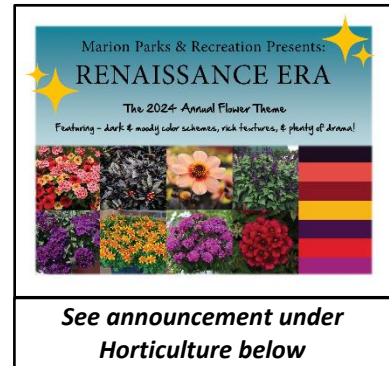


GENERAL DEPARTMENT UPDATES

National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) Directors School: Staashelm was selected to attend the two-year NRPA's Directors School. He had the opportunity to join other park and recreation professionals across the country to learn, network, and collaborate best practices, trends, and opportunities in the parks and recreation field and the role of a director in those aspects.



Iowa Parks & Recreation (IPRA) Spring Conference: Multiple



staff members attended the Iowa Parks and Recreation Spring Conference in Des Moines. The four-day event consisted of daily educational sessions, an exhibit hall with vendors from across the Midwest, and networking opportunities with agencies across the state. At the Best of the Best Awards Ceremony, the Monarch Research Project received the Outstanding Service Club award from our nomination. (photo left)

PROJECTS

Butterfield Playground Reconstruction: The old playground structures and wood chips were removed at Butterfield Park to prepare for a new installation. Engineering staff assisted with laying out the footprint and setting the grade for the new equipment. Subgrade for the playground and the border sidewalks was dug. The contractor arrived and completed the installation. The play area will remain closed until the sidewalk is completed in May.

Peg Pierce Softball Complex Improvements: Renovations began in the restrooms and included repairing or replacing the toilets, urinals, and sinks. The lighting was updated to LED fixtures to help brighten up the rooms. New towel dispensers were installed at an easier height for children to reach. Soap dispensers were also lowered for this reason. Ceiling damage was repaired and repainted and as well as touch up spots on the walls. (photo right)



Thomas Park Sand Volleyball: A location in Thomas Park was selected for two full sized sand volleyball courts. Work began by laying out the four corners to start digging the subgrade. Nets and poles have been ordered. Recreation programming activities will begin in mid-summer.



Central Plaza Groundbreaking: Parks staff joined Chamber ambassadors, City leaders, and community donors and partners for the Central Plaza groundbreaking at City Square Park on March 28. This is a grand project that is the heart of the community, featuring an updated Depot facility, splash pad, playground, and a refrigerated ice-loop. (photo left)



Indian Creek Trail Ribbon Cutting: A ribbon cutting was held March 25 for the 2-mile, 10-foot wide, hard surface trail which runs along Indian Creek, from Boyson Trail to Tower Terrace Road. This section of the trail provides a scenic pedestrian trail and covers a gap in which you can ride a bike from Lowe Park to Waldo's Rock Park just utilizing urban trails. (photo left)

Marion Reforestation Plan: A rough draft of the Urban Reforestation Master Plan has been shared for staff and committee review. Edits will be made, and the final presentation is expected in late April or early May.

PARKS

Rental Room Improvements: Fourteen monitors were installed at the Lowe Arts & Environment building and the Thomas Park Safe Room. These will be utilized by renters for presentations and to display City promotional and sponsorship information. (photo right)



Low Community Gardens: The Community Gardens were tilled and marked out for the year. Water will be turned on when temperatures are consistently above freezing.



Low Ball Diamonds: Games begin April 13 at the Lowe Ball Diamonds. Prepping for the first games include moving and measuring bases, removing excess material, and grooming diamonds. (photo left)

Horticulture: Designs and orders were finalized for spring perennial planting projects; a total of 495 shrubs and perennials were ordered for spring installation. These projects include filling in the newly renovated Thomas Park entry sign bed and planting the new beds on the NW corner of the Lowe Arts & Environment building. Both plantings incorporate a mix of ornamental and native perennials to extend bloom time and seasonal interest while also providing environmental benefits to wildlife and pollinators. Planting for these projects is expected to start in late April. The preliminary designs were also completed for new beds at Prairie Hill Park and incorporate natives and cultivars of natives which are suited to a full sun, but wet planting site.

The Adopt-a-Flowerbed program is up and running for the season (orientation meeting April 10) with most volunteers returning from last year! Additional applications have been coming in and flowerbed assignments are being finalized before the meeting. Looking forward to another successful volunteer season.

Planning has begun for the 3rd Annual Migratory Bird & Arbor Day Celebration on May 11. Partners and layout will be finalized during April.

Announcement: With help from the Chamber, the name for the 2024 Annual Flower Theme has been locked in! Marion Parks and Recreation presents: **Renaissance Era!** The theme incorporates dark, gem-toned colors and rich textures, but the name is a nod to pop culture and the continued 'renaissance' of our Uptown. The first round of annual plugs arrived March 27 and

will be grown by the Master Gardeners at the Lowe Greenhouse, with the rest of the annuals being delivered in May. Be on the lookout come mid to late May for annual installations!

