

In This Update:

- **From the City Manager:** Budget Updates, American Phoenix Community Noise Update, COVID-19 Update, Boardwalk Updates, High Bridge High Honors, Riverview Praise, Thank you to Streets Crews, Lifeguard Praise, Bus Operator Praise, Some Activities
- **Council Calendar**
- **Special Employee Spotlight:** Dan Sarauer

From the Manager

Budget Updates: Our Finance Team, Directors, and Managers have spent hundreds – maybe a combined thousands of hours – on piecing together what will be the proposed FY24 budget. Thank you to those Council Members who shared feedback based on the budget exercise we presented in our last work session. The work on fiscal stability, including our internal efforts and the steps taken by the Council, allowed us to balance our budget this year. We will present a budget that includes five “service mods”, or requests for budget increases, though 77 service mods will need to continue to go unfunded. We spent a huge amount of time trying to figure out which ones to fund, and we can share the thinking at the next budget work session. Here’s our Finance Team – Kitzie Winters, Corey Lee, and Michael Korbol – late last Friday afternoon. They were exhausted but smiling!



American Phoenix Community Noise Update: As discussed in prior updates, Environmental Sciences staff have been consulting with American Phoenix, Inc. (API) since spring about industrial noise concerns near their facility, which is located at Banbury Place. Following a noise investigation performed by the Health Department in May and June, and following several meetings with both local government representatives and community residents, API has been taking steps to lessen the amount of noise extending from the facility to surrounding neighborhoods. The Health Department met with API management on July 5th and again on August 15th to perform interim assessments of the mitigation measures. Those measures have included several upgrades to the facility exhaust

system that are intended to reduce and/or dampen the various noises associated with this facility. API has indicated that their goal is to make substantive improvements in the noise situation without adversely impacting air quality or causing more odor. To date, the actions taken have resulted in measurable progress toward noise improvement, and it appears that some further reduction is possible as at least one more measure is planned in the coming weeks. During the August 15th assessment, decibel readings were markedly improved from prior readings at the most impacted area (E Grand Ave. area between Boyd Park and University Park). Improvement was also observed at further distances. It is still early, but there have been no active odor complaints received by API or the Health Department since these measures were completed, which is also encouraging. Staff feel that API representatives have been very responsive and proactive in their approach to this situation. It is encouraging to see progress towards improving this issue. Staff will continue to consult with API and provide further updates as they are available.

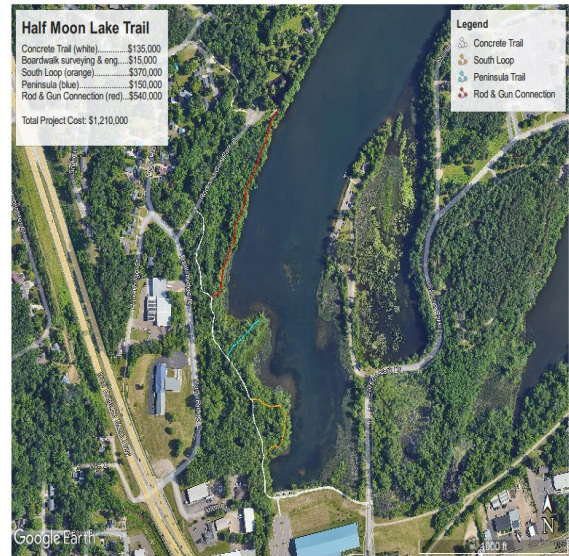
COVID-19 update: Over the past month, COVID-19 trends have shown signs of increasing disease activity. Both wastewater concentration of SARS-CoV-2 and hospitalizations have been increasing at the local and national level. The Eau Claire Health Department continues to follow up on outbreaks, provide vaccines as supply allows, and monitor disease trends. 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. Trends include:

