

Columbia Quarterly

Winter

2011



Lighted Christmas Parade

Mayor Hutchinson
www.columbiaillinois.com



Pull out the sweaters and coats, winter is just around the corner. There are so many fun filled events around the city and county. Get out and enjoy Columbia!

When you are out, please be careful since fall and winter driving can be treacherous. Make sure you change your wiper blades, keep your tires properly inflated and check to make sure they have enough tread on them. If you need tires, wiper blades or other parts and services to winterize your vehicle(s), I encourage you to support our local businesses and make your purchases in Columbia. Don't forget that wet leaves can be as slick as snow and ice. Be aware of road conditions and drive accordingly.

While we are talking safety, I'd like to remind you of several ways to protect your family from fire. Make sure you have an adequate amount of smoke alarms strategically placed around your home, and don't forget to check them periodically; have fire extinguishers located in key spots around the house and make sure family members know how to use them; post emergency numbers by all phones; keep your dryer vent clean; make a family escape plan and practice it with regular drills. The Columbia Fire Protection District (serving the City of Columbia) is a great resource if you have any fire safety questions. Speaking of fire safety, thank you Rich Dreher for 50 years of dedicated firefighting service to the City of Columbia "job well done!"

Be safe this fall and winter. Enjoy the holidays and check out the local shops and cuisine. The restaurants and shops in Columbia are a great place to get gift cards, unique gift baskets, wine and spirits for parties and so much more.

Remember, you can enjoy the holiday season as you continue with your normal schedule, taking time for your exercise routines, hobbies, community involvement, and other activities you like.

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat please contact me at 281-7144 x 109, or at home 281-5199, or khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com. Wishing you all a Safe & Cheerful Holiday Season and a Healthy & Happy New Year!

Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor



Columbia's New Website is Now Live!



The City of Columbia's website has been upgraded to better serve the community: www.columbiaillinois.com

First, City staff has worked with CivicPlus, the vendor, to completely update the design of the site. In conjunction with that process, the team reorganized the website's navigation, making it easier to find content. As a result, the whole look and feel of the website has been updated and improved.

Three new features merit special notice:

- The calendar now shows dates in a graphic manner, not just as a list, making it easier to find events via the website;
- A new navigation button has been added to take visitors directly to information for senior citizens, a recommendation from the Plan Commission's recent assessment of senior services;
- The website now offers a volunteer matching function—a new feature encouraging continued "Outstanding Community Volunteerism."

Other changes have been made to improve the website's functionality for new businesses looking to locate in this area. National studies suggest that more than 98% of site selections occur with primary contact via a community's website.

Further improvements will continue to be made to make Columbia's website more useful to citizens as well as for visitors. If you have a suggestion for improving the website, please send it to Paul Ellis, pellis@columbiaillinois.com.

Welcome New Businesses!

American Family Insurance 634 N. Main St. Insurance Office	Chateau LaVin 119 S. Main St. Wine shop & tasting room	D&T Nail Salon 208 C N. Main St. Manicure & Pedicure
USA Mortgage 108 S. Main St., Suite 100 Mortgage Financial Group	Dr. Chadalawada 123 Wedgewood Dr. Internal Medicine	Crawford-Butz Insurance 319 N. Main St. Insurance Agency



SNOW SEASON IS UPON US

Did you know...

The City of Columbia has received 1,000 tons of salt for the upcoming snow season. Heavily traveled roadways and hills are “pretreated” with a salt brine solution to keep ice and snow from bonding to the pavement. The salt is treated with calcium chloride to aid the salt in working faster to melt the ice and snow.

Here are some items that will help the Public Works Department in performing snow removal activities.

- * When snow is forecast, if at all possible, please remove vehicles from the streets and roadway. This is especially true for cul-de-sacs and dead end streets.
- * Please do not push or throw snow from drives and walks into the street.
- * The Public Works Department's first priority is to keep the more heavily traveled streets and roadways open. Secondary and subdivision streets will be addressed as snow removal activities continue and the snowfall starts to subside.
- * During a heavy snowfall event clearing snow to the edge of the street and roadway will take place once the snowfall starts to subside. Cul-de-sac areas are one of the last areas to be fully cleared of snow.

The Public Works Department thanks you in advance for your consideration and efforts in helping during winter weather.

Did You Know!

The greatest one-day snowfall in Illinois was 24 inches in Coatsburg, Illinois (Quincy) on February 28, 1900!

ILLINOIS HARDEST HIT PROGRAM

Governor Pat Quinn announced the Illinois Hardest Hit program to help approximately 15,000 Illinois homeowners threatened by foreclosure.

