



MARION MESSENGER

Winter 2021

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Regaining Our Momentum

As we observe the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remember our friends and neighbors among the millions of people around the world who battled with the virus and we grieve for all who lost their lives. We are also reminded of the

amazing people in our community, from healthcare heroes and front-line workers in all fields to businesses who have powered our economy and individuals who have helped each other through this difficult period. Hope is on the horizon with the increasing availability of vaccines, but many are still struggling with the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, in addition to the effects of the destructive derecho storm. We will continue to rely on each other's kindness, compassion and sense of shared responsibility as we look forward to better days ahead.

Marion entered the pandemic at a time of positive momentum and rapid growth in both community betterment and economic development. Despite the challenges, disruptions and uncertainties of the past year, we were still able to enjoy many reimagined community programs and enhanced delivery of business services. Growth in housing and commercial development also continued and we welcomed a number of new businesses to town. This trend should remain as business owners and developers continue to believe in Marion as a place of great potential and opportunity.

In January we celebrated the long-awaited opening of Marion's new YMCA and community rec center, the largest in the region and a spectacular amenity to serve the health and well-being needs of Marion's growing population. In the coming months, we can look forward to the opening of our third fire station and the new headquarters for the Marion Fire Department, several large multi-family housing projects that will increase the options for Marion's residents and a number of additional businesses that provide jobs and new services.

Construction is well underway on our new library building in the heart of our town, where people can learn, discover, connect with services and experience community. We will also see a significant increase in activity in the city's historic center with the upcoming reconstruction of 7th Avenue and the Uptown streetscape in addition to the construction of the Broad and Main development project.

I have no doubt that Marion will quickly regain its prior momentum and continue on the path to being the best place to raise a family and grow a business. The past year taught us that no challenge is too great when we work together, see the best in each other, give each other the benefit of the doubt and believe in the amazing potential of our commUNITY. Let's keep reaching higher, together!

New Marion YMCA Opens

On Monday, Jan. 18, the new Marion YMCA officially opened at the corner of Tower Terrace Road and Irish Drive. The state-of-the-art, multi-purpose facility is more than double the size of the former Marion YMCA. It features 7,000+ square feet of fitness space, three full-size basketball courts, an indoor track, plus leisure and lap swimming pools. It is designed as a community center to meet the recreational, wellness and social needs of residents in Marion and surrounding communities.

During his remarks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Mayor Nick AbouAssaly noted, "This project is much more than a beautiful building; the truly spectacular part of the story is what will happen here, through the partnership between the Y and the City of Marion. This facility will give people of all ages new and expanded opportunities for physical and mental well-being and social interaction. Community will happen here."

The project was widely supported at the state, regional and local levels. With a lead investment of \$7.3 million from the City of Marion, this new facility demonstrates a full partnership between the City and YMCA. By joining forces, a single structure will meet the needs of the community at lower overall costs to each partner than having each try to do a project on their own.

"Over the past year, both the City and YMCA have been working together on a recreation program schedule to maximize the recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities," said Seth Staashelm, interim director for Marion Parks and Recreation. "Together, we will be able to provide more opportunities for youth and teens to develop skills and learn about teamwork, respect, responsibility and accountability. Adults will be able to socialize, improve their health and find a sense of community."

Fifteen years in the making, this facility was one of the final Imagine8 projects to be completed. Knutson Construction served as the general contractor, completing the project on time and under budget despite the challenges of both a pandemic and derecho storm.

The YMCA continues to work towards its \$2 million private fundraising goal. Visit www.newmarionymca.org for more information or email mentzer@crmetroyymca.org to support this effort.

About YMCA Membership

Individuals and families interested in joining the YMCA are welcome to stop in during open business hours for a tour of the new facility. YMCA staff will be available upon request.

Unfortunately, due to current COVID-19 restrictions, use of the facility is temporarily limited to members only. The Y is not honoring guest passes at this time to help limit capacity and allow for social distancing inside. The Y will announce when guest passes will be once again honored. In the future, Marion residents will be able to purchase unlimited guest passes as a benefit of the City's partnership.

Another aspect of the partnership provides Marion residents with a 10% discount when joining the YMCA, which cannot be combined with other discounts.



To learn more about the new facility, its hours of operation, and Frequently Asked Questions, visit www.crmetroyymca.org/locations/marion.





City Asking Residents/ Businesses to Submit **DERECHO** Contributions

As part of the ongoing recovery efforts following the Aug. 10, 2020, derecho, the City of Marion is asking for assistance from residents and businesses who donated money, materials or time in the aftermath of the storm as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement process.

For disasters such as this, FEMA covers 75 percent of the costs, the State of Iowa provides 10 percent of the costs and the City of Marion is required to cover the remaining 15 percent. The value of personal donations of time, money or materials to support community recovery can be counted toward the City's 15 percent of the costs and will minimize impacts to the City's annual operating budget.

"We are blessed that this community came together to help one another in the days and weeks after the storm," said Deb Krebill, Marion Fire Chief and Incident Commander of the Derecho Response Team.

"As we work through the reimbursement process, we now need residents and businesses to recall how they contributed to the clean-up and recovery effort and submit the details as part of the local match," Krebill added. "If you hauled your debris to the reduction site, donated supplies or cleaned up the street/sidewalks in your neighborhood or other parts of town, we want to hear from you."

Providing proof of this work that occurred in the days following the storm can reduce the City's local out-of-pocket match by millions.

Two forms (one for residents and one for businesses) have been added to the City's website at www.cityofmarion.org/StormResponse and will serve as a central repository. Paper copies are available at the Marion Public Library Uptown location at 1064 7th Avenue or the Technology Station at 5650 Kacena Avenue.

The data gathered will only be used to support the City's FEMA claim. The information is asked to be submitted between now and Feb. 28, 2021.



Residents and businesses are asked to document:

- › the amount of time spent helping others with debris clean-up in Marion.
- › the amount of time spent volunteering at food distribution sites in Marion.
- › the approximate value of donated materials such as food, water, meals, or building supplies.
- › the amount of debris/number of trips hauled with personal vehicles to the debris collection site on 44th Street.
- › any financial contributions to support community recovery efforts.



