



AURORA BOREALIS

Tours scheduled Dec. 5 and 6

Public invited to tour APD headquarters



Residents are invited to explore the City of Aurora's Police Headquarters and Branch Court during two open houses. The public can take self-guided tours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 and from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.

"After years of working in a rapidly deteriorating and undersized building, our police department desperately needed a facility that would meet the needs of the 21st century," said Mayor Tom Weisner.

"I'm happy that our police force, which has served us so well, will no longer have to 'make do' with anything less than the latest crime-fighting tools and technology."

The new headquarters features the most advanced technology available to law enforcement today.

The Emergency 911 Dispatch Center, which will move into the headquarters in January, will serve as the crucial link between those in need and first responders. Cramped in the basement of the current headquarters at 350 N. River St., the 911 center has only six dispatch stations.

The new center will feature updated technology and 12 dispatch stations with the ability to expand to 24. "Our emergency operators handle hundreds of thousands of calls each year," said Police Chief

Greg Thomas. "Our 911 Center is fundamental to public safety."

The Investigative Services Bureau will benefit from increased space in the new headquarters.

Each unit will be housed on the same floor, making communication among the more than 60 employees easier, leading to better intelligence gathering and decision making, Thomas said.

The added space also allows the police to begin using new technologies, such as the AFIS fingerprint analysis system. With AFIS, police will be able to analyze fingerprints on site, reducing the turnaround time to match prints from a crime scene from months to days.

The department's new digital radio system will enable Aurora's first responders to communicate with other first responders, ultimately providing improved public safety throughout the region.

The headquarters is complemented by the Training and Support (TAS) Facility, which

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APD photos by Perry Slade

Below: Anessa and Matthew Fernandez of Aurora





From the Mayor's Desk

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..."

Charles Dickens' opening sentence for *A Tale of Two Cities* seems perfect for opening this letter to you.

In a sense, ours is a tale of two cities – two Auroras.

On the one hand, we are a city that continues to make many positive strides.

On Friday, November 20, Aurora (and many Aurora area commuters, I'm sure) celebrated the long-awaited opening of the Illinois Tollway's Eola Road Interchange. The City partnered with DuPage County and the Tollway to construct this \$50 million project, which provides Aurora residents and businesses access to Chicago and the suburbs at a fifth Tollway interchange location. This interchange also will bring tax-generating office and retail development to the area.

On Friday, December 4, our new Aurora Police Facility will officially open, with public open houses on Saturday, December 5 and Sunday, December 6 (see page 1). This state-of-the-art and sustainable facility will feature 21st century crime-fighting capabilities and replace a deteriorating and technologically outdated building, built for fewer than 150 sworn officers, with a modern facility that will serve more than 300 officers. This facility represents a major investment by our community in a superb group of men and women who have brought crime and violence to their lowest levels in several decades. I hope you will take advantage of the December 5th and 6th Open Houses to get an exclusive look at our beautiful, new Aurora Police Department facility.

Beyond these two new openings, there is more good news.

The City completed a record amount of street resurfacing

in 2009, we held the best attended Veterans Day event in many years and we dedicated our longstanding community center as the Fred Rodgers Community Center in honor of our retiring youth services director. Fred Rodgers has helped countless youths to find the path to success. He is an inspiration to us all.

On the other hand, in some ways the City of Aurora is going through the "worst of times." The national economic downturn has harshly impacted state and local governments along with millions of families, and Aurora is no exception. A look at the main sources of revenue for the City's General Fund shows a \$10 million reduction for 2010, when compared to actual revenues from those same sources in 2008. We also are getting pressure on the cost side of the ledger, mainly due to poor performance of investments by state-mandated police and fire pension plans. The fall in investment returns must be covered by the City at a cost of more than \$3.8 million in 2010.

The prospect of a 2010 deficit has caused us to reduce our workforce (through voluntary programs, as well as layoffs), cut non-essential services and negotiate pay freezes and other concessions with our employees. In spite of this difficult situation, we will submit a 2010 budget that keeps the authorized city property tax rate at \$1.56, as it has been since 1996. At the same time, we will be working each day to maintain quality services.

May the Holiday Season bring joy and peace to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Tom Weisner
Mayor, City of Aurora

City cuts costs to balance budget

Facing an unprecedented \$19 million revenue shortfall heading into the new budget year, city officials spent the last several months cutting costs in order to balance the 2010 budget.

