



From the Desk of the City Administrator

As this is my last “From the Desk,” I look back on the things we have accomplished in the last three years with much fondness. I also look to the friends that I have made and the things I have learned. I want to thank the citizens of Monmouth for welcoming Gwen and me into your community, and we will always remember the friends we have made and the experiences we have had while we have been here. I know that Monmouth has a great future and whoever replaces me is inheriting one of the great small towns in the Midwest. I want to also thank Rotary, the Jamieson Center Board, Maple Leaf Music Series Board, and the United Way Board for allowing me to participate with some of the great non-profits in the community. Gwen and I are moving on to Freeport, Illinois, a bigger community—to new challenges and new experiences. Thank you for all you have done.

I also want to announce that Paul Schuytema will be leaving the City staff this month as well to become the new executive director of the Iron County Economic and Chamber Alliance in Michigan. Paul has done great things for this community over the last six years. It has been a pleasure working with him in getting the new Enterprise Zone adopted, the drafting of the new Downtown Strategic Plan, the development of the downtown streetscaping plan, as well as seeing the growth in the downtown. Good luck, Paul. I know you will do great things, and I will see you up there to do some fly fishing.

Now on to other City business. Last month, the City Council approved Millennium Waste as

your new curbside pick-up provider. They will use toters to pick up garbage. There are three sizes: 96 gallon, 64 gallon, and 48 gallon. The first toter is provided free of cost. The 96 gallon one will be delivered to everyone. If you want a smaller one instead, please contact Chad Braatz at City Hall: (309) 734-2141. The new containers will begin to be distributed at the end of the month. Clean-up week will occur on June 5-9, and there will be a second clean-up week in the fall. Routes will not change, but please bear with us over the first couple of weeks as we make the switch.

Thank you again,

Lowell Crow
City Administrator

City Council Meetings at City Hall

Monday, May 1, at 7 p.m.
and Monday, May 15, at 7 p.m.

Cops and Bobbers Fishing Derby

The Cops and Bobbers Fishing Derby is designed to get kids hooked on fishing! This family-friendly event began in 2006 and is hosted by the Monmouth Police Department.

It will be held on Saturday, May 20, at Citizen's Lake, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., for ages 2-15. For this event, the north side of Citizen's Lake is stocked with channel catfish and hybrid

bluegill.

"Every year, we put in one or two albino catfish, and kids get a \$25 prize for catching one," said MPD Investigator Jimmy McVey, who coordinates the fishing derby. "Kids can keep what they catch if they want. Some people have never caught, scaled and eaten fresh fish from a pond before."

Food and drinks are available for purchase at the event.



Participants are asked to bring their own fishing pole and bait if possible. (A few spares are available.) Please note: Anyone 16 years of age and older assisting needs to have a valid fishing license.

If you would like to volunteer or donate items for the event, please contact Investigator McVey at jimmy.mcvey@monmouthpolicedepartment.com.

Citizen's Lake is located on the west edge of Monmouth, at the intersection of Highway 34/67 Bypass and Highway 164.

Pattee Plaza Celebration

Please join the Buchanan Center for the Arts and Monmouth College at 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 6, as they host the Grand Opening of Pattee Plaza on the southwest corner of the Public Square. The Way Down Wanderers will perform, and Alfano's will have pizza by the slice and sandwiches available for purchase.

Playing, performing and writing together for just three short years, the Wanderers, a five-piece modern-folk Americana act, have built an enthusiastic and fast-growing following.

The concert is free and open to the public and is sponsored by Monmouth College, the Buchanan Center for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Kickin' It Country

The Jamieson Community Center presents Kickin' It Country, a style show and brunch, on Saturday, May 6, at the Warren County History Museum (238 S. Sunny Lane) at 10 a.m. The show features musician Shaniah Paige, and models from our community will be dressed in fashions from the Jamieson thrift store. There will be door prizes, raffles, and a 50/50 drawing.

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased in their office at 1025 South 2nd Street.

Yoga on the Lawn

On Friday, May 19, grab your mat and head over to the Stewart House (1015 E. Euclid Ave.) for this free yoga session! The event is open to the public and instructors from Knit 102 Yarn, Yoga & More will lead the group. Yoga begins at 6 p.m.

Ancestry.com Available at the Library

The Warren County Public Library and the Warren County Genealogical Society now offer **Ancestry.com: Library Edition**.

