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Budgeting conservatively

Citizen and business input important part of the process



City at work rain or shine by Terri DeGezelle, Mankato.

The Mankato City Council adopted a five percent preliminary property tax levy that can be lowered. Initial budget forecasting considers a 1.26 percent increase in the debt levy survey, no increase to the \$167,000 transit levy and \$260,000 economic

development levy and estimates a deficit of \$1.4 million in the general fund. Over the past five years, the City Council has made substantially decreased general fund services and spending levels to balance the budget:

- reduced full-time workforce;
- implemented employee time off without pay;
- employed cost-containment strategies (health care refunds discontinued);
- identified service delivery priorities, efficiencies and core service funding, secondary services and livability services;
- reduced staffing throughout city departments;
- cut grant funding;
- lengthened schedules for equipment depreciation/replacement.

Also impacting Mankato's budget is a \$1.56 million reduction in Local Government Aid. Another change underway is the shift from the market value homestead credit to the market value homestead exclusion. The previous law calculated tax, giving property owners a credit, which was reimbursed by the state (a reduction the city budget did not see). The new law lowers a home's value and then determines the tax based on that value.

How does this shift in tax laws affect citizens and businesses? It results in \$104 million in state budget cuts that will affect property owners. Reducing property values before taxes are determined results in lower tax capacity. In addition, even having a flat tax rate causes the total tax levy to rise. Then a greater portion of that burden is placed on commercial/industrial and residential non-homestead properties.

As city officials deliberate on how to achieve a balanced budget, citizens and businesses have been invited to participate in focus groups since their input is important and useful in determining a balanced budget. In addition, public input can be provided online. [Watch](#) Mankato's website for updates and an online option to give input.

Budget options considered include reducing services across the board, further reducing community grants, changes in parks

Apply to serve on Mankato's Public Safety Advisory Committee

Citizen involvement is important and helpful to maintain and enhance quality of life. Mankato residents are being recruited to serve on Mankato's new Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Establishing this committee will proactively involve citizens in public safety priorities and planning. Responsibilities include providing input with industry professionals and city staff about hiring and promoting public safety staff. Committee recommendations will be made to the City Council. Nine appointments are expected to be made before the end of the year.

Learn more about the committee [online](#). [Apply](#) to serve on Mankato's Public Safety Advisory Committee. More information is available [online](#), or [contact](#) staff in the City Manager's office at 507-387-8690.

Warren and Cherry streets converted from one-way to two-way streets

Warren and Cherry streets recently converted to two-way streets. This conversion is a part of the [City Center Renaissance Plan](#), which recommended changes to enhance neighborhood livability and economic vitality within the City Center.

Signals were removed from the Glenwood Avenue and Warren Street intersections, creating a free-flowing movement for Warren Street. Learn more about the conversion [online](#).

For more information [contact](#) engineering staff at 507-387-8634.

Mankato's new sister city – Ungheni



Liliana Tincu, Mayor Eric Anderson and Assistant City Manager Tanya Ange sign the sister city agreement.

City intern Liliana Tincu made the suggestion that Ungheni, in the Republic of Moldova, be Mankato's new sister city.

This no-cost partnership emphasizes cultural, educational and technological exchanges between the two cities, including meetings via webcam.

Tincu attended Minnesota State University, Mankato to earn a graduate degree while serving as an intern with the city of Mankato. She returned to Ungheni last month.

service levels and public landscaping and elimination of an outdoor ice skating rink. Some items up for consideration to help increase revenue include increasing the property tax levy and service charges, discontinuing fee waivers for nonprofit organizations, redirecting funds and charging for ballfield maintenance.

Citizens are encouraged to attend a budget hearing at 7 p.m., Monday, December 5 in the Minnesota River room of the Intergovernmental Center, 10 Civic Center Plaza.

For more information [contact](#) Assistant City Manager Tanya Ange at 507-387-8609.

311 Mankato - one call does it all

*Have a burning building? Call 911.
Have a burning question? Call 311.*

311 Mankato is a call center with a short, easy-to-remember telephone number for Mankato residents to phone with their city service questions. A major benefit of 311 is that it serves non-emergency calls once directed to 911.

The 311 call center staff is also available by calling 507-387-8600. Currently, 311 is available to HickoryTech, Verizon and Sprint customers. City staff are looking to expand 311 with other carrier providers.

For more information [contact](#) public information staff at 507-387-8516.

CityArt wins "Community Pride Award"

Mankato's [CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour](#) is one of 30 projects in Minnesota to win the "Community Pride Award. The tour includes 25 sculptures from artists around the world with mediums ranging from cast iron to molded plastic through Mankato's City Center. The public has an opportunity to vote for the People's Choice Award, which will be purchased by the City Center Partnership for permanent installation.

