

2	MAYOR'S MESSAGE
3	AWARDS
4	CENTRAL PLAZA
5	CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK
6	SHOP LOCAL
7-8	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
9	ENGINEERING
10	CITY SERVICES
11	PUBLIC WORKS
12-13	PUBLIC SAFETY
14	PARKS & REC
15	LIBRARY
16	RETIREMENTS



Winter 2024

# MARION MESSENGER

Check out  
the New  
Pride & Pack  
School  
District  
Insert

Marion lands  
Five Voice of  
the People  
Awards  
page 3

## Making Spirits Bright

Christmas in the Park happening Dec. 6



Nick AbouAssaly

## Celebrating Milestones & the Marion Way

Recently, our city celebrated the sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary of the Marion Fire Department. This event was the perfect opportunity to recognize

the department's historical role in our city's growth and development and its contributions to making Linn County's oldest town one of Iowa's best cities. We congratulate Chief Tom Fagan and the entire Fire Department staff, past and present, on this milestone and thank them for their commitment to the safety and well-being of our community.

The event was made even more special with the unveiling of a recognition piece highlighting the awards garnered by our Fire Department Headquarters building. Marion's Fire Station No. 1 is yet another point of pride that is putting Marion on a global stage. Following is the remarkable list of recognitions:

- American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, Honor Award (2021)
- American Institute of Architects, Central States Region, Honor Award (2021)
- International Interior Design Association, Great Plains Chapter, Honorable Mention (2022)
- International Living Future Institute, Stephen R. Kellert Biophilic Design Award (2023)
- Rethinking the Future Awards, Public Building (Built) Winner (2023)
- American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, Impact Award, Honor Award (2023)
- Archello Awards, Government Building of the Year (2023)
- American Institute of Architects, Justice Facilities Review Award (2023)
- Architizer, A+ Awards, Special Mention (2023)
- American Institute of Architects, Honor Award (2024)
- The Chicago Athenaeum, International Architecture Awards, Winner (2024)

The facility was also featured in numerous prestigious publications, including "Contemporary Architecture: Masterpieces Around the World."

Fire Station No.1 is just one example of the new "Marion Way," representing our commitment to excellence in everything we do. This approach to community development is anchored in an understanding that we have one chance to do things the right way. Across the community, we can see examples of how, today, Marion is reaching higher, asking for the best and elevating the community's curb appeal as we shape a city that we're all proud to call "home."

In this season of gratitude, I am grateful to be on Team Marion, which is comprised of wonderful people who are setting the standard in responsible and responsive City government and are committed to serving Marion's residents and giving them the best opportunities. And I'm grateful to the Marion community for the honor and privilege of serving and leading our great city. Together, we are reaching higher and moving the community forward.

To all who will observe a holiday in the coming weeks, my family and I offer our best wishes for a joyous celebration. God bless.

## City and Chamber Seeking Community Impact Award Nominations

The City of Marion and Marion Chamber of Commerce are proud to partner on the Morris F. Neighbor Community Impact Award. Nominations are currently open and will be accepted until Jan. 31, 2025.

The Community Impact Award was launched in 2021 in recognition of banker Morris F. Neighbor of Farmers State Bank. Through his leadership, the Neighbor family has given to countless capital campaigns, community events, and charitable non-profit groups. In addition, volunteerism and dedication to the community have remained a priority with the family and among bank staff.

John McIntosh was awarded the 2024 Community Impact Award earlier this year.

Community Impact Award nominees may be one or more people or an organization whose volunteerism, outstanding service and dedication have impacted the Marion community. Ideal candidates are people who have made a positive difference in the lives of fellow residents, continually volunteer in Marion, demonstrate a spirit of collaboration and are enthusiastic about the community and its people, and model honesty and integrity, exemplary character and leadership.

The nomination period opens annually at the Marion Chamber of Commerce annual meeting in October. The honoree will be announced by Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly during the Marion State of the City event next spring.



Visit [www.marioncc.org/community-impact-award](http://www.marioncc.org/community-impact-award) to access the nomination form.



## City Council Office Hours

Marion City Council office hours have returned to the Marion Public Library, 1101 6th Avenue. One or more City Council members will be available to visit with residents each Saturday between 9-11 a.m. through the fall and winter months. Residents can also call or email City Council members directly with their questions and input. Contact information is available at [www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.cityofmarion.org).

## Come Work with Us

The City of Marion has a wide variety of job opportunities available. We are a highly collaborative team where people can learn and grow while making a positive impact in the community. We offer competitive pay and a benefits package that includes health and dental insurance, a retirements plan, tuition reimbursement, vacation, sick and holiday pay and more.



For a complete list of current openings, visit [www.cityofmarion.org/employment](http://www.cityofmarion.org/employment).





# Marion Receives Five Voice of the People Awards

*Commitment to resident-centered decision-making earns national recognition*

The City of Marion has been named a winner in five categories of the 2024 Voice of the People (VOP) Awards. Marion was recognized for excellence in community design as well as transformation in parks and recreation, transformation in mobility, transformation in the natural environment and transformation in community design.

The VOP Awards are the only nationally recognized honors given to local governments based on resident input, government performance and the use of community data in decision-making. This is the 16th year of the awards, presented by Polco and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

In a time of fading public trust and polarization, community-centered governance is more important than ever.

“Local governments face significant challenges today. Collaboration, resident participation, and data-informed decision-making are vital for solving these complex issues. The VOP awards highlight these communities as national models for addressing difficult problems

in government,” said Nick Mastronardi, CEO of Polco.

The 2024 winners represent local governments in 11 states that have excelled in responding to the needs of their residents. Through data-informed strategic planning and community engagement, these organizations have made significant strides in budget management, community design, safety and beyond.

“Community engagement is one of the secrets to our success in Marion,” said Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. “We take the input of residents and use it to make the best decisions for our community. This recognition in the areas of community design, parks and recreation, mobility and natural environment points to the unequalled quality of life we enjoy and our continual pursuit of making Marion the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business.”

Many award recipients were nominated after receiving the highest or most improved ratings from residents on The National Community Survey (The NCS). The NCS is a nationwide community livability assessment with the largest

database of its kind and nearly 1,000 participating municipalities over the last 30 years. The database represents the perspectives of more than 50 million Americans, and well over 100 jurisdictions conduct the survey each year.

