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Statue of Marie Wilkinson
at the Aurora Public Library

WARM HEARTS

Caring Aurora residents organized a “Warm Hearts” campaign to place warm clothing throughout the city with personal notes attached for anyone in need. This hat and scarf were placed on the Marie Wilkinson statue at the Aurora Public Library. Learn more about service opportunities on **Page 2**.

I AM NOT LOST.
IF YOU ARE STUCK
OUT IN THE COLD
PLEASE TAKE THIS TO
HELP YOU KEEP WARM

VOLUNTEER FOX VALLEY

Get Connected to Volunteer Opportunities
in Your Community



www.volunteerfoxvalley.org

The one place you can go to become involved in our community!

GIVE

ADVOCATE

VOLUNTEER



Les Misérables

ONLY SIX WEEKS! MARCH 18 - APRIL 26

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From the Mayor's Desk



Mayor Thomas J. Weisner

Blizzards, Broadway, and Being of Service to Others

If this has been a gentler winter than last, there was little evidence to suggest that as we entered the month of February 2015. Exactly four years from the occurrence of the 2011 Groundhog Day Blizzard, another powerful blizzard—the 5th worst in local history—enveloped Aurora and the entire Chicago area.

The storm brought more than fifteen inches of snowfall over the Super Bowl weekend and high winds created white-out conditions for much of Saturday and Sunday.

City of Aurora snow crews worked night and day throughout the storm, but conditions were so bad that a freshly plowed street could be difficult to traverse only two hours later, due to new and wind-blown snow.

As our City snow team proved in 2011 and last winter, as well, they were up to the task and the vast majority of Aurora streets were reasonably drivable by Monday morning.

With the exception of one of the City's contract snow plowers, who let us down on Aurora's far west side, our privately contracted snow plowers—needed to help us cover 1360 lane miles of streets —also did a good job.

We appreciate our residents' patience during this challenging three-day snow event, as well as the many positive comments we received. Where there were issues or valid complaints, we aim to make sure they don't happen again.

One of the best ways to warm the cockles of your heart in the final cold and wintery days of the season is to attend a Broadway production at the Paramount Theatre. In a season that is already breaking box office records (62,000 people saw *Mary Poppins*), the Paramount brings you a high level classic, *Les Miserables*, beginning Wednesday, March 18 and running through Sunday, April 26. Visit paramountaurora.com for dates and

times of this and other coming shows, like John Lithgow, David Sedaris, Vicki Lawrence and Poi Dog Pondering.

And of course, nothing warms the heart like helping others and being a volunteer in Aurora. There are many opportunities to serve through the Volunteer Fox Valley initiative organized by the Fox Valley United Way and Aurora University. Sign-up today at www.volunteerfoxvalley.org.

Sincerely,

GOVERNMENTAL LEADER OF THE YEAR!

Mayor Weisner received the 2014 Governmental Leader of the Year Award from the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) during its annual Legislative Action Dinner held last week in Lisle, IL.

Roselle Mayor Gayle Smolinski, who also serves as DMMC Vice President, presented Weisner with the award and recognized the three-term mayor for his leadership on regional issues such as reforming public safety pensions, improving rail freight safety and promoting sustainable water planning.

"Mayor Weisner is a leader on the regional, state and national level," said Smolinski, noting that Weisner represents the second largest city in the state and recently served as Chairman of the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. "He has set a strong example for his fellow municipal officials with his innovation and efficiency in Aurora."

Roselle Mayor Gayle Smolinski presents Mayor Weisner with the Governmental Leader of the Year Award.



Improved Waste Hauling Program

In an effort to improve services and decrease costs for residents, the City of Aurora will be implementing an improved waste hauling program.

Under the program, the City's current contracted waste hauler, Republic Services, would provide every household in Aurora two carts, one for garbage and another for recycling. Any refuse in the carts would no longer require a garbage sticker for collection. Residents will be able to select from three different sizes of garbage carts - 35 gallons, 65 gallons, or 95 gallons - that are all on wheels with attached lids.

SAVE MONEY

The program could save a typical Aurora household money over the current stickered collection program. For instance, under the current program, Aurora households that use only one sticker per week for garbage spend \$15.29 per month on trash & recycling collection. Under the proposed program, Aurora

households that choose one standard 35-gallon cart, which is equivalent to one stickered can, would spend just \$13.90 each month.

