

2 
MAYOR'S MESSAGE

3-4 
PUBLIC SAFETY

5 
BUDGET

6 
CITY SERVICES

7-8 
PUBLIC WORKS

9-10 
EVENT CALENDAR

11 
COMMUNITY NEWS

12-13 
PARKS & RECREATION

14-15 
LIBRARY

16 
SPIRIT OF MARION
AWARD



Fall 2025

MARION MESSENGER



Play
by Play
Insert
– Inside –

Fall into Marion

Community Event Calendar | page 9



Nick AbouAssaly

The Role of Property Taxes in a Thriving Community

In recent months, property taxes have become a topic of conversation and concern among many in Marion. This is understandable as taxes are a significant expense for homeowners and business owners and questions about how those dollars are used are both

natural and important.

Every dollar the City spends is tied directly to the cost of providing services to our residents. These services include public safety (fire, police and emergency services that keep residents safe), infrastructure (streets and sidewalks and public spaces) and parks and recreation, among other things. Few will doubt the need and desire for the services our City provides. But, it is impossible to provide them without adequate funding and, in Iowa, the primary source of any City's income is property taxes.

While property tax revenue pays for a variety of operations, approximately 56% of this revenue is used to fund public safety, including our Police and Fire Departments. Wherever we are able to fund a particular service by charging the costs directly to the user, we do so, thus reducing the burden on the property taxes.

We also continually seek ways to reduce costs through efficiencies, shared services and strategic planning. And in recent years, we've transitioned to a zero-based budget process, by which we start from scratch each year and build a budget based on the actual needs for services and the anticipated costs of providing such services. This approach helps ensure thoughtful spending, responsible planning for infrastructure and equipment and ultimately better stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Our City has faced tough budgetary and operational decisions in meeting the increasing needs of our growing city and endless competing priorities in a challenging environment of state real estate tax reform. Nonetheless, our team's versatility and innovative approaches, including restructuring and realignment of departments and reducing leadership positions have helped us to continue serving residents in an exemplary manner and shaping one of Iowa's premier communities.

It is worth noting that Marion's property tax levy over the last 10-12 years has remained relatively flat, with a noticeable jump in FY2024 associated with the onboarding of six additional firefighters to staff the new headquarters for the department.

Fiscal Year	Levy Rate \$\$ per \$1000 of Assessed Value	Fiscal Year	Levy Rate \$\$ per \$1000 of Assessed Value
2015	13.12954	2021	14.21502
2016	13.58625	2022	14.19976
2017	13.82108	2023	14.20203
2018	13.98943	2024	15.03390
2019	14.22338	2025	14.80314
2020	14.22338	2026	14.89684

It is also important to keep in mind that the total tax bill paid by a property owner is comprised of taxes levied by various taxing entities – including the City, school districts, the community college and Linn County.

The City of Marion's annual budget process begins in July with a series of budget discussions held at City Council meetings leading up to the annual budget work session in January and concludes with a public hearing and adoption by the end of April. This schedule promotes transparency and offers the community valuable opportunities to engage in the process of shaping the budget. I encourage residents to become engaged in the budget process and learn about our City operations and the planning behind all spending decisions. Together, we will continue to reach higher and build a thriving community we're proud to call, "home."



For more information including the City Council's budget meeting schedule, visit: www.cityofmarion.org/government/finance/budget



City of Marion's Meeting Portal

Are you interested in following the City's board/commission discussions and decisions? Since 2020, the City of Marion has displayed public records on an easy-to-use meeting portal. The portal, found at www.cityofmarion.org/meetingportal, increases transparency and ensures the important decisions made by City Council and other boards and commissions are easily accessible to the public. Within the portal, the public has the opportunity to be notified when agendas or minutes are posted, apply to serve on Marion's boards and commissions, access archived information and submit public records requests. The meeting portal is linked to Marion's website, ensuring everyone has access to information 24/7.

THE RIDGE Second Addition
AT INDIAN CREEK

PURCHASE PRICE: **\$175,000**

Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds are helping construct new homes in Linn County and assistance is available for homebuyers.

UP TO \$35,000 DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR QUALIFIED HOME BUYERS

HOW TO APPLY:

Return a complete and accurate application with the required income documentation. Obtain mortgage preapproval from a qualified lender. Secure a purchase agreement for a qualifying home from the participating builder.

Questions may be directed to: Paula Mitchell at 319-289-0071 or paula.mitchell@ecicog.org



ELIGIBILITY

- The home purchased must be buyer's primary residence.
 - Buyer must continue to own and occupy the home as their primary residence for 15 years or agree to resale provisions.
 - Buyer must obtain a fixed-rate mortgage with a term of at least 15 years.
 - Income Limits apply: Must be at or below 80% Area Median Income for family size. Documentation for verification must be complete and will remain good for 12 months.
- Please visit ECICOG.org for full details and other eligibility requirements.



1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5-person	6-person	7-person	8-person
\$56,950	\$65,050	\$73,200	\$81,300	\$87,850	\$94,350	\$100,850	\$107,350

For the first four months, the first opportunity to purchase goes to applicants who were impacted by the derecho.

Jeremy Sprague to Serve as Next Chief of Police



The City of Marion is pleased to introduce Jeremy Sprague as its new chief of police. Sprague brings 25 years of dedicated law enforcement experience to the position, including 19 years with the Des Moines Police Department.

