

Update Rock Island News Release

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Update Rock Island is a segment at City Council meetings given by Mayor Mark Schwiebert focusing on news in Rock Island. The video segment from the meeting is available on the home page of www.rigov.org and provides more information on the topics listed.

Renaissance Rock Island's Hard Hat Awards

Renaissance Rock Island recently hosted the 20th Annual Hard Hat at Jumer's Casino & Hotel. The event is designed to recognize investment in the community and thank those who have helped strengthen Rock Island. The organizations of Renaissance Rock Island - Development Association of Rock Island (DARI), Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation (GROWTH), and The Downtown Rock Island Arts & Entertainment District (The District) – presented the following awards.

Golden Brooms for outstanding maintenance:

Chippiannock Cemetery, Greenbush Neighbors, Keep Rock Island Beautiful

Golden Hammers for outstanding business investment:

Handy True Value, Hughes Tire & Battery, Quad Cities Woodturners, Spirit Partners, Trinity Regional Health System, Viridi Eye Clinic

Mayor & City Council Trophy for the most strategic new investment.

Finalists: Augustana College, Hy-Vee, KJWW Engineering Consultants

Winner: Jumer's Casino & Hotel

CC Wilson Trophy for the most dedicated:– Phil Dennis

Mo Payton volunteer of the year: Anita Adams

Renaissance Rock Island Vision Award: Mark Schwiebert

General Fund Budget 2009-2010

City Staff has been working for several months to prepare the budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Revenues for the General Fund for next year are projected to be flat or lower due to the effects of the national recession. Sales tax, income tax, and replacement tax are three very important revenue sources that are expected to suffer due to a weak state and local economy.

Preliminary budget projections showed a gap between the General Fund Revenue and expense of \$2.6 million. Since then, all departments have worked diligently to identify ways to reduce costs or increase revenue to help close this gap. Departments were asked to consider three guidelines:

1. Maintain the financial strength of the City and follow prudent financial practice.
2. Provide as high a level of service as possible with the limited resources we have.
3. Work to minimize the impact of the City workforce.

All departments have responded and identified cuts as well as other measure that help address the budget challenge. All departments have trimmed line items. With all of this work the status of the projected gap between revenue and expense is \$1,270,291.

City Council provided policy direction to narrow the gap and balance the budget at Study Session.

Comments on Governor

Mayor Schwiebert commented on the recent arrest of Governor Blagojevich.

Rock Island Maintains A1 Rating from Moody's

Moody Investor Services has affirmed the A1 rating on the city's outstanding general obligation debt. The city has \$29.5 million of outstanding general obligation debt, including the current issues. The A1 rating incorporates the expectation of moderate long-term tax base growth and diversification in the city's tax base, historically stable financial operations with healthy reserves and financial flexibility, and manageable debt burden.

Moody's believes that the economic growth experienced by the city in recent years, along with several sizeable projects that are currently at various stages of development, will provide for long-term stability in the city's local economy.

Moody's believes that despite near-term pressures on economically-sensitive revenue sources, the city's financial operations will remain sound due to the support of favorable reserve levels, undesignated gaming revenues and the city's status as a home-rule community.

New Online Services Available at Library

Holiday gatherings are prime times for family stories. If you're in charge of collecting them, check out a new online genealogy resource at the Rock Island Public Library. The library edition of Ancestry.com brings together thousands of historical records, stories and publications, photos and maps into one easily searchable database. Patrons can use the library edition to find census, birth, marriage, death records and more ancestral data from the United States and many other countries. The ProQuest database was added as the result of popular demand following a library survey earlier this year. Due to restrictions from the distributor, the Ancestry.com database is available for use on library computers only. Home users can connect to another library genealogy program, Heritage Quest; it is available at the library and from home with a Rock Island library card.

In other new services, the Children's Department has subscribed to Scholastic BookFlix, an online literacy resource that pairs classic video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks to build a love of reading and learning. If you're looking for something new to read, try NoveList, your online guide to great fiction for all ages. Visit www.rigov.org for details.