Beginning this year, the VOP Awards expanded to recognize top-performing jurisdictions according to the Government Performance Action and Learning (GPAL) data warehouse. Initiated by Polco, GPAL curates public data from the nation’s most trusted sources, such as the US Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Housing & Urban Development, and many more.

VOP Award categories include excellence or transformation in: economy, safety, natural environment, health and wellness, mobility, education, arts & culture, parks and recreation, utilities, community design, trust in government, budget & finance, online outreach, and online engagement.

Polco, a community engagement and civic analytics technology company, presents the Voice of the People Awards in partnership with ICMA.



## Event Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Interested in sponsoring an event? Sponsorship dollars allow the City of Marion to provide free, quality programming for the community. Sponsorship benefits include advertising opportunities, an on-site presence during events and more. Sponsorships are accepted for a variety of events. If you’re interested in learning more, drop us a line at [events@cityofmarion.org](mailto:events@cityofmarion.org).



# Central Plaza Project Update

Marion's Central Plaza grew out of the ImagiNEXT community visioning process and is a continuation of the North Plaza that was constructed as part of the 7th Avenue Reconstruction and Streetscape project in 2021 and 2022. The project includes the eastern section of the park and the vacated portion of 11th Street.

The Central Plaza is expected to be substantially completed by the end of 2024. Plantings and a few remaining structures will be installed in the spring when the weather allows. Look for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to occur in May.

## Central Plaza Capital Campaign to Close Dec. 31

As 2024 draws to a close, the transformation of the Central Plaza in City Square is nearing completion. The plaza will be home to the new outdoor ice-skating loop, public art, a water feature and a play structure. It will provide recreational opportunities in all seasons and enhance the vibrancy of Marion and the Uptown District.

The Marion Parks and Recreation Foundation invites you to be part of something truly special – a project that will serve as a central gathering place and a symbol of Marion's growth and community spirit.

More than \$1 million has been raised through the private fundraising campaign to date. Consider an end-of-year gift to help bring it across the finish line. The capital campaign will officially close on Dec. 31, 2024. Don't miss out on the opportunity to leave a lasting impact on Marion's future by supporting this project.



Sponsorship opportunities and the pledge form can be found at [www.cityofmarion.org/parksfoundation](http://www.cityofmarion.org/parksfoundation).



## Get Ready for Winter Fun on Marion's New Ice Loop

Lace up your skates and be one of the first to experience Marion's newest winter attraction! In January/February 2025, we anticipate holding a soft opening of the outdoor ice-skating loop at the Central Plaza in Uptown Marion. This unique refrigerated ice loop will offer a fun and exciting way to enjoy the beauty of winter while creating unforgettable memories with family and friends.



## Marion Conducting Community Equity and Inclusion Survey

The City of Marion is seeking input from residents to help identify community strengths and challenges related to racial justice, inclusion and equity through an online survey. The deadline to participate is Dec. 15, 2024.

The Community Equity and Inclusion Survey, available at [www.polco.us/MarionIA](http://www.polco.us/MarionIA), is designed to help community leaders understand the experiences of all residents. Questions are centered around experiences related to community safety, fairness, respect and how welcome they feel.

The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Answers are completely confidential and survey results will be reported in group form only. The data will be reviewed and analyzed by City staff, community leaders and the Marion Civil Rights Commission.





## Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk

Kick off the holiday season with family fun at Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk on Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, from 4-8 p.m. in Uptown Marion.

- › Visit Santa and Mrs. Claus and don't forget to leave your letter!
- › Enjoy popcorn from El Kahir Shrine and hot cocoa while supplies last.
- › Take a horse-drawn carriage ride through Uptown.
- › Enjoy musical performances by the Heart of Marion Community Choir and local carolers.
- › Pay a visit to the princesses from Adorable Princess Parties.
- › And you won't want to miss the lighting of Marion's community peace tree!

Visit participating Uptown Marion merchants for the Peppermint Walk. Stores will be decked with holiday lights and decorations, and shoppers can receive a free peppermint treat while supplies last.



Visit [www.facebook.com/MarionIACChamber](https://www.facebook.com/MarionIACChamber) for more details.



### CONTACT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

#### Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly

1225 6th Ave. | (319) 743-6305  
marionmayor@cityofmarion.org

#### At-Large - Randy Strnad

1820 Agate Circle | (319) 377-3276  
marionatlarge1@cityofmarion.org

#### At-Large - Steve Jensen

3830 Monarch Ave. | (319) 360-7009  
marionatlarge2@cityofmarion.org

#### Ward One - Gage Miskimen

2551 Pleasantview Dr. | (850) 361-7181  
ward1@cityofmarion.org

#### Ward Two - Grant Harper

2522 Vaughn Dr. | (319) 389-3385  
ward2@cityofmarion.org

#### Ward Three - Will Brandt

2745 4th Ave. | (319) 389-9918  
ward3@cityofmarion.org

#### Ward Four - Sara Mentzer

2305 Timber Creek Dr. | (319) 538-8296  
ward4@cityofmarion.org

Send the same email to all members at:  
council@cityofmarion.org

Marion's City Council meets in work session (no action taken, just discussion) on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. Regular session meetings are held the Thursday following the Tuesday work session at 5:30 p.m. Meeting information can be found at [www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.cityofmarion.org).



Support neighborhood businesses in Uptown Marion



Start your day at the Marion Welcome Center to receive your Shop Small gift!  
\*while supplies last



Unwrap creativity this season—discover unique treasures at Uptown's carefully shops, perfect for every holiday wish!

**Small Business Saturday**  
Saturday, November 30th • 10am-2pm • Uptown Marion



#SmallBizSat



MARION Chamber  
Commerce. Community. Culture.



UPTOWN MARION  
A Main Street Iowa District



# Strengthening the Shop Local Muscle

Contributed by the Marion Chamber of Commerce

**W**hen is the BEST time to shop local? Is it back-to-school time? Mother's Day? November and December? There's an entire holiday the Saturday after Thanksgiving centered around supporting small businesses and turning the focus of the busy holiday shopping season to local retailers. These are all good times, but the best time to shop local is ANY time.