The program allows eligible participants to receive up to \$25,000 over 18 months as a 10-year loan to keep mortgages current and make ongoing payments, including fees and penalties. The loan is forgiven over the last five years of the 10-year term, and carries zero interest. Funds for the program are supplied by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Illinois is among 18 states and Washington, D.C. that received funding for the program earlier this year. The Illinois Hardest Hit program will be administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA).

Free applications and eligibility criteria for the program are available exclusively through IHDA's Illinois Hardest Hit website: www.IllinoisHardestHit.org. Applicants will be matched with a local review agency that will answer questions, pre-screen applicants for eligibility and assist homeowners in preparing the application and assembling the required supporting documentation.



UTILITY BILL DIRECT DEPOSIT

Don't forget you can sign up for direct debit payment of your monthly utility bill. This is a free service and can be initiated by completing a direct debit form which is available at City Hall.

Preserve Our Community's Unique Character – Buy Local

The local business community is a reflection of our culture, our unique character and our community. It helps define who we are and is an integral part of what makes our community a great place to live. However, our rural communities are in danger of losing their unique character as residents continue the trend of traveling outside of the local area and into neighboring states to spend their discretionary income and contract for services. If this trend continues, each year we can anticipate having fewer and fewer local businesses and less and less local character.

Local businesses are the lifeblood of the rural communities that comprise Illinois and are, therefore, critical to our area's survival. To retain what makes our communities unique, we need to reexamine our current buying patterns and make a conscious effort to identify ways each of us can work to keep more money circulating in the local economy.

Supporting local businesses preserves the economic diversity and unique character of our local communities. Local business ownership means that important decisions are made by people who live in our community, are our friends and neighbors and have a personal vested interest in the long-term success of our community.

By embracing what makes our community unique, we can develop a strong sense of community and continue to provide gathering places where you can interact with your neighbors and friends, as well as the local business owners.

Individuals, workers and small business owners are more likely to move to or invest in communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character. In addition, communities that offer local character are more attractive to tourists according to Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation who stated *“When people go on vacation they generally seek out destinations that offer them the sense of being someplace, not just anyplace.”* Therefore, preserving what makes our rural communities unique can in turn bring “NEW” dollars into the community, which further supports the growth of our local business community.

Local businesses help build strong, sustainable communities, enhance the quality of life and create a specific sense of place. Our rural communities are worth saving. Let's start today!

Source: Susan Odum CED Program Coordinator,
University of Illinois Extension



Columbia Wins Regional 'Active Living' Recognition

Trailnet, the premier non-profit organization developing bike and pedestrian trails, saving green spaces and advocating alternative transportation across the St. Louis metropolitan area, recently recognized the City of Columbia with the 2011 Active Living Award for a municipality. The annual awards celebrate the individuals, non-profits, municipalities, and businesses who are engaged in unique and sustainable efforts to incorporate physical activity into everyday living.

Nominated by Scott Rodemich of Marketicity -- formerly a member of the Play Commission -- Trailnet recognized Columbia's commitment to encouraging walking and biking. Despite the economic downturn and severely restricted revenues, city leaders are continuing to make investments in projects and planning that continues to build community momentum, such as:

- Pending construction of a new sidewalk along Temple, connecting Main St. with Parkview School and the city's largest park;
- Upcoming installation of fixed speed feedback signs at two key crosswalks on Main St.;
- Development and annual expansion of a School Travel Plan through the Safe Routes to School program;
- Updating the City's Open Space, Bike & Greenway Alignment Plan;
- Creating a Play Commission and winning recognition for three years in a row as a Playful City USA;
- Initiating a new master planning process for a 33.8 acre park in the Admiral Trost Subdivision

For more information about the Active Living Awards, visit the Trailnet website: <http://www.trailnet.org>.



Co-chair Nancy Lieberman
Mayor Kevin Hutchinson
Alderman Mary Ellen Niemietz
Economic Dev. Director Paul Ellis
Co-chair Lily Seymour

News from Columbia School District

Columbia Unit School District is proud to announce a new partnership with Waterloo High School which allows our high school students to participate in FFA (Future Farmers of America) programs. Waterloo teachers, Tim and Mindy McDermott, have agreed to offer an evening Introduction to Agriculture course to any interested Columbia High School student. At this time, nine students took advantage of this opportunity. Enrollment in this course allows our students to be eligible to participate in FFA activities through the Waterloo FFA Chapter. In fact, three students, Zac Hollis, Lucas Stumpf, and Tyler Braun, attended the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

At one time, a Columbia FFA Chapter existed and was very active. It is our hope that Columbia FFA Chapter alumni would like to reunite and form an active support group and/or serve as mentors for our high school students. The first kick-off meeting for FFA alumni and/or interested community members was held on November 9th at Columbia High School. Mr. Dean Dittmar, Agriculture Program Advisor for the region, facilitated the meeting. If you would like to be notified of future FFA Alumni/Support meetings, please contact Principal Stuart at 281-5001 or Dr. Segobiano at 281-4772.

