



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review

January 13, 2020: Volume XXVII, Issue 27

MEETING EVERY TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER



STATE OF THE CITY Mayor Mike Thoms


Rotarians met today jointly with the Rock Island Noon Kiwanis to hear Rock Island Mayor, Mike Thoms, present the 2020 "State of the City Address". The Mayor, a member of Rock Island Rotary, gave an upbeat and positive presentation of the past accomplishments and projected 2020 projects and goals. Mayor Thoms began by thanking Kiwanis and Rotary for hosting the annual State of the City event and added his thanks to City employees, council members, and the more than 125 Rock Island citizens that serve on various boards and committees. He noted that in the past year, new business invested \$30 million in Rock Island and created hundreds of new jobs. However, he also reported that the city has had no luck in attracting any retail development for the former Watchtower Plaza, 11th Street site. He said that the traffic pattern on 11th Street is no longer strong enough

January Calendar

- Jan 21 - Dr. Joseph Rives, Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Initiatives, Western IL University
- Jan 28 - Dr. Luis Moreno, CEO, Arrowhead Ranch
- Feb 4 - TBA
- Feb 11 - TBA
- Feb 18 - TBA

for most retail developers. He said efforts continue and new ideas are welcome. The hope is that if retail entities can not be found, perhaps development of some non-retail entities could attract retail development to the area. When asked if Fairway had been contacted, the Mayor honestly reported that Fairway was, "Not returning our calls". He said he fears that bridge was burned, but also said the City would "Bend over backwards" to get Fairway into Rock Island. He also noted that Dollar Tree will be moving into about 1/3 of the former County Market site and that tenants are being solicited for the other portions of the building. Back on the positive side of things, Mayor Thoms reported that many existing businesses have taken advantage of the City's "Façade Program" and have upgraded the appearance of their businesses. He said Rock Island has a strong housing market and a good number of new constructions within the city. He also reported that city revenues have been flat, with gaming tax income decreasing as a result of video gambling coming into restaurants and bars, and the renovation and the move to land-based casinos on the Iowa side. To attract development the city has also had to offer incentives which typically take the form of delaying or discounting property taxes on the new development for a given number of years. Eventually that income will flow into the city, but initially it does not. To cope with flat revenues while expenses continue to rise, the city has cut expenses, in large part by personnel reduction while trying to maintain a high level of services for Rock Island citizens. He also noted that 2019 was an expensive year because of weather. We had not only record floods in terms of water depth, but also records in the number and duration of the floods. On top of that we had a very brutal winter with an inordinate amount of snow and ice to be dealt with. Even so, the Mayor reported that three years ago the City budget showed a \$5.3 million deficit; 2 years ago, that was reduced to a \$3.6 million deficit; and last year the deficit dropped to \$2.9 million. In each case the city had ample reserves to cover the deficit. He also said the City continues to have the recommended amount of reserves on hand to remain financially solid. Continuing with a list of accomplishment, he pointed out that 38th Street was repaved from Blackhawk road to 7th Avenue, and 18th Avenue was repaved from 17th Street to the Moline border. Both are major arteries for Rock Island traffic. The city has also been replacing streetlights with LED lights which are much more efficient and long lasting. In some areas the old lights were not working at all and \$100,000 had to be spent on rewiring. On the expense side the Mayor stated that an 8.9% increase in city property taxes was projected but was pared down to 3.93%. Thoms noted that about 70% of City general funds go to personnel costs. He expressed hope that new state legislation combining multiple police and fire pension funds will result in costs savings for the City. Even though finances have been difficult, Mayor Thoms was happy to report a 35% increase in Rock Island Library attendance and the addition of a new Mobile Library at no cost to taxpayers. The Fire Department was lauded and Thoms noted that Rock Island is a "5 Star" fire safety community. He also reported that 2,200 youth were served in the Martin Luther King Center's after school program and 3 of those students formed a Robotics Team and were one of just 10 teams selected to compete at State competition.

- Continued "Mayor" page 2-

Rotary 
Club of Rock Island
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Officers

Mark Mayeski, President
Angela Campbell, 1st VP
Justin Peterson, 2nd VP
Anne McGlynn, Secretary
Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Sue Cassatt, Past Pres.
Co-Sergeants at Arms
Cindi Gramenz
Bob Swanson

Board Members

Rick Emery
Kathy Lelonek
John Oliger
Bill Stengel
Howard Beck
Kim Calhoun
Cindi Gramenz
Eric Westphall

Program Chairs 2019-20

Aug. – Sep. Kathy Trone
Oct. – Nov. Cindi Gramenz
Dec. – Jan. John Wetzel
Feb. – Linda Golden
Mar. – May: Gary Rowe
June – July: Volunteer Needed

Have a program idea? Contact
the chairman listed above for a
possible date.

