



## February meetings

**City Commission**, Feb. 3 and Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m., City Hall

**School Board**, Feb. 2 at 5:30 p.m. and Feb. 17 at 7 p.m., City Hall

**Park Board**, Feb. 9 at 4:30 p.m., City Hall

**County Commission**, Feb. 12 and 24 at 5:30 p.m., Morton County Courthouse

**City Planning and Zoning Commission**, Feb. 23 at 5:15 p.m., City Hall

## City Hall public info & input meeting, Jan. 27

The architectural firm conducting a facilities study for the City of Mandan will hold an informational open house and citizen input session Jan. 27 regarding options for a new or renovated City Hall and north area fire station. It will run from 5 to 7 p.m. at City Hall.

A second meeting will further refine preferences for City facilities is tentatively set for Feb. 16 from 5 to 7 p.m. at City Hall. Stay tuned to [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com) for updates.

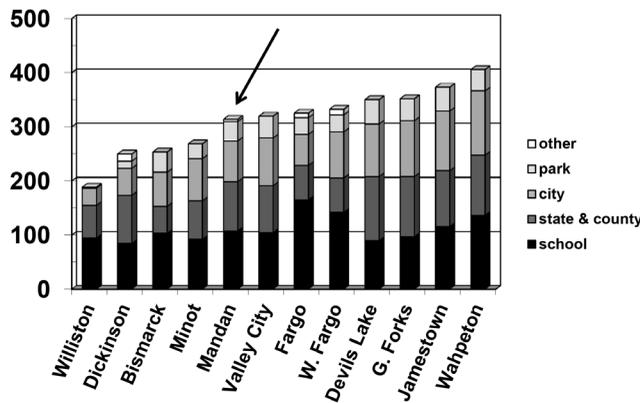
The Mandan park and school districts are separately studying their facility needs. A Joint Facilities Committee with representatives from each board is looking at a possible local sales tax initiative to fund capital improvements for the community.

Official City Commission action is needed before any initiative can go to a ballot for consideration by voters. Research is expected to continue through March to determine the type and scope of projects for possible inclusion with a public vote to potentially coincide with the June 9 election.

# Mandan compares more favorably to other cities for property taxes

## 2014 PROPERTY TAX RANKINGS

Mandan in lower half of state's 12 largest cities



Mandan's tax rank in comparison to the state's other largest cities improved another notch in 2014. A North Dakota League of Cities report indicates Mandan's consolidated mill levy, at 314 mills, ranks fifth lowest among the state's largest cities. That compares to being tied for sixth last year.

Mandan's levy for 2014 is 1.41% of value on a residential property or 1.57% for a commercial property. These percentages of value are down from 2013's share of 1.49% and 1.66%, respectively.

Mandan entities (City Commission, County Commission, Mandan Public School District, Mandan Park District) all lowered their levies for 2014 to help offset an average valuation increase of 12.8% on existing residential property and 8.8% on commercial property. Increased state legislative funding for education and a state credit equal to 12% of property taxes provide further property tax relief.

Factors behind differences in mill levies include sales tax base and whether it benefits from natural resources such as oil, gas and coal. Market values may also vary by city.

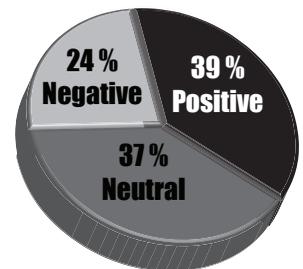
## Outside opinions help Mandan improve

The Mandan Tomorrow – Leadership, Pride and Image Committee conducted its fourth annual survey of residents from other cities this fall to assess external views of Mandan and help improve the city. As a whole, Mandan's image is positive to neutral. Only 24 percent of respondents indicated having a negative image of the city.

A majority of the 432 respondents, two-thirds from Bismarck and one-third from other locations, continue to recognize Mandan's strong sense of community, growth and quality of life. The parks and recreation system as well as events and activities are also identified assets.

Attributes where potential exists to heighten awareness include:

- sources of fun and adventure for visitors and residents alike,
- desirability as a place to live, including low crime rates despite population growth,



MANDAN'S OVERALL IMAGE

See **Nonresident Survey** page 2





"WHERE THE WEST BEGINS"

## 2014 BY THE NUMBERS

### Residential building

- 505 new residential units, down from 2013's record 652 units and 2012's 520 units.

### Commercial & industrial building

- \$24.1 million in permits for new construction, remodeling and additions
- That's the third highest year in Mandan's history, compared to the 2012 record of nearly \$50 million, followed by \$26 million in 2007.

### Value of all building activity

- \$94 million, down from \$139 million in 2013 and \$130 million in 2012.

### Local usage taxes

- 17% ahead through November for the 1% local sales tax
- Revenue at \$2.46 million, already exceeding last year's total and on track to finish the year at approximately \$2.6 million.
- 1% restaurant and lodging tax is up 1.6% at \$368,330
- Revenue from the 2% hotel occupancy tax is down nearly 5% at \$60,369

## Street improvement projects near completion

The Engineering and Planning Department reports a good year for street construction in Mandan. Plans came in early and good weather helped get things buttoned up before winter. Thirteen projects focused on new developments, including six projects in which construction began in 2014. Asphalt is down on all new development projects, making it easier for builders to access lots to construct over winter. For many projects, only a chip seal coat and final corrections remain, as was anticipated at time of bid.

