



May 2012

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# Rock Falls News



## Concerns with Bridge

At the April city council meeting, Fred Heinz, director of the Cerro Gordo Conservation Commission, gave an update on the happenings at Wilkinson Pioneer Park. The City of Rock Falls and Wilkinson Park have had a long-standing mutual relationship.

The campground has become a very popular destination, reflected by the \$18,735 in campground revenue for 2011. Ten years ago, revenue was \$11,679.

The greenbelt and campground areas are expected to be opened the first weekend in May.

Director Heinz reported that park improvements have been funded in the past by special appropriations of county tax dollars. More recently, special projects are being funded by the special park fund that comes from park user fees.

Director Heinz brought photographs of the recent renovations to the shower house. This facility will now be handicap accessible and will have ceramic tile flooring.

Another improvement expected in 2012 will be the installation of an outdoor shower station for river-floating campers. This shower will help reduce the amount of sand being carried in to the shower house and reduce sediment draining into the sanitary sewer.

Such sediment is very detrimental to the sewage grinder pump. The shower house will also receive new siding in 2012 at a cost of about \$8,500.

The windbreak plantings along the west border of the campground are being repaired. Some of the trees have been damaged and some have just died. Where appropriate, the trees that cannot be saved are being removed and new trees will be planted. The City Council was concerned that the entire windbreak was being removed, but Director Heinz reassured the council that every effort was being made to save the majority of the trees.

The big item of discussion was Director Heinz's report on the condition of the covered bridge. The county engaged WHKS Engineering to evaluate the structural integrity of the bridge. The report showed that the bridge is beginning to lean to the west. Correction of the problem could approach \$100,000. If funds cannot be found to fix the bridge it may need to be closed to vehicle traffic.

## Earth Day Cleanup



A great turnout of volunteers made light work of the city-wide cleanup project on Earth Day 2012. Eleven volunteers braved the bitter cold winds to help pick up large trash items not normally taken in the weekly residential trash removal.

Waste Management Co. brought a 25-yard trash packer to town at 7:00 A.M. April 28 to

## Weather Radios

Several years ago, the City of Rock Falls provided every household a weather radio to provide early warning of treacherous weather conditions. It was interesting to note that the city of Creston did not get a tornado warning until seven minutes after the tornado struck the town. Tornado sirens are activated by a tornado warning from the National Weather Service. The NWS reported that this was a rapidly changing atmospheric condition that quickly formed into tornadic winds and didn't appear on radar as a tornado cell until it had passed through Creston.

Another community reported last week that high winds took out the power before the tornado warning was issued, thus preventing the warnings sirens from operating.

Weather radios, on the other hand, have a battery backup, and give more complete information regarding tornado watches, tornado warnings, high winds alerts, blizzard conditions, flash flood warnings and other concerns.

The NOAA weather reporting service provides a test of weather-alert radios every Wednesday morning at about 11:00 AM. If your radio is not sounding this test alarm, then it needs to be re-programmed. The radio should have a sticker on the back with a phone number (919-639-3001) to call to receive programming instructions.

We are obviously in a severe-weather pattern right now. So make sure you have a fresh battery in your radio and it is programmed to receive the alert signal from NOAA. On occasion, KIMT-TV meteorologists visit area HyVee stores and will program weather radios.

assure adequate collection and transport of large items.

The City Council would like to thank the following volunteers for helping keep Rock Falls the prettiest town in Iowa: Scott Ennis, Lincoln Jost, Doug Heimer, Rich Petersen, Tracy Ward, Roger Luther, Josh Stanley, Randy Arndt, Tom Listick, Todd Huff, and Larry Dorenkamp.

**Betterment  
Breakfast  
Sunday, May 6  
8:00 – 11:00 am**



Pancakes, Biscuits,  
Gravy, Sausage,  
Eggs, Juice,  
Coffee