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City Administrator Report to Mayor & City Council

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Report

1. Golf Course: Thought you might find the following informative. Use of Pre-emergent for crabgrass - We are having unseasonably cool and wet weather this spring which is causing some concern about growing grass on our tee boxes and getting last years damage repaired. Any damage (divots) that incurred late last fall and early this spring before the turf was actively growing and repairing itself is still out there. Typically in late April we would put our pre-emergent down for our crabgrass control for the year. We have elected not to put this product on selected areas and tee boxes in exchange for an extended window to try and grow new grass in these areas. The way our pre-emergent (Dimension) works is: the material is applied in a granular form, it breaks down and the herbicide hangs out in the area between the soil and the thatch layer and lasts from 6 to 16 weeks. When new seedlings germinate they produce a grass blade that then protrudes up through the soil and photosynthesis starts to take place to produce food for the plant. Our pre-emergent then is absorbed by the plant and inhibits cells from splitting which the plant must do in order to survive, it does not inhibit cell growth within the plant which causes it to use up all of its energy then it dies off. This is an effective product against crabgrass as well as any new grass seed that we are trying to grow. We know that we are going to get some crabgrass germinating in some areas where the turf is not thick and healthy, but we have a plan in place to do some post emergent control to kill these plants off.
2. ATE: Park & Washington ATE camera should be operational on May 2nd. April 29, 2011 –The survey was completed at Park & Washington and an on site meeting was held at the intersection Wednesday. In attendance was Asst Chief Sargent, Matt the surveyor from Martin & Whitacre, Harold and Mark Loos the landowners, and Andrew Noble and Rich Kosina from Gatso USA. The survey found there is sufficient room to install the camera pole base within the State ROW. Markings were painted on the pavement and construction will begin this coming Monday. RLC technology training was provided to MPD staff early Wednesday morning. A check to ensure all signage was installed around the City and a photo report is being compiled and will be delivered to the City.
3. Meetings (Sample): 2011 Iowa Employment Law Conference, Iowa League of Cities Mid-Size City Meeting, Martin Carver, ED Recruitment Chamber Sub-Committee

"I remember Muscatine for its sunsets. I have never seen any on either side of the ocean that equaled them" — Mark Twain

4. Bridge Lighting: Musco (and MPW) crews will be working on the bridge lighting (wiring and fixtures) during the weeks of May 16 and 23. Musco has taken the lead in preparing a plan to address the current issues (repeaters, conduit, and expansion joints) and will coordinate equipment and traffic control with MPW.
5. Hershey: Langman continues on West Third Street. They are installing both storm and sanitary sewers as they proceed from Main to Green Street. This morning they are at the bend in the street near Green. The access problems for residents getting to their homes have been worked out, Langman continues to coordinate effectively with the residents. The recyclables were transported up and over to nearby intersections last week, so Allied could pick up and dump the containers into their trucks. No complaints have been received (by me anyway). Langman has finished the topsoil spreading behind the curbs on Hershey. They have also added topsoil behind the wall near Broadway, and at the elevated sidewalk by McKee Button Co. They are doing some other minor "fix-up, clean-up" tasks. They have gotten 1/2 of the trench areas over the subdrain on West 8th backfilled and compacted; and have graded and compacted the curb and sidewalk area also on West 8th. Heuer has completed work on driveway apron and courtesy walks on Hershey Avenue. They have also poured the trench caps on the east half of the underdrain lateral system on West 8th. They are planning to work on the curb and sidewalk area on West Eighth Street tomorrow. They do have one more driveway apron on Green Street at the corner of Hershey Avenue. After that is done the traffic lights at Green and Hershey can be returned to normal operation, and end the flashing red lights there. French Landscaping is supposed to be on the job tomorrow. They will begin by placing sod behind the curb on Hershey Avenue. They will also be seeding and/or sodding other areas that have been disturbed as well. NOTE: Hershey Reconstruction: There is talk of Sulzberger closing Hershey Avenue as soon as Wednesday of this week. The closure would be in an area from Clinton Street to Houser Street. We will be having a Preconstruction Conference on this project later today, and this subject will be discussed.
6. Riverfront: City crews are working to clean up the riverfront and Miss Drive. No major damage reported to date. Red brick building has been cleaned and is being aired out, cleanup has begun on the Riverview Center, playground area has been cleaned, parking lots will be forthcoming and the sweeper has been along Miss Drive, and several areas will need re-seeding. Miss Drive should be open this week.
7. Property Taxes: Main focus with the Iowa League right now has been property tax legislation and how municipalities will be affected. I have previously forwarded copies of information distributed to our legislators detailing specific affects to Muscatine. Here are some recent articles on the property tax bills:
 - a. <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20110502/NEWS10/105020321/1023/SPORTS13/?odyssey=nav%7Chead>
 - b. http://www.amestrib.com/articles/2011/05/01/ames_tribune/news/doc4dbcd20b5aa85052090449.txt
 - c. <http://statehousenewsonline.com/2011/04/27/cities-fear-revenue-loss-from-property-tax-plan-in-iowa/>
 - d. <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9MS5Q380.htm>