



November 2023

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## MAY YOUR DAYS BE MARION BRIGHT

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Nick AbouAssaly

## Why a moratorium?

The Marion City Council recently approved a measure that temporarily restricts a limited group of commercial uses in three high-growth corridors. The move arose in part out of requests by residents for the City's review of commercial development and the appropriate placement of particular

uses in proximity to residential neighborhoods. This moratorium is limited to one year and does not apply to existing businesses, nor does it impact the great majority of potential commercial development activity. The moratorium applies only to new potential businesses within limited categories of uses.

Some have questioned whether this initiative will stifle development in our city. To the contrary, the measure is intended to allow our City Council and staff time to review and update our comprehensive master plan and make the necessary adjustments to our zoning code to ensure that various types of commercial activities are appropriately located and future commercial development will occur in a manner that preserves the desirability of Marion as a place in which to live and do business.

Thoughtful growth increases the attractiveness of our city for continued development and sustained long-term prosperity. Commercial development is important not only for expanding and diversifying our city's tax base, but also for providing Marion's growing population with convenient access to the products and services they desire. However, development for its own sake is not and should not be our city's objective.

Development works best when it is done in the context of serving the community. In reaching higher for Marion's residents, whenever possible, we must encourage commercial development that adds value to our community and the quality of life that we all enjoy.

With new development occurring in our major growth corridors, we get one chance to do it the right way. To that end, the moratorium will allow us to be more thoughtful about identifying the most appropriate locations for certain uses to minimize the potential impact on adjacent properties and neighborhoods. This is one example of how our City team is working to shape a city we can all be proud to call home. We appreciate your patience and understanding in this process.

As my eighth year in office comes to a close, I am grateful to Marion's residents for giving me this humbling opportunity to serve and make a positive impact. I am also grateful for the members of Team Marion, who share my passion for our community and making it the best place in Iowa in which to live and do business.

Thank you for your trust and enthusiasm as we build a prosperous city that is vibrant, welcoming and a place where all people belong and have access to opportunities for a great quality of life. Working together, we have made Marion a leader in the region and a bright spot in our state.

My family and I extend our best wishes to you for the upcoming holidays. Let's remember to bless others who may need our help to enjoy the season. And let's continue reaching higher, together, in the New Year.

God bless!



AbouAssaly



Miskimen



Brandt



Jensen



Harper



Mentzer



Strnad

## November Election Results

City and school officials were on the ballot earlier this month, and all City of Marion incumbents ran uncontested. Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly, Ward 1 Representative Gage Miskimen and Ward 3 Representative Will Brandt will all serve another four-year term. This will be AbouAssaly's third term. Miskimen was appointed in April 2023 to fill a vacancy. Brandt is serving his third full term as Ward 3 representative.

Due to ward boundary line changes related to the 2020 census, Steve Jensen will now serve as At-Large representative for a four-year term, and Grant Harper will serve as Ward 2 representative for two years. The Ward 2 seat will be back on the ballot at the next City election. The five re-elected council members join Sara Mentzer, Ward 4 representative and Randy Strnad, At-Large representative who were not up for re-election this year. A swearing-in ceremony will take place at the first City Council meeting in January.

## City Council Office Hours

Marion City Council office hours have returned to the Marion Public Library, 1011 6th Avenue. One or more City Council members will be available to visit with residents each Saturday between 9-11 a.m. through the fall and winter months. Residents can also call or email City Council members directly with their questions and input. Contact information is available at [www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.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 retirements plan, tuition reimbursement, vacation, sick and holiday pay and more.



For a complete list of current openings, visit [www.cityofmarion.org/employment](http://www.cityofmarion.org/employment).




## CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK & PEPPERMINT WALK

Kick the holiday season off with family fun at Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk on Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, from 4-8 p.m. in Uptown Marion.



- › Visit Santa and Mrs. Claus and don't forget to leave your letter!
- › Enjoy popcorn from El Kahir Shrine and hot cocoa while supplies last.
- › Take a horse-drawn carriage ride through Uptown.
- › Enjoy musical performances by School of Rock and the Heart of Marion Community Choir.
- › Pay a visit to the princesses from Adorable Princess Parties.
- › And you won't want to miss the lighting of Marion's community peace tree!

Visit participating Uptown Marion merchants for the Peppermint Walk. Stores will be decked with holiday lights, decorations and shoppers can receive a free peppermint treat while supplies last.

 Visit [www.facebook.com/MarionIACamber](https://www.facebook.com/MarionIACamber) for more details.

## Marion Civil Rights Commission Seeking New Members

The Marion Civil Rights Commission currently has three openings for 2024. The commission envisions a community that is welcoming and inclusive and preserves the personal dignity of all people. It serves as a source of information relative to civil rights and is involved in various community outreach activities. Join the commission in time to assist with their 2024 outreach plan!



Learn more about the commission and how to apply at [www.cityofmarion.org/civilrights](http://www.cityofmarion.org/civilrights).

## NEED HELP?

*Get connected to services through My Care Community*

**When you need care but don't know where to turn - My Care Community can help.**

My Care Community is an extensive network of community organizations that work together to refer people to the care they need. Our care coordinators listen to your story and then connect you to services you may qualify for. We help coordinate care for you and your family, so it's easy to find the services you're looking for.



