



CITY MANAGER UPDATE TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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From the Manager

Net New Construction: Yesterday, the DOR released its preliminary Net New Construction report. Once again, Eau Claire hit it out of the park. [EQNNC802 2023 Preliminary \(wi.gov\)](#)

THANK YOU to the City Council for all of your careful thought about how to balance priorities. Thank you to City staff, including: Aaron White and his team, Steve Nick and his team, Dave Solberg and his team, and Kitzie Winters and her team. And to all of the departments that make Eau Claire awesome!

Now, we move on to the ongoing challenge of how to use every penny in our budget to keep attracting new growth and to keep making Eau Claire a desirable place for people and businesses to settle in.

And the numbers are...

- Eau Claire's combined NNC is at 3.03% on \$7.2 billion of equalized value.
- Among larger communities, EC's is second only to Wauwatosa at 3.05% on \$9 billion of equalized value.

Other high performers for medium-sized communities with \$2 billion or more equalized value were

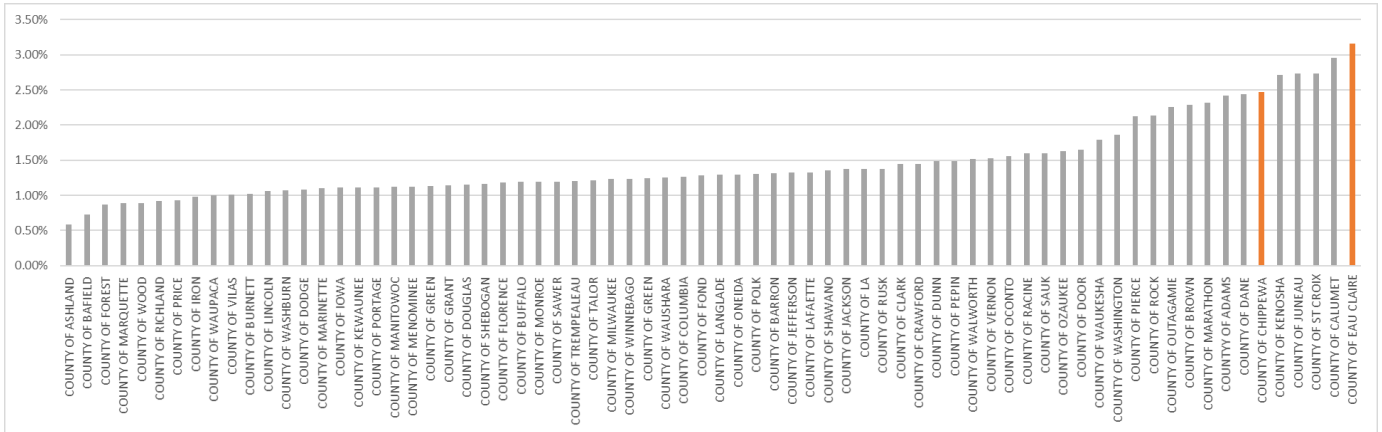
- Fitchburg at 3.7% on \$4.8 billion, and
- Wausau at 4.35% on \$3.6 billion.

And in our neighborhood...

- Altoona at a whopping 10.10% on \$1 billion,
- Lake Hallie at 5.16% at just under \$1 billion,
- Stanley at 6.61% for Stanley on \$167 million,
- Chippewa Falls at 3.93% on \$1.45 billion, and
- Rivers Falls at 2.68% on \$1.5 billion.

Eau Claire tops the Counties for net new construction due to the strong performance of Eau Claire and Altoona, and, similarly, Chippewa County is right up there, sixth from the top, due to the strong

performance of Chippewa and Lake Hallie. This points out the strength of our region in general. The County of St. Croix, between Eau Claire and the Cities, is third from the top, also indicating the strength of the corridor from Eau Claire to the Cities.



