



Festival of Lights celebration is Sept. 20

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City Services Expo page 10



the city of aurora, illinois - www.aurora-il.org

aurora *borealis*

Public safety up; crime down in Aurora

Crime continued to drop significantly in Aurora during the first six months of 2008, and the Aurora Police Department reports there have been no homicides this year.

Violent crime – murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault/battery – decreased 15.58 percent in the first six months of 2008 compared to the same period last year. Property crimes – burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson – dipped 3.53 percent.

These latest numbers come on the heels of 2007 statistics that showed the lowest number of reported crimes in Aurora in 22 years.

“Diligence of officers, partnerships with law enforcement agencies and citizen involvement are the most important tools in improving community safety.”

Chief of Police Greg Thomas

Chief of Police Greg Thomas connected the drop in crime to the diligence of Aurora Police Officers, partnerships with federal, state and county law enforcement agencies and increased community awareness and involvement.

“These factors, I feel, are the most important tools we’ve used in improving the safety of our community,” Thomas said. “I would caution, however, that neither the police nor the citizens we serve can rest on our laurels. We all must continue to be vigilant in the fight against crime, especially as the economy continues to challenge many of our residents.”

Six of the eight major crime categories showed impressive decreases from June 30, 2007 through June 30, 2008. Aurora has not had a homicide since December 24, 2007.

Robberies were down 23.75 percent, aggravated assaults/batteries dipped 13.23 percent, and criminal sexual assault was even. Property crime statistics showed motor vehicle thefts down 13.39 percent, burglaries down 9.63 percent, and thefts down 1.56 percent. The only increase was arson, which went from nine in the first six months of 2007 to 17 this year.

AUTUMN
2008

Aurora repeats as ‘top 100’ city

The City of Lights has once again been named one of America’s best places to live by *Money* magazine.

The August edition of the magazine ranks Aurora as one of the top 100 small cities in which to live.

To determine America’s best places to live, *Money* considers such data as housing affordability, job

growth, education quality, public safety and recreational opportunities.

“For the second time in a row, Aurora is getting the national recognition it deserves,” said Mayor Tom Weisner.

Money rates small cities (population 50,000 to 300,000) every other year.

Aurora was ranked in the top 100 for the first time in 2006.

continued on page 8



An antique truck passes in front of The Paramount Theatre during Aurora’s Independence Day parade

Splish splash! McCarty Park has opening bash

Following a complete renovation, Aurora's oldest park celebrated its grand reopening on July 18.

Mayor Tom Weisner, State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia (D-Aurora) and Second Ward Alderman Juany Garza cooled off in the waters of the new interactive fountain to the delight of the children making the inaugural splashes.



From left, State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, Mayor Tom Weisner and Ald. Juany Garza take a dip in the fountain at McCarty Park

Hundreds of residents attended the opening of the city's downtown gateway park. Improvements to the park totaled \$700,000 and were paid for with second ward funds, capital improvement funds, casino gaming funds and Community Development Block Grant and Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity allotments.

Garza said she was particularly grateful for the hard work the Second Ward Committee and the neighborhood put into planning the park, and the city for making it a reality. "I would like to thank all the city departments, elected officials and especially Mayor Weisner, who understood how important this park is to this ward and this neighborhood," she said.

Longtime Aurora resident Chapa LaVia said she knew that the park's history coupled with its location made its renovation a priority.
(continued on page 8)

TRANSFORMING AURORA

a message from Mayor Tom Weisner

Around this time each year, I wonder how the summer could have flown by so quickly. Here we are again, with fall approaching and children and adults getting back into more predictable school, sports and work activities.

Speaking of activities, this newsletter is packed with opportunities for families to have fun together. The very first Aurora ArtWalk is set for Friday Sept. 12 on Stolp Island. The Aurora Public Library is sponsoring a cooking demonstration Sept. 13 with TV Chef Rick Bayless, with tickets for the whole family available at all library locations, including the Bookmobile. The Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board is hosting Fiesta de Luces on Sept. 20. The last few Saturday Farmers Markets at the Aurora Transportation Center are taking place, and the Phillips Park Fall Festival is Sept. 27. All these events are free, as are two City Services Expos on Oct. 4 and Oct. 11, where residents will receive complimentary Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs).

One thing that we can never fool ourselves into thinking is "free" is our freedom

as Americans. I invite you to attend the Veterans Day Parade with me on Tuesday, Nov. 11 to thank veterans who have served their country in the past and to remember those currently serving overseas.

Also as Americans, we have the freedom to express our opinions. I hope each reader of this newsletter who will feel the impact of more and longer freight trains on the EJ&E rail line on the city's east side will put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and make their opinions known about the sale of the railway to Canadian National. There is lots of information on the subject on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter, and an opportunity to speak on Sept. 9 at West Aurora High School.

See you on Veterans Day and also at other events this fall. 🌸



**HONORING
ALL WHO
SERVED**

Veterans Day Parade Tuesday, November 11th

**10:15 a.m. Step -Off
Benton and Water**

**10:30 a.m. Ceremony
GAR Museum**



Aurora police send message through ‘First Degree Burn’

By Dan Ferrelli

Public Information Officer, Aurora Police Department

A loud, clear message from the Aurora Police has been resonating throughout the community. It has been warning criminals—especially those involved in street gangs—that they will eventually be caught and held accountable for their actions.