Club Notes & Announcements!

□ **WELCOME GUESTS!** Rock Island Rotary was pleased to welcome guests at today's meeting. John McEvoy from Quad City Bank & Trust was a guest of Bob Swanson. Virginia Johnson was a guest of husband Don Peterson. Jess Rose was guest of Rick Emery and Stan Coin. Rev Chris Lee was a guest of James Benson. A special guest, Sara Thoms, the "First Lady of Rock Island" was also present. Guests are always welcome at the **Number One Club**, Rock Island Rotary!

□ **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SCHEDULE – We are combining the January and February board meetings into one meeting on Monday, February 3rd.** Board meetings are open to all Club members and may be used as a "make-up" for missed meetings. The board meets at the office of Studio 483 Architects, 124 Arts Alley, Rock Island at 11:45am in the 2nd floor meeting room.

□ **SERVICE** – Rotary members are needed to help with the Heart of Hope Food Pantry. We help every Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30pm. It's easy duty and is truly *Service Above Self* at its most basic definition. Volunteers have been scarce lately, so please, contact Steve Morenz to join our team of volunteers! Used but sound plastic bags are needed too. They also are collecting men's and women's clothing for their free clothing exchange. Drop off anytime the Heart of Hope Center is open. Call Steve Morenz to volunteer to help at 309-721-7632 or just show up any Thursday at 5:15. It's easy duty! We have a sign-up sheet at the Sergeant at Arms table and will be glad to add your name!

□ **ROTARIANS ARE REMINDED** to pick up your Wine Raffle Tickets and promo posters from Anne McGlynn or Ruth Lee. Tickets are in packs of five and it is hoped that every member will be responsible for selling 5 packs. Cost is \$5 per ticket or \$20 for pack of five. Wine prizes of \$750, \$500, and \$250 will be awarded.

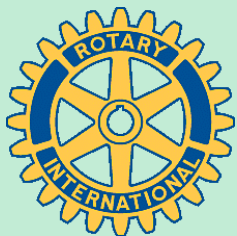
□ **SEND ITEMS** for publication in our newsletter to bobdebswanson@att.net
We are happy to promote anything relating to Rock Island Rotary. Photos are welcome.



FOUNDATION RAFFLE REPORT

Today there was no foundation raffle since we were guests of Kiwanis today. We will be back with a Rotary Raffle at next week's meeting! Bring your dollars and plan to win!. The Club's share of proceeds from our raffle each week go to the Rotary Foundation.
We greatly appreciate and thank all who participate!

MAYOR – The mayor also reported that the Parks and Recreation Department has completed Phase 2 of the Douglas Park Renovation project. Phase I was the renovation of the main baseball field which included a new grass infield and outfield, a new scoreboard, an irrigation system, covered dugouts, and a small playground. Phase 2 included building a multi-use field on the northeast side of the park, a new concession stand, and renovation of the baseball/softball diamond on the northwest side of the park. They now move to Phase 3 which will focus on the interior of the park with bump-outs for benches and seating while also redeveloping the former firehouse on 9th Street and 18th Avenue, on the southwest corner of the park, as a dual-purpose museum — one dealing with the history of firefighting in Rock Island, the other telling the story of Rock Island and its place in NFL history. The City also supported the First Tee program which provided a youth golf program for 125 Rock Island children. Thoms said that the Economic Development Department obtained \$815,000 in HUD grants for the city. The City is now preparing to put the new water filtration system fully online, replacing a 75-year-old outdated system. Finally, he reported that Rock Island experienced a 10% decrease in crime during the past year. Overall it was a fact filled presentation! Thank you Mr. Mayor!!



FOUNDATION MINUTE

People of Action

Rotary is where neighbors, friends, and problem-solvers share ideas, join leaders, and take action to create lasting change.

Whether working to End Polio, Promote Peace, Fighting Disease, Providing Clean Water, Supporting Education, Saving Mothers and Children, Growing Local Economies, or Responding to Disasters, Rotary and Rotarians throughout the world lead the way with their hearts, labor, and treasure. We are working not only to improve today's world but through Youth Programs, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Peace Fellowships, Rotary Community Corps, Grants, Youth Exchanges, New Generations Service Exchange, Scholarships, and Friendship Exchanges, Rotary works for a better tomorrow.

