



March 2023

MARION MESSENGER



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Nick AbouAssaly

Change Creates Opportunity

We recently unveiled plans for another signature park in our growing list of amazing outdoor amenities that contribute to Marion's curb appeal and make it a standout community. The new park will be located adjacent to

the popular Grant Wood Trail, which was built on the former railroad right-of-way. It will be a dedicated space for preserving and celebrating Marion's proud railroad history.

In addition to artifacts, educational displays and seating areas, the park will feature the beloved caboose currently located in the City Square. The decision to relocate the caboose is the result of much consideration and careful planning as we prepare to construct the new Central Plaza in the City Square.

Marion received a \$3 million Destination Iowa grant to assist with the costs of constructing a Central Plaza that will activate the square and make it a true year-round destination.

Some have expressed concern that relocating the caboose might signify a reduced commitment to Marion's history by City leaders. To the contrary, the City has never been more committed to preserving Marion's history.

Last year the City Council approved historic preservation as a strategic goal and City and community leaders worked tirelessly to save a historic church building from demolition. We have supported grant programs to upgrade building facades and incited the installation of fire sprinkler systems in historic commercial structures.

But a commitment to history is neither mutually exclusive, nor does it have to be at the expense of, progress and new opportunities. Openness to change creates the potential for new opportunities and perhaps improved ways of doing things, including new ideas for preserving and celebrating our city's history.

Since it was placed in the Square in 1992, the caboose has become a source of nostalgia for many, but a recent community survey revealed that less than 10% of residents visit the City Square specifically to see the caboose. One could argue that the caboose in its current location isn't adding value to its fullest potential.

Our hope is that relocating the caboose and making it a central feature of a new destination dedicated to railroad history will give it greater visibility and a more prominent role in telling the story of Marion's past as a railroad town.

Perspective is key.

When we are willing to consider new ideas and say "why not?," we create opportunities for reaching even higher.

The sky is not the limit!

Marion's State of the City Address Happening on March 8

In a year punctuated by the completion of several major public and private investments in the community and considerable progress on several others, Marion delivered on its promise of "Progress Ahead."

Marion Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly will review the challenges and triumphs of 2022 and highlight the projects slated for 2023 and beyond during the 29th annual Marion State of the City luncheon. His presentation is entitled "Delivering on Our Promise."

The event is planned for Wednesday, March 8, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Cedar Rapids Marriott, 1200 Collins Road NE. It is sponsored by the League of Women Voters Linn County, in cooperation with the City of Marion, and supported by local businesses.

Reservations for the luncheon are \$45 per person or \$450 for a table of 10 and may be purchased online via the Linn County League of Women Voters website at www.lwvlinncounty.org/lwvlc-marion-soc. Credit card processing fees apply.

Limited free seating, on a reservation basis, will be available to allow individuals to attend and observe the presentation only.



Subscribe to IN FOCUS

Do you subscribe to the weekly IN FOCUS update provided by City Manager Ryan Waller? You can expect high-level updates on various City-related projects, timely reminders and other relevant topics. Sign up to receive it directly in your inbox at www.cityofmarion.org/enotify, or find it posted on the City website or social media channels.





Cimprich Honored as Inaugural Recipient of National Award

Mike Cimprich, Marion's city arborist, was recently recognized as the inaugural recipient of the Merrell Changing Nature of Work Award presented by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The Changing Nature of Work Award recognizes an individual or team that has responded to natural disasters with a spirit of teamwork, community and perseverance to clean up, rebuild and advance the resilience and well-being of their community.

When Marion lost over 40 percent of its public tree canopy in the August 2020 derecho, Mike Cimprich was integral in leading the Urban Forestry Division's response. He was a trusted resource at a time of much uncertainty and crucial in coordinating contractors and assisting community members who were grappling with a changed landscape and damaged trees.

Cimprich and his team initiated an inventory of the community's tree population, which served as the foundation for everything from securing contractors to quantifying debris to tracking the number of stump removals.

More than two years after the storm, Cimprich's impact continues to grow. In the last year alone, over 1,500 trees have been planted in partnership with Monarch Research, Trees Forever and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Cimprich has successfully secured over \$110,000 in grant funding in 2022 to support these efforts.

In his nomination, Marion Parks and Recreation Director Seth Staashelm noted, "It has been said, 'If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life,' and Mike Cimprich is living proof of this. His passion for the outdoors and commitment to leaving Marion in a better place than he found it are unmatched. He embodies Merrell's purpose to share the power of being outside with everyone."

This is the first award presented by Merrell in partnership with NRPA. The awardee will be sponsored with Merrell gear for one year and will receive \$10,000 toward the advancement of a project or effort.

The City of Marion intends to use the funds to support ongoing replanting efforts.

City Council to Fill Ward 1 Vacancy



Marion City Council member Colette Atkins has announced her intent to resign as Ward 1 representative on the Marion City Council effective March 31, 2023.

"It has been an honor to serve on City Council with Colette," said Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. "She has been a thoughtful member of the team and a strong advocate for our residents. She will be missed."

Atkins was appointed to fill a vacancy in Ward 1 in October 2018 and was reelected during the November 2019 election. Her term expires at the end of 2023.

The City Council intends to fill this vacancy by appointment. The appointment shall be in place until Dec. 31, 2023, as the position will be on the November 2023 ballot.

To be eligible for consideration, candidates must be registered voters of the City of Marion and residents of Ward 1. Those eligible and interested in filling the vacancy must submit a resume and write a letter of interest expressing their desire to be considered for appointment. Credentials should be addressed to the City Council in care of the City Clerk at Marion City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, Iowa 52302.

Applications must be received in the office of the City Clerk by noon on Thursday, March 30, 2023. Action concerning the appointment is expected at the City Council meeting on Thursday, April 6, with the successful candidate sworn into office that day.