“An equally clear message is being sent to crime victims and their families,” said Chief of Police Greg Thomas. “We will never forget you and will do everything we can to assure that justice is served.”

Earlier this year, 22 murder cases in which 31 people were charged with 179 total counts of first degree murder in “Operation First Degree Burn” began to wind their way through the justice system. The multi-agency operation in June, 2007, resulted in charges being lodged in gang-related murder cases dating as far back as 1989.

“First Degree Burn” demonstrated the results of years of close teamwork between the Aurora Police and federal agencies including the FBI, ATF, and DEA. Since 2002, more than 100 gang members have been charged in federal weapons and narcotics conspiracy cases. Several county and municipal law enforcement agencies, along with the Illinois State Police, assisted in the operations.

“Federal statutes call for much more severe penalties than cases prosecuted under state law,” Thomas explained. “Those arrested in the gang sweeps knew that if they wanted to receive lighter sentences, they would have to give up details of murders and other crimes of which they had knowledge. We compiled all that information and, working with Kane County State’s Attorney John Barsanti, were able to lodge the murder charges in ‘First Degree Burn.’”

Thomas said the ongoing sweeps and “Operation First Degree Burn” both play major roles in Aurora’s continuing crime drop. “The work with our federal partners has thrown the hierarchy of several street gangs into disarray by putting so many leaders behind bars,” the chief said. “We’ve also demonstrated to current gang members that despite what they once believed, their fellow gang members will break their code of silence in order to receive lighter penalties. This has created an atmosphere of distrust, so they’re more hesitant to get involved in criminal activity.”

In 2007, Aurora’s reported crime was at its lowest point in 22 years and through the first six months of 2008, violent crime decreased 15.58 percent, property crime was down 3.53 percent, and shootings dipped 29.4 percent over the same period last year. Thomas also credited the outstanding work of all Aurora police officers and partnerships the department has formed with the community for the crime decreases.

As of early August, eight defendants charged in “First Degree Burn” have so far been tried. Four have been convicted, two cases were dismissed, and two were acquitted. The dismissed charges could be re-filed in the future.

Gang-related homicides are not the only cold cases being met with success. In early summer, charges were lodged in the 1991 domestic-related murder of Maria Montano; and in August, the 1981 murder of 20-year-old Cheryl Lynn Hall was solved. The motive for the Hall murder remains unclear.

HondaJet Midwest ‘lands’ at Aurora Airport

HondaJet Midwest, a sales and service representative for Honda Aircraft Company, Inc., announced this summer that the Aurora Municipal Airport will be home to the HondaJet Sales and Service facility servicing the Midwestern United States.

The future Aurora facility is one of five U.S. dealership locations HondaJet has chosen. The others will be in Salt Lake City, Tallahassee, Fla., Phoenix and Albany, N.Y.

“Aurora is proud to join these four cities as part of the U.S. sales and service infrastructure of HondaJet,” Mayor Tom Weisner said. “Aurora is moving forward on many fronts, and because of HondaJet’s wise choice of location as well as the recent arrival of Joliet Avionics Air Center, the Aurora Municipal Airport is becoming the airport of choice for growing businesses throughout the Midwest.”

John Lowe, president of HondaJet Midwest, said the company “looked at (airports in) Wisconsin and Indiana, but kept coming back to the Aurora airport.” Don Jay, director of special projects for HondaJet, said Joliet Avionics Air Center’s commitment to moving to the Aurora airport from the DuPage County Airport in West Chicago also influenced the company’s decision to choose Aurora. Joliet Avionics played host to the announcement in its hangar at the Aurora airport.

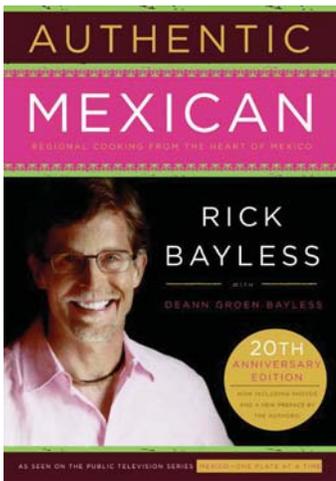
Lowe also praised Airport Director Bob Rieser, whom he said “made it as smooth as possible for us to pick Aurora.”



HondaJet Midwest President John Lowe shows a rendering of the future Aurora HondaJet facility

The facility is expected to be complete in September or October 2010, with jet deliveries to be made soon afterward. All major assembly and testing of the prototype HondaJet has been conducted at the company’s North Carolina facility that opened in 2001 as an extension of Honda’s global research and development operations.

The \$8.5 million Aurora facility will feature a large hangar for service operations and will provide customer sales and service support in the light jet class. In its initial phase, Honda plans to hire 10 to 15 people.



September fiestas planned to celebrate Hispanic heritage

Bayless demo, festival kick off fall fun

The Aurora Public Library presents an afternoon of Mexican cooking with chefs Rick Bayless and Dudley Nieto at the Paramount Theatre on Sept. 13 and the city's Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board presents Fiesta de Luces (Festival of Lights) on Sept. 20.

Chefs at the Paramount:

Chicago chef, restaurateur, cookbook author and television personality Rick Bayless will appear at Aurora's Paramount Theatre on Sept. 13 for a cooking demonstration, tasting and book signing.

The event will begin at 1 p.m. when Chicago chef Dudley Nieto takes the stage to speak about regional differences in Mexican cooking. Nieto is preparing to open Eivissa, a tapas and sangria restaurant, in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood this fall.

