



AURORA BOREALIS

Aurora safer now than in 1978

Mayor, Police Chief ask for public's continued vigilance

T rue or false: Aurora is a safer place to live today than it was when President Carter was in the White House. True.

According to recently released statistics, Aurora police took fewer reports for major crimes in 2008 than any year since 1978.

The latest crime statistics reinforce the impressive successes made against criminal activity in Aurora even as the population has exploded over the past three decades, said Mayor Tom Weisner.

“These statistics, while counterintuitive, showcase the positive changes that can happen when a community works together to keep neighborhoods safe. Normally, as a city grows in population, crime increases,” Weisner said. “Here in Aurora, we are seeing the lowest crime rate in almost 30 years despite a population increase of more than 100,000 people.

“These numbers are proof positive that Aurora is a safe place to visit and a great city in which to live and do business.”

In 1978, the city's population was approximately 79,871, while in 2008, estimates put the city's population at 190,000. According to statistics, major crimes (including the violent crime categories of murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault/battery), have dropped dramatically. Compared to 1998, major

crimes have decreased by 15.3 percent in raw numbers and 45.56 percent per 100,000 population. Equally impressive, major crimes have gone down since 2003 by 12.39 percent in raw numbers which equals 22.9 percent per 100,000 population.

“I am certain the reason we have seen drops in all areas of crime is because of our highly professional police department and our officers' work with citizens and community groups as well as partnerships with agencies like the FBI and DEA,” Weisner said. “The department's talent for solving cold case crimes also is sending a clear message to criminals: If you commit a crime in Aurora, we will find you and put you away.”

While Chief of Police Greg Thomas said he was “obviously pleased” with the crime drop, he said that the nation's economic conditions will “necessitate

increased vigilance for everyone in the community to be alert and report crime.

“Along with our dedicated police officers and support staff and the partnerships we continue to solidify with other law enforcement agencies at all levels, the citizens we serve have been instrumental in reducing crime over the years. I'm confident their efforts will continue in these tough economic times when property crimes may tend to increase.”

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*“These numbers are proof positive that Aurora is a safe place to visit and a great city in which to live and do business.”
— Mayor Tom Weisner*

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**NEW DATES!
NEW LOCATION!**

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SAVING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS...
WATER CONSERVATION
BROCHURE INCLUDED
INSIDE





From the Mayor's Desk

City rolls up its sleeves in 2009

My wife Marilyn and I had the opportunity, in late January, to attend the Presidential Inauguration. It was a pleasure to see history made, but the magnitude of the difficulties this president faces, along with our entire nation, is quite sobering.

While there are challenges ahead, here in Aurora we have many reasons to be hopeful. Crime has dropped to a 29-year low and all our citizens can be proud that we live in a remarkably safe city.

The front-page article outlines just how successful we have been in fighting crime. Now, instead of Aurora being an example of a town with double-digit murder rates, it is becoming a national model for other communities.

Case in point: In the Dec. 10 edition of U.S. News & World Report, Aurora is hailed as a city where local and national law enforcement agencies have combined forces to get the worst of the worst off the streets. Through work with federal agents, shootings in the city dropped from 354 in 1996 to fewer than 100 in 2008.

If you are a victim of crime, statistics don't matter. That's why the city council and I are committed to giving our officers the tools they need to do their jobs.

I'd like to suggest that citizens attend an open house on either March 21 or 22 to celebrate the completion of the first phase of Aurora's new police headquarters, the Training and Support facility (see page 3).

Every job calls for the right tools. Sometimes, it means updating buildings and equipment, as in the case of our police department. In other areas, that tool is working with our legislators.

The impact of the national economic downturn leaves no American city untouched. Job layoffs and home

foreclosures have already affected hundreds of Aurorans. My staff and I are working hard to help mitigate the impact of foreclosures and create new job opportunities for our city.

After President Obama's inauguration, I visited with Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Bill Foster in Washington D.C. to make sure Aurora benefits from the recently approved economic-stimulus plan. Aurora's stimulus project requests would create more than 1,300 jobs in Aurora while improving our infrastructure and attracting new development to our city.

Around kitchen tables across America, families are tightening their belts. Here in the city of Aurora, we've done the same by passing a lean budget with less than a 1 percent increase. We also maintained the current tax levy at nearly the same dollar amount, which will likely result in a decrease in the city portion of the tax rate for Aurora residents.

At the same time, we continue to make progress in attracting new employers to Aurora. Freudenberg Household Products, (FHP) recently chose Aurora as its new North American Headquarters, which will bring 425 jobs to our city. And by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox, Ballydoyle Irish Pub will be open in downtown Aurora (page 4).

Progress doesn't just happen. It takes hard work and persistence, especially in difficult times. I am confident the steps we are taking now will position Aurora to emerge a stronger, more vibrant city.

Here's to a prosperous and safe year.

Sincerely,

Tom Weisner
Mayor, City of Aurora



Judges proclaim Au the best in Kane Co

A panel of judges has decided once again that Aurora has the best tasting water in Kane County. Aurora emerged the winner of the Kane County Water Association's annual water taste test contest held in December in Batavia.