Submit the contributions for your household or business at www.cityofmarion.org/StormResponse.

BE IN THE KNOW

State of the City Scheduled for March

Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly will review the City's accomplishments of the past year and look ahead to 2021 and beyond during the 27th annual Marion State of the City event.

The virtual event is sponsored by League of Women Voters Linn County, in cooperation with the City of Marion, and supported by local businesses. Funds raised by the Marion State of the City event are used to help the League cover the cost of nonpartisan voter-education materials and forums.



Visit www.cityofmarion.org to learn more.



“Marion is fortunate to be among the fastest-growing cities in the state. While the rate of development can present unique challenges, it is important for us as City leaders to balance the maintenance and upkeep of what is already existing while being visionary and forward-thinking to position our community for future success,” said Marion Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly. “This is a project that is able to accomplish both.”

Participants had the opportunity to provide valuable feedback related to design elements and other amenities being proposed that are mindful of the historic nature of the district.

With the final segment of 6th Avenue to be constructed in the spring of 2021, the focus turns to a complete reconstruction of 7th Avenue and adjacent side streets between 8th and 12th Streets and 6th and 8th

Avenues in the heart of the central business district. It also includes the addition of a plaza on 11th Street that stretches from the Uptown Artway south across 7th Avenue.

“This project replaces underground infrastructure that is over 100 years old, improves walkability, accessibility and overall safety,” said Community Development Director Tom Treharne. “It also enhances our City’s core making it attractive to potential businesses, visitors and residents.”

Initial estimates show a total project cost of \$6.5 million. This includes complete reconstruction of the right-of-way for nine City blocks, and the replacement of underground utilities, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water main, in addition to construction of the North Plaza.

Individual follow-up meetings will be scheduled with adjacent property owners to more specifically discuss plans for phasing and construction implications.

Uptown Master Plan Update

The Community Development Department began working with RDG Planning and Design in May 2020 to update the Uptown Master Plan. The update focuses on the area



7th Avenue Reconstruction and Streetscape Project Nears

In mid-January, the City of Marion and design consultant RDG Planning and Design hosted a virtual open house and public input session to share plans for the 7th Avenue Reconstruction and Streetscape Project in Uptown Marion.

between 7th Street and 15th Street and between 8th Avenue and 5th Avenue. Public input, common themes and recommendations from previous plans contributed to the creation of the plan's four guiding principles: Character of the District, Programming, Redevelopment and Infrastructure.

An overarching goal of the project was to enhance the district for year-round enjoyment for all ages. The three plaza areas depicted in the plan create a cohesive connection between the new Marion Public Library and shops and restaurants by way of the 11th Street right-of-way. Outdoor dining and flexible lawn space, a more defined bicycle route from Grand Avenue to Indian Creek via 10th and 11th Streets through the heart of Uptown, an event stage, outdoor play features, gardens and an ice trail enhance the program offerings.

Conceptual layouts of how vacant or underutilized properties could be redeveloped, along with potential parking opportunities are provided as part of the document. One key recommendation within the update is to complete a parking study once Uptown parking normalizes. This study will provide insight into how parking is being utilized and how the City should proceed with public parking accommodations in the future.

Broad and Main Development Plans Announced for Uptown Marion, Entering City Approval Process

Submitted by MEDCO

Eagle View Partners is proceeding with its newest development project, Broad and Main, designed to add residential density and commercial vibrancy to the Uptown Marion District.

The more than \$25 million Broad and Main redevelopment plan calls for two properties to be constructed in succession at 1101 7th Avenue, currently the Marion Square Plaza strip mall. The first project, Broad and Main on 7th, is a three-story mixed-use property that includes two large commercial bays – anticipated for food and beverage tenants with additional micro-retail bays ideal for new businesses. A “Beer Hall,” or indoor/outdoor gathering space, is anticipated in the second phase of construction to synergize activity at the future Plaza at City Square Park. The property's second and third floors are devoted to 39 market-rate residential units in a mix of efficiency, studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, and a second-floor office suite.

Broad and Main on 6th will be a four-story residential property housing 42 units in a mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, plus high-demand amenities shared between the properties, including an outdoor dog run, indoor/outdoor lounge, fitness center, secure bike storage room and secure parcel technology. Both properties will share the use of a surface parking lot situated between the properties and a private parking garage on the ground floor of Broad and Main on 6th.

“We’re expecting to find folks of all ages who are interested in living, working and playing in a vibrant district. We’ve seen that adding residential density in an urban center complements existing shops, bars and restaurants; Uptown residents will become their most loyal customers. Both residents and businesses come to add a lot of value for one another, and it’s this relationship that contributes to a district’s long-term success,” said Mark Kittrell, owner and CEO of Eagle View.

Construction is anticipated to begin on Broad and Main on 7th in the spring and be completed in Summer 2022. Construction of Broad and Main on 6th will begin immediately after the completion of Broad and Main on 7th. Eagle View is working closely with existing Marion Square Plaza tenants to phase construction and minimize disruption to their businesses and is providing financial assistance to relocate their businesses to Broad and Main on 7th.

“This development will be a catalytic complement to the years of planning and visioning executed in our community,” said MEDCO President Nick Glew. “Eagle View is a first-class team who shares the excitement of our long-term vision for Marion’s Uptown District.”



The Uptown Master Plan Update and other information regarding the 7th Avenue Streetscape and Plaza projects can be found at www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape.



Freshen Up Your Local Game

This year, we saw more and more people resolve to support local. Thank you! If the past year taught us anything, it's the importance of supporting our small, locally-owned businesses in Marion. The challenges they have faced with the pandemic followed by a natural disaster are catastrophic, and they continue to work through these challenges.

Putting local first may be a change in mindset for many, but it's as simple as dining in Marion, shopping in Marion or getting your car serviced in Marion. Here are a few more ideas to freshen up your local game and continue to support small businesses:

- › Find one new-to-you business in Marion a month and visit. Need some inspiration? Check out the Uptown Marion map for a list of local businesses at www.uptown-marion.com/discover-uptown/district-map. You can also look through the Marion Chamber's business directory at www.bit.ly/marionchamberdirectory.
- › Follow local businesses on social media. Like, comment and share their posts.
- › Sign up for newsletters from local businesses. You may get notified of sales, specials or events first. Many businesses share behind the scenes information about products and services.
- › Leave a positive review. You can do this on their social media or sites like Google and Yelp.
- › Recommend a Marion business to friends and family.
- › Send the business a personal message. As a society we can be quick to call out an error, practice being intentional about calling out the awesome!
- › Make a purchase from their shop!