Bayless, star of public television's Mexico – One Plate at a Time, will demonstrate his trademark Mexican cooking peppered with stories about the dishes he is preparing, his travels to Mexico, and the history behind the traditional Mexican recipes he loves.

Two types of tickets are available.

For \$12, audience members will receive preferred seating and a sample taste. Call the Paramount Theatre's box office at 630-896-6666 to secure a ticket. Limited seats/tastings are available.

Free tickets (four per person) may be picked up at any of the Aurora Public Library locations or in the Bookmobile. Seats will be reserved, but the recipe sample will not be included. The library locations are: Main, 1 E. Benton St.; Eola Road Branch, 555 S. Eola Road; and West Branch, 233 S. Constitution Drive. Check the library's Web site, www.aurora.lib.il.us, for the Bookmobile schedule.

Bayless will conduct a book signing following the demonstration. Two cookbooks, *Mexican Everyday* and *Authentic Mexican: Regional Cooking from the Heart of Mexico*, will be for sale in the Paramount Theatre's Grand Gallery.

Call 630-264-3049 or 630-264-4123 for more information.

Fiesta de Luces:

The Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board will host Fiesta de Luces (Festival of Lights) from 2 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 20 at the Aurora Transportation Center's Spring Street and Lincoln Avenue lot. Grammy award winners Angel Melendez & the 911 Mambo Orchestra will headline the event. The group will perform at 5:30 and 6:40 p.m.

The event is held to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, which includes the Festivals of Independence from Spain by Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua.

A favorite of the event, the Parade of Nations, will begin at 2:45 p.m. Twenty-one children will be featured in costumes of Latin nations.

A "Wall of Memories" will display photos of the first Hispanic settlers of Aurora in the 1920s. The National Museum of Mexican Art will facilitate the creation of alebrijes (papier-mache animals), and painter Juan Flores will create murals throughout the day.

Schedule of Events:

2 p.m. – Star Spangled Banner sung by 2004 Aurora Idol Alex Bennefield; Welcome by Mayor Tom Weisner; Announcements

2:15 p.m. – Janet Mendoza

2:45 p.m. – Parade of Nations

3:15 p.m. – Salsa competition

4 p.m. – Jibarito

4:45 p.m. – Salsa competition

5:30 p.m. – Angel Melendez & the 911 Mambo Orchestra

6:20 p.m. – Dance competition winners announced

6:40 p.m. – Angel Melendez & the 911 Mambo Orchestra

Children's Activities:

Day of the Dead mask decorating

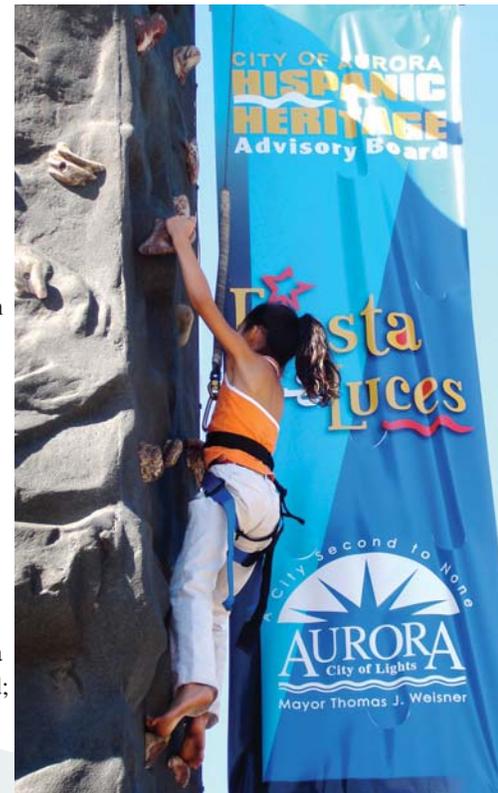
Family tree or ancestral flag craft

Pinata story and activity every one-half hour

Latin rhythms craft (make a rain stick or maracas)

Alebrijes class (for ages 8 to 12; two sessions offered)

For information, call Liz DeLeon at the Mayor's Office of Special Events, 630-844-4731.





Free
Fun for the
Whole Family

Phillips Park

Fall Festival 2008

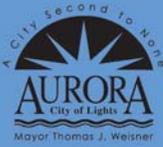
Saturday, September 27
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Enjoy a day filled with activities, attractions and fun for the whole family!

Pony Rides	Fire Trucks	Super Slide
Petting Zoo	Caricatures	Jumping Castle
Stiltwalker	Face Painting	Bungee Jump
Hay Rides	Scratch Art	Pumpkin Painting

Live Entertainment

11 a.m. Truly Remarkable Loon
12 p.m. Dave Rudolf
1 p.m. Thaddeus Rex
2 p.m. Magic by Randy



A City Second to None
AURORA
 City of Lights
 Mayor Thomas J. Weisner

Presented by
AURORA
 Mayor's Office Of Special Events
 630-264-INFO
 www.aurora-il.org



Get to Farmers Market before end of season

Residents who haven't had the chance to make it out to the Farmers Market still have through Sept. 27 to make a visit to this popular Saturday morning activity.

The market, located at the Aurora Transportation Center, runs from 7 a.m. to noon Saturdays through Sept. 27. It features family farms, Dick's Mini Donuts, Wurst Kitchen bratwurst, breakfast burritos and tacos from Cazadores Restaurant, a large seasonal wine selection from the Sycamore Winery, Great Harvest Bread Company, soy candles, natural bath products, potpourri, wind winders, wine charms, bottle art and custom made outdoor and yard games.