FY 2024 City Budget to be Adopted by the End of March

At the end of January, City staff and the City Council held a budget work session to discuss the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget. During the session, City Council considered strategic priorities and provided direction regarding funding various initiatives. The proposed budget includes the addition of six firefighters as well as wage increases to support the recruitment and retention of police officers. Enhanced public bus service was considered but was deferred as City Council remains mindful of the overall impact of increases to property tax bills and public safety remains the top priority for FY 24.

Public safety accounts for nearly \$2.2 million of the \$3.2 million increase in costs in the General Fund. The City Council provided for a 4% wage increase for non-bargaining staff (union staff increases are included and are set by contract) with application of the funds dependent on the results of the Compensation Study currently underway. Inflation also continues to impact expenses with general insurance and health insurance having notable increases.

Despite Marion's growth, the City is seeing a decrease in revenue sources as the result of changes being made at the State level. Changes include the phase-out of the previously established commercial rollback, the conversion of the Commercial Property Tax Credit to an automatic exemption and the elimination of the multi-residential tax classification (once taxed at 100%). In fact, the State is considering a bill to change the residential rollback calculation established in October 2022 and impacting the FY 24 budget. The change will wipe out the \$478,437 growth currently assumed in the General Fund levy. If the bill does not pass, a \$14.87202 property tax rate is budgeted to bring in an additional \$2.2 million in property tax revenue required to fund needed services to our community. If it does pass, City Council will have tough decisions to make as Marion works to establish a sustainable budget.

Continued investment in capital infrastructure is key to Marion's continued growth and to maintaining existing levels of service. Balancing out investment in new infrastructure with the maintenance of existing assets is a strategic priority. The FY 24 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget is \$69.1 million. This is the largest annual CIP to date, with many projects moving forward this year after delays or having received federal or state funding. The new Public Services Facility and fleet replacement account for half of this total.

New Information Related to Sump Pump & Downspout Discharge

The September 2022 issue of the Marion Messenger provided information and guidance on discharging downspouts and sump pumps. There has been some discussion since this publication regarding sump pumps and downspouts that we would like to update you on.

Per Chapter 50.02.25 of the Marion Municipal Code, discharge of downspouts less than three feet to adjoining property lines or discharge of a sump pit less than 10 feet to adjoining property lines are defined as a nuisance that the City of Marion can take enforcement actions on. Consequently, for a discharge of downspouts or sump pumps that are deemed a nuisance, a Nuisance Abatement letter may be sent to homeowners in violation of this code.



Engineering Update

Here are a few of the higher-profile projects that are in the Engineering Department's upcoming work plan that maintain existing infrastructure and support new development.

3rd Avenue Reconstruction - Phase 2

The final phase of this project is expected to begin early this summer. This includes the reconstruction of 3rd Avenue from 22nd Street to 26th Street and water main improvements along 22nd Street from 3rd Avenue to 5th Avenue. Rathje Construction is the contractor for this project. They will have 75 working days to complete the work.

Indian Creek Trunk Sewer Project - Segment 7

This project involves upsizing the sanitary trunk sewer from the Mt. Calvary Cemetery area (in Cedar Rapids) to just north of Highway 100 (west of Menards). The project is currently out to bidders and construction is expected to begin with tree removal in late March.

2023 Asphalt Resurfacing Program

This annual program to mill and replace the existing asphalt surface on several of our roadways is expected to begin in July.

- › Lindale Drive from Blairs Ferry Road to W 8th Avenue
- › W 8th Avenue from Lindale Drive to the bridge
- › 9th Avenue from 4th Street to 9th Street
- › 6th Street from 7th Avenue to 9th Avenue
- › 7th Street from 8th Avenue to 9th Avenue
- › 9th Street from 7th Avenue to 8th Avenue
- › 11th Street from 9th Avenue to 10th Avenue
- › 5th Avenue from 11th Street to 13th Street
- › 4th Avenue from 10th Street to 11th Street
- › 12th Street from 3rd Avenue to 6th Avenue
- › 3th Street from 5th Avenue to 6th Avenue

10th Avenue Rehabilitation

The project includes the rehabilitation of the eastbound lanes of 10th Avenue (Business Highway 151) from 35th Street to Highway 13. This project is currently in the design phase. Work is expected to begin later this summer.

Pavement Patching Project

Two pavement patching projects are slated for later this summer. Crews will rehabilitate a section of 29th Avenue from approximately Northview Drive to Highland Drive and a portion of 8th Avenue from approximately 13th Street to 22nd Street. The work will include concrete pavement patching and diamond grinding of the pavement surface. This project is currently in the design phase. Work is expected to begin later this summer.

Tower Terrace Road Phase A - Grading and Utility

Work will continue on Tower Terrace Road from Alburnett Road to the Marion city limits with the installation of a box culvert, storm sewer and water main this spring/summer. Boomerang Corp. is the contractor for this project. This project is expected to be completed this season. After completion, a separate paving project will likely occur next year.



Coworking Hub for Entrepreneurs and Location-Independent Workers

Cowork 1107 is Marion's newest coworking business, which opened in November 2022. Operated by Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), the coworking space offers a shared, community-driven workspace for location-independent workers and entrepreneurs. Whether you need desk space for the day or private, executive-level accommodations to host a prospective client, this is the space for you. Cowork 1107 is located at 1107 7th Avenue, Suite 201, inside the beautiful Broad and Main on 7th. Cowork 1107 offers multiple membership levels. Options include a \$20 day pass, a \$50 punch card that provides for five uses within one month or a monthly \$150 Community Membership. Membership options include access to amenities such as free coffee, a rooftop patio, discounted conference rooms and Wi-Fi.



Learn more about membership opportunities at www.cowork1107.org.

