



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review

January 10, 2022: Volume XXIX, Issue 28

SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

MEETING TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER



ROCK ISLAND MAYOR MIKE THOMS STATE OF THE CITY



Today Rock Island Rotary was pleased to host a joint meeting with the Noon Kiwanis Club to hear the annual State of the City Address presented by Mayor Mike Thoms, who we are proud to claim as a member of Rock Island Rotary. We were particularly pleased to have the Mayor Pro-tem of Bettendorf, the Mayor of East Moline, former Rock Island Mayor Mark Schwiebert, Rotary District Governor Dave Emerick; soon to be seated Rock Island Councilman, Bill Healy, and John Gripp, interim City Manager of Rock Island join us today along with our regular members, Rock Island Councilmen Mark Poulos and Randy Hurt who also were present at today's meeting.

Mayor Thoms began by noting that with the variants of Covid causing new and additional illness throughout our community, 2021 was another very challenging year. He was pleased to report that City services in Rock Island were provided without interruption even while coping with a shortage of city employees. He reported that there was no increase in property taxes in 2021 and there will be no increase in 2022. Through some difficult cuts, wise spending, and reducing personnel by not filling vacant positions the city has a balanced budget for 2022 and has maintained a ninety-day cash reserve. The mayor then discussed each city department highlighting their accomplishments during the past year.

Parks and Recreation – High on their list of plans and accomplishments was obtaining approval and funding to construct a new Club House at Highland Springs Golf Course. He noted that the partnership the city has with First Tee of the Quad Cities was extremely helpful in getting this underway. The department also continued its summer concert programs in Lincoln Park as well as offering a full menu of recreational events for youth and adults. Highland Springs and Saukie Golf courses hosted 30 golf outings during the past summer raising over \$100,000 for local charitable organizations. He said the Rock Island Fitness and Activity Center (RIFAC) also showed a 20% increase in membership.

Finance – The finance department was able to improve the cities financial status by issuing bonds at very favorable rates. They also were able to cut personnel expenses by not filling some open jobs. The City was also able to garner a substantial increase in state funds received by the city.

Information & Technology – The city was able to expand the broad band availability in the city providing service to previously underserved areas. They also installed security cameras at 20 new locations throughout the city. The department worked closely with the police and fire departments in technology upgrades more fully discussed in the reports on those departments.

Human Resources – A major accomplishment of this department was keeping the city "open" throughout the Covid pandemic. With personnel impacted by exposure or illness, it was a challenge to keep all areas staffed, but that was accomplished. They also were able to keep employee insurance costs stable during a time when most rates were steadily rising.

Jan. - Feb. Calendar

- Jan 18 - TBA
- Jan 25 - TBA
- Feb 1 - Nicole Cisne Durbin
- Feb 8 - Neil Dahlstrom - Deere Company Author
- Feb 15 - Rebecca Wee – Augustana Poet
- Feb 22:- Joel Vanderbush - Niabi Zoo
- Mar 1 - TBD
- Mar 8 - TBD
- Mar 15 - Laura Fontaine Director - World Relief Quad Cities
- Mar 22 - Mikhayla Hughes-Shaw, former Miss Iowa - currently hostess of "Living Local" on WHBF-TV – "How About H" ope Mental Health Awareness"



P.O. Box 4514
Rock Island, IL 61204
www.rirotary.com

Officers

Justin Peterson, President
Cindi Gramenz, 1st Vice Pres.
Eric Westphall, 2nd Vice Pres.
Anne McGlynn, Secretary
Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Angela Campbell, Past President

Board Members

Amber Brummit
John Daly
Rick DeVinney
Monta Ponsetto
Sue Rector
Gary Rowe
Molly Shattuck
Kathy Trone
Bob Swanson Co-Sgt.-at-Arms
Cindi Gramenz Co-Sgt.-at-Arms

Program Chairs

2021-22

Aug-Sept	- Gary Rowe
Oct - Nov	- Frank Lambert
Dec-Jan	- John Wetzel
Feb-Mar	- Kai Swanson/ Dave Hodge
Apr-May	- Kathy Trone/ Jeff Rose
Jun-Jul	- Tom Hammar

Club Notes & Announcements!