"Many experts have suggested that we are in the midst of the worst U.S. recession since the Great Depression," explained Mayor Tom Weisner. "With so many families struggling to pay bills, I felt the city needed to cut expenses rather than increase the authorized property tax rate."

In order to balance the budget, the city pursued an aggressive cost-cutting strategy, combining pay freezes, employee furlough days, union concessions, and cuts in non-essential services such as special events, cable television and public art. In addition, the city took steps earlier this year to reduce training costs and eliminate all unnecessary travel and conferences. As a result, there will likely be a significant decrease in non-personnel, general operating fund expenses for the second consecutive year.

For decades, growth in our region and increased property values allowed Aurora and cities across the area to keep tax rates flat while consistently generating higher property tax revenues to cover the increased costs of doing business. Today for the first time in years, Aurora and many cities are faced with flat or declining property tax revenues.

Property tax revenues are not the only city revenue source to take a hit. As unemployment rises, income tax revenues

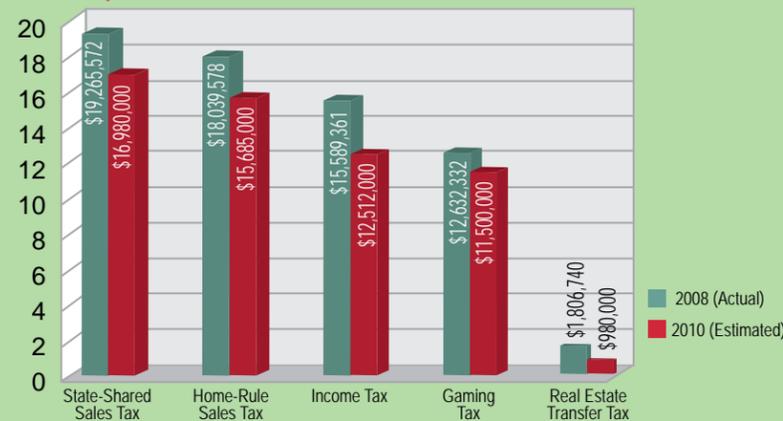
drop. And with less disposable income, fewer people shop, which results in less sales tax revenue. As a result, five of the city's major revenue sources, excluding property taxes, have experienced significant declines ranging from 6.2 percent to 44.7 percent with a total reduction estimated at nearly \$10 million.

Compounding the problem is the fact that police and fire pension costs have increased dramatically, rising \$4.5 million since 2008. Mandated benefit increases passed by the State of Illinois combined with poor investment performance resulted in the unusually large increases.

Although more than 80 positions have been eliminated through the implementation of a hiring freeze, a voluntary reduction in force incentive program and layoffs, the 2010 budget does not recommend reduced staffing levels for police officers and firefighters on the street.

The Finance Committee began consideration of the 2010 budget on November 24. The City Council is expected to consider the budget in the month of December with approval by December 31.

City of Aurora Revenues by Source (in millions)



Community Center named for Fred Rodgers

In honor of the retirement of longtime Aurora youth advocate Fred Rodgers, the Aurora City Council has renamed the Aurora Community Center 'The Fred Rodgers Community Center.'

A dedication ceremony was held Nov. 7 at the corner of Root Street and College Avenue. The structure originally housed Madonna Catholic High School for Girls. Founded by the School Sisters of St. Francis, Madonna was opened in 1926 and closed in 1968 when it consolidated with Roncalli Catholic High School for Boys to become Aurora Central Catholic High School.

The City of Aurora transformed the former school building into a Community Center and Area 2 Police Headquarters in 1997 after Aurora Central moved to its new location on Edgelawn Drive.

Mayor Tom Weisner said Rodgers' retirement from his position as director of the Youth Sports and Activities Department at the end of November will be a bittersweet moment in the city's history.

"While we celebrate with Fred on his retirement, we know he will be greatly missed by the entire Aurora community," Weisner said. "But the impact he has had on the city and both its children and adults will never be retired or forgotten. And if I know Fred, he will continue to be a father figure and role model to young people well into the future."

Rodgers said it was hard for him to find words to express his feelings about giving the community center his name.