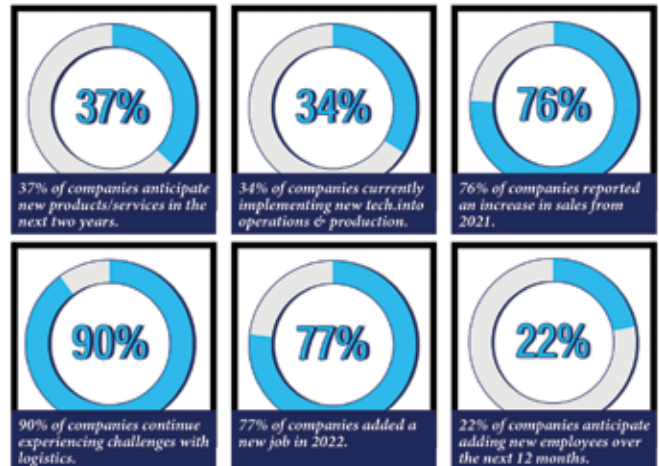


Business Retention & Expansion Report Shows Strong Growth and a Focus on Employee Retention

Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) proactively connects with existing local business owners/leaders throughout the year to understand and respond to their needs. This strategy is known as Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) and it is the backbone of local economic development.

In 2022, MEDCO's formal BRE program included 83 business interviews between the months of January-November. These in-person discussions were completed with over 150 individuals representing local employers with a median employment of 25 and a total full-time employment base of almost 6,500 employees.

The 2022 findings included the following:



Read the full report at: www.medcoiowa.org/bre2022



Uptown Marion Market is Set for Summer

Uptown Marion Market, presented by Marion Platinum Community Partners, will be held the second Saturday in June, July and August, from 8 a.m.-noon. The Fall Marion Market will be held Saturday, Sept. 30, from 8 a.m.-noon. Get to know local growers and artisans while enjoying fun, family-friendly activities. The market will be held on 7th Avenue in Uptown Marion.

Interested in becoming a vendor? The market is a great opportunity for local farmers and vendors to visit and get to know their customers. It's also a place for entrepreneurs to test the waters on new products and retail. Applications are now open. Visit marioncc.org/vendor-information for details or call (319) 743-4723 with questions.



Watch for details or visit marioncc.org and facebook.com/MarionIACHamber for the latest.

City and Partners Proceed with Next Steps of Central Plaza



Sponsorship Opportunities

Generous support from community businesses makes many of Marion's events possible. The annual Fireworks & Fireflies event and the Music under the Moon and Moonlit Movies series would not be possible without our valued sponsors.

Check out the exciting sponsorship opportunities for 2023 by visiting www.cityofmarion.org/sponsorship. Questions can be directed to events@cityofmarion.org.



Come Work with Us

The City of Marion has a wide variety of job opportunities available. We are a highly collaborative team where people can learn and grow while making a positive impact in the community. We offer competitive pay and a benefits package that includes health and dental insurance, a retirement plan, tuition reimbursement, vacation, sick and holiday pay and more.

For a complete list of current openings, visit www.cityofmarion.org/employment.

The City of Marion, in partnership with RDG Planning and Design and Rinderknecht Associates, has resumed the design efforts of the Central Plaza. A preliminary cost breakdown is being compiled based on the 100% design development plans prior to the development of construction documents. Once construction documents and a final budget amount have been set, project bidding will commence with construction anticipated in the spring.

To that end, **City Square Park will not be available for reservations or community events during the construction season.** Organizers have found alternate locations within the City's park system or by using the 7th Avenue festival street and North Plaza. Inquiries may be directed to the Marion Parks and Recreation Department at (319) 447-3580.

Are you Weather Aware?

Sign up for County-based Severe Weather Alerts through Alert Iowa

Sign up for Linn County/Alert Iowa Alerts! In the event of an emergency or severe weather, an alert will be sent by text, phone call and/or email to the number or address you provide. This is a free service provided by Linn County and the State of Iowa; however, normal text message fees may apply. Sign up today at alert.iowa.gov. Scroll down and select "Linn" from the list of counties to be taken directly to the registration page for Linn County.



Why should I sign up? Linn County uses Alert Iowa to send official, real-time alerts to the public with information about potentially life-saving actions that you may need to take to keep yourself, your family and your household safe. By signing up for Alert Iowa, you're taking a large step toward improving your personal safety.

When you sign up online, you can create one user account for a whole household or family! You can add multiple people, including their contact information, and add multiple addresses outside of your county to receive alerts for.

What does creating an account do for me? Creating an account provides flexibility for you to manage the people and contacts attached to your alert preferences. You can also choose a language of preference for alerts, provide information for an access and functional needs registry, and select how you receive alerts (voice, text, email).

What kind of messages will I receive? Availability may vary by county, but alerts might include weather notifications or county/community specific alerts.

How do I sign up for Alert Iowa? There are three ways to sign up for Alert Iowa in Linn County.

1. You can sign up online through an opt-in webpage by visiting alert.iowa.gov and selecting Linn.
2. You can register for limited alerting without an account by texting LinnIA to 672-83.
3. You can download the Smart911 App for your Android or Apple device. Using Smart911 you can choose to set up a full account or receive limited alerts without an account.



M A R I O N S P R I N G / S U M M E R C O M M U N I T Y E V E N T S

Pound in the Park
**2nd & 4th Wednesday | Through April |
Low Park Arts & Environment Center**

Designed for all fitness levels, POUND® provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin' out! Don't forget to bring a yoga mat and water to this free event. Starts at 6 p.m.

Coffeehouse Nights
**Fridays | March 3, April 7 | Low Park
Arts & Environment Center**

Enjoy listening to local artists in a relaxed atmosphere with coffee and tea available for purchase. Concerts begin at 7 p.m.

March 3: Irish Jam

April 7: Deep Dish Divas

B-I-N-G-O Nights
**Fridays | March 10, April 14, May 19 |
Low Park Arts & Environment Center**

Join us for nights of fun, socializing and a chance to win some cash! Games of BINGO will be played for \$0.25 per card, per game. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Wee Parade
Saturday | March 11 | Uptown Artway

Join us for an Irish-themed parade – in miniature! Float registration is at 1:30 p.m., and the parade starts at 2 p.m.

