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Welcome to the village of Mahomet

By SEAN WIDENER
Village President

Mahomet is one of the fastest-growing communities in central Illinois and is ideally located between Bloomington-Normal and Champaign-Urbana. An award-winning school district, minutes away from the University of Illinois, a community-focused library, flourishing businesses and a family-friendly atmosphere are all great reasons to choose Mahomet.

Outdoor recreational opportunities also thrive in Mahomet. We are the home of two Champaign County Forest Preserves: Lake of the Woods, a 900-acre rolling woodland, and River Bend, which has 130 acres of clear water lakes. You can walk, run or bike on miles of paved and natural trails, fish on the largest lake in Champaign County and enjoy 18 holes of golf. While taking in the natural beauty of the preserves, you can also enjoy unique destinations such as the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, the Museum of the Grand Prairie and Champaign County’s only covered bridge or climb high above the trees at the Hi-Tower observation desk.

The village of Mahomet’s Parks and Recreation Department expands upon the opportunities with over 100 acres of open space spread across 10 park locations. We offer a variety of fun and instructional programs from soccer to yoga. If the Parks and Recreation Department doesn’t have what you are looking for, you are likely to find it with numerous club sports within the area.

We are committed to long-range planning and making Mahomet a great place to live, work and play. Many communities talk about quality of life – we invite you to experience it.

Welcome to Mahomet!

Mahomet village President Sean Widener, standing at a monument about the town’s history at its administrative offices downtown, said he expects growth to continue in coming years.

Penny Weaver/The Mahomet Citizen
The village board of trustees holds study sessions on the second and third Tuesdays of each month.

The board holds a regular board meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month. All meetings are at 6 p.m. and are held at the Village Administration Building at 503 E. Main St. in Mahomet.

**Government**

**Village President**
Sean Widener
mayor@mahomet-il.gov

**Trustees**
Bruce Colravy
bcolravy@mahomet-il.gov
Andy Harpst
aharpst@mahomet-il.gov

David Johnson
djohnson@mahomet-il.gov

Donald Lynn
dlynn@mahomet-il.gov

Bill Oliger
boliger@mahomet-il.gov

Brian Metzger
bmetzger@mahomet-il.gov

The Village of Mahomet Administration Building at 503 E. Main St. is the site of village staff offices and provides a meeting place for the village board of trustees.

Village of Mahomet elected officials include, in front, from left, trustee Andy Harpst, village President Sean Widener and trustee Donald Lynn; in back, from left, trustees Bruce Colravy, David Johnson, Bill Oliger and Brian Metzger.

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Penny Weaver photos/The Mahomet Citizen

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The Village of Mahomet Administrative Building is located at 503 E. Main St. Forms and applications for bonfires, complaints, employment, Freedom of Information Act information, solicitation permits and special events may be found at the administration building or at the village's website: mahomet-il.gov.

Water and wastewater service applications ($40) by cash or check) must be submitted in person with one form of photo ID on hand. Applications for various planning or zoning procedures and burning regulations also may be found at the village's website.

Village staff
Administration
Patrick Brown
Village administrator
pbrown@mahomet-il.gov

Robert Kouzmanoff
Finance and HR director
rkouzmanoff@mahomet-il.gov

Amanda Andersen
Village clerk
aandersen@mahomet-il.gov

Sara Toomer
Collector/receptionist
stoomer@mahomet-il.gov

Treichae Ashwood-White
Accounting assistant
twhite@mahomet-il.gov

Water/Wastewater Department
302 S. Vine St.
Water Plant
217-586-3554
Wastewater plant
217-586-5324

Jason Heid
Superintendent
jheid@mahomet-il.gov

Transportation Department
218 S. Lake of the Woods Road
217-586-2013

Jim Barden
Superintendent
jbarden@mahomet-il.gov

Village offices
Village Administration Building
503 E. Main St.
P.O. Box 259
Mahomet, IL 61853

Phone: 217-586-4456
Fax: 217-586-5696

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Planning and zoning
Kelly Pfeifer
Community development director
kpfeifer@mahomet-il.gov

Ken Buchanan
Inspector/code compliance officer
kbuchanan@mahomet-il.gov

Abby Heckman
Planner
acheckman@mahomet-il.gov

Teresa Karnes
Administrative assistant
tkarnes@mahomet-il.gov

Ellen Hedrick
Village engineer
ehedrick@mahomet-il.gov
Police department, ESDA

Mahomet Police Department
303 E. Oak St.
P.O. Box 1043
mahometpolice@police.mahomet-il.gov
Emergency: 911
Dispatcher: 217-333-8911

Police department staff
Michael Metzler
Chief of police
Bill Ward
Officer/School resource officer
Tim Elliott
Deputy chief
Rebecca Bragg
Officer
David Parsons
Officer
Ryan Rich
Officer
Kevin Beckett
Officer
John Paulo Alfonso
Officer

Nonemergency: 217-586-5533
Fax: 217-586-4132
Social media:
Like Mahomet Police Department on Facebook
Follow @MahometPD on Twitter

Mahomet Emergency Services and Disaster Agency
Gary Crowley
Director
Phone: 217-586-3511
(only manned during severe weather)

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The Cornbelt Fire Protection District’s team of local volunteers has served the Mahomet community and the surrounding areas since 1953.