[www.MyCareLinnCo.org](http://www.MyCareLinnCo.org)



[MyCareCommunity@LinnCountyIowa.gov](mailto:MyCareCommunity@LinnCountyIowa.gov)



SCAN  
TO GET CONNECTED



A free service for those needing help in East Central Iowa



## Meet Mark Seckman

In September, the Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) named Mark Seckman the new president of the organization.

He comes to the position with more than 30 years of experience in economic development at the community and regional levels. He previously held positions at Priority One (the predecessor to the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance), the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation and most recently Alliant Energy.

"I'm excited about getting back to my roots with community economic development," said Seckman. "I've been a Marion resident for the past 20 years and the progress in Marion has been impressive to see. I look forward to working with the outstanding team at MEDCO and our partners at the City of Marion, Marion Chamber, Uptown Marion and our regional partners at the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance."

## City and Chamber Seeking Community Impact Award Nominations

The City of Marion and Marion Chamber of Commerce are proud to partner on the Morris F. Neighbor Community Impact Award. Nominations are currently open and will be accepted until Jan. 31, 2024.

The Community Impact Award was launched in 2021 in recognition of banker Morris F. Neighbor of Farmers State Bank. The Neighbor family has given to countless capital campaigns, community events and charitable non-profit groups. In addition, volunteerism and dedication to the community have remained a priority with the family and among bank staff. Phil Pfister was awarded the 2023 Community Impact Award earlier this year.

Community Impact Award nominees may be an individual, couple or organization whose volunteerism, outstanding service and dedication have impacted the Marion community. Ideal candidates have made a positive difference in the lives of fellow residents, continually volunteer in Marion, demonstrate a spirit of collaboration and are enthusiastic about the community and its people, and model honesty and integrity, exemplary character and leadership.

The nomination period opens annually at the Marion Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting in October. The honoree will be announced by Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly during the Marion State of the City event in March.



Visit [www.marioncc.org/community-impact-award](http://www.marioncc.org/community-impact-award) to access the nomination form.



The City of Marion, Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), the Marion Chamber of Commerce, and Uptown Marion Main Street District, collectively referred to as Team Marion, have issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the former Marion Public Library site, located at 1095 6th Avenue in Marion. The RFP is issued to identify private developers and development teams interested in redeveloping the site.

The site is owned by the City of Marion and located in the core of Uptown Marion, a Main Street Iowa District. Primary frontage is provided by the 6th Avenue Corridor and the Grant Wood Trail passes along the northern edge of the site, providing future connectivity to the regional trail network.

Team Marion envisions a privately owned building or complex of buildings with a mix of commercial and residential offerings that will make the biggest impact of this anchor parcel in Marion's Uptown District. The redevelopment should represent the character of the community and the history of the site. The project should also complement the historic nature of adjacent properties while enclosing the retail loop of the historic Uptown District.

Proposals are due no later than 3 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2024. Questions may be directed to Mark Seckman, president of MEDCO, at [mark@medcoiowa.org](mailto:mark@medcoiowa.org).



## Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly Honored as Mayor of the Year

Marion Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly was named the inaugural Mayor of the Year honoree among cities with more than 2,000 in population by the Iowa Mayors Association. The award was presented at the Association's business meeting on Sept. 20, 2023, held during the Iowa League of Cities Annual Conference & Exhibit in Cedar Rapids.

The Mayor of the Year Award was created to recognize individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to their community, the League, the Iowa Mayors Association and local government. The award has two population categories: Under 2,000 and Over 2,000. Mayor Allen Hadfield of Treynor won in the Under 2,000 category.

Mayor AbouAssaly has been helping move Marion forward for several decades, always promoting a bigger vision and a higher standard of excellence. He served on numerous boards, commissions and committees in addition to the Marion City Council before becoming mayor in 2015. He leads from the front and spends countless hours meeting

with residents, business owners and investors. He is committed to responsive leadership, economic development and community betterment.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, he formed a multi-disciplinary Community Recovery Task Force, and as part of the city's successful response to the 2020 derecho, he assembled a disaster recovery team and communicated with federal and state officials to secure assistance.

Among other accomplishments, he personally raised more than \$1 million for the Marion Public Library and the Marion Central Plaza capital campaigns. He established the Mayor's Youth Council, the Senior Connections Committee, the Community Equity Task Force and increased City Council engagement through weekly office hours.

He is a champion for progress and works to ensure the City and its community partners are successful. He is an advocate for positive change while honoring Marion's history and he challenges his colleagues and the community to think bigger and go the extra mile.

Congratulations, Mayor AbouAssaly!



## Marion Recognized for Streetscape Project

The City of Marion and its partners were recognized with the Project of the Year Award from the American Public Works Association (APWA). The award recognizes the Central Corridor 7th Avenue, 8th Street to 12th Street, Pavement Reconstruction and Streetscaping Project in the category of transportation projects greater than \$2.5 million. This was a two-year construction project that transformed the 7th Avenue Corridor into a curbless festival street, updated infrastructure and improved accessibility.

