Donations will restore ‘burn building’

Springfield’s private sector stepped up in January to help the City and the Fire Department ensure a key rating by donating money and labor to restore the “burn building.”

The burn building training facility located in northwest Springfield has been in disrepair for some time. The building and the site surrounding it are essentially unsafe and unusable for fire training. While a more modern burn training facility is in the long-term plan, it will be several years before such a site becomes a reality.

Meanwhile, the current facility’s unusable status was cited as a red flag in the most recent rating evaluation by the Insurance Services Organization, or ISO. Springfield’s Fire Department has held a highly respectable 2 rating from ISO for many years. Of more than 1,700 rated Missouri departments, Springfield is among six departments to hold the ISO 2 rating. But ISO informed the Department following its most recent evaluation in 2009 that it might receive a 3 rating because of concerns about the burn

Zumba comes to Parks centers

This new class combines Latin music and easy-to-follow moves to create an energetic aerobic workout. Zumba classes are now available at the Doling and Chesterfield Family Centers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Times and costs vary. For more information, call 891-1616 (Chesterfield) or 837-5900 (Doling).

Eagle Days

See the bald eagles at Lake Springfield from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Jan. 23-24. The Boathouse will be open and available to the public during the event. Additional classes and demonstrations at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center. Admission is free for all ages. Call 891-1550.

Eyes on the Road

They say you should always keep your eyes on the road when driving. Chip McCarty has the equivalent of dozens of eyes on roads all across Springfield. It’s his job to monitor traffic flow and help traffic engineers figure out the best ways to deal with traffic situations in real-time.

McCarty works in the Transportation Management Center, which is a joint venture between the City and the Missouri Department of Transportation. While it’s not a driver’s seat, but his desk does closely resemble a cockpit.

There are nearly 20 computer screens arranged in a semi-circle formation at a specially made work station. Most show images from more than 30 traffic-monitoring cameras stationed at intersections around the city. Others show information from E-911 dispatch, signal operation systems, and the Internet.

When an accident, signal malfunction, traffic jam or weather-related incident occurs, it’s McCarty’s job to make sure information gets to the proper agencies as soon as possible.

“Basically what I do is act as kind of a clearing house for information coming from the computers and cameras and update that information for our traffic engineers,” says McCarty, who works four days a week in 10 and 1/2-hour shifts.

It’s essential to have an “operator,” as McCarty’s position is called, funneling all of this information —

On the Job

Burn Building

Chip McCarty monitors traffic city-wide from his high-tech perch at the Transportation Management Center. Information from more than 30 cameras and several computer systems are at his fingertips.
Living With Ambiguity & Change

As humans, we seek stability in our lives. We seem to need a high degree of certainty in the way things happen, and we seek to understand the way the world works (or doesn’t work) based on past experiences. The past will predict the future ... right?

As the author Peter Lloyd said, “If you can live with ambiguity, you can deal better with contradiction, which is everywhere. And the better you can deal with contradiction, the more in tune you are with the universe, which is basically chaos.”

The City of Springfield has been financially stable for many, many years. Year after year, almost all revenue sources experienced growth. In that climate, pay raises and other benefits were awarded to employees.

Then the bubble burst in September 2008, and the country began its slide into the worst recession since the 1930s. Uncertainty is everywhere. Our monthly sales tax checks are with the universe, which is constant change, since change is becoming the only constant. We can only do that by working together to help create our own future. There will be more to come soon regarding our community strategic planning process and how the resulting plan can help bring some level of stability and predictability back into our work lives.

As always, thank you for what you do for the citizens of Springfield.

-Greg Burris, City Manager

Support Center Tips

New Year is time for a reminder or two

- When e-mailing an incident for the Support Center, please address it to Support Center, not Help Desk. Support Center address will create an incident in our Cherwell software and in return, you will get assistance faster.
- Password into the network needs to be at least 7 characters.
- Don’t post your password on the side of your monitor or any other visible place around your workstation. This should be kept confidential and not passed on to others.
- All desktops and laptops should be powered on and connected to the network at least once a week for an hour or so. This will allow all the updates to be downloaded to the PC.
- Laptops will not be able to use VPN connections if the updates are not current.
- Don’t save anything of value on your C: drive (locally) as this is not backed up and will not be restored by IS.