Aurora won the county competition in 1998, 2000, 2006 and 2008 and the state competition in 1999, 2000, 2007 and 2008. The city will compete in the state competition in March.

Aurora, along with Elburn, Geneva, Batavia, Sugar Grove, North Aurora, Elgin, Algonquin, Carpentersville and Montgomery participated in the contest.

The contest is based on taste, odor and clarity, and this year featured US99 radio host Ramblin' Ray Stevens, Lisa Jordan,

**Rebuilding Together
to help families in 2009**

Rebuilding Together Aurora (RTA) had a successful 2008, helping 26 families and giving 82 individuals improved homes.

Now RTA is looking for volunteers to help make improvements to 30 homes in 2009.

Those interested in helping RTA in its April 25 "Rebuild Day" as a volunteer or sponsor may contact Emily Stern, AmeriCorps Client Outreach Coordinator, at 630-585-7510. Go to www.rebuildingtogetheraurora.com for more information.

Formerly known as Christmas in April, Rebuilding Together Aurora is a non-profit organization that helps low-income homeowners with home modifications and repairs so they may remain in a safe home. More than 500 volunteers and many generous sponsors from Aurora and the surrounding area partnered last year with RTA to improve the homes and lives of families in Aurora.

...again



education coordinator for the Illinois Section American Water Works Association, and a representative from The Elgin Courier News, as judges. ✨

RTA's work focuses on helping homeowners with small children as well as those who are elderly or disabled. All work is done by volunteers – both skilled and unskilled – at no cost to the homeowner.



Roofing, plumbing, window and drywall repair, painting and electrical upgrades are typical projects. ✨



Reminder: Deadline approaching to register rental properties

Landlords must register their property with the Department of Neighborhood Standards by **April 17** to avoid a late fee. Call 630-264-INFO or go to www.aurora-il.org and click on the quick link for the property registration help desk.

APD open house to unveil high-tech shooting range and evidence facility

Aurora's new police department headquarters at 1200 E. Indian Trail is not altogether finished, but the Training and Support (TAS) building that will house evidence storage, a shooting range and a 200,000-square-foot garage will be open to the public on March 21 and 22 for an exclusive one-time look.

Police personnel are looking forward to sharing the first phase of the new headquarters with the public. They are preparing interactive displays and a special "scavenger hunt" activity for children. Police vehicles will be on display, and the public will be able to see demonstrations of the activities that will go on day-to-day in the new building.

"All of our officers and support staff are looking forward to seeing the completion of the first stage of where they will be serving Aurora's citizens for years to come," said Police Chief Greg Thomas. "After touring it, I'm sure the community will agree that the entire facility is one of which the whole city can be proud."

The 42,000-square-foot TAS building also will house forensic labs along with the shooting range and evidence storage facility. The 156,000-square-foot main headquarters, which will be complete in early 2010, will house the detention facility, 911 Center, Kane County Branch Court, records division and administration.

"We couldn't have everyone moving in at once, so we staggered our construction of the training facility and parking deck to be done several months ahead of the headquarters," said R.C. Wegman construction manager William Arnolde.

Leopardo Construction of Hoffman Estates is building the \$62 million headquarters. About 400

Public Open House Schedule for APD Training and Support Building:

Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m. to noon

Sunday, March 22, 1 to 3 p.m.

public safety professionals will be housed in the building, which is situated on 25 acres on Aurora's northeast side.

The new headquarters probably will seem cavernous to police personnel in the beginning, said Mayor Tom Weisner. "The current police station (at 350 N. River St.) is close to 50 years old and is



about the same size as the new TAS building alone," Weisner said. "Our police have been working hard for us, reducing crime to its lowest rate in 29 years. They deserve modern, up-to-date working conditions."

Besides being able to spread out, officers also will be working in a building that was designed from the beginning to be energy efficient while using recycled and recyclable content. For example, countertops that look like granite will in reality be made of recycled concrete and paper, all cast into a product that looks and wears like stone.

"Besides being a 'green' building," Weisner said, "it will be a cleaner building with alternative sources of energy and power, and it will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels."

Project Manager Barbara Kattermann said the project remains on time and on budget. "That usually doesn't happen," she said. "With a project of this size, you usually get one or the other and this happened in spite of the two of the worst winters on record. We're excited to have finished the TAS building, and we look forward to the opening of the new headquarters building." ✨

Directions in Development

O-Cedar parent company brings 425 jobs to Aurora

Freudenberg Household Products, LP (FHP) has selected the City of Aurora as its new North American Headquarters. The 525,000-square-foot facility will be constructed to serve as the administrative, manufacturing and distribution center for the company's entire North American territory. More than 150 new jobs will be created with the opening of the headquarters, with at least 425 employees working at the new site when it is up and running. FHP is the market leader in branded household cleaning tools and products. The company is best known in the United States for its O-Cedar brand and worldwide for its Vileda brand. FHP will be located in the Prairie Point West Industrial Park at 2188 Diehl Road on Aurora's east side. The estimated cost of the building is \$30 million.

