# The Bridge—Volume 131

CITY OF ROCKFORD

## City Hall

6031 Main Street
Rockford, MN 55373
phone: 763-477-6565
fax: 763-477-4393
email: cityhall@cityofrockford.org
website: www.cityofrockford.org

## City Hall Office Hours

Mon-Fri 8am—4:30pm

## Mayor

Renee Hafften

## City Council

Deb Buoy
Ted Hill
Rick Martinson
Scott Seymour

## City Council Meetings

Second & fourth Tuesday of each month at 6pm

## Planning Commission Meetings

Second Thursday (fourth Thursday Apr-Oct if needed) of each month at 7pm

## Park Commission Meetings

First Monday of every other month at 6pm

**To receive the newsletter and city updates via email, send your email address to:**
**audrae@cityofrockford.org**

**"Like" The City of Rockford on Facebook**

## Message From Council

A Message from Councilman Rick Martinson....

Happy Winter Solstice to everyone! What a great time of year! Here is brief update of what has been happening in Rockford.

Recently, Dollar General opened for business to serve our residents with a variety of merchandise including grocery items. Having Dollar General in Rockford is a welcome addition. Also in the news, the City of Rockford sold the Rockford Mall to Team Properties in October. Team Properties owns and manages similar sites and for them this is a great acquisition. Look for Team Properties to offer more tenants to fill the mall space in the future. Welcome to Rockford Team Properties!

The former Lumberyard property is back on the market for RFP (Request For Proposal). This gateway site is ideal for commercial development and will help define the downtown district. Please visit the city's website or contact our City Administrator, Dan Madsen, for more information on this property.

City staff has been preparing for the winter season by cleaning streets, finalizing the fall projects and making sure our fleet of snow removal equipment is ready for the challenge. The city compost site is closed for the year. Crews need time to grind branches and process all the compost for next spring.

Please be mindful to keep fire hydrants clear of snow during the snow season. Having access to a fire hydrant clearly saves time in responding to an emergency.
City staff finished Holiday decorations a bit ahead of time and made our city look fantastic. Many thanks to the decorating crew for their great eye to detail.

I am proud to say I am one of those rare individuals that enjoys every season of the year. Whether it is spring, summer, fall or winter there are positives to every season. I look forward to Crow River Christmas on Saturday, December 2, which will have fireworks capping off the day's events at 6:00 pm in Riverside park.

Have a Great Holiday Season! *Councilman "Rockford Rick" Martinson*

## Christmas Tree Pick-Up

If you would like to have your tree picked-up on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, you MUST call City Hall by noon on **Friday, January 5, 2018** to sign-up. If there is not a minimum of 10 participants, Waste Management will not be able to facilitate the collection of trees! The cost is $10 and will be billed to your Waste Management account.

Call Audra at 763-634-8770 to be added to the list. We will need your name, address and daytime phone number.

## 2018 Commission Openings

The Park and Recreation & Planning and Zoning Commissions have openings for terms starting in 2018. Each term is for three-years. If you are interested in serving, please complete an application and return to City Hall by January 3, 2018. Applications are available at City Hall or on-line at: www.cityofrockford.org.

# Get Involved With Wellhead Protection!

Ground water often moves very slowly. Once it is contaminated, it may remain so for a long time, and it is difficult and expensive to locate and remove the contamination. It may require decades of treatment before the water is restored to drinking water quality. In some cases, the contamination may never be completely removed.

If you get your water from a well that supplies water to more than 15 connections, your water supplier will, in the near future, be putting together a "plan" to prevent contamination of the water you drink. This plan is called "Wellhead Protection."

Every well is different in degree of contamination risk. If there is a protective layer of soil or rock between the surface and the aquifer from which your water is drawn, there is a better chance there will be no contamination in the aquifer. Even if a good, protective confining layer exists, contamination can occur if there are "leaks" in the layer. Leaks may be in the form of rock crevices or improperly constructed wells. Water also moves naturally, although very slowly, down through the confining layers. Therefore, contaminants should be dealt with at the surface so they don't have a chance to enter your drinking water supply.