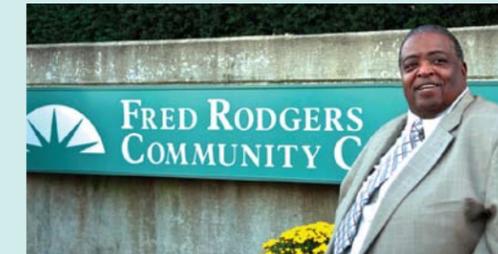


Photo by Cynthia Gonzales

"The most important thing to me is that it is called a community center because I have always wanted it to be just that: the center of our community," Rodgers said. "The community is not a building, but it is people...people who have been a part of this community and the services we provide. I asked the community to help me and it's because of the community I get this recognition."

Rodgers has spent more than two decades working to improve the lives of youth. He began working for the City of Aurora 24 years ago as the first employee of the Youth Services Department. The department touches more than 10,000 young people each year. Rodgers has introduced many programs over the years, including the City of Lights Sports Tournaments, Aurora Sports Festival, Stepping into the Arts music program and summer drama and sports camps.

Born and raised in rural Alabama, Rodgers also was a civil rights activist, having experienced the dire impacts of Jim Crow laws in the Deep South as a youth. Later, long after civil rights legislation had created change across America, former Alabama Governor George Wallace invited Rodgers to visit him in his home, where he apologized for many of his actions as governor.

Rodgers has been instrumental in organizing the city's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Day events which have brought inspirational icons such as Coretta Scott King, Dick Gregory, Les Brown and Thomas El Salome to the city.

The Census is coming!

The census is a count of everyone residing in the United States. All U.S. residents must be counted – both citizens and non-citizens. The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every 10 years to count the population and determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Each household will receive a 10-question form in February or March 2010 either by U.S. Mail or

hand-delivery. A resident should complete and mail back the questionnaire upon receipt. Those who do not respond may receive a replacement questionnaire in April. Census takers will visit households that do not return questionnaires to take a count in person. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities.

For more information, go to 2010census.gov.

Garbage sticker prices to go up Jan. 1

Garbage stickers will increase from \$2.35 to \$2.60 on Jan. 1, 2010, per an agreement between The City of Aurora and Allied Waste approved in 2007.

The environmental refuse fee will increase from \$3 per unit (per household per month) to \$3.35 per unit and from \$2 to \$2.25 for senior citizens age 65 or older. The charges are included in residents' water bills. The fee covers unlimited recycling as well as curbside brush and leaf collection and natural Christmas tree collection.

The following fees also will increase:

14 gallon bags (for purchase by senior citizens) — \$1.30

Optional annual garbage cart (65 gallon)—\$168 (95 gallon)—\$204

Exchange Program

Residents are encouraged to mail in old stickers, a check for the difference in cost between the old stickers and the new, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Allied Waste of Aurora
1565 Aurora Avenue Lane,
Aurora, IL 60505

This program will run from Dec. 15 to Feb. 28, 2010.

Allied Waste will accept old stickers at the curb for the first two weeks of January.

Call 630-264-INFO for additional information.

Aurora twinkles with magic!

DECEMBER

Visit with Santa at Phillips Park

Saturdays and Sundays between Thanksgiving and Christmas
Noon to 4 p.m.

Phillips Park Visitors Center
1000 Ray Moses Dr.
Sponsored by the Friends of Phillips Park.
Don't forget your camera!
Call the Phillips Park Visitors Center at 630-978-4774 for information.
FREE

Holiday Festival of Lights

Nov. 27 through Dec. 27
Sunday through Thursday, 5 to 9 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, 5 to 10 p.m.

Phillips Park
615 S. Smith Blvd.
Sponsored by the City of Aurora and the Rotary Club of Aurora
www.aurorafestivaloflights.com
FREE, donations accepted

Aurora Public Library

34th Annual *Holiday Celebrations in Many Lands*

Dec. 1 through Dec. 31
West Branch: 233 S. Constitution Dr.
View the *Holiday Celebrations in Many Lands* display which includes multicultural exhibits and 20 trees decorated in the traditions of various countries around the world. Display is available during regular library hours.
To arrange for tours call 630-264-3600.
FREE

Aurora Police Department Headquarters Open Houses

Saturday, Dec. 5
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 6
1 to 4 p.m.
1200 E. Indian Trail
Come tour the city's new police headquarters, one of the largest and greenest in the United States. The city is seeking the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold designation for the 200,000-square-foot

department that includes the headquarters, branch court and 911 emergency call center, a training and support building that houses a firearms range, evidence storage, forensic examination laboratories and employee and public parking.
FREE

