Cedar Rapids, a vibrant urban hometown - a beacon for people and businesses invested in building a greater community now and for the next generation.

Employment Opportunities  2
Deferred Compensation Info  2
New Benefit Enhancement  3
Golf Study Recommendation  3
Making Holidays Special  4
License or Certification Info  4
MLK Movie Night  5
Wellness Info  5-8

Employee News

**New employees**


**Retirees**


**Mark Ultis, Utilities** – retiring Mar 10, 2017. Mark started with the City June 24, 1982. His current position is Utilities Lab Services Manager.

Congratulations to **Jason McKinstry**, Water System Repair Worker I, who recently passed the Iowa DNR Water Distribution Grade I test.
Employment Opportunities

Employees are welcome to apply for any open positions and are also encouraged to share the job openings with anyone who may be interested in joining the City. Positions highlighted in yellow are newly posted this week.

All job descriptions can be viewed on the City Website at the following link: [Employee Resources](#).

If you have questions about any of the opportunities, please contact Jenelle Sisneros, 286-5001.

### Seasonal Positions / Internships / Partner Organization Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intern IV (Forestry)</td>
<td>Jan 6, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intern IV (Veterans Memorial)</td>
<td>Dec 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Seasonal Positions</td>
<td>Open Until Filled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employment Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIP Engineering Program Manager</td>
<td>Jan 13, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims Analyst</td>
<td>Jan 6, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Business Manager</td>
<td>Open Until Filled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Supervisor</td>
<td>Jan 6, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner I</td>
<td>Jan 6, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>Jan 12, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of Way Agent I</td>
<td>Dec 30, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Driver</td>
<td>Dec 30, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities Laboratory Service Manager</td>
<td>Jan 13, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPC Electrical Systems Supervisor</td>
<td>Jan 6, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPC Instrument Technician</td>
<td>Jan 13, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2017 Deferred Compensation Limits

The normal maximum Deferred Compensation dollar limitation for calendar year 2017 will be $18,000 – this reflects no changes from 2016. The contribution limit for Deferred Compensation plans is the lesser of:

1. 50% of taxable compensation before reduction for 457 deferrals, Section 125 and pension contributions (this is called the percentage limitation); or
2. a dollar amount in effect for that year (this is called the dollar limitation).

Beginning in the year that an employee reaches age 50, an additional annual catch-up contribution can be made per year up to a specified dollar limit. Effective January 1, 2017, the Age 50 and Over Catch-Up limit will be $6,000 – this reflects no change from 2016.

The deadline for submitting a Deferred Compensation Payroll Deduction Change Request form is the 20th of each month in order for the change to be effective with the first paycheck of the upcoming month.

The [457 Deferred Compensation Payroll Deduction Authorization Form](#), used for payroll changes to 457 Deferred Compensation accounts, is on [CR@Work](#) under Employee Resources, Benefits and Deferred Compensation.
Announcing New Benefit Enhancements for 2017

All four benefits (Health, Dental, Vision & Child Life Insurance) will now have consistent age eligibility. Your dependents can be covered under any of these benefits through age 26.

Golf Operations Recommendations

Cedar Rapids has completed an internal review of the golf operations of the Parks & Recreation Department, which oversees the 18-hole Gardner, Jones, Twin Pines and Ellis golf courses. The purpose of the review was to identify recommendations that would close a budget shortfall that averaged $342,000 annually.

The review committee recommends closing Jones Golf Course and maintaining management of the City’s other three courses. Jones had the greatest financial losses and fewest golfers among all the courses over the past five years. Much of the financial loss at Jones is due to the flooding of Prairie Creek which causes the course to close 9 or 18 holes repeatedly. There were full or partial closings of the course 22 times in the past 16 years. Land will be retained as a 70-acre enlargement of Jones Park.