Junior Police Academy: Deputy Chief Derek Thomas shared an update about the Police Department’s current Junior Police Academy. The Junior Police Academy is on its eighth year, totaling 16 sessions that have reached approximately 300 children. Over the one-week course, children between the ages of 12 and 17 spend 20 hours learning about the variety of police specialties, the legal system, and functions of every day police work. The School Resource Officers take a great deal of pride interacting with the kids and their families in such a positive light. Council Members are invited to attend the Academy Graduation, which will be held on Friday, August 11th at 5:15 – 6:30PM in the Pine Pavilion at Carson Park.



Invitation to Fire Leadership Conference: Fire Captain Nick Ledin recently invited Council Members to attend the Eau Claire Leadership Conference, which will be held at the Lismore Hotel on September 1st and 2nd, from 8AM to 5PM each day. He wrote: “We are hosting our annual conference on leadership, and we would like to extend an invitation for you to attend, free of charge, if you're available. The presenters are all incredibly well-respected firefighters and fire chiefs from

across the US, with a wealth of expertise and experience leading some of the best firefighters and fire departments in the world. While the conference will focus on leadership in the fire service, the concepts and practices that will be discussed are universal and are analogous and applicable in every other domain of all of our lives. These classes will cover the essential topics of shaping culture, enhancing morale, empowering our co-workers, being a servant leader, building effective teams, and creating robust and resilient organizations, along with many others. While many of the topics discussed are oftentimes nebulous, these leaders will help us find clarity in the fog. You are all the leaders of our favorite city, and since we work with you every day, either directly or indirectly, we are really hoping to see you there.” Council Member Christopherson attended a prior conference and found it very interesting. Join in for as much of the conference as you’re able to make.

Fire Department Visit to River City Adventures: This past week, the Eau Claire Fire Department made a site visit to Mitscher Park to visit our River City Adventure participants. The kids reported that it was one of the week’s highlights!



CVTC ELL Visit to City Hall: Last week, a class of English Language Learner students from CVTC Instructor Alyssa Hedenstrom’s class visited City Hall. They had a chance to tour and learn about City Hall and the various City career pathways. (Because it was a field trip, some of the class members were able to bring their young children, and getting a chance to interact with the little ones made a number of us at City Hall very happy! The children, in turn, were excited to meet Murphy). After getting a chance to learn about City jobs, the students expressed an interest in coming back to job shadow. Dr. Ka Vang and our Police and Fire Departments did an awesome job of welcoming the students. In one of the pictures here, they test out the Council Chamber seats!



Marshfield Exemptions: We were discouraged to be served by Marshfield Clinic, which indicated their intention to sue the City so that they no longer need to pay taxes. If Marshfield’s suit is successful, Eau Claire is responsible for paying back some tax payments. Going forward, the change will not lower our total tax revenue (unless we further cut taxes and revenue), but it will shift the tax burden from Marshfield to property owners. By our estimates, a \$200,000 home will see a \$21.13 increase in their taxes if Marshfield becomes fully exempt. The impact on Marshfield’s home city, Marshfield, will be even greater, as explained in this article: [Marshfield Area Citizens On the Hook for up to \\$8.4 Million if Marshfield Clinic Wins Lawsuit - OnFocus](#) Eau Claire is in touch with Marshfield to compare notes.

Here is an excerpt from the article:

“The City could have to pay back anywhere from \$0 to \$1.1 million in tax revenue to MCHS, depending on the case outcome. In total all tax districts, including the City, County, Marshfield School District, and Mid-State Technical College could have to pay back up to approximately \$2.8 million per tax year for a total of \$5.6 million dollars. Each tax district would be responsible for establishing their own repayment. The Marshfield School District could see nearly a million dollars per year cut from its operating budget and the County would see a reduction of approximately \$600,000. And lastly, Mid-State Technical College is approximately \$140,000 annually.

In total, Marshfield tax districts could see up to a \$8,400,000 refund to the Marshfield Clinic if the case is closed after the 2022 tax payments are made.