Have your corned beef and cabbage at Ballydoyle

Ballydoyle will be serving up Irish food and drink at its new Aurora pub on St. Patrick's Day after opening in late February. It is owner Phil Cullen's second Ballydoyle

location: the highly successful original is located in Downers Grove. Doors, windows, furniture and fixtures used in the pub were salvaged from old buildings, churches and homes. The pub is located in a former commercial laundry building at 28 W. New York St.

Chinese restaurant opens downtown

New China Hut #3 has opened at 140 S. River St., Suite 100, in River Street Plaza. New China Hut owners Hui Nong Wu and May Wu are from the Cantonese region of China. They own two other locations: at Eola Road and East New York Street in Aurora and in Oswego. The restaurant is open seven days a week for dine-in, carry out or delivery to east and west Aurora. The restaurant employs approximately 15 full- and part-time workers in the 1,500 square foot space with seating for about 30 patrons.

Grainger opens new facility on Bilter Road

Grainger, a local distributor of facilities maintenance supplies, has opened a new facility at 1204 Bilter Road near



Ballydoyle owner Phil Cullen

Farnsworth Avenue and Butterfield Road. The 20,000-square-foot facility offers customers same-day access to nearly 23,000 products including heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment, hand and power tools and electrical, safety and security supplies. The new facility also features a 2,500-square-foot showroom with hundreds of products on display.

Liberty Property Trust building breaks ground in Liberty Business Center

Liberty Property Trust (NYSE:LRY) broke ground last fall on a 463,636-square-foot distribution building designed to meet LEED standards. The new LEED CS (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design on Core and Shell) building will occupy 25.6 acres at 900 Bilter Road in the Liberty Business Center. ✨



Putting energy conservation in a new light

Traffic signal coordination planned

Over the next 18 months, Aurora will coordinate and upgrade traffic signals throughout much of the city.

The signal coordination project will allow long segments of roadway to coordinate signals so that vehicles traveling at the speed limit will progress from signal to signal with minimal stopping. These efforts are being undertaken to reduce travel time on many corridors and consequently reduce vehicle emission and improve air quality.

The upgrades will include modernization of outdated signals with new, energy-conserving LED signal heads, retrofit battery backups, countdown pedestrian signal heads and replacement of rusted and/or dented signal poles.

The installation of LED signal heads will

decrease the amount of electrical energy used by each signal by 75 percent. Battery backups will allow signals to continue to operate during a power failure. To improve emergency vehicle response times, all signals will be fitted with emergency vehicle preemption devices.

These upgrades are being made possible by a variety of funding sources, including contributions from seven separate Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grants and contributions from the Illinois Department of Transportation. The city will be spending fewer than 20 cents on the dollar for all these improvements to enhance mobility, improve traffic safety, and reduce vehicle emissions.

Lastly, in an effort to remain 'Second to None' and maximize the ability for the city to take advantage of the new

The following corridors are planned for upgrades over the next 18 months:

- Galena Boulevard – Orchard Rd. to Ohio St.
- New York Street – Farnsworth Ave. to Lake St.
- Broadway – North Ave. to Illinois Ave.
- River Street – Prairie St. to New York St.
- Lake Street – Gale St. to Indian Trail
- Indian Trail – Lake St. to Edgelawn Dr.

infrastructure, the city is considering tying the whole project together with a traffic management center (TMC). The implementation of the TMC would allow staff to re-time and maximize traffic flow in real time and account for special events such as the Downtown Alive Series or the holiday shopping season with the touch of a button. The TMC could save hundreds of hours a year in staff time while allowing the city to address traffic issues in an expedited manner. ✨

Mayor Tom Weisner says the city's 2009 budget that was passed by the City Council trims operation costs while maintaining judicious investment in infrastructure in order to create jobs for residents and commercial opportunities for businesses.

"While every department worked hard to trim their budgets and find ways to become more efficient, we also are maintaining the high level

Council passes balanced budget



Bob O'Connor

of service citizens have come to expect from Aurora," Weisner said.

For example, last year the city put 19 additional patrol officers on the streets without any new budget dollars due to new efficiencies

implemented in hiring and training protocols. And by partnering with Naperville, Aurora was able to purchase a new digital interoperable radio system for several million dollars below the budget estimate.

Noting sharp decreases in revenues due to the national economic crisis, Weisner eliminated 11 vacant full-time positions and one part-time position. He also postponed new initiatives and training, as well as implemented a hiring freeze to maintain service levels and avoid layoffs.

He also noted that the increase in the budget is less than 1 percent after deducting items carried over from 2008 – a huge feat considering most wage increases are preset in union contracts and labor represents approximately 80 percent of the general fund budget. Since 2005, the city of Aurora has lowered the average increase for employees by more than one-half percent from nearly 4 percent then to less than 3.5 percent today.

Alderman-at-large Bob O'Connor said creating a balanced budget was a true team effort.

"All of the work and planning in putting the 2009 budget together by the administration and the extensive review and adjustment of it by the finance committee and the council has resulted in a very solid fiscal plan," O'Connor, who heads the finance committee, said. "The budget council approved has realistic limitations on spending, the ability to maintain the high quality

Aurora earns AA+ rating in finances

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has raised the rating on the city's waterworks revenue bonds from AA to AA+, the higher of only two upgrades given to Illinois public water and sewer systems in their recent review of Midwest issuers.