UNLIMITED RECYCLING

The collection program will continue to include unlimited recycling. Residents would be provided a 65-gallon wheeled and covered recycling carts, which offer triple the capacity of current recycling bins, making sustainable habits more convenient for residents. Lidded carts help keep neighborhoods tidier by preventing flyaway trash.



CONTINUED SERVICES

The program would leave unchanged popular services, including free spring and fall yard waste collection, and holiday tree collection. Residents would have the flexibility to purchase stickers for bulk items or occasional excess trash that does not fit in the cart.

Senior citizens who already participate in the reduced-cost senior bag program could opt out of the garbage cart program and continue to save by using the reduced-cost bags along with the free recycling carts.



CURRENT STICKER PROGRAM <i>Effective July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015</i>	1 Sticker per Week <i>(32 gallon can)</i>	65 Gallon Cart	95 Gallon Cart	2 Stickers per Month
Monthly Garbage Cost (\$2.72 Sticker)	\$11.79	\$15.70	\$19.10	\$5.44
Environmental Refuse Disposal Fee	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$3.50
Currently Total Monthly Cost	\$15.29	\$19.20	\$22.60	\$8.94

Seniors (65 and older) are eligible for \$1 discount on ERD fee and may use senior bags (\$1.36 per bag)

NEW MODIFIED VOLUME CART PROGRAM Effective - 7/1/2015

Approved Modified Volume Cart Program - 24 week service parameters - Limited to 3,750 households - Only eligible to receive a 35 gallon recycling cart - Not eligible for Vacation Hold - Carts may be refurbished or different color - Refuse collection is every other week. Recycling collection remains weekly.	35 Gallon Cart	65 Gallon Cart	95 Gallon Cart	35 Gallon (24 Week Service) Low Volume Option*
Monthly Garbage Cost	\$10.30	\$13.25	\$19.05	\$8.80
Environmental Refuse Disposal Fee	\$3.70	\$3.70	\$3.70	\$3.70
Total Monthly Cost*	\$14.00	\$16.95	\$22.75	\$12.50

* \$ 2.75 - Excess Refuse, Bulk, Yard Waste Sticker

Seniors (65 and older) are eligible for \$1 discount on the ERD fee and may use Senior Bags (\$1.40 per bag). Seniors still receive free recycling cart. Stickers remain for bulk items and refuse in excess of cart. Seniors citizens who would like to participate in the program can call 630.256.INFO for information.

Looking to grow your business by working with the City of Aurora?

In an effort to be as inclusive as possible and help all local businesses prosper, the City of Aurora actively works to reach out to businesses owned by minorities, women and disabled people.

In 2013, the city spent \$1,509,237 with 122 self-declared and certified MWDP firms for various products and services. Our future efforts will continue to develop ways to open access to MWDP businesses who can fulfill our procurement requirements on a competitive basis.

"The City of Aurora strives to provide municipal services of the highest quality to residents and businesses while safeguarding



city assets and upholding the public trust. MWDP businesses can benefit from the programs offered by the city by utilizing bidding and procurement services," said Esther Phillips, director of purchasing.

Businesses that are interested in becoming vendors with the City should complete a vendor application, available on the City's website, aurora-il.org, and indicate their status as a business owned by minority, woman, or disabled person. Businesses are then added to the City's Minorities, Women and Disabled Persons Vendor Directory, used by City staff in search of new vendors and made available on the City's website.

For more information, contact the City's Purchasing Division at 630-256-3550, or at PurchasingDL@aurora-il.org.

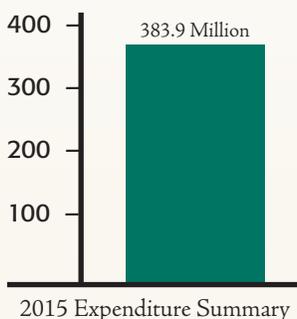


City of Aurora Total Expenditures Budget 2015

The 2015 City of Aurora, which is available online, was unanimously passed the Aurora City Council. The City of Aurora remains committed to "tightening the belt" and optimizing the deployment of public resources. Residents will notice an increase in the budget and tax levy this year and that is due, in a large part, to increased pension costs, especially costs related to public safety pensions. The increase in pension costs is a staggering 16.46%.

"On our end, it is evident that we have been very serious about cost-cutting measures," said Mayor Weisner. "We must call on our state leaders to deal with pension reform at the state level in order to help balance out this equation."

Visit www.aurora-il.org to learn more about the 2015 budget.



