



March
2015

West Des Moines eNewsletter



Tom Hadden, City Manager

As we leave February behind and hopefully start moving toward spring, I want everyone to know that we're making great progress in several key areas.

On February 23, the City Council adopted the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015. As I mentioned in my last column, this is the single-most important action taken by elected officials each year because it authorizes resources and sets the direction for the programs and services we provide for our community.

The Council approved *reducing the property tax levy* for residents by 5 cents to \$12.00 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. This action is important because it lets you know that your City Council is continuing to focus on conservative financial planning. The goal is to make certain funding is adequate to provide services and protect the long-term viability of the organization.

For information about how this will impact your overall property tax bill, please see the article about the budget on page 3.

The 2015 Special Census is coming!

Another major project for West Des Moines is the Special Census that we'll be conducting to get an accurate count of our population. Recruitment for Special Census workers will begin soon, so if you would like to apply for a temporary job as a Census taker (enumerator), watch for more details as they are posted on our website at www.wdm.iowa.gov.

I want everyone to realize how important it is to share information with Census workers once they begin going door-to-door and asking questions. By law, all the information you share is confidential, and it will help us get additional revenue for road construction and maintenance projects.

So please, tell your family, your friends and your neighbors how important it is to participate.

In our community, *everyone counts!*

Connect with us! Wdm.Iowa.Gov



A Special Census is coming to West Des Moines!

Census takers (called enumerators) will soon be going door-to-door in your neighborhood to collect a few facts about each member of your household for the West Des Moines Special Census.

Why a Special Census?

If Census results show that our population has increased, we'll be eligible to receive additional funds for road construction and maintenance projects.

What questions will they ask?

Census workers will be asking questions such as the name, age, gender and relationship of each person in your household. They also will ask about race and Hispanic origin, and whether you own or rent your home or apartment. All Census workers will carry a U.S. Census Bureau photo ID badge.

Is my information confidential?

The information you share is confidential, and the law applies whether or not you are a U.S. citizen. No one will ever be asked for other identifying information, such as your Social Security number or checking account/financial information.

So when someone knocks on your door, please cooperate and answer their questions.

In our community, everyone counts!



Temporary Special Census Jobs are available

The City of West Moines is recruiting about 300 residents to help with our Special Census.

Temporary jobs are available for Census takers, office staff and supervisors. Visit our website at www.wdm.iowa.gov to fill out our online Special Census Interest Form and the U.S. Census Bureau Application (which you must print and drop off at City Hall, 4200 Mills Civic Pkwy, West Des Moines). Paper copies of both documents also are available at City Hall.

You will be contacted just prior to the Special Census to take a job-related test to determine if you qualify for a Census job. If selected, you will be required to attend a training class and then given a work assignment that lasts approximately 3 to 8 weeks.

Census workers typically are paid \$13 to \$17 per hour, plus mileage and paid training. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and willing to work a minimum of 20 hours per week when residents are home, usually during evenings and weekends.

Questions?

Contact McKinlee Ritter, City Manager's Office, (515) 222-3598

City Council approves budget and reduced tax levy

In approving the City's proposed budget for FY 2015 - 2016 at its meeting on February 23, the WDM City Council reduced *the property tax levy* for residents by 5 cents to \$12.00 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. The Council's action to reduce the City's portion of the tax levy signals to residents that the Council is continuing to focus on conservative financial planning.

The rate of \$12.05 has been in place since July 1, 2007. This budget marks the first time the tax rate has been reduced since July 1992 when the rate was decreased by 1 cent. The last significant decrease was in July 1988 when the City's levy rate decreased by \$2.22.

This reduction in tax levy will not translate into a reduction in overall property taxes for West Des Moines residents because it only applies to the City's portion of a homeowner's property tax bill. Other taxing entities, which the City has no control over, such as schools, counties, Broadlawns Medical Center, Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority and Des Moines Area Community College, also figure in to the total property tax a homeowner pays each year.

