

City of Ralston  
5500 S. 77th Street  
Ralston, NE 68127  
402.331.6677  
www.cityofralston.com

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# Our Town

## Mayor's Message

Hello Ralston,

Well, March is over and maybe, just maybe, we're done with the snow! Now on to the potholes. Our Public Works Department continues to work diligently on repairing our streets. Our plan is to start budgeting additional funds in order to do more panel replacements. Panel replacement is always a better solution and a less expensive remedy in the long run.

As we look over the city skyline, our downtown view is changing with the new apartments being built by the Fire Station. There will be 25 units with parking as well as some retail space.

In other news, the developers of the Granary held a groundbreaking ceremony on March 30th, 2021. There are all sorts of exciting changes happening in Ralston!

The Ralston Arena has reopened and it looks like we will have sell-out crowds! The picture below is from the Lee Brice concert. That show was sold at 75 percent capacity!

Hope everyone has a wonderful spring.

Mayor Don



***The Ralston Arena's first ticketed concert in exactly one year!***

*The Lee Brice concert was held on March 11, 2021 at the Ralston Arena. The show was sold at 75% capacity.*



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The City of Ralston now has a Facebook page. Follow us to make sure you get up-to-the minute news and information  
[www.facebook.com/CityofRalstonNE](https://www.facebook.com/CityofRalstonNE)  
or @CityofRalstonNE



## Ralston's "Shark Tank" and What It Means for Our Future

By Rick Hoppe

One of the more successful shows on TV is ABC's "Shark Tank" a reality show where entrepreneurs make business presentations to a panel of five investors or "sharks" who decide whether to invest in their companies.

Ralston's version of an entrepreneurial competition is playing out on Main Street. I See It Ventures is a company that invests in other companies and the firm has chosen Ralston's Granary District to launch the businesses that will build our future.

I See It Ventures funds people with ideas for successful businesses and provides coaching and support. Already their firm has created 30 good paying jobs since they opened shop in July of last year. New businesses like the Deviled Egg Company (the siracha and bacon eggs are amazing) and EventVesta are up and running in Ralston.

Ralston's "Shark Tank" is more than an hour TV show. It is actually a plan to create a District where new entrepreneurs will work, live, and socialize. I See It Ventures is so confident in Ralston's future they are making the single largest private sector investment in our City's history. Their \$20 million investment will build new housing, renovate the old Granary building, revitalize our historic Bushwackers and create new public spaces for all Ralston residents to enjoy.

I am fortunate to get the opportunity to work closely with the I See It Ventures team. Their CEO Gordon Whitten has successfully launched a number of new businesses during his career. Gordon and his I See It Ventures partner and project manager, Wayne Lallman, said something to me early on that really got my attention. They told me that a big factor in the decision to invest \$20 million and a decade of their lives in this effort was the people of Ralston. They want to work with people who exhibit the same "can-do" spirit that their new businesses exhibit. They want to work with people who will embrace and support the new people who are joining our community. They want to work with people who come together to meet challenges and strive for progress.

That progress is evident throughout our community. Zehv's Place, the Hinge's first economic development project, is nearing completion and by late summer new Ralston residents will be moving into new housing and bringing new life to our downtown area.

Economic development is not the only area where Ralston is making progress. As part of the 2020-21 budget, the City is making the changes that will set our community on a much stronger financial path. We are doing more with less and as a result, the Council just voted to pay off a \$1 million loan and instructed the City Finance Director and me to develop a plan to pay off another loan on the City books.

Paying off these debts is part of a larger plan for our future. As anyone with a credit card knows, paying off debt is good for your credit rating. We anticipate that the bond rating agencies will raise Ralston's bond rating as a result of our actions. A new bond rating will allow us to re-finance the Arena bonds at a much lower interest rate. With the amazing progress made by the Arena's new management company, Spectra, we are systematically reducing the Arena's impact on the City budget and freeing up funds for other needs. We plan to use these freed up funds to increase our investment in streets and sewers, the basics that are literally the foundation of our City.

I am inspired by the great work of Ralston's version of the "Shark Tank." They are finding new ways of doing business and creating value. Your City team is learning from our private sector partners and finding the innovations that create better value for our taxpayers while maintaining the services Ralston residents expect.

Gordon and Wayne are right. Working with good people can really make a difference in a community's future. Current residents and our new businesses are working as one to make change for the better.

Together, we are putting Ralston on the right path for the future.



