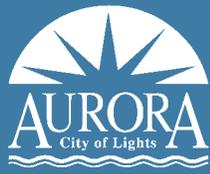


AURORA BOREALIS



Festival of Lights to shine even brighter in Phillips Park this year

One of the largest outdoor light shows in the Chicago area will shine even brighter – and greener – at Phillips Park during the holidays.

The fifth annual Festival of Lights brings a mile of enchantment as lighted trees and displays such as Santa, his reindeer and other holiday favorites



entertain both children and adults. Many of the displays this year will be lit with LED bulbs making the Festival not only 10 times brighter but also more cost-efficient by going green. The Festival of Lights is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Aurora in partnership with the City.

“Today, despite a tough economy, the Rotary Club of Aurora remains committed to making the Festival bigger and brighter and will continue to offer this wonderful event to

the public free of charge,” Event Coordinator Mary Dougherty said.

Event organizers anticipate more than 40,000 people traveling in 16,000 cars will visit Phillips Park during the four-week event. The Rotary Club does

accept donations at the Festival exit and raised more than \$60,000 for a variety of local charities last year.

For more information on the event, visit www.aurorafestivaloflights.com.

Festival of Lights hours

5 to 9 p.m. Sunday to Thursday
5 to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Phillips Park, 1000 Ray Moses Drive,
through Dec. 26

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Lehnertz Avenue display celebrates 60 years

Aurora residents looking for more holiday lights should stop by Lehnertz Avenue for a holiday tradition six decades in the making on the City’s Northeast side.

Homeowners will be brightening up the neighborhood for the 60th straight year with a mixture of traditional religious outdoor displays and another area featuring lights from the “Peanuts” cartoons.

The lights are displayed from 5 to 10:30 p.m. mid-December through the early part of January. Lights stay on all night Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. The display can be found along Lehnertz Avenue from Sheridan Street, past Garfield Park through Lehnertz Circle.





From the Mayor's Desk

The holidays will shine bright with light displays and your support to shop locally

The holiday season is upon us, which means cold weather, extra calories, lots of shopping, and, hopefully, good times with family and friends.

For the City of Aurora, it is budget season. Our strong success in cutting costs in recent years is working to our benefit as we approach 2012. Despite a continued weak economy and flat revenues, we will once again reduce the property tax levy for 2011.

This means the City portion of your property tax bills payable in 2012 will go down once again, just as it did in 2011.

While violent crime is falling for the fourth consecutive year (there was but one homicide recorded for 2011 through November), crimes against property, such as burglary, have increased. Although this comes as no surprise in the current economy, it is critically important that we keep our homes secure during absences and that we report unusual activity in our neighborhoods.

In our downtown, construction on Phase I of RiverEdge Park is progressing on schedule. The park, located on the Fox River on Route 25 across from the Aurora Transportation Center, will include an entertainment venue and other amenities.

As one of several riverfront sites being cleaned up and revitalized, RiverEdge Park will be a premier gathering place in our community. It will also spur private, mixed-use development in the vicinity as the economy recovers, which in turn will provide jobs and strengthen our tax base. RiverEdge Park will be in full operation beginning in Spring 2013.

Certainly, the retail community in Aurora, as elsewhere, has been challenged in this economy, but we were pleased to learn Simon Property Group, owners of Premium Outlets at Interstate 88 and Farnsworth Avenue, is planning a 130,000-square-foot addition to its outlet mall.

Premium Outlets and the Westfield Fox Valley Mall are just two of many holiday shopping locations available in Aurora. Remember, Aurora stores provide local jobs and support our schools through taxes.

If you're looking for holiday fun the whole family can enjoy, be sure to visit the holiday light displays on Lehnertz Avenue and Phillips Park. Lehnertz Avenue residents are celebrating the 60th consecutive year of this wonderful neighborhood tradition that

includes an area of religious displays, as well as an area with "Peanuts" characters. Phillips Park features our Rotary Club's Festival of Lights, which gets bigger and better each year. You can get the details in this newsletter.

My wife, Marilyn, and I wish you and yours the happiest of holidays as 2011 comes to a close.