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Phone: 217-586-3380  
Fax: 217-586-5042  
Emergency: 911  
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Fire chief

Mitch Rolson  
Assistant fire chief

Chuck Thompson  
Assistant fire chief

John Cumbee  
Assistant fire chief

Michelle Morgan  
Bonnie Vaughn  
Administrative assistants

Jim Rolson  
Treasurer  
Jim Jeffers Jr.  
Secretary  
Randy Buchanan  
Mark Kaiser  
Trustees at large

**Government bodies**

**Plan and Zoning Commission**
Members of the commission are appointed by the village president. Meetings are typically held at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month.  
Jay Roloff, chairman  
Earl Seamands  
Bob Buchanan  
Steven Briney  
Damian Spencer  
Robert DeAtley  
Mike Buzicky

**Economic Development Commission**
Commission members are chosen by appointment. They meet at 7 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month.  
Kyle Jordan  
Bill Peithmann  
Ryan Heiser  
Brian Egeberg  
Nathan Mills  
Darwyn Boston

**Plan and Zoning Board of Appeals**
Ed Delaporte  
Jared Ernst  
Alex Kocher  
Josh Jessup  
Bill Peithmann  
Ryan Heiser  
Brian Egeberg  
Nathan Mills  
Darwyn Boston  
Eric Kraft  
Lisa Peithmann  
Tom Widener

**Tree Commission**
The commission works to promote the well-being of Mahomet’s trees.  
Emily Kroner  
Bruce Colravy  
Gary Kling

**Board of Fire and Police Commissioners**
Creation of this board was required by state law when Mahomet’s population topped 5,000. Because Cornbelt Fire Protection District is an independent entity, the commission oversees only the village police department.  
Paul Palumbo  
Thomas P. Petrilli  
Keith Willis

If you are interested in serving an appointed capacity in case of a vacancy, complete the application available on the village of Mahomet’s website (mahomet-il.gov) and submit it to the Village Office at 503 E. Main St.

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The Mahomet Township board holds monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Mahomet Township Building, 512 E. Main St.

The township mailing address is P.O. Box 492, Mahomet, IL, 61853.

The township phone number is 217-586-5757.

Aaron Wheeler
Township board supervisor
217-372-1054

Chris Doenitz
Highway commissioner
217-202-1910
mahtwp@yahoo.com

Lindsay Brotherton
Assessor

David Parsons
Township clerk
217-202-6037
dpars@mschi.com

Greg Miller
Township trustee

Eric Hall
Township trustee

Tal Holmes
Township trustee

Shelby Ray
Township trustee
Paul Christie

Cemetery sexton
217-202-1909

Mahomet Township
Assessor
207 N. Division St.
Mahomet, IL 61853
217-586-1938

Mahomet Township Road
District
2270 County Road 0 East
Mahomet, IL 61853
217-586-3022

More than 8,600 people live within the corporate limits of the village of Mahomet. Adjacent to the village, but outside of village limits, rests unincorporated Champaign County, which includes Champaign, Dewey, Mahomet and Seymour addresses.

“I think a lot of people confuse the two,” said Patrick Brown, village of Mahomet administrator. “There’s a difference between the village and the unincorporated.

“The majority of us are in Mahomet Township, although some might be in Newcomb. Everybody in the village limits are also in the township and pay township taxes, too, but the people outside the village pay only the township taxes.”

Village of Mahomet taxes provide for the operation of the village government, including funding the Community Development Department, Mahomet Police Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Transportation Department, water and wastewater treatment facilities and much more.

For more information about the village of Mahomet, visit mahomet-il.gov.

To learn more about the Mahomet Township, call 217-586-5757.
Mahomet Community Center

The Mahomet Community Center, located at 510 E. Main St., is owned and maintained by the Mahomet Township.

For over 30 years, it has provided a place for township people to gather and host celebrations.

It’s available for rent for civic groups, baby and wedding showers, family reunions and any other group desiring a roomy place in which to hold a gathering.

The center is also where many Mahomet area residents vote in elections and attend Parks and Recreation classes.

Rentals cost $50 for up to four hours and anything over four hours is $100. For more information on rental fees and regulations, or to book an event, call Walter Pierce at 217-840-2700 or David Parsons at 217-202-6037.
Mahomet area churches

Due to COVID-19 related concerns, many churches were still meeting remotely or with altered in-person arrangements at press time. Please call the church of your choice to confirm information on meeting days and times before attending. Thank you!