- WELCOME GUESTS** – Today our club was pleased to welcome a number of guests and visiting Rotarians. Visiting Rotarians included David Emerick a member of the East Moline-Silvis Club and our District Governor Nominee; Mark Zimmerman, a member of the Davenport Club; Duncan Cameron, a member of the Naples, Florida Club; Scott Naumann a member of the Bettendorf Club and Mayor pro-tem of Bettendorf; and Reggie Freeman, a member of the East Moline -Silvis Club and Mayor of East Moline. Bill Healey, soon to be seated as a member of the Rock Island City Council was a non-Rotarian guest. We love having guests at “The Number One Club”! Have you invited a friend or colleague to join you at a future meeting?
- Our January Collection for “Keep Them Engaged”** is coloring books/puzzle books/word searches/crossword books. We need to supply 300 Earl Hanson students and want each to get a fully filled summer bag to “Keep Them Engaged”. Bring your donation for the January cause!
- GREETERS NEEDED** – Greeters are needed for January, February, and beyond. All that is required is the ability to come a few minutes early and bring your smile. Handshake, fist bump, elbow bump, whatever your pleasure is fine. It’s a great way for newer members to get to know your fellow Rotarians. Signup at the Sergeant’s table.
- DENKMANN LITTLE LIBRARY** – We need a volunteer to be the monitor for the Little Library located at Denkmann Elementary School. All that is required is a periodic drive by to make sure the Library is in good repair and well supplied with books. If books are needed, we have them ready to go! If you can help, please contact Sue Rector, srector3614@gmail.com.
- NEWSLETTER** – The January 18th and 25th newsletters will be edited by Angela Campbell. If you have items that need to be in the newsletter, please send them to Angela at Campbell.angela@rigov.org. Thanks go to Angela for taking on the newsletter in my absence.

Rock Island Rotary Literacy Committee Introduces

“Keep them Engaged”

Summer Packs for Earl Hanson School



JANUARY COLLECTION ITEMS:

coloring books/puzzle books/word searches/crossword books

The Goal: Collect and assemble items in engaging Summer packs for every student at Earl Hanson Elementary School. That means we need 300 of each item!

JANUARY GOAL: We are looking for coloring books/puzzle books/word searches/crosswords
Bring your donation items or cash to purchase them to our meeting

FINES – HAPPY/SAD DOLLARS

To make sure the Mayor had ample time for his State of the City address we skipped fines and happy dollars this week. We are confident that V.P. Eric will make-up for it at next week’s meeting. Bring your cash!

FOUNDATION RAFFLE

Today our raffle featured deluxe Nimble Vineyards wine, a beautiful Angela Campbell Fabric bowl and cash. The first ticket drawn belonged to Bud Phillis who took the cash and donated it all to the Rotary Foundation. The second ticket we held by Kiwanis member Gary Miner, and he took the wine. The thirds and final winning ticket taking home the fabric bowl was held by Rotarian Mark Poulos. Congratulations to our winners and thanks to all who participated. Proceeds from our raffle go to the Rotary International Foundation account and are used to assist members in achieving Paul Harris Fellow awards.



COAT DRIVE A GREAT NEW PROJECT!

So far 43 coats were brought by Rotarians and donated to the Heart of Hope Food & Clothing pantry. They were extremely appreciative and are excited that we hope to bring them more! Currently, they are accepting only coats because of their limited storage space. In the future other clothing will be appreciated, but for now, it is strictly the much needed warm, winter coats. Bring coats you no longer wear to Rotary, and we will see that they get delivered to Heart of Hope. All sizes are needed, men's, women's, and children's from toddler on up! .What a wonderful opportunity to turn something you don't need or use into a lifesaver for someone in need. Let's keep them coming!! Our goal is 50!

MAYOR –

Martin Luther King, Jr. Center remained open throughout the pandemic and during the summer served 90 children with day care so their parents could work. The Center hosted a Family Fun Day attended by 2,500 citizens. They also served 3,500 Thanksgiving dinners free to those in need and provided Christmas gifts for 600 Rock Island children.

Fire Department – The Rock Island fire department answered 7,200 calls for service in 2021. Personnel went through 9,000 hours of training and currently all fire department personnel are trained and certified in Emergency Medical Services. Very few fire departments can make that claim. In addition, the department donated and installed 100 free car seats and donated and installed free smoke alarms throughout the city.

Police Department – The Mayor was very proud to report that the city has affiliated with the National Crime Data Collection reporting system, connecting our community with the resources and information of nationwide law enforcement agencies. He said that in 2022 we will help create a Quad City-wide computer aided dispatch system. This will be a state-of-the-art digital system connecting all the Quad City communities' police and fire departments. He also said that the Rock Island police maintained their Tier 2 Accreditation. Several officers received awards for their service and heroism during 2021. The mayor also noted that the department is 17 short of being fully staffed. That is a result of the lack of qualified applicants and the general difficulty all employers are having finding people who want to work.

