

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, we had a great Independence Day this year in Ralston. We were actually able to hold a few activities. The parade was outstanding and everyone in attendance had a great time. It was nice to have everyone back to Ralston. As always, the fireworks show at the Ralston Arena was awesome. Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce for all their support and work.

At the time of this writing, Deb and I just got our power back on after 58 hours. We certainly appreciate having our power back on!! The tree damage in Ralston was substantial and I would like to extend a big thank you to all city employees for working throughout the night on Saturday. A tree dump site was opened at our Public Works Building so residents could drop off tree debris.

I hope everyone has a safe and wonderful summer.

Mayor Don

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*61st Annual Independence Day Parade*

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## **Progress: Preserving What We Have**

**By Rick Hoppe, City Administrator**

City expenditures tend to fall into two categories: taking care of what we already have and investing in new amenities or projects. Both are important to a community. The challenge is finding the resources for both.

We have had a great year balancing these priorities. Our new investments in the Hinge Project continue to pay off and we have put greater emphasis on repairing and replacing what we already have.

Streets must be consistently maintained as they become more expensive to fix the longer they aren't addressed. Concrete panels must be replaced as they become damaged or the risk for even greater damage increases. Unfortunately, it is an expensive process and the City has not done panel replacement for the past several years. But thanks to prudent budgeting, we were able to invest about \$200,000 in 10 panel replacements across the City. Some are already completed and others will be happening in the coming months. While we have a great deal more to do, this represents tremendous progress on streets.

Tight budgets have also impacted repair and replacement in our parks and trails. A good example is the Serum Avenue trail bridge, which has been closed for two years. Now, thanks to re-prioritizing our resources, the trail bridge is scheduled to be repaired this fall.

The City received an offer from a business to purchase the Serum Avenue soccer fields. The fields have not been used as much as in the past, so the City decided to put them up for bid. That resulted in an \$800,000 offer that will dramatically impact a number of Parks projects. In addition to the trail bridge, we will be able to address failing retaining walls at the Ralston Park ballfields. We are also reviewing what playground equipment needs replacement and assessing repair needs at all facilities. We are also reserving some of the funding to replace the

soccer fields so our youth soccer teams still have a nice place to play.

Paying down debt has been a major focus of our budget efforts in 2020-21. Our plans to reduce debt are critical to more consistently focus our resources on repair and replacement. We paid off a \$1 million line of credit this year. In addition, we just paid down \$400,000 of another \$1.8 million loan and if our revenues keep pace, we should be able to pay it off completely in the 2021-22 budget. Our goal is to increase Ralston's bond rating. A bond rating is essentially a credit rating for the City. If we improve our credit score, we will receive more favorable interest rates on our outstanding bonds. Refinancing bonds will free up revenues to pay for street repairs, fixing parks, and better maintaining what we already have.

It is exciting to watch the new Hinge Flats project rise from the ground. The steel girders on Main Street that will support a 27-foot LED screen for the new Granary Green demonstrate the success of our public-private partnership in redeveloping the Granary site. While the City will continue to invest in those projects that build our economy and create jobs, we are also strongly focused on the fundamentals like streets and parks that ensure a high quality of life.

Taking care of what we have. Investing in our future. Ralston is truly on the move.

Our Finance Director, Tim Bohling, has been a strong leader on the budget and a passionate advocate for the investments discussed in this article. He has been a major force in the amazing run of success our community has enjoyed over the past couple years. Tim is taking on a new challenge in Florida and moving closer to his family. He will be missed. Thanks for everything, Tim.





## BARIGHT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ralston, NE

This beautiful summer has brought everyone at the library so much joy! Watching the Library fill with members of the community is like a breath of fresh air. Ms. Justine spearheaded the Summer Reading Program and all the events for children and teens creating a successful and engaging summer so far.

Summer Reading has put a free book in the hands of over 300 children and teens since June 1<sup>st</sup>. Storytimes have been offered twice a week at both Ralston Park and the Seymour Elementary playground encouraging families to be outside and socialize. Lego club happening once a week is a rowdy constructive space for children of all ages to build and engage. Every week we get to add another table to build on because it is just that much fun! In June, the teen special event took place at Scorz Sports Center. They had a great time eating pizza, making new friends, and getting a little competitive.

Ms. Justine and Miss Sadie got to visit the Ralston Public Schools Summer Camp, organized by Summer School Principal Malachi Behrens, and offered the kids a

chance to have their own library card. They had so much fun getting to be featured in such an amazing program.

Not only have we pushed access to information and knowledge for all, but we have been combatting food insecurity. Every week day Ms. Justine and our amazing volunteers are on the front steps of the library to help The Salvation Army provide free lunch to everyone ages 0-18. This will continue on until August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Just before summer the Library's Wildewood Park permanent StoryWalk was installed for anyone and everyone to stroll through the shaded trees and read along with a new story each week. The StoryWalk is a permanent installation that will continue to offer new adventures weekly for the summer months.

Before the summer is over we look forward to even more programs and events for all ages; Between Books where adults can watch a presenter and learn something new, Book Club, Bingo for all ages, a teen lock-in, plus more storytimes and crafts.



*Storytime in the Park*

### Ralston Arena Events

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

- ◆ Blippi The Musical—July 17, 2021 at 2:00 PM
- ◆ IBLA Lacrosse Games, Ralston Regals/Aksarben Stampede - July 18—August 21, 2021
- ◆ Rauw Alejandro World Tour 2021, Zamora Live—July 24, 2021 at 9:00 PM
- ◆ Jo Koy, Just Kidding World Tour—July 30, 2021 at 8:00 PM
- ◆ El Fantasma, Zamora Live—August 13, 2021 at 8:30 PM
- ◆ Dynasty Combat League—August 14, 2021 at 8:00 PM
- ◆ La Adictiva, Zamora Live—September 5, 2021 at 8:30 PM
- ◆ Guns & Hoses—September 11, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- ◆ Theresa Caputo, The Experience Live! - September 26, 2021 at 7:30 PM
- ◆ Omaha Lancers Hockey—October 8, 2021—April 22, 2022
- ◆ Gerardo Diaz, Zamora Live—October 9, 2021 at 8:00 PM
- ◆ Styx World Tour—November 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- ◆ Cody Johnson with special guests Easton Corbin & Ian Munsick—November 19, 2021 at 7:30 PM
- ◆ LOL Surprise! Live—November 20, 2021 at 4:00 PM
- ◆ Price is Right Live! - December 5, 2021 at 7:30 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)

## Our Permitting Process Has Changed

All building, plumbing, electrical, sign, and contractor permits and licenses must be filed with the City of Ralston through the Community Development Coordinator's office at 7305 Main Street, located south of the Ralston Police Department.

For your convenience, you may apply for the permit online by visiting: <https://ci-ralston-ne.smartgovcommunity.com/Public/Home>

You can also pay the permit fees online.

Permits are required for most projects.

All submissions are subject to review by the City of Ralston. You will be notified when your application has been approved or if additional action is required.

If you have any questions regarding permit requirements, please contact:

Heather Gamon  
Community Development Coordinator  
402.331.6677, Ext 1204  
7305 Main Street  
Ralston, NE 68127  
Email: [hgamon@cityofralston.com](mailto:hgamon@cityofralston.com)

### ***A Reminder . . .***

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).