Tom Weisner
Mayor, City of Aurora



Aurora news on Facebook, Twitter



Be our biggest fan and follow the City of Aurora on social media.

The City's Facebook fan page and Twitter feed offer residents, business owners and other community stakeholders City news, event information, road construction updates and alerts from the convenience of their cell phones or computers.

Here is how you can follow the City:



Search: "City of Aurora, IL"
Website:
www.facebook.com/cityofaurail
Then click the "like" button.



Search: @CityofAuroraIL
Website:
www.twitter.com/cityofaurail
Then click the "follow" button.



Residents interested in receiving City email alerts can sign up on the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.

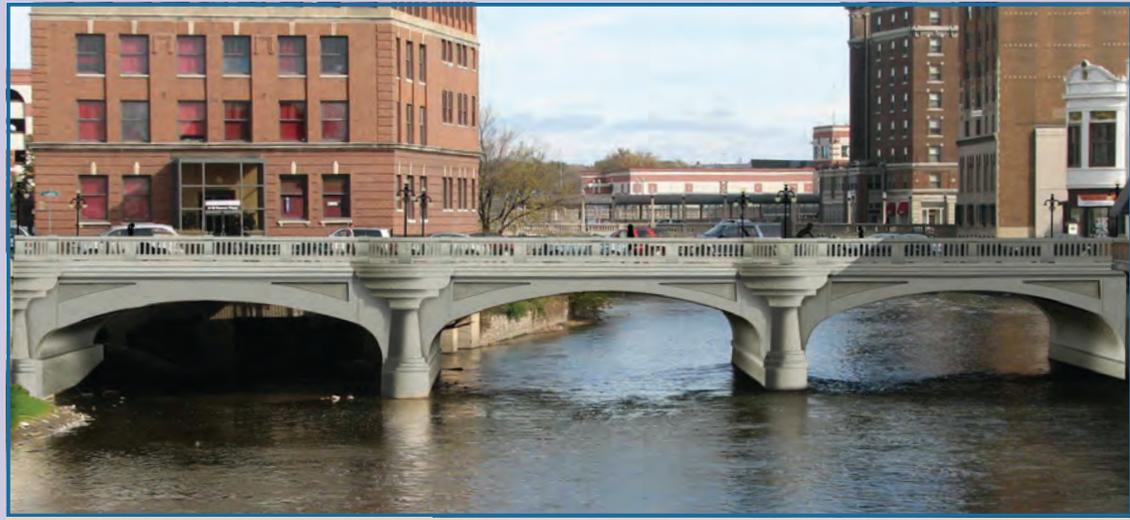
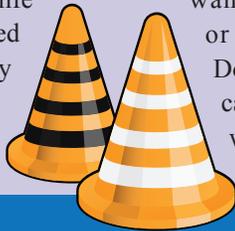
Caution: Downer Place bridge construction ahead

Residents heading to the Aurora Public Library or doing business in downtown Aurora next year may need to make alternate plans to get to their desired destination.

Starting in February, both of the Downer Place bridges crossing the Fox River will be closed as the structures are torn down and replaced. Traffic will be rerouted to Benton Street (refer to the detour map, right) during the construction period, which is forecasted to take between 9 to 10 months.

Motorists looking for parking downtown can still utilize the Stolp Avenue parking garage by taking Benton Street to Stolp Avenue and then heading north to access the deck's entrance.

The bridges, originally built at the turn of the 20th century, have exceeded their useful life and have been deemed structurally deficient by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