Upcoming Computer class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes are in L46, Busch Municipal Building. All classes are one day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excel Level 1</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Jan 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excel Level 2</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Feb 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outlook</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Feb 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Level 1</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Feb 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Level 2</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Feb 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Powerpoint</strong> 8:15 a.m.– 4 p.m., Mar 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contact Judy Stangl at jstangl@springfieldmo.gov with your requested date. You will receive an e-mail acknowledgement. (Limit of nine per class.)

City of Springfield

We are committed to working with the community to provide ethical and responsible local government so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of living and working in Springfield.

SCENE Deadline
February 5, 2010
Please direct your submissions to Mike Brothers in the Department of Public Information. Submissions and ads via e-mail are preferred: thescene@springfieldmo.gov.
City Manager Greg Burris has recommended budget cuts totaling more than $1.27 million to the Springfield City Council following a continued drop in sales tax revenue and other funding sources such as permit fees and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from City Utilities. The cuts are outlined in a memo that can be found linked on the Dec. 29, 2009 post at the City Connect blog. If approved by Council, would be implemented immediately rather than at the end of the 2010 fiscal year on June 30. Council heard first reading of a bill on these cuts at its Jan. 11 meeting, and is expected to vote on the item at its Jan. 25 meeting. The second-quarter cuts follow $13.7 million in cuts made thus far in the last two fiscal years — $7 million in FY09 and $6.7 million following decreased revenue in the first quarter of FY10. Collective savings during the second quarter from the City’s ongoing hiring freeze total $645,000. The City is currently down 114 full-time positions, or about 10 percent of its work force.

Similar to last quarter, Burris is recommending the remaining shortfall be made through specific departmental cuts. Those cuts include:

- A one-time reduction in the General Fund transfer to the Health Department budget totaling $225,000, much of which will be made up with federal grants.
- Eliminating a $100,000 reserve fund for Busch Building maintenance.
- Eliminating funds for capital equipment purchases by the Public Works Department totaling $100,000.
- Eliminating funds for capital equipment purchases for the City View channel totaling $100,000.
- Changes to telephone and facility cleaning services totaling $96,500.
- Voluntary furloughs totaling $7,000. These furloughs are above and beyond the furlough time required of some employees following the first quarter budget cuts.

On a more positive revenue-related note, the City has settled the last of its lawsuits with telecommunications companies over back taxes. Under a settlement signed in January, AT&T Missouri will pay the City of Springfield $7.45 million for back taxes. AT&T Missouri will pay attorneys’ fees associated with the settlement directly to the City’s outside legal counsel.

As with past settlements, City Council intends to put the money into the Police-Fire Pension Fund and will consider a formal action to do so at its Jan. 26 meeting.

The settlement results from a lawsuit the City filed in the U.S. District Court in Jefferson City in May 2004, naming AT&T, Sprint, Alltel, Cingular (now AT&T Mobility) and Nextel as defendants.

With this settlement, the City has netted a total of $25,128,788 from the telecommunications providers. Of that amount, $24,088,788 has been or will be applied to the Police-Fire Pension Fund, including the entire amounts of the last three settlements.

The telecommunications companies paid a total of $221 million to settle a class-action lawsuit with 240 other Missouri communities. If Springfield would have participated in that action, the City would have received only about $5.5 million. Assistant City Attorney Nancy Yendes has played a leading role throughout this successful legal process.

**Final telecom settlements total: $25 million**

On a real person who knows the traffic landscape in Springfield and can respond appropriately when incidents happen. “You have to have somebody that can assimilate the information and determine who it goes to,” he says. “It’s like a big puzzle, and we’re trying to keep all the pieces working properly.”

