annual Conference

The Diplomat Beach Resort,
Hollywood, Fla.
www.floridaleagueofcities.com

Aug. 19-22 NIGP Forum

Gaylord Opryland,
Nashville, Tenn.
www.nigp.org

Aug. 20-23 ITE International and Midwestern/Great Lakes Districts Annual Meeting and Exhibit

Minneapolis, Minn.
www.ite.org/annualmeeting/default.asp

Aug. 22-24 WasteCon 2018

Nashville, Tenn.
swana.org

Aug. 26-29 American Public Works Association's PWX

Kansas City Convention Center,
Kansas City, Mo.
pwx.apwa.net

Aug. 27-31 Heartland Emergency Apparatus Technicians Association (HEAT2018)

Overland Park Fire Training Center, Overland Park, Kan.
www.heatevt.com

Aug. 27-30 Florida Recreation and Park Association 2018 Conference

Orlando, Fla.
www.frpa.org/conference/confgeneral

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 12-14 Iowa League of Cities 2018 Annual Conference and Exhibit

Mid-America Center,
Council Bluffs, Iowa
www.iowaleague.org

Sept. 16-19 Missouri Municipal League Annual Conference

Branson Convention Center,
Branson, Mo.
<https://mocities.site-ym.com>

Sept. 19-22 North Carolina League of Municipalities' CityVision 2018

Hickory, N.C.
www.nclm.org

Sept. 20-22 Michigan Municipal League Convention

Holland, Mich.
<http://blogs.mml.org/wp/events/>

Sept. 20-22 Illinois Municipal League Annual Conference

Chicago Hilton, Chicago, Ill.
conference.iml.org

Sept. 24-26 2018 Midwest Green Fleets Forum and Expo

Marriott University, Columbus, Ohio
www.cleanfuelsohio.org

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 24-26 NCSFA 2018 State Fleet Managers Workshop

Astor Crowne Plaza,
New Orleans, La.
www.ncsfa.wildapricot.org/event-2878465

Sept. 24-26 F.I.E.R.O. Fire Station Design Symposium

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel,
Raleigh, N.C.
www.fierofirestation.com

Sept. 24-28 Ohio Association of Emergency Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Program

Ohio Fire Academy, 8895 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio
www.oaevt.org

Sept. 25-27 NRPA 2018 Annual Conference

Indiana Convention Center,
Indianapolis, Ind.
www.nrpa.org/conference/

Sept. 29-Oct. 3 WEFTEC 2018

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La.
www.weftec.org

Sept. 30-Oct. 2 Virginia Municipal League Annual Conference

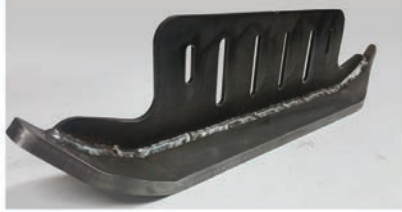
Hampton Roads Convention Center, Hampton, Va.
www.vml.org

Sept. 30-Oct. 3 IEDC 2018 Annual Conference

Atlanta, Ga.
www.iedcevents.org/Atlanta/index.html

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UTX Scissor Lifts can be attached to a variety of utility vehicles with the process taking under five minutes and requiring only one worker. (Photo provided)

UTX Scissor Lifts satisfy a variety of uses with ease

By SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal



Smaller than traditional scissor lifts, the UTX takes up less storage space; additionally, with its jacks, it is stored off the ground. (Photo provided)

Scissor lifts can be exceptionally handy when completing a variety of tasks from building maintenance projects to trimming trees and hanging up summertime banners announcing the latest events. While helpful, such lifts can also be cumbersome, hard to store or just not in the budget. But what if you could mount a scissor-lift onto the back of the utility vehicle you already have? This dream is a possibility through Innovative Equipment's UTX Scissor Lift.

New on the market, this compact scissor lift comes in two models — the UTX30 and UTX44. The UTX30 offers a maximum work height of 18 feet while the UTX44 reaches 19 feet. Respectively, the UTX30 and UTX40 have 500- and 600-pound capacities. With adaptors, both UTXs can be connected to the back of UTV vehicles in under five minutes by one worker, thanks to their jacks.

“We’ve designed it so that there is no heavy lifting,” Marc Dack, sales and product development for Innovative Equipment, said, noting that switching from the UTX scissor lift to a dump box only requires the loosening of two bolts. Also due to the jacks, Dack said, “You are not storing it on the ground, but actually up off it.”

Because of its easy removal, Wally Osswald, partner in Innovative Equipment, said, “If you don’t need it every day, you can easily put it in a storage shed until it is needed.”

The UTX Scissor Lift can be fitted onto a variety of UTVs, including Kubota, Polaris, Gators and many more.

“If you have multiple UTVs,” Dack added, “you can have adaptors on each UTV so you don’t have to use a specific one each time. The adaptors are a 10th of the cost as the UTX.”

