



February 2011

City Happenings

An eNewsletter from the City of Lexington, Nebraska



What's Going On At . . . ?

Dawson County Opportunity Center 1501 Plum Creek Parkway

Phase 2 renovation of the DCOC (former Walmart building) is complete, and includes approximately 20,000 square feet of space intended for community education, job training, and business development activities for the area. Central Community College, project partner and initial tenant, began their programming the first part of January 2011. The City of Lexington looks forward to adding several other tenants over the course of 2011, that will provide a wide range of programming and collaboration to increase opportunities for individual growth and business development.

The renovations to the Opportunity Center included a geothermal mechanical system and roof improvements with added insulation value that will provide low energy costs to sustain the operation of the facility into the future, as well as represent a responsible energy conservation measure.

On Feb. 18 there will be a ribbon cutting event (2:00), open house (2:30 - 5:00), and business after hours (5:00 - 8:00). We encourage the public to explore your Opportunity Center.





Downtown Revitalization

In 2009 The City of Lexington, funded by a grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED), commissioned a

Downtown Revitalization (DTR) study. The study was completed by RDG Planning & Design in April 2010. Following the study, which was Phase 1, the City in 2010-2012 is moving on to Phase 2: implementation, which is funded by a \$350,000 Community Development Block Grant administered by NDED.

On December 14, 2010, the Lexington City Council approved Phase 2 Guidelines developed by the DTR Committee comprised of local citizens interested in downtown improvement. These guidelines include application forms businesses must use when applying for grant or loan assistance through the DTR program. Funds can be used for Commercial Rehab, Facade Improvements, Energy Efficiency Improvements,



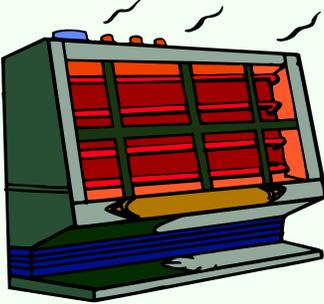
or Architectural Barrier Removal (Handicap Accessibility). Both the Study and the Guidelines can be downloaded from the City's website (<http://www.cityoflex.com/index.aspx?page=100>). Businesses may also request a printed copy. Visit City Hall, 406 E 7th Street, or contact Dennis Burnside, dburnside@cityoflex.com, to request a printed copy or if you have any questions.



(BELOW): Artist's rendering of a possible alleyway conversion into a shopper's "Promenade" near the south end of downtown Lexington.



EnergyWise Tip: **Save 50% Energy While Keeping Warm? Tough to Do!!!**



Magazine, newspaper and even television advertisements are claiming you can save up to 50 % on your heating bill by using their attractive and special space heater! Initially, you

might think, "Wow! I spent a lot of money keeping warm last winter. I can cut that amount in half."

Then, you see the special offer. Originally \$499.95, you can order now for \$299! You are convinced you will save that much in one winter. This must be an incredible deal!

But before you rush out and buy one of these "miracle heaters," look closer at what you are going to have to do to achieve those savings. The fine print says that savings to your heating bill comes from setting the main thermostat in your house to as low as 50 degrees and moving the space heater to a single room. In doing so, the savings does not come from operating the heater, but rather from turning down the thermostat for the rest of the house. In fact, if you use a miracle heater and don't lower your thermostat, you can actually spend more heating your home!

This practice of using space heaters to warm individual rooms is known as zone heating. If used correctly, it can provide some benefit. For example, if you are consistent in turning down your main system's thermostat and use the space heater to heat just the room you occupy, you can save money. Also, if you have an area of your home that is hard to heat, a space heater will make that area more comfortable. However, it will cost you more for the additional heat.

In reality, very few homeowners achieve the maximum savings portable heater manufacturers claim. After one heating season, homeowners are

usually disappointed that they paid a lot of money for a heater that performed the same as one they could have purchased for under \$100.

A portable heater can improve comfort in hard-to-heat areas, but it does not guarantee you will save in heating costs. Note that most homeowners can achieve greater savings by investing in insulation, weather stripping, servicing their heating and cooling equipment, changing filters, installing compact fluorescent lamps, using programmable thermostats,

purchasing ENERGY STAR® appliances, or setting back the thermostat when not at home.

