



# VINITA PARK CITIZEN NEWSLETTER

∞ PUBLISHED BY ∞

**JANUARY 2014**

**VOLUME 2014:01**

**NEWS WORTH KNOWING**

## **CITY HALL**

8374 MIDLAND  
(314)428-7373

FAX: (314)428-7379

MONDAY – FRIDAY  
8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

### **MAYOR**

James W. McGee  
426-5529

### **COLLECTOR**

Jeanette Carridine  
428-7373

### **ALDERMAN**

#### **WARD I**

Brian Gremaud  
922-0885

Richard Redel  
368-2329

#### **WARD II**

Wanda Fairley  
427-8587

Ora Stokes  
429-6863

#### **WARD III**

Celeste McGee  
426-5529

Dennis Hayden  
276-6188

## **WORDS FROM THE MAYOR**

I would like to start by thanking Alderwoman McGee and her committee and the business owners who donated and participated in the Breakfast with Santa event; it was a huge success.

I appreciate and thank Ms. Stokes and her committee for organizing the senior citizen's Christmas luncheon which was enjoyed by all.

A special thanks to Ms. Regina Speed for her years of service as the city clerk for the City of Vinita Park. We wish her success with her new job with the law firm. I would like to introduce our new temporary city clerk, Nina Walker, who is State and Internationally Certified as a City Clerk for 4<sup>th</sup> class cities.

We would like to Congratulate and send Best Wishes to Lovell Mays in his retirement as of January 1, 2014.

It is my sincere wish that you had a joyous holiday season and that this New Year brings you peace, health and prosperity. As we enter 2014, I am pleased to be able to tell you that through hard work and diligence, the City of Vinita Park is sound and strong. Through collaboration and trust, we have built a stronger community in 2013. We will use that foundation to continue to face the challenges in the New Year ahead and make our city an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

In order to continue providing you with a high level of city services, the budget includes capital improvements and the purchase of much-needed new equipment. We will be updating the city website to make it more user-friendly and to keep you informed. New software for our business tax collector will allow for more efficient reviews and collection of business taxes.

Your elected officials are working together with city employees to hold each department more responsible and accountable, to cut spending and increase productivity. Some elected officials and city employees are receiving more training with the Missouri Municipal League in the areas of budgeting, safety, emergency response, parliamentary procedures and new laws that will help make our city more efficient and provide you with better service.

Through careful financial planning and sound fiscal management, the city's budget is balanced and our projected reserve is \$1,096,651. We are working very hard to operate your city government efficiently, provide you with the best service, and to be good stewards of your tax dollars.

We are very proud of the Vinita Park Boys and Girls Club, who has made a tremendous difference in our city by helping to train the young professionals of tomorrow. The mission of the Boys and Girls Club is to inspire young people to reach their full potential as responsible, accountable, productive and caring citizens in our community, our nation, and our world.

I ask for your continued support and involvement in 2014 as we all work together to make our community stronger, safer and better as we continue to encourage our children to be successful, engage families and neighbors to support our mission.

**James W. McGee**  
**City Administrator & Mayor**

# ALDERMEN'S CORNER

## Happy New Year Ward 1, 2, 3 Residents

The holidays have come and gone and I'm sure some of the decorations are still up. I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

### Breakfast With Santa

Our Annual Breakfast with Santa and Santa Coming to Town events were a huge success thanks to all of you who came out and supported these great events on such a cold and wet morning. We had over 100 children, parents, residents, grandparents, and great-grandparents to participate. The turnout was overwhelming and City Hall was filled to capacity. I cannot tell you how surprised I was to see how many of you showed up to show your love and support. Our children were very happy and filled with joy knowing Santa was coming and they would be able to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. While the children were waiting with anticipation for Santa, they were served a hot breakfast which included bacon, eggs and cheese, sausage, hash brown, orange juice, cookies, donuts, and hot chocolate.

I would like to congratulate all of our winners of the bike giveaway. We had 29 children to receive bikes. In our special prize giveaway, we had three children win tricycles. In all, we had a total of 32 winners. Every child received a special gift from Santa. Everyone was a winner.

I would like to thank our local business owners for their donations and support in helping to raise over \$3000 in the form of monetary donations, bikes, and toys.

### Annual Lighting Contest

Our 2013 Annual Christmas Lighting Contest was very successful. I would like to thank the judges, Mrs. Shirley Keefer and Ms. Georgia McNutt, for taking time out of their busy schedules to judge the homes.