### CITY DEPARTMENTS

#### City Hall

1225 6th Avenue  
Marion, IA 52302  
cityofmarion.org

#### Administrative Offices

319-743-6301  
aabernathey@cityofmarion.org

#### City Clerk

319-743-6327  
cityclerk@cityofmarion.org

#### City Manager

319-743-6301  
citymanager@cityofmarion.org

#### Community Development

Building Division  
319-743-6330  
buildingpermits@cityofmarion.org  
Planning Division  
319-743-6320  
planning@cityofmarion.org

#### Engineering Department

319-743-6340  
mbarkalow@cityofmarion.org

#### Finance

319-743-6350  
lcairy@cityofmarion.org

#### Human Resources

319-743-6329  
lspersflage@cityofmarion.org

#### IT Department

319-743-4735  
itdepartment@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

100 Irish 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



## Stormwater Rebates Available

New rebates are available for residential practices that reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality. These rebates include:

- › Reimbursement of up to 50% of the project cost up to a maximum of \$1,000 for:
  - › Rain gardens
  - › Soil quality restoration
  - › Pervious pavers
  - › Native plants
- › Up to a \$50 rebate for rain barrels and trees purchased within 30 days of rebate application submission. This rebate can be applied up to three times per household.

Rebates are not grandfathered in for existing stormwater best management practices.



Visit [www.cityofmarion.org/stormwater](http://www.cityofmarion.org/stormwater) for more details on how to qualify and to view the terms and conditions.



## Central Plaza Updates

The City of Marion, in partnership with RDG Planning and Design and Rinderknecht Associates, continues to finalize plans and the construction timeline for the \$7.3 million Central Plaza. The City secured \$3 million through the Destination Iowa program several months ago and has been working to navigate several layers of requirements at the State and Federal levels to ensure the funding is not jeopardized. Construction is now expected to begin in the spring.

The Central Plaza includes the eastern portion of City Square Park and what was formerly 11th Street adjacent to the park.

### Amenities will include:

- › Iowa's first refrigerated ice-skating loop
- › Public restrooms
- › Engaging water features
- › Public art and seating
- › Fire tables and more
- › Enclosure of the Depot Pavilion
- › Live performance space
- › Interactive play sculpture
- › Decorative lighting

## Central Plaza Capital Campaign

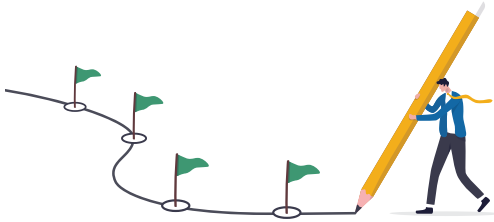
To continue Marion's endeavor to provide an unparalleled quality of life for both residents and visitors, the Marion Parks and Recreation Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has launched a capital campaign for the Central Plaza that will serve as a dynamic, regional asset for attracting residents and visitors to Marion. Plaza amenities play an integral role in creating a regional outdoor recreation experience and community living room in Uptown Marion.

Consider being part of this exciting opportunity in the Heart of it All by participating in the capital campaign or sponsoring a commemorative brick. The bricks will be a permanent feature and prominently displayed around the depot pavilion and firepits in Marion's Central Plaza.

To date, more than \$650,000 in private contributions has been raised to support this project. Help further Marion's investment in becoming a regional destination!



Learn more about the opportunities, complete a pledge form or visit the online giving site at [www.cityofmarion.org/parksfoundation](http://www.cityofmarion.org/parksfoundation).



# Planning & Development

## Please Stay on the Trails

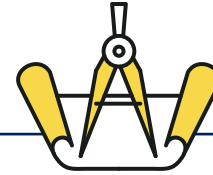
It's always important to remember that if you are not in a designated park area, you should stick to the trail. While many Marion trails are on City property, some trails have been constructed with limited access easements on private property. This means that the property outside the mowed shoulders of the trail may be private property. Going outside of the mowed area onto undesignated property could be considered trespassing.

## How do YOU think Marion should grow?

The City of Marion recently entered into a service agreement with RDG Planning and Design to revise Marion's Comprehensive Plan. All cities within Iowa are required to have a comprehensive plan for the community that guides the city's growth. It is a high-level planning document that generally lays out future land uses, road networks, trail networks, parks and open space, public facilities and generally provides a vision for the community. The revision to Marion's Comprehensive Plan is expected to take over a year and includes a number of public input sessions to gain an understanding of what residents and Marion business owners want to happen as the city continues to grow. Keep an eye out for opportunities to share input and help shape the future of Marion.

## Housing Rehabilitation Program Open to Income-Qualified Residents

Using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City of Marion has partnered with the Housing Fund for Linn County to fund an owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program. The program offers to assist Marion homeowners with up to \$20,000 in project-related costs, with additional funding opportunities as well. Both interior and exterior repairs are eligible. Income restrictions include annual income being at or below 80% the average median income for Linn County. For example, a single-person household would qualify at or below \$53,000, a family of four would qualify at or below \$75,700 and a family of seven would qualify at \$93,900. For more information about the program or to see if you would qualify, please contact the East Central Iowa Council of Governments at (319) 289-0060 or email Deanna at [deanna.robinson@ecicog.org](mailto:deanna.robinson@ecicog.org).



## Council Approves Moratorium Along Commercial Corridors

The Marion City Council has approved a moratorium on select commercial uses along portions of Tower Terrace Road, Highway 13 and within the Central Corridor. The moratorium is a temporary restriction of those limited commercial uses within the locations identified within the ordinance; most commercial activity will be permitted to continue to develop along these commercial corridors to serve the community.

The moratorium will provide time for staff to assess and plan for the potential impacts of specific commercial development within those geographic areas. This will ensure adequate time is provided to evaluate zoning regulations, environmental concerns, infrastructure needs and other relevant factors to make informed decisions about future growth and development. The pause in these limited commercial activities aims to strike a balance between economic progress and safeguarding the well-being of the community and environment, ultimately promoting responsible and sustainable development practices.