The traffic-monitoring system is different than, and not connected to, the red-light camera system set up at some intersections. The cameras are designed to see the big picture. Anyone who wants to find out local traffic conditions can see the latest images from the cameras online at OzarksTraffic.info.

With that Web site, drivers, as well as traffic engineers, can use the information McCarty sees. McCarty does not necessarily see an accident as it happens, but he quickly sees the aftermath and response, such as traffic backing up or an ambulance on the scene. McCarty can take a picture of the scene if it’s within view of a camera (which he can turn). He posts the picture on the Web to alert motorists and news media, who monitor the OzarksTraffic Web site. If the crash is causing a backup, he then alerts City and MoDOT traffic engineers. If necessary, the engineers can adjust signal timing on the fly to compensate, or to adjust for traffic backing up.

Special events and weather also play a big role in traffic. The TMC can help coordinate parades and routing near large events. During bad weather, having an operator like McCarty at the help of the TMC network is a huge plus. But, McCarty says he’s often surprised by how the weather affects traffic. “You can’t put a pattern on anything,” he says. “I can have an absolutely gorgeous day where you’d think nothing would go wrong and still have all sorts of accidents going on.” Yet a gloomy, rainy day might see virtually no incidents.

The City and MoDOT recently broke ground on a new building to house a state-of-the-art TMC. Located inside the Public Works Service Center, it will one day expand to help monitor not only the Springfield area, but all of MoDOT District 8, which includes 12 counties.

McCarty says everyone who’s been involved with the TMC since it began in a small room in the Discovery Center (it’s now in a rented space downtown) is thrilled. When completed in early 2011, it will allow greater collaboration and expandability for many “operators” during big events or weather incidents.

McCarty says he doesn’t necessarily enjoy waking up at 4:30 a.m. each work day, but he loves the work. “I simply love my job,” he says. “I do feel a sense of satisfaction doing what I do here and I look forward to coming to work, I really do.”
Service Anniversaries

30 years
Mike Stafford
Public Grounds
Maintenance Supervisor
Public Works – 02/25/80

John Marion
Battalion Chief
Fire – 02/09/90

Stephanie Elliott
911 Telecommunicator
Emergency Communications – 02/05/90

15 years
Machelle Stacey
Senior Lab Scientist
Health – 02/06/95

Sue Murphy
Accounting Services Representative
Finance – 02/06/95

Gary Cyr
Director of Aviation
Airport – 02/01/95

10 years
Terrence Moore
Craftsworker
Public Works – 02/12/00

5 years
Mike MacPherson
Principal City Planner
Planning and Development – 02/06/05

Renatta Peskar
Crime Research Analyst
Police – 02/14/05

Matthew Iver
Police Officer
Police – 02/21/05

Dennis Mork
Parks Maintenance
Working Leader
Parks – 02/05/05

William Walters
Custodian
Airport – 02/22/05

Welcome

Sandra Fanning
Health Program Assistant
- Health

Stephen Goodwin
Custodian – Airport

For Sale or Rent

NW 2 Bedroom, 1 bath, trash paid, moving provided during growing season, 2 available $375/$425. Deposit $300/$400. Pets negotiable with paid pet deposit. Discounts available to City Employees. Call Jim @ 417-887-0745 for directions.


Scrap plywood. Looking for long pieces that can be damaged or cut to put in floor of attic. Call 766-8536.

Services

Need work done around the house? Small projects to major remodels, no job too big or small. 10 years experience, references available. Contact Patrick at 268-5633.

Online Computers can handle viruses; data backup; consultation and installation of new hardware and software; and Wi-Fi for your personal computer. Call Jason Hicks at 569-9884.

Grizzly Mountain Saw Works — handcrafted wood art, custom stump carving. Send e-mail to: favorite848@hotmail.com, or call 749-1888.


Painting: Interior, exterior, residential and commercial. Licensed and reasonable, with more than 30 years of experience. Satisfaction guaranteed. Free estimates. Call Don Spradling at 833-5182.

