



December 2008

An eNewsletter from the City of Lexington, Nebraska



What's going on at . . . ?

Oak Park

(Oak Street & South Madison) - Modern playground equipment was installed in Oak Park in November, as part of a park renovation program. The City has been placing approximately one new piece of equipment per year, in alternating parks.



Cattlemen Drive Drainage Ditch



Drainage Ditch #1, just north of Cattlemen Drive, is the most complicated part of the City's new Hike & Bike Trail. In November crews began building a concrete box culvert over the ditch. The 2.4-mile trail has been under construction since this summer. It will stretch from Frontier Street to the pedestrian overpass that spans the railroad tracks at Madison Street. The trail was expected to be completed by now, but frequent seasonal rains have delayed the project. This phase of the trail system will be completed by summer 2009.



Lexington wins \$1 million New Neighborhood II Grant

Lexington is one of three cities selected to participate in the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's (DED) \$3 million "New Neighborhoods II" Initiative. The announcement came November 7, following a presentation to the DED selection committee by Lexington leaders led by City Manager Joe Peplitsch.

"If Nebraska is to remain competitive in its pursuit of new business start-ups and expansions, we must do everything in our power to ensure that affordable housing is readily available to meet the needs of employees relocating for these better job opportunities," said Richard Baier, DED director. "Along this line, our communities also must continue to pursue other projects, such as downtown revitalization and infrastructure improvements...projects that all factor heavily into people's reasons for ultimately choosing to live in one location or another."

The Department will invest up to \$3 million total from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Funds and the Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund depending on the nature of the cities' projects.

The goal of the New Neighborhoods Initiative is to develop models for communities lacking all necessary components to meet the demand for workforce housing, which in turn, stalls business recruitment and expansion efforts. This Initiative includes planning, community development and housing components. Projects may be multi-phased and span several years.

The New Neighborhoods program was launched in 2007 with the participant cities of Columbus, Holdrege, and Sidney. The other recipients this year are Ord and South Sioux City.



City Manager Joe Peplitsch leads the presentation with City & County leaders, and the DED selection committee, which led to an award of a \$1 million grant for Lexington.

The City expects to use the funding to continue developing and redeveloping neighborhoods in the southwest and northwest portions of the community.

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Archives available online at www.cityoflex.com.



EnergyWise Tip: LEDs can help brighten your Christmas



Christmas lights help make the season special. But they certainly don't help brighten your mood when they are a source of frustration. Are you tired of trying to find the lone burned out bulb in a set of Christmas lights? Ever dropped a set of Christmas lights only to discover some of the filaments were broken inside the

bulb? Ever put up an entire string of lights only to discover the set does not work? An answer to this seasonal frustration can be found in Light Emitting Diode (LED) Christmas lights.

LED Christmas lights are superior to old, incandescent bulb strings of lights in several ways.

- LED Christmas lights have an extremely long life. Some manufacturers state their LED strings will last 100,000 hours, or approximately 100 Christmas seasons! This should all but eliminate the need to spend hours trying to replace burned out bulbs
- LED Christmas lights are a solid state device, which means they are very durable and can better withstand being knocked around than conventional Christmas lights.
- LED Christmas lights are a proven technology used in hundreds of thousands of Christmas displays throughout the U.S. They come in many different styles, colors and sizes.
- LED Christmas lights are safe – cool to the touch, they eliminate most fire concerns.

Energy efficiency means you save money in the long run.

LEDs produce more light per watt than other types of lighting. Each bulb uses only 0.04 watts and is up to 90 percent more efficient than its incandescent counterpart. For a household that displays 10 strands of lights for eight hours a day for a month, LED Christmas lights would cost only \$7.20 for the season (at about 8.5 cents per kilowatt-hour). Compare that to \$127.67 the homeowner would spend to hang 10 strands of large, incandescent bulbs.

Bottom line, although they may cost more up front, because of their long life and low-cost to run, LEDs can save money over time.