## Parking Study Update

In August the City of Marion kicked off a parking study of Uptown. Through the six-month study the consultant, HKGi, will look at parking numbers, identify where the most parking is being used compared to where parking is available, make recommendations on low-cost, short-term parking improvements in addition to long-term management recommendations. The consultant conducted parking counts at multiple times on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday in September. In October, there was a listening session with Uptown business and property owners and an online survey opened to the public. While the survey is now closed, there will be additional listening sessions and public input opportunities before the final recommendation goes to the City Council in March.



## Free Public Wi-Fi Available through Partnership with ImOn

The City of Marion and ImOn Communications have partnered to bring free Wi-Fi to community parks and public spaces. The first location went live in late September in the outdoor spaces surrounding the Lowe Park Arts and Environment Center, the Klopfenstein Amphitheater and the Lowe Park Ball Diamonds.

Lowe Park is now equipped with ImOn's wireless infrastructure engineered to cover the highest-trafficked areas of the park and activities such as concerts, festivals and sporting events.

The City and ImOn are already working together to add Wi-Fi to the Thomas Park playground and pavilions located east of the Thomas Park Administrative & Operations office. Plans are also in place to add Wi-Fi to the Uptown District as part of the Central Plaza project.

### 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



## 2023 Community Event Recap

2023 was a banner year for community events. Forty-seven free events were organized by the City, including 25 concerts, the first-ever play at Lowe Park, a winter celebration featuring ice-sculpture demonstrations and an Independence Day celebration that attracted approximately 6,000 people. Over \$36,000 in sponsorship dollars were raised through partnerships with 24 local businesses. Their support, coupled with Hotel/Motel tax funding, was vital to providing free programming and entertainment, and we're thankful to have so many supportive businesses in our community. These events are part of what makes Marion a standout community. Plans are already in the works for 2024.

## Event Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Interested in sponsoring an event? Sponsorship dollars allow the City of Marion to provide free, quality programming for the community. Sponsorship benefits include advertising opportunities and spots for booths at events. Sponsorships are accepted for a variety of events, including Fireworks & Fireflies, Marion ICE and Music Under the Moon concerts.



If you're interested in receiving information about sponsorship opportunities, email [events@cityofmarion.org](mailto:events@cityofmarion.org).

## Give a Gift from Home

The Marion Welcome Center is located inside the Marion Chamber and Uptown Marion Main Street office at 1070 7th Avenue.

The retail store offers fun Marion merchandise great for gift giving or sharing your Marion pride. The selection includes greeting cards, postcards, household items, apparel, Christmas merchandise and more!

Uptown Dollars, good at over 30 businesses in Uptown Marion, are also available for purchase in \$5, \$10 and \$20 increments. Store hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Welcome Center is part of a tourism initiative by the Marion Chamber and made possible by a grant from the Linn County Economic and Community Development fund and Marion's Hotel/Motel Grant program.



## Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras

Like most other law enforcement agencies in the United States, the Marion Police Department has been experiencing staffing challenges. We've implemented strategies to ensure we can continue to provide the level of service the community expects from us in an efficient manner. One such strategy was to implement the use of Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) cameras to assist the Police Department in performing an essential public safety function.

On Aug. 18, 2023, ATE cameras were activated at the intersections of Highway 13 and 151, as well as Highway 100 and E. Post Road. These cameras detect both speeding and red-light violations and were strategically placed at these intersections due to accident histories and traffic patterns. The department also rolled out a mobile ATE camera, which detects speeding violations only and will be deployed based in part on resident complaints regarding speeding. The location of the mobile ATE unit is announced at least 12 hours in advance on the department's social media pages.

When the cameras were activated, the department issued warnings for 30 days. During that period, approximately 1,900 warnings were issued. About 97% of those were for red-light violations; 77% of the vehicles involved in the violations were registered outside of Marion and 74 vehicle owners received more than one warning. On Sept. 18, 2023, citations started being issued.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q | What did it cost to install the cameras?**

**A |** There were no equipment costs associated with the program. The vendor, Sensy Gatso, receives a flat rate of \$35 from each citation, which covers all equipment, operational and maintenance costs.

**Q | Were the yellow light cycles shortened when the cameras were installed?**

**A |** No. The yellow light cycles at both intersections covered by ATE cameras were not shortened when the cameras were installed and are in compliance with the times set forth in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

**Q | If I receive a citation, will it go on my driving record?**

**A |** No. Citations are issued to the registered owner of the vehicle and are not reported to the Department of Transportation.

**Q | Will I get a ticket if I make a right turn on a red light?**

**A |** Right turns on a red light are legal unless signs indicate otherwise, so long as the car comes to a complete stop behind the white line before making the turn. Drivers making a right turn on red must yield to vehicles and bicyclists already traveling in the lane of traffic and must yield to pedestrians.

**Q | Will I get a ticket if I make a left turn when the light is red?**

**A |** Yes. Left turns can only be made with a green light, green arrow or yellow flashing light after yielding to oncoming traffic.

## Marion Celebrates Fire Prevention Week



Fire Prevention Week was Oct. 8-14, 2023, and the Marion Fire Department (MFD) teamed up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA) to promote this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention™." The campaign emphasized simple but important actions residents can take when cooking to keep themselves and those around them safe.

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Most cooking fires can be easily prevented by following a few simple safety tips.