Pathways to Prosperity partners host Technology Day for Aurora high school students

Pathways to Prosperity, the citywide collaboration between educators and employers, brought students together in November for one of its largest events to date to excite the teens about in-demand career paths.

About 125 students from seven Aurora high schools and Waubensee Community College spent a day at the BP campus, where they talked to experts in high-tech fields and learned about various engineering disciplines and how they collaborate. Students also participated in a workshop on critical thinking skills and were given information on internships and other opportunities in their fields of interest.

Pathways to Prosperity began with a 2011 report from the Harvard Graduate School of Education that identified a need in Aurora

to combine rigorous academics with strong technical skills to equip young people with the credentials to succeed in an increasingly challenging labor market.

In addition to student events, Pathways to Prosperity also brings together educators and industry leaders, who have recently collaborated to offer new high school courses designed to prepare students for careers in healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing.



Plant a parkway tree for added beauty this spring and save

In an effort to continue replanting the City's urban forest following the devastating Emerald Ash Borer epidemic, the City of Aurora will again offer the 50/50 Parkway Tree Program this spring and fall.

The 50/50 Parkway Tree Program allows residents to purchase trees for planting in parkways for half the typical cost, with the City paying the remaining cost. This year's program includes a spring planting of elms, maples, oaks and additional varieties suitable for planting in the spring months. Elms, maples, and other species will be available in the fall. Residents should consider the species of tree that would suit their parkway and order accordingly. The deadline for ordering a tree for spring planting is March 13. The deadline for fall planting is Sept. 25.

The discounted cost of the trees will range from \$150 to 225, depending on species and size. The cost includes planting and mulching.

To be eligible for the 50 percent discount, trees must be planted in parkways on the front or sides of a resident's property, and must be set back from utilities, intersections and other trees. More information, including species and price lists, is available on the City's website, www.aurora-il.org.

Tree orders will be taken first-come, first-served. To be added to the waiting list, call the City of Aurora's Customer Service line at 630-256-INFO.

Construction Update

In an effort to get traffic moving, crews have continued working on major road construction projects throughout the winter, as weather permits, and opened up additional traffic lanes:



Church Road Bridge – Major construction on the Church Road Bridge has been completed. The bridge opened to traffic in December.

Indian Trail Bridge – One lane in each direction across the Indian Trail Bridge has been opened this winter to allow motorists to use the bridge as construction slows. The bridge will completely close again in March so that crews can continue work replacing the west deck. The project is expected to be complete by the end of 2015. For more information and updates, go to www.indiantrailbridge.com.

Route 59 – Crews from the Illinois Department of Transportation plan to work throughout the winter, weather dependent, with additional lanes opened in the winter

months on North Aurora Road and on Route 59 under the BNSF viaduct.

Ogden Avenue Overpass – IDOT plans to work throughout the winter, dependent upon weather and the relocation of some utilities. Sometime during the winter, the roadway will be restricted to one lane in each direction and will continue for the duration of the project. IDOT expects to have one half of the bridge completed at the end of 2015 which would allow the one lane in each direction to avoid delays associated with the train crossing. The other half of the bridge is expected to be completed in late 2016, when four lanes of traffic will be restored.

Ohio Street Bridge – Preliminary work to move utilities ahead of the bridge replacement project began December 1. The bridge will be closed beginning in March. Crews will replace the bridge deck with a wider two-lane structure with a multi-use bike pedestrian path and a sidewalk.

For updated information on construction projects happening throughout the City of Aurora, go to www.aurora-il.org/construction/index.php. Or call the City's Customer Service Division at 630-256-4636.

Reminders for the Road

While a new year always brings several new traffic laws, it is frequently a good idea to remember statutes that are already in place to keep everyone safe. Aurora Police remind you that driving a vehicle is a big responsibility that demands 100 percent attention to the road at all times, and they are cracking down on distracted driving, aggressive driving, and motorists who pass stopped school buses.

Remember – Distracted driving is anytime you take your hands off the wheel, your eyes off the road, or your mind off driving. While cell phone use is commonly (and correctly) associated with distracted driving, behaviors like eating, talking with others in the vehicle, personal grooming, adjusting the radio or CD player, and myriad of other activities is also distracted driving.

Remember – Aggressive driving is dangerous driving and accounts for more than half of all traffic fatalities. Speeding, tailgating, and sudden lane changes are all examples of

aggressive driving. Awareness of the problem, allowing yourself time to get to your destination, slowing down, and driving defensively are all ways to curtail aggressive driving.