For more information on steps homeowners can take to improve the efficiency of their homes, contact Lexington Utilities System, or visit the ENERGY STAR® Home Advisor at <http://www.energystar.gov/homeadvisor>. Lots of useful energy efficiency information is also available at <http://www.nppd.com>.

Lexington Utilities System wants you to get the most energy value for your money. It costs far less to save energy than it does to build a new power plant to generate additional power.



City Employees have Holiday Giving Spirit



L to R: Julie McNett, Michelle Rivera, Judy Ferguson, Lori Juhlin, Lola VerMaas, Marcia Holtz, Jo Keim, Pam Berke

Members of the City's Employee Committee recently purchased and donated Thanksgiving meals for two needy Lexington families. The committee raises money throughout the year. They also organize employee activities such as snack breaks, family get-togethers, and food drives, to help build employee unity. Members plan to participate in Operation Santa in December.





December Library News

Lexington Public Library
907 North Washington St.
by Kathy Thomsen
Library Director

The Swing Choir from the Lexington High School will be performing at the Lexington Public Library on December 16 at 7:00 p.m. This program is sponsored by the Lexington Community Foundation.



David Bristow will present the first Lexington Community Foundation sponsored program of 2009. The program, "The Schoolchildren's Blizzard of 1888," will be offered on January 15 at 7:00

p.m. A published author and former editor of the Nebraska Life magazine, he currently is working at the Nebraska Historical Society.

Storyteller **Bobby Norfolk** will be at the Lexington Public Library on January 22, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. He is a three-time Emmy Award winner and a Parents Choice honoree, who is well known for his high-energy performances and lively animation. His stories promote character education, cultural diversity, and self-esteem. Bobby's program is sponsored by the Lexington Community Foundation and is made available through collaboration with the Kearney Public Library and other Kearney organizations that sponsor the annual Kearney Storytelling Festival.



If you are wondering what to get the reader on your Christmas list, stop by the Library Book Sale. We have "gently used books" both fiction and non-fiction from \$1 to \$5. The library will also be selling books at the Children's Store and Baker's Market every Saturday morning from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. through Christmas.



You can now download audio books from your home computer! Simply go to the Lexington Public Library website and look for the



OverDrive Audio Book icon. Click on the icon and follow the directions. The audio books can then be transferred to an MP3 player or some can be burned to a CD. There is a large selection of audio books available. You will be able to check out four audio books at a time and the check out period is seven days. We will be making more changes to the Library's website in the future, so be sure to continue to check and see what's happening!

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Dawson wins 2 NCIP awards



Dawson County won two awards at the 2008 Nebraska Community Improvement Project (NCIP) Awards Ceremony November 14 in Kearney. Dawson placed best in Class IV (multi-communities) under the categories: (1) "Technology, Infrastructure, and Planning," and (2) "Workforce Development."

Dawson Area Housing Market Study

In November of 2006, communities in Dawson County joined forces to conduct a Dawson County area Housing Market Study.

The study is an overview of the existing housing conditions in the area, the demand for new housing, land requirements, available temporary housing, and housing priorities for each community. Upon completion of the final plan, an area housing fair was held with all communities hosting housing developers, funding agencies, contractors, and local banks. The Study is considered a contributing factor to the success of Lexington obtaining a \$1 million New Neighborhoods grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (see related article this issue, page 2).

www.dawsoncountycareers.com

In November 2007, Dawson Area Development and Advocating for Business Labor Education (ABLE) launched a new website to attract and retain residents to the Dawson area. Posted on the website are success stories, business profiles, job opportunities, education, housing, and medical information, and much more. Individuals can also post a resume and update alumni information. The site averages about 80-100 jobs at all times.

Congratulations Dawson County!



Compost to keep a-comin'



The City took possession of a new compost screening unit (trommel screen) in October. The device separates good compost from sticks, rocks, and other non-compostable matter. In the photo above, the usable compost is conveyed to the right, the waste goes left. The screen purchase was made possible by a grant of \$74,963 from the

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's Waste Reduction & Recycling Incentive Grants Program. Composting helps the environment by keeping yard waste out of the landfill. Residents may obtain free usable compost at the City Service Building, 801 West Vine.