Professional Handyman. All types of home repair or remodel, inside or out. No job too large or small. Craftsman extraordinaire. Can build anything you have a picture of. Licensed and insured. Call Caleb at 540-0070.

Guitar and bass lessons. Over 20 years experience. All styles; beginning through advanced. Best rates in town. Contact Brad at 869-1284.

Tired of the volatile market affecting your retirement and investment accounts? We provide a wide range of financial services and specialize in retirement and tax planning. Call today for your appointment to talk about alternatives for your financial future. Ask for Jeff Burnett, John Truman or Mike Truman at Truman & Associates, 881-9700. 1992 W. Chesterfield Blvd., #110.

Sunni Side Grooming & Pet Café – Full Service grooming for your dog or cat. Ten-percent discount on first grooming visit. Located in Rogersville. Call 753-3511.

Do you have something to sell or a service to offer? Advertise it for free in the SCENE. Call Mike Brothers at 864-1119 or send an e-mail to thescene@springfieldmo.gov.

Important Dates

Jan. 23-24 – Eagle Days at Lake Springfield Park
Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Day
Feb. 15 – President’s Day, City offices closed
Feb. 16 – Police/Fire retirees meeting; 6:30 p.m., Heritage Cafeteria, 1364 E. Battlefield Road
Employees boosted charities during ’09 holidays

This past Christmas season, the City was involved in four holiday charity drives. Several different departments and many employees volunteered to make this possible.

In the past, the City has held a chili charity luncheon to pay for Salvation Army Christmas needs. This year, in lieu of a luncheon, Merleene Knapton of BDS and Roxanne Sharp of Health decorated Christmas boxes and distributed them to various departments.

The Salvation Army indicated that adult male items were most in need, and City employees came through once again. In fact, the departmental drive collected more items in 2009 than were ever bought from chili earnings in years past: six large boxes full. Municipal Court and the Law Department get high kudos for their overflowing boxes.

“The Salvation Army depends on us every year,” Sharp said. “City employees have big hearts for those in need.”

On a related note, the Public Works Department enlisted employees to be “bell ringers” for the Salvation Army during Christmas 2009. That’s in addition to the donations the Department gave to the annual Candyland at the Footbridge charity event. When Santa brings toys and candy for neighborhood children. Public works participates in Candyland at the Footbridge each year.

Finally, the Fire and Police departments participated in the Shop With A Hero program, in which a child is given a $75 gift card to shop for his or her family, and is accompanied on their shopping trip with a first responder. Springfield Fire Marshal Kevin Binam coordinated this year’s program.
Take advantage of your annual physical exam

January is a time of year when many people think about improving their health and fitness. One way to do this is to make sure you have periodic health exams with your primary care physician. Having an annual physical exam gives you regular benchmarks for monitoring your health, and it also strengthens the relationship between you and your primary care physician before problems happen. It also provides an opportunity to ask questions and to learn about good health practices.

Employees who are covered by the City of Springfield Health Plan have an annual physical exam benefit that pays 100 percent of the first $400 of eligible expenses. This benefit is available each calendar year. Eligible expenses typically include office visit charges, screening lab work, annual gynecological exam, mammogram, bone density, prostate cancer screening, urinalysis, other cancer screenings and immunizations. Taking advantage of this benefit is even more important this year since the Health Risk Assessments (known as an HRA) are no longer offered through the City due to budget contraints.

Here are a few tips to get the best benefit from your annual physical exam:
- Arrive a little early for your appointment.
- Make a list of current health issues or concerns that you wish to discuss with your physician. Any new symptoms or changes in your health that are of particular concern?
- Write down the questions that you want answered by your physician.
- Take a list of all prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements you are taking. Do you need new prescriptions for the next 12 months?
- Know your family medical history. Seeing your doctor on a regular basis for checkups (rather than waiting until you are already sick) can help you focus on preventing health problems and staying in optimum health. So, make getting an annual physical exam one of your 2010 goals!

For more details about the City of Springfield Health, you may access the Plan Summary and Plan Document on the City’s Web site at www.springfieldmo.gov. You may also contact Med-Pay at 417-886-6886 regarding health plan coverage questions.

