

## City of Dubuque

# CITY NEWS

November/December 2025

### Inside This Issue

#### 2 | Free 'Ride to Vote' Service

City/School Election on Nov. 4

Details on the Dollars: Open Budget Transparency Tool

Residents Invited to Share Input on FY27 Budget

Leaf Rake-Out Appointments

#### 3 | A Message from the City Manager: Retirement Announcement

#### 4 | New Faces & Retirements

Events Calendar

Seeking Input on Millwork District Community Space

Recent News

### Ribbon-Cutting for the new Dubuque County 911 Emergency Communications Center

4:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 6  
7880 Chavenelle Rd.

Public welcome!



### Attention Thursday Customers!

Due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, your trash and recycling will be collected on:

Saturday, Nov. 29 &  
Saturday, Dec. 27.



## City Council Goals & Priorities

During three sessions held in September, the City Council identified seven five-year goals for the city, along with top and high priorities for the 2025 - 2027 policy agenda.

### Five-Year Goals

- **Healthy and Safe Community**
- **Financially Responsible, High-Performance City Organization:** Sustainable and Effective Service Delivery
- **Robust Local Economy:** Diverse Businesses and Jobs with Economic Prosperity
- **Livable Neighborhoods and Housing:** Great Place to Live
- **Sustainable Environment:** Preserving and Enhancing Natural Resources
- **Connected Community:** Equitable Transportation, Technology Infrastructure, and Mobility
- **Diverse Arts, Culture, Parks, and Recreation Experiences and Activities**

(Top Priorities continued)

- Hempstead St. Project
- Sanitary Sewer Force Main Stabilization Project
- Sanitary Sewer Consent Decree Compliance
- Terminal St. Lift Station & Force Main
- Sports Complex Development
- Stormwater Management Investments and Implementation
  - 17th & Elm St. Stormwater Project
  - 17th & Locust St. Stormwater Project
  - Bee Branch Gate & Pump Station Project
  - Detention Ponds Maintenance
  - Individual Neighborhood Investments
  - Kaufmann Ave. Storm Sewer Improvements
- Street Maintenance/Rehabilitation Program

### Top Priorities

- Commercial Air Service Future Strategy and Action Plan to Sustain and Expand
- Comprehensive Fire Station Location and Facilities Study
- Fire Department Staffing Increases
- Police Department: Full Staffing and Hiring
- Sanitary Sewer Investments and Implementation
  - Catfish Creek Sanitary Sewer Project
  - Cedar St. Lift Station & Force Main
  - Chaplain Schmitt Island Sanitary Sewer
  - Cooper Pl./Maiden Ln. Project
  - Grove Terrace Project
  - Harvard St. Project

### High Priorities

- Continued Implementation of Central Avenue Revitalization Plan
- Downtown Master Plan Update
- Dubuque Law Enforcement Center (DLEC) Short-Term Facility Enhancements and Future Plan
- East-West Corridor/Roundabouts Projects
- Next Phases of Chaplain Schmitt Island Development
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan Adoption and Implementation
- Water Resource and Recovery Center Facility and Process Improvements and Odor Reduction

Learn more at [cityofdubuque.org/citycouncil](https://cityofdubuque.org/citycouncil)



## FREE 'RIDE TO VOTE' Service on Election Day

The Jule is offering free bus rides for voters on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 4, from 6:15 a.m. until 6:45 p.m. Residents who wish to utilize this free service can inform Jule operators that they are riding to vote. Fixed-route buses will not deviate from regular routes but will provide rides to bus stops within reasonable walking distance of polling places in Dubuque.

### Learn more at

[www.cityofdubuque.org/ridetovote](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/ridetovote)



## Leaf Rake-Outs

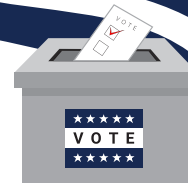
### October 13 – November 26

The Public Works Department provides residents a leaf rake-out service by appointment each fall. The cost is \$20 for the equivalent of 40 leaf bags and will be added to your utility bill. Acceptable items in the leaf rake-out include loose leaves, pine needles, and pine cones. Grass, brush, plants, and rocks are not accepted.

**Schedule a leaf rake-out appointment,** at [www.cityofdubuque.org/yardwaste](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/yardwaste) or call 563-589-4250.



## Tuesday, Nov. 4 City/School Election



Please be aware of these important dates and regulations to ensure your vote is counted.

### Early Voting

The Dubuque County Elections Office is located at 880 Central Ave. Any registered voter in Dubuque County can vote early at the Elections Office via in-person absentee ballot during these scheduled times.