- 1 | Watch what you heat.** Always keep a close eye on what you're cooking. Set a timer.
- 2 | Turn pot handles** toward the back of the stove.
- 3 | Always keep a lid** nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- 4 | Have a "kid- and pet-free zone"** of at least three feet around the stove or grill and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- 5 | Be on alert!** If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- 6 | Keep anything that can catch fire** — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.



For more general information about fire prevention and cooking safety, visit [www.fpw.org](http://www.fpw.org). For fire safety fun for kids, visit [sparky.org](http://sparky.org).

## 2023 Fire Safety Poster Contest Winners



During Fire Prevention Week, third graders attending Linn-Mar, Marion and St. Joseph schools created a fire safety poster. Creating posters about fire safety is an effective learning tool to teach children fire safety techniques and practices. It can also help them remember what to do in the event of a fire and be prepared for emergencies.

Members of the Marion Fire Department judged the posters to select a winner for each school, and then one poster was selected overall to be "Best in the City." Congratulations to Corrigan Cook, pictured above, for achieving this honor. The MFD would like to congratulate everyone who participated in the 2023 poster contest. All the winning posters will be displayed at the Marion Library.

### FMI - RED

Corrigan Cook

### FMI - GOLD

Aniston Aossey

### INDIAN CREEK ELEMENTARY

Kinley Meeks

### LINN GROVE ELEMENTARY

Bailey Byers

### NOVAK ELEMENTARY

Sloane Tiernan

### ECHO HILL ELEMENTARY

Keerthana Ramkumar

### WILKINS ELEMENTARY

Ava Maas

### ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

Luke Diercks



## Lieutenant Scott Elam Retires from the Marion Police Department

Over his 32-year career in law enforcement, Scott Elam has been a patrol officer, task force officer, detective, and finally a lieutenant.

Much of his career was spent in investigations, where he enjoyed the challenge of working on difficult cases.

“I was always proud of how everyone pulled together,” he said.

He also got the chance to see many younger officers develop their skills.

“I’m proud of the fact that I was involved in helping train the officers that will be leading the Marion Police Department in the future,” he said.

In retirement he plans to stay busy by working at the Eastern Iowa Airport and spending time with family. Congratulations, and thank you for your years of service, Scott!



## City Working to Develop Reforestation Plan

The City of Marion is working with Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company (JBC) to develop a reforestation plan for the community. The multi-step process includes multiple opportunities for community input.

“We’re looking to the community to help identify tree planting priorities and preferences, particularly in City parks and in the street right-of-way,” said City Arborist Mike Cimprich. “The input gathered through this study will provide a holistic look at our tree canopy needs and provide us with a multi-year plan for planting, maintenance and administration.”

An online survey is being used to help inform the reforestation plan. It is available at [www.polco.us/marionIA](http://www.polco.us/marionIA) through Nov. 30, 2023.

The finished plan will evaluate existing conditions along with community needs and priorities related to restoring the urban tree canopy. It will also include recommendations for reforestation and a phased action plan.

The City of Marion was awarded a \$40,000 grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to cover the majority of this work.

The 11-month process is expected to be completed in Spring 2024.

### CONTACT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly**

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

**At-Large - Randy Strnad**

1820 Agate Circle | (319) 377-3276  
[marionatlarge1@cityofmarion.org](mailto:marionatlarge1@cityofmarion.org)

**At-Large - Grant Harper**

2522 Vaughn Dr. | (319) 389-3385  
[marionatlarge2@cityofmarion.org](mailto:marionatlarge2@cityofmarion.org)

**Ward One - Gage Miskimen**

2551 Pleasantview Dr. | (850) 361-7181  
[ward1@cityofmarion.org](mailto:ward1@cityofmarion.org)

**Ward Two - Steve Jensen**

3830 Monarch Ave. | (319) 360-7009  
[ward2@cityofmarion.org](mailto:ward2@cityofmarion.org)

**Ward Three - Will Brandt**

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

**Ward Four - Sara Mentzer**

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

Send the same email to all members at:  
[council@cityofmarion.org](mailto: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](http://www.cityofmarion.org).



## Frozen Pipes

### What to do if there is no water

- 1 | Check your water meter** – If water is leaking or spraying from the meter in your basement or the base plate is cracked, your water meter may be frozen. Call the Marion Water Department at (319) 743-6310 as soon as possible. There is a charge to replace your meter.
- 2 | Check for frozen pipes** – Pipes located along exterior walls are the most susceptible to freezing. To thaw pipes, contact a licensed plumber or use hot towels or a hair dryer. Never use an open flame or heat tape to thaw pipes, as this could cause a fire.
- 3 | Check with your neighbors** – If you and your neighbors do not have water service, there may be a water main break. Check your front door for a notice from the Water Department or call (319) 743-6310.



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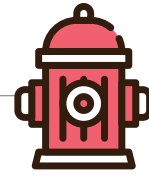
Go to: [www.cityofmarion.org/billingoptions](http://www.cityofmarion.org/billingoptions)

#### 2023 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

## City of Marion IOWA Garbage & Recycling Collection

Date	Holiday	Day	Pick-Up Schedule
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	Collection on Friday
Nov. 24	Day after Thanksgiving	Friday	Collection on Saturday
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	Monday	One day late all week
Jan. 1	New Year's Day	Monday	One day late all week

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



## Adopt a Hydrant

The Marion Water Department and Marion Fire Department are encouraging residents and community businesses to adopt their neighborhood fire hydrants.

The number of house fires typically increases during the winter months. Significant snow accumulation and drifts can hide fire hydrants, making them impossible to find quickly. In the event of a fire, firefighters often must locate and shovel out fire hydrants before being able to connect to them, losing precious time.