Our 2013 Winners Were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place (Nancy Mewes)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (Mr. & Mrs. William Beekman)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (Rose Blassingame)

**As I look back on 2013, I cannot go into 2014 without thanking the people who made Vinita Park the place it is today.**

I would like to give the warmest thanks to all of you for your hard work and outstanding contribution towards making Vinita park what it is today. Thank you to our wonderful Mayor James W. McGee, the hardest working mayor in North County; you are the greatest. Thank you for the successful growth of our City, for balancing the budget for the last four years, for making sure we have the best employees on the face of the earth. Thank you for making sure our residents have a warm bed to sleep in, free bread to put on their table, allowing residents to use City Hall as a heating shelter when their heat went out during the blistering cold winter of January 2013, for serving food and hot chocolate, for helping residents to find resources such as food pantries and rent assistance, just to name a few. Your dedication and commitment serve as a vital link in the chain which drives our community and your hard work shows that you truly care for our **Senior Citizens, Youth, Residents, Employees, and Community**. Thank you for all that you do!

**Alderwoman Stokes**, I would like to thank you for your willing heart to go above and beyond the call of duty no matter what is going on in our City. You have the strength that flows from your soul and your faith conviction is like a river that knows its own course. I know I can count on you. You are a beautiful person and I thank you.

**Chief Swope** and the Vinita Park Police Department, thank you for your leadership and making our City one of the safest places to live. Your department has the respect of our residents and our community and we really appreciate you. Thank you.

**Public Works Director Gerald French** and the Public Works Department, thank you for your fine effort and hard work in making sure our city and streets are clean during the summer months. This winter, we had the worst snow storm in 17 years with 12 inches of snow. The Public Works Department spent 12 long hard hours plowing snow and removing ice, a job well done. I cannot thank you enough for your devotion and dedication. It is a true testimony of our community spirit that influences many others. Thank you Mary, our Vinita Park Master Gardner, for planting all of the flowers throughout the City.

**This is where I live, Vinita Park, the Best and the Safest place in North County.**

Life is great and Life is the best gift from God; one can live only once. Many times, Life takes on a rough journey where you feel others are better off than you and sometimes, Life gives you more than you asked for. There are two primary choices in Life: to accept conditions as they exist, or to accept the responsibility for changing them. Life is really short and we need to live life to the fullest.

Constantly working hard for progress and stable leadership for our Community!

**Celeste McGee**  
**Alderwoman, Ward III**

**Happy New Year Ward II**

I hope you all had a wonderful New Year. Vinita Park has many things going on in the upcoming months. It was wonderful to see all of the children and parents come out for Breakfast with Santa and Santa Comes to Town. Santa gave out a lot of wonderful gifts. I would like to congratulate Ms. Nancy Mewes for winning the first place prize for her beautiful home decorations. I hope everyone was safe during the snow storm. Don't forget, if you need any assistance paying your utilities bills, please call 211. They will help you.

Remember, the only way we can move this City forward is by working together.

Thank you,

**Wanda Fairley**  
**Alderwoman, Ward II**

**Happy New Year to Ward 2 and the Entire City of Vinita Park**

We have had a wonderful 2013 and now we look forward to 2014 as a more perfect year. We can all thank God Almighty for all the things he has done for us.

Let us love a little more and be concerned about our fellow man as we start 2014. Though we all have shortcomings in our lives, we should be thankful and caring to one another.

Seniors, I look forward to another year working with each of you. We will have more trips this year than last year, should the Lord permit it to be.

Thanks to all who attended our final luncheon for 2013 which was held on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

I would like for more of you to get involved in helping me plan your entertainment this year. Let me know what you would like to do and I will do my best to get it done.

Stay warm, be safe, love one another, pray for one another, and God will do the rest. Thanks to our wonderful Mayor James McGee for the fine job he did last year. We look forward to many more. In addition, thanks to all City Departments in your respectful places; you all have given us your best and we thank you so much.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we may encourage one another in love and good deeds.

“Leadership with Integrity – Accessible, Committed and Honest”

**Ora Mae Stokes**  
**Alderwoman, Ward II**

# PUBLIC WORKS NEWS

## **No Parking**

We have purchased new 'NO PARKING' signs to be placed throughout the city. These new signs will specify which day and time no parking will be allowed, thus allowing full access to clean each street. Once the 'NO PARKING' signs are in place, there will be a NO TOLERANCE policy for those who do not obey these signs. The NO TOLERANCE policy will apply to current and future 'SNOW PLOWING' signs.

## **Snow Removal**

Please use off-street parking areas during snow removal. This will allow Public Works to better plow the streets of Vinita Park.

## **Storm Drains**

At the request of MSD, all of our storm water inlets have been marked as a reminder that only rain water should go in the drain. In years past, it was common practice for residents to sweep debris along the curb into the drains. Some went as far as to dump their waste oil. The new markers are there to remind us that what goes into these drains eventually ends up as our drinking water in our homes.

## **Grass/Yard Waste**

Yard waste pickup will resume in April 2014.

