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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WHEN TWO BECOME ONE: A “TRANSFORMER” AT PUBLIC WORKS**

*Symbol of resiliency created by staff in Muscatine Public Works Department*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The legend of “Transformers” has been told through five movies and decades of comic book adventures. While the City of Muscatine’s version may not transform as they do in the movie, Muscatine’s version does speak volumes about the expertise of City employees, the value and pursuit of an innovative idea, and the cause for which this particular “Transformer” is dedicated to.

Late in 2016 the Public Works Department had two trucks that had become unusable, one was unsafe to use on the road and the other had equipment that was damaged beyond repair. Normally these units would be replaced through a bidding process, but this time an idea emerged that caught the imagination of Public Works Director Brian Stineman.

The first vehicle was a 1995 International tandem axle dump truck.

“The frame had rusted through and the springs had cracked which meant the truck was no longer safe to operate over the road by the Streets Division of Public Works,” Stineman said.

The second was a 1997 International tandem axle Vector flusher truck that was used to clean the sewers.

“The Vector unit on the truck was damaged beyond repair making the truck no longer useful for the Collection & Drainage Division of Public Works,” Stineman said.



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Early in the winter of 2016, Stineman was approached by Street Division Manager Randy Howell about the possibility of combining the two trucks into one useable truck. By taking the Vactor equipment off of that truck and replacing it with the dump box from the dump truck, the City would create a usable truck.

“The Vactor truck was 20-years-old, had few road miles, and the chassis and cab were in very good condition,” Stineman said. “The Streets and Maintenance Division has incredibly resourceful and knowledgeable staff, so I gave my permission to move forward with creating a usable vehicle from two unusable ones.”

With a mild winter and relatively few snow events, the Streets Division staff was able to complete disassembling the two trucks and reassemble one usable truck. The combined vehicle was inspected by the Iowa Department of Transportation in April 2017 and approved for over the road use.

But that is not the end of the transformation.

The “new” truck needed to be painted and plenty of paint schemes were suggested. This truck was special, though, and ideas were generated that would make this working truck a symbol beyond just a representative of the City of Muscatine.

“Andy Kral in the Street Division brought up the idea of painting it pink and putting ribbons on it for Breast Cancer Awareness,” Stineman said. “I thought that was outstanding.”

But then the thought became what about making the truck a symbol for all causes with ribbons. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it, that thought was quickly “dumped” after a little research showed just how many different ribbons and causes there are.



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“At that point, since a pink truck had already been done by a concrete ready-mix company, we decided to paint the truck lavender which symbolizes all cancer awareness,” Stineman said.

Once the paint colors were decided, Eldon Ballenger and Aaron Starkweather of the Streets Division paint crew prepared and painted the cab and dumb body of the “new” truck. Ribbons were cut from scrap steel by a local metal shop, painted a darker color purple, and attached to the sides of the dumb body. Sign Pro created and installed decals on the dumb body, hood, and doors of the truck to complete the transformation.

“This truck shows the resourcefulness of the Public Works Department,” Stineman said. “To create something out of nothing is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our staff. It also stands as a symbol of resiliency for all those affected by all types of cancer. We hope that this effort brings awareness to the community of what we can accomplish with hope and perseverance.”

The “new” truck will be featured in the Fourth of July parade in downtown Muscatine and will soon be seen doing the work it was designed for out and about the City of Muscatine.

Stineman offered a special thanks to Eldon Ballenger, Matt Chandler, Randy Howell, Eric Hutmacher, Andy Kral, Randy Moeller, Kenny Ordway, Sam Ravenscraft, Jody Shoppa, Aaron Starkweather, Mike Taylor, Matt Whitlow, Sign Pro, and Lewis Brothers for their help in the accomplishing the transformation.

[Photo Gallery](#)

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