Church of the Cross
1204 Rolling Hills Drive
217-586-6764
Worship: Sunday, 10:15 a.m.

Point of Change Mahomet
702 Turkey Farm Road
217-586-4434
Worship: Sunday, 3 p.m.

Community Free Church
An Evangelical Free Church
102 W. Riverbend Blvd.
217-586-5165
Worship: Sunday, 10:45 a.m.

First Baptist Church
402 S. Elm St.
217-586-3304
Worship: Sunday, 10:45 a.m.

Grace Church
800 W. Oak St.
217-586-4331
Worship: Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Lake of the Woods Church
910 S. Trailside Drive (north of Interstate 74 off Exit 174)
217-586-5805

Lutheran Church of Mahomet
410 East Andover Drive
217-586-4786
Worship: Sunday, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Mahomet Christian Church
908 N. Lake of the Woods Road
217-586-3095
Worship: Sunday, 10 a.m.

Mahomet United Methodist Church
1302 E. South Mahomet Road
217-586-2147
Traditional worship: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.
Contemporary worship: Sunday, 10:45 a.m.

New Beginnings Lutheran Church
304 E. Dunbar St.
217-590-0306
Worship: Sunday, 10 a.m.

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church
501 W. State St.
217-586-5153
Masses: Saturday, 4 p.m. (winter) or 5 p.m. (summer); Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Tuesday, 6:30 a.m.; Wednesday through Friday, 8 a.m.

Sangamon Valley Christian Center Mahomet Foursquare Church
200 W. Washington St.
217-586-5875
Worship: Sunday, 10 a.m.

Shiloh United Methodist
325 County Road 2700 N. (Route 47 north, 4 miles)
217-493-1528 or 586-4802
Worship: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Vineyard Church
1500 N. Lincoln Ave., Urbana
217-384-3070
Worship: Saturday, 6 p.m.; Sunday, 9:15 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Mahomet area churches of all denominations welcome visitors and new members.

Worship: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Life Community Church
804 Eastwood Drive, Suite 10
217-649-8302
Worship: Sunday, 10 a.m.

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Mahomet Music Festival

The Mahomet Music Festival, previously named the Sangamon River Music Festival, is an annual, free Mahomet tradition that welcomes hundreds of guests to its two-day event that typically features nationally recognized headliner music acts and numerous local acts.

Due to COVID-19 related concerns, the fate of the 2020 festival is not known. At press time it had not been cancelled.

Held in late August, the annual event dates back to 1997, when the festival featured mostly bluegrass acts. Mahomet Music Festival staples include a carnival, food vendors, a parade and much more.

More info
For more information about the festival, visit mahometmusicfest.com or Mahomet Music Festival on Facebook.

The Mahomet-Seymour High School Marching Bulldogs’ horn section plays its part during the Mahomet Music Festival parade on Aug. 24, 2019.


Garrett Halm/for The Mahomet Citizen

Brett Back, 6, a Mahomet first-grader, takes a ride on the giant slide as part of the carnival at the Mahomet Music Festival on Aug. 24, 2019.

Penny Weaver/for The Mahomet Citizen

Mahomet Music Festival

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201 W. Springfield Ave., Ste 1201
Champaign, IL 61820
Mahomet-Seymour schools

**Superintendent’s Office**
1301 S. Bulldog Drive
217-586-2161
Superintendent: Lindsey Hall
Director of instruction: Nicole Rummel
Director of special education: Christine Northrup
Administration assistant: Dawn Quinley

**Middletown Prairie Elementary**
1301 S. Bulldog Drive
217-586-5833
Grades: Early childhood program for 3- and 4-year-olds, kindergarten, first and second.
Principal: Ryan Martin
Assistant principal: Dustin Day

**Lincoln Trail Elementary**
102 E. State St.
217-586-2811
Grades: Third, fourth and fifth
Principal: Megan Hunter
Assistant principal: Darin O’Connell

**Mahomet-Seymour Junior High**
201 W. State St.
217-586-4415
Grades: Sixth, seventh and eighth
Principal: Nathan Mills
Assistant principal: Doug Fisher

**Mahomet-Seymour High School**
302 W. State St.
217-586-4962
Grades: Ninth through 12th
Principal: Chad Benedict
Assistant principal: Patrick Bailey

**Transportation**
217-586-4443
Director: Nick York

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The Mahomet-Seymour board of education holds study sessions at 7 p.m. on the first Monday of each month and regular meetings at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month.

Meetings of the board of education are typically held in the boardroom at Middletown Prairie Elementary School, 1301 S. Bulldog Drive, Mahomet.