- Due to the Oct. 7 Primary Election, City of Dubuque election ballots may not yet be available on Oct. 15. Please check with the Election's Office before visiting.
- Regular Early Voting Hours at the Elections Office: Weekdays, Oct. 15, – Nov. 3, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Extended Early Voting Hours at the Elections Office: Friday, Oct. 31, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Weekend Early Voting at the Elections Office: Saturday, Oct. 18, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and Saturday, Oct. 25, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### Election Day: Tuesday, Nov. 4

Voting at polling places from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. (NOTE: You CANNOT vote at the Elections Office on Election Day.)

To determine your polling place, visit [elections.dubuquecountyiowa.gov](http://elections.dubuquecountyiowa.gov), call 563-589-4457, or email [elections@dubuquecountyiowa.gov](mailto:elections@dubuquecountyiowa.gov). Please know your polling place before Election Day.

### Absentee Ballots

- Deadline to request a mailed absentee ballot from the Elections Office: 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 20
- Absentee ballot due date: By 8 p.m. on Election Day (Nov. 4). Postmarks are not considered.

**For additional information on voting,** visit [elections.dubuquecountyiowa.gov](http://elections.dubuquecountyiowa.gov), call 563-589-4457, or email [elections@dubuquecountyiowa.gov](mailto:elections@dubuquecountyiowa.gov).

## Details on the Dollars

"Open Budget" is the City of Dubuque's online financial transparency tool. You can explore details on the City's operating revenues and operating expenses by department and fiscal year (2022–2026). You can also examine the City's ledger/checkbook and analyze all expenditures by department, project, vendor, and more. Information can be displayed by charts, exported, and shared through the tool's dashboard.

**Access Open Budget at** [www.cityofdubuque.org/budget](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/budget)

Explore Dubuque's  
**Open Budget**



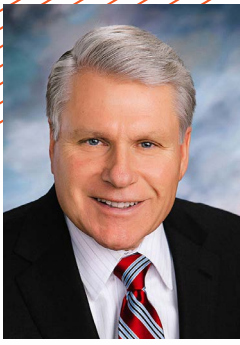
## Share Your Input on the Next City Budget

Dubuque residents are invited to share their input on the next City budget for fiscal year (FY) 2027, which runs July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027. A public input meeting will be held at **6 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 12**, in the City Council Chambers at the Historic Federal Building, 350 W. Sixth St. City staff will provide general information on the budget process and attendees will be invited to share their thoughts on what they would like to see funded in their neighborhoods and the community at-large.



**Comments can also be submitted at** [www.cityofdubuque.org/FY2027budget](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/FY2027budget).





## A Message from the **CITY MANAGER** to the Mayor and City Council

**Michael C. Van Milligen**

Entering 2025 I was planning to retire within 5 years. Coming way too close to being killed by a hit and run drunk driver on March 27, 2025, has caused me to pick a time sooner rather than later. In our life we have multiple defining moments. A few of mine were:

**1. Being fortunate to have two loving parents who had grown up during the Great Depression and then both served in the Army in the Pacific Theater in World War II.** They taught me that, "Family is about Love and Respect." In their lives they modeled the secrets to success:

- Hard Work.
- Good Attitude.
- Be Humble and Kind.
- Make Good Choices, the most important one being your life partner.

These were special lessons to learn from members of, "The Greatest Generation."

**2. Coming out of college and getting my first full-time job as a Police Officer in Carbondale, Illinois.** The next 7 years instilled in me the importance and the gratification of public service and provided me the best supervisors, mentors, and lifelong friends anyone could ask for. They taught me that listening and problem solving are foundational to achieving results, and in the end, you must take action.

**3. Meeting my wife, Nancy, in graduate school was a life changing event.** Nancy put into practice the concepts of Love and Respect building a healthy family. I also learned what Nancy meant by her saying, "If there is room in the heart, there is room in the home." I have been able to experience the joy of having over 30 children live in our home, including our own 5 children. And, now to experience the joy of having 18 grandchildren, with the newest arrival coming August 4, 2025.

**4. Being hired in Skokie, Illinois, then being promoted to Assistant Village Manager.** Having the opportunity to learn from one of the best Village Managers in our profession on how to run local government like a business to achieve meaningful outcomes that affect people's quality of life.

**5. Being hired as the City Manager in Dubuque beginning in January 1993.** This has been a great honor, as I have had the privilege of being a small part of an amazing team consisting of tremendously talented people, including city employees, elected officials, and members of organizations we have been proud to call partners. Our mantra has always been, "Planning, Partnerships, and People." My personal goal has been to empower others, as beautifully expressed by the Conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Benjamin Zander, when he said, "The conductor of an orchestra doesn't

*“ In my time in Dubuque I have had the honor to work with and work for people of great character. Thank you for the kindness you have shown me and thank you for your exceptional leadership. ”*

make a sound. He depends, for his power, on his ability to make other people powerful.”

Of course, the most important people are the residents of this great city, and they are the reason this is the "Masterpiece on the Mississippi."

