

GENERAL DEPARTMENT UPDATES

NEW Event Coordinator: We're excited to welcome Faith Pladsen to our team as the new Event Coordinator. A graduate of Iowa State University, Faith returned to the Cedar Rapids area in 2022 and brings three years of experience in event management. Her background includes working in the wedding industry, where she helped couples plan their big day! Faith is eager to dive into organizing vibrant community events for the Marion area. Outside of work, she has coached gymnastics for eight years and has a strong passion for motivating and mentoring young athletes. In her free time, Faith enjoys soaking up sunny days with her boyfriend and their cat, as well as spending quality time with her family — especially her five lively nieces and nephews!



Urban Reforestation Plan Award: The City Arborist attended the American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA) Central States Conference in Kansas City to co-receive an award for the City of Marion's Urban Reforestation Plan with landscape design firm, Jefferey Bruce and Company (JBC). The plan was adopted by City Council in September 2024 and selected for the HONOR Award for Planning and Analysis. Out of nearly one hundred other submissions, Marion and twelve other projects regionally were selected for this recognition. All eligible projects were reviewed collectively from seven surrounding states in the Midwest, including Iowa. What an accomplishment!

City Showcase: The City again partnered with the Marion YMCA for the Healthy Kids Day and Marion City Showcase on April 26. Over 1,000 community members attended the event. This is always a great opportunity for the members of Marion to connect, explore, and experience all the Marion Departments. The Parks Department had two of the inflatables on site for the younger community members to enjoy. Photo right.



Iowa Urban Tree Council's Award Ceremony: Forestry staff attended the Iowa Urban Tree Council's (IUTC) Tree City USA Award Ceremony in Ankeney and received the Growth Award for urban canopy improvements along with the annual Tree City USA designation recognition.

New Building Hours: Beginning April 28, the building hours for the Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center changed to provide visitors with more opportunities to experience the art gallery, interactive exhibits and natural surroundings of the center. The new business hours are Monday to Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PROJECTS

Marion Central Plaza: Over the past month, the Plaza had turf installed, dasher boards put away, and finishing touches to the Depot completed. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for May 7, 2025, benchmarking the opening of the new park.

Tree Planting Grant: Work continues with the CDBG-DR tree planting grant project. Staff have formally requested to expand the planting area approved by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) to maximize the use of available funding.

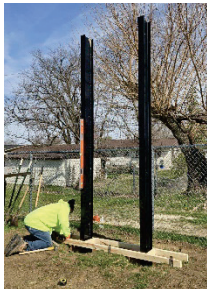
PARKS

Central Plaza & Depot: Staff removed the dasher boards and securely stored them for the season. Grounds staff worked on installing trash cans, benches, tables, and TVs. Staff also put down fertilizer before the new sod was installed. Preparing for the May 7 ribbon cutting and the park's opening has been a true team effort, with everyone contributing to the final cleaning, detailing, and finishing touches to ensure everything is ready to welcome the community.



Pool Start Up: Staff completed reinstallation of all plumbing following the fall winterization of the pool. All necessary repairs have been made, and the pool is now fully prepared to be filled.

Gill Playground Removal: The playground equipment for 2- to 5-year-olds has been removed at Gill Park due to safety concerns. The area has been backfilled with woodchips to ensure a clean and level surface.



Starry Scoreboards: Grounds staff worked to replace an existing scoreboard and install a new one at the Starry Baseball Complex.

Lowe Park: Full time and seasonal staff worked on a variety of tasks at Lowe Park. Baseball diamond base hubs were reset and straightened. Weekday and weekend tournament staff continue setting up for weekly games and weekend tournaments. Lowe Park staff began mowing and trimming operations throughout the park.

Mowing Operations: Mowing operations began with a combination of seasonal and full-time staff. Mower operators maintain all City facilities, City-owned property, City parks, and the Oak Shade Cemetery.



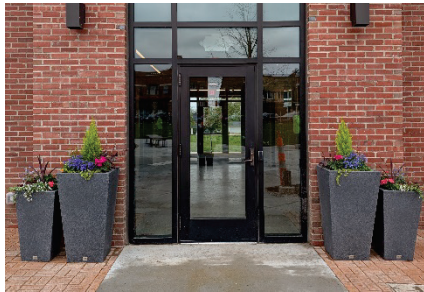
Spring Startup: Operations staff put together and opened restrooms and other water services throughout the park. Repairs were completed as needed.