The reconstruction project at Roughriders Estates is also near completion. A chip seal coat will be completed in the summer, as well as minor corrective items. The Sunset Drive project, largely completed in 2013 with mostly finishing touches in 2014, is substantially complete, with verification of a few outstanding items pending. The street improvement project comprising much of Diane's addition is near completion as well. Remaining work includes a chip seal coat and minor patching on Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Avenues NE.

Also completed in 2014 were three areas of mill and overlay projects in which the city received federal and state aid funding assistance through the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Those stretches were 40th Avenue SE, 24th and Longspur SE (adjacent to Dakota Speedway and Centennial Park), as well as Ninth Avenue NE.

## June 1 deadline for new special assessed street projects

The City Commission has approved a new bid opening deadline of June 1 for street improvement projects in new developments that are special assessed. A 2014 deadline of July 1 was established after six projects planned later in 2013 failed to meet contractual deadlines. The delay in finishing street projects resulted in delayed housing starts.

The even earlier deadline for 2015 is expected to result in on-time completions and lower bid prices. The June 1 deadline requires plans and specs to be approved at or before the May 5 Commission meeting. Developers willing to finance the cost themselves for street improvement projects are not subject to the deadline, but rather can enter into a three-way agreement, similar to what is required to install city water and sewer mains, to complete the work in accordance with City specifications. For more information, contact the Engineering and Planning Department at 667-3225.

## Grounds maintenance building to be constructed in 2015

The City Commission has approved construction of a grounds maintenance building at the Mandan Union Cemetery. The new building will combine cemetery maintenance, forestry and weed control functions. The building will make it easier for staff to share equipment to work more efficiently, saving time and money. Ground breaking is planned for April. Anticipated completion is Sept. 1.

## Nonresident survey

*from page 1*

- Mandan's economic opportunities for businesses and career opportunities, and
- student achievement and the quality of the public school system.

The topic of property taxes now appears neutralized with very few mentions. Mandan and Morton County officials have made an ongoing effort to reduce property taxes and to communicate Mandan's ranks among the state's largest cities.

Aspects of the community where a combination of substantive improvement and more marketing is needed include:

- Mandan's appearance,
- Mandan as a place to visit and as a place to do business, and
- perceptions of progress, hampered by views that growth is associated with crime.

The LPI committee will use survey results to direct 2015 community marketing activities and other initiatives. Members encourage elected officials and other civic leaders to use findings to address concerns and capitalize on opportunities to increase Mandan's competitiveness for businesses, residents and visitors.



## City adopts landscaping ordinance

A landscaping ordinance focuses on enhancing the appearance of Mandan. The ordinance provides a universal requirement for landscaping on all new developments within the city. New properties must be landscaped within one year of issuance of a certificate of occupancy or within two years of issuance of a building permit.

Here are the new landscaping requirements based on zoning and land use:

- Residential (1 to 4 dwelling units)
  - Every area of the lot not covered by structures or paving.
- Multi-family (4+ dwelling units) and commercial districts
  - At least 50% of the yard setback, or
  - At least 10% of the developable area
- Industrial districts
  - At least 25% of the yard setback areas, or
  - At least 5% of the developable area.

For owners of multi-family, commercial or industrial lots bordering a residentially-zoned property, landscaping is required of the front yard setback and the rear yard or side yard setback. If the neighboring property is commercially-zoned, the requirement only applies to the front yard setback. For commercial and industrial lots where the landscaping area requirement exceeds 5,000 feet, trees or shrubs must be included.

Ordinance 1188 is available at [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com) in the City Commission's Dec. 2 and Dec. 16 agenda packets and under the City Government section in section 21-03-11 of the municipal code. It is also available by contacting the Engineering and Planning Department by phone, 667-3225.

## Improvements planned at Wastewater Treatment Plant

An optimization project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant aims to improve efficiency, replace equipment nearing the end of its useful life, and help with odor control. The project includes a full overhaul of the pretreatment building, including the replacement of processing equipment and mechanical and electrical systems. Improvements in other areas of the plant include the replacement of ultraviolet disinfection equipment and new blowers for the aeration pond. The \$5.3 million project is included in the City's 2015 budget. The bulk of the project is scheduled to begin in February and is expected to be completed in February of 2016, but changes are already underway.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant installed two SolarBee mixers in November. The new mixers are expected to reduce odors related to biosolids by improving the sludge digestion and treatment process. The new mixing system enhances natural aeration while promoting sludge thickening. The process should reduce the volume of sludge handled annually, resulting in operation and maintenance savings, reduced fuel consumption and reduced impact to the lands receiving the biosolids application.

