HIAWATHA INSIGHTS

July 2025 Vol. 204

BOOM RESPONSIBLY: YOUR GUIDE TO FIREWORKS SAFETY IN HIAWATHA

The 4th of July is a time for celebration, community, and honoring our nation's independence. As you prepare to enjoy the holiday, the Hiawatha Fire Department and City Officials want to remind residents of both safety guidelines and important changes to fireworks regulations in Iowa. It's important to note that Iowa Senate File 303, effective July 1, 2025, reinforces that fireworks may not be restricted on July 3, July 4, and December 31 beyond the guidelines already set by state law. Fireworks may be used only on private property and only by individuals 18 years or older. The use of fireworks is strictly prohibited in city parks, public right-of-ways, and on streets or roadways. **Continued on Page 6**

HIAWATHA LIBRARY SUPPORTS SHARE A ROW

Has your garden produced more than you need this growing season? Consider donating your excess fruits and vegetables to the Hiawatha Public Library Food Pantry! **Continued on Page 5**

75 CHEERS FOR YOU—THANKS FOR CELEBRATING WITH US!

On June 14 Guthridge Park came alive with music, laughter, and a whole lot of hometown pride as the City of Hiawatha marked its 75th birthday. The celebration brought together residents, families, and visitors for a full day of activities—from a lively parade to kids' events, food trucks, historical displays, and live music.

Mayor Dodson addressed the crowd at 5:45 p.m. with heartfelt reflections on Hiawatha's journey since 1950, while the Hiawatha History Commission, City Administration, Public Works, Fire Department, and Parks and Recreation teams made sure every detail was just right.

We extend our deepest thanks to the sponsors who made this milestone celebration possible through their generous support:

- Fareway Grocery Store – donated 800 cupcakes that were shared with attendees as a sweet birthday treat.
- Culver's – sponsored the always-popular Frozen Custard Eating Contest, which was a big hit with both participants and spectators.
- Cedar Rapids Toyota – loaned trucks for our Mayor, Council Members, and Grand Marshals to ride in during the parade, and also donated a Power Wheels vehicle for the Power Wheels Nationals.
- Dave Wright Auto, Darrah's, P&K Midwest, Big 10 Mart, McGrath Powersports, and the Friends of Hiawatha Parks & Recreation – generously donated additional Power Wheels for the races, helping create an unforgettable experience for our youngest attendees.
- Farmers State Bank – sponsored the creation of our special History Display, a thoughtful and engaging tribute to Hiawatha's 75 years of growth.

This celebration was more than a party—it was a reflection of our community spirit, generosity, and shared history. Thank you to all who joined us, volunteered, and supported this once-in-a-generation event. Here's to the next 75 years of Hiawatha—stronger together!

Hiawatha!™ CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR
STEVE DODSON
mayor@hiawatha-iowa.com

COUNCIL MEMBER
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COUNCIL MEMBER
BILL BENNETT
bbennett@hiawatha-iowa.com

JULY MEETING SCHEDULE

02 City Council 5:30 PM
08 Parks Commission 5:30 PM
08 Library Board 7:00 PM
15 Water Board 5:30 PM
16 City Council 5:30 PM
28 Planning & Zoning 5:30 PM

