



HIAWATHA

July 2026 Vol. 216

INSIGHTS

A DOWNTOWN FOR ALL OF US: INTRODUCING THE CORE OF HIAWATHA

Something big is taking shape at the corner of Center Point Road and Robins Road and it belongs to all of us. The City of Hiawatha, in partnership with Merit Development and the Hiawatha Economic Development Corporation (HEDCO), has officially announced The Core of Hiawatha; a mixed-use development designed to give our community what it has long deserved: a walkable, livable downtown we can all be proud of.

What Is The Core?

Phase I is a four-story building on 4.75 acres featuring 39 residential units and space for approximately 6 ground-floor commercial businesses. Estimated at \$12-13 million, it's the first step in a three-phase vision that will ultimately deliver over 120 residential units and \$27 million in total investment — one of the largest private investments in Hiawatha's downtown in a generation. The project sits along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, steps from City Hall, Guthridge Park, the new Cedar Rapids Prep, the Hiawatha Public Library and Hiawatha Elementary School. A planned pedestrian bridge will further connect the trail and surrounding neighborhoods.

Why It Matters for Hiawatha

Hiawatha is uniquely positioned as a tight-knit community of 7,800 residents, contiguous with Cedar Rapids and Marion, with all the benefits of a small town and immediate access to the broader metro. Until now, what we've lacked is a true downtown core: a place to gather, live, shop, and connect on foot. The Core changes that. It creates workforce housing for people who want to live here, street-level commercial space for local entrepreneurs and a walkable hub that serves every resident.

What's Next

Groundbreaking is anticipated for late summer. Additional project details including commercial leasing opportunities and public engagement events will be announced in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to the City and HEDCO's websites, Facebook pages and future newsletters for updates. More about Merit Development can be found at their website:

<https://www.developmerit.com/>

WATER AND IRRIGATION COMMODITY RATE UPDATE



The Hiawatha water rates will NOT be increasing for FY2027 and neither will the commodity rate. The Water Board passed a resolution to freeze the water commodity rate at \$8.45 instead of increasing to \$9.04.

With this commodity rate freeze does come an increase on the irrigation commodity rate. Previously, irrigation did not follow the water commodity rate schedule. As of July 1, 2026 the irrigation commodity rate will increase from \$6.25 to \$8.45 to be able to follow the current commodity rate schedule.

Minimum Water Rate for the first 1000 gallons of water will continue to be \$28.98

Minimum Irrigation Rate for the first 1000 gallons of irrigation water will continue to be \$14.91.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the Water Department during the hours of 7:30 – 4:00 Monday thru Friday at 319-393-5556.

CONNECT:



CITY OF HIAWATHA, IOWA



[HIAWATHA-IOWA.COM](https://www.hiawatha-iowa.com)

[HIAWATHA-IOWA.COM/ALERT-SIGNUP/](https://www.hiawatha-iowa.com/alert-signup/)



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JULY MEETING SCHEDULE

1st - City Council Meeting

14th - Library Board Meeting

14th - Park Board Meeting

15th - City Council Meeting

16th - History Commission Meeting

17th - Planning & Zoning Meeting

21st - Water Board Meeting



Interested in community events? Find out what's happening in Hiawatha by checking out our city calendars!

hiawatha-iowa.com/calendar/



Long before I ever thought about running for City Council, I already had a relationship with Hiawatha. Not with the city as an institution, but with the people who make it run. And I understood that relationship through stories. If I'm honest, I had about one for every department.

There was the night we thought we had a gas leak. I made the call, and our fire chief came out himself to walk through our home and make sure my family was safe. He didn't treat it like a nuisance call. He treated it like it was his own house. I have never forgotten that.

There are the mornings after a heavy snow, when I look out the window and the street is already clear. If you've only ever lived here, that might seem normal. It isn't. A lot of work goes into a clear street before most of us have finished our coffee.

And there is the library, where I spent more hours as a kid than I could count. Some of my earliest memories of belonging somewhere happened between those shelves. But it isn't only the people who work for the city. Our neighbors, Stan and Carol, have become something like adopted grandparents to us, the kind of people who wave every time, who notice when something's off, who make a street feel like a place you actually know. That's Hiawatha too.

None of these are dramatic stories. They're small. But add them up, and they're the reason this town feels like home and not just an address. Most of them never get told. Here's the thing: I love storytelling. A town is really just the collection of stories its people carry about it. The official reports tell you what we spent and built. The stories tell you why any of it matters.