The 2011 School and District Report Cards can be accessed from the district's website at www.chseagles.com. The information on the report card provides financial as well as academic progress for the school district. Ninety percent (90%) of Parkview and Columbia Middle School students met and/or exceeded state standards on the state mandated test (ISAT) in reading and math. Our high school juniors average ACT score was 22 with 18 being the state average. Columbia High School is particularly proud of Drew Spargo who scored exceptionally high on the ACT and is a National Merit Scholar. Great job to the students and teachers, and thanks to the parents for their educational support at home.



A Message from the Columbia Police Department

Throughout the year there are a number of scams that individuals use to try and take money from innocent victims. Unfortunately, the holiday season seems to bring new attempts. I just wanted to take this opportunity and provide some information that individuals might be able to use to protect themselves.

E-mail scams usually come with a subject line titled "ALERT" or "Unpaid Account." The message will usually start out by saying, "I have been waiting for you to contact me since ..." or "I have been unable to contact you and this is your final notice." The e-mail will usually ask the individual to send a specific amount of money and in return they will receive something. The body of the message will usually contain broken English and may include an address from another country. Currently the most common scams are lottery type scams from Canada. Please do not ever send money or personal information to people or places that are unfamiliar to you. I would encourage everyone to delete any e-mails they receive if they do not recognize the sender.

Please remember these are just a few of the scams that are currently being used on the internet. If you have any questions about e-mail scams feel free to contact the Columbia Police Department or visit the FBI website at www.fbi.gov.

Also during the holiday season be sure to lock your doors and windows and report any suspicious activity you see in your neighborhood and community to the police department. We need the public's assistance to help us prevent and reduce crime.

Joseph A. Edwards, Chief of Police



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Upcoming Events

There are a lot of great activities planned for the winter season. For more details on items listed below, call 281-7144 or visit the city website calendar at www.columbiaillinois.com.

KID'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

November 26, 8-11 am:
Free for all children at the ICS Gym. Donate a toy or food item & enter to win a Wii!



CHRISTMAS CRUISE

November 27, 10 am-4 pm:
Take a cruise in your car and get a head start on holiday shopping at our local retailers. Great prizes!

LEAF PICK-UP: Extended through

Friday, December 2nd: Please place leaves by the curb (not in the street). If possible cover the pile(s) of leaves so they do not get wet. Wet leaves are difficult to pick up with leaf vacuums.

GENE HALLER BOOK SIGNING

December 3, 10 am-2 pm/Library:
Local history expert will be selling & signing copies of his book ... *A Glance at the Past*.



LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE & POST PARADE SOCIAL

December 3, 5 pm: Join us for a bright night of Christmas lights down Main St. The parade will start at Rueck Road and end at Cherry Street. Santa will be visiting with the kids following the parade at Turner Hall's post parade holiday social. Warm up with some delicious chili and hot dogs—available for purchase.



SANTA HUT AT CITY HALL

Dec. 4, 10, 11, 17 & 18, 1-4 pm:
Santa will be available for kids to visit and share their Christmas wish list. Please bring your camera to capture the memory.

LARGE ITEM TRASH PICK-UP

Dec. 6 residential pick up:
See website for complete list of acceptable items.

NIGHT OUT IN C-TOWN

December 8, 5-8 pm:
Visit some unique local businesses and earn chances to win nice prizes. Starting at Harres Furniture & ending at Agnes Ross.



ACTING OUT LOUD WORKSHOP

December 8, 6:30 pm & December 10, 1 pm/Library:
A show to get you into the holiday spirit. Presented by some of Columbia's finest talent.

SANTA VISITS THE LIBRARY

December 10, 10 am—Noon: Be sure to bring your camera and your wish list.



NELSON WILLIAM REX BOOK SIGNING **December 17, 10 am—2 pm/Library:** Promoting his new book, *Grand Legacy: A History of Monroe County*.

MARK HODAPP BOOK SIGNING

January 7, 10 am—2 pm/Library: Promoting *Tears from the Heart*, a collection of photographs, stories & poems designed to help the bereaved.

GAMES & TRIVIA—LIBRARY

January 21, Noon—1:30 pm:
Recommended for 3rd—5th graders; registration is required.

VALENTINE'S DAY TEA PARTY

February 11, 11 am/Library:
Come for tea, treats and stories. Bring along your favorite stuffed animal. Ages 5 and up; registration required.