Remember – Passing a stopped school bus puts children's lives in peril.

On two-lane roads, all traffic in both directions must stop when meeting a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm extended.

On four-lane roads with traffic in both directions, vehicles traveling in the opposite direction of a stopped school bus need not stop.

Remember – Help us keep our roadways safe! Call 911 when you see distracted or aggressive drivers or those that pass stopped school buses.



Upcoming Events 2015

JOIN YOUR ALDERMAN & THE MAYOR AT UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS:

City Council meetings are held on at 6 p.m. on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each on the second floor of City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place. Meetings are open to the public. Mark your calendars to join us.
Tues., February 24 · Tues., March 10 · Tues., March 24 · Tues., April 14 · Tues., April 28

FEBRUARY

February 27

Senior Services Associates & City of Aurora

Black History Month Presentation
12:15 p.m.

Senior Services Associates | 900 N. Lake Street

The City of Aurora, Senior Services Associates and the Aurora Township present the annual Black History Month event for senior citizens in Aurora. The event features storytelling, music, dancing, and a wonderful lesson in history and culture. It's free and open to all seniors.

African-American Heritage Advisory Board

Annual Heritage Dinner
7 p.m.

Gaslite Manor | 2485 Church Road

The Aurora African-American Heritage Advisory Board will present the 2014 Outstanding African-American Award at its annual celebration. For more information, or to purchase tickets for the dinner, contact Community Services at 630-256-3400.

February 28

FREE Electronics Recycling

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Aurora's Customer Service Center | 3770 McCoy Dr.

Eligible electronics that can be recycled include: computers, computer monitors, laptops, televisions, printers, fax machines, scanners, computer accessories, video games, telephones, answering machines, cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), MP3 players, cameras, camcorders, servers and networking equipment, DVD players, stereos, and VCRs. Microwaves are the only kitchen appliances accepted for recycling.

Low-Cost Pet Wellness Clinic

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Animal Care and Control | 600 S. River Street

Just Animals, a local non-profit, no-kill animal shelter, provides vaccinations, heartworm tests, discounted heartworm prevention medicine, FIV tests and micro-chipping for Aurora area pet owners. The services are available by appointment only and can be arranged by calling Just Animals at 815-830-6568 and leaving a message. Agency representatives will then call back and confirm an appointment time. More information on the clinics is available by calling Aurora Animal Control at 630-256-3630.

MARCH

March 14

FREE Electronics Recycling

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Aurora's Central Garage | 720 N. Broadway

Low-cost Pet Wellness Clinic

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Animal Care and Control | 600 S. River Street

March 21

Kiwanis Annual Pancake Breakfast

7 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Aurora Central Catholic High School

1255 N. Edgelawn

The 65th Annual Pancake Day hosted by the Aurora Kiwanis Club is a fundraiser that helps the Aurora Kiwanis to provide support for Aurora initiatives. Tickets: \$7 per person at the door.



March 28

Earth Hour

8:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Join the City of Aurora in turning off the lights for one hour tonight to start the conversation on how we can all protect our planet. All non-essential City buildings will go dark tonight. For more information on how to participate, go to earthhour.org.

Low-cost Pet Wellness Clinic

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Animal Care and Control | 600 S. River Street



Mondays at 7:00 PM come view a classic film at the Paramount for the incredible price of just \$1 per ticket!

View the entire calendar at: www.paramountaurora.com

February 23:

MALCOLM X

March 2:

HIGHLANDER

March 23:

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

March 30:

JUMANJI

The Paramount Theatre | 23 E. Galena Blvd. | Aurora, IL 60505



Mayor Thomas J. Weisner

Aldermen

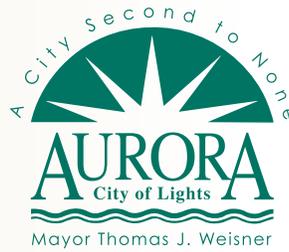
- AT-LARGE: Robert O'Connor
- AT-LARGE: Richard Irvin
- WARD 1: Kristina "Tina" Bohman
- WARD 2: Juany Garza
- WARD 3: Ted Mesiacos
- WARD 4: Bill Donnell
- WARD 5: John "Whitey" Peters
- WARD 6: Mike Saville
- WARD 7: Schequeta Hart-Burns
- WARD 8: Rick Mervine
- WARD 9: Edward Bugg
- WARD 10: Lynne Johnson

Mayor's Office

630-256-3010 – mayorsoffice@aurora-il.org

Aldermen's Office

630-256-3020 – aldermensoffice@aurora-il.org



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Si usted desea recibir una versión en español de Aurora Borealis, por favor solicítela llamando al 630-256-4636.