- Case numbers remained stable from the week prior, however other indicators are continuing to show increasing disease spread.
- Eau Claire wastewater data concentrations increased from a High to Very High level, with a significant increase in trajectory noted. State wastewater data has shown a sharp increase over the past couple of weeks.
- Nationwide, a 15.7 percent increase in hospitalizations and a 10.5 percent increase in deaths have been observed. Regionally, we are observing no significant change in trends of COVID-19 patients hospitalized.
- The XBB subvariants (XBB's) remain the dominant strains throughout the U.S (53.7%). The percentage of cases attributed to the XBB strains has been declining for several weeks. The proportion of cases attributed to new strains EG.5 and FL.1.5.1 is increasing quickly, at 21.5% and 14.5% respectively. Both are a subvariants of Omicron. State data shows 88.4% of WI variants were XBB and 11.6% were EG.5.1 in the most recent week. Note: This data tends to lag 2 to 4 weeks.

The Health Department continues to monitor data, respond to questions, provide testing supplies, and investigate outbreaks. For more information:

- For updated information on COVID-19 exposures, prevention, treatment, vaccines, and more, visit our COVID-19 website by clicking [here](#).
- If you'd like to get updates on local COVID-19 trends, vaccines, and boosters delivered to your email inbox once a month, sign up for the Health Department's monthly COVID-19 updates newsletter by clicking [here](https://bit.ly/covidupdatesEC): bit.ly/covidupdatesEC

Boardwalk Updates: Our Parks Division reports that sections of the Half Moon Trail continue to take shape. Sections of the boardwalk have arrived, and this first section that will be completed is the Peninsula Trail (the aqua green on the map). The boardwalk will be built in segments as indicated on the attached map – the Rod and Gun Connection in red, and then South Loop in yellow on the map, though we are not yet sure of the order. The boardwalks should be completed by late October and they will be working off the Concrete Trail”. We will place signs at each end to inform trail use to exercise caution because of trail construction. Parks Manager Steve Plaza said: “I must say I am very excited about this project it has been a long time coming – Thanks to all who supported this trail!”



High Bridge High Honors: The City of Eau Claire recently received an APWA 2023 Small Cities/Rural Communities Project of the Year award for the High Bridge Rehabilitation project. The City received this same award in the same category (Historical Restoration/Preservation) also in 2020 for the Eau Claire City Hall Remodeling project. We received the same award in 2019 as well, but in a different category (Transportation), that time for the Grand Avenue Half Moon Lake Bridge Replacement project.

- [Engineering Award-Winning Projects | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)
 - [Renovation of City Hall | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)
 - [Repair of the Historic High Bridge | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)
 - [Grand Avenue Footbridge | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)

APWA holds the awards program each year to honor various outstanding projects completed by various individuals, groups and chapters within public works. This year’s award winners were

announced in July 2023 with the City of Eau Claire receiving the 2023 Small Cities/Rural Communities Project of the Year award for the High Bridge Rehabilitation project. The APWA Awards Recognition Ceremony is held annually at the yearly PWX (Public Works Expo) events to present the awards to those selected recognizing their professional contributions and achievements. PWX2023 took place in San Diego, California this year from August 27th through 30th. Dave Solberg and Christien Huppert from the City of Eau Claire traveled to San Diego to accept the award on the City's behalf. Pictured from left in the attached photo accepting this award are **Keith Pugh**, National President – APWA, **Dan Sydow**, Manager, Structural Engineering – Ayres, **Christien Huppert**, Civil Engineer – City of Eau Claire, **Dave Solberg**, Deputy City Manager | Engineering Director & City Engineer – City of Eau Claire, and **Scott Grayson**, CEO – APWA.



Dave Solberg said about the award: “It’s significant recognition of our commitment to keep historical assets for the public. It was a national award and competed against projects in America and Canada.”

Riverview Praise: Council Member Gragert received a text and he kindly passed it along to staff.

“The revamping of Riverview Drive is fantastic! With the parks, boat landings, houses, etc., the bike lane and path are phenomenal. And it’s a lovely ride along the river. Whatever role you played, thanks! And tell others they’re doing great work making biking safer and easier for everyone.”