Think about shopping local as a muscle that needs to be continually flexed. It's a change in mindset, like a new behavior that needs to be repeated several times to create a habit. If you do it often enough it will become natural for your first thought to be visiting a local business when you need shoes, clothing, sporting goods, gifts or a great meal.

Our small businesses are fighting every day to compete and stay relevant when big box stores move in or goods and services are just a click away.

## WHY SHOP LOCAL?

In Marion, and every community across the state, amazing small businesses are waiting to be discovered. They may be located on main streets, just outside of town or in newer mixed-use buildings. They are the face of the community. They are owned by our friends and neighbors

who are investing in the community they live in. Why wouldn't you want to support them?

Local shopping helps strengthen our local economy. When money is spent at a local business, a significant portion of it stays within the community creating a multiplier effect. A local retailer likely uses other local businesses for goods and services needed to operate. For every \$100 spent, approximately \$68 stays local. Small businesses are also employers providing jobs to residents and fostering economic stability.

There is also something about getting to know local business owners. Knowing that the place you service your vehicle or purchase your insurance through is a third-generation family-owned business gives meaning to mundane transactions. Small businesses are also more likely to be involved in the community, sponsor local events and support local teams and non-profit organizations. They are reinvesting in the community and adding to its vibrancy.

## GET STARTED

It's not just retailers that need support. Think about some of the everyday services you use like lawn care, heating and cooling checks, oil changes or dental visits. Are you using a local Marion business?

Can you make a switch? When it's time to meet a friend or grab something to eat, plan to visit a restaurant or coffee shop in Marion. Get started by looking for opportunities to visit many small businesses at the same time. Try taking part in Small Business Saturday on Nov. 30, 2024. The Marion Chamber will be hosting an event from 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Before you know it, you will be flexing your shop local muscle daily and adding to the strength of our community.







## Boulevard Apartments Receives HousingIowa Award

**B**oulevard Apartments, a project by Talon Development and Eagle Construction, received the Multifamily Development HousingIowa award during the 2024 HousingIowa Conference in Des Moines earlier this fall. The project was recognized as an outstanding housing initiative by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and highlights the success of the 99-unit apartment complex in Marion, as a model of innovative and replicable community development.

The project, which began in 2021, was designed to address the growing housing needs in Marion and Cedar Rapids, offering modern, affordable options for the city. Situated in a prime location near the intersection of 1st Avenue NE and Collins Road NE, Boulevard Apartments provide easy access to retail, dining, and personal services, while featuring amenities such as a playground, dog park, fitness room and ample parking.

The success of Boulevard Apartments is a testament to the power of collaboration, thoughtful planning and strategic use of resources.



## Comprehensive Plan Update

**T**he City of Marion, in partnership with RDG Planning and Design, is nearing completion of the update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Marion 2045: A Plan to Reach New Heights.

The draft plan will be shared at a public open house on Tuesday, Dec. 10, to gain additional community feedback. Following the open house, a draft plan will be posted to the project's website to allow for public comment through January. In February and March, the plan will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Marion City Council. Once adopted, Marion 2045: A Plan to Reach New Heights will help guide the city into the future over the next 15-20 years through the implementation of strategies within the plan.



**Visit the project website for upcoming public participation opportunities and to view the draft plan**  
[www.cityofmarion.org/CompPlan](http://www.cityofmarion.org/CompPlan)



## Uptown Parking Study Update

The City of Marion recently completed a Parking Study for Uptown Marion. It evaluates both current and future parking demand in the Uptown Marion District and suggests strategies that focus on efficient management without requiring substantial capital investments. Conducted in the fall and winter of 2023/24, the study was guided by City staff in partnership with the Uptown business community to align recommendations with local needs and priorities. Key goals include balancing parking access for various users, like employees and patrons, particularly during peak demand times.

The study's objectives are centered on assessing current conditions, analyzing utilization data to understand parking trends, engaging the business

community throughout the process, and establishing strategies to optimize existing parking resources. It also proposes a parking assessment tool to evaluate potential redevelopment impacts on parking availability, considering mixed-use development scenarios. The study provides a comprehensive evaluation of Uptown's parking system and presents short- and long-term strategies to enhance the parking experience in Marion's Uptown District.

The City will establish an Uptown Parking Committee in early 2025 to begin to review the recommended strategies. This committee will provide the City Council with actionable recommendations to ensure continued and future access to parking in the heart of the community.



## When Are Building Permits Required?

Permits benefit more than just the homeowner, although that is who benefits most. If work is completed without a permit when one is required, the City will not have record of the updates, additions or improvements when you try to sell your house, and the future buyer may ask for these records. The permitting process also ensures structures meet the minimum levels of health and safety for your family and future owners of the property. The cost of a building permit covers any necessary review of your project as well as all required inspections.

The following is a list of the most common projects that require building permits. A more comprehensive list may be found at: [www.cityofmarion.org/building-services](http://www.cityofmarion.org/building-services)

- Basement finishing and remodeling
- Room additions (including sunrooms) and garage additions
- Kitchen and/or bathroom remodeling
- Detached accessory structures (garages, storage sheds) over 120 square feet
- Installation or replacement of furnace and/or air conditioner
- Installation or replacement of water heater
- Replacing windows or exterior doors
- Residing
- Reroofing
- Decks
- Swimming pools over 24 inches deep
- Hot tubs
- Fences over 7 feet high (fences over 6 feet tall require a variance)

For any questions about permit requirements, call the Marion Building Division at (319) 743-6330.

# This Calls for a Celebration!



## Marion Fire Department Celebrates 150 years

The Marion Fire Department marked its 150th anniversary with an open house on Oct. 12. The event honored the rich history and promising future of the Marion Fire Department and included a program, tours, a food truck and even an engine “push-in” ceremony to place the department’s newest fire engine into service.



## Marion Public Works Ribbon Cutting

On Sept. 24, City staff, community leaders and residents gathered to celebrate the completion of the City’s new Public Works Facility located at 202 44th Street. The 144,000-square-foot structure provides for the current and future operational needs of the Public Works Department. It includes expanded equipment storage, fleet maintenance and fabrication facilities. The building has a 3,000-square-foot FEMA-certified safe room and a front office constructed out of precast wall and ceiling concrete components to withstand severe weather events. It also incorporates a geothermal system to provide long-term energy savings.