He is responsible for the administration, coordination and direction of all Marion Police Department activities. The department employs 48 sworn officers, 10 dispatchers and six civilian employees, and consists of patrol, investigations, administration and public safety communication divisions.

“Marion has been recognized for more than 25 years as one of Iowa’s safest cities among communities our size, thanks in part to the hard work and dedication of our public safety employees,” said Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. “I am confident Jeremy’s leadership will support our vibrant community culture and preserve and protect the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors.”

Sprague has served as a patrol officer, detective, hostage/crisis negotiator, sergeant and lieutenant over the course of his career. He possesses a diverse skill set, adept at managing finances, identifying challenges and implementing strategic solutions to enhance efficiency and workflow.

“We were fortunate to have four highly qualified candidates interview for this position,” said City Manager Ryan Waller. “Jeremy stood out as a thoughtful leader with a vision to move the Marion Police Department forward.”

A strong advocate for first responder well-being, Sprague developed Iowa’s first public safety peer support program within the Des Moines Police Department and later established the Peer Support Foundation, an organization dedicated to enhancing the strength and resilience of first responders nationwide through specialized training and critical mental health resources.

“It is an honor to be joining Team Marion,” said Sprague. “This is a special place, made evident in the commitment from city leaders, staff and so many invested members of the community throughout the hiring process.”

Sprague holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management Administration, along with a certificate in Critical Incident Stress Management. He is also a graduate of Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command.

“I’m truly impressed by the dedication and commitment of the officers and staff at the Marion Police Department,” Sprague added. “It’s an honor to work alongside them and serve Marion’s residents with integrity and compassion.”



Walk Your Wheels in Uptown Marion

Marion’s shared-use paths are intended for use by people, pets and bicyclists. To ensure safety in the Uptown Marion District, the Walk Your Wheels program aims to avoid bike and pedestrian collisions.

Walk Your Wheels zones are located on 6th, 7th and 8th Avenues from 10th to 13th Streets. Riders have the option to move to the street or walk their wheels in the established zones. Together, we can help keep Uptown Marion a thriving district and safe place for all ages and abilities.

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

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

319-743-6340
mbarkalow@cityofmarion.org

Finance

319-743-6350
lcairy@cityofmarion.org

Human Resources

319-743-6329
swilber@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



Stay Safe This Fire Prevention Week: Know the Dangers of Lithium-Ion Batteries

Today, lithium-ion batteries are everywhere — in our phones, laptops, electric cars and more. They're incredibly convenient, but they also come with some risks if we're not careful.

What's the Danger?

These batteries can overheat or get damaged, which might cause them to catch fire or even explode. Things like dropping a device, using the wrong charger or exposing batteries to extreme heat can all lead to problems. When they malfunction, it's called thermal runaway—a fancy way of saying the battery gets so hot it ignites.

How Can You Stay Safe?

- › **Use the Right Charger:** Always charge your devices with the charger that came with it or a trusted brand.
- › **Handle with Care:** Don't puncture, crush or expose batteries to water or high temperatures.
- › **Don't Overcharge:** Avoid leaving devices plugged in all night or for extended periods.
- › **Dispose Properly:** If a battery is damaged or old, recycle it at a proper facility—don't just toss it in the trash.
- › **Watch for Signs:** Swelling, leaks or excessive heat are red flags. If you see any of these, power down and get rid of the battery safely.

In Case of Fire

If a lithium-ion battery catches fire, don't try to put it out with water - use a fire extinguisher meant for electrical or chemical fires, or smother it with a fire blanket. Call emergency services immediately.

This year during Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 5-11, the Marion Fire Department wants you to remember that understanding these batteries and handling them with care can prevent fires and keep everyone safe.

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.



City Budget Planning for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Budget planning for the next fiscal year is in full swing. Here's an overview of the process:

When It Starts:

Budgeting discussions began in July and will continue throughout the year.

Zero-Based Budgeting:

To ensure your tax dollars are spent wisely, staff uses a zero-based budgeting approach. This means every year it starts from \$0 and every dollar is carefully allocated to the City's most important priorities.

Property Assessments:

Your home's value was assessed by the Linn County assessor as of Jan. 1, 2025, and there will be a discount applied to this assessment before calculating the property tax rate for FY 27. This discount, known as a rollback, is determined by the State in late October or early November. For example, during FY 26 a home valued at 100,000 received a 47.4316% rollback, making the taxable value \$47,432. Historically, the rollback has decreased on reassessment years.

Property Tax Rate:

The City will receive the total taxable valuation from Linn County on or before Jan. 1, 2026. This value, along with the amount needed to support City functions, is plugged into a prescribed formula that determines the property tax rate.

Important Meetings:

The City Council holds meetings to discuss budget priorities starting in July until final adoption in April. The City Council's annual budget work session occurs late January.

Public Input:

Your feedback matters! The biennial National Community Survey will go live this fall. Survey results will be shared with the City Council in January and will help to shape the budget. In March, you will receive a mailer from Linn County with proposed tax rates and information about public hearings for the School District, City and County. There will be a public

hearing on the proposed tax rate in March and another on the proposed budget in April. These meetings are great opportunities for you to share your thoughts.

Subscribe to the city manager's IN FOCUS newsletter to be informed of the steps in the process. Sign up at www.cityofmarion.org/enotify.