Library – The mayor listed a number of new and expanded services offered by our public library including the "Library to Go," a mobile library that moves within our community and even into surrounding communities offering library services to areas that have been underserved. The library has also worked with technology to create additional "hot spots" in Rock Island giving more people access to the internet and online library services. They have increased the number of sewing machines that citizens can use. The library also obtained a \$50,000 grant for interior improvements to the main Library building. Their biggest project is the new 30th Street branch library expected to open in 2022. It will offer additional meeting spaces and resources for the entire community. Its location is within walking distance to numerous schools and its location in the residential heart of the city will bring services closer to the people.

See MAYOR continued on page 4

DON'T FORGET OUR CLUB'S OWN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT



In 2016 Rock Island Rotary founded the Western Illinois-Eastern Iowa Rotary Water Project initially funded by a \$10,000 contribution from Rotarian Sam and Hilde Wray. Across the world almost two billion people have no access to safe drinking water. An estimated 88 percent of childhood illnesses are related to contaminated water and poor sanitation. At least 3,000 children die each day from diseases caused by unsafe water! The Illinois/Iowa Safe Water Project was created as a way for Rotary Clubs in western Illinois and eastern Iowa to directly and quickly impact that crisis. Starting in 2017 our club began soliciting donation from our members and from other Rotary Clubs in the area. We partnered with Replenish, Inc. who provides Vestergarde LifeStraw® Community water filtration units to village school children in Africa, where the need for access to safe water is most urgent. Tests confirm the LifeStraw® Community filtration unit removes a minimum of 99.99% of protozoan parasites; 99.999% of viruses; 99.9999% of bacteria; Reduces turbidity (muddiness) by filtering particulate matter larger than 0.02 microns; Meets the standard for the “highly protective” category of household water treatment options by the World Health Organization; Complies fully with US EPA guidelines for micro-biological water purifiers. The LifeStraw® Community filtration unit is chemical-free and prevents waterborne disease such as diarrhea, typhoid, cholera, worms, and cryptosporidiosis. For \$350 each, Replenish delivers a Vestergarde unit to a remote village school in Kenya identified as in desperate need of safe

drinking water. They set up the unit, train local leaders on its use, and conduct sanitation and clean water training for both students and adults in the village. Through the initial and three subsequent donations from the Wray family, donations from our club and 16 other clubs in Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa, and from 16 individual Rock Island Rotarians to date we have purchased 244 filters that are serving more than 17,020 children in Kenya. Some Rotarians contribute as little as \$20, others purchase an entire filter unit annually. All together we have raised and contributed over \$85,000 for the project. We urge every Rock Island Rotarian to make an annual contribution to the project in whatever amount fits your budget. Simply write your check to “Rock Island Rotary”

MAYOR –

Public Works – Has been busy replacing water service in several areas of the city as well as completing curbing and street improvements. Three new street projects are planned for 2022 including replacing the water service running under 11th street. The mayor said Rock Island has taken over the management of sewer and water services for the Rock Island Arsenal and under the agreement will net \$100,000 annually for the city. He said the department also replaced 22 hydrants, repaired 2,200 watermain breaks, and conducted 15,000 chemical and biological water tests.

Community & Economic Development – During 2021 the department was able to bring 17 new businesses to our city and helped the transfer of three existing business to new ownership. The “Live-Work in Rock Island” program helped 400 new Rock Island homeowners finance their homes in over \$31 million in real estate transactions. The department helped Rock Island businesses obtain \$7.8 million in financial assistance and in 2021 obtained approval for \$4 million in funding for downtown Rock Island improvements including lighting, trees, building facades, and art items. They are currently working on an additional \$3 million state grant for downtown improvements. In 2022 there is a \$60 million in planned business expansion. Adding new computers and video cameras to squad cars and completing a needs assessment being done for the King Center are also planned.

Finally, the Mayor laid out 4 goals for the City: 1) Financial Stability 2) Increased Utilization of Marketing and Communication to promote Rock Island both within and outside the city. 3) Transform the local economy with attraction of new businesses and assistance to our current businesses. And 4) Leveraging our community assets to encourage growth. He then answered several questions from the audience. Thank you Mayor Thoms for a huge plate full of facts and information. It is quite obvious that much is going on in Rock Island!