

Altoona Life

OCTOBER
2018



Providing a healthy dose of Altoona Attitude!

Don't Let Colder Weather Stop Your Renovation Plans

The staff at the Altoona Building Department is ready to serve the needs of the citizens of Altoona. Their knowledge and experience prove to be a great resource in helping to bring those DIY projects to fruition. Whether it is a deck expansion or an addition on your home, they can help answer some of the difficult questions that arise through the process.



Our current Building Department employees share a combined 150 years of experience in the construction and inspection industries, and utilize this experience to create a smooth, effective, and efficient permitting and inspection process.

If you have projects from this summer that you have finished, but have forgotten to contact the Building Department for a final inspection, this would be a good time to make that call so they can close the file on your active permit. To schedule inspections, please call 515-957-5128.

With winter coming, it is a good time to check your weatherization and insulation components. The majority of heat loss from a house is through the ceiling. If you haven't checked your attic insulation recently, bringing your attic insulation into compliance with current recommended standards could save you a significant amount on your winter heating bill. In recent years, energy codes have made significant gains in establishing energy efficient criteria for residential homes. An attic insulation rating of R-49 is now adopted by the City and the State of Iowa as the minimum for new construction. This is significantly more than required for houses built even 10 or 15 years ago. The cost of insulating an attic can quickly be recovered by the energy savings on your home heating bills.

For more information on the Building Department, please visit the Building Department on the City of Altoona website:

<http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/community-services/building>

WHAT'S NEW?

- P1... Renovations
- P2... Fall Reminders
- P3... Welcome!
- P5... Retirements
- P6... Library Info
- P8... Winter Reminders



**BEGGARS'
NIGHT**

Altoona's
Trick or
Treating night

Monday, October 30th

6—8pm

CITY OFFICES CLOSED

Thanksgiving

Thurs. 11/22 and Fri. 11/23

Christmas

Mon. 12/24 and Tues. 12/25

New Year's Tues. 1/1

Vote

Early Voting Wraps Up

Early voting at the Altoona Public Library will conclude on **Wednesday, Oct. 31st**. Voters may cast their ballot from 10-4 that day.



Join us @ the Library for our 2nd annual **Pumpkin Party!**

Youngsters are invited to dress up in costume and come to the library on Wednesday, Oct. 31 from 6-8pm. We'll scare up some activities, games, crafts, and fun, including a costume contest that will be judged via Facebook! All ages are welcome.

ALTOONA FALL REMINDERS

JOIN THE ALTOONA FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION FOR PANCAKES ON OCT. 27 FROM 7—11AM AT THE FIRE STATION.



Hy-Vee Pharmacy will be providing a flu shot clinic at the same time. The cost is \$30 per shot or Hy-Vee Pharmacy will take your insurance.

What better way to get over a shot than some pancakes!

LAST BRUSH DROP OFF IS NOVEMBER 3rd

The brush pile is open from 8:00am—12:00pm on November 3rd. Residents disposing of brush can enter through the north gate of the Altoona Aquatics Park (located at 1200 Venbury Dr.) and south of the Altoona Skateboard Park.

Please have information identifying you as a City of Altoona resident ready when you drop off brush.



Yard waste Compost it! season ends on December 1st.



Remember to change your clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 4, 2018. This is also a great opportunity to change the batteries in your smoke detector.

If you have difficulty changing the batteries in your fire alarm, please contact the fire department at 515-967-2216. Someone will come out and help you.

AUTO DRAFT FOR UTILITY BILLS

The Auto Draft program debits your utility bill payment from your checking or savings account automatically on the due date.

If you are not currently an auto draft customer and wish to sign up, please visit our website, www.altoona-iowa.com. Click on the "I Want To" tab and choose 'Pay My Utility Bill'. Complete the Auto Draft Form and send it to City Hall. You will receive a \$5.00 credit on your first utility bill after signing up.



ALTOONA PARKS

The permanent bathrooms located at Haines, Lion's, Village parks and Sam Wise Youth Complex will be closed on approximately October 15 for the season. Portable bathrooms located throughout the city parks will be removed for the season on approximately October 15. The City does this to protect the pipes from freezing. Although we may have some beautiful, warm fall days, the nights may dip into freezing temperatures. The City anticipates being able to open the bathrooms and provide portable bathrooms in the spring on approximately April 15, weather permitting.

Please check out the following on our website for rental and planning forms:

<http://www.altoona-iowa.com/i-want-to/reserve-a-park-shelter/>
<http://www.altoona-iowa.com/i-want-to/plan-an-event-in-altoona/>

If you have questions about whether your event may require additional approval, please ask the city staff person who is helping you with your rental at 515-967-5136.