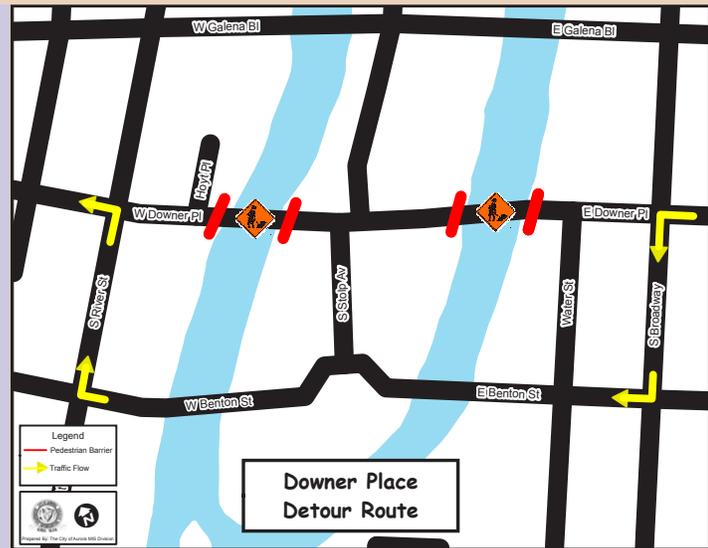


The rendering depicts what the Downer Place bridge will look like when completed in fall 2012.

Eighty percent of the construction and engineering costs, which total \$7.83 million, will be federally funded. The City also received a \$500,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to help offset the City's share.

The City will construct rain gardens on all four corners at the intersection of Downer Place and Stolp Avenue to help collect storm water and beautify the downtown. The project is being paid for in part with a \$70,000 green infrastructure grant.

Residents and business owners wanting the latest updates or more information on the Downer Place bridge project can visit the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.



When both bridges are shut down on Downer Place, traffic will be detoured south down Broadway Avenue to **Benton Street**, which will be designated a two-way road throughout the construction period. Motorists can head west on Benton Street, north on River Street and then continue westbound on Downer Place to complete the detour.

Downer Place bridge history

- Wooden structures built in 1836 were the first bridges to span the east and west channels of the Fox River
- Both bridges were washed out in a flood the following year
- Covered bridges were constructed in 1857 but were destroyed later that year by another flood
- Iron bridges were built in 1868 and lasted until 1906 when they were replaced with concrete
- Bridges for New York Street, Galena Boulevard and Benton Street were influenced by the design of the Downer Place bridge



Memorial Building, Aurora City Hall, and the post office are shown in this beautiful postcard that was mailed on August 10, 1910. (Courtesy of Bill Novotny.)



The Downer Place bridge in the early 1900s.

Aurora Early Learning Center ready to serve the community

The One Hope United's Aurora Early Learning Center opened its doors this fall to much fanfare from parents seeking full-day child care and early education for their children.

The center provides affordable services for up to 200 children, infants through school age, based on family size and income.

The Aurora center is a state-of-the-art facility that has 11 classrooms and features an indoor gym as well as three large outdoor playground spaces with separate areas for different age groups.

"We are fortunate to have such a wonderful facility and so much support from the community," Aurora Early Learning Center Director Ann O'Malley said. "Our enrollment is growing each week, and we are committed to offering quality early learning opportunities to the children in our care."

The facility features resource rooms that offer parents information on parenting and access to computers. The center also has been classified as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building.

In 2001, the City of Aurora commissioned the Illinois Facilities Fund to conduct a comprehensive early childhood care needs assessment. The study specifically focused on the need for a licensed full-day, full-year child care program for low-income working families with children eligible for state subsidized services. The report revealed the need for additional early learning opportunities in the community based on Aurora's rapid population growth.

Thanks to the hard work of State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, the City was able to secure more than \$2 million from the state and chipped in an additional \$600,000 to move forward with construction at 525 College Ave. The City donated the land at the site, which formerly served as a parking lot for the former Area 2 Police Headquarters,



which later became the Fred Rodgers Community Center. Second Ward Alderman Juany Garza also contributed \$150,000 in ward funds for the project.

One Hope United utilizes nationally-recognized Creative Curriculum teaching and assessment tools with a strong focus on a healthy lifestyles program that promotes health, nutrition and environmentally-friendly practices.

"The Aurora Center follows the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) requirements for high quality and has begun the national accreditation process," said Kate Currin, One Hope United's communications

director. "Once accredited, the Aurora center will be among the top 10 percent of programs for quality across the nation."