The announcement comes on the heels of the affirmation of the city's general bond rating to AA+ in 2008. S&P upgraded the city's GO rating from AA to AA+ in 2006.

The higher rating helps the city issue bonds at a lower cost.

According to a Standard & Poor's report, the increases were based on strong financial metrics, including debt service coverage and cash reserves; good economic fundamentals that (will be able to) handle such pressures as housing market vulnerabilities, employment softness or cost of service inflation; and solid management including long-term planning to fund key service components like water supply or regulatory-driven expenditures.

"This bond rating increase affirms that the city's water utility continues to be well

managed and financially healthy," said Mayor Tom Weisner. "The city has done well in demonstrating its ability to serve the needs of our growing community."

"It is gratifying to see that S & P recognizes the financial strength of our water utility," said Brian Caputo, the city's director of finance and city treasurer.

The report states that "(Aurora's) system has used excess cash generated over the last two years to refund much of the district's outstanding debt. In our opinion, the system's liquidity is good. Debt service coverage is strong and leverage is low."

Ratings were increased on 24 municipal waterworks, sanitary sewer and/or drainage utility revenue bonds in the Midwest region (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and North Dakota). S&P periodically reviews ratings of public bonds to provide an indication of security of the investment.

The highest rating given by the service is AAA. *

services the citizens have been receiving, and no increases in any of the tax rates."

The budget rejected a de facto tax increase on property owners, which could have occurred due to the fact that the EAV multiplier is likely to be more than 1 this coming year. Instead, Weisner opted to maintain the current tax levy at nearly the same dollar amount, which will likely result in a decrease in the city portion of the tax rate for Aurora residents.

Weisner believes the city's finances are healthy enough to push ahead on critical infrastructure projects, such as road improvements, the police headquarters and sewer separation, which will allow the city to hold its own in current financial times and be well-positioned to prosper when the economy turns around.

The mayor said continuing with important capital projects is the way to "keep people working and Aurora businesses strong."

The 2009 budget continues to prioritize street and neighborhood improvements by providing aldermen nearly \$7 million in funding so that they can make improvements that are important to their residents – this represents a 41 percent increase in funding since 2005. *

Aurora safer now than in 1978, continued from page 1

Major crimes, also known as Part One Index Crimes, include the violent crime categories of murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault/battery and the property crime categories of burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson. There were 5,147 index crimes committed last year, the fewest since 1978, when there were 4,893 crimes reported. Significant drops also were recorded in the five-, 10- and 20-year crime trends.

Although not a major crimes category, reports of shots fired also have plummeted. They were down 2.7 percent last year, 38.5 percent in the past five years, and 60.3 percent over the past 10 years. *





Get A Little Wild!



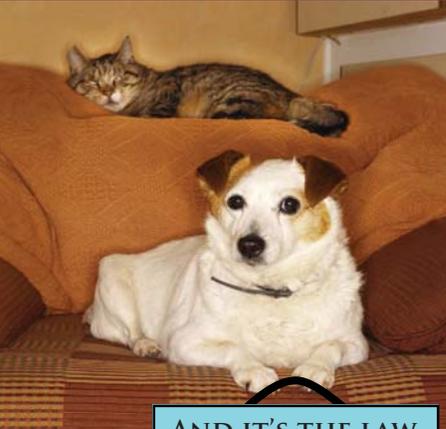
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Mark your calendars!

Downtown Alive! Festivals to have new form

Downtown Alive! gets bigger and better this summer as it expands to four Friday-Saturday festivals during the summer and moves all shows from Downer Place to Galena Boulevard. This year, 27 acts will fill the streets of Aurora with music. Each free festival will begin at 6 p.m. on Friday and 2 p.m. on Saturday.

"After 10 years of Friday night shows, it was time to make some changes," said Gina Moga, special events manager for the City of Aurora. "The two weekend festivals last year – Blues on the Fox and Rock on the Fox – gave us a new vision for the 2009 lineup," Moga said. "We will still showcase eight nights of entertainment, but in a new format."

Moga is especially excited about two of this year's offerings: 80s rocker Billy Squier and three-time Grammy Award winners Los Lobos.



Entertainment lineup

Blues on the Fox, June 19-20

Friday — Big James and the Chicago Playboys, Davy Knowles and Back Door Slam

Saturday — Hix Brothers Junior All-Stars, Henry Butler, Cedric Burnside & Lightnin' Malcolm, Sugar Blue, Watermelon Slim & the Workers, Los Lobos

Summer Jam, July 10-11

Friday — Final Say, Sister Hazel

Saturday — 7th Heaven, Painkiller Hotel, Eve 6

Rock on the Fox, July 31-Aug. 1

Friday — (to be announced), Foghat

Saturday — Dbl. Shot, Blue Truth, ARRA, Trippin' Billies, Billy Squier

Fan Favorites, Aug. 14-15

Friday — Hot Rocks, Hi Infidelity

Saturday—August, The Moods, Elevation, American English

City pet licenses... Inexpensive, but invaluable

A pet can slip out the door or under the fence or past the babysitter in an instant. But if Fido's or Fluffy's owners have secured licenses for their pets through City of Aurora Animal Control, finding them will be easier. And, it's a law for dog and cat owners.