If everyone becomes aware of contaminants and deals with them properly, our water can remain drinkable for years to come. Here are a few things you can do to help keep hazardous wastes out of our aquifers:

- Read product labels to identify what is hazardous
- Purchase fewer hazardous materials, choose the least toxic product, and consider changing business/household practices to avoid producing hazardous wastes
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle garbage and hazardous wastes
- Manage hazardous wastes responsibly--use, store, and dispose of properly

*This article is part of a series of articles related to wellhead protection. The goal of wellhead protection is to prevent pollutants from contaminating public water supply wells. Our city has developed a wellhead protection plan which will only be effective if the community is involved. If you would like more information about wellhead protection, contact the MN Department of Health (MDH) at (507) 292-5138 or visit their website at: www.health.state.mn.us*

***Get involved with Wellhead Protection in your community.***
***Concerned citizens are one of the best resources a community can have!***

Spectrum Cable Subscribers: View the City of Rockford on Channel 180

## CROW RIVER CHRISTMAS

### Saturday, December 2, 2017 (9-6pm)

***Here are a some of the events:***

- 8:30am Jolly Jingle Jog 5K (9am Riverside Park)
- 9am–2pm Christmas Express
- 10am-1pm Girl Scout Gift & Craft Sale at Fire Station
- 10am-2pm Photos with Santa at Fire Station
- 12pm-4pm Stork House Open House
- 1pm-4pm Horse and Wagon Rides
- 4:30pm Christmas Music at Riverside Park
- 5:30pm Light up the Trees at Riverside Park
- 6pm Light up the Sky Fireworks at Riverside Park

Toy and Food donations will be accepted at most sites during events and at Riverside Park from 1pm-5:30pm.

For more information: www.riverworksonline.org or

Saturday, December 2, 2017
*Grab your family and enjoy all the fun and festive events!*

## AMES-FLORIDA-STORK HOUSE

The Ames-Florida-Stork House is located at:
8131 Bridge Street
(763) 477-5383 Email: storkhouse@cityofrockford.org
**www.rockfordmnhistory.org**

The Ames-Florida-Stork House is open for **SCHEDULED TOURS** .

Crow River Christmas—12/2 (12pm-4pm)

The Rockford Area Senior Citizens meet the 2nd Monday of each month at different locations. Call Bonnie Pool (763) 477-4468 for information or to sign-up. Membership is $10 per year. Upcoming meetings:

- **December 11th**—Riverside Park, 8220 Elm Street
- **January 8th**—Rockford Community Center
- **February 12th**—Walnut Place, 8854 Walnut Place

# City of Rockford, Minnesota
## 2018 Proposed Budget and Property Tax Levy

## Truth - in - Taxation Hearing

The Truth-in-Taxation Hearing on the proposed 2018 Budget and Property Tax Levy is scheduled for 6 p.m., Tuesday, December 12th, 2017 in City Hall's Council Chambers. The general public is encouraged to attend.

### Why do my property taxes change every year?

The State of Minnesota has a complex system for calculating property tax, and the amount of tax assessed to a property changes from year to year based upon a number of factors. The decisions made by the City Council, County Board and School Board about the amount of tax dollars needed to deliver services may be the most obvious factors affecting property tax bills. Other factors that impact property tax bills include the value of the individual property, the total value of properties in our community, changes in state programs and changes in state laws that affect the tax system.

### How does the city calculate the property tax levy?

The City of Rockford's budget process is a year-round project that begins to take shape in the summer months each year. The prior year's budget is compared to the revenues and expenses received to date and projections are made and revised for the following year until the preliminary budget and preliminary property tax levy is established. To calculate the preliminary property tax levy, the city reviews available revenues and compares those with the projected expenses for municipal operations for the following year. These expenses usually exceed projected revenues, so the difference between these numbers is the amount of revenue the city needs to raise through taxation to balance the city's budget. Cities are required by Minnesota Statute to certify a proposed levy amount to the County Auditor no later than September 30th of each year. Cities are able to decrease the amount of the property tax levy, but generally cannot increase the levy amount after it is certified. The city carefully compares revenues and expenses from September through December to establish the Final Property Tax Levy. This final levy is what is collected as property tax for the following year.