Shoppers also will find more than 40 varieties of regional and artisan cheeses along with free-range eggs, butter, jams, jellies, dressings, salsa, relishes, pickled products, oils, vinegars, fresh cut flowers, perennials, annuals, hanging baskets,

handcrafted birdhouses, benches, concrete lawn decorations, stepping stones, bird feeders, cooking accessories, gourmet mixes and more!

Provena Mercy Medical Center is on site weekly for free blood pressure screenings and diabetes risk assessments, while The Fox Valley Marine League is raising funds for care packages as part of the "Support Our Troops" group.

The City of Aurora also hosted two weekday markets this year that closed at the end of August. Farmers Market East was held Tuesdays at Bethany of Fox Valley United Methodist Church. Farmers Market West was held Wednesdays at West Aurora Plaza.

About 3,000 people attend the three markets weekly.

For further details contact the Mayor's Office of Special Events at 630-844-4731 or visit the city Web site at www.aurora-il.org and go to Special Events.

Saturdays

Through September 27

7 a.m. - Noon

Aurora Transportation Center - Route 25
 233 N. Broadway

What is an ArtWalk?

EDGY
 SURPRISING
 FRIENDLY
 INVITING
 PERSONAL
 ENGAGING
 INSPIRING
 DIVERSE

The first Aurora ArtWalk is set for 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12, on Stolp Island in downtown Aurora.

The ArtWalk will feature artists of many kinds – photographers, sculptors, musicians, painters and performers – in a concentrated area of downtown Aurora to create an atmosphere of creativity and excitement. Two prizes will be awarded based on votes by attendees: one for visual arts and one for performing arts.

The event is free and includes food, beer and wine. Artwork, books and CDs will be available for purchase.

The ArtWalk will show the public what Aurora artists have to offer and show artists what downtown Aurora has to offer them. The ArtWalk is being planned and organized by Cultural Creatives, an ad-hoc group of downtown artists, businesses and property owners with a common interest in encouraging an arts-friendly environment.

Some of the featured artists in the ArtWalk are painter Cass Alexander, photographers from Studio 5, charcoal artist Becky Barie and sculptor Lane Allen. For a complete list of contributing artists and more information, go to www.auroraartwalk.com.

A message from TRAC

Coalition against Canadian National gaining momentum

This is a pivotal time in our fight against the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National (CN) Railway.

Aurora has taken a leadership role in this fight. Things are happening because people are choosing to get involved. While we continue to break barriers and set new precedents in opposing this acquisition, we realize that a challenging road lies ahead.

This is an uphill battle, but legislators have responded and we are taking steps toward success. Because of our vocal and constant opposition, our unity against CN's plans is stronger than ever and momentum is on our side. A broader coalition has emerged called The Regional Answer to Canadian National (TRAC), which represents more than 1.5 million residents from Waukegan to Northwest Indiana. September is a critical month as the Surface Transportation Board (STB) is hosting a round of public hearings to provide information and to get citizen input. Once again we are hoping for a record turnout to send a strong message to the STB and Congress that this transaction must not be approved. This is the only way we can continue our fight against CN's plans, which will negatively impact the safety, economic vitality and environment of our communities.

A QUICK RECAP:

We first learned of CN's plans to purchase the EJ&E from an article in Crain's Chicago Business. This proved to be a glimpse into the future of how CN planned to communicate with and involve communities. We decided early on that we would not allow a foreign corporation with only self-serving interests to railroad our communities. We quickly began a grassroots community outreach campaign to inform residents, businesses, environmental groups, transportation planning agencies and federal regulators about the negative implications associated with CN's proposal. Thanks to our residents, the STB, the government body with jurisdiction over rail transactions, was flooded with thousands of letters and written testimony in opposition to the proposed transaction. We were victorious in our request that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed before the STB issues a final determination on CN's current proposal, which if approved, could be subject to numerous contingencies.



WHERE WE ARE TODAY:

The Draft EIS was released July 25 and reinforced the level of concern that opponents of the merger have expressed since day one. This transaction has serious environmental, safety and economic implications, and it reinforces our belief that the sole beneficiary of this deal is CN. In fact, the Draft EIS suggests that more than \$2 billion of our tax dollars be used to fund necessary mitigation to make CN's proposal work. That's more than six times the amount CN is willing to pay to purchase the EJ&E.

Some other concerns with the Draft EIS include:

- The total number of train accidents on the EJ&E are projected to increase by 28 percent
- The number of "major key routes (segments with more than 20,000 carloads annually)" for transporting hazardous materials will increase from two to 14
- Given the increased train traffic on the EJ&E, there is an increased risk for pedestrian and bicycle accidents, in addition to train vs. car collisions
- Fire and emergency medical service providers along the EJ&E line will experience "substantial effects" including delayed response times
- The EIS indicated that the EJ&E line will see an increase in travel patterns, travel times, and accessibility in many communities that will be negatively impacted
- Residential property values will likely decrease for homes within 250 feet of the EJ&E
- There will be an increase in annual energy use and diesel fuel by trains and trucks idling at grade crossings. This amounts to 639,442 gallons of diesel fuel and an additional 84,000 gallons of gasoline that will be wasted annually by cars stuck at crossings by 2015
- Eighteen forest preserves will be negatively impacted, as well as two endangered species and approximately 50 state-listed threatened and endangered species along the EJ&E line
- Parks in close proximity to the EJ&E will experience increased levels of noise and vibration in addition to decreased air quality

CONGRESS TAKES NOTICE:

There are two major milestones that deserve notice. First, as the result of our efforts, federal legislation was introduced by the chairman of the U.S. House Transportation Committee in July that would change the criteria with which railroad acquisitions are approved. This important legislation has drawn bipartisan support and would require the STB to consider the effects of rail expansion to local communities and taxpayers as part of its core mission. The legislation is called Taking Responsible Action for Community Safety (TRACS) and for the first time puts people before freight. It specifically says that if the adverse impact to communities outweighs the proposed benefits to commerce

and competitiveness, then the STB would be required to mitigate or reject the transaction.