Thank you to Streets Crews: Nolan Fadness from the Health Department shared this in appreciation for our Streets Division. City staff help address situations when large cleanups are required. Nolan gave staff this shout-out:

“I just wanted to send a big ‘Thank You’ for the work you guys and your crew did yesterday morning for the clean-up. Everyone had such a positive attitude and worked hard to get the property cleaned up in timely manner. We really can’t thank you enough for the work you all do and appreciate your communication throughout the process. As you can see by the photos below, not only was the public nuisance resolved, but a huge burden was also removed for the homeowner and now they and their neighbors have a safer and healthier environment to live in.”



Lifeguard Praise: Recreation staff reviewed feedback from participants in their summer programming, and pulled out one quote to pass along to you all about the impact that staff are making in the lives of our residents. (Edited slightly to ensure privacy...)

“I’m not sure who the young man was who taught my child’s class, but I would like to send a big thanks to him. My child is currently facing challenges, and it’s been a rough summer. We thought swim lessons with other children might bring a bit of normalcy to their life. They truly enjoyed every day of swim, which allowed them to be with others and to have some consistency at least for a short while. Once when we were waiting, their teacher walked by and said hi to them, addressing them by name, and my child just beamed. For a young child experiencing challenges and so many transitions, I think their fear and mine too is that they will get lost in the shuffle of things and that perhaps people will forget who my child is. Their teacher didn’t though. He greeted my child before and after class,

praised them for their progress, and allowed them to just be a kid. I came to watch my child one day, leaping right off the edge and into the water with such excitement and bravery, and their teacher was right there to give high fives. It was hard not to shed some tears! I know that my child will face many, many challenges that have yet to come and that I won't always be there to guide and support. However, I will always remember this young man who reminded me that it takes a village to raise our children, and there will be many out there just like him who will continue to show such tremendous acts of kindness and compassion without knowing my child's story. Thank you for allowing my child some time to be a child and for remembering them."

Bus Operator Praise: I had a chance to take the bus to the Airport this week, and it was an awesome ride. It was very interesting to me to see who got on and off and where and to speculate about how the transit service figured into their commute. My very favorite part, though, was seeing how Operator Roger Beaver interacted with both passengers and the public. In addition to personally greeting all the passengers, every single person we passed on the street – from groups of children to adults – waved at Roger. When I got off, I mentioned that to Roger, and he said, “Yes, I’m well known on this route!”

Some Activities: Here are some activities that you can participate in if interested...



- **Fall Festival:** Saturday, September 16th, 11AM to 5PM: Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. has planned a Fall Festival in the South Barstow District. Several thousand people are expected to be in attendance for music, family fun, and over 140 street vendors throughout the day. Volunteers are needed to help run the festival and make the event a success. Below you can find links to more information about the event and a direct link to information on what volunteer opportunities are available. Please consider helping if you can! Fall Festival Website: <https://www.visiteau Claire.com/downtown-eau-claire/events/fall-festival/> Volunteer Information: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080948ACAA2EA2F58-fall#/>
- **Presentation on Alcohol Use:** Tuesday, September 19th, 7PM. Dr. George F. Koob, Director, National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism will present discussion on: “Changing the conversation around alcohol in the U.S.: Acknowledging the elephant in the room.” [Register here](#)

- Eau Claire Health Alliance Coalition: Just as a reminder, the Coalition will be hosting an open house on Thursday, September 21st from 4 to 6PM. The event will be an opportunity to learn about what the action teams are working on, connect with others who care about the health of our community, and find out how to get involved with the Eau Claire Health Alliance. BOH and Council/County Board members are encouraged to attend if available.