AND WHEN SPRING DOES ARRIVE TO WARM US...

As you are out preparing the lawn and doing some spring cleaning later in March, keep in mind that the City of Aurora offers:

FREE YARD WASTE COLLECTION:

- Monday, April 6 - Friday, April 17 yard waste will be collected for free!
- Resident can dispose of an unlimited amount of yard waste for free in 30-gallon yard waste paper bags without using a garbage stick during this two week period of time.
- Bags cannot exceed 60 lbs.
- Yard waste mixed with garbage or placed in a garbage can or plastic bag will not be collected.
- Beginning Monday, April 20, a garbage waste sticker must be attached to the yard waste bag.

FREE UNBUNDLED BRUSH COLLECTION:

- Monday, April 1 – Friday, November 6 brush will be collected for free!
- Branches and limbs that are ½ inch to 4 inches in diameter and 2-4 feet in length can be placed at the curb without a garbage sticker.
- Brush should be stacked in neat piles in the same direction with the cut side of the limbs facing the street. Unmanageable piles will not be collected.
- Brush resulting from commercial tree trimming work will not be collected and is the responsibility of the contractor.

Yard waste and unbundled brush should be placed at the curb by 6 a.m. on the regular garbage collection day. For more information, please visit www.aurora-il.org or call 630.256.INFO.



Stay connected! Visit www.aurora-il.org and click the email button to join our email list or text **MyAurora** (all one word) to **22828**.

STOP SPRINGFIELD FROM RAISING YOUR PROPERTY TAXES Help Aurora FIGHT the "Budget-Busting" Minimum Manning Bill

After tabling this hot-button issue before the elections, Illinois legislators are pushing another backdoor property tax increase onto local residents. House Bill 5485 gives fire unions new power that could require cities to increase the number of firefighters beyond what is needed for community safety. The end result could be increased property taxes for Aurora residents totaling nearly \$75 million dollars over the next 10 years – and that's just the beginning.

IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED

This past spring, House Bill 5485 was PASSED by the Illinois House of Representatives

with Aurora Representatives Linda Chapa LaVla voting PRESENT and Stephanie

Kifowit voting YES. It is ready to be considered by the Illinois Senate, including

Aurora Senators Linda Holmes and Jim Oberweis, in the upcoming veto or lame-duck

session. If the bill is amended, Representatives Linda Chapa LaVla and Stephanie

Kifowit will have a second chance to vote NO and protect Aurora taxpayers.

CONTACT THESE LEGISLATORS TODAY TO WEIGH IN ON HOUSE BILL 5485

Senator Linda Holmes (D)

76 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 202

Aurora, IL 60505

(630) 801-8985

(630) 801-8987 fax

holmes42@senatedem.illinois.gov

Senator Jim Oberweis (R)

959 Oak Street

North Aurora, IL 60542

(630) 800-1992

(217) 782-0116 fax

senatoroberweis@gmail.com

Rep. Linda Chapa LaVla (D)

8 Galena Blvd., Suite 240

Aurora, IL 60506

(630) 264-6855

(630) 264-6752 fax

chapa-lavla@iliga.gov

Rep. Stephanie A. Kifowit (D)

1677 Montgomery Rd., Suite 116

Aurora, IL 60504

(630) 585-1308

(630) 585-1357 fax

stephanie.kifowit@att.net

“Senators, when you debate it, if you’re tempted to vote for it, be sure to call it what it is: a property tax increase bill. We’re sure your constituents will be thrilled.”

– Chicago Tribune (April 28, 2014)

“The bill’s potential cost to municipalities is daunting. One additional around-the-clock firefighter position would require three new employees to fill it. Overtime and pension costs would rise.”

– Chicago Sun-Times (April 24, 2014)

“This legislation is hazardous to the finances of local governments outside of Chicago and is not needed to promote public safety.”

– Chicago Sun-Times (November 11, 2014)

“This bill is the ultimate expression of a large, powerful union’s interest in imposing its will on state lawmakers to enhance its own prestige.”

– Daily Herald (April 25, 2014)

For more information on House Bill 5485, visit the Illinois Municipal League website at www.iml.org.