For more information [contact](#) Twins Rivers Council for the Arts at 507-387-1008.

Mankato holds public sale October 12

Mankato's public works department will hold a public sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, October 12 at the public works center, 501 South Victory Drive. The sale includes furniture and other items, such as office desks and chairs, cubicle partitions, cabinets and hardware, file cabinets, bookcases, refrigerators and drinking fountains.

Prior to holding the sale, staff made sure to reuse as many items as they could, including furniture, doors and lights. In addition, staff recycled items from the public safety center, former Minnesota Department of Transportation building and other city facilities.

For more information [contact](#) Tom Fournier, assistant to the director of public works, at 507-387-8689.

City of Mankato 2012 photo contest winners



Calendar cover winner: A walk down Parsons Street by Julie Thorleifson, Mankato.

Results are in for Mankato's 2012 annual photo contest. This year's cover winner is "A walk down Parsons Street," by Julie Thorleifson of Mankato. Chris Batson of Lake Crystal won second place for "Wonderment at the

Intergovernmental Center." This year's winners:

- January--[City Center](#) by Jenna Hiniker, Mankato
- February--[Winter storm](#) by Randy Wood, Mankato
- March--[Ascending stairs](#) in Sibley Park by Lucas Hendrickson, Mankato
- April--[Coffee in the rain](#) by Alyssa Gratz, North Mankato
- May--[Wonderment at the Intergovernmental Center](#) by Chris Batson, Lake Crystal
- June--[Golf at the Mankato Golf Club](#) by Ann Sorensen, Mankato
- July--[A walk down Parsons Street](#) by Julie Thorleifson, Mankato
- August--[Vetter Stone Ampitheater](#) by in Riverfront Park Ted Jacobson, Mankato
- September--[Wagon Wheel Café in the City Center](#) Todd Donery, Minneapolis
- October--[Fall at Glenwood](#) by Michaela Crnkovic, Mankato
- November--[Brrrrrrrrrr! on Riverfront Drive](#) by Terri DeGezelle, Mankato
- December--[Cabin in the snow in Sibley Park](#) by Sara Palmer, Mankato

People's Choice winners were also selected. People's Choice was a citizen's suggestion.

- [Standing tall at Lion's Park; Nesting pair; A new day, a new start at Rosa Parks Elementary School](#) and [Last days of summer](#) by Jason Verly, Mankato
- [St. Joseph the Worker](#) by Terri DeGezelle, Mankato
- [Judicial storm](#) by Calvin Johnson, Mankato
- [Stand-by bandstand, Sunset river, Matt J. Graif building](#) by Robert Norland, Thousand Oaks, California
- [Keeping cool on a hot day](#) by Jenna Hiniker, Mankato

More than 350 entries were submitted. Look for the calendar in the November 29 issue of Home Magazine and [online](#). Thank you to the [Mankato Clinic](#) and [CHS](#) for partnering to sponsor the 2012 calendar. Without this sponsorship, printing of the calendar could not continue.

For more information [contact](#) Mankato's public information staff at 507-387-8692.



311 Mankato at your service. Or, call 507-387-8600.

Mankato's leaf pickup service begins when leaves fall

Public works staff vacuum leaves as part of Mankato's [leaf pickup service](#), a value-added to residents' garbage and recycling. Leaves will be picked up the day following regular garbage pickup. To participate in leaf pickup, rake leaves to the curb.



Mankato's leaf pickup service is value-added service to residents' garbage and recycling.

- It is important to place leaves in the gutter (on the street, but next to the curb).
- Leaves only please. Brush can damage the leaf vacuum machine.
- Streets need to be free of parked cars on the day after recycling/garbage pickup day for the leaf vacuum machine to get through.
- Residents having a home on a corner lot are asked to pull leaves from the street corner because the leaf vacuum machine turns too wide to pick up leaves left on the corner.

Vacuumed leaves are recycled and used as compost in city parks. For more information call 311 or 507-387-8600. Learn what to do with yard waste and composting [online](#).

Emerald ash borer test results negative

Emerald ash borer detection traps have been removed and the results are negative. Next spring, city employees will again work with staff from Minnesota's Department of Agriculture to place another 20 or so emerald ash borer detection traps. Learn more about Mankato's testing [online](#).

For questions or more information about [contact](#) public works staff at 507-387-8689.