## CeMar Bridge Lighting

A ribbon-cutting and lighting ceremony was held on Oct. 23, at the base of the gateway bridge that spans Marion Boulevard. The colorful bridge is one of a kind, with the artistic elements designed by local artist Cara Briggs Farmer of Synergy Metalworks. MediaQuest Signs was responsible for fabricating and installing the lighted columns. Shoemaker and Haaland provided project design and engineering services.



## Prairie Hill Park Ribbon Cutting

Community leaders, City staff and Chamber ambassadors joined the Marion Parks and Recreation Department on Sept. 30, to celebrate the completion of Prairie Hill Park, located at the corner of 29th Avenue and 50th Street. The park offers a playground with equipment for all age groups, a 20-stall parking lot, a pavilion and a basketball court. Most of the work was completed in-house by members of the City team.

### MARION MESSENGER

The Marion Messenger is published quarterly to keep Marion, Iowa, residents informed of City policies, new developments and community events. If you have comments or suggestions concerning this or future issues, please contact:

**Amber Bisinger**, Editor  
Marion City Hall | [abisinger@cityofmarion.org](mailto:abisinger@cityofmarion.org)



# Engineering Project Updates

The Engineering Division of the Public Works Department oversees many of the City's capital projects and manages an annual construction program. Here are a few highlights from the current construction season. This year, the City invested more than \$10 million in roadway improvements, including improvements to residential and arterial streets. In total, 10 miles of roadway improvement work was completed.



## 10th Avenue Resurfacing Project

Westbound 10th Avenue (Business Highway 151) was resurfaced from Highway 13 near Wal-Mart, to 35th Street near Hy-Vee. This project included the installation of draitile along the pavement edge, milling, full-depth patchwork and roadway resurfacing. Eastbound 10th Avenue was resurfaced in 2023.



## 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project

This two-year project includes the reconstruction of 5th Avenue from 1st Street to 7th Street, including necessary upgrades to the water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer infrastructure. This project also includes water main and sewer improvements along 1st Street from 3rd Avenue to 6th Avenue.

through Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Robins, a portion of unincorporated Linn County and Marion. The goal is to improve transportation, safety and quality of life for residents, along with the environment, as the area continues to see growth. The newest stretch from Alburnett Road to the roundabout at C Avenue NE has opened to traffic.



## Indian Creek Trunk Sewer Replacement Project - Segment 7

The Indian Creek and Dry Run Creek Trunk Sewer is a multi-jurisdictional line serving Linn County and the cities of Cedar Rapids, Marion, Hiawatha and Robins. It is planned to be replaced and upgraded in segments throughout the entire 16-mile length over a period of 15+ years. The new sanitary sewer will provide additional capacity to accommodate present needs and future growth. The Segment 7 project upsized over 6,200 lineal feet of the sanitary trunk sewer from the Mt. Calvary Cemetery area (in Cedar Rapids) to just north of Highway 100 (west of Menards) from 42-inches in diameter to 60-inches in diameter.



## Highway 100 & E Post Road Intersection Improvements Project

This project, intended to improve safety and traffic capacity at this intersection, includes replacing existing traffic signals, and adding eastbound and westbound left turn lanes, a westbound right turn lane and two-way queue detection to alert oncoming traffic that there are stopped vehicles ahead.

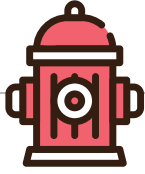


## Tower Terrace Road Project - C Avenue to Alburnett Road - Phase A Paving

The Tower Terrace Road Project hopes to expand Tower Terrace Road to connect I-380 on the west to Highway 13 on the east. When finished, the road will span 8.3 miles

## Coopers Creek Officially Named

Marion has a new creek! Well, the creek has always been there, but now it has an official name. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names, at its Oct. 10, 2024, meeting approved the proposal from a group of Linn-Mar Venture Academics students to name the previously unnamed stream Coopers Creek. This is the creek that flows from south of Echo Hill Road, west of Alburnett Road, and merges with Dry Creek just south of Boyson Road. Congratulations to the Venture Academics students on this successful initiative.



## Adopt a Hydrant

The Marion Water Department and Marion Fire Department encourage residents and businesses to adopt their neighborhood fire hydrants this winter.

The number of house fires typically increases during the winter months. Significant snow accumulation and drifts can hide fire hydrants, making them impossible to find quickly. In the event of a fire, firefighters often must locate and shovel out fire hydrants before being able to connect to them, losing precious time.

You can help by keeping the fire hydrants closest to your home or business clear of snow. It is best to have three-feet cleared on all sides of the hydrant.



## New Online Utility Bill Payment Features – Coming Soon!

By the end of this year, the Marion Water Department will be switching to a new online bill payment system. Be on the lookout for the following enhancements.

- Current eSuite users will see a new look and will have to bookmark the new URL link.
- Recurring card payment customers will have to sign up for this service again and provide card information in the new bill payment system.
- Customers will have new instructions to set up their online accounts.
- A new automated phone payment service (IVR) will take utility payments over the phone.



Visit [www.cityofmarion.org/billing-options](http://www.cityofmarion.org/billing-options) to learn more.

# Let's Talk Yard Waste

### Yard Waste Drop-Off Facility Hours

195 35th Street

Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Tuesday 7 a.m.-5:45 p.m.

Saturday 8 a.m.-4:15 p.m.

One of the biggest changes to the automated curbside collection program has to do with how yard waste is collected. The City can no longer collect paper bags at the curb — the arm of the truck can't handle them! Yard waste must be placed inside a City-issued yard waste cart with a green lid.

### Here are 3 ways you can take care of your yard waste:

- 1 Opt-in to this program by requesting a yard waste cart for \$6 per month/\$72 for the year. To request a cart, call (319) 377-6367. Yard waste carts will be collected through Friday, Dec. 13, this year.
- 2 Bring your yard waste to the Yard Waste Drop-Off Facility located at 195 35th Street, Marion. It's in the same place it's always been – and is open six days a week, year-round.
- 3 If you only have a seasonal need, consider scheduling a special brush pick-up. These happen on Tuesdays and can be scheduled by calling Public Works at (319) 377-6367. The cost is \$40 for every 15 minutes at the curb.