Rentals of the outdoor park shelters will also cease on October 15th. Park shelter reservations for 2019 will begin on Thursday, January 4, 2019.

PLEASE NOTE: LIONS SHELTER CAN BE RENTED ALL YEAR AND RESERVED UP TO A YEAR IN ADVANCE.

HOW ELSE CAN I PAY MY UTILITY BILL?

- 24-hour water payments slot on the back wall of the City Hall Building (407 8th St SE). Cash or check payments may be deposited through the slot. Envelopes are provided at the window. Please note, city staff cannot communicate with you through the window.
- HyVee Customer Service Counter will accept cash or check payments from the 15th of the month through the 3rd when you have your payment stub.
- Cash, Check, or credit card payments can be made in person at City Hall during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30).
- Credit card payments can be made online. Visit our website www.altoona-iowa.com for details. Click on the "I Want To" tab and choose 'Pay My Utility Bill'.

Online Bill Payment through your financial institution. Please note, your bank or credit union will send us a paper check in the mail. Please allow at least 7 days for the payment to reach our office. Please contact Kassie Wentland at 515-967-5136 with any utility billing questions.

WELCOME



The City of Altoona has been able to introduce some new faces in our departments over the past year. We are honored to have so many qualified and talented people to work with each day.

THE CITY OF ALTOONA'S POLICE DEPARTMENT INTRODUCES...

Pictured above left to right: Jason Cunningham, Joshua Starkey, Chief Greg Stallman, Officer Steve Harris, Mayor Dean O'Connor, Cameron Hale and Jacob Smith.

Steve Harris was born and raised in Bloomfield, Iowa. He attended Iowa State University and graduated with a degree in Biology and began working for the USDA in a diagnostic and virology laboratory. After being exposed to law enforcement, Harris decided to change careers and was hired at the Ottumwa Police Department. He worked as patrol officer for two and a half years and eight years as a detective. Harris was also on the Emergency Response Team for nine years.

When asked what brought him to Altoona, Harris responded, "I had multiple co-workers transfer to the Altoona Police Department and heard many good things about the department including its focus on Community Policing. I decided that I wanted to spend the rest of my career in the City of Altoona." Harris joined the Altoona Police department in May.

He and his wife, Danielle, have two young children that keep him on his toes. Harris spends most of his free time chasing the kids and spending time with family.

Cameron Hale just started with the Altoona Police Department in October. Hale is originally from York, Nebraska (just 45 miles west of Lincoln). He is working on bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Hale also served six years with the Army National Guard in Nebraska.

Hale and his wife, Madison, take care of two dogs and one cat. He enjoys hunting, fishing and target practice. Hale stated, "I chose Altoona because it showed that it was a city of opportunity. The department is a larger department but not too large, so you can still build those relationships with co-workers. The department and the city are growing at a rapid pace and shows promising opportunities for career advancement and diversity. It shows that the police department has built a great relationship with the community and is very active within the community with their community policing programs, which allows officers to build better relationships with citizens."

Joshua Starkey was hired in August. He grew up in Pella and went to college in Chicago, where he graduated with my bachelors degree criminal justice and psychology. Starkey moved back to Iowa after college and was hired by the Os-kaloosa Police Department where he worked and resided for four and a half years. Starkey and his wife, Ellen have two dogs together. He enjoys hunting turkey and deer. He and Ellen are big movie fans.

Jason Cunningham also started in August with the Altoona PD. He is from Columbus, Ohio. Cunningham is a graduate from Ohio State University and a big buckeye fan. He enjoys pretty much anything to do with sports and seeing new movies that come out. Cunningham started off working with the Jasper County Sheriff's Office.

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WELCOME *continues*



Pictured above: Kassandra Wentland (left) and Erin Wiggins (right).

Kassandra “Kassie” Wentland started working for the city in a seasonal position in April of this year. We had an unexpected opening when our Utility Billing Clerk Matt Kray moved on to a new opportunity. Kassie applied and we had such a great experience with her positive attitude and wonderful work ethic that we invited her to be part of our team full-time in October. Kassie will be handling the Utility Billing Clerk Position at City Hall. She grew up in Runnells and spent her childhood hanging out in Altoona and is excited to work in Altoona. Kassie is raising her preschool aged daughter and any free time is spent with her family.

Erin Wiggins comes to the City with nearly 20 years of experience in the construction industry. She began her construction career by working for a local builder; not only did the experience she gain there assist her in fine tuning her

future career path, it also is where she met her husband! After several years of working on the building side of construction, she transitioned to the inspection side. She became a certified HERS Rater and was contracted by builders, developers, and architects to ensure energy efficiency requirements of specific programs were met for Energy Star, Green Streets, and IECC.