UPTOWN MARION MAIN STREET DIRECTOR WINS 'MAZDA HEROES' AWARD



Brooke Prouty, Uptown Marion Main Street Director, played a crucial role in Marion's post-derecho recovery. Even though her newly purchased home had extensive damage, Prouty took action by coordinating volunteer efforts, canvassing neighborhoods and managing a hotline community members could call to request assistance.

It was a herculean effort, and Prouty is quick to point out that she didn't do it alone. Nonetheless, her selflessness stood out. So much so that when Prouty's brother, Dustin Prouty, saw an article about Mazda's plan to award cars to 50 community heroes, he immediately nominated her.

And she won! On Jan. 7, Prouty became the proud new owner of a 100th Anniversary Special Edition Mazda MX-5 Miata. It's a far cry from her '05 Pontiac Grand Prix, which she said had several malfunctioning parts, not to mention damage from the derecho. "The car was so new and shiny I was nervous about driving it off the lot," Prouty said.

A small group of friends and family had the opportunity to watch Prouty receive the car – and attempt to learn about all its features – at the Mazda dealership in Hiawatha. She was especially happy that her brother, who lives in South Dakota, was able to be there. But the whole thing still hasn't quite sunk in for Prouty. "I watched so many people working hard after the derecho. It feels a little surreal," Prouty said.

In fact, Prouty hasn't gotten rid of her faithful Pontiac – yet. But it's clear that those looking in from the outside can see how much Prouty deserves this award. And, eventually, she'll figure out the Mazda's many features. "It'll take a little getting used to," she said.

AARP Community Challenge Grant awarded to Marion

Last August, Marion was selected to receive an AARP Community Challenge Grant. This "quick-action" grant will give the City of Marion four electric 3-wheel bicycles for any resident to use and explore their city, such as trails, parks and outdoor facilities. The bikes will be available to rent (free to Marion residents) at the new Marion YMCA this spring.

"We are incredibly proud that AARP selected the City of Marion to receive this grant," said Brooke Prouty, Uptown Marion Main Street director and Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee member. "AARP is a nationwide leader in making neighborhoods, towns and cities more livable for all residents and we are honored that they see the tangible value this project will bring to our community."

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CHALLENGE | The Community Challenge funds innovative projects that inspire change in areas such as transportation, public spaces, housing, smart cities, civic engagement, coronavirus response and more. It's all part of AARP's nationwide work on livable communities, which supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and counties across the country to become great places for all residents. AARP believes that communities should provide safe, walkable streets, affordable and accessible housing and transportation options, access to needed services and opportunities for residents to participate in community life.



Here are a few of the higher-profile projects that are in the Engineering Department's upcoming work plan. These projects are associated with maintaining existing infrastructure and supporting new development.

ENGINEERING Update



Mini-Roundabout 10th Avenue/10th Street

Construction of a mini-roundabout at the intersection of 10th Street and Central Avenue/10th Avenue. Work will begin in late June and will be substantially complete within 35 working days.

7th Avenue and 35th Street Intersection Improvements

This project includes the installation of new traffic signals along with the extension of left-turn lanes from 7th Avenue onto 35th Street, the addition of a right-turn lane onto northbound 35th Street, installation of a raised median on 35th Street, and the extension of Linden Drive to 7th Avenue. These updates will improve the traffic movement and flow at this intersection. Work will begin no later than June 21, 2021, and will be completed within 55 working days.



10th Avenue Side Paths

This project includes constructing 10-foot-wide side paths within the 10th Avenue (former Business 151) right-of-way, from an existing side path on the

west side of 35th Street to an existing sidewalk on the east side of Eagleview Drive (approximately 1.1 miles in length, 2.2 miles of trail). The project is scheduled to be let in the spring.

7th Avenue Streetscape and Plaza Project

This first phase of construction will include the 7th Avenue streetscape between 10th Street and 12th Street, 12th Street between 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue and a portion of the North Plaza. The tentative construction schedule is to complete these streetscape improvements in 2021, with the North Plaza improvements occurring in 2022. This project is scheduled to be let in the spring.



Echo Hill Road and Alburnett Road Intersection Improvements

A traffic study was completed at this intersection in 2019 and it recommended the intersection be converted to a roundabout. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2022.

Tower Terrace Road Project (C Avenue to Alburnett Road)

This project includes the extension of Tower Terrace Road east from C Avenue to Alburnett Road. Construction is expected to take place from 2021–2024. The work will begin at the intersection of Alburnett Road and Tower Terrace heading westerly and will be broken into several stages.

Additional information can be found at the Tower Terrace website:
www.towerterraceroad.com/about

CITY DEPARTMENTS

City Hall

1225 6th Avenue
Marion, IA 52302
cityofmarion.org

Administrative Offices

319-743-6301
aabernathey@cityofmarion.org

Building Inspection

319-743-6330
building@cityofmarion.org

City Clerk

319-743-6327
rbolender@cityofmarion.org

City Manager

319-743-6301
citymanager@cityofmarion.org

Community Development

319-743-6320
abartlett@cityofmarion.org

Engineering Department

319-743-6340
mbarkalow@cityofmarion.org

Finance Department

319-743-6350
lcairy@cityofmarion.org

Human Resources Department

319-743-6350
kfisher@cityofmarion.org

IT Department

319-743-4735
thunter@cityofmarion.org

Water Department

3050 5th Avenue | 319-743-6310
tsteigerwaldt@cityofmarion.org

Parks & Recreation

Lowe Park, 4500 10th Street
319-447-3590
khummel@cityofmarion.org
Thomas Park, 343 Marion Blvd.
319-447-3580
ssaashelm@cityofmarion.org

Public Services

(solid waste, sewer, streets)
195 35th Street
319-377-6367
public-services@cityofmarion.org

Marion Public Library

1064 7th Avenue
319-377-3412
info@marionpubliclibrary.org

Fire Department

3933 Katz Drive
Emergency - 911
Non-Emergency - 319-377-8237
firechiefkrebill@cityofmarion.org

Police Department

6315 Highway 151
Emergency - 911
Non-Emergency - 319-377-1511
Records - 319-200-7714
Administration - 319-200-7727
administration@marionpolice.com



Hydrant Flushing beginning in March

Each spring, the Marion Water Department flushes the water system to remove sediment from the mains and to exercise and check the operation of the City's fire hydrants. Flushing typically begins in March or April. During this time, Marion residents may notice some temporary discoloration of the water and should postpone laundry until it clears and minimize the use of hot water to prevent build-up within the water heater. The rusty color in the water is due to the accumulation of iron sediment in the water mains and is not harmful. Questions may be directed to the water office at 319-743-6310.