As a city council member, one of my goals is to spend time with different city departments to better understand their daily responsibilities and the services they provide. These opportunities help me appreciate the dedication and heart our employees bring to their work—and the Hiawatha Police Department is no exception. On June 6, I joined Sergeant Brett Bartels for an evening ride-along as the department transitioned into the night shift. Officers Miles and Lockwood were also on duty for their 12-hour shift. The evening began with preparations and a team briefing before we hit the road. From the passenger seat of the patrol car, the city looked a little different. Within the first few minutes, we were greeted with waves from residents, each returned with a smile from Sgt. Bartels. When we passed St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, he recognized a few familiar faces and stopped to ask how their families and pets were doing. These small moments reflected the department's deep community connections. Our officers aren't just enforcers of the law, they're friendly, approachable neighbors who truly care. The first call of the night took us to a neighborhood concerned about a growing number of stray cats. Sgt. Bartels took time to listen, offer potential solutions, and even reached out to Chief Ben Kamm who was off duty at the time, to help address the situation. It was a clear reminder: there's no concern too small for the Hiawatha Police Department. As dusk settled in, Sgt. Bartels predicted we'd soon see drivers forgetting to turn on their headlights—and he was right. A simple, friendly traffic stop followed, with Sgt. Bartels offering a quick reminder before sending the driver on their way. Throughout the night, we conducted around a dozen traffic stops, but only two resulted in citations—both reduced from the original offense. These weren't about punishment—they were about safety and education. Later in the evening came a more serious call. Out of respect for the people involved, I won't share the details, but what stood out was the compassion and professionalism Sgt. Bartels and Officer Lockwood showed the resident. At one point, Officer Lockwood even offered tech support. For me, it was a moving moment and one I won't forget. For our officers, it was another night on the job. This experience focused on Sgt. Bartels, Officer Lockwood, and Officer Miles, but I know their dedication is echoed across the entire department. I'm grateful for the hospitality they extended—and even more grateful for the integrity, care, and commitment they bring to our community every single day.

Ben Fiedler, Hiawatha City Councilmember

EVENTS

Interested in community events? Find out what's happening in Hiawatha by checking out our city calendars!

hiawatha-iowa.com/calendar/

City Calendar

Library Calendar

CITY DIRECTORY

TITLE	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
City Manager	Dennis Marks	319-393-1515	dmarks@hiawatha-iowa.com
City Clerk	Kari Graber	319-393-1515	kgraber@hiawatha-iowa.com
Finance Director	Cindy Daack	319-393-1515	cdaack@hiawatha-iowa.com
Parks & Recreation Director	Matt Boggess	319-393-1515	mboggess@hiawatha-iowa.com
Community Development Director	Kesha Billings	319-393-1515	kbillings@hiawatha-iowa.com
City Engineer	Jon Fitch	319-393-1515	jfitch@hiawatha-iowa.com
Public Works Superintendent	Rod Jasa	319-393-6601	rjasa@hiawatha-iowa.com
Water Superintendent	Marty Recker	319-393-1515	mrecker@hiawatha-iowa.com
Police Chief	Ben Kamm	319-393-1212	chief@hiawathapolice.com
Fire Chief	Matt Powers	319-393-4180	mkpowers@hiawatha-iowa.com
Library Director	Chris Stoner	319-393-1414	cstoner@hiawatha-iowa.com

WELCOME TO HIAWATHA, MATT BOGGESS!

Matt Boggess is the new Director of the Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Department, bringing nearly two decades of experience in community recreation, nonprofit leadership, and fundraising consulting.

Before joining the Hiawatha team, Matt spent 10 years with the Vinton Parks and Recreation Department, including 7 years as Director. During his time in Vinton, he led several transformational projects—building multiple new playgrounds, adding a community splash pad, launching a cutting-edge eSports Lab, and overseeing the design and construction of Nathan's Miles Glow Trail, now recognized as the longest glow-in-the-dark trail in the country.

With over 19 years of professional experience, Matt is passionate about enhancing community spaces and creating innovative programs that bring people together. Beyond his work in the field, he frequently lectures at colleges and professional workshops on leadership development, program design, and career growth in parks and recreation.

Outside of work, Matt enjoys spending time with his wife Cyanna and their two daughters, Rylee and Parker. He's a fan of craft beer, golf, cycling, and pickleball—and is an enthusiastic supporter of the Iowa Hawkeyes, UNI Panthers, Green Bay Packers, and Indiana Fever.