The total value of the two parcels involved in the dispute are assessed at \$112 million, with roughly 7% of the City’s property values tied to them. The city’s budget for 2022 is about \$23.5 million. If the Clinic wins the lawsuit, the City would lose \$1.1 million in its budgeting (about 4.7% of the City’s general fund revenue). If the Clinic wins the lawsuit, the money owed would have to be refunded to MCHS by the city. That money would come from the City’s general fund reserves.”

Health Department Updates: Please find a number of updates from the Health Department below...

Hispanic Health Fair: Health Department staff hosted an informational table at the Hispanic Health Fair held by Neighbor to Neighbor at Immanuel Lutheran Church and connected with at least 30 individuals about various health topics. The Health Department offered Chronic Disease Prevention, WIC, Well Woman, Environmental Sciences, and Medical Reserve Corps materials to Spanish-speaking families.

Annual Beach Monitoring Season Kick-Off: The Environmental Sciences division started the 2023 beach monitoring season on May 22nd. The laboratory team conducts weekly, routine surveillance at seven public beach locations in Eau Claire County (including the City of EC) through Labor Day for both bacteria and harmful algae. If results of testing and/or monitoring are above the safety levels,

the affected locations are visited daily (Monday through Thursday) until the conditions improve. The public is notified of beach status changes via social media messaging, and the ECCCHD website, or by email notifications. Signage is also posted on-site at the beach location if a closure or advisory is issued. To receive beach closure alerts, visit bit.ly/beachalertsEC and select Beach Closings.

COVID-19 Update: The COVID-19 public health emergency officially ended on May 11th, 2023. The Eau Claire Health Department continues to follow up on outbreaks, monitor disease trends, and hold COVID immunization clinics on the second Tuesday of every month. COVID-19 trends have remained stable and continue to show low disease activity in Eau Claire County. [Wastewater levels](#), [hospitalization data](#), and [death data](#) remain our strongest indicators and are monitored regularly. Our local dashboard and data page can be found [here](#).

Legionella Update: The Health Department is investigating two Legionella cases that have occurred in a communal living facility in the past three months in the City of Eau Claire. The Department, in partnership with Wisconsin DHS, has collected water samples for testing and has helped the facility put in immediate control measures to reduce exposure risk. Assessment for possible community sources of Legionella bacteria is also occurring with Community Development Department staff helping. Notably, there has been an increase in cases of Legionella in Eau Claire County this year. There have been six cases identified among Eau Claire County residents, and two cases where individuals who traveled to Eau Claire County during their exposure period this year for a total of eight cases. For reference, in the past 10 years, Eau Claire County has seen between zero and three cases a year.

Mindfulness Day for Educators: Mental Health Matters hosted the second annual Mindfulness Day for Educators in June at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau Claire. One participant commented, "I have the upmost respect for everyone who works so hard to put an event like this together! I've attended these two years in a row, and I always leave with my cup overflowing - Thank you!" Participants indicated the retreats have resulted in slowing down, connecting with others, time to reflect, unplug, rest, and permission to just be. This in turn provides a valuable resource for youth-serving professionals to build skills to support mentally healthy and resilient youth. With the Mental Health Matters collaborative grant project ending in 2024 after 10 years of funding, future Mindfulness Day events for educators will be supported by CESA.

Community Health Promotion – Narcan Direct Program & Fentanyl Test Strip Direct program: The Health Department distributes the nasal-spray formulation of Narcan as a participant in the WI DHS Narcan Direct Program, and fentanyl test strips as a participant in the WI DHS Fentanyl Test Strip Program. Narcan is an opioid antagonist, meaning it can restore breathing in a person experiencing an opioid overdose. During May and June, 117 individuals were trained and 139 boxes of Narcan were distributed. A fentanyl test strip is a tool that can help identify the presence of fentanyl in illegal drugs. Fentanyl is unable to be detected



by sight, taste, or smell and in Wisconsin has been found in many drugs including, cocaine, heroin, heroin, methamphetamine, and pills made to resemble prescription medications. A total of 1,285 fentanyl test strips have been distributed to Eau Claire County community members, peer service agencies, and the UW – Eau Claire. These are ongoing partnership programs funded by grants.