---

**President**
Max McComb
mmccomb@mscusd.org

**Vice president**
Lori Larson
llarson@mscusd.org

**Secretary**
Merle Giles
mgiles@mscusd.org

**Superintendent**
Lindsey Hall

**Dr. Jeremy Henrichs**
jhenrichs@mscusd.org

**Meghan Hennesy**
mhennesy@mscusd.org

**Ken Keefe**
kkeefe@mscusd.org

**Colleen Schultz**
cschultz@mscusd.org

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**NHTSA**
Parks and recreation

Parks and recreation director
Dan Waldinger
dwaldinger@mahomet-il.gov

Administrative assistant
Johanna Jewell

Program coordinator
Denise Reynolds
dreyolds@mahomet-il.gov

Parks maintenance
Dennis Mohr

218 S. Lake of the Woods Road
Mahomet, IL 61853
Mailing address:
P.O. Box 259
Mahomet, IL 61853
Office number: 217-586-6025
Weather line: 217-586-7246 (RAIN)
Email: mahometrec@mahomet-il.gov

www.mahometrecreation.com
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Mahomet Parks and Recreation Department strives to improve the quality of life for all participants by meeting the needs of the community through the provisions of safe, excellent, recreational and leisure-time activities.

Did you know?
• MPRD serves more than 14,500 people in and around Mahomet.
• MPRD programs serve over 2,000 participants and 250 volunteers annually.
• MPRD is a department of the village of Mahomet and not a park district.
• MPRD manages nearly 100 acres of park land.

Other activities
MPRD continues to provide adult fitness classes, a regular lineup of special events and youth sports leagues and new sports camps. Other fun events include the Summer Concert Series and a free “Touch a Truck” annual event.

Park updates
The parks department looks forward to completing a number of projects that will advance the quality of life for community residents.

The department has a number of programs for folks of all ages, including Zumba, Yoga, Egg Hunt, Turkey Trot, Duck Race, Wee Love Music, and youth sports camps and clinics.

Mahomet parks
• Barber Park, 703 S. McDougal Road, has 55 acres and serves as the site of T-ball, soccer and flag football activities. It is equipped with a Lions Club pavilion/kitchen and public restrooms.
• Brent Johnson Park, 1202 E. Oak Valley Road, has 10 acres with a playground and nine-hole disc golf course.
• Brooks/Warfel Park, 405 E. Dunbar St., has 0.33 acre with a playground for small children and a pavilion.
• Bridle Leash Park, 906 W. Dianne Lane, has 10.5 acres featuring two ballfields, a concession stand/restrooms, a walking trail, a basketball court, a playground and sand volleyball.
• Dowell Park, 501 E. Andover St., is 3.2 acres with one ballfield and concession stand.
• Police Department Park, 570 S. Center St., has an asphalt basketball court.
• Russell Park, 413 E. Main St., has 3,600 square feet of sitting area.
• Sangamon River Greenway, 1404 Division St., offers 32.66 acres of preserved, undeveloped flood plain greenway on the Sangamon River.
• Water Tower Park, 1404 E. Heather Drive, is 5 acres of undeveloped open space.
• 13 Acres Park, 302 W. Dunbar St., is 13.3 acres of land owned by the Mahomet-Seymour school district and cooperatively managed by MPRD. It offers a concession stand, a playground, five ballfields and open space.
• Taylor Fields, 703 W. Hickory St., is equipped with two lighted ballfields and a concession stand.

Children typically flock to the Touch a Truck event in early to mid June each summer hosted by the Mahomet Parks and Recreation Department.

The department is moving forward with the canoe/kayak launch at the Sangamon River Greenway Park. This project is fueled by a Recreation Trails Program grant administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

More recently, MPRD applied for an OSLAD (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development) IDNR grant to seek funding support for the first phase of Barber Park development. This includes development of an enhanced pavilion/amphitheater space, a new splash pad, new traditional and nature-themed playgrounds and a connected path to support the fields and access the new amenities.

Renovations to the Parks Maintenance Building are ongoing, updating the facility to better meet the demands of the growing parks system.

Finally, Brooks/Warfel Park is undergoing significant renovations including a new playground, site furniture and new landscaping and hardscapes. The finished project will be easier to maintain, be more accessible for the community and look clean and modern.

Offerings
Youth soccer (boys and girls 4 years old to sixth grade) provides instructions and drills taught to younger leagues. Every league competes in games. Younger participants meet Saturday mornings with the older leagues, which also play one weekend game.

Flag football (boys and girls in first through sixth grade) teaches football skills, rules, sportsmanship and self-confidence. The program promotes safety as there is no tackling or blocking.

Youth basketball (kindergarten through sixth-grade students) is an instructional program with organized games. The kindergarten league is coed. MPRD partners with Mahomet-Seymour schools for facilities use.

Youth Volleyball Clinic (boys and girls third through sixth grade) is an instructional program with organized games that teaches volleyball skills, techniques and rules.

Youth softball and baseball leagues (boys 4 years old to sixth grade and girls 4 years old to fifth grade) include T-ball, baseball and slow-pitch and machine-pitch softball.