The long-standing community health improvement collaboratives in Eau Claire have been renamed: Eau Claire Health Alliance. This includes the work of the former Eau Claire Healthy Communities and Eau Claire Alliance for Substance Misuse prevention. Work is in progress to create the Eau Claire Health Alliance website. Website should be completed by August. The new Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/ecalliance/>

- First BIPOC Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 28th, 6:30 to 8:30PM. The group that will guide our strategic planning related to issues facing the BIPOC community. This is an open meeting, and all are welcome to attend (though will need to observe vs participate).
- Voices of the Valley: Tuesday, October 3rd, 6 to 7PM, Riverview Room at the Library. From Alyssa Hedenstrom at CVTC: "I wanted to personally invite you to our "Voices of the Valley" event happening soon at the Eau Claire Public Library. It's going to be a wonderful celebration of our ELL students and their accomplishments. There will be refreshments, a story gallery, and students do some live readings. Feel free to invite your family, friends, or colleagues."

- DEI: A Workforce Perspective & Insight in West Central Wisconsin: Wednesday, October 4th, 7:30AM to Noon, Pablo Group UW Stout Memorial Student Center. Join in for a morning of informative speakers and conversation on best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion and implementation of DEI/macro level social justice work. Keynote speaker: Matt Glowacki <http://mattglowacki.com/speaking.html>, with a panel of regional employers, including Dennis Beale – Power of Perception <https://www.powerofperceptioninc.org/>

- Tough Topics Book Club Meetings – When Time Stopped: Wednesday, October 25th 6-7:30PM [When Time Stopped](https://lephillips.librarycalendar.com/event/tough-topics-book-club-3) by Ariana Neumann. <https://lephillips.librarycalendar.com/event/tough-topics-book-club-3>
- Toward One Wisconsin: May 7-8th, 2024, Eau Claire/ Registration not yet available – Mark your calendars!

Council Calendar (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, September 25th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 26th: Council Meeting
 - Additional Operating Budget Work Session (Review of proposed '24 changes)
 - Work Session: Boards Committees, Commissions and outreach strategies
- ❖ *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 and State of the City
- 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, September 15th: Council Retreat
- Thursday, September 21st: Eau Claire Health Alliance Coalition
- Thursday, September 28th: First BIPOC Committee Meeting
- Friday, September 29th: Eggs and Issues Legislative Breakfast
- Tuesday, October 3: Voices of the Valley
- Wednesday – Friday, October 18th -20th: League Conference

Employee Spotlight

Here's our next employee spotlight!

Today we highlight **Dan Sarauer**. (Submit your highlight suggestion here: <https://forms.gle/f1PUPpFaWStsvH458>)

What coworkers say about Dan:

A co-worker submitted this quote about Joe: “Dan enjoys customer service, has a great attitude, and is willing to help out where and when needed. This help and guidance to others often enhances others’ productivity as well, oftentimes benefiting the entire department. Dan is proactive and takes extra steps to make sure things get done right. He promotes long-term planning to avoid the need to re-invent the wheel frequently. He always strives to learn and gain additional expertise in all facets of the job, and he has his finger on the pulse of the industry, which gives him the knowledge and forethought to see opportunities sooner and clearer. Dan is also a strong communicator. He is clear, concise, and professional in all of his communication. His interactions with staff and leadership within other departments as well as external support and vendors is always courteous and professional”

More about Dan... And a picture (attached): “Me, my wife (Afton) and kids on the wagon ride at Christmas in the City in December.”



- **Job Position:** “I’m, now, a systems engineer with the City of Eau Claire, and started in January 2019 as the help desk supervisor, so I just crossed my four-year mark!”
- **What people may not know about me:** “I toured Europe with the Wisconsin Ambassadors of Music, have played trumpet for almost 30 years, and played with the Ludington Guard Band for 15 years. I’m also a big fan of the arts (musicals, theater, etc.)”
- **Favorite activities:** “I toured Europe with the Wisconsin Ambassadors of Music, have played trumpet for almost 30 years, and played with the Ludington Guard Band for 15 years. I’m also a big fan of the arts (musicals, theater, etc.)”
- **Best part about working for the City:** “I appreciate that we are an organization that has a strong focus on service to our customers (citizens) and that we strive to be forward thinking and environmentally aware of our impact as we put new initiatives in place and update old ones.”
- **Life Philosophy:** ““Try to find something positive every day, even if some days you have to look a little harder.”- Brian Ford”