Start searching billions of records and discover your family's story. Access is available only in the library, so stop by today!



New Weather Station at Monmouth Airport

The Monmouth Airport received a new weather station package that broadcasts local weather conditions to the public. The conditions include wind speed, wind direction, temperature, barometric pressure and humidity. The data is broadcast to the free Weather Underground website and is listed under the "Monmouth Airport" station.

Weather Underground has free smartphone apps for both iPhone and Android. The apps have helpful severe weather alerts as well as radar from our regional center in Davenport, Iowa.



The Forage Cart



Keep your eyes open for the Forage Cart food truck! Owners Cisco Maez and Amanda McManus, a husband and wife team, have brought a taste of

Colorado to Monmouth. Currently open Tuesday through Saturday, the Forage Cart serves breakfast and lunch in different parking lots every day.

Like them on Facebook to see their daily hours and locations.

Well, Actually ...

You have questions? We have answers!

If there is something you've wondered about that relates to living in Monmouth, let us know by emailing info@cityofmonmouth.com. We

will answer some general interest questions here every month. (If you want to know why the sky is blue, Google is your friend for that type of question.) Be sure to look at the FAQ section of our website as well!

Here are a couple comments/questions we've heard or read recently:

The Downtown Façade grants aren't supposed to pay for things like awnings.

The Downtown Façade program matches half the costs for business owners to fix up the facades of their buildings (up to \$7,500). The City budgets \$25,000 a year for this program, which began in 2015. (Buildings must be in the historic downtown area.)

Awnings can make a big difference, enhancing the look of a building. They are included! However, the Façade Committee (which is made up of five community volunteers who are interested in historic preservation) favors vintage looks and materials. Awnings, for instance, need to be made of fabric, rather than vinyl. (There are no color restrictions at this time.) Lighting, windows, brickwork, etc. are also included. The full list of included items is on the application form, which you can find on the City's website.

Last summer, Tiffany Cole's terrific building improvements (207 N. Main) were done with the help of a Façade grant. The committee recently approved five more projects, which should be underway soon.

What the heck is an enterprise zone?

The City administers the Monmouth Warren County Enterprise Zone (MWCEZ), which is a program designed to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization. It encourages business investment and provides jobs for residents. Industrial and commercial projects receive a ten-year incentive package that includes special financing options, tax credits and reduced fees, to name a few. (You can see a list of the incentives in the Economic

Development section of the City's website.) Residential projects receive five-year incentive packages.

Our original enterprise zone ended in 2015. During the 30 years it was in existence, 77 parcels were improved and are now on the tax rolls. The assessed value of properties in Monmouth increased from \$56,379,123 to \$77,939,608. That means lower property taxes for you.

The new enterprise zone has been in place just over a year. It is already bringing new businesses and construction to Monmouth.

The recent EZ application process was very competitive. We delivered a solid 150-page application, going up against communities that hired high-priced consultants, and walked away with one of only 49 new enterprise zones in Illinois. (Over 100 Illinois communities applied!) All of our local taxing bodies came together to enthusiastically support our application, knowing full well that an enterprise zone is the most powerful economic development tool available in Illinois.

Wicked Mic's Laser Tag

John Moles and his family moved to Monmouth to be closer to his son Ian, who is a freshman at Monmouth College. John's younger son, Mitch, thought that Monmouth needed laser tag, and the idea of Wicked Mic's was born.

"We provide what is considered tactical laser tag," John said.

Wicked Mic's uses tactical bunkers and real laser tag weapons (as used by the U.S. military) for combat missions like Domination, Hostage Rescue and Team Deathmatch. This type of laser tag is recommended for those ages 8 and up.

"Our missions require groups to plan their actions toward achieving an objective or goal," John said. "This type of fun helps sports teams and employees learn the importance of



working together as the missions get harder and harder."

Wicked Mic's is a mobile operation that can set up anywhere: indoors, outdoors, offices, warehouses, basketball courts and football fields. They have partnered with the Freedom Roller Rink to provide laser tag twice a week in Monmouth. Thanks to movable walls, the layout will change regularly.

"Repeat customers will never get bored," John said.

Freedom Roller Rink, 405 N. 11th Street
Tuesdays and Thursdays
6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

<http://wickedmics.com/>



City of Monmouth

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