



TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Common Council
FROM: Rebecca Grill, City Manager
DATE: April 25, 2025
RE: Weekly Newsletter

1. **ARBOR DAY CELEBRATIONS – 44 YEARS OF TREE CITY!** This year, the City celebrated with the students of Menominee Elementary School by planting 4 trees across the street in Menominee Park. There was also a celebration with the Oshkosh North Communities class, where 2 trees were planted, as well as a small celebration with the Oshkosh Garden Club in Oshkosh Garden Club Park. If you have any questions on Arbor Day, please contact Landscape Operations Manager, Travis Derks, at tderks@oshkoshwi.gov or 920-236-5080.



Students from Menominee Elementary (left) and ONHS Communities (right) plant trees with City staff for Arbor Day.

2. **VISIT THE OSHKOSH PUBLIC MUSEUM AND MEET A GENIUS FROM OSHKOSH:** The Oshkosh Public Museum is proud to steward the history of our community. We preserve and celebrate the accomplishments of many who have called Oshkosh their home. The Helen Farnsworth Mears: A Genius of Wisconsin encore exhibit will be at the Museum **through Saturday, June 21**. Helen is one of Wisconsin's most significant artists. Seeing her works on display is a must-see. She was born in Oshkosh in 1872 and showed talent for sculpture at a very young age. She eventually received more formal training in Europe and New York. Her most famous works are on public display, including a statue commissioned for Wisconsin at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 while she studied under Lorado Taft at the Chicago Art Institute. The nine-foot *Genius of Wisconsin* statue now stands in Wisconsin's State Capitol.

The Oshkosh Public Museum acquired an archival collection belonging to her sister, Mary Mears. A talented writer, Mary was her sister's companion in life and steward of her legacy in death. This special collection illuminates Helen's incredible life and the inspiration behind her sculptures. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate one of Wisconsin's famous artists and true geniuses.

If you have questions about the Museum and this exhibit, please get in touch with Emily Rock, Assistant Director/Chief Curator, at 920.236.5767. The Oshkosh Public Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm. Explore all the exhibits and upcoming [programs online](#).

3. **FIRE DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES PERSONNEL CHANGES:** After nearly 26 years with the Oshkosh Fire Department, John Holland (Firefighter John) is retiring on Friday, April 25th. He started the Department's car seat inspection program, Project SAFE (Smoke Alarms for Everyone), and our annual Detector Trek, and he's been a fixture at schools, businesses, and community events. We wish him well on his well-deserved retirement.

Congratulations to Tim Heiman, who was selected as our new City of Oshkosh Fire Chief. Chief Heiman has 20 years fire and emergency management experience, including 10 years as a supervisor and command level officer. His most recent position was as the Training Division Chief for the Oshkosh Fire Department. His dedication and wealth of experience will ensure that the people of Oshkosh will continue to receive the service that they have come to expect and deserve into the future. Congratulations, Chief Heiman.

Congratulations to Firefighter/Paramedic Chad Witmer, who has been selected to be an Emergency Medical Services Coordinator for the Department. EMS Coordinators provide training, answer questions, and are a great resource for all of the other paramedics on their shift. Congratulations on the new role, Chad.

4. **2025 PARKS DEPT ACTIVITY GUIDE AVAILABLE NOW!**

You can pick up a printed copy at the Parks Administrative Office located at 805 Witzel Ave., Oshkosh WI, 54902 or [find it online](#).

5. **SPRING HAS SPRUNG IN THE PARKS:** We are excited to have many of our facilities open and their amenities ready for use! The park restrooms, tennis and pickleball courts, athletic fields, playgrounds, trails and green spaces are all ready for use. Annual boat launch permits are available for purchase at the Parks Administrative Office and the launches have already seen much activity. The Menominee Park Zoo will remain open Monday – Friday from 10:00am – 2:00pm until summer hours take effect on May 24th. At that time, hours will change to 9:00am – 6:00pm, daily.



Spring projects are set to continue as the construction season begins to take shape. Things to keep an eye on in the coming weeks include the removal and replacement of playgrounds at both Stevens Park and Rainbow Memorial Park, and the Menominee Park Zoo path reconstruction near the entrance. These enhancements will provide improved safety, experience, and service at all of these facilities.

6. **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT TRAILER FOR THE PARKS IS COMING SOON:** The Parks Department has been working diligently the last couple of years to recruit more volunteers able to assist us with upkeep in our parks, and we're happy to report that these efforts have been successful. The Parks Department has seen an increase in the number of individuals and groups that have been providing volunteer landscaping services.

To show our appreciation for their willingness to volunteer, and to support their needs, we are excited to introduce our new volunteer support trailer! This mobile unit will be fully stocked with essential supplies and water to keep our volunteers energized and equipped while they work. The trailer will be stationed directly at the locations where volunteer efforts are taking place, making it easier to access what's needed without missing a beat!

If you know of individuals looking to volunteer, or groups looking for a team building project, please contact Special Events Coordinator, Kathy Snell, at 920-236-5080. We are always looking for volunteers to help keep our parks looking beautiful!

7. **PAINTING BY OSHKOSH ARTIST GUSTAV BEHNCKE RECENTLY RESTORED:**

Gustav Behncke was an artist and Oshkosh resident in the early 1900s. In 1930, he donated his painting, *The Resurrection*, to the City of Oshkosh. In 1942, six years after his death, his widow donated another painting, *The Crucifixion*, to the City. In 2022, *The Resurrection* was restored, cleaned, and returned to its place in the alcove of the Chapel at Riverside Cemetery. Recently, *The Crucifixion* was also cleaned and returned to its home above the entrance doors to the Chapel. Riverside Cemetery and the Chapel are on the National Register of Historic Places. If you have any questions on Riverside Cemetery, please contact Landscape Operations Manager, Travis Derks, at tderks@oshkoshwi.gov or 920-236-5080.



8. **GET INVOLVED IN A BOARD OR COMMISSION:** If you are interested in serving your community, please consider becoming a member of one of the City's citizen advisory boards, commissions, or committees. There are current openings on the following boards and commissions:

- BID Board
- Board of Review
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Landmarks Commission
- Long Range Finance Committee
- Plan Commission

To learn more about the boards and commissions, or to complete an application to serve, visit [our boards and commissions webpage](#). If you have questions about current openings, please contact the City Manager's Executive Assistant, Kami Zuercher, by [email](#) or call 920-236-5002.