Winter Garden of Youth Art

Aurora Public Art Exhibit
Dec. 11 to Jan. 10, 2010
Noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 12, 16, 17, 18 and 23
On the third floor of the David L. Pierce Center, 20 E. Downer Place
• Opening reception: 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 11. The Museum Shop will be open and an 'art village' will be open on the third floor.
An annual exhibit of works of art by Aurora students in grades K through 12.
FREE

Robyn Hood and Her Merry Maids

Thursday, Dec. 17
7 p.m.
Greenman School
Presented by ACT I Theatre Group through the City of Aurora's Youth Services Department. The program provides elementary and middle-school students with after-school experiences.
Call 630-880-9570 for information.
FREE

JANUARY

Christmas tree recycling

Week of Jan. 11
The City will collect Christmas trees — free of all decorations including tinsel -- to be ground into pine mulch. Trees should be placed, unbagged, near the curb on your normal garbage/recycling collection day.

Inspirations for Success Hispanic Heritage Board Community Breakfast

Jan. 28, 2010
7 to 9 a.m.
Long Island Sound Banquets
1920 E. New York St.
The Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board will honor students who have achieved excellence in academics, athletics and leadership. Young artists, essay writers and individuals who are making a difference in the Hispanic community also will be recognized.
Tickets, \$15 each, are available through the Mayor's Office of Special Events.
Visit www.aurorahispanicheritage.com or call the Board Chairman Cynthia Hernandez at 630-768-2027 for information.

FEBRUARY

Aurora African American Heritage Advisory Board Sixth Annual Heritage Dinner

Feb. 4, 2010
6 p.m.
Piper's Banquets, 1295 Butterfield Road, Aurora
Tickets are \$50 per person with a portion going to the Henry Cowherd Scholarship Fund.
Call the Mayor's Office of Special Events: 630-844-4731.

Career Center at Main Library

The Library Career Center at the Main Library offers extended length computer sessions for on-line job searches, completing on-line job applications and resume development, as well as links to job search sites, and links to IDES and food pantry sites. In addition to computers, the Career Center provides books on creating resumes, interviewing tips, and assistance by librarians plus programs to assist people who are seeking employment or facing downsizing or foreclosure.



Find us on facebook:
www.facebook.com/auroraininois

Receive e-mail updates by going to the city's Web site, www.aurora-il.org and following directions to sign up

SAVE THE DATE

April 11-24, 2010

300-hour Guinness World Record Ride
Rush-Copley Healthplex
Aurora resident George Hood will attempt a fourth Guinness World Record for the longest stationary bike ride. Hood will raise funds for Fox Valley United Way and the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. Hood broke the record at 177 hours, 45 minutes on May 12, 2008. Go to www.ridegeorgehide.org or call 630-415-6222 for information. Sponsored by The City of Aurora, Rush-Copley Healthplex and Fox Valley United Way.
The current record is 192 hours, set in January, 2009 in Belgium by Shirvani Merhzad.

April 30, 2010

The Aurora Public Library Foundation will host its annual fundraising event, Imagine...the possibilities. Proceeds from the event will benefit Aurora residents of all ages. Check the Web site for updates and to view photos from last year: www.aurora.lib.il.us. Click on the "Foundation/Donate Here" link on the navigation bar on the left. Call Laura Stoney, 630-264-4154 for information.

Aurora Public Library

Christmas & New Year's Holiday Closings

Monday, December 21 -
Saturday, January 2, 2010
Winter Break - No Bookmobile stops

Monday, December 21 -
Wednesday, December 23
Open regular hours

Thursday, December 24 -
Friday, December 25
All locations closed

Saturday, December 26 -
Wednesday, December 30
Open regular hours

Thursday, December 31
All locations to close at 5 p.m.