CONTACT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly

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marionmayor@cityofmarion.org

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Ward Four - Rene Gadelha

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ward4@cityofmarion.org

Send the same email to all members at: council@cityofmarion.org

Marion's City Council meets in work session (no action taken, just discussion) on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. Regular session meetings are held the Thursday following the Tuesday work session at 5:30 p.m. Meeting information can be found at www.cityofmarion.org.

WATER DEPARTMENT NEWS

Water Department Audit Report

Hogan-Hansen, A Professional Corporation, released an audit report on the Marion Water Department in Marion, Iowa.

The Marion Water Department reported operating revenue of \$5,234,491 for the year ended June 30, 2020, a 14 percent increase from the prior year. Operating expenses for the year totaled \$3,426,236, a 5 percent increase from the prior year. Non-operating revenue and expenses for the year totaled a net revenue of \$93,907. Capital contributions for the year totaled \$346,118.

Hogan-Hansen reported three findings. The findings included issues such as segregation of duties, financial statement preparation and inventory valuation. Hogan-Hansen provided the department with recommendations to address each of the findings. All of the findings discussed above are repeated from the prior year.

The Marion Water Department's Board of Trustees has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight of the Marion Water Department operations and financial transactions. Oversight is typically defined as the "watchful and responsible care" a governing body exercises in its fiduciary capacity.

A copy of the audit report is available for review from the Marion Water Department, in the Office of Auditor of State and on the Auditor of State's website at www.auditor.iowa.gov/audit-reports.

2021 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



Date	Holiday	Day	Pick-Up Schedule
Jan. 1	New Year's Day	Friday	One day late Friday
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday	Regular collection schedule
Feb. 15	Presidents' Day	Monday	Regular collection schedule
April 2	Good Friday	Friday	Regular collection schedule
May 31	Memorial Day	Monday	One day late all week
July 5	Independence Day Observed	Monday	One day late all week
Sept. 6	Labor Day	Monday	One day late all week
Oct. 11	Columbus Day	Monday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 11	Veterans Day	Thursday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 25	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	Collection on Friday
Nov. 26	Day after Thanksgiving	Friday	Collection on Saturday
Dec. 23	Christmas Eve Observed	Thursday	Regular collection schedule
Dec. 24	Christmas Day Observed	Friday	Regular collection schedule
Dec. 30	New Year's Eve Observed	Thursday	Regular collection schedule
Dec. 31	New Year's Day Observed	Friday	Regular collection schedule

(Bold indicates City of Marion holidays. Offices will be closed in addition to the Recycling and Compost Facilities.)



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- Save postage and paper
- Fast and easy
- Convenient 24/7 access

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Healthy Habits and Routines to Start Now

How are your New Year's resolutions holding on? It can be hard to make sudden large behavior changes – whether that's hitting the gym every day or swearing off mindless snacking. Most people end up scrapping their resolutions long before the behavior can become a habit, which can take an average of 66 days and as long as 8.5 months for some, according to Mental Health America.

Instead, try creating an environment that will help you make small changes to your daily routine. Once you have one new habit down, add in another. This practice is called habit stacking and can be a little more attainable by making small changes over time. Here are a few ways you can incorporate eating well, moving more, and feeling better into your daily routine.

- 1 | Feel better: Wake up at the same time each day.** If you struggle to get out of bed in the morning or press the snooze button over and over, your body's internal clock may be slightly off. Waking up at the same time each day can actually help you sleep better at night, as well as brighten your mood, reduce dependence on caffeine, improve your alertness and more.
- 2 | Eat well: Don't skip breakfast.** You've probably heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day —it's true! Eating right away in the morning helps kickstart your metabolism and gives you a burst of energy so you can focus at work or on complete tasks for the day, according to WebMD®. Try to avoid high-sugar or high-fat foods, which will counteract breakfast's benefits, and stick to oatmeal, smoothies, or fruit and yogurt.
- 3 | Move more: Get up each hour.** Sitting for extended periods of time can have a negative effect on your health because you use less energy than standing or moving around. To help introduce some movement into your day and combat the negative effects of being sedentary, set an alarm for 5–10 minutes before each hour. When that alarm goes off, stand up and stretch or walk around your house or office.
- 4 | Eat well: Have balanced meals and snacks.** If you are no stranger to the mid-afternoon slump, you may not be eating a balanced lunch. Try to avoid high amounts of fat and carbohydrates, which can lead to afternoon sleepiness. Instead, focus on getting more protein and fresh, whole foods. Make this easier for yourself by storing fruit in a bowl on the counter (instead of a cookie or candy jar) so you're more likely to make a healthy choice when you want something sweet.
- 5 | Move more: Incorporate exercise.** You don't need to work out for an hour every day to reap the benefits of exercise. By starting small, you can build up to more and more activity over time. A few ideas to consider include taking a short, brisk walk around your neighborhood —or doing a few minutes of relaxing yoga at the end of a long day. Map out short, medium and long walk routes near your house so you can easily work in some movement no matter how much time you have. And, try to be consistent about the time of day you get outside — which will help you turn it into a habit.
- 6 | Feel better: Do something you enjoy.** End your day by setting aside time for yourself and something you enjoy, such as curling up with a good book, taking up a hobby, journaling, meditating or connecting with a friend. Even if you have a busy schedule, making time for self-care is well worth it.