Hiawatha!™ EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Kesha Billings

Job Title / Department: *Community Development Director*

How long have you been with the City?: *Just over a year!*

About you: *I'm an 80's baby. Married with three boys under 8.*

What does an average day in your role look like? *I'm grateful to say that no two days are ever the same. My mornings typically begin with responding to phone calls or emails that have come in after hours, aiming to provide timely yet accurate replies to both the public and colleagues. As the head of the Community Development Department, my day also includes checking in with staff on the status of ongoing building projects, addressing concerns, or discussing questions related to upcoming developments. A significant portion of my role involves desk work, where I review and implement community development plans and objectives. My direct report is to the City Engineer.*

What is your favorite thing about working for the City? *My favorite part about working for the City is the strong team culture among our staff and the collaborative, supportive attitude we have towards residents and businesses.*

What's a game or sport you love to watch or play? *The Olympics, to see people at their peak performance, showing that practice does make perfect!*

What's an activity or hobby you enjoy outside of work? *Biking, hiking, baking, gardening, and scrapbooking.*

FAY M. CLARK
Hall of Fame Award

The Fay M. Clark Hall of Fame Award honors Hiawatha community members who, through their leadership and service, have significantly enhanced Hiawatha and whose efforts contribute to making Hiawatha a great place to live, work and play. The Fay M. Clark Hall of Fame Award will be presented on an annual basis at Hiawatha's State of the City Address.

The award is named after Hiawatha's founder and first mayor Fay M. Clark whose entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative efforts led to Hiawatha becoming the 17th incorporated town in Linn County in 1950. We hope to honor Clark's legacy of hard work, collaboration, and being a good neighbor through this award.

NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATION BETWEEN
July 1st - 31st
VISIT HIAWATHA-IOWA.COM

Selection Criteria

- The honoree must live and/or work in Hiawatha
- Innovation/Entrepreneurial Spirit
- Exemplifies the character of a good neighbor; caring, humble, gives back
- Provides leadership and/or opportunities for collaboration
- Demonstrates commitment to the Hiawatha community

HIAWATHA PUBLIC LIBRARY JOINS "LIBRARIES WITH HEART" PARTNERSHIP

The Hiawatha Public Library has partnered with the American Heart Association to offer free onsite and take-home blood pressure monitoring devices to library users. The library is honored to help improve the health of Hiawatha's residents by empowering community members to know their numbers and regularly monitor their blood pressure. A blood pressure measurement kiosk is now located in the library's new Adult Reading Lounge to assist patrons with monitoring their blood pressure as needed. The library also has two take-home blood pressure monitoring kits that patrons may check out with their library card. High blood pressure is a leading cause of both stroke and heart disease, and can cause long-term damage without any noticeable symptoms. High blood pressure leads to cardiovascular disease, which is the number one cause of death in the United States.

CONNECT: HIAWATHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

MORE THAN PARKS: BUILDING CONNECTION IN HIAWATHA

When people hear the word "community," they often think of their neighborhood, town, or city—a shared space defined by borders or buildings. But within every great community lies something even more powerful: smaller, vibrant groups of people who connect through common interests, shared experiences, and meaningful activities. These are the communities within community, and they are the heartbeat of Hiawatha Parks and Recreation.

At its best, a Parks and Recreation Department doesn't just manage facilities—it creates opportunities for connection. Whether it's a parent meeting other parents at the playground, a group of teens bonding over a pickup basketball game, or retirees finding joy in a morning walking club, **OUR GOAL** is to build spaces and programs that bring people together in ways that feel personal and lasting. Why does this matter? Because research—and more importantly, lived experience—shows us that people who feel connected to others are healthier, happier, and more invested in their community. These smaller circles of belonging help reduce isolation, strengthen civic pride, and build bridges across generational and cultural divides. In Hiawatha, we're not just maintaining parks—we're creating places where friendships are formed, mentorships are born, and memories are made.

CONNECT: CITY OF HIAWATHA PARKS AND RECREATION

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

HIAWATHA LIBRARY SUPPORTS SHARE A ROW

This growing season, the Hiawatha Public Library Food Pantry will be participating in the Linn County Master Gardener's Share a Row initiative, which encourages local gardeners to donate their excess garden produce to local food pantries. 1 in every 8 people in Linn County are affected by food insecurity, and these individuals and families typically lack access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Donating is easy! Bring your donation to the Produce Donation Station in the library's entry vestibule. This station has step-by-step instructions for weighing your donation, and whether your produce should be placed in the refrigerator or on the room-temperature pantry shelving. There's also a QR code to submit your donation's weight online. Haven't donated before? There's a second QR code that links to the signup form to become a Share a Row donor! You can also sign up to be a donor at: https://go.iastate.edu/L6WBUH. Sign up today and join in our fight against food insecurity in our community!