### Long Term Debt

One of the biggest factors impacting the 2018 Property Tax Levy is the city's amount and duration of long term debt. As shown in the chart below, the city has four outstanding bonds that are funded by levied property taxes. The city recently sold the Rockford Mall (Bond 2014A) for just over $1.45 Million. That revenue, along with the sale of the lot to Dollar General and the anticipated TIF Increment, will allow the City to pay off this bond debt and proportionately reduce the overall Debt Service property tax levy.

| Bond / Loan | Annual Payment | Outstanding Balance | Interest Rate | Maturity Year | Call Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2014A Series | $108,469 | $1,885,000 | 2.15% - 4.50% Adjusting | 2035 | 2019 |
| 2014C Series | $170,689 | $1,905,000 | 1.15% - 3.5% Adjusting | 2031 | 2021 |
| 2016A Series | $22,990 | $1,005,000 | 1.10% - 2.75%Adjusting | 2038 | 2024 |
| 2016B Series | $131,650 | $575,000 | 1.50% - 2.00 Adjusting | 2025 | N/A |

### Utility Billing Reminder

Residents have the option of changing their utility billing between "actual use" and "averaged use" until December 31st, 2017. The billing system can be changed again in December of 2018.

If you have questions regarding the difference between"actual" or "averaged" use and the impact on your utility bills, please contact City Hall. (763) 477-6565.

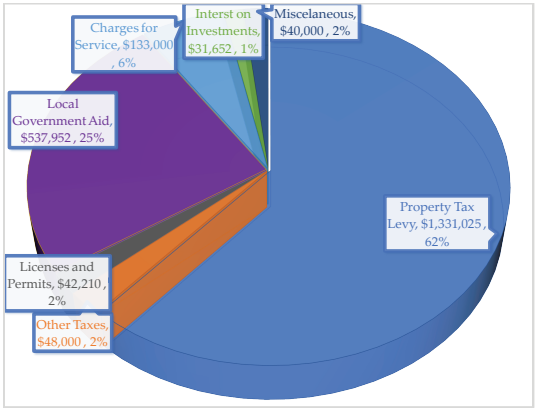
## Where does your property tax dollar go?*

26¢ County | 39¢ School District | 35¢ City of Rockford

* Based on a 2018 home valuation of approximately $160,000 located in Wright and Hennepin Counties.
* Debt Service will likely be reduced from what is depicted based upon the sale of the Rockford Mall.
* The final 2018 City Property Tax Levy will likely be lower than depicted and as reflected in your tax statements.

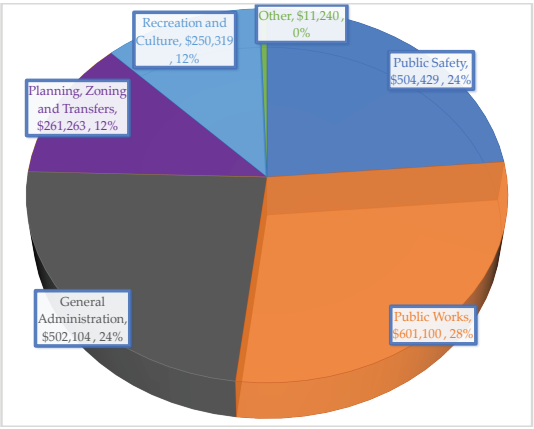
## 2018 Budget and Property Tax Levy

The City of Rockford established a 2017 General Fund and Debt Service Budget last December with expenses totaling $2,380,604. The city levied $1,310,115 for operating expenses to provide city services, and $307,138 to pay the city's long term bond debt. The 2018 Proposed General Fund and Debt Service Budget is currently set at $2,471,488. The proposed levy for operating expenses is set at $1,331,025, which represents a increase in operating expenses of $20,910; or 1.59%. The city's long term debt levy is set at $307,649 based upon the principal and interest payments due and payable in 2018. These debt service payments represent an increase of $511 from the 2017 amount of $307,138; or .16%. Based upon these figures, the city's total 2018 Property Tax Levy is currently recommended to be $1,638,674; which represents an increase of $21,421 from the 2017 Property Tax Levy of $1,617,253; reflecting an overall increase in property taxes of 1.32%.