This approach can be especially beneficial for sharing across city departments. Workers can simply go to where the UTX Scissor Lift is stored, trade out their dump box for it and then complete whatever task they need to with the lift before returning it to the storage site. The UTX’s power source is fully independent of the vehicle carrying it. While stored, workers can charge its on board battery or simply plug in while the UTX is still attached to the vehicle. Once fully charged, the UTX is good for about 120 to 150 lifts. The charger can be left on and automatically switches to maintenance mode to maintain a full battery charge.

“It’s a very new product. A lot are reluctant to try it, thinking it will be unstable,” Dack said. “We’ve registered a 300-pound side load on it, and it’s still stable. A slab scissor would have toppled over easily with a 300-pound side load, and you can’t take them on rough terrain.”

Because of its jacks — both standard and power driven jacks are available options — workers can level the UTX Scissor Lift on uneven ground, including on street curbs, up to 12 degrees. It can also go where few scissor lifts can: off-road.




Attached to a John Deere Gator, this UTX is used to perform forestry work. With its easy-to-use adaptors, the UTX Scissor Lift can be shared across city departments. (Photo provided)

“Most rough-terrain scissor lifts have a speed of 2 mph — this is as fast as the UTV,” Dack said. “We call it our 35 mph scissor lift.”

Insurance agencies love the UTX Scissor Lift because of its built-in safety features. “You cannot overload it because it won’t go up,” Dack explained. “You can set parameters so that if its not level to a certain percentage, it won’t go up. If the jacks are not applying enough pressure to the ground, it will set off an alarm and won’t go up. So if the ground is unsafe (soft and muddy), the safety features will not allow you to use the lift.” The lift also features all of the required safety standards that help prevent tip overs.

Price-wise, the UTX is an attractive option as most cities already own UTVs. “(The UTX) is well under the cost of a dedicated scissor lift,” Dack said.

Currently, Innovative Equipment is testing a pickup truck scissor lift that uses the UTX44 platform. Dack said both these products will be highlighted at the PWX show Aug. 26-29 in Kansas City. 

For information, visit www.iequipt.com or call (888) 359-3002.

Or you can see all the UTX Scissor Lift videos by typing “UTX Scissor Lift” into the YouTube search bar.



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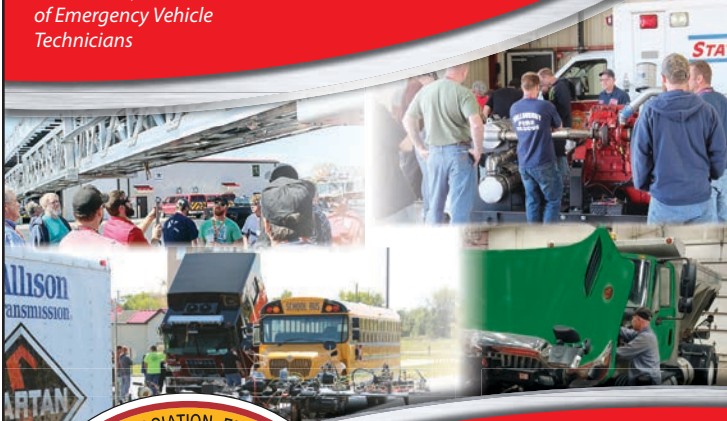
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Element Fleet Management contributes \$15,000 to kick-start NAFA Foundation fundraising campaign

PRINCETON, N.J. — The NAFA Foundation, a not-for-profit charitable organization formed in 1976 to support the vehicle fleet industry, reached a milestone by raising more than \$26,000 in just 10 days — headlined by Element Fleet Management's \$15,000 kickoff pledge.

The NAFA Foundation launched its capital campaign on April 24, 2018, at NAFA Fleet Management Association's annual Institute & Expo. Element announced its pledge that day, providing significant momentum to the campaign.

In addition to Element, several other fleet organizations — including Merchants Fleet Management, Altec and Lyft — made gifts to the foundation, as well as many individual donors through an at-event text-to-donate program.

The NAFA Foundation will use these funds, plus future support, to engage in multiple efforts to increase the knowledge base of the fleet industry, guide professionals through the significant changes impacting the industry, and fund research to advance fleet professionals' growth.

Among the near-term initiatives of the NAFA Foundation are:

- Commissioning an "issue definition paper" that will offer guidance on how fleet and procurement teams can form a productive partnership that fosters better fleet performance. This paper became available in May.
- Teaming up with international mobility expert Lukas Neckermann to develop an in-depth white paper that will include immediate steps for fleet managers to take to embrace mobility options
- Presenting a webinar about the Neckermann mobility paper in early Fall 2018, followed by an in-person workshop on the subject next spring

Although the campaign kickoff was notable in its success, the NAFA Foundation continues to seek gifts and donations throughout the fleet industry. Contributions to the NAFA Foundation are tax-deductible under IRS guidelines.

To donate, visit <https://nafafoundation.snwbll.com/giving-portal>.

NAFA Foundation organizes unique charitable project at Institute & Expo, with surprising results

PRINCETON, N.J. — The NAFA Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization formed in 1976 to support the vehicle fleet industry, partnered with charity Rise Against Hunger during NAFA Fleet Management Association's 2018 Institute & Expo to assemble a staggering number of meals for people in developing countries — in just one hour.

