

Holiday Newsletter

2024

After a full summer of activities and the beautiful weather this fall, the Holiday season is on our doorsteps. As much as I do not look forward to the blustery winter days, I truly enjoy all that comes with it. I once heard that the Holiday season is not a time of the year, but a feeling. It's that sense of generosity, togetherness and joy that we not only individually have, but that we take time to share with others. My wish for you and yours is you have a wonderful Holiday season and enjoy all that comes with it. Below is my update, including the popular Greenery & Glitter event which is just around the corner.

Mike Evans, Mayor

City of Gretna



Greenery & Glitter - December 8th 12:00pm to 6:00pm

The annual event is becoming a great community tradition. Between 12:00pm – 4pm enjoy hayrack rides, story time with Mrs. Claus, a craft fair, candle making, holiday pictures and much more. Then between 4:00pm-6:00pm come to Peterson Park for fire pits, soup, cider, Christmas dances, a tree lighting ceremony and much more. Check out our website (www.gretnane.org) or visit our Facebook page for details.



Gretna Crossing Park & the YMCA

This September we celebrated the first birthday of our new park & YMCA. It is hard to imagine our community without this wonderful asset. The park has hosted tournaments with athletes from Gretna and across the US, fish have been caught, frisbees thrown, kites flown and dogs (and their owners) are making new friends daily. The PrimeTime H2O Zone saw over 70,000 visitors and the YMCA now has around 10,000 members.

Having this facility is making a difference in our community, just take a look!

- *I am older and I am so much stronger than I was. My back no longer hurts, and everyone is so friendly.*
- *This YMCA is fantastic! The staff is so friendly, and the building is very clean. I enjoy exercising again!*
- *Great place to meet people and get into shape.*
- *The Y has been a place where I came to better myself and my health/fitness. It has turned out to give me more than that. My children feel welcomed and loved in childcare.*
- *I have just recently joined and am loving it! Yoga, the pool and sauna have become my must do activities every week. It is such a positive place!*
- *The Gretna Crossing YMCA has impacted me by helping me make new friends and talk to lots of people!*
- *The gym is where I find my sanity. It is the me time I need, and I love my peeps that I have met there!*
- *The YMCA has provided me with a phenomenal gym environment and a welcoming community.*
- *We love the Gretna Crossing YMCA! To us it means more time together as a family and meeting new friends that have become family. Together we build each other up, support and love each other.*
- *The YMCA has given me a place of freedom. After moving halfway across the country, I have found a home away from home!*
- *Great bonding with my son! We now have a common interest in our health and wellbeing! Thanks Gretna Y.*
- *A place I know my family can go and feel safe, have fun and stay healthy!*

Pancakes with Santa!

Thursday, December 12th join the Pancake Man and Santa at the YMCA for some pancakes between 5:00pm-7:00pm!



Community Complex

We are so thankful that our residents are as committed to keeping Gretna, *The Great Life* as we are! Your feedback on the community center was great and our Owner's Representative and architects are making progress on completing designs for both the interior and exterior of this project. Our target is to open this addition to our community either very late 2026 or early 2027, which will be located just west of Gretna Crossing Park. In addition to opening the Community Center, we will be looking at development plans for the remaining city owned property. Watch for more news on this exciting project.

Transition Space

To be able to serve our community as it grows, we have hired additional staff to keep pace with the workload. The existing City Hall was not designed for a community of this size, and we have had to bring in a portable-temporary workspace until the Community Complex is built. This will be removed once the transition to the new building is made.

Good Life District

The City Council took two actions on the proposed Good Life District at the November 5th meeting.

First, the council approved calling for a special election for January 14th, 2025, which authorizes the City to establish a Good Life District Economic Development Program. It is important to know, this only allows the city to establish the program. The election is not a vote on any developer or project.

The second action the Council took was to deny the Nebraska Crossing Good Life District term sheet upon recommendation by our staff and advisors. While the Gretna Good Life District offers many great opportunities, we also believe there is an equal amount of responsibility. I feel the district should be: Transformative, Fiscally Responsible, Sustainable and Ethical. Council did not deny or vote against the developer or any project, they only denied the terms as submitted. We look forward to future discussions on terms that allow transformative projects to occur, but are also fair to our citizens and property owners within the district.

Budget

At the September 17th meeting, City Council passed the 2024-25 budget. For the second time in three years, the property tax levy was **decreased**. The overall budget also decreased, primarily due to fewer capital projects. The Property Tax levy was decreased by 4.4% and the property tax revenue is only 13% of our overall revenue. Capital projects continue to be a large component of the budget as our city continues to expand. A big thank to our staff and city council for their hard work and closely managing our budget to deliver a fair, but fiscally conservatively budget.

MUD Connection

Currently the city has nine water wells throughout the community. These wells generally satisfy our water demands, except a couple weeks a year during the peak watering days of the summer. With continued growth in every direction, the city was faced with the choice of drilling more wells to keep up with demand. While certainly an option, it would only be enough until another well was required, and then

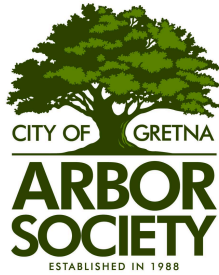
another, and then another. We felt connecting to MUD's water system was a much better and longer-term solution. This will provide our community quality water with a scalable source. We will continue to operate our current wells and could add more in the future if it makes sense. For now, we are excited with our new partnership and construction on a connecting line and pump station are to begin in 2025.

Congratulations To Gretna Arbor Society

The Gretna Arbor Society and members Angie Lauritsen and Missy Ragatz have earned the prestigious Community Forestry Award from the Nebraska Community Forestry Council and Nebraska Forest Services. This award recognizes their leadership and innovation in the Gretna Tree Giveaway and Workshop program, including improvements to tree distribution, adjustments for COVID-19, and promoting forestry education.

For over 37 years, the Gretna Arbor Society has championed the importance of trees, securing over \$700,000 in grants, planting 290 trees, and distributing thousands more to residents. Their efforts include "Gretna Tree Talks," Arbor Day celebrations, and enhancing the health and diversity of the community forest.

Thank you, Angie, Missy, and the entire board, for your dedication to making Gretna beautiful!



What's New? Check out the City's Website

Make sure to check out the City's new website (www.GretnaNE.org). It features such things as Events, News, Announcements, Video Tours and all the previous content in a much more user-friendly format. While you are at it, be sure to check out the City of Gretna Facebook page that is frequently updated. It also now includes a summary of council meetings and what's the latest business coming to town.