Plus, the Marion City Council holds regular office hours most Saturdays throughout the year. From May to September, meet them at the Marion Farmers Market from 8-11 a.m. From November to March, they are at the Marion Public Library from 9-11 a.m. Note: In-person office hours take a break in October and April, but Council members are still available in other ways.

Final Approval:

The budget will be finalized and adopted by the end of April.



For more information including the City Council's budget meeting schedule, visit www.cityofmarion.org/government/finance/budget



Energy Efficiency in Your Home

Are you tired of high energy bills? Saving energy reduces our nation's demand for natural resources and the result may be reduced utility bills and money in your pocket. If you are serious about saving energy, a professional home energy audit is the way to go. A professional audit determines how much energy your home uses and evaluates steps you can take to make your home more energy efficient.

There are many things you can do to improve your home's energy efficiency without doing a professional audit. Some do-it-yourself solutions could include sealing air leaks and adding insulation.

One of the safest ways to identify air leaks is to purchase a smoke pen. Use it next to windows, doors, electrical boxes, plumbing fixtures, electrical outlets, ceiling fixtures, attic hatches and other places where air may leak. If the smoke stream travels horizontally, you have located an air leak. Once you have identified air leaks, proceed to fix them with caulk, weather-stripping or other sealing products.

After sealing any leaks, you should be thinking about insulation. Insulation is essential for reducing heat flow through a home's walls, roof and foundation. Types of insulation and recommended insulation levels for existing wood-framed buildings can be found on ENERGY STAR's website at www.energystar.gov/saveathome/seal_insulate.

More information on programs in energy efficiency can be found on the U.S. Department of Energy's website at www.energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver.

Share Feedback on Flooding and Stormwater Infrastructure

The City of Marion is evaluating its existing stormwater infrastructure and developing a Stormwater Master Plan to guide future investment and maintenance of this critical system.

The community is asked to help identify issues with stormwater infrastructure in Marion. Residents can report specific areas of flooding, blocked storm intakes, detention basin/pond issues or erosion issues to a digital issues map at www.cityofmarion.org/stormwatermasterplan.

Information from the issues map, public comments and scientific modeling will help build the plan and identify potential areas of concern. To learn more about the project, visit www.cityofmarion.org/stormwater-masterplan or contact the Engineering Division at (319) 743-6340.





Pay your Water Bill in One of Three Easy Ways

1. **Online** at www.cityofmarion.org/billingoptions
2. **By phone** at 1-888-459-8550
3. **In person** at 3050 5th Avenue

2025 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



Garbage & Recycling Collection

Date	Holiday	Day	Pick-Up Schedule
Oct. 13	Columbus Day	Monday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 11	Veterans Day	Tuesday	Regular collection schedule
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	Collection on Friday
Nov. 28	Day after Thanksgiving	Friday	Collection on Saturday
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Wednesday	Regular collection schedule
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	Thursday	One day late starting Thursday
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve	Wednesday	Regular collection schedule
Jan. 1	New Year's Day	Thursday	One day late starting Thursday

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



City and Monarch Research Partner on Fall Community-Wide Tree-Planting Effort

The City of Marion and Monarch Research are pleased to announce the next community-wide tree-planting program. The goal of the initiative is to provide residents with native Iowa trees to plant in the right-of-way along City streets adjacent to their property.

"Marion lost more than 41 percent of its public trees in the 2020 derecho," said Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. "As we commemorate the fifth anniversary of this historic severe weather event, we celebrate the nearly 8,500 trees that have been planted on public lands and thousands more on private property in Marion thanks to collaborations with Monarch Research and other community-minded organizations."

In addition to providing shade, reducing stormwater runoff and improving air quality, street trees have a traffic-calming effect and a

positive impact on human health and mental wellbeing.

Marion residents and landowners who commit to the planting, watering and protection of the trees as they become established can register online for up to three free 3-gallon trees provided by Monarch Research. This program targets right-of-way areas, in most cases the area between the curb and the sidewalk.

Program details, tree species and the registration form are available at cityofmarion.org/plantingforward. Orders are due by Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025.

Members of the City's Urban Forestry Division will provide inspection services to verify species, location and the number of trees suitable for the available right-of-way. Once the trees are established, the Urban Forestry Division then assumes the long-term maintenance of the trees.

Engineering Updates

5th Avenue Reconstruction Project Completed



Fifth Avenue from 1st Street to 7th Street has reopened to traffic. This was a major two-year reconstruction project that replaced 2,600 linear feet of sanitary sewer, 2,800 linear feet of water main, 8,100 square yards of paving and expanded the City's storm sewer network with 2,000 linear feet of pipe. Final punchlist items and seeding remain. Thanks to all who were involved in this project. And thanks to the neighborhood for their patience as these improvements took place.

CEMAR Trail Phase 5 Progresses

This summer there was progress on CEMAR Trail Phase 5 with the completion of the final plan design and the letting of the contract. Peterson Contractors Inc. was the low bidder in the amount of \$1,983,028.65. This project has a late start date of June 1, 2026, and has been assigned 95 working days.

This project includes three pre-engineered steel truss bridges that are manufactured off-site. It is anticipated that these bridges will be manufactured during the winter months, and work on site to begin in the spring of 2026. If this schedule holds, this final segment of the CEMAR Trail connecting Marion and Cedar Rapids will open in fall of 2026, weather dependent.