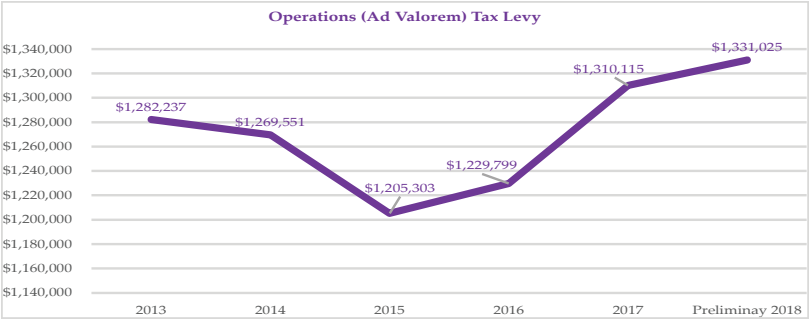

## 2018 Projected Revenues

The pie chart featured to the left highlights the general categories of revenues received by the city that support city services and operations. Property taxes and Local Government Aid funding provides the majority of city revenues. Other sources of revenue that support city operations include revenues generated from permits and fees, interest income from the city's investments, transfers, and a variety of small miscellaneous sources.



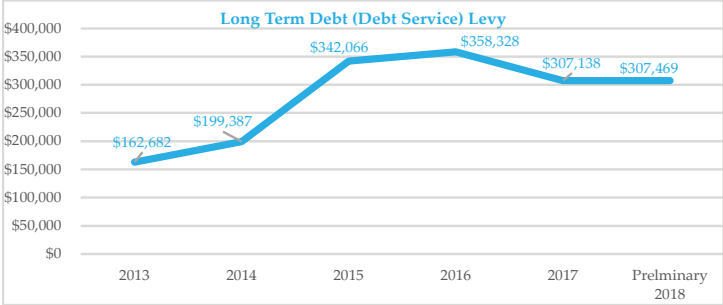

## 2018 Projected Expenses

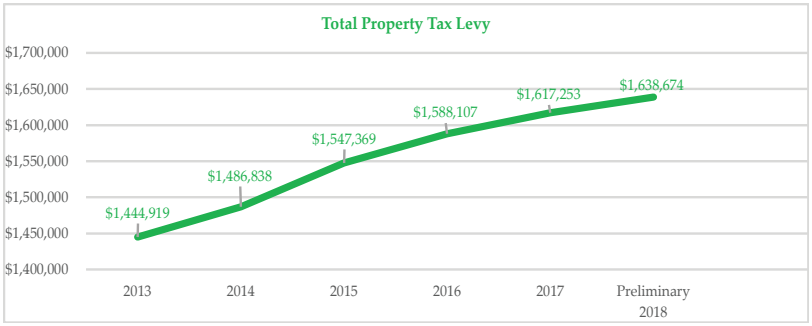
The pie chart featured to the right highlights the general categories of expenses involved in city operations and providing city services. The Public Safety category includes the Fire Department and what we pay for police services from the County Sheriff. General Administration includes all expenses and materials costs that are involved in administrative operations. Public Works includes all equipment, maintenance and materials used in their operations. Planning, Zoning and Transfers includes expenses involved in city planning and funding to support services in other funds, and Parks and Recreation covers the cost of maintenance operations for our city parks and the library.




The following charts track the city's property tax levies over the past several years. The chart on the left shows the operations tax levy which funds city services. The City Council and Staff have worked hard to control the operation costs and increase available revenues in city operations to reduce the tax impact on properties in Rockford.