So I want to hear yours.

Maybe you moved here last month and someone already made you feel welcome.

Maybe you've lived here forty years and have a story no one's heard. A neighbor who showed up. A city worker who went out of their way. Big or small, I want it. Tell me why you love Hiawatha. Send your story to me at bfiedler@hiawatha-iowa.com. I'll read every one. One story at a time.

Ben Fiedler, Hiawatha City Council



City Calendar



Library Calendar

CITY DIRECTORY

TITLE	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
City Manager	Dennis Marks	319-393-1515	dmarks@hiawatha-iowa.com
City Clerk	Kari Graber	319-393-1515	kgrabera@hiawatha-iowa.com
Finance Director	Cindy Daack	319-393-1515	cdaack@hiawatha-iowa.com
Parks & Recreation Director	Matt Boggess	319-393-1515	mboggessa@hiawatha-iowa.com
Community Development Director	Kesha Billings	319-393-1515	kbillings@hiawatha-iowa.com
City Engineer	Jon Fitch	319-393-1515	jfitch@hiawatha-iowa.com
Public Works Superintendent	Rod Jasa	319-393-6601	rjasa@hiawatha-iowa.com
Water Superintendent	Marty Recker	319-393-1515	mrecker@hiawatha-iowa.com
Police Chief	Ben Kamm	319-393-1212	chief@hiawathapolice.com
Fire Chief	Matt Powers	319-393-4180	mkpowers@hiawatha-iowa.com
Library Director	Chris Stoner	319-393-1414	cstoner@hiawatha-iowa.com



RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATES CEDAR RUN'S CONTINUED GROWTH IN HIAWATHA

In June, Cedar Run Company, one of the area's premier animal boarding, daycare, grooming and training providers, opened its new training & wellness center and vet clinic at 2701 Robins Road in Hiawatha. Owner Sonia Wiltsey, Dr. Loni Ellsworth DVM, the Cedar Run Company team, Hiawatha City Council and HEDCO Board members are pictured here at a ribbon cutting Thursday, May 28. An open house celebration was held Saturday, May 30th.



The new facility is 9,000-square-feet on a 2.82-acre lot and offers a comprehensive suite of animal health and wellness services under one roof line. The veterinary clinic features state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment capabilities, while the wellness & training center will provide individualized sessions and group classes using positive reinforcement methods. The facility also includes an underwater treadmill, an advanced therapeutic tool used to support post-surgical recovery, weight management, and conditioning for dogs. The ribbon cutting marks the latest milestone in Cedar Run's growth story. It was founded in 2011 by Wiltsey, who co-founded Last Hope Animal Rescue in 2004 and ran a shelter for rescue dogs out of her home before launching Cedar Run. The company has grown from four employees to more than 90, with Hiawatha locations (2705 Stonegate Court and 860 N. 20th Ave.) offering boarding, daycare, grooming, and training.

CITY CLERK EARNS PRESTIGIOUS MASTER MUNICIPAL CLERK DESIGNATION

The City of Hiawatha is proud to announce that City Clerk Kari Graber has earned the designation of Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). The MMC is one of the highest professional achievements available to municipal clerks and recognizes a commitment to advanced education, professional development, and excellence in local government administration. Earning this designation requires extensive coursework, leadership training, and years of dedicated service to the municipal clerk profession. As City Clerk, Kari is responsible for many of the essential functions that keep city government running smoothly. From coordinating City Council meetings and maintaining official records to supporting human resources, employee benefits, and legal compliance requirements, her



work plays a critical role in ensuring effective, transparent, and responsive local government. The knowledge and expertise gained through the MMC program will further strengthen her ability to serve the City of Hiawatha and its residents. "We are extremely proud of all the hard work Kari has put in to achieve this milestone," said City Manager Dennis Marks. "The MMC designation is the gold standard in the municipal clerk profession and reflects not only Kari's dedication and professionalism, but also the high-quality employees we are fortunate to have serving the City of Hiawatha." The City congratulates Kari on this significant accomplishment and thanks her for her dedication, professionalism, and commitment to serving the Hiawatha community.

Hiawatha!™

Fay M. Clark Hall of Fame Award



The City of Hiawatha is now accepting nominations for the Fay M. Clark Hall of Fame Award, honoring individuals who have made a lasting impact on our community through leadership, service, and dedication to making Hiawatha a better place to live, work, and play.