For more ideas on how to supercharge your daily routine with healthy habits, visit www.cityofmarion.org/BeWellMarion to learn more about how Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark is working with the City of Marion to make the healthy choice easier for residents.



Sunrise Yoga at Lowe Park 2021

Marion Parks and Recreation and Be Well Marion are pleased to bring you Sunrise Yoga at Lowe Park for the summer of 2021. Join us at the Klopfenstein Amphitheater on Saturday mornings at 7:30 a.m. beginning June 5. Please check out our Sunrise Yoga at Lowe Park Facebook page for weather updates and any other announcements. Sunrise Yoga is free and open to all abilities. Our certified volunteer instructors will always provide options for any level. Bring a mat/towel and a water bottle.

Uptown Community Garden Supporting our Local Food Pantries

With assistance from grants from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the Alliant Energy Foundation, Be Well Marion has made significant updates to the Uptown Community Garden. The number of beds has doubled and accessible beds and picnic tables have been added. Thank you to the Marion Parks and Recreation Department who poured concrete to make areas of the garden more accessible. All of this will be more visible this spring. If you know of volunteers willing to help tend and harvest at the garden, we always need more people. Please contact mentzer@crmetroyca.org for more information.

Uptown Marion Market is Set for Summer

The Uptown Marion Market returns in June and will offer a variety of locally sourced food and artisan items. Get to know local growers and artisans while enjoying the fun, family-friendly activities. Interested in becoming a vendor? Applications are now open. Visit marioncc.org/vendor-information for details. Uptown Marion Market will be temporarily moving in 2021 while construction takes place surrounding the park. Watch for details or visit marioncc.org and facebook.com/MarionIACHamber for the latest.

Geek Out About

Get ready to geek out! All events are held virtually on the second Friday of the month at noon. The Zoom link can be found on the Facebook event:

MARCH 12 | Geek Out About Home Maintenance

APRIL 9 | Geek Out About Planting Trees

MAY 14 | Geek Out About Grilling

JUNE 11 | Geek Out About Computer Safety

New Police Hires



The Marion Police Department recently hired two new officer candidates as well as a contract mental health law enforcement liaison.

Anna Maloney is currently working as a dispatcher and will be transitioning to an officer position later this spring after attending the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.

Jamie Arnold was hired as a police officer and came to us from Wisconsin, where he has served as a law enforcement officer for over 20 years. Jamie was hired under the department's new lateral transfer recruitment initiative which was implemented last summer. He will become certified as a peace officer in Iowa through a written examination in lieu of going through the academy, which saves the department both time and money. He is the second lateral transfer officer hired since the initiative began.

Brooke Bige started work on Jan. 4 as the department's new contract mental health law enforcement liaison. Brooke is a crisis counselor employed by Foundation 2 but is assigned to the Marion Police Department full-time. Her role is to supplement and enhance the department's response to those in our community with mental health or substance abuse issues.



Judy Ward

Judy Ward Hangs Up Her Headset After 30 Years

Judy Ward began her career as a 911 communications operator for the City of Marion in 1990.

For more than 30 years she was the calm voice on the other end of the line, provided comfort to scared callers and served as the lifeline for many officers, firefighters and emergency personnel. She answered 911 emergency lines and non-emergency calls, greeted visitors and helped train new hires.

"When I began my career, we used pencil and cards for call information and dispatching officers," said Ward. "Now there's technology for call taking and the mapping of calls and officers."

In that time, she watched the community's population double from 20,403 in 1990 to more than 40,000 today. She embraced change and was proud to be part of a communications center that worked well together as a team and supported the police officers, firefighters and rescue teams who genuinely cared about this community.

"There's no question, the people that I had the opportunity to work with were the best part of my career," said Ward.

"Judy was a mentor, she was able to blend her years of experience with new procedures to provide insight for dispatchers and officers alike," said Rhonda Kaczinski, communications center manager for the 911 Communications Center. "Her kind and genuine personality will be greatly missed."

Her future plans include visiting out-of-state family members when COVID-19 is less of a risk and making it to another island. In the meantime, she and her husband have some remodeling projects on their to-do list.

MARION MESSENGER

The Marion Messenger is published quarterly for the residents of Marion, Iowa, to keep them informed of city policies, new developments and community events. If you have comments or suggestions concerning this or future issues, please contact:

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Know Before You Go for a Safe Vacation Rental Experience

Airbnb, Vacation Rentals by Owner and other types of vacation rentals have changed the way we travel. There are many benefits of staying in a vacation rental, but did you know that they are not regulated in the same way as hotels? Instead, they typically fall under the jurisdiction of local laws and the requirements vary widely from city to city.

Booking a vacation rental may come with safety concerns you probably haven't considered. Many properties do not contain safety equipment such as smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers and first aid kits, potentially putting you at risk in the event of an emergency.

Act as your own safety advocate before you go. The Marion Fire Department wants to keep you safe in your vacation rental. Follow these safety tips from the National Fire Protection Agency to help ensure your stay doesn't turn into a disaster.

Confirm that the rental offers the following:

- › working smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home
- › a portable fire extinguisher
- › working carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping room and on every level
- › a posted a floor plan that notes all escape routes and exits
- › emergency contact information for the owner
- › doors and windows that lead outside and are able to be opened
- › rooms with windows large enough to serve as a means of escape
- › If there are security bars on doors and windows, make sure they have a quick release. Tools, keys or special efforts should not be needed to open them.

Once you arrive:

- › ensure everyone knows the address of the vacation rental
- › identify two ways out of every room and how to escape in an emergency
- › select an outside meeting place in the event of an emergency
- › make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number
- › keep all pathways free and clear
- › keep electrical outlets free from multiple cords and adaptors
- › keep the stovetop clear of items that can catch fire, such as curtains and towels
- › have a flashlight and batteries in the event of a power outage

Do your homework before making a reservation. Check online to see your travel destination's regulations for rental properties. Ask your host if the property meets all the safety regulations and discuss any safety concerns you may have.

Interested in Remodeling your Basement?

Many homeowners raise the value of their homes by taking on some renovation and remodeling projects. Finished basements are a low-cost way to add resale value to your home at a fraction of what it costs to build up or out.