The second event was a Congressional Field Hearing hosted by members of the Illinois and Indiana delegation on August 5. Although CN was invited to attend and testify, the railway declined and yet again showed its disregard and disrespect for the federal approval process and our concerns. Mayor Tom Weisner and Barrington Village President Karen Darch were invited to testify as co-chairs of TRAC. TRAC represents the voices of more than 40 communities throughout the collar counties and northwest Indiana.

What you can do: a checklist



Attend the local STB meeting

A series of eight public hearings scheduled to discuss the Draft EIS and to gather oral testimony from residents have been ongoing since August. It is of paramount importance that citizens come out to provide the STB with feedback. The media, Congress and the STB have taken notice that there have been a record number of written comments to the STB as well as overwhelming turnout at previous public meetings, which is a credit to citizen commitment to preserving the safety, environmental and economic stability of our community. However, they will be looking to these hearings as an indicator of the breadth of opposition among communities throughout the affected region. Although the EIS made some important findings, there are a lot of areas that need further examination. That's why we need your participation.

Tuesday, Sept. 9

**4 to 6 p.m., open house
6 to 9 p.m., public meeting
West Aurora High School
1201 W. New York St.
Aurora, IL 60506**

**(Located west of downtown Aurora on
W. New York St. between N. Highland Ave.
and N. Randall Rd.)**

Speaker registration will be determined on a first come-first serve basis by calling the hotline to preregister in advance (1-800-347-0689) or at the sign-in tables the day of the public meeting. Each speaker will be allocated up to three minutes to present his or her comments. Court reporters will be available at the public meetings for those who wish to dictate their comments in a more informal setting.



Submit comments to the Surface Transportation Board

You as an affected resident are encouraged to submit a public comment by September 30. Every member of your household should write a letter that gives specific ways the acquisition will impact their lives.

Reference STB Finance Docket No. 35087. You may e-mail the letter or send it U.S. mail.

Written comments should be mailed to:
Phillis Johnson-Ball
STB Finance Docket No. 35087
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Comments also can be filed electronically on the Board's Web site, <http://www.stb.dot.gov>, by clicking on the "E-FILING" link.

Please refer to STB Finance Docket No. 35087.

Comments may also be recorded at any time during the comment period on the project hotline: 1-800-347-0689.



Write your legislators

Urge them to take immediate action to prevent increased rail traffic on the EJ&E. A sample letter can be found on the city of Aurora's Web site: www.aurora-il.org.

The Honorable Judy Biggert
United States Congress
1034 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Foster
United States Congress
2034 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515



Stay informed and involved

Share this information with family, friends and neighbors.

Sign up to receive e-news on the city's Web site, www.aurora-il.org

Visit www.FightRailCongestion.com for more information.

The following aldermen in affected wards welcome your thoughts and comments:



Rick Mervine, Ward 8
AldermanMervine@aol.com, 630-844-3619



Leroy Keith, Ward 9
AldermanKeith@aol.com, 630-375-9375



Lynda Elmore, Ward 10
LDElmore@aol.com, 630-898-0403

City employees take part in health department exercise

The Kane County Health Department, along with volunteers from The City of Aurora's Community Services Department and other agencies, conducted a public health emergency exercise simulating an aerosolized anthrax attack on July 24.



Dan Barreiro, director of Community Services, third from left, talks with Kane County Health Department officials about the public health emergency exercise

The exercise at East Aurora High School tested emergency response plans in place to distribute medication to all residents of Kane County in the event of a public health threat. Residents were asked to role-play people who had been exposed to anthrax.

Volunteers manned stations to welcome, register, question and dispense medication to affected persons.

The health department conducted a similar exercise at South Elgin High

School on the same day. According to Kane County Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert, the drills helped test plans to protect Kane County residents. "In the event of an actual release of anthrax, our goal is to be able to provide medicine to all those who need it," he said.

Aurora repeats as 'top 100' city, continued from page 1

Aurora Economic Development Director Sherman Jenkins said the *Money* recognition can have a positive impact on future investment. "Aurora remains a prime destination for business growth and development," Jenkins said. "This recognition just confirms what many developers and businesses have acknowledged for years."

"Great things began happening in Aurora a couple years ago, and *Money* magazine sat up and took notice," Weisner said. "Credit goes to our city council, whose members work tirelessly to make this a great place to live and work, as well as to our employees, business owners, community groups, schools and citizens. People don't spend time and energy improving their communities because they think they will receive an award, but national recognition is always a bonus. It is a well-deserved honor for our entire community."

Four other Illinois cities made the list of best small cities: Naperville, Bolingbrook, Wheaton and Orland Park.