You can help by keeping the fire hydrants closest to your home or business clear of snow. It is best to have a three-foot clearance on all sides of the hydrant.



## Causes of Low Water Pressure

If you are experiencing a sudden change in water pressure in your house, it could be one of two things. First, if you have a water softener unit, put the unit on bypass mode by pushing a button or turning the lever to bypass mode. If pressure is restored, the issue lies within the water softener. If you have a whole house water filter, remove and replace the filter or simply remove the filter if a new filter is not immediately available. Nine out of 10 times, one of these scenarios is the cause of low water pressure.



## City Council Approves Transition to Automated Curbside Collection

In July 2022, the City of Marion selected SCS Engineers as the consultant to perform a comprehensive solid waste collections study and evaluate the City's curbside collection program for garbage, recycling and yard waste.

The consultant used cost and operational data to develop alternative collection scenarios for an automated collection system with trucks equipped with a mechanical arm.

During the Oct. 5, 2023, City Council meeting, Marion City Council directed staff to proceed with the implementation of automated curbside collection. The approved scenario uses a split-body truck to perform the automated collection of both refuse and recycling. Another single-body truck would be used to collect yard waste.

Residents would be provided with a total of three carts which would be owned and maintained by the program. This will enable the department to service 800 to 1,000 units per day as opposed to the 500 to 600 units currently collected via manual collection. Now, work will begin to procure collection vehicles, determine cart size offerings and service fees, order carts, and determine the service roll-out schedule. Roll-out is anticipated in 12-18 months.

The City of Marion has yet to determine which sizes will be offered to residents as part of this program, but the City will have several touch-points with residents as the program is developed.



Learn more at [www.cityofmarion.org/automatedcollectionstudy](http://www.cityofmarion.org/automatedcollectionstudy).

## Roundabout Reminders



Whether you're new to roundabouts or a seasoned pro, a refresher on their proper usage never hurts. The following tips are provided by the Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization as part of their commitment to Safe Routes to School. Pictured is Marion's newest roundabout at the intersection of Echo Hill and Alburnett Road.

**Slow down!** Enter the roundabout at the posted speed.

If a roundabout has more than one lane, then generally:

- Use the left lane to go left
- Use the right lane to go right
- Use all lanes to go straight, unless otherwise marked

**Yield to pedestrians** and bicyclists.

**Yield to traffic** already in the roundabout. Motorists circling through the roundabout will not yield for you.

**Stay in your lane** throughout the entire roundabout. If there is more than one lane, do not switch lanes.

When exiting the roundabout, **signal** to indicate you are turning right out of the roundabout.

Always **assume semi-trailer trucks need all available space** while navigating the roundabout and do not pass them in the roundabout.

**Clear the roundabout** to let emergency vehicles pass.

**Never stop in the middle of a roundabout.** If you missed your turn, circle again and exit where you had previously missed.



# Outdoor Aquatic Center Update

In 2021, the City of Marion partnered with Waters Edge Aquatic Design to conduct an Outdoor Aquatic Center Feasibility Study. The study recommended a \$26 to \$27 million facility, for all ages and abilities, designed to accommodate a growing community and attract out-of-area visitors.

The proposed concept includes a lazy river with three different slides, a leisure pool, a wave pool, a 25-yard lap pool with a ninja warrior obstacle course and a diving well that features a one-meter board and three-meter platform.

The study recommends a 20-acre parcel to include the aquatic center, parking and other recreational amenities such as playgrounds, greenspace, pavilions and the like.

The City is currently in conversations with two property owners regarding land acquisition. The study recommended a preferred location close to the intersection of 35th Street and Munier Road, near Highway 100. It is just over a mile south of the current pool.

When considering potential locations, the consultant and steering committee evaluated the ease of pedestrian and vehicular access, the number of households within walking distance, placement of existing aquatic facilities like the YMCA, Linn-Mar Aquatic Center, splash pads and more.

Following land acquisition, the City will engage in developing site plans which will include opportunities for additional community engagement and feedback. This is expected to occur next summer.

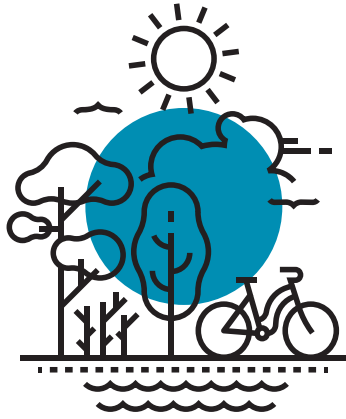
In addition, a funding plan will be developed to model potential revenue sources to fund the construction. The plan includes a community referendum vote.

Upon approval of the referendum, construction is anticipated in 2026 or 2027. The Marion Pool at Willowood Park is expected to continue to operate until the new facility is built.



Learn more at [www.cityofmarion.org/aquaticstudy](http://www.cityofmarion.org/aquaticstudy).





**Oak Shade Cemetery**

**Need a speaker?**

If it's your turn to provide a program for your church group or other organization - we are here to help you!

As we head into our 10th year of volunteerism at the cemetery, Friends of Oak Shade has assembled an extensive and interesting program of information, history and stories about one of the oldest burial grounds in Iowa and the memory of those interred there.