Erin leads a very eventful life, considering she has two teenagers who are involved in sports and various activities. She is also active in her church where she leads a ministry and has even preached on occasion! She is currently enrolled at The Master’s Institute where she is working towards her Master’s degree. When she isn’t focusing on her children’s activities, ministries, or her school work, Erin enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing softball, and camping.

Erin joined the City team in August as our new Housing Inspector-Code Enforcement. You will find her in the building department when she isn’t running around town performing inspections.



Pictured above (left to right): Jacob Slings, Bryon Vermie, Derek Johannsen, Tyler Townsend and Ben Lewis

PUBLIC WORKS & PUBLIC UTILITIES ADDS MANY NEW FACES TO THE CITY WORKFORCE

The City has welcomed in additions in Public Utilities and Public Works. **Ben Lewis** and **Byron Vermie** started with the Street department this year. Ben worked as a park technician for the City of Colfax for five years. He grew up in Baxter and still resides there. He is a graduate of Grand View University. Altoona hired Lewis for his first permanent job as a street operator in January and he has been a great addition to our street department.

Byron Vermie started with the City of Altoona as our Street Sweeper when Randy Ulery retired in April. Vermie managed his own lawn care business and worked for the City of Mitchellville for several years before joining Altoona’s Street Department. Byron also has an electrical background. Bryon grew up in the SEP area and lives in Mitchellville.

Derek Johannsen began his work in August as a Utility Operator. Derek is a SEP graduate and has an Associates degree from DMACC in Water and Environmental Science. He has experience working with Newton Water Works. He lives in Des Moines and enjoys reading in his free time.

Tyler Townsend started in August as a Parks Operator. He is a Prairie City—Monroe graduate and has an Associates degree from DMACC. Before working with Altoona Parks Department, Tyler worked in Prairie City at the local Farm Cooperative and several farms. Tyler still resides in Prairie City.



Randy Ulery came to work for us in 2012. He had just retired and decided he needed something to do. Randy faithfully took care of the city streets and all the maintenance on the street sweeper. When Randy wasn't in the street sweeper you could find him plowing snow or lending a hand with other street jobs. Enjoy your 2nd retirement, Randy!



John Cowell retired in December of 2017 from the City. He started with us in 2002. He served in several departments during his tenure and was always willing to help out where he was needed. We hope you are not missing us too much, John. John is pictured with his wife and daughter who came to celebrate John with us.



Continued from pages 3 & 4

Jacob Slings just started with the Altoona Utilities Department as a Utilities Operator. He was raised in Altoona, Iowa. Jacob attended

Dordt college following his graduation at Southeast Polk and majored in environmental studies. He is recently engaged to Alyssa Hultman. They have a German Shepard named Rika. We asked Jacob why he wanted to work in Altoona. He shared, "This is where I grew up. I feel that Altoona is a great place to work because it is a thriving community that I can have a lasting impression upon much like it has done to me." When Jacob has free time, he enjoys fishing, hunting, trapping, and kayaking.

Jake Smith grew up in Melcher-Dallas, Iowa. He majored in Criminal Justice at DMACC in Ankeny. Smith was a Deputy at the Marion County Sheriff's Office before starting with the Altoona PD in October. Smith and wife, Cassie, always wanted to move back to the Des Moines metro area. They have two young children.

Smith shared that, "My wife and I chose to apply with the Altoona Police Department because of the growing community, work schedule, future advancement opportunities, large community involvement and sense of camaraderie amongst the officers."

Smith stated his hobbies these days consist of socializing with close friends/family, watching new movies, cheering on the Minnesota Vikings, frequenting amusement parks, spending time with their dogs, and occasionally getting roped into one of his wife's Pinterest projects.

THE CITY OF ALTOONA'S FIRE DEPARTMENT INTRODUCES...



The Altoona Fire Department was granted a FEMA Safer Grant that allowed the city to hire five new full-time firefighters in January. We picture four of the five above. In August, the City promoted Blaine Lefler to full-time after an unexpected opening. Pictured above from left to right: Jilliana Lefler, Blaine Lefler, Chief Jared Ogbourne, Mayor O'Connor, Tim Thalacker, Adam Retzlaff, Sarah Merrill and Tad Watson.



Pictured above: (left to right) Fire Chief Jared Ogbourne, Council Members Vern Willey II and Jeremy Boka

The Altoona Fire Department received a grant from Firehouse Subs. Firehouse Subs shares that subs are only part of their story. A portion of your purchase in 2018 at all US Firehouse Subs locations goes to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, to be used to provide lifesaving equipment to first responders.