Community members may nominate individuals who live in, work in, or have made meaningful contributions to Hiawatha. If someone comes to mind, we encourage you to submit a nomination.

Submit Nominations
online at

hiawatha-iowa.com

Now through
July 31st

SEASONED TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY HERB & SPICE CLUB

The Hiawatha Public Library invites the community to explore the flavors of the world with Seasoned Together, a hands-on herb and spice club that meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6pm. This unique program blends learning, creativity, and connection, offering participants an opportunity to experience food in a whole new way.

At Seasoned Together, cooking is about more than just preparing meals, it's about building community, sparking curiosity, and sharing experiences. Each month, participants will explore a different herb or spice, discovering its history, flavor profile, and cultural significance. From there, the group will come together to create a simple, delicious dish, turning knowledge into a hands-on culinary experience.

Whether you're an experienced home cook or just beginning your kitchen journey, the club provides a welcoming and inclusive space to experiment with new flavors, learn new skills, and connect with others who share a love of food and discovery.

This program also pairs beautifully with the library's new community garden, creating a meaningful connection between growing, learning, and cooking. Participants will have the chance to see how fresh ingredients and global flavors come together, making the experience both educational and engaging.

Seasoned Together is more than a cooking club, it is a place to gather, learn, and build connections. Come for the ingredients, stay for the conversation, and leave with new skills, new tastes, and new friendships.



CONNECT:



HIAWATHA PUBLIC LIBRARY



HIAWATHAPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG

JULY IS NATIONAL PARK AND RECREATION MONTH: CELEBRATING "THE POWER OF" HIAWATHA



NRPA'S PARK AND RECREATION MONTH

Hiawatha joins communities across the country to celebrate National Park and Recreation Month. Since 1985, the United States has distinguished the month of July to recognize the vital role that local parks and recreation play in our lives & communities.

The 2026 theme, "The Power Of," highlights how parks and recreation reveal the power of what connects us: the power of play, the power of belonging, the power of well-being, and—most importantly—the power of community.

Looking at the National Impact:

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the impact of local parks is staggering:

- **Economic Workhorses:** Local parks generate more than \$201 billion in annual economic activity and support nearly 1.1 million jobs nationwide.
- **Health and Wellness:** Over 90% of U.S. adults agree that both children and older adults benefit from the multigenerational programs offered by their local parks departments.
- **Accessibility:** The typical park and recreation agency manages roughly 10.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, ensuring that nature and activity are never too far from home.



JULY EVENTS

STORY TIMES, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Summer is in full swing at the Hiawatha Public Library!

From story times and hands-on activities to special guest presenters, outdoor adventures, crafts, and tween programs, July is packed with opportunities for kids and families to learn, play, and explore together. Whether your child loves animals, books, science, art, or just having fun with friends, there's something for everyone on this month's calendar. Join us all summer long as we turn pages, make memories, and discover something new each week!

In addition to daily activities, select programs are offered specifically for tweens ages 9-12 and require registration. We encourage residents to review the full schedule and join the Library throughout the month.

Register for events at:

<https://www.hiawathapubliclibrary.org/>

0-0-0-0 JULY 06		Excavator Story Time 10:00 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 06		The Cold-Blooded Redhead 1:00 - 1:45 PM or 2:15 - 3:00 PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 07		Soccer Story Time & Skills Clinic at DICK'S House of Sport Registration Required 10:30 - 11:30 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 08		Picnic & Pages at the Pad Turtle Creek Park 12:00PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 13		Life on a Dairy Farm Special Story Time 10:00 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 13		Ocean Odyssey Touch Tank Sharks! 1:00 - 3:00PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 16		Barnyard Boogie 10:00 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 17		KPop Demon Huntress Story Time & Sing Along 10:00 - 11:00 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 20		Goat Story Time 10:00 AM
0-0-0-0 JULY 21		Incredible Bats! 4:00 PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 22		Picnic & Pages at the Pad Guthridge Park 12:00PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 23		Picnic & Pages at the Park East Knoll Park, Robins 12:00PM
0-0-0-0 JULY 27		Learn About Fire Safety 10:00 AM

For Tweens Only (Ages 9 - 12)

Take & Make Birdhouse Kit for Tweens*
Registration begins July 1
Pickup Begins July 2

Mini Succulent Fairy or Gnome Gardens*
July 14
1:00 - 2:00 PM

*Registration Required

Bling & A Book
July 21
1:00 - 2:00 PM

Crafts for Kids
Wednesdays in July
10:00 - 10:30 AM
July 1 session will be grab and go.