## Keep Grass Clippings and Yard Waste Out of Waterways

In addition to the reports of grass clippings covering streets and sidewalks in Marion, we've also received reports of grass clippings and yard waste being disposed of in Marion's waterways and stormwater detention basins.

Yard waste is included in the definition of "Rubbish" in Marion Code Chapter 268 SOLID WASTE.

While Marion's Municipal Code does not specifically address the disposal or deliberate build-up of grass clippings in publicly owned detention basins, there are several sections of the Code where yard waste disposal is addressed:

§ 206-23 Insect and rodent control

§ 274-7 Watercourse protection

§ 278-3 Placing debris on streets and sidewalks

§ 268-7 Solid Waste prohibited practices

§ 324-5 Nuisances

Please dispose of your yard waste properly. This can be accomplished by using Marion's newly implemented curbside yard waste collection program, transporting your yard waste to Marion's Yard Waste Facility at 195 35th Street or setting up a composting area in your yard.

### 2024 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



## Garbage & Recycling Collection

Date	Holiday	Day	Pick-Up Schedule
<b>Nov. 28</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Day</b>	Thursday	Collection on Friday
<b>Nov. 29</b>	<b>Day after Thanksgiving</b>	Friday	Collection on Saturday
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	Tuesday	Regular Schedule
<b>Dec. 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	Wednesday	One day late all week
<b>Dec. 31</b>	<b>New Year's Eve</b>	Tuesday	Regular Schedule
<b>Jan. 1</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b>	Wednesday	One day late all week

Bold indicates City of Marion holidays, Yard Waste Facility and City offices are closed.



# All About Automated Collection

On Oct. 14, the new program for automated garbage/recycling/yard waste collection began in Marion.

## Curbside Collection Reminders

- › Keep a minimum of 3 feet between carts and any other obstacle – more is better. This includes fire hydrants, railings, retaining walls, poles, etc.
- › If you have an extra bag, it has to be on top of your garbage cart, with an extra bag sticker visible from the street.
- › The curbside program is for standard household garbage, just because it fits in the cart doesn't mean it is allowed. Do not put TVs, printers or monitors in the garbage cart.
- › Any extra cardboard or bags next to a container will be left behind.
- › Continue to cut up boxes and larger pieces of cardboard. Boxes that are shoved into the cart get stuck and then block the other recyclables from being emptied.
- › Be sure the front of the cart faces the street and the wheels of the cart face the house.

**Recycling Reminders** | The following items are NOT collected at the curb and are considered garbage:

Glass	Containers that once had hazardous material in them	Wrapping or tissue paper
Trash or yard waste	Kitty litter buckets	Packaging materials
Styrofoam	Plastic hangers	Aluminum foil or aluminum pans
Plastic bags or film	Shredded paper	Plastic pots or garden center containers
Shipping or padded envelopes		

**Collection Times** | Residents will likely notice a change in the time of day for their collection. Crews will be stopping at more houses each day, so collection is expected to last from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. It is important to have the new wheeled carts at the curb by 7 a.m. on collection day.

**To Request Different Cart Sizes** | Residents have until Jan. 14, 2025, to request to change their cart sizes or add additional carts for no additional fee. After that date, a \$75 delivery fee applies. The two sizes for garbage and recycling are 48-gallon or 64-gallon. Yard waste carts are the 64-gallon size. To request a change, please call (319) 377-6367.

**Collection of Real Christmas Trees** | Curbside collection of real Christmas trees will continue to be provided for Marion residents from Jan. 2 - Jan. 15, 2025. This service will be provided to all households regardless of whether they subscribe to curbside yard waste service. Trees, free of stands and decorations, should be placed at the curb on the normal collection day. Flocked trees or those in bags will not be collected.

**Extra Bag of Garbage Discontinued** | The City will no longer allow an extra free bag of garbage the week between the Christmas and New Year's holidays. With the transition to automated curbside collection, residents now have an additional 16- to 32-gallons of capacity in their garbage carts. Those in need of additional space should place one extra bag on top of their garbage cart, with a \$2.50 extra bag sticker affixed and visible from the street.

**Private Snow Plow Licensing Requirements** | City ordinance requires that all private snow removal contractors need to obtain a snow removal permit for any work within the City's right of way. The cost of the permit is \$25. Permit applications will be accepted now through Dec. 20, 2024. Applications may be obtained, and payment made by calling the Public Works Department between 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday at (319) 377-6367.



Marion Public Works and its offices have moved to the new facility at 202 44th Street, but the Recycling Drop-Off Center and Yard Waste Facility are still located at 195 35th Street. Just follow the signs!

## City Hall

1225 6th Avenue  
Marion, IA 52302  
cityofmarion.org

## Administrative Offices

City Manager  
319-743-6301  
citymanager@cityofmarion.org

Deputy City Manager  
319-743-4738  
kdowns@cityofmarion.org

City Clerk  
319-743-6327  
cityclerk@cityofmarion.org

## Community Development

Building Division  
319-743-6330  
buildingpermits@cityofmarion.org

Planning Division  
319-743-6320  
planning@cityofmarion.org

## Engineering Department

319-743-6340  
mbarkalow@cityofmarion.org

## Finance

319-743-6350  
lcairy@cityofmarion.org

## Human Resources

319-743-6329  
lsperflslage@cityofmarion.org

## IT Department

319-743-4735  
itdepartment@cityofmarion.org

## Water Department

3050 5th Avenue | 319-743-6310  
tsteigerwaldt@cityofmarion.org

## Parks & Recreation

Lowe Park, 4500 10th Street  
319-447-3590  
sstaashelm@cityofmarion.org  
Thomas Park, 343 Marion Blvd.  
319-447-3580  
bneighbor@cityofmarion.org

## Public Works

(solid waste, sewer, streets)  
202 44th Street  
319-377-6367  
public-works@cityofmarion.org

## Marion Public Library

1101 6th Avenue  
319-377-3412  
info@marionpubliclibrary.org

## Fire Department

100 Irish Drive  
Emergency - 911  
Non-Emergency - 319-377-8237  
tfagan@cityofmarion.org

## Police Department

6315 Highway 151  
Emergency - 911  
Non-Emergency - 319-377-1511  
Records - 319-200-7714  
Administration - 319-200-7727  
administration@marionpolice.com



# Recap of the First Year of the Automated Traffic Enforcement Program

The City of Marion's Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) program has been operational for one year. There are speed/red light cameras located at the intersection of Highway 100 and E. Post Road as well as the intersection of Highway 13 and Highway 151. These were strategically placed due to the accident histories and traffic patterns.