Finished basements have steadily become among the most popular renovation projects. You already have floors, walls and a ceiling, so most of the time; you're just adding finishes to an existing box. Transforming your basement into a gym, wine cellar, sound-proof playroom, family room or state-of-the-art home theater is relatively inexpensive compared to the price of an addition.

You can do almost any reconstruction as long as you secure the permit. Local municipalities issue permits based on City ordinances. Since building codes vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the only way to know what the City of Marion requires is to check the ordinance. To obtain a permit for a remodeling job, visit www.cityofmarion.org/buildingpermits or call the Marion Building Division at 319-743-6330. As the homeowner, it's your responsibility to ensure that all remodeling is completed lawfully. It is your responsibility to ensure all the proper permits are pulled for your project(s)—even if you hire a contractor to do the job.

If you're thinking about remodeling your basement, there are a few things to consider. Look at your plumbing and heating systems and identify any red flags. Another thing to think about is that nearly all basements are interrupted by at least one bulky beam or interior column that often sits in the middle of the room. If that is the case with your basement, do not remove it because it's likely supporting the floor up above in your house. A licensed contractor can help you with this and can help you crunch the numbers. The City website has many handouts on it that can also help you make the right decisions for your project.

In addition, for a permit to be complete, a rough and final inspection of each aspect of work is required. If a person does not call for a rough and a final inspection, the work and the permit will become void. This means that the work was never accepted or approved by the City, leaving the homeowner potentially exposed to future liabilities.

HORTICULTURE



Help Marion Become a Bird Friendly City!

Marion Parks and Recreation recently began the process to be recognized as a Bird Friendly Iowa City. This process requires documentation of actions and assets that the City has in place to help promote and protect birds and their habitats while also engaging and educating the community about their importance in our day-to-day lives.

To support this, Marion will be hosting a Marion Regional Migratory Bird Celebration on Saturday, May 8. Through this event, printed educational materials at various City buildings and the new Bird Friendly webpage, community members are invited to participate and learn how you can help to keep our birds, our environment and our community healthy and thriving!



For more information on Bird Friendly Iowa: www.birdfriendlyiowa.org

For more information on the City's efforts and what you can do to help: www.cityofmarion.org/BirdFriendly

Marion Regional Migratory Bird Celebration

May 8, 2021 | Thomas Park

Attendees will learn about the important role birds play in our local ecosystem and be inspired to find ways, however small, to help benefit our feathered friends. The celebration is geared towards all ages and will include expert-led bird hikes, speakers, educational displays, children's activities and much more! Attendees will also have a chance to complete an event passport to receive one of 100 beautiful birdhouses donated by local birdhouse maker, Paul Knapp! Presented by Marion Parks and Recreation, Friends of Marion Parks and Iowa BIG.

SPRING AWAKENING

7 THINGS TO DO NOW FOR A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN!

March and April are the months of expectation. Though the long, cold winter is finally wrapping up, it still doesn't seem like spring has quite sprung yet. But it's not too early to get back into the garden. Early spring is the perfect time to lay the groundwork for the warm months ahead.

- 1 | PLAN AHEAD** | One of the most exciting spring tasks is envisioning what your space will look like once the snow and cold weather leave. Spend some time out in the garden mapping out where you'll want to place annuals and any other new perennial or hardscape additions later in the season. Nurseries will bring out their offerings before you know it. Now is also the time to begin ordering and starting flower/vegetable seeds. Taking time before the season starts to clean and sharpen gardening tools is also a wise idea. Some steel wool, a whetstone or fine file, oil and a video to teach you how are all you need to make your tools like new again!
- 2 | PRUNE WOODY PERENNIALS AND ROSES** | Now is the time to prune roses and shrubs. Once they have just begun to leaf out or bloom, it's easy to spot dead branches or rose canes. Look for darker, more dry wood and prune by cutting on an angle just below the deadwood section. If a partial-branch removal is unsightly, cut the branch or cane back to just above the base.
- 3 | GET A JUMP START ON WEEDING** | Most annual weeds won't germinate until late spring, but perennial weeds like dandelions start leafing out very early. Dig deep and remove the entire root of anything you do not want in your garden. A garden knife, or hori-hori, is a particularly useful and multi-purpose tool for such endeavors!
- 4 | PREPARE SOIL** | Add generous amounts of compost to gardens and beds, working it into the top few inches of soil with a cultivator. Top dress perennials by spreading an inch or two of compost around them, making sure not to let the compost touch the plant. This helps improve nutrient capacity and soil texture.
- 5 | PLANT COLD-HARDY BLOOMING ANNUALS** | Spring temperatures can be unpredictable, but annuals like pansies and snapdragons can handle chilly April and May weather and will give your garden instant color. These tough plants will be fine even if there is a late frost.
- 6 | GET CONTAINERS READY** | If you did not clean your planters at the end of the season last year, do it now to prevent plant disease and infestation problems later. Scrub non-clay pots with soapy water. If you had pests last year, soak containers in a mixture of one part bleach to nine parts water for ten minutes. Scrub clay pots with steel wool to remove mineral deposits.

Lease Community Garden Space

Community garden plots for Marion residents are available for lease at Lowe Park, 4500 N 10th Street. We offer a mix of full plots (20' x 40') and half plots (20' x 20'). Depending on the spring weather, plots may not be ready until late in April. For questions or plot availability, please contact the Parks and Recreation office at Lowe Park at 319-447-3590. If all garden plots are leased at the time of your request, you may choose to be placed on our waitlist for the next available plot. Plots have been in high demand over the last few years, so check early for availability.