First time donating produce?

Scan this QR code or use the URL below to sign up now, and join in our fight against food insecurity!

https:// go.iastate.edu/L6WBUH

Already have an account?

Scan this QR code or use the URL below to log your donation now!

https://go.iastate.edu/ACWVP3

MG MASTER GARDENER
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Hiawatha Public Library

HIAWATHAPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG

From summer concert nights in the park and youth activities, to fitness classes, events like Food Truck Fridays and HiBrai, we're designing experiences that meet people where they are—and help them find their people. We're also looking forward. As our community grows, so does our responsibility to make sure our spaces are inclusive, adaptive, and welcoming to all. That includes adding new amenities, improving accessibility, and inviting feedback from residents of all ages and backgrounds. This also means continuing to stay up to date with trends and provide state of the art facilities, like our new Pickleball courts and soon to open Mini Pitch at Guthridge Park, and the new splash pad opening soon at Tucker Park. And not to be outdone, but we still have many new amenities to showcase at Turtle Creek Park as well!!!! As your Parks and Recreation Department, our job is to help ensure Hiawatha remains not just a place where people live—but a place where people truly BELONG. Because when we invest in creating communities within community, we create a stronger, more connected, and more joyful Hiawatha for everyone. So come out, get involved, and let's continue building together—one program, one park, and one connection at a time.

TINY TOTS TRIATHLON - Friday, August 8

Guthridge Park | Ages 3 - 10

Kids ages 3-10 years old will bike, run and slide their way through the finish line! Parent assistance is required. All participants will receive a medal at the finish line.

Fee: $12 per child.

Register online at: https://tinytottriathlon2025.eventbrite.com

Hi HIAWATHA.ACTIVITYREG.COM

HIAWATHA PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (HPOA)

The Hiawatha Peace Officers Association (HPOA) was established in the fall of 2024 as a non-profit organization comprised of full-time sworn peace officers employed by the City of Hiawatha Police Department. Our mission is to give back to the community we proudly serve. Through annual initiatives and events, HPOA aims to support local families and strengthen relationships between officers and residents. One of our first initiatives is to launch a Shop with a Cop program this holiday season. This event is designed to provide a positive Christmas experience for children in our community who may be facing financial hardship. In addition, HPOA hopes to be a resource for children in need throughout the year. Whether it's essential items like beds, bedding, clothing, shoes, or school supplies, our goal is to provide support when it's needed most. The Hiawatha Peace Officers Association is not funded by taxpayer dollars. We rely solely on member dues and generous donations from the public to carry out our mission. If you have questions about HPOA or would like to know more about our cause, please contact the Hiawatha Police Department and ask to speak with an association member. You can also reach us by email at HiawathaPOA@gmail.com.

HIAWATHA PUBLIC WORKS: DELIVERING VALUE AND SAVINGS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Every day, the Hiawatha Public Works team is hard at work behind the scenes—repairing streets, maintaining public infrastructure, improving stormwater systems, and checking sewer systems for issues. But beyond the physical labor and visible improvements, our team is also dedicated to one key goal: saving money for the City and its taxpayers. By handling many projects in-house, Public Works eliminates the need for costly outside contractors. Whether it's repairing a neighborhood road, installing a pavilion in a park, or updating city park restrooms, our skilled staff completes the work efficiently and professionally—at a fraction of the cost. These savings add up quickly, reducing strain on the City's general fund and allowing more resources to be allocated to other critical services like emergency services and large construction projects like the Edgewood Rd Extension. We also focus on preventative maintenance. Our crews regularly inspect and service