H1N1 flu shots still available, free to employees

The H1N1 flu may appear to be on the decline, but could cause serious illness beyond the winter months. Vaccination for both H1N1 and season flu is still extremely important, and – for City of Springfield employees – it’s free and readily available.

Influenza viruses are unpredictable and another wave of H1N1 flu is still possible. The best protection against the flu is to be vaccinated.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department’s Westside Public Health Center is providing H1N1 vaccinations free of charge at regularly scheduled walk-in clinics on Tuesdays from 7:30 – 10 a.m. Westside Public Health Center is located at 660 S. Scenic Ave., in Springfield.

Now is the time to get vaccinated. The H1N1 flu virus could last beyond the normal flu season. So, take advantage of this time to get vaccinated and protect yourself and your loved ones against the H1N1 flu.

For more information on the H1N1 flu and vaccination, please visit www.springfieldmo.gov/health or call 874-1228.
Health Dept. renews call for art

Artists, photographers, get busy creating! The Springfield-Greene County Health Department extends an opportunity for City and County employees to begin displaying their original art work at Westside Public Health Center. This program continues to offer visitors to the WPHC an opportunity to appreciate art as one component of a healthy lifestyle. Employees can submit artwork to the Westside Public Health Center, located at 660 S. Scenic Avenue for review. Selected items will be displayed with a card listing the creator’s name.

The second exhibit of this program will launch Feb. 1, 2010 and will last through May 2010. For the display, original photographs or canvas art may be submitted and must be received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 22, 2010. All art must have the ability to be hung and have hanging hardware attached. Two submissions per employee, only, please. Artists who are selected will receive notification and a certificate of selection.

For more information, please contact Pam Bryant at 864-4491 or Katie Towns-Jeter at 864-1149.

Mileage allowance drops to 45 cents

Mileage allowance paid to City employees for use of personal automobiles for City business is calculated at 90 percent of the standard mileage rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS rate is currently 50 cents per mile. The City’s reimbursement rate decreased to 45 cents per mile effective Jan. 3, 2010.

Zoo tops 200,000 visitors for 6th year

Dickerson Park Zoo has announced 2009 attendance totaled 213,176 visitors. The series of 200,000-plus attendance years began with 2004 when Dickerson Park Zoo opened a major expansion funded by the voter-approved quarter-cent sales tax for Greene County Parks. The expansion included the popular elevated giraffe viewing/feeding deck; “Tropical Asia” region with Asian elephants, tigers and gibbons; the addition of gray wolves and mountain lions to “Missouri Habitats”; and an exhibit for black and white colobus monkeys.

Zoo Superintendent Mike Crocker attributed the attendance trend to several factors. “The zoo is very family friendly,” he said. “We provide an outdoor experience that has great kid-appeal and an aspect of education along with it.”

Although Dickerson Park Zoo saw its overall operating budget reduced in 2009 as part of reductions throughout the City of Springfield, Crocker noted the reductions were absorbed mostly in areas that did not directly affect the visiting public. “We tried very hard to maintain the quality of our guests’ experiences.”

Annual zoo attendance is calculated by combining daytime guests and attendance at three evening events: Halloween SPOOKTACULAR, the annual Friends of the Zoo picnic and Dreamnight at the Zoo.

Fire Chief starts blog on CityShare

Incoming Fire Chief David Hall is doing at least one thing differently as the new head of the SFD. He has started a blog, which can be found on the CityShare Intranet page, as a way of enhancing communication with Department employees.

Hall says he regularly visits crews at the City’s 12 fire stations to get face time with employees. But he wanted to take advantage of technology to add to that and help facilitate discussion among all of the crews. He compared it to sitting around a virtual kitchen table at fire station.

The blog is only available to Fire employees. To read it or comment on it, log onto CityShare at http://sharepoint/default.aspx. Click on ‘Fire’ under the ‘Departments’ heading in the left-hand column and look for “Chief’s Blog.”

In Brief

Do You Know…?