The Marion Police Department also uses a mobile ATE unit, which detects speeding violations only, and deploys it based on resident complaints regarding speeding or other information which necessitates a public safety need. The location of the mobile ATE unit is announced at least 12 hours in advance on the department's social media pages.

Sept. 18, 2024, marked the one-year anniversary of the program and the first annual report was presented to the Marion City Council in October.

There were 20,124 citations issued with 68% of those being red light violations. Red light violations include those instances where drivers turn right on red without coming to a complete stop. It should be noted that a citation is not generated unless the vehicle is traveling 13 mph or more when the illegal turn is made. Speeding citations are issued when a vehicle is clocked going 11 mph or more over the posted speed limit.

The Police Department received 71 community requests for deployment of the mobile unit. It was deployed on 78

occasions which resulted in 7,024 speeding citations or (35%) of the total citations generated by the ATE cameras.

The cameras on Highway 100 at E. Post Road captured violations resulting in a total of 3,904 citations of which 2,944 (75%) were for red light violations. Accident rates at the intersection decreased from 1.4 per month on average during the 5 years prior to the ATE cameras going live to 1 per month since the ATEs became operational.

The cameras at the intersection of Highway 13 and Highway 151 captured violations resulting in a total of 9,186 citations of which 9,028 (98%) were for red light violations. Accidents at this intersection decreased from an average of 1.5 per month in the five years prior to the ATE cameras going live to 1.16 per month since the ATEs became operational. While the program is still in its infancy, the reduction in accidents seen in the first year is encouraging.

There were 1,044 citations contested during the year resulting in 188 rulings where the vehicle owner was found not liable. We have issued 45 orders to abate, pursuant to unpaid citations which resulted in 31 municipal infractions being filed. In those instances, a District Court judge will rule on whether the owner of the vehicle is liable or not.

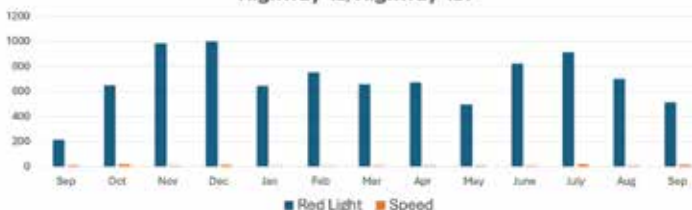
The City pays the ATE vendor \$35 for each paid citation and 25% is paid to a collection agency for any delinquent

citations they collect. During the first year, the gross fines collected totaled \$1,060,433, expenses totaled \$429,605, which resulted in net fines of \$665,153 retained by the City. These funds are utilized for public safety expenses for both the Police and Fire Departments.

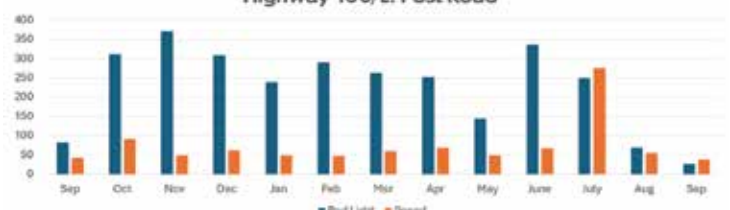
## ATE Speed Camera Legislation

In May 2024, the State of Iowa passed new legislation mandating that cities that use ATE speed cameras obtain a permit from the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). The new legislation did not include provisions for red light cameras, thus the use of our red-light cameras was not impacted. The City's permit request was submitted in June 2024 and in October we were issued a permit to continue using our mobile unit but denied the use of the fixed speed cameras at the two intersections. IDOT determined the fixed speed cameras were "not the least intrusive means" of enforcement. Our new permit also limits the deployment of the mobile unit to 29 specific locations within the city. The bulk of the locations requested were denied because the mobile unit had not been deployed there prior to Jan. 1, 2024. As stated above, the red-light cameras at Highway 13 and Highway 151 as well as Highway 100 and E. Post Road will continue to be operational. The City is currently weighing its options regarding an appeal of the IDOT decision.

Highway 13/Highway 151



Highway 100/E. Post Road





# History of the Marion Fire Department



The City of Marion officially recognized its fire service in 1874, following a significant incident known as the “\$10,000 Fire” in 1872, which occurred in what is now the historic Uptown District at 7th Avenue and 10th Street. In response to this event, City officials established a fire service, acquiring two hand-drawn carts: a Babcock chemical fire cart and a hook and ladder cart. Volunteer companies, including the Phoenix Company, D.C. Davis Hook and Ladder Company, Fullerton Hose Company, George B. Owen Hose Company, and B.F. Mentzer Hose Company, were organized to operate this equipment.



In June 1921, Marion received its first self-propelled fire apparatus, a four-cylinder American LaFrance fire engine, at a cost of nearly \$10,000. Acknowledging the importance of maintaining this new engine, the city established a professional Fire Department and appointed its first career fire chief, Elmer E. King.

The 1960s marked a significant period of expansion for the Marion Fire Department, which added several paid firefighter positions. With community support, a new fire station was constructed at 600 8th Avenue and is currently operating as Station No. 3.



During the 1970s and 1980s, advancements in technology led to the introduction of hydraulic extrication tools and modern emergency medical services (EMS) equipment. In 1977, the Marion Fire Department began responding to medical calls as an EMT-level service, and by 1980, it established 911 services. The department transitioned to a paramedic-level service in 1985 in response to an increase in medical emergency calls.