Splish splash! McCarty Park has opening bash, continued from page 2

"Over the past few months, I have watched as McCarty Park has been totally revitalized, and I look forward to the reenergizing that will occur now that the park is being reopened," she said.

New amenities include the interactive fountain, new entryways, a decorative wrought-iron fence, pergola, drinking fountains for people and pets, and landscaping.

Aurora's founders, Samuel and Joseph McCarty, set aside land for the park in the original 1835 plat map of Aurora (then known as McCarty Mills).

"It's an urban park in a high-density area where citizens can go for a little respite," said Jim Pilmer, Aurora's director of parks and recreation. "One of the best things about it is open space."

The park is located at 350 E. Galena Blvd.

Kane visitor spending ranks in Illinois top five

Tourist spending is increasing in Kane County, with visitors spending almost \$400 million in 2007. That's a 6.5 percent increase from 2006, and puts Kane County fifth in the Illinois rankings for visitor spending. The first four places went to Cook, DuPage, Lake and Will counties.

"To be ranked in the top five, ahead of Sangamon and Winnebago counties, is unbelievable," said Aurora Area Convention & Visitors Bureau president Sue Vos.

The top-attended attraction in Kane County for 2007 was Chicago Premium Outlets in Aurora, which had 5.5 million visitors. Next was Phillips Park Zoo with 369,000 visitors, The Paramount Theatre, 170,000 visitors, and Fox Valley Park District's Blackberry Farm with 79,585 visitors.

State and local tax revenues generated from hotel/motel tax also were up by more than 6 percent.

Hospitality-generated business in Illinois is doing well overall, according to the Visitors Bureau. Domestic and international travel-related business generated \$29.9 billion in revenue in 2007, a 5.8 percent increase from 2006.

GreenTown conference comes to Aurora

GreenTown: The Future of Community, is a one-day conference designed to help create eco-effective communities. Mayors and elected officials, city managers, public works directors, park district directors, planners, developers, engineers, architects, landscape architects, builders, and many others will gather to hear from speakers, learn from case studies and discuss how to make communities eco-effective.



The conference is Oct. 2 at the Paramount Theatre.

This year's key speakers include Terry Tamminen, former secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency and author of *Lives Per Gallon: The True Cost of our Oil Addiction*, and Dean Kubani, manager of the City of Santa Monica's Office of Sustainability.

The inaugural GreenTown conference was held September 19, 2007, in Oak Park.

Contact Sara Rehtin at 312-706-2525 or srehtin@a5inc.com with questions. Go to http://greentownconference.com/register_online.asp to register online. Registration is \$295 for an individual or \$175 for a municipal representative.

Downtown Alive!: From Blues to Rock and everything in between

The city of Aurora's Blues on the Fox event June 13 and 14 was the biggest and best-attended music festival in the city's 10-year Downtown Alive! history... until Rocks the Fox packed Galena Boulevard Aug. 1 and 2.

The two, two-day festivals were bookend events to the four Friday night concerts on Downer Place that made up Downtown Alive! 2008. Estimates put the number of visitors at 25,000 for the two festivals alone.

Popular blues bands including headliners Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Elvin Bishop, food ranging from bratwurst to tacos to fruit smoothies and beautiful weather all had a share in drawing more than 10,000 blues fans downtown for the two-day free Blues on the Fox event, said Gina Moga, manager of the Mayor's Office of Special Events. Another two days of spectacular weather graced Aurora for Rocks the Fox, when UFO, Blue Oyster Cult and Molly Hatchet drew 15,000 visitors to the streets of Aurora.

Many of the people in attendance for both festivals were from other cities and



UFO guitarist Vinnie Moore and lead singer Phil Mogg

states. Some talked of driving across the cornfields of Iowa to get to Aurora for Blues on the Fox. Others said they split their time between Chicago's Lollapalooza and Aurora's Rocks the Fox on the first weekend in August.

Moga was especially proud of the first-ever Rocks the Fox festival and the way local bands were highlighted.

"Bands like ARRA and Problem Child have loyal fans that come out to support them, and that support prompts the rest of the crowd, which might be waiting for a big-name band, to get into the music," Moga said. "It's an amazing thing to watch the audience grow from a few die-hards in the front row to thousands of people. And it's great to see all the families that come out to enjoy the music together. You can almost see the younger kids becoming classic rock fans in front of your eyes."

Corey Long of Geneva thanked concert organizers for the summer-full of entertainment in an e-mail he sent the Monday after Rocks the Fox.

"I just wanted to drop Aurora a line to say THANKS for the concerts downtown these past few months," Long wrote. "I took my 14-year-old son to his first concert to see Molly Hatchet and UFO and it was a blast! Please keep scheduling these great shows for the suburbs. AURORA has the best entertainment around."

KidZone events also helped boost attendance for the family-friendly festivals. William "Billy the Balloon Guy" Pirrello called the downtown events "the most vendor-friendly I have twisted balloons in."

"I had a tent, signage and excellent support. You thought of everything. Not only did you take into consideration the participants, but also provided for the vendors. Your expertise and dedication reflects very positively on the City of Aurora."



Blues singer Bettye LaVette



Congressman's staff at City Hall

Rep. Bill Foster is taking his office "on the road," and is sending staff to cities, communities and neighborhoods all across the 14th District with the "Neighborhood Office Hours" program.

Foster's staff is available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays (excluding holidays) at City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place.