Purchasing and/or renewing a dog or cat license is easy and inexpensive.

Owners of spayed/neutered and micro-chipped pets receive licenses for free. Owners of spayed/neutered pets that are not micro-chipped pay \$10 for a one-year license or \$30 for a three-year license. Owners of unaltered pets pay \$50 per year.

at, location



Family activities planned for El Dia de los Niños

The City of Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board will host El Dia de los Niños (The Day of the Children) from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday April 25 at the Aurora Transportation Center Parking Lot (Spring Street and Lincoln Avenue). Celebrated throughout the Latin American community, El Dia de los Niños is a day for families, schools and communities to value and uplift children.

The Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board's El Día de los Niños will be filled with educational information and free fun and entertainment for all ages. This event will include food vendors and fun-filled activities in the Kids Zone such as moon jumps, a rock climbing wall, pony rides, clowns, shows and competitions and main stage entertainment.

And...save the date for Fiesta de Luces (Festival of Lights) from 2 to 7:30 p.m. September 19. Fiesta de Luces is held to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and will include main stage entertainment, food vendors and more.

For information about the efforts of the Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board, please contact Liz DeLeon at 630-844-4731. *

El Dia de los Niños
Saturday, April 25, 1 to 5 p.m.
Aurora Transportation Center Parking Lot
(Spring Street and Lincoln Avenue)



TRIAD sponsors programs of benefit to older persons

Southeast Kane County TRIAD, which focuses on reducing criminal victimization of older persons, is sponsoring the following FREE programs:

ID Theft /Medicare & Healthcare Fraud:

9 to 10:30 a.m. March 18
Presented by Senior Services and the Aurora Police Department
Visiting Nurses Association Office, 400 N. Highland Ave., 2nd floor, Aurora
Register by 5 p.m. March 13 by calling 630-978-2532, ext. 8399
Refreshments will be served

Safe Disposal of Unused Medications

9 to 10:30 a.m. April 20
Provena Mercy Medical Center,
1975 Melissa Lane, Aurora, Register by 5 p.m. April 15 by calling 1-866-776-8362
Refreshments will be served

Medication Management / Travel Talk

9 to 10:30 a.m. June 9
Presentations by North Aurora Police Department, a pharmacist and a travel agent
Rush-Copley Medical Center, Alumni Conference Room, 2000 Ogden Ave., lower level, Aurora Register by 5 p.m.
June 2 by calling 630-978-4989
Refreshments will be served

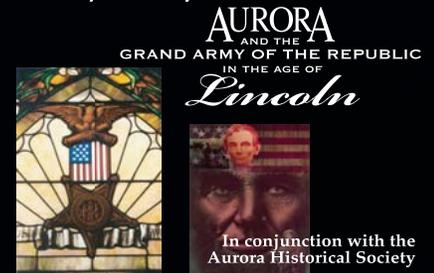
Now, pet owners can download a registration form online at www.aurora-il.org/animalcontrol.php. The completed form may be mailed with a check or money order to: City of Aurora Animal Control & Care Facility, 600 S. River St., Aurora, IL 60506.

Owners can also pay in person at the facility between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays.

Pet owners may drop off a check or money order with the completed form at the City of Aurora Customer Service Call Center/Fire Station #8 at 3770 McCoy Drive on Aurora's far east side. Hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, call 630-897-5695. *

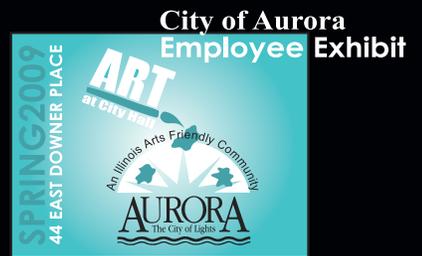
Aurora Public Art Commission

February 6 — May 25



In conjunction with the Aurora Historical Society

March 23 — August 28



March 27 — May 24



THE ART OF MAKING ART AFTER AN EXTENDED INTERLUDE

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A civic organization dedicated to the presentation of public art in all its forms. A Division of the Department of Community Development, City of Aurora.

Waubonsee celebrates groundbreaking of new downtown Aurora campus

Waubonsee Community College celebrated the ceremonial groundbreaking of its new 132,000-square-foot downtown Aurora campus on Jan. 30. The event featured speeches by Waubonsee officials and Aurora Mayor Thomas Weisner.

“It’s another great day in the city of Aurora,” Weisner said during the celebration. “We are well on our way to creating a new face for our downtown.”

The new campus, which represents a \$50 million investment in the city’s downtown and is part of the strategy for downtown redevelopment, will be located at 18 S. River Street, on a site bounded by Galena Boulevard to the north, River Street to the west, Downer Place to the south and the Fox River to the east.

“Waubonsee’s mission, from our founding in 1966 to the present, is to provide quality, accessible education,” said Waubonsee President Dr. Christine Sobek. “Accomplishing this mission is especially vital to the City of Aurora and its residents. The need to continue to be located in the heart of this city, in this key downtown neighborhood, is to ensure that the college is accessible to all. Easy access to our classrooms, labs, and services is essential for our students.”