As families take advantage of the new program, City officials and community leaders are continuing to explore additional early learning opportunities in Aurora. To learn more about Aurora's Early Learning Initiative, call the Fox Valley United Way at 630-896-4636.

Want more details?

Parents looking to enroll their children or seeking more information can contact One Hope United at:

Phone – 630-256-7700

Email – aurora@onehopeunited.org

Website – www.onehopechilddevelopment.org

Holiday Tree Collection

The City will collect trees during the week of Jan. 9. Before you discard your tree, please follow the guidelines below:

- Trees must be free of plastic bags, decorations and tree stands
- Place trees at the curb on your normal garbage collection day
- Wreaths and garland will not be collected for recycling and must be stickered as garbage



End of an era: Old police station demolished

When Aurora built its new police headquarters, the facility was designed to give officers the latest tools to meet the demands of a growing community, whose population had risen 87 percent during the previous four decades.

The scenario above is not 2009 when the City opened the new Police Headquarters at 1200 E. Indian Trail Road. The year was 1966, and Aurora’s population had expanded to 68,000 people over 12 square miles. The City’s police force of 100 employees had become cramped in its downtown building on Downer Place and was looking forward to opening a brand new facility at 350 N. River St.

After more than four decades of service, some of those same employees who welcomed the River Street station attended a ceremony this fall to commemorate the end of an era in Aurora’s law enforcement history as the building was torn down.

“This was a milestone in our history, and while it is sad to see the former building go, it is a sign that Aurora is moving forward,” said Mayor Tom Weisner, who started working for the City in 1986 as an emergency services coordinator in the police station.

Back in the 1960s, the Police Department underwent a large reorganization with an emphasis on training, new uniforms and new police squad cars. The new building along the Fox River was the impetus for change.



With Aurora’s borders stretching into DuPage County and the opening of the Fox Valley Mall in the 1970s, the City constructed a building addition to the police station in 1977 to accommodate more officers. However, the facility became full again with additional hires to protect Aurora’s surging population, which more than doubled from 81,293 people in 1980 during the next 25 years.

“The last 15 years we certainly outgrew this building,” Former Police Chief William Powell said. “The building was made to hold people, but it wasn’t designed for technology required to fight crime efficiently.”

Fast forwarding to 2010, the River Street building was closed, and the operations shifted to the new Aurora Police Headquarters. The police department is now home to 367 sworn officers and support staff to serve 197,899 residents in Illinois’ second largest city, which now encompasses 46 square miles in four counties.

Once demolition is completed, the River Street property will be returned to natural green space along the Fox River. 

New building highlights

- Police have driven the crime rate to its lowest level in more than 30 years with the help of the latest technology.
- The 152,000-square-foot building boasts a larger shooting range, more training space and 911 dispatch stations as well as an attached branch court building.
- The state-of-the-art facility has been recognized with several design and sustainability awards.

City, Waubensee partnership continues down strong path



The City of Aurora and Waubensee Community College cemented their long-standing partnership after unveiling a riverwalk and bike path extension this fall.

The extension borders Waubensee’s new downtown Aurora campus, which opened at 18 S. River St. this summer, and the west side of the Fox River. The college funded the upper part of the riverwalk extension while the City developed the path’s lower section. The project enhances pedestrian safety by allowing students to bypass Galena Boulevard by walking underneath the street to access a remote parking lot.

The City held a ribbon cutting ceremony in late September attended by Mayor Tom Weisner, 2nd Ward Alderman Juany Garza, 5th Ward Alderman John “Whitey” Peters, 6th Ward Aldermen Mike Saville and Waubensee Community College President Christine Sobek. 

Aurora Winter Events!



JANUARY

DECEMBER

Through Dec. 26

Rotary Club Holiday Festival of Lights

5 to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday

5 to 9 p.m. Sunday to Thursday

Phillips Park, 1000 Ray Moses Drive

The City of Lights will be even brighter as the holiday spirit shines at Phillips Park. Bring your family and friends through more than one mile of light displays featuring Santa, his reindeer and other holiday favorites. The Festival of Lights is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Aurora and the City of Aurora. The festival is free to the public, but donations will be accepted. The festival continues each night until Monday, Dec. 26. For more information, visit www.aurorafestivaloflights.com.