Hundreds of I&E attendees in Anaheim, Calif., volunteered to assemble bagged meals that consisted of dehydrated rice and soy protein that was fortified with vitamins and nutrients. The attendees assembled 40,172 of these meals in one hour. A large portion of the meals have already been shipped by Rise Against Hunger to feed less fortunate families in Cambodia.

"It was such an incredible feeling to see the response that this act of good will received from I&E attendees. While the NAFA Foundation is driven by the importance of advancing the fleet industry, it also recognizes the significance of lending a helping hand to people in need around the world," said Phillip E. Russo,

CAE, CEO of the NAFA Foundation. "This event was very empowering and uplifting for all attendees at I&E."

For information visit www.nafafoundation.org

Jack Kardys to serve as chair of the organization

ASHBURN, VA. — The National Recreation and Park Association announced its new 2018-19 board of directors. Long-time board member Jack Kardys will serve as chair, welcoming three new board members at the 2018 NRPA Annual Conference, Sept. 25-27, in Indianapolis, Ind.

Former director of the award-winning Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department, Kardys currently serves as president of J. Kardys Strategies and an associate with PROS Consulting. He also serves on the board of the Park Foundation of Miami-Dade and is the past president of the Florida Recreation and Park Association. Highly respected in the field of parks and recreation, Kardys has received several notable accolades, including the NRPA R.O.S.E., FRPA Distinguished Service and American Society for Public Administration Administrator of the Year awards.

The following new board members were elected to serve a three-year term:

- Carol Coletta, senior fellow, The Kresge Foundation's American Cities Practice
- Joshua Medeiros, director of recreation, town of Cheshire, Conn.; adjunct professor, Southern Connecticut State University
- Greg Weitzel, director, department of parks and recreation, city of Idaho Falls, Idaho

Currently serving a one-year term, the following board members were elected to serve a three-year term:

- Kong Chang, community recreation specialist, city of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation
- Nonet Sykes, chief equity and inclusion officer, Atlanta Belt-Line Inc.

These individuals will join forces with the following group of professionals and advocates currently serving on the board:

- Michael Abbaté, FASLA, former director, Portland Parks & Recreation
- Jesús Aguirre, chief operating officer, Tower Steel Services Inc.
- Leon T. Andrews, Jr., director, Race, Equity And Leadership (REAL), National League of Cities
- Neelay Bhatt, vice president, PROS Consulting
- Hayden Brooks, chairman, American Realty Corporation
- Kevin Coyle, vice president of education, National Wildlife Federation
- Richard Gulley, board member, Balboa Park Conservancy
- Roslyn Johnson, deputy director of facility operations, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince Georges County, Md.
- Jack Kardys, president, J. Kardys Strategies
- Michael Kelly, general superintendent and CEO, Chicago Park District
- Karen Bates Kress, park advocate
- Carolyn McKnight, superintendent, Recreation and Park Commission, East Baton Rouge Parish, La.

- Herman Parker, director, city of San Diego Park and Recreation Department
- Ian Proud, market research and inclusive play manager, PlayPower
- Molly Stevens, CEO and executive director, Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center
- Xavier Urrutia, director, city of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department
- Dr. Howell Wechsler, CEO, Alliance for a Healthier Generation

NRPA's Board of Directors is composed of 15-30 individuals. Board members are representative of NRPA's membership, which includes leaders in the park, recreation and conservation movement, park and recreation professionals and individuals from corporations, industry suppliers, commercial businesses, and volunteer and civic groups.

To learn more about NRPA, visit www.nrpa.org.

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Best Cities for Staycations

With summer fully upon us, many folks will be setting out on adventures — and some won't be straying far, choosing to enjoy a staycation. But not all cities are equal when it comes to opportunities for those staying at home. To identify the best spots for staying local, WalletHub compared 182 cities across three key dimensions: recreation, food and entertainment, and rest and relaxation.

WalletHub notes, "We evaluated those dimensions using 40 relevant metrics ... Each metric was graded on a 100-point scale, with a score of 100 representing the most favorable conditions for staycationers."

These metrics included things like the number of public golf courses and tennis courts per capita, movie costs, nightlife options, museums per capita,



massage costs, the "idealness" of summer weather, among many other aspects.

Below are the 10 cities that topped the list.

City Ranking	Recreation Rank	Food & Entertainment Rank	Rest & Relaxation Rank	Total Score
1. Orlando, Fla.	20	1	26	56.95
2. Honolulu, Hawaii	9	8	4	55.97
3. Chicago, Ill.	1	7	31	55.23
4. Seattle, Wash.	7	3	44	54.60
5. Portland, Ore.	8	4	63	53.61
6. Tampa, Fla.	22	12	2	53.37
7. Las Vegas, Nev.	45	2	41	53.11
8. San Francisco, Calif.	4	5	98	52.91
9. San Diego, Calif.	3	19	23	52.86
10. Charleston, S.C.	26	28	5	50.71

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