Adult softball (16 years of age or older) is a slow-pitch league. The men’s league plays on Monday or Thursday evenings. Participants enter as a team and pay a lump sum registration fee. MPRD does not aid in forming teams or placing individuals on teams.

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An accessible boat dock is being installed at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve in Mahomet. It is part of an overall project that will also add an open-air shelter and accessible picnic tables to the peninsula area of the park.

**BY STEVE HOFFMAN**

shoffman@news-gazette.com

MAHOMET – A key step in the installation of an ADA accessible boat ramp was accomplished in the spring of 2020 at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve in Mahomet after delivery was made of a new dock for the recreation area’s peninsula area.

Funded partially through a $152,000 Illinois Search Results Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant, the dock will eventually include transfer stations to allow persons with disabilities to more easily board paddle boats, canoes and kayaks in the lake.

“The boat dock is the first of its kind in the area and is part of an ongoing, grant-funded construction project, which will improve the preserve’s peninsula location off Lake of the Woods Road,” said Lisa Sprinkle, marketing coordinator of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District.

Depending on when parks fully open amid COVID-19 concerns, she said the dock could be open to the public later this year. If so, it will be available year round during the park’s operating hours, which is outside of the Memorial Day to Labor Day limits for paddle boat rental.

Participants will need to provide their own kayaks and canoes.

The Forest Preserve District is matching the OSLAD grant for an effort that will also include a large, open-air shelter, five accessible picnic tables and grills, and an ADA acceptable path.

“This was a great area to update,” said Sprinkle. Not only is the aging, static dock being replaced by a floating one, entry at that location will allow access to the entire lake.

“If you’re here, you can get everywhere,” she added.

The entire project should be completed by May of next year.

The dock platform was delivered and installed by G&H Marine in Decatur. It is brand named AccuDock, which manufactures a line of floating docks, ramps and gangways that meet American Disabilities Act specifications. Features include transfer platform and launch systems that offer further safety measures.
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Mahomet, IL 61853
Forest preserves

The Mahomet area offers two forest preserves that are a part of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve and River Bend Forest Preserve.

**Lake of the Woods**
Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve is 10 miles west of Champaign-Urbana and just north of Mahomet. The preserve is a rolling wooded area occupying almost 900 acres along the Sangamon River corridor.

It is highlighted by several well-known attractions, including the Museum of the Grand Prairie, Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens and Hartwell C. Howard Lake of the Woods Golf Course.

The two lakes provide opportunities for fishing and boating, while the preserve offers hiking, cross-country skiing, building rentals and much more.

**Museum of the Grand Prairie**
The Museum of the Grand Prairie presents Champaign County and East Central Illinois history with more than 25,000 artifacts, in-depth exhibits and a variety of programming. Exhibits spread out over two floors and include “The Grand Prairie Story,” “Champaign County’s Lincoln” and “Blacksmithing on the Prairie” as well as a hands-on Discovery Area for kids.

Annual programming includes Prairie Stories (September), a festival of 19th-century trades; Harvest Fest (October), complete with a hayride and pumpkin carving; To Grandmother’s House We Go (December); and Museum Mondays (free programs every Monday all summer long).

In 2018, the museum celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special exhibit, “1968: A Time for Every Purpose,” which investigates the turbulent national scene through the lens of local history during such an influential year.

**Gardens**
South of the museum is the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden featuring some of the most beautiful and diverse flora in East Central Illinois. The south end of the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden underwent renovations last year and reopened in 2019 with spruced-up features.

The Miriam Davies Enabling Garden, an award-winning, barrier-free garden, provides a place for physically, mentally and emotionally challenged individuals to experience the rewards and pleasure of gardening in the accessible environment.

The Mindy Harrington Memorial Garden, named for a valuable employee and friend of the Forest Preserve District, is a picturesque area in a tranquil setting.

**Lake of the Woods Golf**
The Hartwell C. Howard Lake of the Woods Golf Course was designed by Robert Bruce Harris and is certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Besides the award-winning 18-hole regulation course, there is a nine-hole par-3 course, nine-hole Foot Golf course, practice par-3 course and practice range.

Lessons, tournaments and family golf activities are offered throughout the season.

**Bike and pedestrian paths**
The 3.3-mile bike/pedestrian path at Buffalo Trace stretches across the entire preserve. It goes through woodlands and grasslands along the Sangamon River.

**HI-Tower**
For four decades, visitors have admired and ascended the six-story structure, which was named after the founder of the forest preserve district, the late H.I. Gelvin.

A popular feature of the tower is the bell carillon, which is programmed to play music throughout the day.

**River Bend Forest Preserve**
Located 1.5 miles west of U.S. 47 on Mid-America Road, River Bend Forest Preserve stretches across 275 acres of land and contains approximately 130 acres of clear water in two lakes, one of which is now the largest public lake in Champaign County, and 2.5 miles of forest along the Sangamon.