Save Money While Helping the Environment
**Saturday | April 15 | Low Park Arts
& Environment Center**

Did you know you can get a rebate from the City of Marion for installing a rain garden in your yard? Hear experts discuss ways to save money while adopting environmentally friendly habits as we kick-off Earth Week. Learn about capturing rainwater, gardening and composting at 10 a.m.

Healthy Kids Day + City Showcase
**Saturday | April 29 | Marion YCMA
& Community Rec Center**

From 9 a.m.-noon., City staff will be on hand to visit with residents and share information about upcoming projects. City vehicles will be on display and a number of community partners will have a presence. Participate in fun activities and enter to win prizes as part of the YMCA's Healthy Kids Day.

Marion Farmers Market
Saturdays | May-Sept. | Taube Park

Visit your neighborhood farmers market throughout the summer. Find produce, baked goods, meats, wine and more between 8-11 a.m. each week.

City-Wide Garage Sale
Saturday | May 13 | Throughout Marion

Marion will hold a city-wide garage sale from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Find some great bargains and be sure to make a pit stop for lunch or ice cream while you're out and about. A map and sign-up link will be posted at www.cityofmarion.org/garagesale.

Migratory Bird Day Celebration
Saturday | May 13 | Thomas Park

Join the Marion Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of the Marion Parks and Iowa BIG to celebrate all things birds! Activities include educational displays, speakers, bird hikes, children's activities, and more! For more information, visit www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation.

Marion Arts Festival
presented by Farmers State Bank
**Saturday | May 20 | 7th Avenue
between 10th and 12th Streets**

One day. Fifty artists. Exceptional art. Enjoy hands-on experiences and one-of-a-kind art from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the 30th annual Marion Arts Festival.

Great American Kites
**Saturday | May 20 | 4401 Irish Drive
(Baseball Diamonds at Low Park)**

The Marion Parks and Recreation Department is excited to host Great American Kites at Low Park from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. for the third year in a row. Great American Kites specializes in producing the most astonishing and colorful outdoor giant kite displays. Guests should bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating. Outside food and drink are permitted.

Artway Trivia Night
Thursday | June 1 | Uptown Artway

Come test out your useless knowledge! This free trivia night will include some Marion-specific questions and the winning team will get a prize. Keep an eye on the City of Marion website and Facebook page for additional details.

Marion by Moonlight
presented by Farmers State Bank
Thursdays | June 1, 8, 15, 22 |
**NEW location: Klopfenstein
Amphitheater at Low Park**

Gather your people, a cooler and some lawn chairs and kick back to enjoy live music. Music goes from 6-9 p.m.

June 1: Awed Man Out

June 8: Crazy Delicious

June 15: Lonesome Road

June 22: Robin Banks

BBQ Rendezvous
**Saturday | June 3 | Klopfenstein
Amphitheater at Low Park**

Visit Low Park for this day of music and fun supporting the Kiwanis Miracle League at Prospect Meadows. The fun begins at 11 a.m.

Moonlit Movie Series*sponsored by Hills Bank***Fridays | June 9, July 7, Aug. 4 |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Join the Marion Parks and Recreation Department for free outdoor family fun. Bring your blanket or lawn chair and enjoy the movie. Movies begin at dusk (about 8:30 p.m.).

June 9: DC League of Superpets

July 7: Puss in Boots: The Last Wish

Aug. 4: Strange World

Sunrise Yoga**Saturdays | June 10-Aug. 26 |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Enjoy the 10th year of free outdoor yoga each Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. Participants should bring a water and a yoga mat or towel.

Movies on the Move**Fridays | June 16, July 21, Aug. 18 |****Marion Parks**

Join the Marion Parks and Recreation Department as they bring cinematic adventures into some of our neighborhoods. Bring your chairs/blankets for seating.

June 16: Elvis at Butterfield Park

July 21: Top Gun Maverick at Thomas Park

Aug. 18: Dirty Dancing at Taube Park

Pop-Up Acts in the Artway*sponsored by Iowa Appliance Center and Affordable Heating and Cooling***Most Fridays | June-August |****Uptown Artway**

Enjoy a night out on the town listening to live music. Sit on the patio of a nearby bar and hear local musicians perform on the Uptown Artway stage. Music begins at 6 p.m. Visit the City of Marion's website and Facebook page for specific artists and dates.

Uptown Marion Market**Saturdays | June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 30 | 7th Avenue between 10th and 12th Streets**

This festival-style market features vendors offering fresh produce, baked goods and artisan items from 8 a.m.-noon.

Music Under the Moon*sponsored by Veridian Credit Union***Saturdays | June 10, July 15, Aug. 12 |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Enjoy live music at the beautiful amphitheater. Bring a blanket, cooler and lawn chair. Concerts begin at 7 p.m.

June 10: Uptown Funk: A Bruno Mars Tribute Show

July 15: Shania Twain: A Shania Twain Tribute Show

Aug. 12: Dueling Duos

**Picnic on the Prairie***presented by Marion Arts Council***Saturday | June 17, Aug. 19 |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Come be inspired by music, art and the beautiful outdoors. Bring your picnic basket, blanket and lawn chair. The concerts run from 7-8:30 p.m.

June 17: Funk Stop

Aug. 19: Pinicon Drift

Poker Challenge**Ongoing | June | Marion Parks**

Fifty-two large playing cards have been hidden around Marion's parks and trails. Assemble your best five-card hand (with photo proof) and submit it for a chance to win cool prizes. Learn more at www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation.

Marion Community Band**Tuesdays | June 13 & 27 |****NEW location: Thomas Park**

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy a nice summer evening listening to our great community band! Music starts at 7 p.m.

Brulé**Saturday | June 24 | Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Join us for free, family-friendly entertainment at Lowe Park with Brulé, a Native American experience in sight, sound and soul. Brulé has pushed the boundaries of contemporary Native American rhythms and classic rock in their genre-blending selections. Guests should bring chairs/blankets for seating. Guests are welcome to bring food and/or drink, but food vendors will be onsite.