In addition to being conveniently located, the campus will also be comprehensive, allowing students to earn their complete associate degrees at this one facility. Scheduled to open for classes in fall 2011, the building will house 52 classrooms, including two science labs, 11 computer classrooms and other specialized instructional spaces.

These state-of-the-art physical facilities will give community members access to transfer degree programs, occupational programs, developmental education, adult education, GED classes, English as a Second Language classes, community education programming, and workforce and professional development.



A view of the west side of Waubonsee Community College’s new downtown Aurora campus, at the corner of River Street and Downer Place.

“This results in our students being able to seamlessly transition from adult education and GED classes into a program where they can earn a degree,” said Dr. Deborah Lovingood, Executive Vice President of Educational Affairs/Chief Learning Officer. “Students can also gain the training and skills they need to find a job or move up in their current career. This campus will help students from all walks of life.”

Other highlights of the campus include one-stop student services, a library, bookstore, café, child care center with playground, and the construction of an upper River Walk.

Cordogan, Clark & Associates designed the building, JJR is the project’s landscape architect, and Turner Construction is providing construction management.

Waubonsee has offered classes at various sites in Aurora since the college’s founding more than 40 years ago. In 1986 the current 80,000-square-foot downtown Aurora campus opened on Stolp Island. The new Aurora campus will replace this current campus, allowing the college to offer more classes and academic programs, form more community partnerships, and provide additional student services.

The Aurora Campus development is part of Waubonsee’s 2020 College Master Plan, which outlines the construction projects necessary for Waubonsee to continue to meet the local community’s growing demand for education.

“The new Aurora Campus is a reality because of community support,” said Richard “Shorty” Dickson, chair of the college’s board of trustees. “I want to thank all of the college district residents who overwhelmingly voted to approve referenda in 2002 and 2003. Your affirmation of the 2020 College Master Plan goals enabled us to develop a vision for this new campus.” * ❁



Waubonsee President Dr. Christine Sobek is shown with a plaque of recognition, along with Aurora Mayor Thomas Weisner (left) and Waubonsee Board of Trustees Chair Richard “Shorty” Dickson.



Green Team visits recycling center

By Karen Christensen, Downtown Development Director

So where does it all go?

Many of us carefully sort our recyclables each week, but wonder about their final destination. Is it really worth taking time and trouble to peel off labels, wash out containers, and lug recycling bins to the curb?

On Jan. 9, eight members of the City's Green Team took a field trip, seeking the answers to these questions. The group visited RMC (Resource Management Companies International, Inc.) in Will County, where they were led on a virtual tour by Senior Vice President Greg Maxwell.



RMC Senior Vice President, Greg Maxwell

RMC handles all residential recyclables for the City of Aurora under a contract with Allied Waste Services, the city's residential waste hauler. Calvin Boonstra, operations manager for Allied Waste, also was on hand to meet the group.

Though prices for commodities have dropped as the world economy has faltered, Maxwell stressed that manufacturers still find it cheaper to make products from recyclables than from new materials.

"Most manufacturers do not buy recyclables out of a particular desire to be environmentally friendly," he said. They purchase the processed materials because the fundamental economics work in favor of recycled materials. Manufacturing goods using the commodities that we recycle requires less energy and produces fewer by-products, including emissions, than using virgin raw resources does."

Of the residential recyclables sorted at RMC, 70 percent are paper fiber (newspaper, cardboard, mixed paper) and 30 percent are containers (plastic, glass, steel, aluminum). Sophisticated sorting and screening equipment separates these materials and bales them so they can be shipped and stored economically. Though the machinery is complex and fast-moving, human workers are essential to the process for quality control.



Photos by Cynthia Gonzales

The Green Team learned that plastics recycling can be tricky; expanded and rigid polystyrene (often called Styrofoam) cannot be recycled, nor can plastic shopping bags. The demand for recycled plastic resin is very specific, so consumers should not put items like plastic shelving in the recycling bin. Eight to nine percent of material collected at RMC cannot be recovered because it can't be reused, so it's sent to the landfill instead. Maxwell told the Green Team, "We don't lose anything except people's good intentions."

His parting wisdom for the Green Team came from the respected philosopher, Yoda. Maxwell stated his belief that recycling, composting, and manufacturing technology will continue to improve when he said: "Always moving forward the future is." ❖

From the Editor:

There's a saying, "Don't count your chickens until they're hatched."

I have tweaked that saying a bit for my purpose here. My new motto is, "Don't say train horns will be silenced until you absolutely know they are... for sure."

Silent Nights?

Not Quite.

In the last edition of *Aurora Borealis*, the lead story was headlined, "Silent night? Aurora in final stages of creating railway quiet zones." The article went on to say that train horns blasting throughout the city will be a thing of the past "by the end of the year."

So on January 1, when I could still hear the

train horns blasting at all hours of the day and night, I knew that the story was a bit, shall we say, premature?

