

City of Fremont Update

Date: June 4, 2021

To: City Employees/ City Boards/ Mayor & City Council

City Having a Hard Time Filling Positions

According to Jennifer McDuffee, the City's Director of Human Resources, there are more than 30 open positions at the City and the number of candidates applying for these positions are down. She said, "Recently we have seen an increase in the number of applications after Governor Ricketts announced last week that federal pandemic unemployment benefits would be ending in Nebraska. We are hopeful that the trend will continue so we can return to normal soon."



With a state unemployment rate below three percent, it's a tough labor market in normal circumstances. However, the additional unemployment benefits appeared to be compounding the difficulties in finding qualified workers. This difficulty prompted the Parks & Rec Department last week to temporarily suspend the Park Play and Tiny Tots programs due to lack of summer employees. The two programs, originally scheduled to start on June 1, are very popular summer youth activities, but without adequate employees to supervise, safety was a concern. Hopefully, employees can be found so abbreviated summer programs can still be offered.

The City is not the only one having troubles hiring employees as many cities across the state say they are experiencing the same thing. Lincoln announced reduced pool hours in its nine pools because of a lack of staffing, saying they still have 30 openings for pool workers. The City of Omaha is also modifying its pool schedules due to a shortage of lifeguards and summer staff to operate and safely monitor swimming.

Laura England Biggs Named Library Director

After serving as Interim Director, Laura England Biggs was officially hired as City Librarian at the Keene Memorial Library. Laura is no stranger to the City as she has worked at the library since August of 2005. During that time, she has served as Assistant Director and was in charge of youth activities. Laura holds a Masters of Arts in Library and Informational Services from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is also currently serving as the President of the Nebraska Library Association.

Of course, one of Laura's first projects as Director will be overseeing the expansion project at the library. Laura will be working with Library Board Members and Friends of the Library to raise around \$7 million of private money to fund the expansion.



Please join me in congratulating Laura!

Leak at Splash Station Temporarily Closes Blue Slide

A cracked 45-degree elbow (bottom right picture) in the plumbing to the blue slide was the cause of the leak and sink hole recently found at Splash Station. On Friday, May 28, Parks & Rec employees found water leaking out of the ground near the slide and then noticed a sink hole (picture on top right) on Saturday. They called the plumber who works on City pools, who began work to remove a portion of the concrete above the leak on Monday, Memorial Day. The leak was completely repaired on Wednesday.

Despite closing the blue slide, the City kept with tradition by opening Splash Station and Ronin Pool on Memorial Day. Nate Schwanke, Interim Parks & Rec Director, said attendance at both pools were good and that no one complained about the blue slide being closed or the cool water temperatures. Of course, with the upcoming unseasonably warm temperatures coming this weekend, I am sure both pools will be bustling with swimmers. Swimmers at Splash Station will also be able to enjoy the blue slide once again.



Peace Officers/Firefighters Honored at Memorial Day Ceremony

Shown in the picture on the right are Chief of Police, Jeff Elliott; City EMT-Paramedic, Levi Alley; and Dodge County Sheriff, Steve Hesperen placing wreaths to honor the men and women who lost their lives serving the public. I was reminded of the reason we celebrate Memorial Day when one of Monday's speakers said, "Armed Forces Day is for those who are still in their uniform, Veterans Day is for those who hung up their uniform, and Memorial Day is for those who never made it out of their uniform." It is good to see everyone come together to honor all of our military, law enforcement, and firefighters who lost their lives serving our community and our country. God bless them!



There is no job so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time to do the work safely!