Summer ROCK Series*sponsored by Wertz Law Firm***Select Saturdays & Sundays | TBD | Uptown Artway**

Enjoy rock n' roll hits by some of your favorite local bands in the Uptown Artway this summer. Sit on the patio of a nearby bar or bring your own chairs. Music begins at 7 p.m.

Fireworks & Fireflies*sponsored by Hanna Plumbing & Heating***Monday | July 3 |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Bring your lawn chair, blanket and cooler and enjoy live music by Kick and the fireworks show. The event starts at 6 p.m. and fireworks begin at dusk.

Pound in the Park**Thursdays | July-Sept. |****Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park**

Designed for all fitness levels, POUND® provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin' out! Don't forget to bring a yoga mat and water to this free event. Starts at 5:30 p.m.

Eat. Drink. & Be Marion:**Pub Crawl Fundraiser****Thursday | July 13 | Various stops in Uptown Marion | Must be 21+**

Enjoy a night out on the town for a good cause! Enjoy live entertainment, exclusive deals and extended shopping hours as you walk to each participating establishment between 5:30-9:30 p.m. Support the ongoing revitalization and beautification efforts of Uptown Marion - A Main Street Iowa District. (Ticketed event)

Marion Big Band**Thursdays | July 6, 13, 20 & 27 |****NEW location: Thomas Park**

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy classic 30's & 40's Big Band hits! These concerts start at 7 p.m.

Uptown Getdown*presented by Marion Chamber of Commerce & Platinum Community Partners***Thursdays | Aug. 2, 10, 17, 21 | Uptown Marion**

The best way to wind down the dog days of summer! Grab your chairs and coolers and meet your neighbors for music in Uptown. The festivities get underway at 6 p.m. each Thursday.



The Role of Building Inspectors and Why it Matters to You

Throughout the United States and around the world, people have sustained injuries and economic loss because of unsafe buildings and systems. These losses are successfully minimized through the application of (and ongoing enhancements to) building safety codes and standards.

Building officials, inspectors and other code professionals have a frequently misunderstood occupation most people know very little about. Many do not realize the essential role building code officials play in enhancing quality of life by helping to sustain safe, healthy living conditions for residents, businesses and communities.

Code officials play a major role in ensuring that all commercial, residential, public assembly and other buildings within their jurisdiction are constructed in accordance with the provisions of the building code. Building code provisions address structural stability, fire safety, adequate means of egress (exits), sanitation, safe wiring and more. It is the code official's responsibility to protect the public health, safety and welfare in relation to the built environment through effective building code enforcement.

No matter where they work, inspectors have similar tasks. They apply the principles and methods of construction to judge the work and decide whether it meets the applicable standards or codes. They make preliminary inspections during the first stages of the project. They also examine the supplies to be sure these materials meet the specifications, standards or codes. Follow-up inspections are performed throughout construction to ensure compliance with regulations. For some projects, various inspectors work together throughout the construction process to ensure the project meets code requirements.

Code officials ensure official records are kept pertaining to permit applications, permits, fees collected, inspections, notices and orders issued. The documentation provides a valuable resource of information if questions arise during and after the construction process. Because construction may occur in steps or phases, the code official may need to conduct multiple inspections; therefore, the exact number of inspections will vary with the particular building design and construction sequence.



For more information on building permits and the inspection process, please visit www.cityofmarion.org or contact an inspector at (319) 743-6330.

2023 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

City of Marion **Garbage & Recycling Collection**

Date	Holiday	Day	Pick-Up Schedule
April 7	Good Friday	Friday	Regular collection schedule
May 29	Memorial Day	Monday	One day late all week
June 19	Juneteenth	Monday	Regular collection schedule
July 4	Independence Day	Tuesday	One day late starting Tuesday
Sept. 4	Labor Day	Monday	One day late all week
Oct. 9	Columbus Day	Monday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 10	Veterans Day (Observed)	Friday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	Collection on Friday
Nov. 24	Day after Thanksgiving	Friday	Collection on Saturday
Dec. 25	Christmas Eve (Observed)	Monday	One day late all week
Dec. 26	Christmas Day (Observed)	Tuesday	One day late all week

Bold indicates City of Marion holidays, Yard Waste Facility and City offices are closed.

MARION MESSENGER

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

Amber Bisinger, Editor
Marion City Hall | abisinger@cityofmarion.org



Iron Removal Plant Project Completed

The new Iron Removal Treatment Plant, located at 2351 31st Street, is completed and is capable of treating 1,500 gallons of water per minute from both the Jordan and Silurian aquifers to meet the community's future drinking water needs.

Spring Hydrant Flushing

Each spring, the Marion Water Department flushes the water system to remove sediment from the mains and exercise and check the operation of the City's fire hydrants. Flushing typically begins in April, weather permitting. During this time, Marion residents may notice some temporary discoloration of the water and should postpone laundry and minimize the use of hot water (to prevent build-up within the water heater) until it clears. 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 Department office at (319) 743-6310.

Water Department 2023 Construction Projects

The Marion Water Department is partnering with the Engineering Department to replace water mains along 3rd Avenue from 22nd Street to 31st Street. The Water Department will also hire a contractor to replace old water mains along 27th Street from 14th Avenue to McGowan Boulevard. Water Department staff will relay a water main at 10th Avenue and 2nd Street and several other locations to be determined after the winter leak season is over. A contractor will be recoating a one-million-gallon ground storage tank at 101 8th Avenue and recoating the Lindale elevated water tower. The Water Department is also going out for bids on a future Silurian Well #11 south of Fernow Road. The approximate construction cost of these projects is roughly \$2 million.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Improving the Chances of Survival



Marion Fire Department to Host Monthly 'Safety Matters' Presentations for Seniors

The Marion Fire Department will host a monthly presentation on safety topics for older adults and families. All are welcome to attend.