Automated Curbside Collection Reminders

- › Have your carts at the curb by 7 a.m. on collection day.
- › Collection takes place from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Crews may not arrive at the same time each week. Please wait until after 3:30 p.m. to call to report a missed pick-up.
- › Keep a minimum of 3 feet between carts and other obstacles (mailboxes, vehicles, signs, etc.) – more space is better.
- › Lids must fully close. Overfilled carts will not be collected.
- › If you have an extra bag, it must be placed on top of your garbage cart, with an extra bag sticker visible from the street. Stickers are available for purchase from Marion City Hall and Marion Public Works, as well as Casey's, Hy-Vee, Fareway and Kum & Go stores.
- › Items must fall out of the carts freely. Do not over fill.
- › Carts must be placed on a flat surface. If necessary, place in the driveway or in the street next to the curb.

Return Trip Fee

Violations are recorded electronically using the Angel Trax camera system which is installed on each truck. If your house was missed due to the carts being put out late or other violations, once the issue is corrected, staff will return for a \$25 fee. Please call (319) 377-6367 to inquire.

No Dumping

The Yard Waste and Recycling Drop-Off facilities on 35th Street are provided as a courtesy to Marion residents. The dumping of garbage, tires, appliances or other bulky items is strictly prohibited and may result in a \$750 fine. The area is under video surveillance 24/7. Large items can be disposed of at the Cedar Rapids-Linn County Solid Waste Agency located at 1954 County Home Road, Marion.

Special Garbage Collection/Brush Collection Fees

The cost for special garbage or brush pick-ups has increased due to higher rates at the landfill and the amount of staff time required. Special collections are now \$60 for the first 15 minutes at the curb and \$40 for each 15-minute block after. Additional fees may apply depending on the types of items being placed at the curb and if there are landfill fees for disposal.

Automated Curbside Collection - Fees for Service

New residents should contact the Marion Water Department to establish service. Fees are charged every other month and are included on the City utility bill which is mailed or emailed by the Marion Water Department.

Monthly service fees (as of 2024):

- › Weekly garbage/recycling curbside collection - \$26 per month
- › Weekly yard waste curbside collection (opt-in) - \$6 per month

Additional carts come with an additional monthly fee, which is added to the utility bill:

- › Extra garbage cart weekly service, limit 1 - \$7.50 per month
- › Extra recycling cart weekly service, limit 1 - \$5.50 per month
- › Extra yard waste cart service, no limit, cost per cart - \$10 per month

In addition, an administrative fee applies to adding or canceling extra carts:

- › Extra Cart Set-Up/Delivery Fee - \$75 for the City to deliver; \$50 for resident to pick-up at 202 44th Street

Any carts that are returned should be cleaned, if not a \$25 cleaning fee applies.



Thank you, Jeff Vanourney!

In August, Jeff Vanourney (center) celebrated his retirement from the Public Works Department. He joined the City of Marion and worked in the Solid Waste Division, throwing garbage for more than 13 years. He then worked as part of the asphalt crew and most recently as a member of the Streets Division. We thank him for his 24+ years of service to the Marion community. Jeff is pictured with (from l-r) City Manager Ryan Waller, Deputy Public Works Director Tara Walker, Vanourney, Public Works Director/City Engineer Mike Barkalow and Deputy City Manager Kim Downs.



MARION FALL/WINTER COMMUNITY EVENTS

Marion Farmers Market

Saturday | Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27 | Willowood Park

Visit your neighborhood farmers' market each Saturday. Find produce, baked goods, meats, wine, and more between 8-11 a.m. each week.

Spark in the Park

Sunday | Sept. 7 | Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Celebrate culture and ignite wellness with international food, music, wellness sessions, sports, a fashion show, and more. This free event goes from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fall Into Marion Parade

sponsored by Farmers State Bank

Saturday | Sept. 13 | Uptown Marion

Celebrate fall with a parade! Both Marion and Linn-Mar High School marching bands plan to participate, along with a variety of nonprofits and area businesses. The parade will start at 10 a.m. and travel north on 15th Street and then west on 6th Avenue from 15th Street to 9th Street. Floats are encouraged, and prizes will be awarded. Register by Sept. 9 at www.cityofmarion.org/fallintomarion.

Tailgate in the Park

Saturday | Sept. 13 | Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Football, food trucks and fun! Activities will kick off at 3 p.m. as the Cyclones take on Arkansas State. Then, the Hawkeyes will play UMass at 6:30 p.m. Come cheer on both teams and watch the games on the BIG screen! Play tailgate games, bounce on the inflatables and enjoy tailgate-inspired foods. The event is free and all are invited. Bring chairs/blankets for open-lawn seating. Outside food and drink are permitted, but food will be available for purchase.

Oktoberfest

sponsored by Club Pilates

Saturday | Sept. 20 | 7th Avenue between 10th & 12th Streets & Central Plaza at City Square Park

Back by popular demand, Oktoberfest will be held from noon-3 p.m. with a VIP hour from 11 a.m. to noon. The event will feature breweries sampling their craft in Uptown Marion, and traditional German games, like Hammer-schlagen and stein holding. Visit marioncc.org to purchase tickets.