A Q & A of City of Springfield employees. To suggest a colleague for a “Do You Know...?” profile, email mbrothers@springfieldmo.gov.

Amanda Jones
Administrative Assistant, Fire. Amanda has worked for the City for 1 year.

What did you want to “be” when you grew up?
I wanted to be a teacher, a waitress and a cowgirl.

What was your favorite TV show as a child?
“The Cosby Show.”

What is your favorite book?

How would you change your name?
Growing up, I would have gladly changed my name to anything other than Amanda because it was so common, there were nine other Amandas in my grade, anything other than Amanda because it was so common, there were nine other Amandas in my grade, “The Cosby Show.”

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What is your favorite book?

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Growing up, I would have gladly changed my name to anything other than Amanda because it was so common, there were nine other Amandas in my grade, and multiple Amanda Joneses. I thought my parents were incredibly unoriginal, but as an adult, it’s OK, I almost like it.

Jason Hicks
Computer technician, IS. Jason has worked for the City for nearly 3 years.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?
Awesome.

What’s the one thing about you most people don’t know?
I operate a personal computer repair business. But hey, I didn’t pay for a SCENE ad, so you’ll just have to ask me about it.*

What is your favorite book?
“Black” by Ted Dekker.

Who do you admire?
My dad.

Who do you quote?
Barney Stinson from TV’s “How I Met Your Mother.” (See question one.)

*Editor’s note: SCENE ads are always free!
To: Marc Thornsberry, Director of Public Works

I wanted to commend a City employee by the name of Steve Shanboltzer. Steve went above and beyond his job responsibilities during our recent interactions. He was very prompt in replying to all e-mails and questions, easy to work with, and frequently offered to stay late or come early to close our contract. I feel the City of Springfield has a very valuable employee in Steve, and I wanted to take the time to recognize him.

Sincerely,
Bryan Cates

To: Our Friends at the Park Board

We can’t thank you enough for you amazing efforts this year's Turkey Trot! Your hard work is really going a long way – 6,856 lbs. for our agency members! What a great record. We are so appreciative for your support.

Best regards,
The Board and staff at Ozarks Food Harvest

To: Jodie Adams, Parks Director

I cannot express enough how thankful I am that the Park Board really stepped up to help provide a beautiful track, soccer goals and playground equipment for our kids and their families. I am so fortunate to have a wonderful partner in the Park Board.

With sincere appreciation,
Chris Mendel, Principal
David Harrison Elementary School, opened fall 2009

To: Police Chief Lynn Rowe

There was an individual trespassing on company property at Paul Mueller. A security officer stopped and detained the person, who had been warned three times in the past for trespassing. E-911 was called and in a matter of minutes, Officer Brandon Cole was on the scene.

Officer Cole was very professional and very helpful in the situation, and was an example of what fine men and women we have working at SPD. Officer Cole was backed up by another outstanding officer, Dale Sokolik.

We appreciate all of the help that SPD gives our company and its security department. Please let officers Cole and Sokolik know they are greatly appreciated and are great examples our security officers can look up to.

Nathan Kelley,
Security Manager, Paul Mueller Company

To: Police Chief Lynn Rowe

I received a phone call from Capt. Bill Anderson of the Pulaski County Sheriff’s Office. Capt. Anderson wanted to let you know what a good job Corporal Angela Burgess did while handling a child abuse case for them recently. Capt. Anderson advised they really appreciated everything Corp. Burgess did and that she represented the Springfield Police Department in a very professional way.

Marilyn Grier

To: Police Chief Lynn Rowe

My 16-year-old son and 19-year-old daughter were in a car accident. Officer John Stowe took extra time to make sure my children were fine until I arrived on the scene. Instead of just saying “No injuries, wait here,” he took the time to help them and I would really like to thank him.

Frank Hamilton

Police Chief Lynn Rowe (right) and longtime administrative assistant Marilyn Grier both marked their final day of work at the City with a reception in City Council Chambers. Both received signed “badges” thanking them for years of dedicated service.