

Mayor's Column for the April 10, 2013 Edition of the Review

## **4Es and U**

Several years ago, the Energy Fair Planning Committee developed the theme of Energy, Environment, Education, Evansville, and U, 4Es and U, for our annual Earth Day Energy Fairs. This theme encompasses the essence of our community's awareness, enjoyment, and care of our natural resources.

April is a month filled with opportunities for learning about, observing, and enhancing our environment. There are also some special events and activities that are important to our community and your participation is encouraged.

Last week I drafted the 2013 Arbor Day Proclamation and the 2013 Resolution in Support of International Migratory Bird Day. Evansville has been a Tree City USA for eleven years. An application has been submitted for 2012 city efforts and we should be receiving annual notification shortly.

Tree planting and care have taken center stage as emerald ash borer infestations move through Wisconsin. Our local tree planting activities are important to offset coming loss of ash trees. The city is fortunate that more than 2,000 native trees and shrubs have been planted along the Grove Community School Forest Trail. The city has also been planting trees in the parks to add species diversity as well as stock. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will again be giving away native trees for resident plantings at the Energy Fair. The annual city terrace tree program will run until April 20 or until all trees are sold. The \$55 cost includes the tree, planting, staking and mulching. Information is available on the city website at [www.ci.evansville.wi.gov](http://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov) and at the city clerk's office, 882-2266, at City Hall.

Evansville has received the "High Flyer" designation in the Bird City Wisconsin recognition program. This designation is for communities undertaking numerous, in-depth bird education activities. Evansville is one of nine communities to receive the special recognition out of the 66 current Wisconsin Bird Cities. We are well underway working on birding activities and projects for this year. Phil and Nancy Kress and I attended the annual meeting and conference of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative last month. We learned about new birding initiatives and educational opportunities. One example is the YardMap project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a free Citizen Science project that focuses on the most extensive habitat on the continent, the yard. Yards play an important role in safe bird habitat. This great family-friendly project compares habitat and gardening practices with bird sightings. You create a digital map of your landscape and report bird visitors. Some of the tips for making your yard more bird-friendly are planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers and leaving seedheads on flowers throughout winter. Check out the website at [www.YardMap.org/learn](http://www.YardMap.org/learn).

The Evansville Bird City Wisconsin committee will have a table at the Energy Fair with lots of birding information, including YardMap and the May 4 International Migratory

Bird Day Celebration in Evansville that includes a morning bird watching walk at Leonard-Leota Park, a local birding hot spot. There will be a chimney swift tower on display at the Fair. We are also excited that the Coordinator for the Bird City Wisconsin program will provide an exhibit on the state-wide initiative at our Fair.

Evansville Water & Light is partnering with Focus on Energy to bring the Express Energy Efficiency Program of the statewide organization to Evansville. From April through June, residential customers living in 1-3 unit homes that get the majority of heat from natural gas or electricity are eligible to receive direct installation of simple household energy efficiency products at no cost. Evansville Water & Light residential customers will soon receive a mailing about this program.

Focus on Energy reports that participants can expect to receive approximately \$100 of products/installation and reduce their annual energy use by 10%. Products include high efficiency showerheads, water-saving kitchen and bathroom faucet aerators, water heater temperature set-back assistance, insulation of hot and cold water heater pipes, and Energy Star qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs. Installation time is estimated at around 45 minutes. To schedule an appointment, call Focus on Energy at (855) 533-8103 or visit [www.focusonenergy.com/express](http://www.focusonenergy.com/express). Focus on Energy will be an exhibitor at the Energy Fair. Be sure to stop by their table for additional information.

On Wednesday, April 17, author Bill Christofferson will speak at Creekside Place at 7:00 p.m. about his book, "The Man from Clear Lake." The book is a biography of Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day. The event is free and open to the community as part of the Creekside Speaker Series.

The Evansville Earth Day Energy Fair will be held on Friday evening, April 19, from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. Highlights of the Fair include The Science Alliance and the Zoozort Animal Show. There will be dozens of exhibitors, including those mentioned above. Plan now to bring recyclables. The Fair is a community-wide educational event; there is something for everyone!

Evansville continues to seek input from residents as we draft an updated five-year park and outdoor recreation plan. We are undertaking a brief 5 to 10 minute survey to help prioritize projects that will maintain and enhance our parks and programming. Your ideas and suggestions are important to our community. The survey can be found online at [www.surveymonkey.com/2013EvansvilleParkPlan](http://www.surveymonkey.com/2013EvansvilleParkPlan). Paper copies of the survey are available at City Hall and Eager Free Public Library. We will also have surveys available at the Energy Fair and the Week of the Young Child Family Night. To date, we have received more than 150 completed surveys. Doubling that number, or more, would be fantastic.

We have received new information on the Ice Age Trail corridor planning process. Three alternative corridors have been identified by the National Park Service. Two of them include Evansville. The remaining corridor connects Janesville to Magnolia Bluff Park to our south, through Footville. Following public input and comments this spring, one

“corridor of opportunity” will be selected. The corridor planning process is expected to be concluded in late 2014. Trail development is voluntary. Interested landowners and community involvement will determine final location of the trail.

The National Park Service will hold an open house meeting on April 29, 2013, at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street, from 5 to 8 p.m. At 6:00 the Park Service will present information on the trail development process, to be followed by a presentation by the Evansville Grove Society on the historical assets of Evansville. Our community includes four historic districts, with nearly 350 contributing structures, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a program of the National Park Service.

Strong public attendance at this open house is essential. It is not necessary to stay long, but signing in to show interest in the Trail is important. If you cannot attend, there is a link on the city website to provide online comments to the National Park Service. The online comment period closes June 1, 2013.

The Ice Age Trail is one of only seven National Scenic Trails in the United States. To be located along the Trail would be a testament to our outstanding local natural and cultural resources. The Trail would provide new recreational opportunities for us, new visitors to our community, and positive economic development impacts. I will be spending every spare moment the next few weeks encouraging attendance at the April 29 open house and also public input online. I am happy to provide any additional information I can about the Ice Age Trail in Rock County. I can be reached at City Hall, 882-2266 or home, 882-5528.

I invite you to support and enhance our natural resources by participating in the above events as you are able. Our environment is a main component of what makes our home town a special place.

### **Community Announcements**

The city yard waste facility on Water Street is now open for the season. Hours are 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

Evansville business owners Sue and Jeff Farnsworth will speak on how to cluster and incubate small businesses at the Evansville Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club on Wednesday, April 10, 2013, at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street.

On Wednesday, April 17, 2013, author Bill Christofferson will give a presentation on “The Man from Clear Lake,” his biography of Senator Gaylord Nelson, the father of Earth Day. The talk will begin at 7:00 p.m. at Creekside Place.

The Evansville Earth Day Energy Fair will be held on April 19, 2013, from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Fieldhouse, 320 Fair Street.

The Evansville Police Department will participate in a Prescription Drug Drop-Off Disposal and Collection Day on Saturday, April 27, 2013, from 8:00 a.m. to noon at the Police Department, 10 West Church Street. Bring meds in original containers with any personal information blacked out. Over the counter meds will also be accepted. Sharps must be dropped off in a registered sharps container or thick plastic detergent bottle. The drug drop off box remains available any time.

The National Park Service is holding a public open house on refined Ice Age Trail options in Rock County on Monday, April 29, 2013, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street. Two corridor options include Evansville.

### **Community Thanks**

Evansville thanks third district Alderman Floyd Hayes for his dedicated public service to our community. We wish him happiness and enjoyable travels!