The AFD applied for a forcible entry training prop that can be used by both fire and police personnel to enhance and practice this vital skill. It cost \$7,600. Thank you to Firehouse Subs!



Pictured above: (left to right) Mayor Dean O'Connor, Officer Joe Meola, Reserve Officers Justin Shellburg and Zachary Wisell, Sergeant Jary Bowie, Officer Chris Lybarger and Reserve Officer Caleb Humburg.

The Blue Knights made a donation to the Altoona Police Officers Association at the July 16th council meeting.

Altoona Firefighters Association helped raise funds for fight against muscular dystrophy on July 3rd.



Altoona Public Library Hours

Monday—Thursday
9am—9pm;
Friday & Saturday
9am—5:30pm;
Sunday 2pm—
5:30pm

HOLIDAY HOURS

Thanksgiving

Wed. 11/21—Close @ 5:30pm
Thurs. 11/22 & Fri. 11/23—CLOSED

Christmas

Mon. 12/24 & Tues. 12/25—CLOSED

New Year's

Mon. 12/31 at 3:00pm & Tues. 1/1—CLOSED

Sweet Storytime

Miss Sheila will be doing a Sweet Storytime for all ages at Over the Top Ice Cream in Pleasant Hill on Wednesday, Nov. 28 at 2:15pm and on Wednesday, Oct. 31 at 2:15pm. It will be a fun day to stop by a story, songs, and something sweet!



Over the Top is located at 955 NE 56th Street, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327.

Harry Potter for Teens

Muggles and wizards grades 7-12 are invited to stop in Thursday, Nov. 15, from 7-8pm, to create and color mini characters and creatures from clay to celebrate the new Potterverse film "Fantastic Beasts: the Crimes of Grindelwald."



A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving for Teens



Come enjoy a festive Thanksgiving feast, Snoopy-style! On Wednesday, Nov. 21, from 3-4:30pm, we'll have all the "traditional" goodies to eat (buttered toast, jelly beans, pretzel sticks, and popcorn!), watch cartoons, and get a head start on making the holidays merry by creating cards to send to hospitalized kids! Grades 7-12.

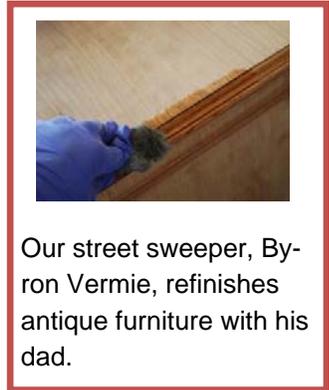
HAPPY FALL!



Featuring the Building Department on the front page article got us thinking. How many of our employees have woodworking experience?



Tick—Tock, Tick—Tock. Ben Lewis in our streets department remembers building a clock in high school shop class. It is still working today.



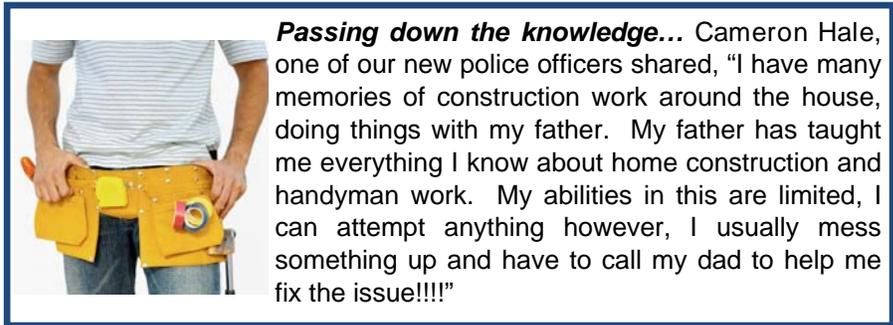
Our street sweeper, Byron Vermie, refinishes antique furniture with his dad.



On your marks, get set, GO! City Planner, Chad Quick shares, “I remember building pinewood derby cars with my Grandpa for Awana when I was a kid. Now I still like to do woodworking, I don’t take a lot of pictures though. I’ve built chessboards, end tables, head boards, jewelry boxes, bird houses, our kitchen cabinets, etc.”



No Island of Misfit Toys at Police Sergeant Alyssa Wilson’s home. She mentioned that she does not do any woodworking. “However, I fix broken things that my children break.”



Passing down the knowledge... Cameron Hale, one of our new police officers shared, “I have many memories of construction work around the house, doing things with my father. My father has taught me everything I know about home construction and handyman work. My abilities in this are limited, I can attempt anything however, I usually mess something up and have to call my dad to help me fix the issue!!!!”