Mega Foam Blaster
10:00 - 11:00 AM

The Power of Hiawatha: Local Pride

Here in Hiawatha, our department is working hard to bring that "power of" to your daily life. Our parks are more than just green space; they are the heart of our city.

- **Guthridge Park Transformation:** We are currently in the midst of the Guthridge Park Masterplan, a community-driven process to make sure our flagship park continues to meet the needs of our residents for decades to come.
- **Community Support:** Events like the Hiawatha Bike Ride Around Iowa (HiBRAI), now in its 23rd year, continue to showcase our community's incredible spirit, raising funds to keep our trails and programs top-notch.
- **Inclusion for All:** Through partnerships like Can Play Adaptive Sports and our awareness events like the Teal Trunk or Treat, we are committed to the "Power of Belonging," ensuring every resident has a place to play.



CONNECT:



CITY OF HIAWATHA PARKS AND RECREATION



HIAWATHA.ACTIVITYREG.COM

HELPING KEEP UNUSED MEDICATIONS OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS



For several years, the Hiawatha Police Department has proudly participated in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Prescription Drug Take Back Program. This program provides community members with a safe and convenient way to dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired prescription medications.

The program has been extremely successful both locally and nationwide. By properly disposing of medications, we help prevent prescription drugs from being misused, diverted for illegal use, or improperly discarded into our environment. Every pound collected represents medication that will not end up in the hands of someone who could misuse it and will not be placed in a landfill or flushed into our water system.

In the past six months alone, the Hiawatha Police Department collected 156 pounds of unused medications through the secure drop box located outside the police department. An additional 78 pounds were collected during our Earth Day event. Together, that totals 234 pounds of medications safely removed from circulation, helping make our community safer and healthier.

While we are proud of the program's success, we have recently encountered a growing concern. An increasing number of needles and other sharps are being deposited in the medication drop box. In some cases, officers have discovered loose, uncapped needles mixed in with medications. This creates a significant safety hazard for officers and staff who must handle and process the contents of the collection box.

It is important for residents to understand that the medication drop box is not designed to accept needles, syringes, lancets, EpiPens, or injectable medication devices, including those associated with GLP-1 medications.

These items should be placed in an approved sharps container and disposed of through appropriate channels. Residents can take properly contained sharps to the Linn County Solid Waste Agency for disposal.

The Hiawatha Police Department remains committed to providing this valuable service to our community. We ask for the public's assistance in ensuring that only approved medications are placed in the collection box. By working together, we can continue to safely dispose of unused medications, protect the environment, and keep potentially dangerous drugs out of the wrong hands.



ANNUAL BACKFLOW PREVENTION TESTING REMINDER

It's that time of the year for lawn irrigation systems to be put on line for the season. If you are a customer that has a lawn irrigation system or a commercial building, then you have a backflow prevention device such as the one shown in the picture. This device, a RPZ, reduced pressure zone device is installed after the water meter at the property and allows water to flow in one direction but never the opposite direction. This protects the water system from contamination, pollution or other potential hazards due to backflow.

As stated in the International Plumbers Code each backflow prevention device must be checked yearly to ensure the device is functioning properly by a certified tester. Failure to test the device could result in termination of water until the test is completed. Submit to BSI, the online registration company the Hiawatha Water Department office works with, verifying a proper test was completed, note any deficiencies, and any repairs completed.

If you have any questions about backflow prevention, please contact us at the Hiawatha Water Department. We will be glad to assist you.



INSIDE YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT: PART 1 – BECOMING A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

A couple of times a year, you may see articles or social media posts about the fire department seeking volunteer members. Although we have several paid positions, volunteers make up the majority of our team. Over the next several months, we will take a look behind the scenes at how your fire department is organized and what it takes to join.

The department operates as a combination department, blending the dedicated service of both paid and volunteer staff. Our paid staff handle administrative functions and ensure a Paramedic is always available to respond to calls. Volunteer staff assist with equipment and emergency response, specifically in the evenings, overnight, and on weekends. Together, both groups provide 24/7 community protection. Regardless of status, the expectations, training, and gear are exactly the same.



Volunteers play a vital role in our community service. Unlike paid staff, who need an EMS certification like Paramedic to start, you do not need any prior experience or certifications to volunteer. We provide all necessary training during onboarding and the initial academy. We look for members with a strong work ethic, a willingness to learn, the physical ability to operate on emergency scenes, and a desire to help others in need.