In FY 2015 -2016, a homeowner's overall property tax bill may still increase due to an increase in the state rollback, which is the portion of a residential property the state decides may be taxed. The state rollback is currently 54.40 percent. During the next fiscal year, the rollback will increase to 55.73 percent.

The FY 2015-16 fiscal budget for West Des Moines is comprised of basic operating expenditures totaling approximately \$63 million, business/proprietary expenses of \$27 million, debt service expenditures of \$22 million and capital improvement expenditures of \$34 million. These expenditures amount to a total budget of nearly \$147 million.

The FY 2015-16 Capital Improvement Plan includes:

- ◆ \$19.9 million for intersection improvements and road construction throughout the City of West Des Moines, including \$12 million in street improvements for the Alluvion development (the Microsoft Data Center).
- ◆ \$3.8 million in sanitary sewer improvements, including \$2.9 million for Project Alluvion improvements (Microsoft Data Center).
- ◆ Over \$2.8 million for improvements to area parks, including the construction of the Grand Avenue Trail between Jordan Creek and Fuller Road, additional renovation to baseball fields at Holiday Park, improvements to the areas around the softball fields at Holiday Park, replacing the splash pool features at Valley View Aquatic Center, and installing basketball courts and other amenities at Valley View Park.
- ◆ \$1.5 million to purchase and install a public safety dispatching system for WestCom (shared with other cities).
- ◆ Design services to plan the widening of 50th Street between Mills Parkway and EP True Parkway.
- ◆ \$200,000 to conduct a study to assess future plans for the Valley Junction area.

The City currently has 402 full-time employees. Although the City added 13 new positions this fiscal year, no new full-time positions are recommended in next year's budget

Yard Waste Collection Starts March 30

Yard waste collection runs weekly from March 30 to November 28, 2015. Residents can get rid of yard waste right from the curb through Metro Waste Authority's Compost It! program. Pick up is on your garbage day with two easy options:

Bags & Stickers

Compost It! Bags

The cost of this bag covers the cost of collection. No sticker is required. Do not exceed 40 lbs. per bag.

Store-brand Bag + Compost It! Sticker

A Compost It! sticker must be attached to a generic bag. The sticker cost covers the cost of collection. It's a good idea to face the sticker toward the street so the hauler can see it.

Compost It! Sticker + Brush Bundles

Attach a Compost It! sticker to each brush bundle and place it next to carts or bags. Bundles cannot exceed 18 inches in diameter or four feet in length.

Cart

A Compost It! cart is on wheels, just like your Curb It! cart, making it a convenient alternative to yard waste bags. Simply wheel it to the curb on garbage day during Compost It! season. The 96-gallon cart can hold the equivalent of three yard waste bags, but you can always use the Bags & Sticker program if your yard waste exceeds the cart's capacity. Consider a cart if you:

- Purchase more than 65 bags a year.
- Garden, bag grass clippings, or don't want to hassle with bags.

Purchase Bags, Stickers, & Cart Subscriptions

The cost of the Compost It! bag, sticker and annual cart subscription covers the cost of collection and processing of the material.

Compost It! Bags	\$8.00 for a bundle of five (\$1.60 per bag). Sold at most grocery and hardware stores.
Compost It! Stickers	\$1.25 per sticker. Sold at most grocery and hardware stores.
Cart	\$105 annual subscription; \$1 credit card transaction fee, one time cart purchase \$60 (\$80 with delivery). To enroll, call 222-3600 or renew at www.WherItShouldGo.com/cartrenewal .



For more information including what is accepted and what is not accepted, call (515) 244-0021 or visit www.WherItShouldGo.com.

A big THANK YOU from Public Works



West Des Moines snow plow operators would like to express their sincere gratitude to those residents who adhere to Snow Parking Bans and remove their vehicles from the streets in a timely manner.

This is a big help to the Public Works crews because it allows them to clean your street from curb to curb.

You play an integral role in fighting winter weather events. Thank you!