Through Wednesday, Dec. 21

Visits with Santa

Noon to 4 p.m. Saturday to

Wednesday, Dec. 17-21

Phillips Park Visitors Center,
1000 Ray Moses Drive

Aurora children who want to give their holiday wish list to Santa Claus in person can visit jolly St. Nick in December at the Phillips Park Visitors Center. The free event is sponsored by the Friends of Phillips Park. Parents are encouraged to bring their cameras. For more information, visit the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.

Thursday, Dec. 15

Home Performance Workshop

7 to 8:15 p.m.

Fred Rodgers Community
Center, 501 College Ave.

Learn how to reduce your energy needs, increase comfort and maintain the structural integrity of your home at a free monthly seminar. The program is part of the City's Aurora GreenWorks Community Education Workshop series that was funded by a federal stimulus grant. Pre-registration is requested by calling the City's Neighborhood Redevelopment Division at 630-256-3320.

Friday, Dec. 16

Winter Garden of Youth Art

Opening reception 5 to 7 p.m.

David L. Pierce Art and History
Center, 20 E. Downer Place

The 14th annual Winter Garden of Youth Art spotlights the artistic talents of Aurora students ranging from kindergarten through high school. The artwork, which will be displayed through Jan. 20, 2012, will feature a variety of mediums chosen by teachers and school faculty members. Admission to the reception and gallery is free. For more information on gallery hours, visit www.aurora-il.org.

Saturday, Dec. 17

Electronics Recycling

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

City's Customer Service Center,
3770 McCoy Drive

Don't miss out on the last opportunity of 2011 to recycle those old or unwanted electronics, this time at the Customer Service Center on the Far East side. For a complete list of accepted items, call 630-256-INFO or visit the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.

Monday, Jan. 16

Fox Valley Special Recreation Association MedFest

2 to 6 p.m.

Vaughan Athletic Center,
2121 W. Indian Trail

The Fox Valley Special Recreation Association will host a clinic with Dreyer Medical doctors to provide free sport physicals to Fox Valley residents who have intellectual disabilities so they can participate in Special Olympics. For more information, call Mike Younie at 630-907-1114 or email him at mikey@fvsra.org.

A Special Tribute to

Martin Luther King, Jr.

6:30 p.m.

West Aurora High School,
1201 W. New York St.

The MLK Planning Committee and the City of Aurora will be holding a special tribute honoring the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The youth-focused evening will include performances from Aurora high school students and local choirs, dance and professional actors. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 19

Home Performance Workshop

7 to 8:15 p.m.

Aurora Police Department,
1200 E. Indian Trail Road

Residents can register for the free energy efficiency seminar by calling 630-256-3320 or by visiting the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Aurora will be celebrating its 175th anniversary in 2012. Joseph McCarty, a pioneer from New York state, headed west reaching the Fox Valley and what is now downtown Aurora in 1834. The settlement eventually incorporated three years later when a U.S. Post Office was established.





Friday, Jan 27

Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board Community Breakfast

7:30 to 9 a.m.

Gaslite Manor, 2485 Church Road

The Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board (AHHAB) will honor students who have achieved excellence in academics, athletics and leadership. Young artists, writers and Hispanic individuals making a difference in the community also will be recognized. Tickets are \$20 with a portion going to the AHHAB's scholarship fund. For more information, visit www.aurorahispanicheritage.com or call the City's Community Services Department at 630-256-3400.

MARCH

Thursday, March 1

African-American Heritage and Awards Breakfast

7:30 to 9 a.m.

Gaslite Manor, 2485 Church Road

The Aurora African-American Heritage Advisory Board will be presenting the 2011 Outstanding African-American Award at its annual celebration. The award is given to an Auran who exhibits leadership, volunteerism and service to the African-American community. Tickets are \$20 with a portion going to the Henry Cowherd Scholarship Fund. For more information, call the City's Community Services Department at 630-256-3400.