Sign up for Home Stretch workshops



**Thinking about buying a home?
Sign up for Home Stretch
to learn about:**

- Homeownership--is it right for you?
- Understanding the home buying process
- Overcoming barriers to homeownership
- Shopping for a home
- Financing a home
- Qualifying for a mortgage
- The purchasing process
- Closing on a home
- Life as a successful homeowner

Workshops are held the first and second Thursdays of every month from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the Intergovernmental Center, 10 Civic Center Plaza. Cost is \$15. Preregistration is requested because space is limited. For more information or to register, contact staff at 507-387-8636, or cdhse@city.mankato.mn.us.

www.ci.mankato.mn.us

Register for a [Home Stretch workshop](#) to learn information about buying a home.

Give "your take" about Hiniker Pond

Give the city of Mankato ["your take"](#) about how to make Hiniker Pond a better place. Plan to attend a Hiniker Pond presentation at 1

Making it right

Prompt to respond and serve



Jim Braunshausen

Streets Superintendent Jim Braunshausen led the way by being responsive when he answered a telephone call from Mankato resident Sue Mueller to check out curb damage caused by a city snow plow. The call came in during the off-season, and Braunshausen immediately responded by visiting Mueller and inspecting the damage.

Mueller said, "He [Jim Braunshausen] was very thoughtful and efficient, and helped me get my problems solved."

Braunshausen suggested to Mueller that in addition to the city fixing the damaged curb caused by the snow plow, it may be worthwhile to find out the contractor's cost for repairing her concrete approach from the street to her driveway at the same time. After reviewing the private contractor's price, Mueller agreed to pay two-thirds of the final repair cost and opted to have the expense assessed to her property taxes.

After talking with Mueller about fears that a decayed boulevard tree would fall onto neighborhood properties, Braunshausen initiated the steps to have the city tree removed for safety. Another item he noticed was the poor shape of the reflective dead end street sign, so he had it replaced.

"Our philosophy is simple," Braunshausen said. "We look for every opportunity to be responsive to citizens, and try to take a common sense and efficient approach in doing so."

Citizens are encouraged to make Mankato a better place by calling 311 or 507-387-8600. Make a customer service request [online](#).

Well-qualified employees serve Mankato citizens

Jim Archer earns advanced licensure

Initiative and effort are commendable qualities in employees who achieve advanced licensure. Jim Archer, wastewater plant industrial chemist, passed the exam to be designated a class "B" operator by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.



Jim Archer

Make a difference in the community

Help make Mankato better by joining Mankato's Vounteer Corps. Help is needed for fall cleanup in city parks – picking up garbage and clearing brush, leaves and rocks. For more information or to volunteer call 311 or 507-387-8600.

p.m. on Wednesday, October 26, where Mankato city staff will review ideas and suggestions collected. The Hiniker Pond presentation will be held at the Intergovernmental Center, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, in the Minnesota River Room (first floor).

Hiniker Pond is one project city of Mankato leadership teams are working as part of Mankato's LEAD institute, a program that helps build leaders from within. Other projects include challenges on Walnut and Sixth streets, such as rentals and on-street parking; the rock and trail area near a local high school; speeding near a local elementary school and Tanager Road pedestrian access. Solutions to these projects will also be presented on October 26.

For more information [contact](#) public information staff at 507-387-8692.

Ride the bus with us



Get to your destination on time--ride Mankato's city bus.

Mankato's city bus is convenient, reliable and affordable transportation that gets riders to their destination on time. Learn more about Mankato's buses and see routes [online](#), or call 507-625-RIDE (7433).

Advertise on a city bus. For more information [contact](#) public works

staff at 507-387-8655.

Connect with local government

The [city of Mankato](#), the [City Council](#) and [City Manager Patrick Hentges](#) are on Facebook. Become a Facebook fan and connect with local government and officials. Follow the city of Mankato on [Twitter](#).

For more information, [contact](#) public information staff at 507-387-8692.

City-School News

Check out the latest edition of City-School News.

Upcoming Verizon Wireless Center events

[MSU Maverick Men's Hockey vs.](#)



Fanastic night at the civic center by Ted Jacobsen, Mankato.

14
7:07 p.m., Saturday, October 15

[MSU Maverick Men's Hockey vs. St. Cloud State](#)

7:37 p.m., Friday, November 11
7:07 p.m., Saturday, November 12

[MSU Maverick Men's Hockey vs. Alaska Anchorage](#)

7:37 p.m., Friday, November 25
7:07 p.m., Saturday, November 26

[Disney Live! Three Classic Fairy Tales](#)

1:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., Sunday, November 27

24-hour city services

- Public safety: 911
- Customer service [online](#)
- Crime solvers tip line and graffiti hotline: 507-345-1023
- Street maintenance request: 507-345-0600
- File a police report [online](#)
- Water 507-387-8661

Other helpful phone numbers

Verizon Wireless Center 507-389-3000
Compost site 507-388-3122
Household hazardous waste 507-304-4242
Recycle center 507-388-1157

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507-387-8692

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