Our presentation is flexible enough to satisfy time limitations of 30 minutes of facts and history of the cemetery to an hour or more with interesting biographical sketches of notable Marion pioneers. We can introduce your group to people like 112-year-old Richard Thomas to the youngest veteran of the Civil War, Mancil Root, who was sworn in to serve at the age of 9 years and 11 months!

From noon luncheon meetings to evening programs, we are able to adjust our message to meet your requirements. Connect with us by calling the Thomas Park Administrative & Operations Office at (319) 447-3580.

**Practice Field Reservation Sign Up**

Reservations for outdoor practice spaces will open on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. Reservations can be made online by visiting [www.cityofmarion.org/facilities](http://www.cityofmarion.org/facilities). The Marion Parks and Recreation Department has priority over all fields. Weekday rentals are for pre-determined time slots only.

Weeknights (5-6:30 p.m. OR 6:30-8 p.m.).....\$20  
 Weekends (90-minutes).....\$20

**Seasonal Help Wanted**

The Marion Parks and Recreation Department is looking for seasonal help for the 2024 season. Positions include lifeguards, pool assistants to help with swim lessons, pool cashiers, parks grounds staff, Lowe concessions and weekend tournament ball diamond help. Applications will be posted at [www.cityofmarion.org/employment](http://www.cityofmarion.org/employment) beginning the last week of December.

**2025 Facility Reservations to Open**

Are you planning a special event or meeting in 2025? The online calendar for the Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center and other park facilities will open for 2025 reservations on Jan. 1, 2024. Visit [www.cityofmarion.org/facilities](http://www.cityofmarion.org/facilities) for more information.

**Hanna Park Improvements**

A new playground for children ages 2-5 has been installed at Hanna Park and this spring, concrete curbing will be installed around both playgrounds to create a defined border from the play area to the turf. In addition, work is underway on the new pavilion at Hanna Park. The weather will determine how much crews are able to accomplish this season. A ribbon cutting ceremony is anticipated in late spring or early summer of 2024, at which time the Parks and Recreation Department will begin accepting reservations.

**Prairie Hill Park Near Completion**

A new pavilion, sidewalks and ADA parking were added to Prairie Hill Park, located at the corner of 29th Avenue and 50th Street, during the late summer/fall of 2023. Weather permitting, the final item, the asphalt parking lot should be completed by late fall 2023.

**Community Gardens at Lowe Park**

Community garden plots have been in high demand over the past few years, but a few might become available for lease during the 2024 growing season. If you are a Marion resident interested in gardening, please call the Lowe Park Recreation Office at (319) 447-3590 to be added to the waiting list. The plots are 20' x 20'.

**Play by Play Spring/Summer 2024**

The next edition of our Play by Play Activity Guide will be available in late February. It will include a full listing of recreation and aquatics programming for the residents of Marion and surrounding communities. In the meantime, visit [www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation](http://www.cityofmarion.org/parks-recreation) to access the online program catalog.

**Marion Parks and Recreation Gift Certificate**

Looking for a last-minute gift? We offer gift certificates to be used towards recreation programs, swim lessons and pool memberships. We can also issue a credit to a RecDesk account after the holidays to help keep the gift a surprise. Call the Recreation Office at (319) 447-3590 to inquire.

# Library Updates



## MakerSpace 101

If you haven't had a chance to explore the library's MakerSpace, make a resolution to do so this winter! Here are some MakerSpace 101 tips for anyone trying it out for the first time:

- › Marion Public Library (MPL) offers open-hour appointments for patrons to use equipment in the space, including:
  - › Filament & resin 3D printers
  - › Glowforge laser engraver
  - › Cricut
  - › Mug sublimation machine
  - › T-shirt press
  - › Arts & crafts
- › Appointments can be made on the library's events calendar. No experience is necessary, and staff will be there to assist you every step of the way!
- › Depending on what equipment you work with in the MakerSpace, there may be an associated cost for materials. Patrons can pay for materials at the Information & Reference Desks.
- › The longarm quilting machine is up and running! The quilting machine is available for use through training and open-hour appointments. Training slots are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and open-hour appointments can only be used by patrons who have completed training and certification first. Both of these can be found on the library's events calendar.

For more information, visit [marionpubliclibrary.org/makerspace](http://marionpubliclibrary.org/makerspace).

## 'Tis the Season to Check Out a Cake Pan

There's no better time to learn to bake than during the cozy holiday and winter season. Check out a cake pan from the library for your holiday feast and party needs – we've got all kinds of shapes and sizes for any recipe. Cake pans can be found in the Youth Collection on the main level, as well as next to the Adult Collection on the second level.

## Take MPL To Go!

Looking for ways to entertain yourself and your family during holiday road trips? Here are two online resources to bring with you:

- › ComicsPlus has graphic novels for all ages in full color. Download the Library Pass app on your device, log in with your library card number and start browsing the hundreds of titles available.
- › iVox makes reading fun with animated storybooks for kids! Download the iVox app on your device and log in with your library card number to start reading.

## 'Hold' On There!

If you aren't finding the item you're looking for when you visit the library, place a hold! Holds are a great way to get on the list for that playaway you've been wanting to listen to or that new book that just came out. Place a hold to pick up at:

- › Another library, such as Hiawatha, Downtown Cedar Rapids or Ladd
- › Our holds wall on the main level
- › Our drive-up window on the south side of the building

## Upcoming Programs & Events

### Saturday Storytimes

**Dec. 4, Jan. 8, Feb. 19 and March 18 | 10:30 a.m.**

Bring the whole family to Saturday Storytime at MPL! Book selections will be geared toward preschool age, but everyone is welcome to attend.