For more information on steps homeowners can take to improve the efficiency of their homes, contact Lexington Utilities System, or visit the ENERGY STAR® Home Advisor at

<http://www.energystar.gov/homeadvisor>.

Many more energy savings tips are also available at <http://www.nppd.com>.

See Property Maintenance Corner on the next page for timely space heater safety tips.



STUDENTS!
NOW is the time to apply for summer City jobs: concessions, lifeguards, & lawn mowing.
Go to www.cityoflex.com/index.aspx?page=40 for more information and to download a blank application form. Send completed application to address below or email to dburnside@cityoflex.com.
Don't delay — do it today!



Lexington recertified as Economic Development Community



In late January the Nebraska Department of Economic Development renewed Lexington's Certified Community status for another five years. The recertification was thanks to a lot of hard work by the staff of Dawson Area Development. As stated by Governor Dave Heineman, "The Nebraska Economic Development Certified Communities certification signals a community's dedication, leadership, and vision for growing and attracting new jobs and people. This certification also better positions a community for economic development opportunities, shows a community is economic development ready, and it shows that a community is capable of marketing itself for business and industry development."



Property Maintenance Corner



by **Bill Brecks**

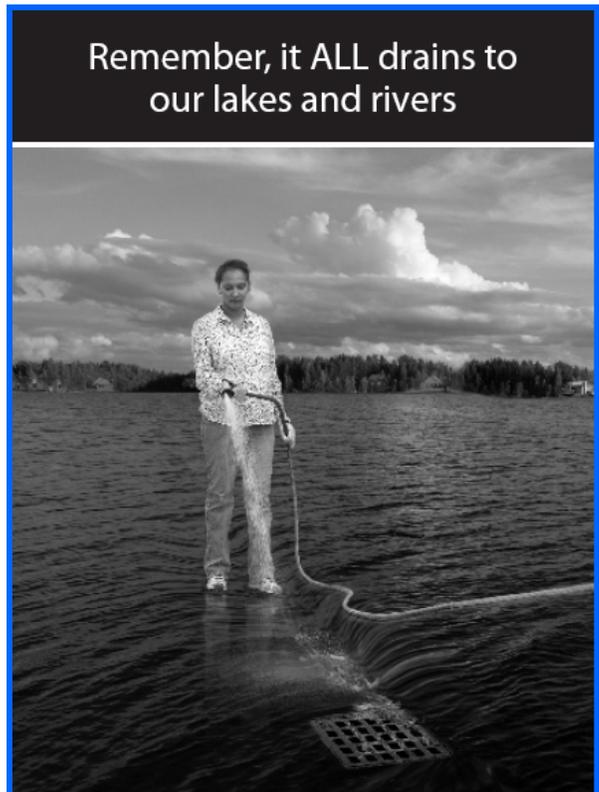
Chief Building Inspector

Space Heater Safety Tips

- Keep the heater in safe working condition. Replace missing guards and controls at once. Never operate a defective heater.
- Don't place the heater where children might play near it or where people might trip over or bump into it.
- Place the heater on a level surface for stability.
- Regardless of the heating system(s) you have, install and maintain at least one smoke detector that is in good working condition on each floor of your home.



The cost of heating combined with the efforts to save energy raises the potential for increased use of alternative heating sources. Space heaters are not highly efficient and have significant fire and safety hazards associated with their use. Space heaters present a greater potential for human error such as leaving them too close to combustible materials.



Remember, it ALL drains to our lakes and rivers

Help keep pollution out of storm drains

Only rain in the drain!

That's because storm drains and roadside ditches lead directly to our lakes and rivers. So, any oil, pet waste, leaves, trash, or dirty water from washing your car that enters a storm drain gets into our lakes and rivers. With thousands of people living in and around Lexington, we all need to be aware of what goes into our storm drains.

So what can you do? Simple:

- Sweep fertilizer off of driveways and sidewalks, back onto your lawn.
- Keep leaves, grass clippings, trash, and fertilizers out of storm drains.
- Do not dump motor oil, anti-freeze, chemicals, pet waste, dirty soapy water, or anything else down the storm drains.
- Volunteer to label the storm drains in your neighborhood to inform your neighbors that storm drains flow directly to our lakes and rivers (contact Keep Lexington Beautiful, (308) 324-7986, or keeplexbeautiful@yahoo.com).

KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN!



Support provided by NDEQ





Library News

Lexington Public Library
907 North Washington St.
by Kathy Thomsen
Library Director



A variety of Lexington Library Memorial Fund and Lexington Community Foundation sponsored programs will be offered during the months of February and March.



On Thursday, February 10, at 7:00 p.m., **Chris Short Puppet Personalities Show** will entertain the

audience with three foot Marionettes and Muppet-type puppets. Puppet routines are choreographed to a variety of music styles. The Chris Short Puppet Personalities Show is presented under spectacular black light effects. This is a program for all ages that will provide a memorable, educational, and enjoyable experience.



On Sunday, February 20, at 2:00 p.m., **The Carr Family Cowboy Band** from Whitman, Neb., will

entertain all ages with original songs, gospel, western, fiddle, and bluegrass music. The Carr Family Band members Ron, Judy, Anna, Abby, and Walter combine the ranching tradition and the legacy of music.



A different type of music will be presented on Sunday, March 6, at 2:00 p.m., when **Robert and Phyllis Dunne** keep everyone entertained with **"Didgeridoo and**

Dulcimer, Too." Sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council, this family concert presents the unique combination of the Appalachian Mountain dulcimer and the Australian Aboriginal didgeridoo. The program invites audience participation, while discovering the history behind American folk songs and the legacy of folk tales and traditions.



Pippa White will be performing her program **The Extraordinary Ordinary** on Thursday, March 17, at 7:00 p.m. It's a tribute to words, speech and language. Pippa states, "We hardly ever stop to think about it, but almost

everything that happens on our planet begins with speech." **The Extraordinary Ordinary** uses stories, music and historical characters to introduce audiences to the history, the mystery and the power of words!



On March 27 at 2:00 p.m., **Hannah Robbins** will present

accordion music. A native of Elm Creek, Hannah is noted for entertaining audiences in the area with her lively music.

Become a Friend of the Library. Help strengthen, support, promote and advocate for the public library. The Friends group meets one Thursday a month at 7:00 p.m. to plan programs, services, and activities that help the Library meet the needs of the community. At the January meeting the Friends developed a list of activities they'd like to implement in 2011. The next two meetings will be Feb. 17 and March 31, 7:00 p.m., at the Library. Join us then and learn about the opportunities that abound when you become a Friend of the Library.



REASONS TO SHOP LOCAL!

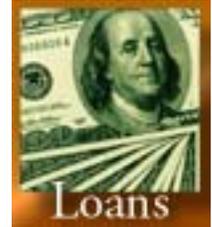
- **Shopping local creates jobs.** Stores in our city create local employment and self-employment. These people in turn spend in the local economy.
- **Local independent shops invest more in our community.** Local businesses are proportionally more generous in their support of local charities, schools, and community events. So supporting local shops means a financial contribution to our community.
- **Local shops sell great products at affordable prices.** Some people get out of the habit of shopping locally and are then surprised by the range of products available right here.
- **Shopping locally saves time and money.** You travel less, saving time and fuel.
- **Shopping locally retains our community.** People don't like losing local shops and services but often don't equate this with where they spend their money.
- **Shopping locally retains our distinctiveness.** Independent shops create distinctive shopping experiences and stock different products. Local businesses respond more quickly to the needs of local customers, stocking products to meet changing population needs.
- **Shopping locally is environmentally friendly.** Local shops often stock a high percentage of locally sourced goods that do not require long-distance transportation, helping to reduce our global footprint.
- **Local shops are for everyone.** Most people can get to local shops easily. This is especially important for the elderly, young people and others who rely on public transportation.
- **Local shops value you more.** Evidence from numerous surveys show people receive better customer care and service locally. These businesses survive by their reputation and repeat business, which means you get a higher standard of service.
- **Shopping local saves services.** Private and public sector services cluster around shops. As shops disappear so do hairdressers, banks, restaurants and other businesses we like nearby.
- **Pledge to Think, Shop, Buy, Local** and commit to patronizing businesses near where you live and work. Local stores employ our neighbors, pay taxes that support our schools and improve our roads, and contribute to local non-profit groups.