It’s a Barn Raising...Our new utility operator, Jacob Slings shared that as a young human his father used to tear down old barns and salvage the lumber. He explained, “I was always around to assist with this process. Following the completion of many barn removals my dad began to build his own. I always enjoyed the rough carpentry aspect of putting old barns back together.”

Mad Crafter Amy Hill, who works at City Hall shared, “My father was a carpenter. I spent a lot of time in the garage turned workshop. I would also go out on jobs with him. I picked up a few skills, enough to try new things but mainly I use them for crafting gifts for family and friends now.”



The Altoona Public Library works at bringing out the inner wood worker in you through Nail Art (pictured left). Check out the Library’s monthly calendar to see what new skills you can learn at <https://www.altoona.lib.ia.us/>.

You can try your hand to make your own unique paper during our Paper Marbling class on November 8th from 6-8pm, ages 18+. Learn a new technique for just \$5.00. All supplies are provided but registration is required.

Then join us on November 12th from 6:30-8:30pm to make holiday cards out of your marbled paper. We’ll demonstrate several card styles and then there will be plenty of time to create. There will be additional paper on hand for anyone that couldn’t make their own. Registration is required.

WINTER REMINDERS

SNOW ORDINANCE

The snow removal parking ban is in effect from October through May or anytime snow and/or ice removal efforts are required. When weather forecast predicts weather conditions that will require enforcement of the parking ban, a notice will be published on the City of Altoona's and/or Altoona Police Departments Facebook and Twitter pages.

HOMEOWNER SNOW REMOVAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All sidewalks adjacent to your property are your responsibility. All complaint calls will be referred to the Building Department for follow-up and code enforcement. Snow placed on sidewalks by City plows where the sidewalk meets the street is the responsibility of the property owner to remove. City snowplows will not clear private driveways except under emergency conditions and with the approval of the supervisor. The snow placed in your driveway by the city plows is your responsibility to remove. Please do not move snow from your driveway into the street.

Clean around fire hydrants in your yard, so the Fire Department may have easy access to your hydrant in case there is a fire in your neighborhood. Please try and keep your driveway and approach to your house clear in case the police or fire personnel need to respond to your home.

Clean around mailboxes and be sure the mailboxes are properly installed behind the curb line to withstand snow clearing efforts by the City. **The City assumes NO responsibility for mailboxes damaged during snow removal.**

CITY TRAIL IN WINTER



The City of Altoona does clear the snow off of the trails during winter. We do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Many communities close all trails during winter

months but we want ours to be open for use. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.

Christmas Tree Pick Up

Only on January 2—12

Christmas trees placed at the curb on your regular trash collections day will be picked up. Trees must be free of all ornaments, have NO plastic bags on them, and must have a "Compost It" sticker (\$1.25) attached. If there is snowfall on the day of collection, you must be sure that your tree is accessible for pickup. Thank you.



City of Altoona attempts to remove all snow from all streets in a reasonable amount of time following a snow event. The first priority is to get the arterial streets cleared and maintained to provide access for the public, police, fire and rescue units.



Sand, salt, and liquid de-icers are used to maintain the roads during winter weather events. The truck pictured is one of many the City uses to clear the roads and apply sand and salt. Please maintain a safe following distance of at least 50 feet from all snow removal equipment.

Streets may be temporarily closed if they become impassible due to automobile accidents or stranded automobiles. City roads will be cleared only if city equipment can safely push the snow without hitting vehicles parked in the street. Cul-de-sacs will not be cleared if garbage and recycling totes are placed in the city street. The roads will be cleared when the obstructions are removed either by the owners or towed at the owner's expense.

Emergency access

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway by removing snow and ice. If you do require an emergency response, a cleared approach to your door will be the safest route for the emergency responders and you. Maintain your outdoor lights to illuminate your numerical house numbers. If you call '911' for an emergency response, turn your lights on to make it easier and faster for responders to find your residence.



The City of Altoona relies on our residents to let staff know of safety concerns created by weather conditions, snow removal operations, water main breaks, potholes, etc. If you have a concern, please contact City Hall at 967-5136 (Monday—Friday; 8am—4:30pm) or 967-2734 (during off hours and weekends).

TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT IN WINTER

Please remember that your garbage and recycling totes must be accessible 18 inches from the curb.

Your clean driveway approach may be the best option during heavy snow times.

Please do not place your toter on City streets. City snowplows can not clear snow properly when totes are placed on city streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow if totes are placed in the road.