FEBRUARY

Thursday, Feb. 16

Home Performance Workshop

7 to 8:15 p.m.

Fred Rodgers Community Center, 501 College Ave.

Residents can register for the free energy efficiency seminar by calling 630-256-3320 or by visiting the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.

Friday, Feb. 17

Art at City Hall

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place

The Aurora Public Art Commission celebrates the City's 175th anniversary with a photo exhibit featuring images from the community's early years in the 1840s to the present. The exhibit will be on display on all floors of the building through Jan. 11, 2013.

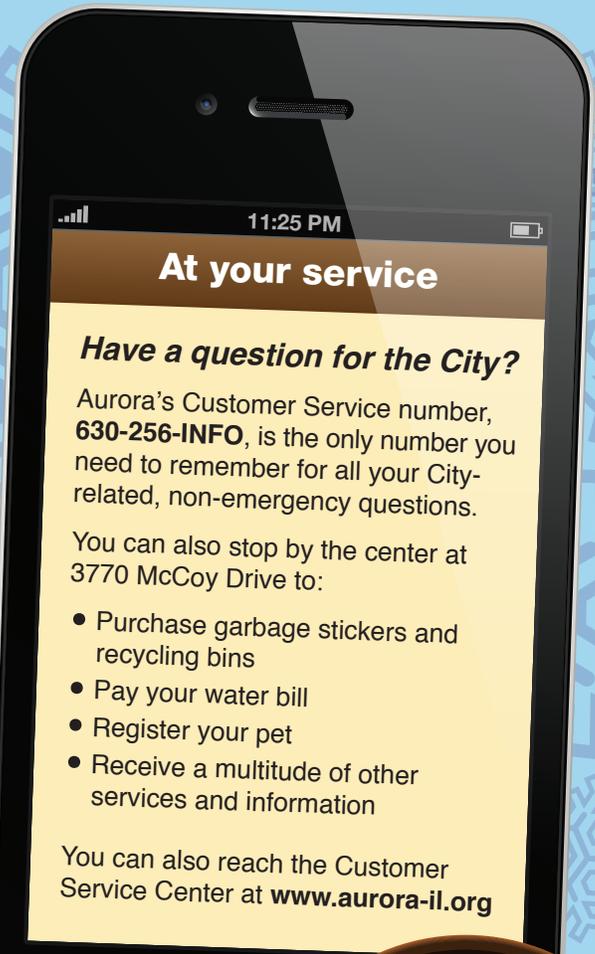
Friday, Feb. 24

Jesse Howard, Paintings

Opening reception 5 to 7:30 p.m.

David L. Pierce Art and History Center, 20 E. Downer Place

A reception will help mark the opening of Jesse Howard's painting exhibit, which is comprised of charcoal and water color pieces. Howard has been painting about social issues and the plight of people in the inner city dating back to the 1970s. The exhibit will be on display from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday through April 20. For more information, visit the City's website at www.aurora-il.org.



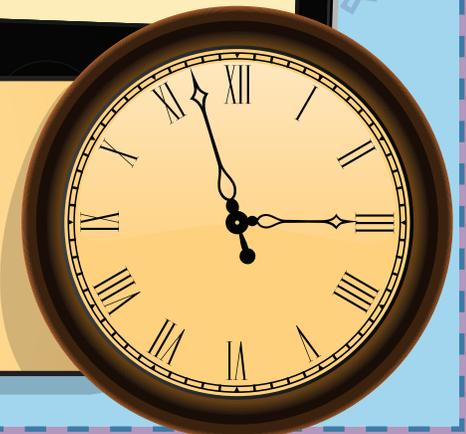
City Holiday Hours

City Hall and all City buildings

Christmas: Offices will close at noon Dec. 23 and reopen Dec. 27

New Year's: Offices will close at noon Dec. 30 and reopen Jan. 3

Police and Fire Departments will be open



Aurora Pauses to Remember 9/11

The City of Aurora honored the memories of the people that lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist attacks during a 10th anniversary ceremony outside the

Central Fire Station in the downtown. The ceremony also recognized local families who have lost loved ones serving our country in the Middle East.