The chart to the right shows the city's long term bond debt over the same time frame. The city has paid off or refinanced existing bond debt to stabalize and reduce the amount of long term debt impacting city property taxes. Long term debt and operations costs are factored to stabalize the city's tax levy.




This chart to the left shows the total property tax levy for the City of Rockford over the past five years. It should be noted that the 2018 Levy is preliminary and cannot be increased at the Truth in Taxation meeting. It will be important to focus on reducing long term debt and operations costs carried by the city to control property tax increases in future years.

To learn more about Rockford's proposed 2018 Budget, please attend the public hearing on Tuesday, December 12th, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 6031 Main Street, Rockford, Minnesota 55373. The City Council may set the final levy after the public hearing at this City Council Meeting. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please share them with City Staff by contacting City Hall (763) 477-6565 or stop by City Hall during normal business hours.

## Wastewater Billing Calculation (Actual vs. Averaging) Open Until the end of December 2017

Historically wastewater rates had only been calculated based on the average water used between November 15th and April 15th and recalculated annually. In 2014 the City Council passed an ordinance to allow residents the choice between being billed for their wastewater use based upon their actual water use or continuing with the old system which averaged winter water use and billed that average as the wastewater usage over the summer months.

All residents in Rockford are assigned the averaging billing system for wastewater unless you have requested to be on actual use. You must contact City Hall between **December 1st and December 29th**, if you wish to change your billing system for it to be effective for the January 2018 billing. Annually, December is the only time you can change your wastewater billing calculation and can do so by calling **City Hall at 763-477-6565 (press 1)**.

## Rockford Fire Department and Auxiliary Toy Drive

The Rockford Fire Auxiliary is seeking donations for their annual LOCAL toy drive. They are looking for new unwrapped toys or monetary donations. Toys will be collected until noon on Thursday, December 14th for this year's distribution. Due to the demand, families are asked to sign-up ahead of time by contacting RiverWorks Food Shelf at 8230 Cedar Street or call 763-477-6098. ALL toys collected stay in the community.

Donation boxes are located at most businesses, schools and Rockford City Hall. Monetary donations should be made payable to the Rockford Relief Association with a note in the memo stating Toy Drive and delivered to City Hall or mailed to: Rockford Fire Relief Association, Toy Drive, 6031 Main Street, Rockford MN 55373. Donations are accepted year round. Please consider donating to the Rockford Fire Department Auxiliary local Toy Drive.

## Rockford Fire Department Auxiliary Annual Spaghetti Dinner

The Rockford Fire Auxiliary is hosting their Annual Spaghetti dinner on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at the Fire Station—6700 Main Street from 4:30pm to 8pm.

# Winter Season Information

## Snow Season Parking

The snow season ordinance is in effect November 1st until April 1st and it shall be unlawful for any person to park a vehicle on or within six feet of the roadway between 2am-6am OR after ice accumulation, continuous or intermittent snow fall during which there has been an accumulation of two inches or more of snow on any street until the same has been plowed or removed from the full width of the roadway. On street parking is prohibited from 4am-6am on ALL non-residential streets regardless of snow. At NO TIME shall a vehicle be parked upon ANY street in any one place for more than twelve (12 ) hours. Please make sure that your guests are aware of these regulations so that they don't end up with a ticket or worse yet, getting towed.

***Maintain a safe driving distance behind snow plows.***

## Sidewalk Snow Removal

In the interest of public safety, the City of Rockford reminds you of the importance of keeping your walkways cleared of snow and ice. City Ordinance 901.04 states that all snow and ice must be removed from public sidewalks 24 hours after the snow or other precipitation causing the condition.

***If you live near a fire hydrant, please keep it clear of snow and ice.***

## Snow Plowing

It is unlawful to plow snow onto ANY city, township, county or state road. Doing so is a violation of Minnesota Statue 160 and

## Snowmobiling

Persons operating snowmobiles within the city limits **must travel on designated trails**. Snowmobiles are prohibited from any public sidewalk/trail ways provided for pedestrian travel, on private property without the owner's permission, and all other public property unless designated as the snowmobile trail. There is no parking or riding of snowmobiles on the levee or in city parks, per Ordinance 208.