### After School Activities

**Weekdays | After School**

School is in full swing, and so is programming for school-aged patrons! Head over to the library after school (and on early out days) for a variety of fun activities from our programming team. Activities range from STEAM days for teens to elementary activity days for kids. Check out our events calendar for a complete list of dates.

### Computer Skills Assistance with Goodwill of the Heartland

**Every other Monday | 1-3 p.m.**

Looking to learn some basic computer skills? Need help with making an online appointment or creating a resume? Visit our second-floor computer lab every other Monday to get your computer questions answered – no appointment required! Check out our events calendar for a complete list of dates.

Find a full calendar of programs at events at [marionpubliclibrary.org/events](http://marionpubliclibrary.org/events).

### Holiday Hours

Nov. 22, Thanksgiving Eve | 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
 Nov. 23, Thanksgiving | Closed  
 Nov. 24, Day After Thanksgiving | Closed  
 Dec. 24, Christmas Eve | Closed  
 Dec. 25, Christmas Day | Closed  
 Dec. 31, New Year's Eve | Closed  
 Jan. 1, New Year's Day | Closed

### Subscribe to MPL Monthly News!

Don't miss out on what's new at the Marion Public Library! Sign up for the library's newsletter – filled with programs, library resources and more – sent to your inbox every month. Visit [www.marionpubliclibrary.org/newsletter](http://www.marionpubliclibrary.org/newsletter) or scan the QR code to subscribe.





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## 2023-2024 Upcoming Events Listing

### Small Business Saturday

**Saturday | Nov. 25 | Uptown Marion**

The Uptown Marion District invites you to kick off the holiday shopping season with Small Business Saturday. Uptown Marion Main Street and Marion Chamber of Commerce will host a shopping event between 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

### Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk

*presented by Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners \**

**Friday | Dec. 1 | Uptown Marion**

Visit Santa & Mrs. Claus, enjoy traditional holiday activities and visit shops filled with one-of-a-kind, unique goods from 4-8 p.m.

### Coffeehouse Nights

**Fridays | Dec. 1, Feb. 2, March 1, April 5 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center**

These musical performances feature talented local acoustic artists in a relaxed coffeehouse-type atmosphere. Admission is free and doors open at 6:30 p.m. with music starting at 7 p.m. Coffee will be available for purchase.

Dec. 1: Cedar County Cobras

Feb. 2: Roots of Rhythm

March 1: Irish Jam

April 5: Deep Dish Divas

### Safety Matters

**Wednesday | Dec. 6 | Marion Fire Station No. 1**

Take advantage of the final Safety Matters program of the year hosted by the Marion Fire Department for older adults and their families. Insurance and Investment Fraud Protection is this month's topic. The program begins at noon.

### Bingo Nights

**Fridays | Dec. 8, Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 8, April 12 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center**

Join us for bingo! Doors open at 6 p.m., with bingo beginning at 6:30 p.m. Games will be played for \$0.25 per card, per game.

### Light the Night Holiday Lights Tour

**Dec. 11-29 | Throughout Marion**

Tis the season...for Christmas lights! We are in search of holiday light displays in Marion and need your help. Simply submit your home address, and we will compile a list so everyone can drive around and enjoy. A great family-friendly activity to enjoy during the holiday season!

### Holiday Lights Bingo

**Dec. 11-29 | Throughout Marion**

Join the fun and participate in the Light the Night Holiday Lights Bingo! Each bingo will equate to an entry into a drawing for prizes (max five bingos/entries per person on a single card). Bingo sheets will be available by Dec. 11.

### Great Candy Cane Hunt

**Beginning Dec. 12 | Marion Parks**

Get active and have a little fun searching for oversized candy canes hidden throughout Marion parks. Each candy cane contains an official "Great Candy Cane Hunt" tag along with a small prize from the Marion Parks and Recreation Department. Participants can keep the candy cane and enjoy the prize on behalf of the department. Post your finds on the Marion Parks and Recreation Department's "Great Candy Cane Hunt" Facebook event page. Hunt continues until all candy canes have been found.

### Principled Leadership from the Road Less Traveled with Dr. David Griffin

**Monday | Jan. 29 | Marion Public Library**

The Marion Fire Department is pleased to bring Dr. David Griffin, assistant chief of administration for the Charleston Fire Department in Charleston, SC and highly regarded speaker and instructor, to Marion. Dr. Griffin will take attendees on a descriptive journey of seven foundational leadership characteristics using interactive team-building activities. Attend to see how this concept can improve your organization and team dramatically.

### Red Cedar Chamber Music

**Saturday | Feb. 12 | Marion Public Library**

Red Cedar Chamber Music is a Cultural Leadership Partner in the State of Iowa. Each season, the group brings nearly 100 enlightening and entertaining performances to audiences in Eastern Iowa and beyond. The free concert begins at noon.

### Marion ICE

*Sponsored by Iowa Appliance Center and LG Home Appliances*

**Saturday | Feb. 17 | Uptown Marion**

Watch a live ice-sculpting demonstration, plus enjoy some cold weather friendly games. There will be plenty of photo ops with the lit-up sculptures. Before or after you stop by the event, be sure to visit Uptown Marion for a bite to eat. The event goes from 4-7 p.m.

\*Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners include Farmers State Bank, ImOn Communications, MercyCare Community Physicians, Summit Pointe Senior Living and Z102.9 with support from the Marion Hotel/Motel Grant Program.