Snack Shack Relocation: A-1 Storage moved the Snack Shack from the Public Works storage building to the Lowe Park patio. This unit will be used for concessions for summer events at Lowe Park, and then will be moved to City Square Park during the winter months where it will be labeled the Skate Shack.

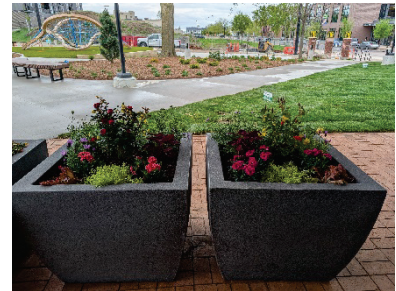
Horticulture: As the Central Plaza planting was wrapped up by contractors this month, discussions began regarding the current state of the landscaping along 6th Avenue, from 10th Street to 11th Street. The landscaping is over 10 years old and has been impacted by many construction projects in recent years, leaving it patchy and mismatched from the rest of the Uptown landscape beds. The decision was made to refresh this zone, so Horticulturist Mary Weber created new designs utilizing plants which would match with the new Central Plaza and renovated 7th Avenue corridor. Existing perennials that were in good condition were transplanted for use in other City planting areas and Landscape Solutions started tear-out and soil replacement.



In preparation for the Central Plaza ribbon cutting, flowers were purchased, and planters were prepped for the North & South entrances to the depot and to be placed at key areas of the plaza. Twelve planters were prepared to help add a pop of color to this major event.



Volunteer orientation was held for the Adopt-A-Flowerbed program, so they were prepared to begin caring for their respective beds. There are still beds available for adoption, so anyone looking for a rewarding summer activity is encouraged to reach out.



On April 26, Antioch Church volunteers joined the Horticulturist in helping to prep the Uptown area for spring plantings and the upcoming ribbon cutting. Eleven volunteers spent three hours helping to remove and replace potting soil, pick up litter, clean out flowerbeds, and transplant perennials. Thank you to all the amazing volunteers!

The Horticulturist also attended a Bird Friendly Iowa (BFI) Workshop in Iowa Falls, with a focus on utilizing the BFI web portal and creating tourism opportunities.

URBAN FORESTRY

Faulkes Heritage Woods: The Faulkes Heritage Woods monitoring visit was completed with the Arborist and representatives from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF). Heavy invasive species development was noted following Derecho damage with no other major concerns. Staff will seek to organize a fall volunteer event to remove invasive plants and discourage development.

Forestry Operations: Some stump grinding was completed along trails and other miscellaneous areas along parks and green spaces. Right-of-way stump grinding will be scheduled following spring tree plantings in May.

Staff assisted with a variety of exterior maintenance items at the Lowe maintenance shop including disposing of unused materials, scrap and end-of-life supplies, and reorganizing the implement storage area and facility access. Photo right.



Eight recently planted right-of-way trees were transplanted before a road reconstruction project starts this season along 1st Avenue, between 15th and 22nd Streets. The project required them to be moved for right-of-way utility replacement.

Forestry staff displayed equipment at the YMCA Healthy Kids Day & City Showcase to allow residents to touch trucks and sit in the operator seats of various maintenance units.

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

CODE COMPLIANCE	FEB 2025	MAR 2025	APR 2025
New Complaints	32	1	1
Resolved Complaints	25	6	0
Active Complaints	28	23	24

COMPLAINT TYPE	FEB 2025	MAR 2025	APR 2025
Tree – Right of Way	1	1	1
Tree – Private Property	0	0	0
Sidewalk Obstruction	0	0	0
Sidewalk Not Cleared (Snow or Ice)	31	0	0
Tall Grass and Weeds	0	0	0
TOTAL	32	1	1

CEMETERY

OAK SHADE CEMETERY	FEB 2025	MAR 2025	APR 2025
Spaces Sold	5	10	8
Burials	5	4	4

RECREATION



Spring Flag Football: This spring program began April 7 and will end May 5 and meets twice a week. There are two different leagues, K to 1st grade and 2nd to 4th grade for a total of 70 participants. This league focuses on teaching the fundamentals of football, including throwing, catching, running, blocking, hand-offs, plays/formations, etc. Teams are kept small to encourage participation for each child. A combination of group practices and games are used to reinforce and teach skills, fundamentals and basic understanding of the game.