Newly added this summer is a partnership with the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office with a vending machine that distributes FREE Narcan nasal spray and fentanyl test strip kits to the public year-round, 24 hours a day. The vending machine is located in the lobby of the Eau Claire County Jail, 710 2nd Ave., Eau Claire. Also included are instructions on how to use both tools. Instructions and information are available in English, Hmong, and Spanish.

From mid-June to mid-July, 72 boxes of Narcan nasal spray and 38 fentanyl test strip kits have been dispensed from this machine. Additional locations are being explored in the community.

Interns: The Health Department annually works with interns to gain capacity for essential public health programs and services and also to continue to provide opportunities to learners as they are working on advancing their skills and experiences. Of note are the interns that have supported the annual housing survey, garbage complaints and other environmental health issues. Two of these are highlighted below:

“Hi, my name is Sydney, and I am heading into my fourth year at UW-Eau Claire. My major is Environmental Public Health, and I am also pursuing a law certificate. I am working for the Eau Claire City-County Health Department this summer helping complete the annual housing survey as well as pool/whirlpool/therapy pool testing, tick drags and mosquito trapping. I help staff local outreach events in the city and county and also have helped with the government center farmer's market! I have also had the opportunity to shadow many different people and all the cool jobs that they have!”



“Hi, I am Michaela Schnell, and I am in my 4th year at UW-Eau Claire as a Geology Major and Math Minor. I have been working at the Health Department since spring 2023 and have been helping complete the housing survey, testing pools/whirlpools/therapy pools, beach monitoring and testing, tick drags, and food sampling at local businesses! I also help staff local outreach events in the city and county to promote services offered by the Health Department.”

Garbage complaint reminder: Anyone with concerns related to garbage can contact the Health Department at phone **715-839-4718**, by emailing ehealth@eauclairecounty.gov or by filling out a [simple form](#) on the health department's website. This includes issues with bin placement, accumulations of garbage, or other concerns that have not been resolved by contacting the garbage

hauler or the property owner directly. Please refer to our [website](#) for more information and a helpful FAQ for common garbage and recycling questions.

Council Calendar (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, August 7th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 8th: Council Meeting
- Monday, August 21st: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 22nd: Council Meeting
 - Additional Budget Work Session – Overview of proposed cuts and proposed service modifications
- Tuesday, September 5th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- Monday, September 11th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 12th: Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 26th: Council Meeting
- ❖ *September 29th – City Council receives 2024 Proposed Operating Budget*
- Monday, October 9th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
 - Public Hearing #1 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 10th: Council Meeting
 - City Council Operating Budget Work Session #3 (Department Directors)
- Monday, October 23rd: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, October 24th: Council Meeting
 - City Council Operating Budget Work Session #4 – Amendment Discussion
- ❖ *November 3rd – City Council Budget Amendments Due*
- Monday, November 6th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- Monday, November 13th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
 - Public Hearing #2 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, November 14th: Council Meeting
 - City Council action on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget and levy
- Monday, December 18th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion

Additional Dates:

- Friday, August 11th: Junior Police Academy Graduation
- Friday and Saturday, September 1st and 2nd: Fire Leadership Conference
- Friday, September 15th: Council Retreat

Employee Spotlight:

Here's our next employee spotlight!

Today we highlight **Aimee Wold!**
(Submit your highlight suggestion here:
<https://forms.gle/f1PUPpFaWStsvH458>)

A co-worker said this about Aimee:
"Aimee is a quiet leader. She doesn't make her presence known but I know and the rest of the records division knows that if we have a question, Aimee will probably have the answer. I was especially grateful for Aimee on a day where we were running short staffed because of snow and illness and she was able to be in the office and cover all the morning duties that needed to be finished in a timely manner."



Here's more about Aimee...

- Your position: "I have worked for 9 years as a Law Enforcement Associate."
- What people may not know: "I have an unhealthy obsession with reality TV shows."
- Favorite activities: "I love to read, hang by a campfire, and spend time with my family."
- Best part about working for the City: "I work with some pretty great people!"