There are 1.8 miles of nature trails and a 1.2-mile multipurpose trail. Visitors will also find a shelter and restroom, a boat ramp and an accessible fishing pier.

**More info**
For more information about any of the forest preserves in the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, contact district headquarters at 217-586-3360, email hq@ccfpd.org or visit ccfpd.org.
By PENNY WEAVER
pweaver@mcitizen.com

MAHOMET – Schoolmarm Miss Sandy offered two lines of children – girls on the right, boys on the left – a few minutes of instruction outside, then the group stepped in single file into the one-room schoolhouse and, in a sense, back in time.

Students, some girls in dresses and wearing bonnets and one boy in a newsboy-style hat and suspenders on his woolen-looking pants, were met inside with four rows of desks, each with a small chalkboard, chalk and small piece of cloth to use as an eraser. The young gentlemen took their places on one side of the room, while the young ladies sat on the other, with the exception of some overflow into the boys’ side of the classroom.

Soon, Miss Sandy picked up her book and began teaching arithmetic.

And so began “Summer in the Schoolhouse: Arithmetic” in July at the Museum of the Grand Prairie in Mahomet on grounds that are part of the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve.

This was the last of the one-room schoolhouse lessons for youngsters this summer, and youths and their parents were present from as far away as Kentucky to experience education in about 1860.

Miss Sandy (volunteer Sandylu Newport) led the class in the Pledge of Allegiance. Young ladies knew to curtsey when addressed by the schoolmarm, young gentlemen to bow. They were instructed to answer questions with a full sentence: “What is 2 plus 2?” Schoolchildren of the time didn’t simply answer “Four.” The proper way to answer – after being called upon and rising to stand next to one’s desk – was, “The answer to the question ‘what is 2 plus 2’?, is 4.”

Classrooms of more than a century ago were kept in strict order. The students were not to speak unless first spoken to by the schoolmarm or schoolmaster. Children were to keep their hands folded in front of their desks from Miss Sandy’s yardstick – discipline and “Whap!” – a rap on the top of their desks. A couple of boys in the front row lapsed in the discipline and “Whap!” – a rap on the top of their desks from Miss Sandy’s yardstick-like tool reminded them.

Their names on simple placards at their desks, schoolchildren like Belle (Jocelyn Hoffman, 8, of Bloomington) and Letitia (Jocelyn’s sister Haleigh Hoffman, 12, of Bloomington), Samuel (Ben Deatley, 7, of Mahomet) and Elmer (Graham Smolich, 7, of Mahomet) set about to learn to “cypher” with Miss Sandy’s guidance. They counted the young ladies in the class – 13 – and the young gentlemen – 6 – and did the addition on the big chalkboard beside the “dunce” stool (empty during this class) and wood-burning stove to determine they had 19 students in the schoolhouse for the day.

Miss Sandy remarked that the young gentlemen must have finished their haying early in the morning, indeed, to be able to come to school today.

The class added up the number of plums and other fruits that two of the young ladies had brought to share during recess. Appropriately, the girls had brought just enough for each student to enjoy one juicy fruit.

At recess, it was time for a cool drink of well water from a metal bucket and ladle from which all of those present at school drank. With parents armed with cellphones, most assuredly not in existence in the 1800s, Miss Sandy taught the children to play a game with large wooden hoops and sticks, where they held up and then moved the hoop across the grass by rolling it with a stick. The youths had such fun that, at one point, volunteer Sandylu Newport giggled in delight, but schoolmarm Miss Sandy returned immediately: “Most excellent,” she said in her reserved manner, hands folded primly behind her back.

Back in 2019 Mahomet, Pat Cain, public programs and visitor services coordinator for the Museum of the Grand Prairie, observed the goings-on with a smile on his face. This was the last in a series over the summer of 1860 schoolhouse trips back in time.

“Despite the heat, the kids still come out. They get dressed up like they did today, and they really enjoy it. They really enjoy these transformative experiences,” Cain said. “Once they walk through the door of the schoolhouse, we see kids’ mindset change. It’s all about incorporating as many of the senses as possible, to try and change their actual feelings while interacting with history.

“The smell of the schoolhouse, the sounds that you hear with the bell that rings – just the sound of chalk on the chalkboard and the smell of everything. It really kind of transforms it all,” he added.

Cain, himself, well remembers participating in a session of an 1860 school day at the museum’s preserved one-room schoolhouse when he was a youngster. He wonders if that helped lead him into his line of work now with the museum – and if the experience for children today might lead them in the direction of history, education or related fields, too.

“We always have a full schoolhouse,” Cain said.
Mahomet Public Library District

Mahomet Public Library District serves the residents of Mahomet Township with a rich assortment of services, information and entertainment. The library has more than 50,000 books, music CDs, DVDs and audiobooks on CD available.

Because the library is a member of Illinois Heartland Library System, a consortium of more than 585 libraries in downstate Illinois, patrons can borrow items from these libraries in person or through interlibrary loan.