We encourage residents to apply, but living in the city is not required. Members outside the response area must stay overnight at the station during their on-duty shifts.

To join, prospective members must submit a city application, available at City Hall or online. Submitted applications are held until the department hosts its next rookie academy, which occurs about every six months. This allows new members to start together and receive consistent initial training.

Once an academy is scheduled, crew officers will contact applicants for interviews and select candidates for membership offers. Chosen applicants must pass a background check and pre-employment physical. After completing these onboarding steps, new members are assigned to a crew and begin the rookie academy.

The academy meets once a week and occasionally on weekends for about four months, preparing members to test for their state Firefighter 1 certification. Next month, we will take a deeper dive into the rookie academy, training opportunities, and the services we provide the city.



ENGINEERING UPDATE

In 2025, the City constructed Edgewood Rd from Pecks Blvd north to Emmons St. At the completion of that project, temporary wood light poles were installed. During the 2025 Capital Improvement Project planning, council wanted to make a statement with the west bookend of our city limits by installing decorative poles and fixtures, similar to what we have on Center Point Rd from Blairs Ferry Rd to Boyson Rd. The City took bids for the new light poles and fixtures in March 2026, with the low bidder being K&W Electric out of Cedar Falls, IA. The new poles will be placed along both sides of Edgewood Rd from Blairs Ferry Rd to Emmons St. The contractor started installation of the conduit and light pole bases in late May, with work expected to last 6-7 weeks. The poles have a long lead time with an expected delivery around late September. We are hopeful that the project will be completed by late October pending no delays in manufacturing.

DELIVER BY
WEDNESDAY
07/01/2026

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Hiawatha, IA
Permit No. 33

ECRWSS

HIAWATHA CITY COUNCIL ACTION

RESOLUTION

JUNE 3, 2026

- #26-111 Contract for 2026 Street Improvements Project
- #26-112 Contract for 2026 Kainz Dr Storm Sewer Project
- #26-113 Employee Wage and Salary Schedule 2026-27
- #26-114 Mosquito Control 2026

Proclamation - Pride Month 2026

Special Event Application - Veterans for Peace BBQ

Special Event Application - Collision Band Concert & Picnic

RESOLUTION

JUNE 17, 2026

#26-115 Approving & Authorizing Conveyance of Certain Real Property Core of Hiawatha, LLC

#26-116 Contract Renewal with Public Consulting Group, Inc. for GEMT Audits

#26-117 28E Agreement with City of Cedar Rapids for Transit Services FY27

#26-118 Amended Sidewalk Assessment Policy

#26-119 28E Agreement with City of Cedar Rapids for Traffic Signal Maintenance

#26-120 Approve Purchase of Two Shade Pavilion Structures for Turtle Creek & Guthridge Parks

Proclamation - Parks & Recreation Month

Proclamation - America the Entrepreneurial Day

Special Event Application - 620 Foundation Bonus Car & Bike Night

The Hiawatha City Council meeting minutes may be obtained online at hiawatha-iowa.com or by request to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 319-393-1515 x526

HIAWATHA HISTORY COMMISSION



July's Question:

From what new road in Hiawatha can you enter Buffalo Cemetery?

Call Marilyn with your answers at 319-721-7077

Do you like history? Would you be interested in helping preserve Hiawatha's History? The Hiawatha History Commission would love for you to join them!

Meetings are the 3rd Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM.

POWER WHEELS NATIONALS

August 1st
10:00AM - 3:00PM
Guthridge Park

\$10 Entry Ticket

Three Divisions:
Limited (Ages 2-4) *Must use Sponsor Car
Pro-Mod (Ages 5-7) *Must use Sponsor Car
Outlaw (Ages 5-7) *Run what you bring!

Purchase Tickets at
bit.ly/PowerWheelsHiawatha26

No Power Wheel? No problem!
Drive one from our sponsors!

COFFEE TALK WITH MAYOR DODSON

It's time to talk. Do you have ideas, solutions or thoughts about the City of Hiawatha? Mayor Dodson wants to hear from you!
Join him at Roasters Coffee House in Hiawatha!

JULY 9 AUGUST 13 SEPTEMBER 10 7:00 - 9:00 AM

CELEBRATING FREE BOOKS FOR KIDS 0-5!

Since Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program began in the Hiawatha area, **313 children** have registered for free & 105 have graduated!



Sign up today, FOR FREE, at
www.hiawathapubliclibrary.org/imagination-library