The goal of the program is to focus on older adults' safety, reduce their vulnerability to fire, injury or crime and connect them with available community resources. Many of the topics will be presented in partnership with other organizations, such as the Marion Police Department, the Marion Public Library and Linn County TRIAD.

The safety sessions will be held on the first Wednesday of each month from noon-1 p.m. at Marion Fire Station No. 1, 100 Irish Drive. Upcoming programs include:

- March 1 iPad, audio books and Library Services (bring your own device)
- April 5 You & Your Medications
- May 3 Gadgets for Better Living
- June 7 Elder Abuse: Types, Warning, Signs and Reporting
- July 5 Identity Theft Prevention
- Aug. 2 Medicare, Medicaid & Prescription Fraud Prevention
- Sept. 6 Emergency Preparedness
- Oct. 4 Fire Safety
- Nov. 1 Coping with the Holidays
- Dec. 6 Insurance & Investment Fraud Prevention



For more information, contact the Marion Fire Department at (319) 377-8237.



Earlier this year, a sudden cardiac arrest event occurred on live television for the world to see. Fortunately, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) began quickly, and the individual ultimately survived the emergency. But what is CPR?

CPR is an emergency lifesaving technique that is used when someone's breathing or heart-beat has stopped. When the heart stops, the body no longer gets oxygen-rich blood. The lack of oxygen-rich blood can cause brain damage in only a few minutes. Performing CPR can keep blood flowing to the brain and other organs. Keeping the blood flow active – even partially – extends the opportunity for a successful resuscitation once trained medical staff arrive on site.

There are more than 356,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) annually in the United States. That's almost 1,000 people per day. According to the American Heart Association, the survival rate to being discharged from the hospital following an OHCA is only 10%.

Bystander CPR

The good news is that research has found a significant factor that greatly increases the chance of survival: Bystander CPR. Bystander CPR means that a person who is near someone whose breathing or heartbeat has stopped pushes hard and fast on their chest until help arrives.

Bystander CPR can triple a person's chance of survival when performed before the arrival of emergency medical services. The MFD partnered with the Marion Rotary to host community CPR training in February and it is likely this partnership will continue in the future. Have the courage to act. Save a Life. Together, we can increase bystander CPR and save lives.

People may be hesitant to use their First Aid or CPR training because they're worried about being liable in a lawsuit. Iowa has a law (Iowa Code 613.17) that protects people who help in emergency situations. If you are not a paid EMS worker and you help in an emergency, you can only be held liable if you act recklessly or if you intentionally act in a way that would be considered misconduct. Essentially, if you act reasonably and in good faith, you will be protected by the law. The same is true for people who use or attempt to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) machine. A person who owns or is otherwise responsible for a property that is home to an AED will also not be liable, so long as they ensure that the AED is properly maintained.

LUCAS Compression Systems

In 2021, the Marion Fire Department received a generous donation from the trust of Gary and Judy Stevens. In January 2023, those funds were used to purchase three LUCAS Compression Systems. The LUCAS device is a mechanical chest compression device that will help Marion firefighters deliver high-quality, consistent chest compressions to sudden cardiac arrest patients. The LUCAS devices are on each of our front-line fire apparatuses responding to all sudden cardiac arrest events in Marion and the Marion Township.

Together, let's increase the chance of survival in Marion!



Police Department Retention/ Recruitment Efforts

The Marion Police Department has taken steps to bolster its officer recruitment and retention efforts.

The department, which is funded for 48 sworn officers, was one of the first in the metro area to offer hiring bonuses for lateral transfer officers due to the cost-savings associated with hiring an experienced officer versus a new officer who must attend the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.

In January 2023, the department began working 12-hour patrol shifts, at the request of the Marion Policeman's Protective Association, due to the increased number of days off it affords officers. When working 12-hour shifts, every officer gets a Friday, Saturday, Sunday off each pay period, and they won't work more than three days in a row (without a day off). The department hopes this will help retain younger officers who would not

normally see an actual weekend off, due to their lack of seniority, for several years.

The department also assembled a diverse group of officers and civilian employees from the City to form a recruitment team. The team created a recruitment video and expanded the use of social media to advertise vacant positions. Officers are also assigned to individual applicants to ensure they are prepared to pass the mandatory written and physical exams necessary to become an officer.

While the Marion Police Department is currently working to fill five vacancies, personnel deficits have not impacted its ability to provide Marion residents with the level of service expected of them.

CONTACT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly

1225 6th Ave. | (319) 743-6305
marionmayor@cityofmarion.org

At-Large - Randy Strnad

1820 Agate Circle | (319) 377- 3276
marionatlarge1@cityofmarion.org

At-Large - Grant Harper

2522 Vaughn Dr. | (319) 389-3385
marionatlarge2@cityofmarion.org

Ward One - Colette Atkins

1070 Creekbend Ct. | (319) 213-8075
ward1@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.

Ward Two - Steve Jensen

3830 Monarch Ave. | (319) 360-7009
ward2@cityofmarion.org

Ward Three - Will Brandt

2745 4th Ave. | (319) 389-9918
ward3@cityofmarion.org

Ward Four - Sara Mentzer

2305 Timber Creek Dr. | (319) 538-8296
ward4@cityofmarion.org

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

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
cityclerk@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

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
sstaashelm@cityofmarion.org
Thomas Park, 343 Marion Blvd.
319-447-3580
bneighbor@cityofmarion.org

Public Services

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

Marion Public Library

1101 6th Avenue
319-377-3412
info@marionpubliclibrary.org

Fire Department

3933 Katz Drive
Emergency - 911
Non-Emergency - 319-377-8237
tfagan@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

We're Hiring!

Now is the time to apply to become a seasonal employee of the Marion Parks and Recreation Department. We are hiring pool employees, recreation assistants, concession stand attendants and grounds maintenance workers. Find the specifics and a full list of open positions at www.cityofmarion.org/employment.