Fall Marion Market

*sponsored by Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners**

Saturday | Sept. 27 | 7th Avenue between 10th & 12th Streets & Central Plaza at City Square Park

Pumpkins, gourds, cornstalks and more...shop local and shop fresh at the Fall Marion Market! This festival-style market features vendors offering fresh produce, baked goods and artisan items from 8 a.m.-noon.

Dog Fashion Show

sponsored by Apple Creek Canine Resort

Saturday | Sept. 27 | Central Plaza at City Square Park

Have a furry friend? Enter them in the Dog Fashion Show, set to take place in the Central Plaza at City Square Park at 10 a.m. Register online at www.cityofmarion.org/fallintomarion.



* Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners include Farmers State Bank, ImOn Communications, MercyCare Community Physicians, Sheets Forrest Draper Insurance, Summit Pointe Senior Living and Z102.9 with support from the Marion Hotel/Motel Grant Program.

Event details accurate at time of publication. Consult the website of the event host for any updates.



Happening in Uptown on September 20

Raise your steins — Oktoberfest is back!

Presented by Club Pilates, this year's event is on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, bringing together breweries from across Iowa and beyond. Sample a wide variety of beer styles, meet the brewers, and discover your new favorite pour.

The day will include live music by Lyle Beaver and the Brass Notes, traditional German games like hammerschlagen and stein holding, plus the return of keg rolling. Proceeds support Marion's Winter Lights program, which brightens the community during the holiday season, as well as the Iowa Brewers Guild, which champions Iowa's craft beer scene.

General admission tickets are \$40 and include access to breweries beginning at noon. An exclusive VIP ticket is available for \$60 and includes early access to brewers at 11 a.m. Tickets are now on sale at givebutter.com/MarionOktoberfest. Must be 21+ to attend. IDs and tickets will be scanned at the entrance.

Classic Car Show & Shine Sunday | Sept. 28 | Thomas Park

Join the Cedar Rapids Corvette Club for an all-car cruise-in at Thomas Park from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Suggested donation to benefit Eastern Iowa Honor Flights. If it rains, the show will be canceled.

Healthiest State Walk

Wednesday | Oct. 1 | Marion City Hall

Join friends and community members for the Marion Healthiest State Walk beginning at Marion City Hall at noon.

Chocolate Walk & Shop

presented by Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners*

Friday | Oct. 3 | Uptown Marion

Fall's favorite night returns with this after-hours, adult-focused shopping event from 6-9 p.m. Visit your favorite stores, listen to live music, discover what's new just around the corner and savor a sweet treat from participating businesses.

Coffeehouse Nights

Fridays | Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center

Kick back and enjoy live music in an intimate setting with Coffeehouse Nights at Lowe Park. These musical performances feature talented local acoustic artists in a relaxed coffeehouse-type atmosphere. Admission is free and light refreshments and pastries will be available for purchase.

10/3 – Blake Shaw Trio

11/7 – The High Crest

12/5 – Terry McCauley

Falliday Market

Saturday | Oct. 11 | Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center

Celebrate the season at our fourth annual holiday market! Find seasonal and holiday-inspired items — from handcrafted décor and delicious treats to fresh greenery, produce and unique gift ideas — from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. It's the perfect way to kick off the most wonderful time of the year! Interested in becoming a vendor? Email events@cityofmarion.org — space is limited!

Marion Monster Mash

co-hosted by Farmers State Bank, City of Marion and Marion Chamber

Saturday | Oct. 25 | Uptown Marion

Mark your calendars for a spook-tacular day in Uptown Marion! Join us in the Central Plaza at City Square Park on Saturday, Oct. 25, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., for the Marion Monster Mash. Enjoy family-friendly fun with trunk-or-treating, face painting, spooky story time, yard games, arts and crafts, and a festive costume parade. Come in your best costume and celebrate Halloween with the whole community—if you dare!

Trick-or-Treat at Marion City Hall

Thursday | Oct. 31 | Marion City Hall

Area princesses, superheroes, ghosts and goblins are invited to include a stop at Marion City Hall in their Halloween plans. The City of Marion will host a trick-or-treat event at City Hall from 3-5 p.m. Children can dress up in their Halloween costumes and collect candy and other treats from staff on both floors at Marion City Hall.

Small Business Saturday

Saturday | Nov. 29 | Uptown Marion

The Uptown Marion District invites you to kick off the holiday shopping season with Small Business Saturday. Uptown Marion Main Street and Marion Chamber of Commerce will host a shopping event between 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk

sponsored by Marion Chamber Platinum Community Partners*

Friday | Dec. 5 | Uptown Marion

Visit Santa & Mrs. Claus, enjoy traditional holiday activities and visit shops filled with one-of-a-kind, unique goods. This event will start at 4 p.m. and go until 8 p.m.



Expanding Healthcare in Marion: Meeting Demand with Quality, Access and Innovation

CONTRIBUTED BY: MEDCO

As Marion grows, so does its need for high-quality, accessible healthcare. In response, healthcare providers across the region are investing in new facilities and services that are transforming how and where Marion residents receive care.

Two full-service emergency departments recently opened in Marion, dramatically improving local access to 24/7 emergency care. **Mercy's Marion ER**, part of its Marion Medical Park, has been well-received by patients across the region. With an average wait time of just nine minutes and access to co-located urgent care, family practice, lab, imaging and physical therapy services, patients benefit from a streamlined experience in one convenient location. Mercy has already transferred over 60 patients to its downtown hospital and continues to plan for future growth at the site. Area Ambulance Service will soon join the campus, further strengthening emergency coordination and response.