Your generous support of the Rotary Foundation makes this all possible. Including the great news regarding Polio Eradication reported on page 4 of our newsletter.

Rotary Foundation Receives Highest Rating From Charity Navigator For 12th Consecutive Year

For the 12th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities in the U.S.

The Foundation earned the recognition for demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency. Only one percent of the organizations Charity Navigator evaluates have received 12 consecutive 4-star evaluations.

"Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that The Rotary Foundation exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work", says Michael Thatcher, president and chief executive officer of Charity Navigator. "This exceptional designation sets the Foundation apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness."

The rating reflects Charity Navigator's assessment of how the Foundation uses donations, sustains its programs and services, and practices good governance and openness.

In CHARITY WATCH ratings, Rotary received an A+ Rating with 91% of money raised going to programs vs. overhead. For comparison, Jr. Achievement received a B+ with 72% going to programs; Girls Scouts was rated B+ with 87% going to programs; St. Jude's Children's Hospital has 71% going to programs; World Vision spends 85% on programs; and American Red Cross spends 91% on programs. It should be noted that all of these are considered good, honest, and reliable charities. It is hard to believe but some charities spend over 90% of their funds on administration and fund raising. For instance, the Disabled Police and Sheriff's Foundation spends 95.3% on administration and fundraising and just 4.7% on its programs to help disabled law officers.

Bottom line, you can be confident that your donations to the Rotary Foundation goes to help those you intend to help and not to administrators and fundraisers.

READY TO LEAD?

Frank Lambert and the nominating committee are soliciting Rotarians willing to step up and lead our Club. If you have any interest, please contact Frank for further information and details.

Rotary Provides Millions In Polio Funding As Wild Poliovirus Type 3 Is Eradicated!

EVANSTON, Ill. (October 30, 2019) — Rotary is giving \$50 million in grants to support the global effort to end polio. The funding will provide surveillance, technical assistance, and operational support for immunization activities, and will reach up to 38.4 million children with polio immunizations. The funding comes on the heels of **the announcement that wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3) has been eradicated globally.**

WPV3 is just the third human disease-causing pathogen to be eradicated in history, and **the announcement means that there is just one remaining strain of wild polio left that continues to affect children.** Rotary and its Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners reached another major milestone in August, when Nigeria reached three years without a case of wild poliovirus, thus opening the door for the entire African region to be certified wild polio-free sometime in 2020.

"Both of these milestones are critical steps towards the ultimate goal of a polio-free world," said Michael K. McGovern, chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee. "The eradication of wild poliovirus type 3 and Nigeria's good news demonstrate tremendous progress, but there is still much work to be done as we address the increase in cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the face of challenges, reaching these historic benchmarks shows us that polio eradication is possible, and it's important that we harness this momentum to secure the funding and political support needed to end polio for good."

Grants announced today will support ongoing eradication efforts in Nigeria as well as other African countries. Grants will also be directed to efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Funding will be distributed as follows: African Regional Surveillance, \$6.3 million; Cameroon, \$4.1 million; Chad, \$3.3 million; DR Congo, \$3.4 million; Niger, \$8.2 million; Nigeria, \$491,153; Afghanistan, \$4.6 million; Pakistan, \$4.8 million; Somalia, \$4.6 million; mOPV2 Stockpile, \$10.3 million. Rotary has committed to raising \$50 million a year to be matched 2-to-1 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, amounting to \$150 million for polio eradication annually.

While only Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to report cases of wild poliovirus, the remaining challenges to global eradication—like difficulty reaching children amid insecurity and conflict and weak health systems—have proven to be the most difficult. In order to meet these roadblocks head on and ensure the continuation of program efforts, the GPEI is hosting a pledging event at the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi, at which world leaders will gather and announce their commitment to ending polio for good.

Rotary has contributed more than \$2 billion to fight polio, and countless volunteer hours since launching its polio eradication program, PolioPlus, in 1985. In 1988, Rotary formed the GPEI with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Gates Foundation later joined. Since the initiative launched, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99.9 percent, from about 350,000 cases in 1988 to fewer than 100 cases this year.

ROTARIAN BLOOD DRIVE

The annual Rock Island Rotary Blood Drive will be held on Tuesday, February 4th. Giving blood is a simple way to change the world, one pint at a time! The Blood Drive will occur at the Botanical Center all morning and through the noon hour on the 4th. You can sign up (or sign up your family members) at any meeting right up to February 4th. Last year 20 Rotarians and family members donated 2.5 gallons of blood **Let's beat last year's total ... we need more than 20 donors and more than 2.5 gallons donated!**