Upcoming Bus Trips

Pella Tulip Festival

Thursday, May 4
\$81 per person

Cubs vs Cardinals at Wrigley

Friday, July 21
\$155 per person

Find reservation instructions at www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation

Adopt-A-Flowerbed

Marion Parks and Recreation invites you to Adopt-A-Flowerbed and take pride in making our community a more beautiful place to be! Previously known as Adopt-A-Spot, this revised program allows volunteers of all skill levels, ages and group sizes to adopt a flowerbed. Volunteers will plant annuals or perennials (provided by the City) and help maintain the flowerbed throughout the growing season. Flowerbeds vary in size, so choose one that fits your group size and a time commitment you're comfortable with. Volunteers will be recognized with a personalized sign in their adopted bed and the option of participating in a friendly end-of-season award contest! Visit www.cityofmarion.org for more information on the program and how to sign up.

Oak Shade Cemetery Clean-Up

All holiday decorations must be removed from gravesites in Oak Shade Cemetery by March 15, 2023. Staff will remove and dispose of any decorations left after March 15.



Marion and Monarch Research Partner on Community-Wide Tree-Planting Program

On the heels of a successful pilot project, the City of Marion and Monarch Research are excited to announce the next community-wide tree-planting program. The primary goal of the initiative is to provide residents with native Iowa trees to plant in the right-of-way along City streets adjacent to their property.

The benefits of trees are well documented. In addition to providing shade, reducing stormwater runoff and improving air quality, street trees are known to have a traffic-calming effect and a positive impact on human health and mental wellbeing.

Marion residents and landowners who commit to the planting, watering and protection of the trees as they become established can register online for up to three, free, 3-gallon trees provided by Monarch Research. This program specifically targets right-of-way areas, in most cases the area between the curb and the sidewalk.

"We are grateful to Monarch Research for providing the high-quality, fast-growing native trees," said Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. "As we continue working to restore our prized canopy, I encourage our residents to consider partnering with their neighbors to make a big impact by planting street trees."

Program registration began on Sunday, Feb. 19 at www.cityofmarion.org/ROWtrees or www.monarchresearch.org and will remain open through March 12, 2023.

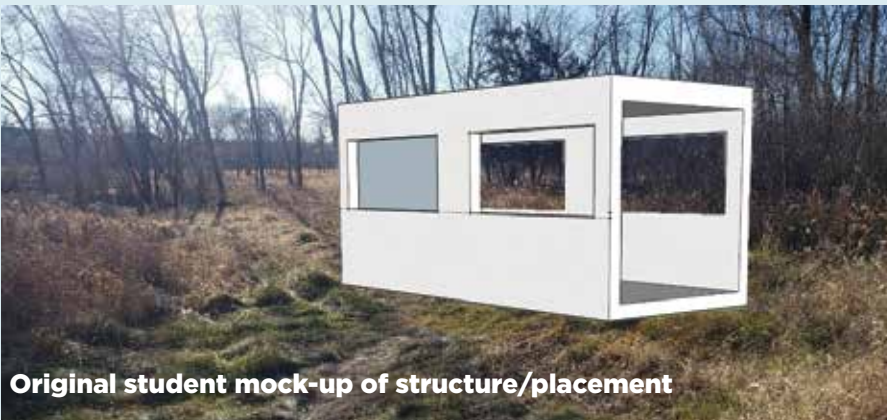
"The continued effort to rebuild and restore what was lost in the derecho becomes more manageable when friends, neighbors and the community come together," said Clark McLeod, founder of Monarch Research. "These native trees will make the community more attractive and restore the ecosystem for future generations."

Members of the City's Urban Forestry Division will provide inspection services to verify species, location and the number of trees suitable for the available right-of-way. The Urban Forestry Division then assumes the long-term maintenance of the trees.

Residents and landowners interested in participating can find program details and the available tree species options online.



Learn more at www.cityofmarion.org/ROWtrees or monarchresearch.org.



Original student mock-up of structure/placement

Bird Viewing Blind

If you frequent the trail in Legion Park, you may have noticed a new structure along the trail and wondered – what is that doing there? This repurposed shipping container is part of an ongoing project between Marion Parks and Recreation, Friends of Marion Parks and Iowa BIG to create a bird viewing blind. A bird blind is a permanent structure that conceals movements, allowing people to watch and photograph birds at a closer distance without being seen. Blinds are best situated near bird essentials: food, water, nesting habitats and migratory pathways. Edge habitats and forest streams, like those found in Legion Park, can be especially busy and may exhibit great species diversity.

Work will continue this spring – flooring, benches, educational signage and bird-friendly landscaping will be installed. It will be fully accessible, so anyone in the community, regardless of age or ability, will be able to utilize it. The blind is also furthering the City's commitment to being a Bird Friendly Iowa Community (officially recognized in Spring 2021). Stay tuned for an official ribbon cutting ceremony once work is completed.

Oak Shade Cemetery



Visitors to Oak Shade Cemetery – a popular place to walk and meditate – frequently encounter three or more of our volunteer “friends” at work. When they do, it often results in break time for the crew and a conversation about the history of one of the state's oldest burial grounds and those who are buried there. It is not uncommon for such meetings to end up adding another volunteer to our roster.

In the picture here, Dennis Amdahl, John Clark-Hansen and Dick McDonald are seen restoring a monument to straight and clean and proud after years of hard Iowa weather and the effects of gravity.



During 2022, about 40 volunteers devoted 605 hours to the restoration, preservation and beautification of the cemetery (including 15

hours to trapping moles). An additional 269 hours were contributed to projects and activities relating to veterans, genealogy, publicity, training and other relationships and meetings. Volunteer opportunities abound.

Friends of Oak Shade was organized in 2013 and is a branch of the Marion Parks and Recreation Foundation relying on tax-deductible contributions for support. It does not receive funding from the City of Marion.