On the other side of the city, **UnityPoint Health - St. Luke's Marion ER** is marking its first year as Iowa's only trauma-certified freestanding ER. It has already served nearly 8,000 patients with an

average wait time of just three minutes. UnityPoint is also expanding outpatient imaging services with a new CT scanner coming soon to its Marion campus.

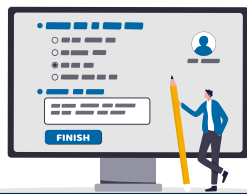
Area Ambulance Service (AAS), which responds to nearly 30,000 calls annually across 260 square miles, will open a new Marion facility in late 2025. Uniquely funded entirely by user fees with no tax subsidy, AAS is jointly owned by UnityPoint, Mercy, the Cities of Marion and Cedar Rapids, and Linn County. Its fleet of 18 ambulances and dynamic deployment model ensures rapid, reliable emergency coverage throughout the region.

Beyond emergency care, Marion continues to expand specialty and family-focused services. **Forefront Dermatology** opened a local clinic in 2023, bringing board-certified skin care professionals to the community. In 2024, **Iowa Kids Pediatric Dentistry**, led by a mother-daughter dental team, opened to provide dedicated care for children and families.

Together, these investments ensure Marion's healthcare system is growing in step with its population and providing the care families need, right where they need it.

Coming Soon!

Central Plaza Ice Loop to Elevate Winter Magic in Uptown Marion



Aquatics Park Survey Update

Thank you to the 3,240 respondents who took the Aquatics Park survey in July. This valuable feedback helped inform the City Council as they determined whether to pursue a bond referendum to replace the Marion Pool at Willowood Park. Due to the publishing timeline of this publication, several decisions have been made since going to print. To review the report of the survey results and learn about next steps in the referendum process, visit www.cityofmarion.org/aquaticspark.



Marion is lacing up for winter fun with the debut of the ice loop in the Central Plaza at City Square Park (1001 7th Avenue). This unique seasonal attraction promises to create a new level of winter magic in Uptown Marion from Small Business Saturday (Nov. 29) through February, weather permitting.

The seasonal programming line-up includes public skating, skate rentals and special events.

Anticipated operating hours are as follows:

- › Thursday–Friday: 5-10 p.m.
- › Saturday: noon-10 p.m.
- › Sunday: noon-6 p.m.
- › Winter break, holidays, special events and program hours will vary.

Fees for admission and skate rentals will be announced closer to the opening date. Pricing will be designed to keep the experience affordable for individuals and families.

Concessions and skate rentals will be offered from the Skate Shack during operating hours, and the Depot will serve as a warming area for skaters.

Opportunities also exist for businesses to get involved through sponsorships. Call (319) 447-3590 to inquire.

Playground Replacement Projects

The City of Marion continues its commitment to investing in safe, inclusive and engaging play environments for all children. Two playground replacement projects are underway in 2025.

Ascension Playground Replacement



The existing playground at Ascension Park (875 S. 22nd Street) is being replaced in 2025 as part of the equipment replacement program.

This project features:

- › Modern and inclusive play equipment designed for a variety of age groups and abilities
- › Artificial turf surfacing for better durability and safety
- › Upgraded site amenities, including benches and landscaping

Construction began in late July and is expected to be completed in October.

Taube Park/Wilkins Elementary Joint Playground Project



In collaboration with the Linn-Mar Community School District, the City is replacing the shared playground located at Taube Park (2200 31st Street) and Wilkins Elementary School. This joint-use facility supports both school-day use and public access during non-school hours.

It includes:

- › A single, larger playground and replaces aging equipment on both the school and city sides
- › ADA-compliant surfacing and pathways
- › Cost-sharing between the City and School District to maximize impact and minimize duplication

The new playground will serve as a key amenity for both Wilkins students and the surrounding neighborhood. The project is expected to be completed in September.



Help Keep Marion's Trails Safe & Enjoyable

Marion's trails are a great place to walk, bike, run and enjoy the outdoors. With more people using the trails, we all need to help keep them safe, clean and fun for everyone.

Here are some simple reminders to keep in mind:

- › **Stay Right, Pass Left:** Keep to the right side. If you're passing someone, do it on the left and say "On your left" or ring a bike bell.
- › **Watch Your Speed:** Bikers and e-bike riders - go slow around people, kids and pets.
- › **Motorized Vehicles Not Allowed:**
 - No scooters, dirt bikes or other motorized vehicles.
 - They're not safe and can damage the trail.
 - Class 1 e-bikes (with pedal assist) are allowed.
 - Mobility devices (like wheelchairs) are always welcome.
- › **Keep Dogs On A Leash:** Dogs must be on a leash. Please pick up after them and throw the waste in the trash.
- › **Stay Alert:** Avoid texting or using loud headphones. Be aware of others and don't stop in the middle of the trail.
- › **Don't Block the Path:** If you're in a group, walk or ride no more than two side-by-side. Move over if you need to stop.
- › **Carry Out Trash:** Keep the trails clean. Use trash cans or take your garbage with you.
- › **Respect Nature & Neighbors:** Stay on the trail, protect plants and animals, and be kind to nearby residents. Keep noise down.
- › **Be Prepared for Weather:** Marion's trails are open year-round, but be careful in icy, wet or muddy conditions.