Tiny Goal Kickers: This program started on April 1 with 210 participants including coaches and children ages 4- to 8-years of age. This instructional league is designed to develop basic soccer skills, rules, and concepts. Players are randomly assigned to teams in this non-competitive, seven-week league. Games are played in a 3v3 format on a scaled-down soccer field to increase player participation and interaction. They have had a great season so far with only one rain date. The program will wrap up the week of May 13.



Kick Star Soccer Camp: April 7 was the start of Kick Star Soccer Camp for ages 3 & 4 with three different session and a total of 45 kids. This soccer camp allows kids to socialize and interact with other little ones in a fun, non-competitive environment. Participants learn the basics of soccer through a variety of drills and activities. Emphasis was placed on developing the fundamentals of kicking, dribbling, passing, running and agility.

BINGO Night: The last Bingo Night for the season took place April 11 with 120 participants. Games of bingo were played for \$0.25 per card, per game and cash prizes were paid to the winner of each game. BINGO will return in the fall.

Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt: Twenty seven children ages 3 to 10 attended the always popular Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt. Participants enjoyed Easter themed activities like Carrot Toss, Easter Crafts, a photo opportunity with the Bunny, and then ended the evening with a Glow in the Dark Hunt outside. Over 800 glow in the dark eggs were distributed across the lawn by recreation staff.



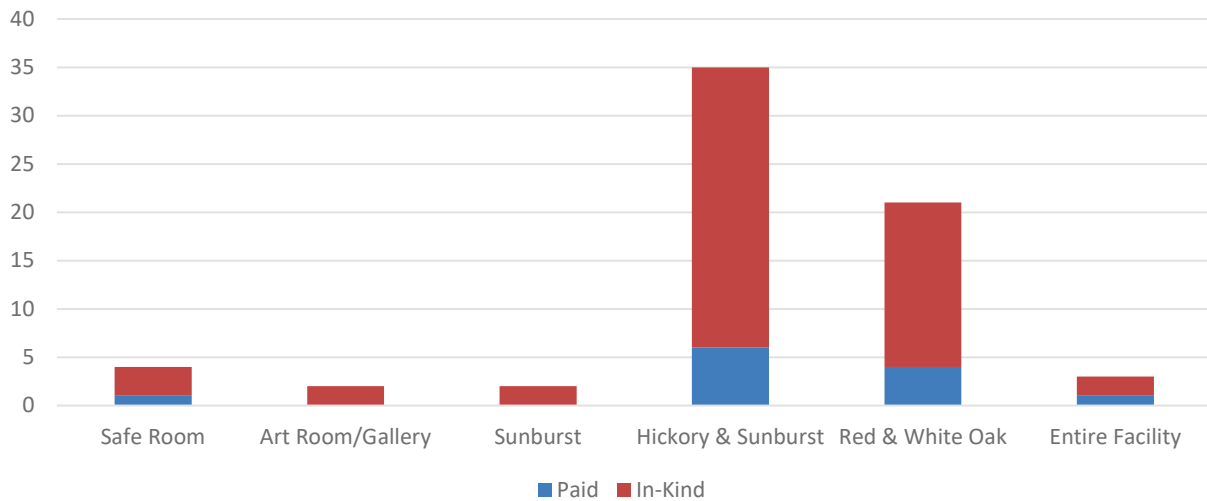
Breakfast with the Bunny: There were 20 kiddos aged 3 to 8 attend Breakfast with the Bunny on April 12. Children enjoyed donuts and juice along with games, crafts and an egg hunt alongside the Easter Bunny at the Arts and Environment Center. The beautiful weather even allowed the egg hunt to be held outdoors this year.

ARTS COUNCIL

Coffeehouse Nights: Tangle Creek performed at the Arts & Environment Center on April 4 with 39 people attending. This was the final Coffeehouse Night until the Fall.

FACILITY RESERVATIONS

2025: In-Kind 55; Paid 12
 2024: In-Kind 55; Paid 15
 2023: In-Kind 55; Paid 22



ACTIVITIES USAGE (Pavilion data not reflected)

2025 - 69
 2024 - 70
 2023 - 77