URBAN FORESTRY

Community Outreach: A fruit tree pruning workshop was hosted at the Lowe demonstration orchard in partnership with Linn County Master Gardeners and Trees Forever. The event lasted two hours on a Saturday morning with over 40 people attending.

Debris Clean-up: Moser Grinding (Nevada, IA) completed grinding logs stored near Hanna Park. The clean chip material is being hauled offsite. The logs came from derecho and Ash tree removals.

Kammiller Tree Service completed storm debris clearance at the small, wooded city property at Wallace Street and Tower Terrace Road. Damaged trees and wood materials were cleared off the site for future use.

Creating Standards: City Departments are working together to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for storm water best management practices. This will include a description of city maintenance and level of work expectations for basins, wetlands, natural areas, right-of-way areas, etc. within the city.

Forestry Operations: Progress on the CDBG-DR funding release continues. The environmental study has been completed and the information must be posted publicly for 14 days to allow for public comment. Once this deadline has expired the procurement process can begin.

Staff are working on adolescent tree pruning, shoring up support tubes, and mulching. Pruning Oak and Elm trees during the winter season is done to avoid disease transmission.

Prairie Maintenance: Prescribed burns were completed at Lowe Park during spring break to complete maintenance on sensitive areas due to the close vicinity of the schools. Students were not present due to the scheduled closure. Grounds staff and Urban Forestry staff then teamed up to remove and chemically treat volunteer trees throughout the prairie at Lowe Park. (photo right)



CEMETERY

OAK SHADE CEMETERY	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024
Spaces sold	6	1	0
Burials	6	2	1

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

CODE COMPLIANCE	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024
New Complaints	70	3	2
Resolved Complaints	65	3	0
Active Complaints	35	37	24

COMPLAINT TYPE	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024
Tree – Right of Way	6	1	1
Tree – Private Property	2	1	1
Sidewalk Obstruction	0	0	0
Sidewalk Not Cleared (Snow or Ice)	62	1	0
Tall Grass and Weeds	0	0	0
Parks Misc	0	0	0
TOTAL	70	3	2

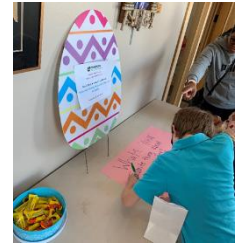
RECREATION

Spring Break Camp: Camps during Spring Break (March 11 to 14) were held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily. The camps follow a similar schedule of activities each day, including crafts, small group games, active large group games, snack time, and a movie. Activities change each day and are based on different themes, such as sports, animals, nature, etc. A representative from the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art came on Wednesday to lead a craft project and was a good addition to the camp. (Next year, guest instructors will be scheduled every day of the camp.) The weather was great, so the kids were able to go outside for games of kickball, a walk to the playground, and time outdoors. There were 58 kindergarten through 5th grade participants. (photos right)



Eggstraordinary Egg Hunt: The annual Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt at Lowe Park was held March 22. The event is always a hit with the kids and parents. The children did easter themed crafts and coloring sheets. Once the sun set and it was dark outside, Recreation staff hid 1,000 eggs on the Lowe Park lawn in the back of the building. YES, there was even snow to make the hunt more exciting! (photo left)

Breakfast with the Bunny: This event, featuring a visit from the Easter Bunny, was held March 23 with 19 kids, plus their families at the Arts & Environment Center. The morning started with coloring sheets and crafts (a Bunny wind-up toy and a bunny mask). For the Scavenger Hunt Challenge, Easter Egg cutouts are scattered throughout the building with a station activity at each one. Children and their families complete the challenge to collect a piece of candy. Activities included a mini egg hunt, a photo op with the Bunny, an Easter crossword, and more. The Bunny costume is shared between us and Hiawatha Parks & Recreation. (photo left & right)



BINGO Night: This month's BINGO Night was on March 8, and was well attended with over 100 people coming out to play. There is one more BINGO Night this spring on April 12 in the Oaks Room with games played from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Swim Lessons: Registration for swim lessons in 2024 began March 5. On the very first day, 591 lessons were signed up for, with 6 receiving financial assistance.

Seasonal Employees: Recreation staff have been busy filling all the needed seasonal positions to serve the community from Spring to Fall. There will be 7 hired for Lowe Concessions, 35 hired as lifeguards/leadership positions at the pool, 4 pool cashiers, and 5 swim assistants.

ARTS COUNCIL

Coffee House Night: Coffee House Night on March 1 featured Irish Jam and was enjoyed by 110 attendees. The next event is April 5, with Deep Dish Divas playing.

Picnic on the Prairie: Musical acts have been secured for this season's Picnic on the Prairie. Funk Stop will perform in June, and Bear Cat Pickers in August.