URBAN FORESTRY

Pruning Storm Survivor Trees

Did your tree survive the derecho? Does it still look rough? There are a few things to consider as we move into the next growing season that may help your survivor trees adapt to the stress and change that took place last August. It is important to remember that the trees have already sustained a great deal of trauma and we do not want to add any unnecessary stress as they respond. Here are a few things you can do to promote a positive reaction this spring:

- › **IT MAY BE BEST TO MONITOR** rather than take heavy pruning action.
- › **REDUCE (CUT) BROKEN, TORN OR SPLINTERED STUBS** back to the next branch junction. If it is a primary limb that goes back to the main trunk, it can be either cut back to the trunk OR a clean cut can be made just behind where the branch failed to minimize the amount of exposed wood. The remaining stub will push new growth in following seasons.
- › **EXPECT SPROUTING!** This is a sign of stress. As new sprouts develop, sprouts with desirable form can be left to replace canopy while others can be thinned or removed to discourage clumping of new branching. The tree gets energy from the leaves that conduct photosynthesis. If a large percentage of the canopy was lost the tree will try to replace it by sprouting to maximize energy production.
- › **PLAN TO MONITOR THE TREES** over the next five years. Some may still decline and die due to stress in the coming seasons. Survivors will need mild attention to train new growth.
- › **DO NOT GET CARRIED AWAY!** Any material removed cannot be put back on, but you can always take it off later. Survivor trees will take many years to recover and stabilize growing patterns.
- › **WATER:** Even mature trees can stress during dry periods. A little water can relieve stress during the hot and drier months of summer.

Do not hesitate to ask questions. Marion's Urban Forestry Division is busier than ever, but our job is to encourage community canopy and that includes private trees too. We have a lot of helpful information on the City website and many organizations can help, such as Trees Forever located right here in Marion.

Now Taking Online Registrations for Park Pavilions and Thomas Park Safe Room

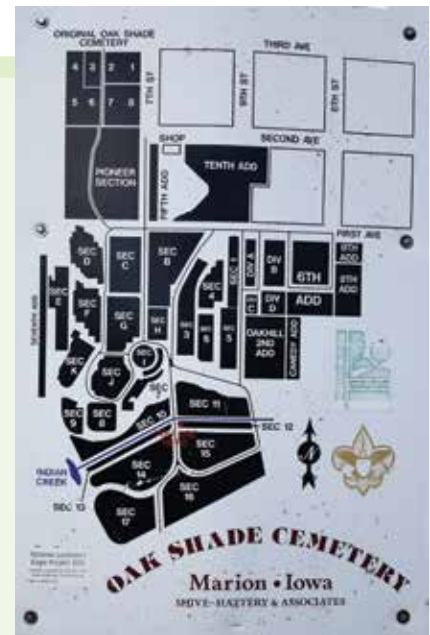
As of March 1, Marion Pool private pool rentals and practice ball diamonds can be reserved online.

Reservations for many of the Marion park facilities can be made online or via phone through the Marion Parks and Recreation offices, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. We are accepting reservations for most facilities through Dec. 31, 2022 except for City holidays.

Visit the facility calendar for complete instructions and to check availability www.cityofmarion.org/recreation/parks-recreation/facilities.

Marion Farmers' Market Now Accepting Lease Agreements

The Marion Farmers' Market at Taube Park runs every Saturday from May through September from 8-11 a.m. and offers a variety of locally grown produce, fresh baked goods, flowers, homemade crafts and much more. The Parks and Recreation Department will begin accepting lease agreements for the 2021 season in February. Please contact the department at 319-447-3590 for availability, rental rates and any other questions.



Finding Family at Oak Shade Cemetery

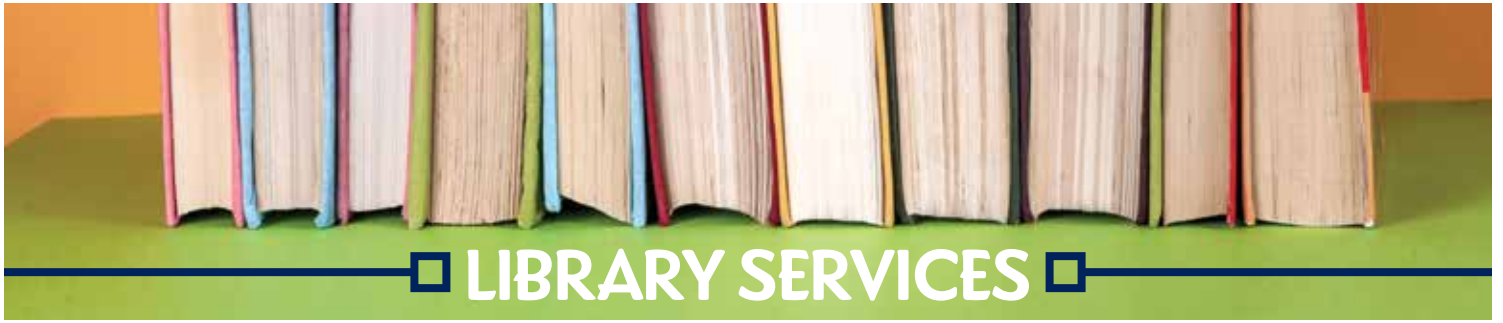
Oak Shade Cemetery is a large, old cemetery containing more than 7,500 graves in a maze of 44 separate areas spread out over 22 acres. These conditions exist because the earliest burials date from 1840 and are the result of additions and expansions over 181 years. At least one addition resulted from the inclusion of a family cemetery previously located nearby.

Given these facts, locating any ONE gravesite can be a challenge unless you know where you are going. Here are several things that can help:

First, there are the large wooden maps on posts, which are placed at three entrances to the cemetery. While not providing details about specific grave locations, these maps do accurately describe the layout of the entire cemetery and the location of those 44 sections and additions.

Specific lot and space numbers of grave locations can be obtained from more than one source. The first is published on www.cityofmarion.org/oakshade. A quicker way to find that location number, which in most cases also includes a photograph of the grave marker, can be found at www.findagrave.com.

Eventually, you may need a more detailed map and/or the help of a Parks and Recreation Department employee or volunteer to find the specific space you are seeking. A map of the entire cemetery can be obtained at the Administrative and Operations office in Thomas Park.



Virtual Services

DIAL A STORY | Enjoy this magical service, available from any phone, 24/7. Call the number 319-727-8100 to hear classic stories, new pep talks, mystery sounds, and more. Stories are updated monthly. Thank you to Farmer's State Bank for making this program possible.



BEANSTACK CHALLENGE | Are you looking for a great read-aloud picture book for your preschooler? Have you heard about the Bridge to Reading Picture Book Award? Join our newest Beanstack challenge and read the 10 nominated stories to your child so they can vote for their favorite! You can sign in to Beanstack online or through its free app to enjoy the best stories of the year and some wonderful activities for your child! marionpubliclibrary.beanstack.com/reader365

LOOKING FOR A GREAT BOOK?