Together, we can keep Marion's trails safe and welcoming for all users!



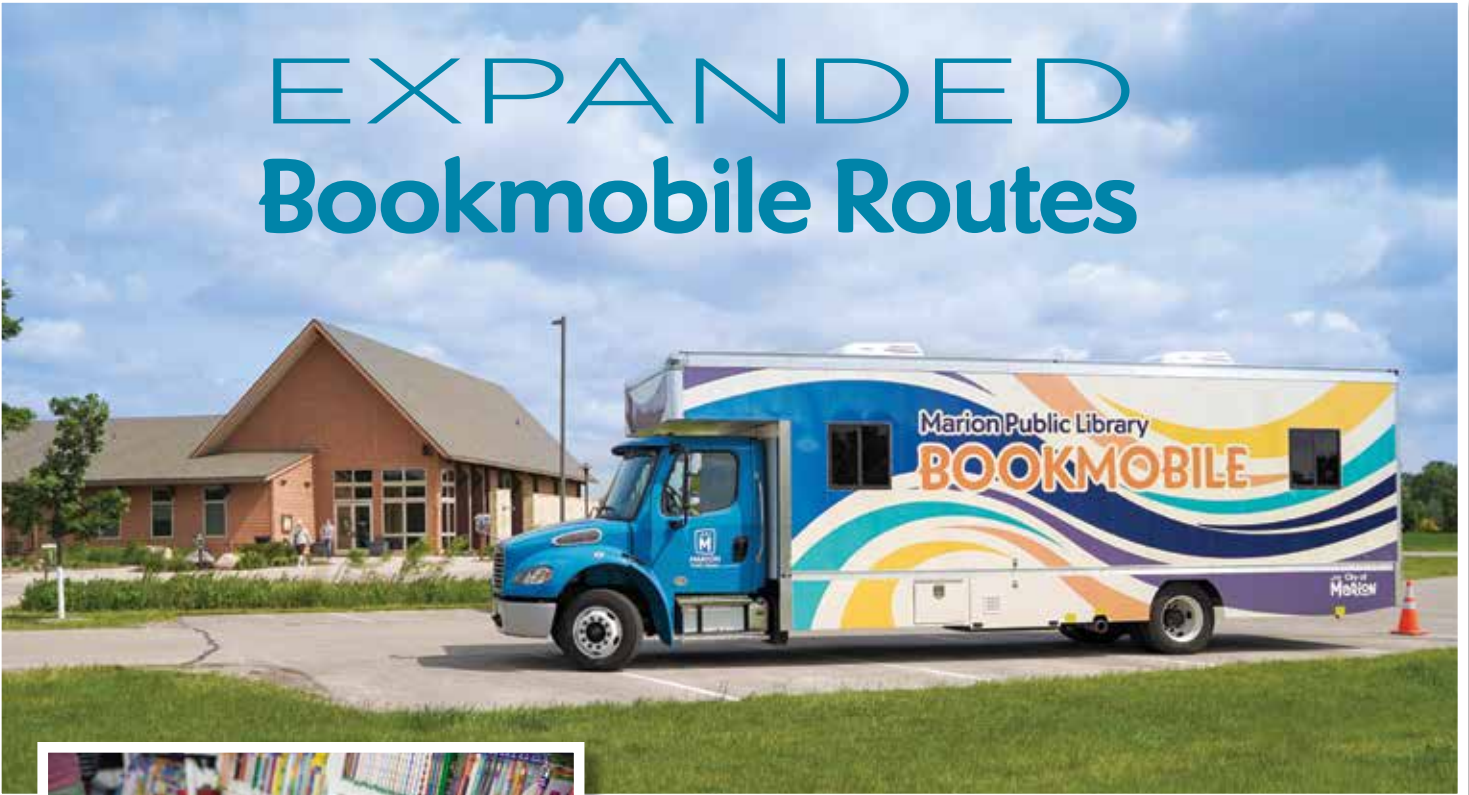
Oak Shade Cemetery

With graves dating back to 1840, Oak Shade Cemetery represents one of the most shared spaces in Marion. The 22-acre area is the final resting place for over 725 military veterans, including 10 from the War of 1812 and 216 from the Civil War. The official youngest veteran of the War Between the States, Mancil Root, is buried here, and a soldier from New York who survived 16 months in the infamous Andersonville Prison in Georgia.

A stroll or a jog through Oak Shade, alone or with a friend, is another way to share the space. The degree of difficulty is enough to satisfy everyone.

But, perhaps, the greatest rewards of our cemetery are shared by those who volunteer to maintain it despite its age or the elements. Friends of Oak Shade Cemetery was founded in 2013 and will soon document 10,000 hours of volunteer care. Contact the Marion Parks and Recreation Department at (319) 447-3580 to learn more.

EXPANDED Bookmobile Routes



As you check off school supply lists and settle into new routines, make time for a stop at the bookmobile! The bookmobile is currently running at a variety of stops throughout Marion four days per week. Whether you're looking for fun reads or resources to support student learning, the bookmobile has something for everyone.

Visit marionpubliclibrary.org/bookmobile for a full list of route stops and frequently asked questions.