The quiet zone on the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern (EJ&E) rail line actually was established on Dec. 1, but both the EJ&E and the Illinois Commerce Commission had some additional questions about the zone, so the horns continued. Likewise, a quiet zone on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) line should also have been in effect by the end of 2008, but the ICC required some additional paperwork in that instance.

So, where are we as we go to print with this newsletter?

Thankfully, the EJ&E quiet zone actually did take effect on Feb. 2. The BNSF quiet

zone is scheduled to go into place on Feb. 18... before this newsletter arrives in your mailbox, but after it goes to the printer.

So as not to throw myself under the train again, in a manner of speaking, I will make no predictions about the BNSF quiet zone, although our traffic engineer has had his fingers and toes crossed about this one for quite some time now.

Quiet crossings on the BNSF will include those at McClure Road, Terry Avenue, Edgelawn Avenue, Prairie Street and Barnes Road.

The reason the quiet zones can be established is because all the crossings are protected by gates. ❀

—Amy Roth, *Aurora Borealis* editor

Torres honored for contributions through boxing

Aurora Police Officer Jesse Torres was presented with the 2009 Peter J. Perez Community Service Award during the City of Aurora's Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board annual community breakfast on Jan. 29 at Long Island Sound in Aurora.



Torres, who was born in Puerto Rico and moved to Aurora at age 4, became an Aurora police officer in 1987. A retired professional boxer with a passion to give back to his community, he incorporated the nonprofit Jesse "The Law" Torres Boxing Club in 1995, which operates out of the Fox Valley Park District's Copley II Recreation Center.

The award celebrates the memory of Peter J. Perez, who was born in 1925 in the "boxcar" community of primarily Mexican railroad workers just outside Aurora. He attended Marmion Military Academy and the University of Illinois and went on to play football for The Chicago Bears. After retiring from his sports career, he joined the Aurora Police Department where he served for 21 years. He then served as Kane County's Undersheriff for 13 years. He died of cancer in 1999 at the age of 74.

Also during the breakfast, four high school students and four college students were awarded scholarships for their leadership and community service. High-school aged Leadership/Excellence Award winners, as well as the young artist and essay-writer competition winners were recognized. Guest speaker was Robert Renteria, author of *From the Barrio to the Board Room*. *

Crime Stoppers offering up to \$5,000

Aurora Area Crime Stoppers, a community-based program that encourages citizen involvement in the fight against crime, is now offering up to \$5,000 in rewards, as well as anonymity, to callers who supply information leading to the arrest of felony crime offenders or fugitives.

Most information received by Crime Stoppers is shared over the telephone. Crime Stoppers can be reached by calling 630-892-1000. When a call is received, it is logged in with a record of the date, time and summary of the information being reported by the caller, who remains anonymous throughout the process.

Callers are assigned a confidential number which is used in future contact as well as in making arrangements to pay the reward.

Since its founding in May of 1985, Aurora Area Crime Stoppers has been successful in providing information that has led to about 600 arrests, recovery of \$2.25 million in drugs and \$600,000 in stolen property.

Since increasing the reward money from up to \$1,000 to up to \$5,000 in 2008, the city has received tips that solved two bank robberies, an armed robbery and a sexual assault, said Sgt. Kevin Triplett, police liaison to the Aurora Area Crime Stoppers.

Crime Stoppers is a nonprofit organization that is funded by private donations of funds, goods or services from members of the community including individuals, corporations, clubs, associations, retailers and others. No law enforcement, tax dollars or public funds are used to pay Crime Stoppers rewards. *



Two officers and sergeant share APD Employee of the Year honors

Two Aurora police officers and their sergeant are sharing 2008 "Employee of the Year" honors for guiding a distraught woman off the roof of her home.

On January 8, 2008, Officers Edgar Gallardo and Max Worcester, along with Sergeant Doug Podschweit, responded to a domestic disturbance call on the city's far east side and found that a woman had climbed onto the roof after exiting her home from a third floor balcony.

As she was peering over the edge, Gallardo tried to calm her by talking with her. He informed backup officers of the situation and also requested a response from the Aurora Fire Department. He then climbed up onto the roof just as the woman moved closer to the edge. Thinking she was about to

Sears Trolley Tour kicks off annual celebration

This May the Aurora Preservation Commission marks its 30th annual celebration of National Preservation Month. The events will kick off early with an April 11 Sears homes tour and will extend into June. For information closer to the events, check the Historic Preservation section of the city's Web site or call 630-844-3648.

Sears Trolley Tour

10 a.m. April 11

With 136 authenticated Sears houses, Aurora is home to one of the largest collections of authenticated Sears homes in the country. These homes have stood the test of time, and today they are some of the most charming homes in Aurora. The tour will leave from the Aurora Regional Fire Museum (located at the corner of Broadway and New York Street), and will include an hour-long trolley tour showcasing some of the best examples



Latimer is Heritage Award recipient

Cynthia Latimer received the Outstanding African-American Heritage Award Feb. 5 from the City of Aurora's African-American Heritage Advisory Board (AAHAB) during the group's Fifth Annual Heritage Dinner at Piper's Banquets.

Latimer is West Aurora School District 129's assistant superintendent for teaching and learning.