The library also has 75 magazines with subscriptions to print copies of the Mahomet Citizen and The News-Gazette, as well as BookPage, a book review take-home magazine. The library’s Wall Street Journal subscription is available online. Access to e-books, audiobooks and digital magazines is available on Overdrive, Cloud Library and RBDigital.

Online research help
Online databases are available for research assistance at mahometpubliclibrary.org. The library’s databases include:

- Catalogs of books, CDs and DVDs from libraries statewide.
- Full-text digital copies of millions of articles from print magazines and newspapers.
- “In Context” databases that combine articles, source documents, images, videos and vetted websites to give the full story on thousands of research topics.
- A Testing and Education Reference Center, with test prep and sample tests for high school, college and career certification tests, as well as scholarship searches and financial aid analysis.
- World Book Encyclopedia.

Computers and technology
The library has 16 computers with high-speed internet access and print access. Free Wi-Fi is available, and Wi-Fi users have access to the same public printer. Copy services, document scanning and a fax machine are also provided.

Programs
Children’s programming includes weekly story times for toddlers and preschoolers and special events for grade school students with books, games, music and crafts. Teen, adult and family programs include board game nights, Valentine Bingo, concerts, crafts and seasonal programs.

In the summer, the library has Independent Summer Reading programs for all ages.

Other services
The library officers a Homebound Delivery Service for homebound patrons, meeting and study rooms, notary public, reference service, tax forms, technology help and voter registration.

Friends of the Mahomet Library
The Friends of the Library support the library with financial donations and volunteer help. The group holds two book sales each year and co-sponsors Run for the Library to raise money for the library.

For details, visit MahometPublicLibrary.org/Friends.

NOTE: Hours and activities may differ due to COVID-19 precautions. Call for details.

Hours and contact information

Hours:
Monday through Thursday: 9 AM to 8 PM; Friday: 9 AM to 6 PM
Saturday: 9 AM to 5 PM; Sunday: 1 to 5 PM
1702 E. Oak St., Mahomet, IL 61853
217-586-2611 • mahometpubliclibrary.org

General questions:
staff@mahometpubliclibrary.org

Director
John Howard • director@mahometpubliclibrary.org

Youth services and programming librarian
Maura Stutzman • maura@mahometpubliclibrary.org
Business manager and website manager
Kate Smith • kate@mahometpubliclibrary.org

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The Mahomet Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to connecting area businesses with one another.

With the addition of www.visitmahomet.com, the chamber is now able to promote those businesses to all area residents. The Visit Mahomet website will also feature details on all things Mahomet, including the village, school district, parks and recreation, Mahomet Public Library and the Champaign County Forest Preserve.

In addition, Visit Mahomet showcases real estate listings for home purchases, rental opportunities and coupons and specials offered through area merchants and restaurants.

The chamber promotes Mahomet by coordinating an array of events throughout the year.

Mahomet Area Chamber of Commerce
512 E. Main St, P.O. Box 1031, Mahomet, IL 61853

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Website: mahometchamberofcommerce.com
Visit Mahomet: visitmahomet.com
Phone: 217-586-3165

Chamber staff
Walter Pierce
Executive director
walter@mahometchamberofcommerce.com

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Work or engage in schooling FROM HOME whenever possible.

IF YOU WORK IN A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employees should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.

AVOID SOCIAL GATHERINGS in groups of more than 10 people.

Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts — USE DRIVE-THRU, PICKUP, OR DELIVERY OPTIONS.

AVOID DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL, shopping trips, and social visits.

DO NOT VISIT nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE:

• Wash your hands, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
• Avoid touching your face.
• Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
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Clubs and organizations

Due to COVID-19 precautions, make sure an event is still being held, or that additional safety requirements have not been made before attending.

Mahomet Happy Helpers – 4-H
Contact person: Jill Taylor, 217-377-6940
Email: jstaylor4@frontier.com
Meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Focuses on food, clothing, small animals, horticulture and general project work.

American Legion Post 1015
Meets at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at 412 E. Main St. Visit their website at mahomet- legion.spaces.live.com or Facebook page at American Legion Post 1015.

American Legion Auxiliary Post 1015
Contact person: Vi Wilson, 217-586-7964
The auxiliary provides assistance to veterans and the community. Meets at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at 412 E. Main St.

Sons of American Legion Post 1015
Meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at 412 E. Main St.

Boy Scouts
Troop 25
Contact person: Bobby Butler, 217-722-8637
Troop 103
Contact person: Todd Burmester, 217-778-8039
The Boy Scouts is a youth development program open to boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18.

Cub Scouts
Pack 25
Contact person: Craig Kempher, 217-637-0329
For more information, visit prairielandsbsa.org.