In 1990, Maureen Boots made history as Marion's first female firefighter. The following year, Station No. 2, located at 3933 Katz Drive, was put into service after a bond issue received overwhelming community support, significantly improving response times for the rapidly growing east side of Marion. In 1995, the department acquired its first ladder truck, a 75-foot Pierce quint, facilitating the construction of taller buildings in the area.

The new millennium brought continued growth in staffing and capabilities, including the introduction of Marion's first thermal imaging camera in 2001. The department enhanced its technical rescue capabilities—trench, ice water and high-angle rescues—through new equipment and training. In 2014, Deb Krebill became the first woman to serve as fire chief in Marion.



The 2020s began with unprecedented challenges, as the department faced the dual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a devastating derecho on Aug. 10, 2020. Despite these extraordinary challenges, Marion's firefighters

remained steadfast in their commitment to serving the community. In 2021, the department celebrated the opening of a new Station No. 1, now serving as the administrative headquarters. By September 2024, the Marion Fire Department transitioned to a fully career agency, entering an automatic aid agreement with the City of Cedar Rapids to enhance emergency response capabilities. Today, the department operates from three stations and responds to nearly 5,000 calls for service annually.

## Notable Dates and Events – Celebrating 150 Years

**1874** – Establishment of the Marion Fire Department.

**1921** – Acquisition of the first self-propelled apparatus, a four-cylinder American LaFrance and appointment of the first career fire chief, Elmer E. King.

**1964** – Approval and construction of a new fire station, currently known as Station No. 3.

**1970** – Establishment of the International Association of Firefighters, Local #1937.

**1977** – Formation of the Fire Prevention Division and introduction of Emergency Medical Services.

**1983** – Historic Spahn and Rose lumber yard fire on Christmas Eve, with windchill temperatures reaching -60 degrees Fahrenheit.

**1991** – Construction of Station No. 2 on the east side of Marion.

**1995** – Delivery of the first aerial apparatus, a 75-foot Pierce ladder truck.

**2002** – Significant fire in the Uptown Historic District.

**2014** – Appointment of Deb Krebill as the city's first female fire chief.

**2020** – Marion experiences one of the worst storms on record, a derecho affecting much of east central Iowa.

**2021** – Completion of the newly constructed Station No. 1, serving as the administrative headquarters.

**2024** – Transition to an all-career department, phasing out the volunteer firefighter program.



# Upcoming Events

## COFFEEHOUSE NIGHTS

**Fridays | Dec. 6, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center**

These musical performances feature talented local acoustic artists in a relaxed coffeehouse-type atmosphere. Admission is free and doors open at 6:30 p.m. with music starting at 7 p.m. Coffee will be available for purchase.

## BINGO NIGHTS

**Fridays | Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, March 14, April 11 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center**

Join us for Bingo! Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with Bingo beginning at 6 p.m. Games will be played for \$0.25 per card, per game.

## GREAT CANDY CANE HUNT

**Beginning Dec. 9 | Marion Parks**

Get active and have a little fun searching for oversized candy canes hidden throughout Marion parks. Each candy cane contains an official "Great Candy Cane Hunt" tag along with a small prize from the Marion Parks and Recreation Department. Participants can keep the candy cane and enjoy the prize on behalf of the department. Post your finds on the Marion Parks and Recreation Department's "Great Candy Cane Hunt" Facebook event page. Hunt continues until all candy canes have been found.

## LIGHT THE NIGHT HOLIDAY LIGHTS TOUR

**Dec. 9-30 | Throughout Marion**

'Tis the season...for Christmas lights! We are in search of holiday light displays in Marion and need your help. Simply submit your home address at [www.cityofmarion.org/holidaylights](http://www.cityofmarion.org/holidaylights) by Dec. 6, and we will compile a list so everyone can drive around and enjoy. A great family-friendly activity to enjoy during the holiday season!

## HOLIDAY LIGHTS BINGO

**Dec. 9-30 | Throughout Marion**

Join the fun and participate in the Light the Night Holiday Lights Bingo! Each bingo will equate to an entry into a drawing for prizes (max five bingos/entries per person on a single card). Bingo sheets will be available by Dec. 9.

## Park Winterization Underway

With the overnight lows getting below freezing, the Parks and Recreation Department has begun the task of winterizing our restrooms, splash pads, irrigation lines and other water lines throughout the parks system. None of the flush restrooms located throughout the parks are heated. So, to mitigate any damage to the plumbing, we must turn off the water to keep the pipes from freezing and bursting. All-season portable restrooms will be available through the winter months at the Lowe Park playground on Irish Drive, the Boyson Park trailhead on Boyson Road, Thomas Park on Marion Boulevard and Prairie Hill Park on 29th Avenue. Please continue to use our beautiful park system, but plan accordingly!

## Snow Removal Reminders

Marion City code requires that property owners maintain their sidewalks and any snow and ice shall be cleared within 36 hours after the snow or ice has been deposited on the sidewalk. The entire sidewalk along the property must be cleared, including any corners leading into the street. If the snow/ice is not removed in a timely manner, the City will clear the sidewalk. The resulting charges will be 85 cents per square foot, plus a \$25 administrative fee. Questions relating to snow removal on sidewalks can be directed to the Parks and Recreation Department at (319) 447-3580.

## Aquatic Center Update



Progress continues behind the scenes on a new outdoor aquatic center for Marion. In October, Marion City Council approved a memorandum of understanding to purchase the land located at the intersection of 31st Street and Munier Road for this purpose. The City began exploring options for an updated outdoor aquatic center back in 2016 as we developed our Master Park Plan, and continued that effort in 2017 through the ImagiNEXT community visioning process. The concept has been developed by a diverse cross-section of elected officials, staff and community members – in partnership with Waters Edge Aquatic Design. Next, the community will help further refine the plans as we begin the referendum process with the intent to have it appear on the ballot in Nov. 2025. Look for more information to be shared in the coming months.

## Friends of Oak Shade Cemetery



Oak Shade Cemetery, which features 22 beautiful acres of hills and trees in the southwest corner of Marion, is also one of the oldest cemeteries in all of Iowa. Its first burial dates back to 1840.

In addition to serving as a challenge to early-morning joggers, many residents enjoy the quiet environment of Oak Shade for a relaxing stroll and meditation.