city infrastructure to catch small problems before they turn into expensive repairs. For example, early detection of an issue in our sewer system can prevent road damage and save thousands in future repair costs. Public Works staff works with engineers when designing projects to ensure future maintenance issues can be minimized. Through smart planning, we extend the life of city assets and avoid premature replacements. Innovation is another area where we create value. By sourcing materials locally, reusing resources when possible, and applying new techniques, we continue to reduce both costs and environmental impact. Our Public Works team is skilled at solving problems and maximizing existing resources in solving these problems. Collaboration with other departments further amplifies these efforts. At Public Works, we take pride not only in what we build and repair, but in how we serve the public—responsibly, efficiently, and with the City's financial health in mind. Every dollar we save helps make our community stronger and more sustainable. Projects the Public Works has completed in the last few years that saved the city money include, but not limited to: Install new Pavilion and associated concrete work at Turtle Creek Park, widen the east side N. Center Point Rd by Culvers for the upcoming Boyson/I380 interchange project, trim ROW and park trees, remodel 2 restrooms in Guthridge Park, plant 144 trees in the ROW and Tucker Park, paint crosswalks, stop bars, and turn arrows, and make numerous holiday decorations for Hiawatha Holiday events.

BOOM RESPONSIBLY

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Safety First

Every year, the Hiawatha Fire Department responds to several fireworks-related incidents, including fires caused by improper use and disposal. If you plan to use consumer fireworks, please keep these safety tips in mind:

- Stay at least 20 feet away from people and buildings.
- Have a bucket of water, garden hose, or fire extinguisher on hand.
- Soak used fireworks in water for at least 24 hours before disposing of them—never place them directly in a trash can.
- Sparklers can reach temperatures of 1,200°F—always supervise children and dispose of sparklers safely.
- Never use fireworks if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Do not aim fireworks at people, pets, vehicles, buildings, or other property.
- Be considerate of your neighbors, especially those with small children, elderly residents, veterans, or pets who may be sensitive to loud noises.

Respect Our Community Spaces

City staff spend a significant amount of time after the holiday cleaning up debris and repairing damage caused by fireworks in prohibited areas. Violations can lead to fines starting at $250, with additional penalties if injuries or property damage occur. Let's all do our part to keep Hiawatha safe, clean, and enjoyable this Independence Day. Celebrate responsibly—and let the 4th of July shine for all the right reasons!

FEEDING STRAY/FERAL ANIMALS ... DON'T DO THAT!

Pet ownership is a significant responsibility—not only for the well-being of the animal but also for the peace and cleanliness of the surrounding neighborhood. In Hiawatha, how you care for your pet can directly impact your neighbors and the broader community. To promote responsible pet ownership, the City enforces several ordinances related to animal care. These include regulations on barking, proper containment, sanitation, and general animal welfare. Relevant codes can be found in Chapter 50-Nuisances, Chapter 53-Noise, Chapter 55-Animal Protection, Chapter 162-Storm water discharge. Additionally, the Community Development Department receives complaints about so-called "pseudo-pets." These situations often involve individuals who regularly feed stray cats without providing essential care such as neutering, vaccinations, or pest control.

While well-intentioned, this practice creates an attractive nuisance—encouraging feral cat populations that can damage private property and disturb neighbors. Although feeding stray animals is not currently prohibited under City Code, it is strongly discouraged due to its unintended negative effects on the community. As Bob Barker was famous for quoting "Help control the pet population, have your pets spayed or neutered."

ENGINEERING UPDATES

2025 Street Improvements

LL Pelling has completed the concrete and asphalt work on Pirie Drive from Robins Rd east to the Nixon Elementary school property; Rainbow Drive from 10th Avenue to 11th Avenue; and 13th Avenue from Rainbow Drive south to the dead end. Remaining work includes extension of the manhole blockouts and site restoration.

Turtle Creek Park Trail Connection

Peterson Contractors Inc has completed the grading, backfilling, installation of the new creek box culvert and rock base for the trail connection from the Edgewood Village subdivision north to the park trail. Over the next month, the trail will be paved, fencing placed at the box culvert and final restoration completed.