Marion Public Library Receives National PR Award

Congratulations to the Marion Public Library for winning a national PR Xchange Award from the American Library Association this summer! The library's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan won the top honor for born-digital annual reports and strategic plans in the library operating budget category of \$1-5 million. This document ensures that the library remains responsive to evolving community needs, leveraging new technologies and fostering partnerships to enrich lives and support lifelong learning for all. This year's competition attracted more than 297 entries in print and electronic formats from over 100 institutions, including public, academic, school, state and special libraries. Entries were evaluated based on the quality of content, format, design, creativity and originality.



To view the plan, visit marionpubliclibrary.org/strategic-plan.

September is Library Card Signup Month!

September is Library Card Sign-up Month, which means it's time to celebrate everything the library can do for you. Library cards open doors, create adventures and allow you to access library resources for free! It may just be the most valuable tool you have in your pocket.

The library is for everyone – if you haven't visited, now's the time! Watch a movie, play board games, listen to music, get help studying, look for a job, connect with friends new and old, ride a bike, listen to an audiobook, learn a new skill, support your community... the possibilities are endless! Sign up for a card at marionpubliclibrary.org or speak with staff to get the process rolling.

Not a resident of Marion? Residents of surrounding communities may be eligible for a library card – see staff for details.



New Digital Resources at the Library

Dive into two new digital resources from the Marion Public Library!

Mango Languages is a language learning platform that uses seeing, speaking, listening and writing to teach new languages. Your library card gives you access to over 70 languages and 20 ESL courses. Mango is available for desktop and on-the-go use.

PressReader is a digital newsstand featuring 7,000+ of the world's most popular newspapers and magazines. Just like reading a print edition, viewers can browse articles, pictures, advertisements, and more.

Visit marionpubliclibrary.org/online-resources to start using Mango and PressReader today!

Learn About Finance This Fall

The next installments of our Finance Series in partnership with Farmers State Bank are coming up! Mark your calendars for the following dates and times. Each program will be held in Community Room A.

Fraud 101: Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 6 p.m.

Adulting 101: Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 6 p.m.

Learn more and find a full calendar of programs at marionpubliclibrary.org/events.

Visit the Friends of the Marion Public Library Book Sale

We've got books for you! Join the Friends of the Marion Public Library for their fall book sale – great books at great prices! Friends' members can shop early on Friday and get the first selection of books. Not a member yet? No problem – you can join at the sale. The sale will be held in the library's Community Room on:

Friday, Nov. 14 from 4-5 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 15 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 16 from 2-4 p.m.

Pricing for the sale is: Adult Hardcover - \$3, Adult Softcover - \$2, Children's Hardcover - \$2, All Others - \$1. Jigsaw puzzles will also be for sale at \$3 each.

Inspire a Love of Reading with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

As a parent or caregiver, reading with your child is one of the most important activities you can do to help set your child up for success. Research shows that the single most significant factor influencing a child's early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school.

The Marion Public Library partners with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to mail a free book each month to Marion children from birth to age 5. The high-quality, age-appropriate books are mailed directly to your child, plus each book provides tips and encourages good reading habits for parents and caregivers. Since 2020, Marion children have received more than 55,000 books through this program!

To register your child, stop by the library or visit marionpubliclibrary.org/imaginationlibrary.

Thanks to the businesses and individual donors who make the Imagination Library possible in Marion! To learn more about supporting this program, contact the library at (319) 743-1985 or foundation@marionpubliclibrary.org.



1225 6th Avenue
Marion, IA 52302
www.cityofmarion.org



Matt Tielebein Honored with the Paul Draper “Spirit of Marion” Award

The City of Marion is pleased to recognize Matt Tielebein as the 2025 recipient of the Paul Draper “Spirit of Marion” Award.

The award recognizes a City of Marion employee who best represents dedication to public service, combined with an exceptional work ethic, humility, a sense of humor and a sincere desire to see the City team and its members succeed. The award was presented on Tuesday, May 6, by Mayor Nick AbouAssaly and City Manager Ryan Waller during an employee luncheon in conjunction with Public Service Recognition Week.

“Team Marion is committed to serving our residents and providing them with an unequalled quality of life,” said Mayor Nick AbouAssaly. “Each year, it is an honor to give the ‘Spirit of Marion’ Award to an outstanding public servant who puts forth extra effort and exemplifies our ‘reaching higher’ standard.”

Matt Tielebein is the solid waste and recycling manager for the Public Works Department. He joined the City of Marion as an equipment operator in July 2004 and was promoted to his current role in March 2024.

Over the last year, he spearheaded the transition of the City’s manual waste collection process to automated

garbage, recycling and yard waste collection. This highly anticipated and complex project involved coordinating truck deliveries, implementing new software and ensuring the availability of various container sizes.

Despite the challenges, Tielebein remained dedicated to modernizing waste management for our community. He went above and beyond, spending weekends at farmers’ markets and other events to educate and engage residents.

“Matt’s leadership, problem-solving skills and commitment to excellence were instrumental in the project’s success,” said City Manager Ryan Waller. “He kept the needs of his team and our residents at the forefront.”

The award is named for former City Council member Paul Draper. Draper was a great supporter of Marion’s progress and a tireless advocate for the community for decades. He served on the Civil Service Commission for 25 years and was on the Marion City Council from 2012 to 2020. Draper passed away in February 2020, and his legacy lives on, in part through this award.