Friday, January 1, 2010
All locations closed

Saturday, January 2, 2010
Open regular hours



Main Library:
1 E. Benton St.,
630-264-4101

Eola Road Branch:
555 S. Eola Road,
630-264-3400

West Branch:
233 S. Constitution Drive,
630-264-3600

Hours:
Monday - Thursday,
9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday and Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday,
1 to 5 p.m.
(school year only)

City Holiday Hours

City Hall at 44 E. Downer Place and The Customer Service Center at 3770 McCoy Drive will be:

Open until noon on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24

Closed on Christmas Day, Dec. 25

Open until noon on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31

Closed on New Year's Day, Jan. 1

Public invited to tour APD headquarters (continued from page 1)

houses a lead-free tactical firearms proficiency range, state-of-the-art climate-controlled evidence storage warehouse, and forensic laboratory with automated fingerprint identification capabilities.

Green features of the building include permeable pavement that absorbs storm water runoff, "daylight harvesting" elements that maximize natural light, recycled content in drywall, steel and concrete and photovoltaic panels for solar power generation.



"Working in tandem with the operations of one of the most progressive police departments in the nation, the environmentally friendly features mean Aurora citizens win on two fronts: they get a cleaner environment and a safer city," Weisner said.

The 152,000-square-foot headquarters will house 301 officers and 92 civilians who serve a population of an estimated 185,000 people living in a 46-square-mile radius.

"Two years ago, when this project started, I wasn't able to visualize how impressive the finished product would be," said Ward One Alderman Abby Schuler. "But each step along the way, from the groundbreaking to the steel-topping ceremony to the completion of the Training and Support Facility, my support for and pride in the facility has grown. I am anxious for the citizens of Aurora to see it."

Thomas also extended his welcome to the public to take a self-guided tour of the three-story building. "The headquarters, along with its Branch Court,

911 Emergency Call Center and interesting features that residents of all ages will enjoy seeing." "There are many enhance the capabilities of our police force," Thomas said.

Aurora Police Department: OLD vs. NEW



	The Old	The New
Location	350 N. River St.	1200 E. Indian Trail
Completed	1966	2009
Staff	89 officers, 11 civilians	301 officers, 92 civilians
Department Organization	Two bureaus, five divisions	Three bureaus, 11 divisions
Population	68,000	185,000
Service Area	12 square miles	46 square miles
Square footage	approx. 25,000	152,000

3 intersections equipped with cameras

Aurora Police are reminding motorists they will be fined \$100 for running red lights at three city intersections equipped with camera enforcement systems.

The intersections are Commons Drive at East New York Street, Farnsworth Avenue at New York, and Farnsworth at Molitor Road.

The cameras operate through in-ground sensors that monitor each passing vehicle. If a motorist enters an intersection after the light turns red, the sensors trigger a high resolution camera system that records several still images and a video clip

of the red light violation. Vehicles entering the intersection on a yellow light or those caught in an intersection when the yellow light turns red are not considered in violation.

Although motorists not coming to a complete stop before making a legal right turn on red will probably not be ticketed, Aurora Police reinforce that Illinois law requires drivers to "cease all forward movement" before turning right. Therefore, it is possible that motorists who demonstrate a complete disregard for safely while turning right on red may receive a ticket. As part of the citation process, an Aurora police officer will

review all violations. If he or she would have issued a ticket in person, a citation will be issued.

Violators will be sent citations through the mail within 20 days of the infraction. They can then either pay the fine or contest it through a municipal hearing process. They also can view the red light violation online by logging onto www.photonotice.com.

Complete information is available on the city's Web site at www.aurora.il.org. Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc., the company providing the red light camera systems, has an office that is handling inquiries and fine payments. Call 630-499-8601.

Four honored for lifesaving efforts

Lt. Toby Gill and Private Clinton Thompson were named Firefighters of the Year by The Exchange Club of Aurora during an Oct. 27 ceremony.

Also nominated for the award was Pvt. Brandon Matson.

The Outstanding Citizen Award was presented to Terry Smith, Aurora University athletic trainer.

Gill and Thompson entered a burning home on Gladstone Avenue on Aug. 20 where a person was believed to be trapped inside.



An Aurora police officer who was first on the scene reported that he was unable to enter the residence because of the extreme heat and smoke.



When Gill and Thompson arrived, smoke was pushing from every opening of the house. Within three minutes of going inside, they had located an elderly man and taken him to a waiting ambulance. The man, who was suffering from smoke inhalation, was airlifted to a hospital and later recovered.

Gill joined the Aurora Fire Department in April 1994. Thompson joined the department in August 2008 and is the department's newest firefighter.

