



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review



January 8, 2018: Volume XXV, Issue 28
MEETING EVERY TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER

STATE OF THE CITY



Newly elected Rock Island Mayor, Mike Thoms made his first State of the City presentation to a joint meeting of Rock Island Rotary and Rock Island Noon Kiwanis at today's meeting. Mr. Thoms, with an extensive background in business and development, brought a fresh and enthusiastic tone in his report with a definite emphasis on "partnering". He began by reviewing each City department and their accomplishments during the past year. He noted that Rock Island is the first Quad City community to provide body cameras for their police officers, saying that this technology helps ensure fairness for both police and citizens and adds to the transparency goal of the Thoms administration. The police also instituted monthly crime prevention meetings, inviting the public to discussions of various topics regarding crime, safety, and community relations. Thoms proudly reported that major crime in Rock Island decreased by double digits during the past year. Several Rock Island detectives completed training and are now certified for forensic data and evidence gathering and analysis. Rock Island police are also partnering with area forces by assigning an officer to the Quad City Drug Enforcement Taskforce. Turning to the Fire Department, the Mayor announced that 3 Rock Island firemen complete training to be certified as fire investigators, saving tax dollars previously spent to hire outside certified investigators. He stated that the Fire Department received the 2017 EMS Bronze Award from the American Heart Association and the department also partnered with the American Red Cross to provide free fire detectors to Rock Island citizens. The City also adopted the most recent International Fire Code during 2017 which updated the old code. The Parks and Recreation Department was also lauded for its successful partnerships with the Friends of Hauberg and the Friends of Douglas Park groups. The Hauberg Center has received tuckpointing, landscaping, painting, floor refinishing, and obtained a liquor license. The facility is now in excellent shape and is hosting numerous community and private events. Douglas Park has improved the main baseball field with new turf, an underground watering system, new fencing, and a playground has been added to the park. Hodge Park, which had the oldest park equipment in the City, received new playground equipment in 2017. Highland Springs Golf Course partnered with the First Tee of the Quad Cities organization to build a new children's golf facility with new programs to encourage youth golfing. Programming at Lincoln Park and Schwiebert Park were increased so that virtually every week some sort of free activity or entertainment was provided throughout the summer. Energy efficiency upgrades were made to the Rock Island Fitness and Activity Center resulting in a 40% reduction in utility costs. The Park Department also partnered with the Moline Park Department which resulted in Moline citizens coming to RIFAC. In the area of Information and Technology the City updated its webpage and now have meeting agendas and police reports available "on-line", furthering the transparency goal of the Mayor. The City also replaced and added additional security cameras in the downtown and various neighborhood areas.

Jan - Feb Calendar

- Jan 8 - **MONDAY**, JOINT MEETING WITH KIWANIS, Mayor Mike Thoms, Annual "State of the City" address
- Jan 9 - No Meeting
- Jan 16 - Dr. Bruce Peterson, "Traveling New Zealand in an RV!"
- Jan 23 - President, Steve Bahls – Augustana Today
- Jan 25 - Quad-City Wide Rotary Membership Recruitment Event at St. Ambrose Univ.
- Jan 30 - TBA
- Feb 6 - Rotary Blood Drive
- Feb 13 - TBA
- Feb 20 - TBA
- Feb 27 - TBA



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Officers

Bruce Peterson, President
Sue Cassatt, 1st VP
Mark Mayeski, 2nd VP
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Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Steve Morenz, Past President

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Jim Nordquist
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Al Metz
Tammy Weikert
Sarah Gorham
Justin Peterson
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Bob Swanson & Vic Boblett

Program Chairs 2017-18

Aug – Sept: Fred Luckenbill
Oct – Nov: Tom Hammar
Dec – Jan: John Wetzel
Feb – Mar: Gary Rowe
Apr – May: Dave Geenen
June – July: Justin Peterson/
Bill Groh

Club Notes & Announcements!

□ **WELCOME GUESTS!** Rock Island Rotary was pleased to welcome our one and only guest also a visiting Rotarian; Mark Zimmerman from the Davenport Club. Guests are always welcome at Rock Island Rotary. Prospective members are our favorites!

□ **QUAD-CITY WIDE ROTARY MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT EVENT.** Thursday, January 25, 2018, 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM CST at the St. Ambrose Rogalski Center, West High Street, Davenport, IA. This is an opportunity for Quad City Rotarians to invite guests/potential members to learn about the work of Rotary in our community and beyond. Learn more about the effort to build a Miracle Field in our community and Rotary's leadership role in the project. Be inspired by Challenger League athletes and their families and endorsement messages from area Mayors. Draft beer, appetizers, and a cash bar will be included with admission.

□ **SERVICE OPPORTUNITY** – Our Club is partnering with the Heart of Hope Food Pantry. Volunteers are needed Thursdays 6 to 7:30pm just once a month. If evening is a problem a Thursday morning opportunity is also available! Contact Al Metz or Steve Morenz to join our team of volunteers! Used but sound plastic bags are needed too. Don't throw them away, bring them to Rotary. The food pantry goes through 160 bags each night!

□ **DID ANYONE FIND BUD PHILLIS' COAT?** It is still missing after it was mistakenly taken by another Rotarian several weeks ago. It is a London Fog style coat and has the name "BUD PHILLIS" inside the right lapel. Please check what you took home!

□ **Have Items for our Newsletter?** Email to bobdebswanson@att.net. If you attend a Rotary event and take pictures, please also email or text them to Bob. The newsletter is much better with lots of photos!