Other operational changes include reducing the tee time intervals at Ellis and Gardner Golf Courses to expand the capacity of the courses, particularly during the full in-demand weekend mornings. Slight increases to season passes and daily greens fees at Ellis and Gardner, the more premiere courses, are recommended to bring fees in line with other municipalities that operate three golf courses. Twin Pines fees will remain the same as 2016. All three courses will feature a lower Senior 9 hole rate during the weekdays.

A budget developed for the operations of three courses shows the recommendations will “swing” Golf Operations $430,000 allowing for complete closure of the budget shortfall. Golf operations would make payments to the City’s General Fund to repay past debt.
Public Works employees make holidays special for families

The Public Works Department adopted a family of 5 for Thanksgiving AND another family of 5 for Christmas through Olivet Mission. In addition to the many items pictured above, employees donated $140 in cash that will be given in the form of an Aldi gift card. Thank you Public works employees for your generosity and making wishes come true!

Submit your newly earned Degree, Certification, License and / or Award

Have you received a degree, certificate, license or award in 2016? As a new program the City will be recognizing these accomplishments in early 2017. Please provide documentation to HR of such accomplishments. This link provides a PowerPoint that explains the new program: [Degree, Certification, License and Award Program]

See slides 12 and 13 for FAQ.
For additional questions please contact Jan Rushford at 286-5106 or Amanda Felton at 286-5094.
Here are a few psychological Benefits of Yoga.....

1) **Yoga improves your psychological/mental well-being.** Do you always seem stressed and tense? Do you feel as if you're carrying the entire world on your shoulders? With the help of yoga, you can definitely put those unhealthy feelings on the wayside. According to the British Psychological Society, yoga involves concentration on the breath and body, which makes it a great way to soothe a person's mind and relieve worries. By helping discharge tension and stress, yoga poses and breathing exercises keep a person free from such negative elements. As a result, a person who does yoga is better able to achieve the peak of psychological health.

2) **Yoga helps with anxiety and depression.** Consisting of activities such as relaxation, meditation, socialization, and exercise, yoga has been proven helpful in reducing your anxiety and depression. According to a Harvard University article, yoga is able to accomplish this by helping regulate a person's stress response system. With its ability to lower blood pressure and heart rate as well as improve respiration, yoga provides you with the means to deal with and resolve anxiety and depression without resorting to expensive medications.

3) **Yoga prevents the onset of mental health conditions, which are prevalent during adolescence.** Adolescence is a stage in one's life when a variety of mental health problems are more likely to develop. With the many cases of psychological disorders diagnosed in teenagers, it has become imperative to find ways to prevent the onset of such mental health conditions.

Yoga, among others, has been seen as a helpful method that can be used to protect adolescents from mental illnesses. This is according to a study published in the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. The said study had some of the subjects enrolled in PE classes centered on Kripalu Yoga. This type of yoga involves physical postures, breathing, relaxation, and meditation. In comparison to the control group, the yogis displayed better moods, lower levels of anxiety and tension, better anger control, improved resilience, and enhanced mindfulness. These are just some of the many factors that are important in the prevention of psychological conditions in teenagers.

4) **Yoga reduces the effects of traumatic experiences.** Women who have been abused, as well as enlisted military personnel who have gone into battle with enemy combatants, usually develop a condition known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Patients who suffer from this mental illness frequently experience nightmares and flashbacks, to name a few of the symptoms. While some mental treatments can address the underlying factors of PTSD, there are some patients who prove to be immune to these approaches. Particularly in cases where contemporary mental and pharmacological treatments have failed, Hatha Yoga has been shown to be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms, according to the American Psychological Association. As such, Yoga might just be a great counterattack against the ravages of traumatic experiences.

The Wellness Ambassadors are pleased to announce that Lunch Time Yoga is back at the Vets Memorial! Starts January 10th. See flyer for more details!
Lunchtime yoga is back

Starting January 10

A six-week session of yoga will be offered to city employees from January 10 – February 21 from 12:30—1:00 on the 4th floor ballroom of Vets Memorial Building (no class on January 24)
The class is open to people of all skill levels and will be taught by yoga instructor Kristen Kuch.

