

**City of West
Branch
Office of the
City
Administrator**

To: Mayor and Council
From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator
Date: August 25, 2011
Weekly Council Update

- **Police Chief Mike Horihan:** Monday August 22, 2011 was the first day for our new Police Chief, Mike Horihan. We welcome Mike to West Branch. He had a full first week, meeting with City Staff, greeting children on the first day of school, meeting with business owners, and becoming familiar with City systems.
- **Bridge Inspection Results:** Michael Vander Wert, P.E., with Calhoun-Burns and Associates, Inc. met with City Administrator Matt Muckler and Public Works Water Operator Matt Goodale on Wednesday August 24, 2011 to discuss the results of the City of West Branch 2011 Bridge Inspections and Rating. All four of West Branch's bridges were inspected according to the federal guidelines.

Both bridges on Main Street and the bridge on 300th Street were rated as being in either good or very condition, as a seven or eight on a ten-point scale. (A rating of zero is the lowest rating and a rating of nine is the highest rating.) A rating of seven (both bridges on Main Street) signifies good condition and a rating of eight (the 300th Street Bridge) signifies very good condition. The estimated remaining life of these bridges is estimated between twenty-five and forty years. These bridges will continue to be monitored and inspected every two years per federal guidelines. Maintenance will be performed in the future by local contractors or City staff as needed.

The College Street Bridge was originally constructed in 1940 and reconstructed in 1985. The reconstruction did not include the timber foundations. Those were left as originally built. The bridge received a rating of four, which signifies poor condition. It is estimated that twenty-five percent of Iowa bridges are rated at a level of four or below. The estimated life of the bridge is four years (the same estimate that was given two years ago), but we can expect the condition rating of the bridge to be lowered in the near future due to the deteriorating condition of the original foundation. This could happen in two, four or six years and maybe even later. Within the next five years, we should begin planning for total replacement of the bridge to take place within ten to fifteen years.

The complete City of West Branch 2011 Bridge Inspections and Rating Report can be found on the City Website at: <http://westbranchiowa.org/departments/reports>

- **North Downey Resurfacing Project:** Specifications for the North Downey Resurfacing Project have been completed by Veenstra and Kimm, Inc. and are available for your review in the City Office. Cedar County Engineer Rob Fangmann communicated an interest in partnering with the City on the 280th Street project (from North Downey to the entrance of West Branch Village). Rob is preparing a request for the fiscal year 2013 budget to fund the project.

- **West Branch Village Lagoon Odors:** There was a strong odor coming from the West Branch Village wastewater lagoon last week. The odor was due to WB Village installing an additional aerator in their lagoon. It was installed with the hope that when the temperature changes, the smell would be reduced as there would be a higher level of oxygen and the contents of the lagoon would be mixed together, rather than separated. So West Branch Village is taking proactive steps and the smell is a result of these efforts, rather than a lack of action.

The City worked with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources on behalf of WB Village to move the project forward. If the aerator improves the situation, West Branch Village will pursue a permitting process next spring to maintain the aerator as a permanent addition to their wastewater system. It is important to note that the odor that was noticeable last week was not due to the seasonal smell from the lagoon. It is the result of the new aerator mixing things up. We are hopeful that there will be no further odors as a result of the aerator installation and that the aerator will significantly reduce the odor when the weather changes and the lagoon rolls over (or doesn't because the contents are mixed up).

On a related note, City Engineer Dave Schechinger is working to identify an organization that could complete an income survey, which would be the first step in determining whether or not Community Development Block Grant money could be available for wastewater infrastructure improvements at West Branch Village.

- **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting:** Commission Chair Roger Laughlin has called a Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting for Tuesday September 27, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the West Branch Council Chambers. City Engineer Dave Schechinger will be on hand to lead our discussion and answer any questions on a proposed site plan ordinance, sidewalk standards (Chapter 136), parking regulations (Chapter 69), and lighting standards.

- **Council Goal Setting:** The Council Goal Setting Session has been scheduled for a Council Work Session on September 19th at 6:00 p.m. This week, Council Members received a report on the status of current goals and recommendations from staff for new goals. Please contact me with any additional goals that you would like to have considered as a part of this year's Goal Setting Session.

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.