Matson was nominated for saving a choking child in June at a fun fair he was attending in Romeoville. He joined the Aurora Fire Department in August 2000.

Smith came to the aid of a basketball player who had collapsed in the Aurora University gymnasium after practice on Oct. 15. Smith instructed an assistant coach to call 911 and directed another coach to retrieve an automated external defibrillator while he began CPR on the unconscious student.

He used the AED to revive the student prior to the arrival of paramedics.



Photos from top to bottom: Pvt. Clinton Thompson, left, Lt. Toby Gill, middle, and Fire Chief Hal Carlson. Aurora University's Terry Smith. Pvt. Brandon Matson.



Safe snow removal a team effort

Snow operations in the city are a cooperative effort between the city and residents during winter months. Equipment and manpower are distributed throughout 35 snow routes. Both city departments and private contractors have assigned routes.

Busy, primary streets are plowed and/or salted first, with residential streets following.

How can residents help?

- ❄ **Make sure your mailbox meets United States Postal Service standards of installation** (Go to www.usps.com/receive/mailboxstandards.htm). Most of the time, damage done to mailboxes is from snow off the plow hitting a substandard or unsecured box, not by the plow hitting the box.
- ❄ **Move vehicles off streets to facilitate plowing efforts during any snowfall.** For accumulations of two inches or more, residents are prohibited from parking on any city street until the snow has been cleared to the curb or road edge.
- ❄ **Do not allow children to play in or around snow piles in the public right-of-way** (the area between the sidewalk and street and/or cul-de-sac islands)
- ❄ **When cleaning driveway approaches and sidewalks, do not throw snow into the street.**
- ❄ **Stay back at least 75 feet from the rear of any plow truck and do not pass snow plow trucks at any time.** During snow operations, plow trucks are considered emergency vehicles and should be treated as such.
- ❄ **Remove all obstructions from streets including basketball hoops, trash cans or any other items that could hinder snow cleanup.**

Record number of miles resurfaced in 2009 season



A record number of miles of pavement were resurfaced during 2009, thanks to funding from a number of sources including aldermen's ward funds, Motor Fuel Tax Funds, Community Development and Block Grants, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars.

According to City Road and Bridge Coordinator Chris Lirot, 56 lanes miles were resurfaced during the 2009 construction season at a cost of \$9.2 million.

In all, 108 streets received new pavement, including portions of Sullivan Road, Eola Road, Molitor Road, McCoy Drive, Woodlawn Avenue, Shoreline Drive and Stonebridge Boulevard.

In 2008, the city resurfaced 54 lane miles at a total cost of \$9 million.

Director of Public Works Ken Schroth stated that more than \$310,000 in state Emergency Repair Program funds, secured with the help of State Rep. Darlene Senger (96th District), provided for

*"...it was a plus to be able to use funding from a number of sources to resurface a record number of miles throughout Aurora."
-Mayor Tom Weisner*

this season's Meridian Parkway resurfacing project.

ARRA funding contributed more than \$600,000 to the resurfacing of Farnsworth Avenue from Reckinger Road to Molitor Road.

"Keeping city streets in good condition is a challenge that keeps us busy year-round," said Mayor Tom Weisner. "This year was no exception, so it was a plus to be able to use funding from a number of sources to resurface a record number of miles throughout Aurora."

Ward funds controlled by the city's aldermen are the main source of funds for residential street resurfacing, Schroth said.

The State of Illinois completed seven lane miles of resurfacing work at a cost of \$1.7 million on state routes in the city. Federal funds are covering 80 percent of a three-year project to reconstruct Indian Trail Road from Church Road to Farnsworth Avenue to a five-lane roadway with a raised, landscaped median.

Although the construction season ended in November, Lirot said portions of Simms Street, Center Avenue, South Avenue, Bangs Street, Hoyles Avenue, Fourth Street, Schomer Road and Friar Drive are already scheduled for resurfacing work next spring.

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

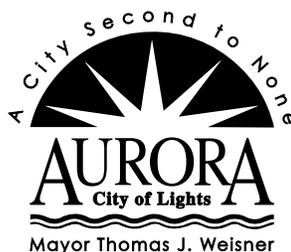
Ward 6: Mike Saville

Ward 7: Scheketa Hart-Burns

Ward 8: Rick Mervine

Ward 9: Leroy Keith

Ward 10: Lynda Elmore



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