Latimer has served as a teacher, principal, and bilingual administrator at West Aurora schools and also as an administrator in East Aurora School District 131. In addition to her role in the school district, she served as president of the Aurora Actionaires, a service organization.

"As Maya Angelou would say, she is a phenomenal woman," said Clayton Muhammad, chairman of the African-American Heritage Advisory Board. "Her commitment to all of our children, this community, and our culture resonates in the very core of who she is and what she has consistently done for decades."

Latimer was nominated by a trio of West Aurora School officials: Board President Allen Rhea, Director of Secondary Education LuAnne Kelsey and School Superintendent Jim Rydland.

"She has reached out to students and parents that historically haven't had a 'voice' in educational organizations," Rydland said in his nomination letter. "Cynthia's work with underrepresented populations, including African-American students and parents, has enabled the district to increase access and success for these students."



Photo by Lyle R. Rolfe

Mayor Tom Weisner presented Latimer with a proclamation for her accomplishments.

Each year, the AAHAB presents the award to an African-American leader from Aurora who has made significant achievements in his or her career field and who has made a lasting impact on the fabric of the community.

Latimer is the fifth recipient of the Outstanding African-American Heritage Award. Past recipients include Donnell Collins, Archie Needham, Lillian Perry and Henry Cowherd.

The dinner also featured performances by local artists and scholarship presentations to high school seniors. 🌸

Large share of the Year honors

jump, Gallardo quickly restrained her while Worcester and Podschweit, who had arrived on-scene and climbed onto the roof, assisted in escorting her to safety.

Officer Gallardo joined the Aurora Police Department in June, 2007; Officer Worcester in March, 2004; and Sergeant Podschweit in June, 1994.

Sixteen other officers, all of whom were named "Employee or Co-Employee of the Month" during 2008, were recognized during a January ceremony, which also spotlighted recent promotions, retirements, new employees, and officers who earned letters of commendation in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Aurora Chief of Police Greg Thomas said all of the officers recognized during the gathering illustrated the professionalism of the entire department. 🌸

celebration

of Sears homes. There is no cost for the tour, but space is limited. Call the Aurora Preservation Commission at 630-844-3648 to reserve a seat on the trolley tour bus.

May Events

Thirtieth annual Mayor's Awards for excellence in historic preservation: May 19. To nominate a restoration project, go to www.aurora-il.org/historicpreservation or call 630-844-3648.

Sears Bike Tour (*Date to be announced*): A great opportunity to view unique mail order

homes and get some exercise. All levels of biking experience are welcome. There will be frequent stops along the way. Helmets are strongly recommended. Call 630-844-3648 for updates.

Window Restoration and Energy Efficiency Workshop

(*Date to be announced*): A local window expert will provide information on how to repair and weatherize historic wood windows.

De-sidings

(*Date to be announced*): Interested in some volunteer work to help improve our historic neighborhoods? Join us as we remove artificial siding and see the wonderful details that were covered as original Victorian era homes are unveiled.

June Events

Bauhaus and Beyond Tour (*Date to be announced*): This Chicago-based modernist organization is recognizing Aurorans who made significant contributions to our architectural heritage during the 1950s by hiring nationally renowned architects such as Bruce Goff and Keck & Keck to design outstanding modern homes.

Downtown Living Tour: 1 to 4 p.m. June 14. Tour will feature residential spaces in downtown Aurora, from rehabbed lofts to new condos. Sponsored by Aurora Downtown. Go to www.auroradowntown.org for updates.





ArtWalk will delight senses on March 27

The second Aurora ArtWalk is scheduled for 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, March 27 in downtown Aurora. Visual and performing arts can be enjoyed at 11 downtown venues, including the Paramount Theatre, ArtWorks Studio, Gallery 44, Balderas Beauty Salon, Tavern on the Fox, Bella Jewelry, Budget Finance, Aurora Fastprint, La France Bakery and Riverfront Playhouse. From 5 to 7 p.m. on the same evening, the public is invited to the Aurora Public Art Commission's opening for a new exhibit titled "Lost and Found."

Visit www.auroraartwalk.com to see pictures from the first ArtWalk on Sept. 12, 2008.



Pottery wheel demonstration by Doug Jeppesen at the Sept. 12, 2008 ArtWalk

Save the Date: Friday, March 27

27

✿ Aurora ArtWalk
7-10 p.m.

✿ Aurora Public Art Commission
exhibit opening
5-7 p.m.

▶ For e-mail updates about City of Aurora news and events, go to www.aurora-il.org and follow directions to sign up. ◀

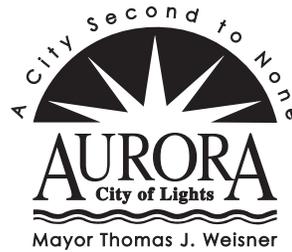
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At-Large: Richard Irvin
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Ward 2: Juany Garza
Ward 3: Stephanie Kifowit
Ward 4: Rick Lawrence
Ward 5: John "Whitey" Peters
Ward 6: Mike Saville
Ward 7: Scheketa Hart-Burns
Ward 8: Rick Mervine
Ward 9: Leroy Keith
Ward 10: Lynda Elmore



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