- › We love crafting specialized recommendations for you. Just fill out the Materials Recommendation Form on our website and we will email you personalized suggestions within 1-2 business days.
- › Check out our YouTube playlist of book talks to pick your new favorite at <http://bit.ly/MPLReadMeNext>.
- › Chat live with a library staff member for reading requests, reference inquiries and more on the library's website. Click on the icon in the bottom right corner of the home page to get the conversation started.

Virtual Programs

DOODLEBUGS | Introduce your preschooler to legendary artist Grant Wood the fun (and messy) way! Each Zoom class starts with a story and ends with imagination and creation. Visit www.crma.org for a list of materials you will need if you would like to create along with us! Zoom information is available on the library website. Program titles include:

Grant's Gothic Glass **Grant Wood Land** **Lilies of the Alley**
Feb. 26, 10:30 a.m. March 26, 10:30 a.m. April 30, 10:30 a.m.

Material Returns

We have a 24-hour drop box available outside our Uptown Branch. You may also return your Marion Library materials to any of the other Metro libraries or any of the Hy-Vee grocery stores in the Metro area.

Awareness and Belonging in Community Series: Food!

Join us March 22-27 for our first Awareness and Belonging in Community (ABC) Series: Food! Everyone needs to eat, but there can be challenges that get in the way of accessing nutritious, delicious meals. This program series highlights community need and disparity surrounding access to nutrition, while also sharing how we culturally gather around and celebrate food. There will be a storytime for youth, a hands-on eating and learning experience for teens, and more:

Thurs., March 25 | Frugal Food: Can You Eat Well on \$4 a Day?

Fri., March 26 | At Home Date Night: Learn the Love Language of Food!

Sat., March 27 | To Everything There is a Season: Making Gardening a Family Affair

Take and Make Kits

- › What do polar bears, bubble gum and Mardi Gras all have in common? They are holidays we can celebrate in February! Grab a February Take and Make Kit at our Uptown and Columbus Club locations and get ready to celebrate during the shortest month of the year! Kits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- › Looking for something to do this Spring Break? Have fun using everyday material to craft a variety of crafts. Spring Break All Ages Craft Kits will be available on March 12 at the Uptown Library location. Each kit will have a wide range of crafting ideas ranging from easy to difficult so you can choose your skill level/project!

Linn-Mar and Marion Independent Students Get Student Library Cards

In December, 7,825 Linn-Mar students and 2,696 Marion Independent students gained access to the vast print and digital collections of the Metro Library Network due to newly created student library accounts. With Marion Public Library and the school districts partnering together, students can now borrow print and physical materials, e-books, and e-audiobooks and utilize our substantial lineup of research and homework help resources. Marion Public Library is excited to ensure that students will have continual access to our materials and online resources during the school year and through school breaks. Thank you to the Linn-Mar and Marion Independent school districts for this important partnership!



Our Next Chapter



The Marion Public Library's capital campaign, Our Next Chapter, recently surpassed \$2.5 million of the \$3.3 million goal! The campaign video and case statement are now available for the public at <https://marionpubliclibrary.org>. If you have any questions regarding Our Next Chapter, please contact Foundation Director Amy Geiger at ageiger@marionpubliclibrary.org.

Interested in watching our brand-new library being built? Check out our 24-hour webcam courtesy of Bush Construction. Access the link at www.marionpubliclibrary.org.



For more than 30 years the Marion Independent School District and Linn-Mar Community School District have constructed new homes through the Building Trades program.

Students worked throughout the year to build a new single-family home within the community. Through Marion Community Build, Marion Economic Development Corporation purchased a deteriorated single-family home for students to complete full rehabilitations that will support low- to moderate-income individuals and families.

Throughout the fall, the students have been primarily working on the siding and the windows of the home. The extensive and precise process of window installation is baffling. Two students, Austin Johnson and Carter Scott, shared their insight into how they install the windows. First, precise measurements are taken, which in this case is only one millimeter of tolerance. Then, they nail a bracket of the exact measurements to ensure rigidity of the frame. After placing the new window within the bracket, they wrap Tyvek and apply silicone to seal the frame. Finally, a waterproof coat is applied for weatherproofing and durability. In the past few weeks, I visited the Marion Community Build home, talked to the students working onsite, and interviewed Jim McGrew, President and CEO of Suburban Lumber, a locally owned and operated company.

My conversation with Jim, a Marion Independent graduate himself, also taught me a lot about the community involvement in student projects like this. Suburban Lumber has supplied much of the Community Build project with materials for the renovations.

Suburban Lumber's contributions have also enabled students to explore career fields in hands-on experiences. They've had an age-old tradition passed from generation to generation of giving to the community through their local programs and donations.

Interior work on the home has begun. Make sure to follow along online at www.communitypromise.org as we continue to report on renovations.

Marion Community Build Project Continues to Accelerate

Written by Prem Kulkarni,
Linn-Mar Student and Marion
Community Build Intern



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Marion to Display Military Tribute Banners

For the fourth year, the City of Marion, Marion Chamber of Commerce and Uptown Marion Main Street District invite residents to recognize and honor those who are serving or have served in the United States Armed Forces through sponsorship of streetlight banners in the community.

The program is designed to recognize and show appreciation for veterans and military personnel and their families with ties to Marion. The banners, each featuring the honoree's military photo, name, branch and dates of service, will be placed on as many as 50 decorative streetlight poles throughout the community. They will go up along with 50 banners that were sponsored in 2020.

Any Marion resident or local business is invited to honor an active duty or former service member. For a \$150 sponsorship, a double-sided, customized banner will be created and displayed from Memorial Day to Veterans Day in 2021 and again in 2022. The fee includes design/production, installation/care, as well as a contribution to local veteran affairs programs.

Applications are being accepted in the Uptown Marion/ Chamber office at Marion City Hall. Payment, payable to the Marion Chamber Foundation, must be received in order for the application to be processed. Requests will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis until availability runs out.



Learn more at
www.cityofmarion.org.