Still, there is a downside to 22 acres of hills and trees. Trees can fall down hills! During the 2020 derecho, over 200 trees suffered serious damage or destruction. Volunteers spent hundreds of hours in the cleanup effort.

On July 29 of this year, a single tree which had survived the derecho fell victim to a big wind causing it to fall on several grave markers beneath it. Pictured are before and after pictures of the family monuments of James and Anna Flinn who died in 1893 – 131 years ago.



Maintenance of cemetery markers is the responsibility of surviving family. Since there appears to be no family surviving in this case, the most likely solution in most cemeteries might be simple disposal.

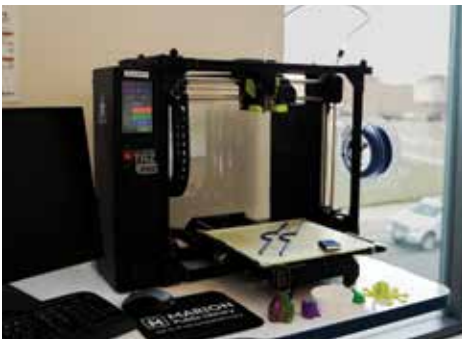
Fortunately for James and Anna, at this time in the 184-year history of Oak Shade Cemetery, we have a group of volunteers willing and able to repair such damage out of love and charity.





## Visit the Library During the Peppermint Walk!

Grab your family and friends to kick off the holiday season at Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk on Friday, Dec. 6! The library will be open until 8 p.m. with crafts, music and activities for all ages.



## Create in Our MakerSpace

If you haven't had a chance to explore the library's MakerSpace, make a resolution to do so this winter! Here are some MakerSpace 101 tips for anyone trying it out for the first time:

- Marion Public Library offers open-hour appointments for patrons to use equipment in the space, including:
  - Filament & resin 3D printers
  - Cricut
  - Sublimation machine
  - T-shirt press
  - Arts & crafts

Appointments can be made by visiting the library's website. No experience is necessary, and staff will be there to assist you every step of the way!

- Depending on what equipment you work with in the MakerSpace, there may be an associated cost for materials. Patrons can pay for materials at the Information & Reference Desks.

For more information, visit [marionpubliclibrary.org/makerspace](http://marionpubliclibrary.org/makerspace).

## 'Tis the Season to Check Out Vinyl, Games and Puzzles

Entertaining guests during the holiday and winter seasons just got easier with our vinyl, games and puzzles collections! Bring out your family's competitive edge with a board game or work together to build one of our many puzzles. And don't forget about those holiday tunes – check out a vinyl record or a turntable to really amp up those holiday vibes.

## Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You: The Library's Bookmobile!

Big things are on the horizon! The highly anticipated Marion Public Library bookmobile was delivered this fall and is being prepared for launch this winter. There is a lot more to come with this exciting addition to our community – stay tuned for more information in the next issue of the Marion Messenger.

## Notary Public Services at the Library

Did you know: the library offers free, limited, notary public services? These services are available by appointment and must be made with at least 24-hours' notice.

Visit [marionpubliclibrary.org/notary](http://marionpubliclibrary.org/notary) for more information on service guidelines and how to make an appointment.



## Upcoming Programs & Events

### Master Gardener Library Talks | Dec. 2, 9 and 16 | 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Volunteers from Linn County Master Gardeners will share gardening tips during three talks in December! Learn more about poinsettias, winter sowing, and yoga for gardeners on Monday evenings.

### Doodlebugs: Art is in the Air | Dec. 17 | 10:30 a.m.

Doodlebugs, a partnership with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, combines art with literacy for preschoolers. Each session starts with a story and ends with creation. All ages are welcome, but book selection is ideal for ages 4–7.

### Fiero Coding Club | Dec. 17 | 4–5 p.m.

Are you interested in learning how to code? Tweens and teens can join us in the Teen Computer Area to learn about Fiero Code! This platform teaches coding from the ground up through engaging and interactive games and challenges. Once you're signed up, your account can be accessed anytime.

Find a full calendar of programs at events at [marionpubliclibrary.org/events](http://marionpubliclibrary.org/events)



## Holiday Hours

Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving Eve): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
 Nov. 28 (Thanksgiving): Closed  
 Nov. 29 (Day After Thanksgiving): Closed  
 Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve): Closed  
 Dec. 25 (Christmas Day): Closed  
 Dec. 31 (New Years Eve): Closed  
 Jan. 1 (New Years Day): Closed



1225 6th Avenue  
Marion, IA 52302  
[www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.cityofmarion.org)



## Rich Holland Retires after 37 Years with Marion Police Department



When reflecting on his 37 years with the Marion Police Department, Rich Holland has a few stories to tell.

"When I started, patrol vehicles were equipped with just a radio and radar unit. We were not required to wear seatbelts. The vehicles did not have a rear prisoner compartment. You would put the subject in the front seat and head to jail," Holland recalls.

"Now the cars are equipped with video cameras and computers. We can access maps and data that provide information on subjects and addresses before we arrive at a location or pull over a vehicle.

Realtime information makes our job safer," he adds.

Holland joined the City of Marion as a police officer in September 1987. He worked his way up through the ranks as a sergeant in the patrol division, lieutenant in charge of support services, and then asked to be reassigned as a sergeant in the patrol division. He spent 25 years of his career as a patrol sergeant.

Holland served as a lieutenant for the Police Department from 2011 to 2015, at a pivotal time in its history. He facilitated the move from the former station on Katz Drive to its current location on Highway 151. He oversaw the transition to a countywide radio system that made it possible for different agencies to communicate out in the field. He also managed the department's transition from patrol cars to SUVs.

Holland is most proud that he was able to get all of the officers that he supervised over the years home safely.

His future plans include dividing his time between his grandchildren and traveling.

"The last 37 years have been a pleasure to work for the residents of Marion," said Holland. "I've met and made friends along the way."

## Paul Rehn Honored for 48 Years with Marion Fire Department



Earlier this month we recognized Paul Rehn for his 48 years of service to our community as a paid-on-call member of the Marion Fire Department. Paul has a long history of public service in Marion, from his decades with the Fire Department to his years as mayor. Thank you for your selfless contributions, Paul!