RecAssist Financial Assistance Program

The Marion Parks and Recreation Department recognizes there are Marion residents who are financially unable to participate in programs offered by the department but still desire the opportunity to experience the benefits of leisure activities. We've established a Financial Assistance Program to make recreation and swimming programs available to all Marion residents. Marion residents who are experiencing financial hardship are eligible to apply for assistance. If you feel you need assistance but do not meet the income guidelines, you may attach a letter to your assistance application stating your circumstances. These special circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Financial assistance forms are available online or at either the Thomas Park or Lowe Park offices. You will need to return the completed assistance form, which requires proof of income as well as any additional assistance, to one of our offices. If approved, you will be required to pay a 50 percent co-payment of the recreation program cost and a 50 percent co-payment for a swimming pool pass and pool programs. Visit www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation for additional information.

Linn County Master Gardener Charlene Woeste Spring Plant Sale Happening at Lowe Park

Friday, May 12 | 4-7 p.m.

Saturday, May 13 | 8 a.m.-noon

The Linn County Master Gardener Plant Sale will be held at the Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center, 4500 North 10th Street, Marion. (This is a change in location from prior years.) The sale features a wide assortment of sun and shade perennials, hostas, native plants, grasses and wildflowers from the gardens of Master Gardeners. In addition, annual flowers, vegetables, succulents, arrangements and hanging baskets are available for sale from the Master Gardener Greenhouse at Lowe Park. There's always a wide assortment of plants to choose from.



Looking to fill your spring with new experiences? Our Adventure Pass can help do just that! Marion Public Library (MPL) partners with other libraries across the state to offer the Iowa Libraries Adventure Pass, which offers free passes to special attractions. Any Marion resident over the age of 18 with a library card that is non-expired and in good standing may reserve passes.

Visit marionpubliclibrary.org/adventurepass to get your pass and view frequently asked questions.

 **ENCORE
CAFÉ**
is back!

Encore Café has returned to the library! Encore Café offers a healthy meal and incorporates activities and educational sessions to improve socialization and overall quality of life for area seniors. The group will be at the library on Fridays and at Lowe Park on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Reservations for meals are requested and can be made by calling (319) 398-2585. Access the menu and monthly schedule at www.heritageaaa.org/encore-cafe.

Reserve A Library Meeting Room



From book club groups to corporate trainings and everything in between, the new library has a variety of meeting spaces available for patron use. Patrons can reserve our boardroom and community rooms (A-B combined or separate) for meetings and special events. Visit marionpubliclibrary.org/reserve for room information, and email events@marionpubliclibrary.org to book a space.

Bookings can be made up to three months in advance. Meeting rooms have been in high demand since our opening, so book sooner rather than later!

Upcoming PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Kids

WEEKLY STORYTIMES | MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS | VARIOUS TIMES

2023 brought the return of weekly storytimes to the library! Join us in our youth programming space on Mondays for Preschool Storytime (10:30 a.m.), and on Wednesdays for Baby Time (9:30 a.m.) and Toddler Time (10:30 a.m.)

DOODLEBUGS WITH THE CEDAR RAPIDS MUSEUM OF ART | LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH | 10:30 A.M.

Doodlebugs is an interactive art class for children, brought to you in partnership with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Our themes for the upcoming months are:

- February 28: Building Bridges
- March 28: To Be Frank
- April 25: The Houses That Jack Built

Teens

TEEN CLUBS | EACH TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH | VARIOUS AFTERNOON TIMES

Pathfinder, book clubs, and Pokémon, oh my! No matter the interest, our Teen Programming Room has rotating clubs every Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, with start times ranging from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Please visit our events calendar for a comprehensive list of clubs and times.

Adults

LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER LIBRARY TALKS | EVERY THURSDAY IN APRIL | 6:30 P.M.

Nurture your green thumb with help from the Linn County Master Gardeners. A series of Library Talks will be held each Thursday in April in the library's community room. Topics range from landscaping and tree maintenance to discussing food insecurity and how you can help.

- April 6: Bird Friendly Gardens & Landscaping - Deb Walser
- April 13: Tree Selection and Maintenance - Mike Anderson
- April 20: Food Insecurity - How We Can Help - Beula Dvorak
- April 27: Container Vegetable Gardening - Phil Pfister

UKULELE CLUB | 4TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH | 2 P.M.

Ukulele Club is coming back in 2023 and we want you to join us! This club will meet on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. Stay tuned to our events calendar for more information.

Find the full calendar of programs and events at marionpubliclibrary.org/events.



Bob Reynolds

Meet Bob!

We are very excited to announce that Bob Reynolds has joined the Marion Public Library as our new Patron Services Manager.

"I am thrilled to join such an amazing team in a wonderful location. I greatly enjoy servicing this community, especially now with our new library. It truly feels like I am coming home."

City Council Office Hours Return to Marion Public Library

Marion City Council office hours have returned to the new Marion Public Library, 1101 6th Avenue, on Saturday mornings.

"Communication and outreach are important, and we are thrilled to engage with community members in our new library facility," said Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. "Our goal is to connect with residents, answer their questions and help them solve issues."

One or more City Council members will be available to interact with residents each Saturday between 9-11 a.m.

Residents can also call or email City Council members directly with their questions and input. Contact information is available at www.cityofmarion.org.





1225 6th Avenue
Marion, IA 52302
www.cityofmarion.org



Military Tribute Banners

For the sixth 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 50 decorative streetlight poles throughout the community. They will go up along with the 60 banners that were sponsored in 2022.

For a \$150 sponsorship, a double-sided, customized banner will be created and displayed from Memorial Day to Veterans Day in 2023 and again in 2024. The fee includes design/production, installation/care, and a contribution to support local veteran programs or community flags. Requests are filled on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. Due to the popularity of the program and the timing of this publication, all banners may be committed for 2023. Learn more at www.cityofmarion.org. To request to be among the first notified in future years, please visit tinyurl.com/marionmilitarybanners.