# CITY OF ROCKFORD

## Upcoming Events

**December 2nd**—*Crow River Christmas* 9am-6pm Riverside Park and other locations within the Community
**December 6th**—*Chamber Holiday Mixer* 4:30pm at the River Inn in Hanover
**December 11th**—*Rockford Senior Citizen's* 11:30 am at Riverside Park
**December 25th**—*City Hall Closed* for the Holiday Season
**January 1st**—*City Hall Closed* for the New Year's Day Holiday
**January 8th**—*Rockford Senior Citizen's* 11:30 am at Rockford Community Center
**January 10th**—*Christmas Tree Pick-Up*
**January 11th**—*R-G Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting* 11:30 am at Wright-Hennepin Electric
**January 15th**—*City Hall Closed* in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
**February 8th**— *R-G Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting* 7:30am at BANKWEST
**February 12th**—*Rockford Senior Citizen's* 11:30 am at Walnut Place
**February 19th**—*City Hall Closed* in observance of President's Day
**February 24th**—*Fire Department Auxiliary Spaghetti Dinner* 4:30pm

## RECYCLING

Waste Management **collects recycling every other Wednesday**. The 2018 calendar will be mailed in January and is available on the City website or at City Hall.

**Recyclables must be set out at the curb by 7 a.m.**

The City of Rockford supports residential recycling in the general fund budget. Recycling was state mandated by legislature. The more everyone can recycle the bigger the county rebates, reducing the tax burden.

Future Pick-Up Dates:

December 6, 2017
December 20, 2017
*January 4, 2018**
January 17, 2018
January 31, 2018
February 14, 2018
February 28, 2018
March 14, 2018
March 28, 2018
April 11, 2018
April 25, 2018
May 9, 2018
May 23, 2018
June 6, 2018
June 20, 2018

*July 5, 2018**
July 18, 2018
August 1, 2018
August 15, 2018
August 29, 2018
September 12, 2018
September 26, 2018
October 10, 2018
October 24, 2018
November 7, 2018
November 21, 2018
December 5, 2018
December 19, 2018
*January 3, 2019**

**Thursday pick-up*

**Canadian Pacific Holiday Train**—Monday, December 11th (approximately 4:15pm) in Downtown Loretto
Benefiting Local Area Food Shelves

## Rockford-Greenfield Area Chamber of Commerce

*Holiday Mixer* on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at River Inn in Hanover at 4:30pm. Cost is $25 per person—includes 2 drink tickets and heavy appetizers. Any questions or to RSVP contact: inquire@rgchamber.org

The next *R-G Chamber Meeting* will be held on **January 11th** at Wright-Hennepin Electric located at 6800 Electric Drive, Rockford. Networking starts at 11:30am with lunch and program at noon.

**February 8th** Chamber Coffee Meeting at BANKWEST 7:30am

The chamber invites all the businesses from the surrounding area to join them at their gatherings. For more information contact their website at: **www.rgchamber.com** or Email: **Inquire@rgchamber.org**

## ROCKFORD LIBRARY

Located at **8220 Cedar Street** (763) 477-4216

A FEW OF THEIR ACTIVITIES and EVENTS:
*Crow River Christmas at the Library*-12/2 (11am-1pm)
*Hour of Code*—12/4-12/9
*Tween/Teen Book Club*—12/4 (6-7pm)
*Family Storytime*—Wednesdays (11:15am-noon)
*Holiday Music Recital*—12/8 (3:30pm)
*Read on the Wild Side Winter Reading Program*—1/2 to 2/28
*Tween/Teen Game Night**—Mondays: 1/8, 2/5, 3/5 (6-7pm)
*Adult Book Club*—Fourth Monday of each month (2-3pm)
*Minnesota Author Allen Eskens*—2/3 (1:30pm)
*Minnesota's Most Haunted Locations*—2/15 (6:30pm)
*Registration Required

Contact the library more information regarding programs, registration, age limits, etc., see their website: **www.griver.org**