Edgewood Road Connection - Pecks Blvd to Emmons St

We have seen a fair amount of progress on the roadway extension over the past month. Rathje Construction has completed all clearing and grubbing of the site, mass grading, and storm sewer and water main installation at the Emmons St intersection. The intersection of Emmons and Edgewood Rd was paved in mid-June. We appreciate resident patience during the street closure. Over the next month, we anticipate all of the storm sewer and water main to be installed. We are anticipating for this project to be completed by the end of September.

Tucker Park Splashpad

Bowker Pinnacle Mechanical has completed the installation of the new splashpad at Tucker Park. All of the features were installed in June with testing completed. The site has been restored with new sod and city staff is working on final installation of amenities. The site amenities include installation of a shade structure and three park benches. City staff is excited to have a splashpad up and running again at this park. We ask that patrons not walk in the newly placed sod until it is fully established.

WATER SYSTEM MAINTENANCE UNDERWAY THIS SUMMER

If you've noticed our water operators out and about with the Hydrovac truck this summer, they're hard at work performing important preventative maintenance on the city's water system. Their tasks include checking for water leaks, identifying deteriorated service bands, verifying service line locations for GIS mapping, and addressing any other issues they encounter along the way. Once inspections are complete, crews will return to restore any areas that were disturbed during the process—including backfilling and reseeding the grass to leave things looking just as they were.

Turn to the back page and help Dewy the Water Drop find his way back to the water tower! Follow the path, solve the puzzle, and be a water-saving hero!

DELIVER BY TUESDAY, 07/01/2025

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HIAWATHA CITY COUNCIL ACTION

JUNE 4, 2025

RESOLUTION #

#25-098 Sewer Waiver for 3054 Forrest Hill Court

#25-099 Sewer Waiver for 3011 Prairielight Court

#25-100 Sewer Waiver for 3659 McLain Drive

#25-101 Sewer Waiver for 260 Heritage Court

#25-102 Status of Funded Activities for the Daws Rd, Clymer Rd & Thiher Dr Water Main Replacement

#25-103 Interfund loan/transfer for LOST (2025-34) Fund to Capital Project Fund

#25-104 Interfund transfer of sums for FY25

#25-105 Awarding Mosquito Control 2025

#25-106 Change Order #1 for Edgewood Rd Extension Project

#25-107 Amending City Manager Employment Agreement

#25-108 Approving Union Contract Agreement for the Hiawatha Police Department

#25-109 Approving Assistant Finance Director Position Creation, Job Description & Related Benefits

#25-110 Approving City of Hiawatha Employee Wage and Salary Schedule for FY25-26

#25-111 Approving Professional Service Agreement with Patrick Parsley

Approved Special Event Application for the Mental Health Matters 5k

Ordinance #1007 Amending Hiawatha Code Chapter 41 Public Health and Safety by adding §41.15 Public Exposure

Ordinance #1008 Amending Hiawatha Code Chapter 69 Parking Regulations by adding §69.15 Parking Unregistered Vehicles

JUNE 18, 2025

RESOLUTION #

#25-112 Sewer Waiver for 3128 Timber Ridge Court

#25-113 Application to the State Recreational Trails Program Committing to Provide Local Matching Funds Contingent Upon Award and Acceptance of Grant Funds

#25-114 Extending Contract with City Laundering

#25-115 Lease Agreement with Marco for City Hall and Fire Station #2 Copiers

HELP DEWY GET BACK TO THE WATER TOWER!

Checking for leaks in your water fixtures such as toilets, faucets and pipes can help conserve water. Whether you are a business or a residence, water leaks occur and that leak will cost extra on the utility bill. Help Dewy the water drop get back to the water tower to make sure no water is wasted.

COFFEE TALK WITH MAYOR DODSON

It's time to talk. Do you have ideas, solutions or thoughts about the City of Hiawatha?
Mayor Dodson wants to hear from you!
Join him at Roasters Coffee House in Hiawatha!

JULY 17 | AUGUST 14 7:00 - 9:00 AM