## BARIGHT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ralston, NE

When looking back the past year, the library has gone through a lot of changes. This time last year our library building was closed due to COVID-19. Even though our doors were closed, we did our best to still serve our community by offering curbside service, online reading challenges, take and make craft kits, and so much more. We were able to open our doors again in July though our programming was still on pause.

We have been excited this spring to slowly start our programming again. We had our annual Easter Egg Hunt inside the library, with two different sessions for families to register. The egg hunt was held prior to the library opening so that we were able to monitor exactly how many people were in the building and attending. It was a success! We look forward to slowly implementing more in-person programming in the future.

Our adult and teen monthly craft kits have continued to be very popular. This spring we have offered kits to

make mug cakes, bird seed feeders, sock bunnies, and air fresheners. We will be continuing these craft kits through the summer.

The library has gotten a lot of new technology items for our community to check out. We now have Kindle Oasis eReaders that can be checked out. They have preloaded romance novels and best sellers available for a 2 week checkout to patrons who are at least 19 years old. We also have Wi-Fi hotspots and Chromebooks available for checkout for adults. Be sure to stop in and ask more about them!

The library has a new director, Amanda Peña. Amanda brings to this position 20 years of experience working in libraries in a variety of positions. Amanda's most recent position was library director of Ashland Public Library. Be sure to stop in and say hello!



*Miriam Newsome enjoying the annual Easter Egg Hunt!*

### Ralston Arena Events

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the following events at the Ralston Arena!!

- ◆ April 9 —April 24, 2021—Omaha Lancers Hockey
- ◆ April 17—June 19, 2021—Omaha Beef Football
- ◆ Grupo Firme—April 30, 2021 at 9:00 PM
- ◆ Clay Walker & Tracy Lawrence—May 21, 2021 at 7:30 PM
- ◆ Hairball—June 4, 2021 at 7:30 PM
- ◆ Baby Shark Live! - June 5, 2021 at 2:00 PM
- ◆ Midwest Golden Gloves—June 16th and 17th, 2021
- ◆ Styx World Tour—November 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM

**New events are added daily! Keep up on the events by visiting the Ralston Arena website at [www.ralstonarena.com](http://www.ralstonarena.com)**



## City of Ralston

### Our Vision Statement

**"The City of Ralston will deliver economic, creative, cultural, and community development strategies to generate a quality of life that is a beacon of dynamic and independent small town culture within the metro area."**

## Local Government Officials & City Department Heads

**Mayor**—Donald Groesser

### City Council Members:

**Ward 1**—Tim Brousek

**Ward 2**—Lee Fidelity

**Ward 3**—Brian Kavanaugh

**Ward 4**—Jerry Krause / Council President

**Ward 5**—Michael Sanchez

**Ward 6**—Ben Preis

The Ralston City Council meets on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 5:30 PM in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 5500 S. 77th Street.

**City Administrator**—Rick Hoppe

**Finance Director**—Tim Bohling

**City Clerk**—Rosie Russell

**City Attorney** - Don Ficenec

**Chief of Police**—Marc Leonardo

**Public Works Director**—Dan Freshman

**Library Director**—Amanda Peña

**Arena General Manager**—Brian Krajewski

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Or contact us at [cityhall@cityofralston.com](mailto:cityhall@cityofralston.com)

## Meet Our New Library Director . . .



Amanda Peña was appointed as Ralston Library Director on January 18, 2021.

A longtime resident of Portland, Oregon, Amanda began her career in high school as a clerk for Temecula Public Library in Southern California. With a 20 year career in libraries, she's done everything from driv-

ing a bookmobile, being a Director, working in outreach to the community, and helping incarcerated youth find their love of reading.

Amanda is passionate about the vital role of public libraries in developing vibrant and engaged communities. She is excited to meet everyone and to learn more about the Ralston community.

Welcome to Ralston, Amanda!!

### *Did you know . . .*

The City of Ralston recently installed a cloud-based software program that helps assign and track progress of reported issues within the City of Ralston. You can use our website to report an issue 24 hours a day. The reports will be reviewed during regular business hours and the issue will be directed to the appropriate department.

To report an issue, go to our website at [www.cityofralston.com](http://www.cityofralston.com) and click on **"Report an Issue"**. This will direct you to a citizen portal and after creating a user-id and password, you will be able to pin the location of the issue and create a work order.

As always, feel free to contact the Streets contact information at [streets@cityofralston.com](mailto:streets@cityofralston.com) or 402-935-5386 or City Hall at 402-331-6677 or [cityhall@cityofralston.com](mailto:cityhall@cityofralston.com).