All you need to bring is a yoga mat and a water bottle.
Cost for the 6 week session is $20 (payment will be collected on the 1st day of class)

There is a limit of 40 people per 6 week session.
Sign up by 5pm on Thursday, January 5th to reserve your spot.

Email Amanda Rabey at A.Rabey@cedar-rapids.org to reserve your spot.
C.OUR. WEIGHTLOSS Challenge

Individual or Team 8 week weight loss challenge!
$5.00 cash buy-in/person to participate

- You may use your final weight from the Maintain Don’t Gain Challenge, for your initial weigh in for this challenge ** The schedule listed below is for both the final weight out for Maintain Don’t Gain and the initial weigh-in for the Weight Loss Challenge
- Teams must have 4 (choose your own team) individuals and must have a team name
  - If you need help forming a team, Health Solutions can assist in finding team members
- All participants must weigh in at week 1 and 8 to be eligible to win
- $5.00 must be paid (cash only) at the time of first weigh in, no late buy-ins will accepted
- Prizes awarded based on the total amount raised with buy-in and total percentage lost, as a team and individual separately
- The participant with the highest percentage of total lost can be on a team and would receive the individual payout in addition to their team payout!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>% payout of total raised</th>
<th>Example: $ amount won per individual*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st place team</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$83 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd place team</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>$41.50 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd place team</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$16.50 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant w/ overall largest % lost</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 130 people that participated in 2017

January 9 - January 13, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library: 8:30 – 9 am</td>
<td>Water: 10 - 10:30 am</td>
<td>CSC: 8 - 9 am</td>
<td>CentralFire: 11:30 am - 12</td>
<td>City Hall: 8 – 9 am Central Fire: 11:30 am - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police: 9:30 – 10 am</td>
<td></td>
<td>CentralFire: 11:30 am - 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>NW Rec Center: 1 - 1:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport: 10:30 - 11 am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final weigh-ins will be held February 27th-March 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.P.C.: 12 – 12:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may also weigh in at the Health Solutions office 8 am-5 pm the week of weigh ins

Maintain don’t gain

Final weigh-outs for the Maintain Don’t Gain Challenge:

Attend one of the times listed above, if you would also like to participate in the weight loss challenge, you will use the same weight for both and declare your participation at this time.
Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

Exercise has long been known as the path to fitting into your favorite jeans. But what about those above the waist benefits also? Exercise can benefit mental health, relationships, and lead to a happier life. Here are some tips to get a jump start on your New Year’s resolution and keep off the holidays pounds.

Motivation to exercise can come from these mental fitness gains:

Reduction of stress
In addition to exercise combating current stress, did you know that exercise can increase a chemical in your brain that regulates our response to stress? A bank of buildup defenders for your next stressful situation—how helpful!

Boost happy chemicals
Exercise releases chemicals that create feelings of happiness. Doctors recommend that those who suffer from depression, or even just feel blue, pencil in sometime at the gym.

Improve Self Confidence
Exercise, regardless of weight, size, gender or age, can boost your self-esteem by making you feel attractive. Self-love is a great feeling!

Enjoy the great outdoors
Free vitamin D and fresh air can be just what the doctor ordered. How many of the area’s 5 seasons have you truly experienced lately?

Alleviate anxiety
Those warm and fuzzy chemicals released after exercise can help those with anxiety calm down. Interval trainings have added bonus—reducing anxiety sensitivity!

Help Control Addiction
Short exercise routines are a great distraction for the preoccupied addiction brain. Exercise can also aide in resetting the body’s “clock” that is often disrupted by drug and alcohol use.

Increase Relaxation
Exercise alters the body’s core temperature. That drop in temperature you experience after working out can be the perfect sleep aide for a good nights’ sleep!

Starting an exercise routine is not only a physical but also a mental anticipation. Adding exercise can be a life changing event. If you or someone you know needs to talk, Mercy EAP is here is help. Individual, couples, and family counseling is available for all ages.

For more information go to www.mercycare.org/EAP or to schedule an appointment call (319) 398-6694