This is Iowa, so even though it's March, we're not out of the woods just yet!

Continue to check for a **Snow Parking Ban** when a snow event occurs:

- * Call the Snow Hotline at 2730-SNO (273-0766).
- * Check the home page of the WDM website at www.wdm.iowa.gov.
- * On the WDM home page, sign up for E-Updates to automatically receive notices of snow emergency parking bans.
- * "Like" the City of West Des Moines on Facebook or "Follow" the City of West Des Moines on Twitter.



EXTRA! EXTRA! Recyclables

Did you know that items left outside of the cart can't be recycled due to limitations of automated collection? So what do you do with extra recyclables or larger items that won't fit in your green Curb It! recycling cart? Check out these tips and resources for those experiencing a one-time or routine cart overflow.

Curb It! Extra – Residents who routinely have more recyclables than fit in their cart may want to enroll in this program, which provides a second cart for \$30 per year. To enroll, call Metro Waste Authority at (515) 244-0021.

Recycling Drop-Offs - Residents can take recyclables to local drop-offs for free. Visit [Metro Waste Authority's website](http://www.metrowasteauthority.com) for locations.

Conserve Cart Space – Refresh your memory on what is **accepted** and **not accepted** in your recycling cart by reviewing recycling guidelines. Items that are not accepted could be taking up valuable cart space. It's also a good idea to breakdown boxes and crush bulky items, such as milk jugs. For more information about recycling options, visit www.WhereltShouldGo.com or call (515) 244-0021.



2015 Solid Waste Events for WDM Citizens

**Annual Spring Cleanup is June 1–5
on your regular trash collection day!**

March 30	Yard Waste Pick-Up begins on your normal trash collection day
April 11	Scrap Appliance, Metal Drop-Off & Paper Shredding, 8 a.m. – Noon, West Des Moines Public Works
April 18	Scrap Tire Drop-Off, 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., West Des Moines Public Works
May 21	National Public Works Week Celebration, 4 to 7 p.m., Valley Junction Farmer's Market
June 1 – 5	Annual Spring Cleanup – On your regular trash day. <i>Watch for new details!</i>
June 27	Hazardous Waste Drop-Off, City Hall, 8 a.m. to Noon
Sept. 12	Scrap Appliance, Metal Drop-Off and Paper Shredding, 8 a.m. to Noon, West Des Moines Public Works
Nov. 28	Yard Waste Pick-Up Ends
Dec. 28 – Jan. 8	Winter Yard Waste & Christmas Tree Collection

A number of Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Events will be scheduled in our area by Metro Waste Authority and will be posted on their website when available.

Visit www.whereshouldgo.com

Yard Waste and Annual Spring Cleanup events are available to all West Des Moines residents who are eligible for solid waste collection (single-family homes up to and including 4-plex units).



For more details, check the calendar on the City's website: www.wdm.iowa.gov or call the Public Works Department at 222-3480.

West Des Moines to offer Citizens Fire Academy

The West Des Moines Fire Department will be hosting the 12th annual Citizens Fire Academy (CFA) on Monday, March 23, 2015. This 9-week program is designed to answer questions about fire service or fire safety by offering you in-depth teaching and training exercises. Participants of the CFA will be taught fire safety and prevention, firefighting tactics and strategies, fire investigation, fire behavior and many other related topics.

The class meets once a week from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at WDMFD Station 17, on Railroad Avenue. Along with in-depth classroom presentations, participants will take part in several hands-on training drills that are designed to mimic fire ground situations. There are also two Saturday training exercises that take place on May 9 & 16 that give participants the opportunity to experience a real structure fire, as well



descending our 65-foot training tower in a rope rescue situation. All drills and exercises are taught and supervised by West Des Moines firefighters.

If you would like to “walk in the boots” of a firefighter, this is the class for you. The cost is \$20, and each participant will be given a class T-shirt, class photo, and photos of each participant in firefighter bunker gear, as well as descending the training tower “on rope.” The class is limited to 16 students and there is no deadline to sign up. There are no residency or work restrictions to enter

this program.