**6. But, not every defining moment is positive. March 27, 2025 I was struck in downtown Dubuque by a hit and run drunk driver. Having experienced this, "brush with death," it helped crystallize my thoughts on retirement.**

Satchel Paige said, "How old would you be if you did not know how old you were?" Age is not just a chronological number. After almost 50 years in public service I still look forward to coming to work and being part of this great team. For the last 20 years I have gotten up early every morning spending over 2 hours exercising. Over the last 6 years I have walked over 18 million steps, walking 4 – 6 miles a day, having been on an 82-day streak without a miss when I was struck by the drunk driver. I also love to read books and do research, challenging myself to be in a state of continuous improvement and discovery.

The automobile accident reminded me that life can change in the blink of an eye and that if I hope to have a third career after first Policing and then City Management, and to have the time and flexibility to enjoy time with my beautiful wife and wonderful family, I need to retire from the 24/7 demands of being the City Manager of Dubuque. My children and grandchildren are spread out across the country, and I look forward to being able to spend more time with them.

I plan to retire as City Manager of Dubuque in June, 2027, a little over 20 months from now. I thought it important that once Nancy and I had made this decision that I share it with you. I hope this advance notice provides you as the Mayor and City Council time to plan for the selection of the next City Manager and the transition that will need to take place.

In my time in Dubuque I have had the honor to work with and work for people of great character. Thank you for the kindness you have shown me and thank you for your exceptional leadership.

-Mike

Mark Twain said, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."

## New Faces & Retirements

### New City Employees

Eldon Schneider	Water
Abby Gordon	Information Technology
Paul Johnson	Transit
Reise Johnson	Public Works
Angelia Rouse	Transit
Ella Link	Police
Alexander Stackis	Public Works
Sarah Emm Chesher	Public works
Christina Lemmon	Public Works
Lauren Egan	Housing
Wesley Atkinson	Housing
Matthew Kalcevich	Parks & Recreation
Kloe Eitter	Library

### Recent Retirees

Robert Barry	Public Works
--------------	--------------

### New Board/Commission Members

Katie Bailey	Transit Advisory Board
--------------	------------------------

## Calendar

### November

3	City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
4	Election Day
11	City offices closed for Veterans Day (No change in curbside collection.)
12	FY27 Budget Public Input Meeting, 6 p.m.
17	City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
27-28	City offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday (Thursday, Nov. 27, curbside collection will occur on Saturday, Nov. 29. No change in Friday, Nov. 28, collection.)

### December

1	City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
15	City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
24-25	City offices closed for Christmas holiday (Thursday, Dec. 25, curbside collection will occur on Saturday, Dec. 27. No change in Wednesday, Dec. 24, collection.)

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building, 350 W. 6th St.

The public has the option to view and participate in City Council meetings in person at City Council Chambers or virtually (see agenda for details). Meetings are aired live on CityChannel Dubuque (Mediacom cable channels 8 and 117.2 and ImOn channel 5), streamed live and archived on the City's website at [www.cityofdubuque.org/media](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/media), and streamed live on the City's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/cityofdubuque](https://www.facebook.com/cityofdubuque).

## We Need Your Input for Millwork District Community Space

The Planning Services Department is seeking input on the design of a new outdoor community space to replace a temporary parking lot in the Historic Millwork District. In 2012, a temporary parking lot with 57 spaces was constructed to meet parking needs while the adjacent Intermodal Parking Facility was being built. That facility, which includes 292 spaces, was completed in 2015.

In 2024, the updated Historic Millwork District Master Plan, developed with input from a 13-member steering committee consisting of business and property owners, residents, community leaders, and City staff, identified transforming the lot into a vibrant, year-round community space as a top priority.

The public is invited to share their thoughts on potential uses, amenities, landscaping, and design elements for the space at these upcoming events:



#### Public Input Work Session

Wednesday, Nov. 12 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Jule Operations & Training Center (JOTC), 949 Kerper Blvd.



#### Open House

Friday, Dec. 5 | 4 – 7:30 p.m.  
Merry Millwork Market, Historic Millwork District

Input collected will guide development of final designs for the space!

For questions, contact the Planning Services Department at 563-589-4210 or email [colson@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:colson@cityofdubuque.org).

## Recent News

### Mayor of the Year

Mayor Brad Cavanagh was recently named Mayor of the Year in the Over 10,000 Population category by the Iowa Mayors Association at the Iowa League of Cities Annual Conference. The award honors mayors who demonstrate exceptional public service to their community, the Iowa League of Cities, the Iowa Mayors Association, and local government.



### 2025 State of the City

On Sept. 26, Mayor Cavanagh delivered the 2025 State of the City address, highlighting Dubuque's shared successes over the past year and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Watch the full address and read the written remarks at:

[www.cityofdubuque.org/sotc](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/sotc)