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Mayor Hutchinson

www.columbiaillinois.com

The holiday season is always a nice time to reflect and be thankful for our charming city and what it has to offer. We have so much to be proud of – great civic organizations, churches and businesses that support our community, excellent schools, great family friendly events, beautiful parks, interesting historical sites, a pleasant Main Street and a great recycling program. We are also looking forward to the expansion of walking/biking trails throughout the city, Main Street streetscape improvements, continuing infrastructure improvements and additional city parks. All of these things contribute to making Columbia a fabulous place to live, play, shop, raise a family and call home.

I would like to encourage everyone to "Think Monroe County First" during this holiday season. We have many great businesses in town that can help with your shopping list and they would love to have your support. Many retailers and restaurants are expanding their operating hours, and in some cases, the days they open for business, for your shopping convenience throughout the holidays. Please keep in mind that many of our local businesses help sponsor the city's special events and they are very generous with their donations to schools, sport's teams, charity events, and other special interest group fundraisers. Please remember that you can show your appreciation to our local businesses for their generosity by shopping, wining and dining in Columbia and Monroe County whenever possible.

Get out and enjoy Columbia and its many fun filled events this holiday season!

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat please contact me at 281-7144 ext. 109, khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com or at home 281-5199.

Wishing you all a safe & cheerful holiday season and a healthy & happy New Year! Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor



Columbia

Quarterly



LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE

The City of Columbia and Columbia's Resourceful Organization of Women Networking (C.R.O.W.N) are planning another bright night, fun-filled Christmas parade on Main Street. On Saturday, December 1st beginning at 5:00 p.m., area businesses, churches, schools and organizations will be participating in the 4th annual holiday parade to welcome the Christmas season. Many lighted floats, festively decorated vehicles, a horse-drawn carriage, strolling carolers and bands will light up Main Street. The parade will travel South on Main Street -- beginning at Rueck Road and ending at Cherry Street (City Hall).

Gather your family and friends, snuggle up in your coats & mittens, bring your blankets and get ready for a delightful event. "This can be a chilly time of the year, so we plan to keep it to about a 30 - 40 minute parade" noted Jackie Hausmann, Event Coordinator with the City of Columbia. To help keep the crowd warm, some businesses along the parade route will be offering free hot beverages. This will also be a great opportunity for attendees to do some Christmas shopping at local merchants or have a nice dinner in Columbia after the parade.

Santa will be arriving in style in his fabulous sleigh at the end of the parade and will be joining the folks at Turner Hall who will be hosting a Christmas Social immediately after the parade. Kids will have an opportunity to visit with Santa and share their wish list. Parents are encouraged to bring their camera for that special moment. Chili, hot dogs and hot chocolate will be available for purchase. This is also a good opportunity to help those that are less fortunate. Nonperishable food items will be collected at the door for our local food pantry.

For more information please contact Jackie Hausmann at the City of Columbia (281-7144 ext. 106) or jackie@columbiaillinois.com.





A Message from the Columbia Police Department

The Columbia Police Department is requesting your assistance to help stop and prevent drug abuse. The current report and arrest numbers relating to drugs in Columbia are bothersome. If you look at the report and arrest numbers for the entire year of 2011 and compare them to the numbers through just September of 2012, you will see a 50% increase in the number of reports and arrests for Cannabis (from 12 reports and 14 arrests to 18 reports and 21 arrests). You will see a 280% increase in the reports related to Controlled Substances (from 5 to 19) and a 171% increase in the number of arrests for Controlled Substances (from 7 to 19).

Additional statistics that cause great concern come from the Columbia EMS Department. In 2011, the Columbia EMS responded to 5 Overdose/Drug related calls. As of September 2012, the Columbia EMS has already responded to 19 Overdose/Drug related calls. That is a 280% increase and there are three more months remaining in this year.

If you have prescription medication in your house that is no longer being used, please bring it to the Columbia PD and dispose of it in our Medical Drop Box. By properly disposing of these drugs, you will decrease the possibility of individuals experimenting with drugs and consuming them. You are also helping to keep our environment clean by not contaminating our water sources with prescription medications.

Since installing the Medical Drop Box in the lobby in May 2012, we have already collected and properly disposed of 98 pounds of medication. Please do your part to help reduce illegal drug usage and keep our environment clean. If you have any questions or concerns about drug usage or abuse, please feel free to contact the Columbia Police Department and speak with an officer.

Joseph A. Edwards, Chief of Police



News from Columbia Unit School District #4



Greetings from CUSD4! It is hard to believe that the first quarter grading period is complete with several items of accomplishments worth noting. The school district was one of eighty-five school districts in the state of Illinois to earn the 2012 Bright Star Award. The award criteria are based on those districts whose students' academic performance ranks in the upper one third of Illinois school districts, but whose expenditure per pupil ranks in the lower one-fourth of Illinois school districts. Hence, Columbia School District shines in spite of low funding. This is the second year in a row the school district earned this recognition.

At the October 18th meeting, the Board of Education sponsored an appreciation reception honoring key individuals who made significant contributions toward the multi-purpose field that was recently completed at the high school. The field has surpassed expectations with continual use by numerous groups with rain not affecting field conditions. Featured guests were: Jeff Kleinschmidt, Mike Luhr, board members from the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation, Randy Simmonds, and Ron Langhans. The financial summary for the project includes \$200,000 of in-kind contributions and \$175,000 outright donations. In addition, another \$175,000 was pledged over a three year period. The school district could not have moved forward with the field project without the in-kind contributions and donations. As of November 1st, the school district is just \$50,000 shy of raising the campaign goal of \$400,000 for the multi-purpose field. For more information, please visit the school district's website at www.chseagles.com.

WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

Fabulous Finds Annex 323 N. Main St. Household embellishments, jewelry, purses, dips & soup mixes, florals & more	Doane Engineering & Fabrication Co. 123 Southwoods Center Dr. Electrical, mechanical & software engineering services
American Home Lending USA 119 W. Gundlach Mortgage Origination	Classic Graphics 121 Southwoods Center Printing stationery products



Please remember to support our local businesses when shopping for the holidays and throughout the year.



DID YOU KNOW.....

Illinois, on the average, experiences five severe winter storms during the November-April period. These storms may be those with only heavy snow, or with snow and ice mixed, or with ice (glaze) only. Although the average is five per winter, as many as 18 storms have occurred in one winter (1977-1978) and as few as two (1921-1922). January is the most favored month for severe winter storms, although December, February and March are close behind in numbers of storms. The earliest a severe winter storm ever hit Illinois was on October 28-30, 1925, and the latest one ever to hit was on May 1-2, 1929.





The City of Columbia Announces Credit & Debit Payment Options

Beginning in early September 2012, customers who wish to make payments to the City of Columbia using credit and debit cards may do so through GovPayNet. GovPayNet accepts MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover debit and prepaid debit card brands for payments twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on-site, online (www.govpaynow.com) or by phone (1-888-604-7888). All that's needed is some basic payment information.

Cardholders pay a service fee to GovPayNet at the time of their transaction. There are no charges to the City of Columbia for participation in the GovPayNet service. Improving the convenience of taxpayer transactions with the City of Columbia means more frequent and timely payments, improved services and reduced taxpayer expenses.

GovPayNet handles all cardholder calls and inquiries about issues with payments. GovPayNet is an excellent opportunity for the City of Columbia to be at the forefront in offering convenient, flexible payment options.

For more company information, visit the website at www.GovPayNet.com
Or call GovPayNet toll-free at 888-561-7888.

CLICK TO PAY NOW



PALMER/QUARRY/GHENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Bids were accepted by the Illinois Department of Transportation on Friday, September 21, 2012 for the Palmer/Quarry/Ghent Improvement Project. The lowest bid was submitted by Keeley & Sons. The project will add a "slip lane" for westbound Quarry/Palmer traffic between Old Route 3 and the ramp onto northbound Illinois Route 3 heading to I-255. The "slip lane" will be constructed next to the existing pavement and will allow motorists travelling westbound on Quarry/Palmer to "slip" to the right out of traffic to go onto the ramp. It will also allow Old Route 3 traffic to turn right onto Quarry/Palmer utilizing the "slip lane" for direct access to the ramp without having to get into the through traffic lane for Quarry/Palmer. The project will also realign the Old Route 3 and Ghent intersection to make it a more direct route across Quarry/Palmer.

Work on the project could start yet this fall if the contractor is so inclined. More than likely work will not begin on the project until late winter or early spring in 2013. The roadways will not be closed to traffic for the work to take place although some lane blockages with the use of flagmen will occur. Please watch for construction warning signage and workmen along the roadways. Your patience and understanding as this project is undertaken is greatly appreciated.



Finance



UTILITY BILL DIRECT DEBIT

Don't forget... the City of Columbia also offers direct debit payment of monthly utility bills. There is no charge for this service - it's free! The direct debit form is available at City Hall or on the city's

website at www.columbiaillinois.com.

For more information contact Michelle Brown, Accounting Specialist, at 281-7144 ext. 102.

COMMUNICATION TOWER

The new 195 foot tall radio tower that was recently built next to the Columbia Police Department will soon have a microwave radio system installed on it. This will allow the emergency service units from Columbia to communicate across the State of Illinois and Missouri with other emergency service units. This type of interoperability radio system enhances the ability of surrounding emergency units to quickly respond and communicate with one another during emergency situations.



The new radio system should be completed by December 2012.



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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.

LEAF PICK-UP:

Through Friday, December 7th:

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.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

November 24, 8-11 am:

Free for all children at the ICS Gym. Donuts, crafts, games, balloon animals, prizes for all. Donate a toy or food item & enter to win a new iPod nano! Sponsored by Helmets 1st and Kiwanis Club.

CHRISTMAS CRUISE

November 25, 10 am-4 pm:

Take a cruise and get a head start on holiday shopping at our local retailers. Great prizes!



LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE & POST PARADE SOCIAL

December 1, 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 & hot dogs—available for purchase.

LARGE ITEM TRASH PICK-UP

Dec. 4 residential pick up:

See website for complete list of acceptable items.



SANTA VISITS THE LIBRARY

December 8, 10 am—Noon: Be sure to bring your camera and your wish list.

SANTA HUT AT CITY HALL

Dec. 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 & 23, 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.

AUTHOR VISIT

Dec. 15, 10am—noon:

Jaclyn Fearheller and her book "Pug Story Chloey's Big Move" at the Library.

Elected Officials



Mayor: Kevin Hutchinson
khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com

Ward I: James Agne
jim@columbiaillinois.com
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Ward III: Gene Ebersohl
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Jeff Huch
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Ward IV: Mary Ellen Niemietz
meniemietz@columbiaillinois.com

City Clerk: Ron Colyer
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Treasurer: Robert Naumann
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Visit

The City of Columbia is proud to print the Quarterly on recycled paper