For more information, contact Corry Dolbeer at 222-3423 or corry.dolbeer@wdm.iowa.gov.

Please visit our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more information and an application packet.

The Fire Department needs Paid-On-Call Volunteer Firefighters

The West Des Moines Fire Department is currently seeking men and women willing to invest their time and energy to serve as Paid-On-Call Firefighters.

If you have a strong desire to assist your community, believe you have what it takes to meet the challenges, and you want to become part of a well-trained team of community oriented firefighters, you are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and be able to reach a West Des Moines Fire Station within four minutes. Valid Iowa Driver's License, good driving record and high school diploma or equivalent also required. Paid-On-Call Firefighters are paid \$9.41/hour with the opportunity to earn additional hourly pay for obtaining certain certifications.

All application materials must be submitted by **March 27, 2015**. For more information, visit the [City of West Des Moines employment section](#).

The City of West Des Moines is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



West Des Moines holds open house for new Human Services building

West Des Moines Human Services held an Open House on February 5 to celebrate their new home. More than 100 people toured the building, enjoyed some delicious cake and participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony. Many thanks to Mayor Steven Gaer for his insightful remarks, the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce for providing the ribbon cutting, and everyone who helped us celebrate!

NEW ADDRESS:

West Des Moines Human Services
139 6th Street
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265



Reminder: April 30 is the deadline for low-income home energy assistance

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal social services program created to assist low-income households with their home energy needs.

LIHEAP offers one-time financial assistance to households who require support in meeting higher heating costs during the winter months. LIHEAP is not intended to pay a household's total energy costs, but is meant to provide assistance with the payment of residential heating costs. Payments are made directly to the households' utility vendor.

To be eligible, applicants must have an income less than 150% of federal poverty guidelines. The program is meant to target those who are most

vulnerable: the disabled, the elderly and families with young children.

If you live in western Polk County and are interested in applying, please contact **West Des Moines Human Services by April 30** to arrange an appointment, or you may visit our office Monday through Friday to meet with staff who can complete your application. You will be told at the time of your appointment whether you are eligible. Dallas County residents should call New Opportunities at (515) 465-5185 to apply.

West Des Moines Human Services is located at 139 6th Street in Valley Junction. Program Outreach hours vary. Please call 222-3660 for more information or visit www.wdmhumanservices.com.

Communication Fiber Network Expansion

West Des Moines and Surrounding Area

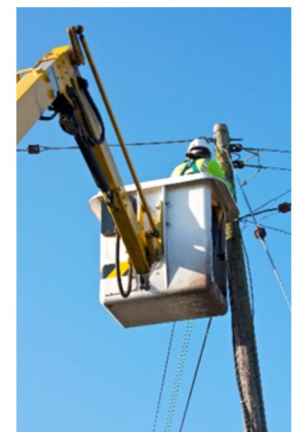
Unite Private Networks (UPN) has begun construction on a major communication fiber network expansion in West Des Moines. The state-of-the-art high speed network will create a diverse ring around the state, connecting all major metro areas in central and eastern Iowa and providing businesses and government entities access to the suite of products UPN provides, including Ethernet services from 10 Mbps to 100 Gbps, wavelength services, Internet access and dark fiber.

“Impact to residents should be minimal,” said Clark Lundy, Regional Vice President of Construction at UPN. “We will follow all sidewalk and roadway signage policies dictated by the City of West Des Moines, and City street lane closures will be limited.”

Throughout the duration of the project, all excavation will take place in the public right-of-way only. Additionally, underground facilities will be placed in the public right-of-way as well.

Should any disruption occur, a UPN contractor will complete restoration and clean up in a timely manner, in accordance with the City of West Des Moines excavation policies. A UPN construction supervisor will be on site to monitor construction and cleanup activities.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by October 2015. Should you have any questions, please contact UPN at (866) 813-3608.



West Des Moines Area Networks