"I know my constituents are busy – that's why my staff is coming to them," Foster said. "... we are taking an extra step to help solve our constituents' problems."

Caseworkers will be available to assist constituents with questions about Social Security, Medicare, veterans' benefits, immigration and other concerns.

"I like to tell my staff that we work for the families of the 14th District," Foster said. "We will do all we can to meet them face-to-face."

Call the congressman's office at 630-406-1114 for information.

City Holiday Schedule

Non-emergency facilities in the city will be closed for the following holidays this fall:

Veterans Day, Nov. 11

Thanksgiving, Nov. 27 & 28

CFLs save energy, money



The City of Aurora will be distributing free compact fluorescent light bulbs to citizens during its two annual City Services Expos in October (see information on this page).

Consumers first saw this new lighting product 30 years ago. These funny looking lights were shaped like tuning forks or soft-serve ice cream swirls, and they were expensive, averaging \$10 each. But a purchase was a good investment, and it still is. CFLs use less energy and last much longer than traditional incandescent light bulbs, resulting in big savings, averaging \$25 over the lifetime of a bulb. Despite that, CFLs account for only a fraction of the light bulbs purchased today. Why haven't more people adopted this superior technology? There may be some myths at work:

Myth #1
CFLs are expensive. The price of CFLs has decreased dramatically; it's possible to find bulbs today on sale for \$1 each. They still cost more than incandescent bulbs, but the money saved on electricity bills more than makes up the difference.

Myth #2
CFLs are too big for my light fixtures. CFLs have become smaller, and some are even shaped like incandescent bulbs.

Myth #3
CFLs are incompatible with many fixtures. That was true in the early days of CFLs, when they couldn't be used outdoors, in enclosed globes, or in dimmers. But today CFLs are available for all kinds of applications. There are even bug repellent CFLs.

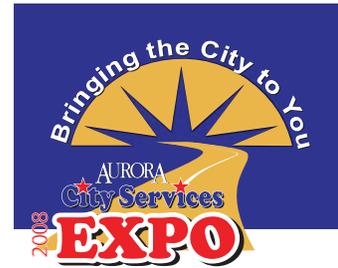
Myth #4
CFLs are not bright enough. If you know what you are looking for, you'll find what you need. CFLs use fewer watts to produce the same amount of lumens, or light, as higher watt incandescent bulbs. CFLs also take a minute or so to warm up to full brightness.

Myth #5
CFLs look cold. The first CFLs had a bluish tone, and the yellow hue of incandescent bulbs seemed warmer. Today, you can buy CFLs in many color tones.

TIP: Because CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, do not throw them away in your garbage. Home Depot, 1250 N. Orchard Road, Aurora, will accept CFLs for recycling. Go to earth911.org for more recycling options.

CNT Energy, a non-profit organization that helps consumers and communities obtain information about controlling energy costs, compiled this information. CNT Energy was founded by the Center for Neighborhood Technology in 2000 and is funded by a Riverboat grant from the Kane County Board of Commissioners.

City Services Expo will feature demonstrations and giveaways



Aurora residents are invited to attend one of two City Services Expos in October. More than 30 departments as well as public officials will be on hand to answer citizens' questions. Plus, the first 100 residents who bring an old EMPTY gas can will receive a new eco-friendly 2.5 gallon plastic gas can, sponsored by the City of Aurora and Clean Air Counts.

The first expo is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 4 at Vaughan Athletic Center, 2121 W. Indian Trail. The second, at Eola Community Center, is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11. Eola Community Center is located at 555 S. Eola Road.

The city also will be distributing free Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs. The CFLs were made available to municipal members of the Metropolitan Mayors

Caucus through a grant. If every American family replaced just one regular light bulb in their home with a CFL, enough energy would be saved to light more than three million homes for a year.

Citizens will be able to collect other giveaways during the Expos, as well as meet elected officials, find out what's new downtown, participate in public safety demonstrations, find out about job openings, register to vote, license pets, sign up for a library card, ask an expert for golf tips, ask questions about planning or zoning, inquire about recycling and garbage collection, learn about conservation efforts and more.

For information, call the city's information line at 630-264-INFO (4636). ☎

'City of Lights' tournaments set

City of Aurora Youth Services will once again sponsor the 'City of Lights' tournament series for middle school students. The tournaments will begin in October and lead up to the Aurora Sports Festival in May.



Holy Angels seventh grader Courtney Cox tries the "Euro bungee jump" at the 2008 Aurora Sports Festival (Photo by Peter Cherwin)

The goal of the tournaments is to provide an opportunity for Aurora's middle school athletes in public, private and parochial schools to compete with their peers in an atmosphere of teamwork, sportsmanship and achieving team goals. A citywide champion is crowned at the Aurora Sports Festival. Last year's winning school was Jewel Middle School.

For information about the schedule below, contact Sports Festival Coordinator Al Miller, 630-264-8297.

Tournament Schedule:

SOCCER – Oct. 6, 7, 9, 11
CROSS COUNTRY – Oct. 7
FOOTBALL – Round robin regular season
GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL – Oct. 3-8
BOYS' WRESTLING – Dec. 13
BOYS' BASKETBALL – Dec. 11-18
GIRLS' BASKETBALL – March 5-12
BOYS' & GIRLS' TRACK – May 6
AURORA SPORTS FESTIVAL – May 15 & 16 ☎

Whether it's leaves or snow, city picks up what comes down

LEAF COLLECTION

Free curbside leaf collection begins Monday, Oct. 13. Please follow these guidelines:

- Gather leaves in 30-gallon Kraft paper yard waste bags
- Place bags near the curb on regular garbage day
- Waste stickers are not required for yard waste bags containing only leaves

Collection of all other bagged yard waste, such as grass clippings, twigs and garden debris, continues as normal. Bags should not exceed 60 pounds and must have a waste sticker attached.