Together we can strengthen relationships that improve our quality of life. So next time before you make a purchase, **Think, Shop, Buy, Local.**

Used with permission: Barbara Wold International
www.linkedin.com/in/barbarawold

Energy Loans Extended

The December 2010 issue of *City Happenings* described a low-interest loan program to help make energy efficiency improvements on your property.



The Nebraska Energy Office has extended the deadline for taking advantage of these loans through March 2011. The loans are as low as 2.5% for up to 15 years, and are processed through the NEO, using local lenders. Loan rates may increase soon, so you are encouraged to make application soon to lock in a low rate. Visit <http://www.neo.ne.gov/loan/index.html> for requirements, forms, and more information.

As you will see at the website, there are far too many options to list on this page. However some typical improvements you can finance include:

- ★ Refrigerator, Freezer, Dishwasher, Dehumidifier or Clothes Washer Replacements
- ★ Certain Commercial Appliance Replacements
- ★ Room Air Conditioner and Room Heat Pump
- ★ Insulation added to walls, floors, ceilings, attics and other building envelope surfaces
- ★ Windows, Glass Doors and Exterior Doors
- ★ Skylight Replacements
- ★ Replacing windows and doors with solid walls
- ★ Reflective Window Film
- ★ High Efficiency Space Heating Equipment
- ★ Forced air gas furnace or Central Air Conditioner
- ★ Steam or hot water boiler
- ★ Combination water and space heater
- ★ Radiant heating
- ★ High Efficiency Space Cooling



Lexington snow and ice removal

Winter will soon be here once again. Before the first winter storm of the season, the City would like to remind citizens of the following points related to snow removal. There is also an Emergency Snow Route map on the next page, and is also found on the Maps link at the City's website.

Property owners are required to remove snow and ice from sidewalks abutting their property, within 48 hours of the snowfall. Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks not only ensures safe passage for pedestrians (including school children), but also limits liability. Someone who sustains injuries from slipping on ice might claim their injuries resulted from property owner neglect.

Please remember that snow and ice removed from your property is not to be placed into the street, instead move it to non-paved areas.

The City needs the cooperation of all citizens as we work to remove snow and ice from the streets. Citizens are encouraged to listen to local radio stations or read the local newspaper for announcements of possible Snow Emergency situations where substantial snowfall is experienced or anticipated.

In times of a declared Snow Emergency, parking along streets in the designated Snow Emergency Route is prohibited. Commercial Areas may also be included (see Snow Route map).

Citizens living along these routes are encouraged to comply

with the prohibition and move their vehicles from the street.

In addition, during a Snow Emergency, parking in the Downtown area is prohibited. In non-emergency times, citizens are still encouraged to move their parked vehicles off of the street in a reasonable period of time after snowfall to allow City crews access to remove the snow and ice. Information regarding the removal of snow in your area of the City can be obtained by contacting Glenn Hawks, Community Services Director, at 308-324-5995.

The City of Lexington would



like to reiterate that snow and ice removal is important for vehicular traffic as well as pedestrian traffic.

Please take the time to do your part to keep our streets and sidewalks safe.

The City of Lexington thanks everyone for their cooperation and prompt attention to this issue.



WE ASK OUR CUSTOMERS

DO NOT DEPOSIT IN TRASH DUMPSTERS:

yard waste • tree branches • wood
cement • iron • batteries and tires . . .
. . . as the landfill will not accept these items.

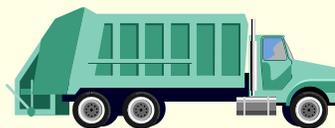
YOUR DUMPSTER IS FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD TRASH ONLY

If you have a curbside trash container, DO NOT place trash in large alley dumpsters. These are for alley customers only.

If your curbside trash container fills before the weekly pickup, please call for additional containers.

DO NOT under any circumstances put hot BBQ coals or fireplace ashes in your dumpster. If you are caught doing this you will have to pay to replace the dumpster if fire occurs.

If you see someone using alley containers for construction materials, yard waste, or other unaccepted items please call us right away and we will take care of it.



Dan's Sanitation

324-6693 • Lexington