"Mayor" from page one --

The Human Resources Department partnered with Rock Island County to provide a Benefits & Wellness program for City employees and opened a wellness center in partnership with Genesis Hospitals which has already saved the City nearly \$170,000. The Martin Luther King Center partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Quad Cities, hosting a summer camp attended by 300 Rock Island children. The King Center provided programs for families in an effort to involve citizens of all ages. Town meetings with local legislators were also provided. The King Center was honored to receive the Governor's "Home Town Award" in recognition of its extensive community work. The Rock Island Library renewed its partnership with the Milan-Blackhawk Library District. Rock Island runs the library and the Library District pays operating costs for the Southwest Branch Library. They also formed a new partnership with the Augustana College Library, opening up greater resources for Rock Island Citizens. The City's Finance Department received the Governor's Finance Office Awards for both the audit of the City books and the new City budget. Public Works was particularly busy in 2017 completing four major street reconstructions, \$600,000 worth of concrete patching was completed. Resurfacing of numerous streets was done using the City's hot, in place, recycling machine which removes old asphalt, melts it, and re-lays it as new street surface. The department also partnered with the Rock Island-Milan School District to replace deteriorating sidewalks at Rock Island High School. The City also resurfaced 14 blocks of alleys which have for many years gone without maintenance. Thoms noted that the City has committed \$1.9 for a new water filtration plant which will take nearly 2 years to construct and will replace our current 100-year-old water filtration system. The City also adopted the most recent International Building Code, which goes hand in hand with the new fire code. The Mayor has promoted more inter-departmental partnerships to save money by sharing manpower and equipment.

FOUNDATION MINUTE

In September, Hurricane Maria pummeled Puerto Rico, the strongest storm to make landfall on the island in 85 years. More than three months later, people are still struggling to recover. The immediate response from Rotarians in District 7000 was quick and precise. Several clubs around the island began to provide humanitarian aid to those affected. The help included non-perishable food, water, hygiene kits, water filters, solar lights and power generators.

Now local Rotarians are focusing on recovery and reconstruction. Plans are underway to work with pumping systems for renewable energy projects in communities without potable water, the installation of water filtration systems, and the rollout of community economic development projects for the most affected areas. Disease prevention efforts in areas affected by the hurricane are also taking place among other initiatives.

Rotary International has established a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) of the Rotary Foundation to support projects for the recovery of Puerto Rico. Given the great work that remains ahead, contributions from Rotarians to this fund will be essential to help Puerto Rico get back on their feet. Visit District 7000 website to learn more. Your contribution will make a difference in lifting Puerto Rico.

Thank you.

"Forward" from page two –

Looking forward, Mayor Thoms stated that there are numerous commercial developments in the works for 2018, which at this time must remain confidential. He said a new City committee on Biking, Busing, and Walking will be meeting later this month. Another new committee will be looking at "streetscapes" in the downtown area. Thoms lauded the 150 citizens who volunteer their time and talents to serve on various City commissions and committees, noting that these people all serve without compensation and are motivated simply by a desire to make our City a better place in which to live and work. On the downside, Thoms mentioned that the City had to increase taxes to offset a loss of \$1.2 million in state revenue for 2010. He said the budget was out of balance by almost 6 million. The City cut 4 million in spending, and filled the shortfall by increasing taxes. He said he hoped they would be able to cut taxes in future years. His goal is to reduce expenses while maintaining services. He said the City is financially stable, is paying all its bills, and has cash in the bank. He stressed the importance of attracting small and regional businesses to Rock Island and concluded his comments with a "Call to Action" asking all of us to:

1. **Talk Positive** about Rock Island, we have great entertainment, growing businesses and the best parks in the area.
2. **Encourage Businesses** to locate in Rock Island. Use our contacts to help grow the City
3. **Support Local Business** by shopping in Rock Island and encouraging others to do the same.

It was obvious that the Mayor's first 250 days in office have been busy and eventful. We thank him for his detailed report and wish him great success in moving Rock Island forward!



END POLIO DRIVE OFF TO A GREAT START

Foundation chairman, Bud Phillis kicked off our END POLIO PLEDGE DRIVE two weeks ago, announcing the drive and making the first pledge. Then last week he made pledge cards available to all club members and by the time the meeting ended, he had nine pledges in hand for \$6,100.00. Some are quarterly, semiannually, and some annually. Quarterly payments will be due before the end of March, semiannually by the end of June, and annually by the end of the year. Bud will send reminders for those who need them. Bud, himself a surviving victim of polio lost his sister to the deadly disease. Fortunately, the United States has been free of polio for many years, but as long as the virus survives anywhere the threat of a new outbreak is with us. We're now down to the final two countries in the world to achieve eradication of the disease. Once that is achieved we need to see three consecutive years of no new cases to know the battle has been won and is over. To ensure we never forget the tragedy ...



Four children share a quadruple iron lung weakened by polio to the extent that breathing is too much for their young bodies. These were scenes in virtually every American community prior to the vaccine ridding the US of the disease.



Rows of iron lungs give Polio victims life ... temporarily.

Many who were fortunate to live are crippled for the rest of their lives.



Your Rotary donation makes a simple and totally effective oral vaccine available to children where Polio is still taking lives and crippling. We can wipe this deadly disease from the face of the earth, but we must act now. Fighting polio is a bit like herding chickens, once we get them into the coop we've got to slam the door and make sure it never breaks out again! We've got the disease cornered, now we must kill it!

RAFFLE REPORT

Since today's meeting was a joint meeting with Rock Island Kiwanis and they were the hosts, we did not hold our usual Foundation Raffle. However, it is worth noting that Kiwanis did hold a raffle and none other than Rotary Past-President, Steve Morenz was the winner. True to his amazing winning streak of three weeks in a row, Steve took home the Kiwanis wine!

REMINDER

Rotary Board of Directors meeting is next Monday, January 15 at Jeff Dismar's Office (Studio 483 Architects, 1715 2nd Avenue, Rock Island. The meeting begins at 11:45am.