Brush collection also continues as normal. Branches and limbs one-half inch to four inches in length can be placed at the curb without a waste sticker. Brush less than one-half inch in diameter is considered yard waste and must be placed in a Kraft paper yard waste bag with a

waste sticker attached. Brush collection ends Nov. 7. Leaf collection and yard waste collection run until Dec. 5.

SNOW OPERATIONS

Snow operations are a diverse, cooperative city effort. Aurora has 550 road miles, 1,250 lane miles and more than 2,100 plowed road miles divided into three areas and 34 routes. The Street Department is responsible for 17 routes, the Parks Department has 10 routes, and the Water and Sewer Department has seven routes. There are two salt storage facilities: 720 North Broadway and 2112 Montgomery Road.

The city will hold its second annual Snow Forum in October to inform homeowners' associations and neighborhood associations of snow removal procedures. Call customer service at 630-264-INFO (4636) for more information about the Snow Forum or snow removal procedures. ❄️🌨️

October is Fire Prevention Month

By Irene Pelan

Administrative Secretary

October is a busy month for the Fire Prevention Bureau and the city's fire department companies. Not only is it Fire Prevention Month, but Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 5 through 11. This year's slogan is "Prevent Home Fires." The Fire Prevention Bureau will be scheduling programs at area schools and tours at all nine fire stations in October.

Last year, 7,318 children and adults were reached through 180 fire prevention programs, and 1,431 citizens toured fire stations. Anyone wishing to schedule a tour or program during October should contact Irene Pelan in the Fire Prevention Bureau at 630-892-9001.

On Sept. 27, we will be a part of the Phillips Park Fall Festival. While we tattoo children with temporary tattoos of fire trucks, we will talk to them about such things as the importance of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers and implementing an escape plan in case of a fire. We also provide literature on these topics in both English and Spanish.

Watch for more information regarding this year's Team FireStopper Program to be held on Saturday, Oct. 18, at East Aurora High School

in conjunction with the Joseph Corporation Homeownership Expo. For more information about Team FireStopper contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 630-892-9001 or fpb@aurora-il.org.

Fire Prevention is once again partnering with the National Fire Safety Council in a community

fund-raising effort that will allow coordination and distribution of more than 49,000 pieces of fire safety materials geared to preschool and elementary age children in both public and parochial schools in our community.

Thanks to the generous support of concerned business, industrial and professional leaders; we have exceeded our fundraising expectations in 2008 (\$25,000) and as a result will be able to provide materials not only for PreK, Kindergarten, and first- and second-graders; but we also will be able to reach an additional 4,000 third graders for the first time. These materials will be delivered to the schools at the beginning of the 2008 school year and will be used by the teachers to help us carry the message of fire safety in both English and Spanish. 🚒🔥



Art en plein air* Easels dot Water Street Mall on a summer day

Artists in the Aurora Public Art Commission's ARTworks program taught by Jen Evans set up the tools of their trade for some outside inspiration on the Water Street Mall near Aurora's City Hall this summer.



Artworks is a fine arts career exploration initiative in which high school students work with professional artists/mentors from a variety of fields. The program is sponsored by the City of Aurora in partnership with Waubensee Community College and Aurora Community Cable Television.

Pictured is artist Jaleesa Johnson.

**En plein air is a French expression which means "in the open air," and is particularly used to describe the act of painting outdoors.*

Joseph Corporation Presents:

2008 Homeownership Expo

Fifty housing related companies ready to assist Aurora residents.

Come see what they have for you!

Federal funding and local tax information available

FREE Workshops:

Buy Your First Home

Maintain & Remodel Your Home

Protect Your Investment

Make Your Home Safer from Fires

October 18th
9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
East Aurora High School
Freshman Center



JOSEPH CORPORATION
building better communities

Surface Transportation Board Public Meeting Set For Sept. 9



FACT: If CN buys the EJ&E Railway, train traffic will TRIPLE in your neighborhood.

Come to speak your mind about the EJ&E sale to Canadian National Railway:

Tuesday, Sept. 9
4 to 6 p.m., open house
6 to 9 p.m., public meeting
West Aurora High School
1201 W. New York St.
Aurora, IL 60506

See pages 6 and 7 for more information.

Your Elected Officials

Mayor Thomas J. Weisner

630-844-3612

mayorsoffice@aurora-il.org

Aldermen's Office

630-844-3619

At-Large: Robert O'Connor

At-Large: Richard Irvin

Ward 1: Abby Schuler

Ward 2: Juany Garza

Ward 3: Stephanie Kifowit

Ward 4: Rick Lawrence

Ward 5: John "Whitey" Peters

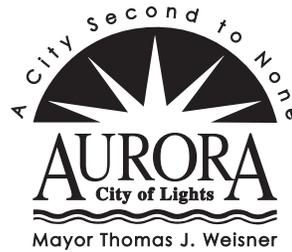
Ward 6: Mike Saville

Ward 7: Scheketa Hart-Burns

Ward 8: Rick Mervine

Ward 9: Leroy Keith

Ward 10: Lynda Elmore



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