Central DuPage Hospital to build medical facility in Aurora

Aurora residents living on the Northeast side will have quicker access to convenient medical care when Central DuPage Hospital (CDH) opens its first facility in Aurora.

The hospital is tentatively scheduled to start the first phase of construction next year on an \$11 million convenient care building on a portion of vacant land it owns on the northwest corner of Farnsworth Avenue and Bilter Road. The proposed 30,000-square-foot facility will offer patients same-day medical service with doctors.

The CDH development is expected to create 50 to 75 jobs, however, that number could potentially grow if the hospital moves forward with a proposed three- or four-building campus, which could include doctor facilities or specialized medical offices. Any potential expansion would be based upon the service needs of the community.

Site construction for the first phase is scheduled to begin in late spring or early summer 2012 with anticipation for completion the following year.

The convenient care facility will not only offer much needed medical care for Northeast side residents, but the project will provide additional property tax revenue to local government agencies. The CDH expansion into Aurora could potentially serve as a catalyst for future economic development. 



City of Aurora and Central DuPage Hospital (CDH) leaders broke ground this fall on a new convenient care facility on Farnsworth Avenue and Bilter Road that is expected to open in 2013. Pictured above is (from left) Charles Rusick, CDH manager of real estate; Mayor Tom Weisner; Tom Wright, Delnor Hospital executive vice-president; Jim Spear, CDH-Delnor System executive vice-president; 1st Ward Alderman Abby Schuler; 10th Ward Alderman Lynda Elmore; State Sen. Linda Holmes and State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia.

PARAMOUNT BROADWAY SERIES A SMASH HIT!

TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE FOR 'A CHORUS LINE' AND 'HAIR'

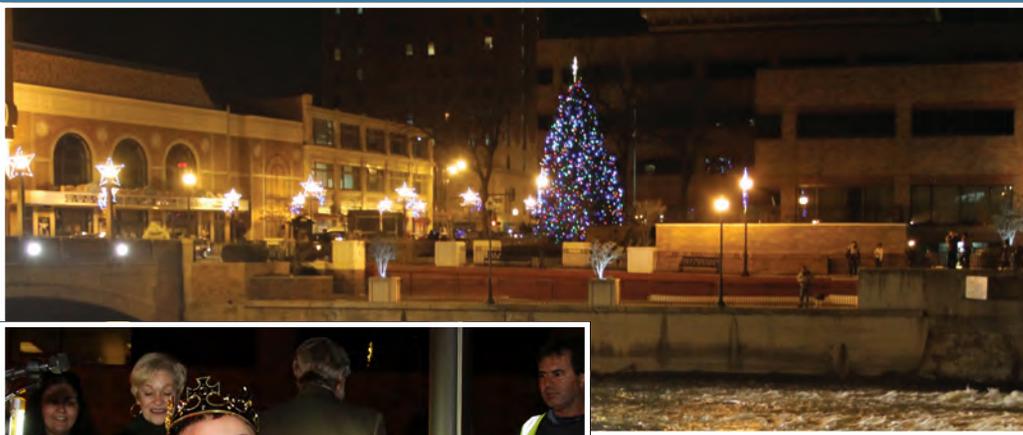
The Paramount Theatre's locally produced Broadway series is literally packing the house, with the first two shows achieving both popular and critical success.

The first-of-its-kind Broadway series, at the beautifully restored Art-Deco Paramount in downtown Aurora, has proven to be a huge draw. "My Fair Lady," the first play of the four-production series, brought unprecedented crowds and high praise. "Chicago Sun Times" Theater Critic Hedy Weiss proclaimed, "By all rights, the phenomenal production of 'My Fair Lady' now inaugurating the homegrown, grandly ambitious Broadway series at Aurora's historic 1,888-seat Paramount Theatre, should move straight to New York."

The buzz from "My Fair Lady" helped spark even greater interest in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," creating a 50 percent increase in advance ticket sales. "Chicago Tribune" Theater Critic Chris Jones declared, "The Paramount has knocked its second self-produced musical out of the park and halfway to Egypt." The upbeat musical with a biblical storyline finished its run with multiple sellouts in the week preceding Thanksgiving.