The City is currently accepting bids for engineering services related to the project. For more information on the Wastewater Treatment Plant, visit [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com) or call 667-3278.

## City increases NSF charge for utility and other payments

The City recently increased its non-sufficient funds (NSF) charge to \$20. The previous charge was \$10. The change is necessary to recover costs charged by financial institutions when utility bill payments are returned. The City reminds residents using the automatic payment option to update account information whenever a change occurs by calling 667-3215.

### NEW MANDAN BUSINESSES

- 180 Family Chiropractic, 2008 Twin City Dr.
- Acoustical Sound Systems, 201 Riverwood Ave. SE, Unit 2
- Cake Dreams (formerly Sweet Beginnings), 300 West Main Street
- Forbidden Concepts, 201 Riverwood Ave. SE, Unit 3
- Johnstone Supply, 201 Riverwood Ave. SE, Unit 1
- Strawberry Restaurant & Bar, 210 West Main Street

### EXPANSION/ NEW LOCATION

- Ahern Rentals, 3015 Memorial Highway



## Ordinance meant to foster local breweries, wineries

"WHERE THE WEST BEGINS"

North Dakota laws are becoming friendlier to the craft beer industry, and Mandan is following suit. Ordinance 1196 updates Mandan's municipal code to reflect allowances for maximum quantities for sale and distribution as indicated in the century code. Mandan is home to Buffalo Commons Brewery. Bird Dog Brewery hopes to be operational in early 2015. The U.S. craft spirit industry is growing rapidly with economic development opportunity for tourism, manufacturing, revitalization and more. Potential exists to expand this industry in Mandan.

The City Commission approved the first consideration of Ordinance 1196 at its Dec. 16 meeting. The second and final consideration is slated for January.

## City Commission adopts multi-hazard mitigation plan

The City Commission approved a resolution adopting the Morton County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan at its Dec. 16 meeting. The goals of the plan are to get people, property, jobs and natural resources out of harm's way.

Hazard mitigation takes place because of mitigation funding from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA requires that this planning process occur in all counties in North Dakota. Counties or other local government units failing to comply will not be eligible for FEMA mitigation funding and may receive reduced recovery funding during the next declared disaster. A link to the plan is posted at [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com).

## Sign up for emergency notification system

Morton County Emergency Management asks citizens to sign up for its emergency notification system. CodeRED is a mass notification system that allows local governments to send out alerts of emergency events through the Code RED mobile app, by phone and e-mail. Sign up by calling 667-3307 or via links on the City and Morton County websites.

### ONLINE POLL RESULTS

## Respondents enjoy local winter activities

November's informal online poll asked, "What winter activity do you most enjoy locally?" There were 130 responses. The most popular activity among respondents was ice skating or hockey.

- 32% ice skating/hockey
- 27% skiing at Huff Hills
- 15% sledding
- 5% shoveling snow
- 2% snowmobiling
- 19% other

Mandan offers many fun winter activities including indoor skating at the All Seasons Arena and outdoor skating at four locations:

- Legion Park, 1111 10th Avenue SW (warming house)
- Borden Harbor Park, 3805 Sandpiper Trail
- Eagles Park, 100 14th Street NE
- KC Park, 801 3rd Avenue NE

Eighteen miles south on County Road 80, the Huff Hills Ski Area gives people a chance to hit the slopes on skis, snowboards or sleds. Outdoor enthusiasts can also enjoy the season by cross-country skiing at the Mandan Municipal Golf Course and the Missouri River Nature Trail. For more information on winter activities in Mandan, visit [www.mandanparks.com](http://www.mandanparks.com) or call the Park District at 751-6161.

## City Contacts

Mandan City Hall  
205 Second Avenue NW  
Phone 701-667-3215  
Fax 701-667-3223  
[www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com)

### Mandan City Commission

Mayor Arlyn Van Beek  
Mike Braun  
Shauna Laber  
Dennis Rohr  
Sandy Tibke

### City Departments

Administration ..... 667-3215  
 Airport Authority ..... 663-0669  
 Assessing ..... 667-3528  
 Building Inspection ..... 667-3230  
 Business Development  
 & Communications ..... 667-3485  
 Cemetery ..... 667-6044  
 Engineering, Planning  
 & Zoning ..... 667-3225  
 Finance ..... 667-3213  
 Fire ..... 667-3288  
 Human Resources ..... 667-3217  
 Landfill ..... 667-0184  
 Library ..... 667-5365  
 Municipal Court ..... 667-3270  
 Police ..... 667-3250  
 Public Works ..... 667-3240  
 Special  
 Assessments ..... 667-3271  
 Utility Billing ..... 667-3219  
 Waste Water  
 Treatment ..... 667-3278  
 Water Treatment ..... 667-3275

### Receive E-mail Notices

Sign up to receive notice of city meetings and news in the "E-mail Updates" section of [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com). Meeting dates and agendas are available.

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH

*Would you be interested in receiving an e-mail newsletter from the City of Mandan?*

Visit [www.cityofmandan.com](http://www.cityofmandan.com) by Feb. 28 to respond.