## **Reminder from Public Works**

In an effort to keep our city clean and beautiful, it is sometimes necessary for our city inspector to issue Housing Code Violations. It is the inspector's job to cite those who are in violation. This is not meant as an attack on our residents but as a firm reminder of that needs to be addressed by a resident in order to comply with our housing codes. Our inspector will work with you and may even extend your time frame to complete the necessary work. The work **MUST** still be completed. Failure to respond to your notice unfortunately results in an appointed court date. If this happens, the issue is out of the inspector's hands and into the courts which could result in possible fines and/or charges. So please, respond as soon as possible.

**Gerald B. French**  
**Public Works Director**

# POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

## **Greetings**

The Police Department continues to work efficiently. The new prisoner transport agreement has been a huge success, freeing up officers to dedicate even more time to patrol. We have been working with Public Works to get derelict vehicles removed from the roads and yards.

## **Can Drive for Needy Families**

The can drive went well. We were able to provide food for five needy families in time for Christmas.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Chief Swope at 314-428-7373.

**Sincerely,**  
**Chief Tim Swope**

# CITY HALL NEWS

## City Hall Closing

City Hall will be closed for the upcoming holiday:  
**Dr. Martin Luther King Day, January 20, 2014**

## January Board Meeting

Due to the holiday falling on the third Monday, the monthly board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

## Operation Excel Basketball League

Once again, Vinita Park will be participating in the annual Operation Excel Basketball League. Recruiting for the basketball league will begin in January and we will begin playing by April 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be five divisions with children and teenagers ages 8-10, 11-12, 13-15, 16-18, and 19 plus. Each team will play 10 games, not including the playoffs. There will also be a 3-on-3 tournament before the league starts which will be a fundraiser at Viking Hall.

## Indian Trails Library January Events

Tuesday, January 7, 2:00 pm

### **Tech Talks: eMedia**

Did you get a new eReader or tablet for the holidays? Find out how to download free eBooks and eAudiobooks from the St. Louis County Library's eMedia collection. Bring your device, your library card number and PIN, and any other accounts or passwords needed for your device. Library staff will assist you with the process. Registration recommended.

Wednesday, January 8, 2:00 pm

### **Homeschool Explorations: Masquerade**

See behind the disguise! Discover the world of masks and make one to take home with you.

Saturday, January 11, 10:00 am

### **In Search of Buried Treasure**

The Captain and the First Mate have a new treasure map that will lead them to "The Greatest Treasure in the World!" With audience help, the pirate ladies solve the clues on the map to find the treasure, but not before a mutiny breaks out. After all, what's a pirate shoe without a few sword fights? Presented by Swords and Roses. All Ages.

Thursday, January 23, 7:00 pm

### **Indoor Snowball Fight**

Stay warm as we have an indoor snowball fight and snowman building competition. Refreshments provided. Ages 12-18, registration required.

Thursday, January 30, 2014

### **Art@ Your Library: The Art of Magic**

Learn to captivate your family and friends through the art and skill of magic tricks. Your imagination will be inspired as you learn to perform simple "sleight of hand" tricks with basic household items. Ages 8-12, registration required.

### Women Living Whole

Women Living Whole welcomes you to attend our next events:

#### **"I am a Diamond"**

This session is centered on identifying the things that make us who we are. We all go through things that try to diminish our drive and motivation. Come learn how to turn each adversity into an opportunity.

**Date:** February 8, 2014 2pm to 5pm

**Place:** Vinita Park City Hall

8374 Midland Blvd

St. Louis, MO 63114

#### **"Being Seen as a Professional"**

This session is centered on interviewing skills and resume writing. Interviewing is a skill that most people are uncomfortable with and we want to provide you with tips that can help ease that anxiety. With a strong resume and great interviewing skills, you will have the opportunity to open new doors. Come to this session and get some advice from an expert in the Human Resources field.

**Date:** March 8, 2014 2pm to 5pm

**Place:** Jefferson Elementary School

4315 Cardwell Drive

St. Louis, MO 63121

#### **Summary of Session on Saturday, January 11, 2014:**

Women Living Whole hosted a session called Taking Charge of Your Health, at the Vinita Park City Hall January 11, 2014. This session was presented by Kathe Ward, RN, MSPH. Kathe Ward has 24 years of nursing experience and she used her knowledge of healthcare to teach women about preventive care and taking care of their families' health. One of the attendee's admitted that she had a phobia of seeing doctors because of a traumatic experience that occurred in her life. She stated because of the education that she received from Kathe she knows it is time to overcome that fear and go see a doctor. Women Living Whole hosts an event every month. Look for these free events which are open to the public in the monthly newsletters.

## **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

- **January 20 – Dr. Martin Luther King Birthday, City Hall Closed**
- **January 21 – Monthly Board of Alderman Meeting, City Hall, 6:30 PM**
- **January 21 – Last day to file for 2014 election**
- **February 14 – Pet Tag Deadline**
- **February 14 – Pavilion/Ball Diamond Registration Begins**
- **February 17 – President’s Day, City Hall Closed**