Tickets are now available for "A Chorus Line," appearing at the Paramount from Jan. 18 to Feb. 15, 2012, and for "Hair," March 14 to April 1, 2012. For tickets or more information, call 630-896-6666 or go online at www.paramountaurora.com.

Aurora ushers in the holiday season



The City of Lights shined with holiday spirit as Jack Frost and Miss Merry Christmas winners Edwin Ramos and Madeline Assell light up the City's official tree for the first time Nov. 23 at the North Island Center. Residents can come see the tree right along the Fox River across from the Paramount Theatre through the holiday season.

Winter wonderland

Bundle up and bring your skates or sled for some outdoor fun this winter. Facilities are open sunrise to 10 p.m.*

Phillips Park: The sledding hill and ice rink are located just north of the aquatic center, 828 Montgomery Road

Garfield Park: Ice skating is available at the park, 817 Forest Ave.



* = Weather dependent. Call the Customer Service Center for details at 630-256-INFO.

The Aurora Borealis is now available for advertising.

We encourage you to consider how this newsletter can benefit your business while supporting the community at the same time.

Please contact The Strathmore Company for details on how you can start generating your increased sales through advertising in the Aurora Borealis.

Benefits

- Generate increased traffic to your location. Don't be overlooked. Your ad will help customers want to seek you out.
- Get full exposure in your town. **More than 67,000 households and businesses** will see this piece, unlike subscription-based publications which reach a fraction of the population.
- Fact – Display ads generate 60% more response than an individual listing.
- Get some shelf life. Don't have your ad end up in a recycle bin by late afternoon. Newsletters are relevant local pieces in homes for several weeks.
- Demonstrate local support. People welcome businesses that advertise in community publications.
- Avoid getting lost. What's the best local advertising option: a color advertisement in a widely distributed newsletter or a small black and white ad in a large throwaway newspaper?



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Phone: 630-232-9677 Ext. 119

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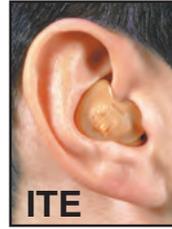
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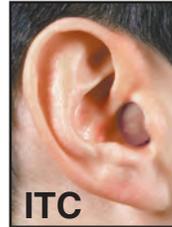
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AURORA BOREALIS

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mayorsoffice@aurora-il.org

Aldermen's Office

(630) 256-3020

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

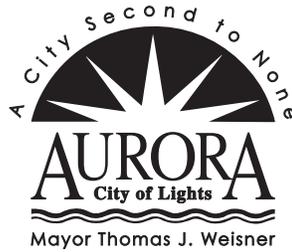
Ward 6: Mike Saville

Ward 7: Scheketa Hart-Burns

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City Web site: www.aurora-il.org
Aurora Community Television: Comcast Channel 10

Holiday wish list

While everyone is busy getting into the holiday spirit, the Aurora Fire Department and the City have their own wish list they would like to see from residents this winter. Please remember the following safety tips in the coming months.



Fire safety

- Check the water levels in your holiday tree daily to make sure it does not dry out.
- Take down live trees, even if they are well-watered, after four weeks.
- Make sure outlets are not overloaded with decorations, extension cords or power strips.
- Inspect outlets and switches if they are warm or hot, which could mean unsafe wiring exists.
- Space heaters should be placed on a level surface out of the reach of children and pets.
- Candles should be placed on sturdy, uncluttered surfaces away from children and pets and at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

Winter safety

- Don't park on any street after a snow fall of 2 inches or more until it has been plowed.
- Use common sense and refrain from leaving a warming car unattended — locked or unlocked.
- Keep fire hydrants cleared of snow so they can be accessed quickly in an emergency.
- Do not shovel snow into the street when cleaning driveways.
- Drive safely; busy primary streets are plowed first before residential roads are cleared.
- Check your mailbox posts for signs of deterioration (The City is not responsible for damage resulting from snow being plowed on to the parkways.)