Venture Crew/Sea Scouts
Contact persons: Bob Bantz, 217-377-7554; Kaitlin Bantz, 377-4143; and Curt Wave, 217-641-0445
Sea Scouts/Venture Crew is a group for young men and women ages 14-21 who are looking for an additional Scouting adventure. Meets every Sunday at the Mahomet United Methodist Church, 1302 S. East Mahomet Road, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Mahomet-Seymour High School FFA
Contact person: Jennifer Wherley, 217-586-4962
The FFA is a school-based organization of students of agriculture and agribusiness.

Friends of the Library
The Friends of the Library support the library with financial donations and volunteer help. The group holds two book sales each year and co-sponsors the Run for the Library event to raise money for the library. For more information visit mahometpubliclibrary.org/friends.

Girls Scouts of Central Illinois
Contact person: Vicki Haber, 888-623-1237, ext. 1212
The Girl Scouts offer programs to girls between the ages of 5 and 17.

Home and Community Education
Contact person: Mary Miller, 586-4721
The Home and Community Education group is an educational organization that disseminates information on the family, community and health issues gained from research at the University of Illinois. The group meets monthly.

Mahomet Area Republicans
Meets at 7 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month at Bridle Brook.

Mahomet Area Democrats
Contact person: Maggie Kinnamon, mahomet-democrats@gmail.com
Follow Mahomet Democrats on Facebook to learn more about upcoming events and ways to be involved.

Mahomet Area Youth Club
700 W. Main St., Mahomet
Contact person: Sara Balgoyen, 217-586-6323.
The Mahomet Area Youth Club is a not-for-profit youth club that serves members ages 6 through 18 and their families.

MAYC supports after school programming including BLAST and Kid’s Club, an all-day program at its clubhouse during winter, spring and summer break; a junior after-school club; a high school building club called Bulldog Makers; a work study program that partners with local businesses to provide on-the-job training; and space for the ATLAS program during the school year.
With over 1,000 youth each year, MAYC works to improve attendance, grades, behavior and school engagement. These indicators have been proven to enhance high school graduation rates, improve engagement in the community, decrease interactions with law enforcement and generate long-term successes.
For more information, visit mahometyouth.org.

Mahomet- Seymour Education Foundation
MSEF provides financial support and educational opportunities for M-S students, sponsoring classroom grants, scholarships, academic recognition, an annual art show and other initiatives. The group also maintains an Alumni Association open to all M-S graduates.
For more information, visit msef.weebly.com or Mahomet-Seymour Education Foundation on Facebook.

Mahomet Area Chamber of Commerce
Contact person: Walter Pierce, 217-586-3165.
The chamber advances the interests of the Mahomet-area business community. The chamber meets on the third Thursday of each month, typically from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Mahomet Helping Hands
Contact person: Ann Paul, 217-586-3392
Provides food and clothing to help people in need living in the Mahomet-Seymour school district. Donations are received on the second Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m. Distributions on the third Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.

Mahomet Lions Club
Contact person: Lisa Haynes, 217-714-0513
Provides food and clothing to help people in need living in the Mahomet-Seymour school district. Donations are received on the second Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m. Distributions on the third Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.

Mahomet Masonic Lodge 220
Contact person: Chris Hicks, 217-369-3419.
Fraternal organization performing a number of service and volunteer functions in the community. Meets the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge, 414 E. Main St.

Peace Meal
Program delivers meals to homebound seniors across central Illinois Monday through Friday. For more information, call 217-345-1800.

Mahomet Rotary Club
Contact person: Tim Lindsey, 217-841-5012.
Meets at 6:45 a.m. every Wednesday at Bridle Brook Assisted Living. For information, visit the club’s Facebook page.

Mahomet Town & Country Women’s Club
Community service organization that meets at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month, September through May, at the Mahomet Public Library.

OASIS (Older Adults Still in Service)
Contact person: Linda Maltby, 217-586-2332.
OASIS, the senior group of Mahomet Christian Church, meets at 11:30 a.m. the first Thursday of the month at MCC.

Upper Sangamon River Conservancy
Community-based organization is dedicated to raising awareness of the Sangamon River in our area. USRC meets at Mahomet Public Library on the third Monday of each month. For more information, visit sangamonriver.org.
Mahomet-Seymour fieldhouse renovations ahead of schedule

By COLIN LIKAS
clikas@news-gazette.com

It’s almost entirely an indoor project.
Save for one portion.
Renovations to the Mahomet-Seymour High School fieldhouse have been happening since late March.
They center around interior aspects – painting, flooring, insulation replacement, locker room work and wall graphics.
But one of the fieldhouse’s outdoor elements also needs a touch-up.
“We’ve actually got to replace a few exterior siding panels on the outside because ... we set our (indoor) shot put ring up right here,” said Bulldogs athletic director Matt Hensley, pointing to the building’s northwest corner. “But we’ve had Dani Bunch and Jason Seaman and some of those other kids (like recent three-time state throwing champion Hunter Hendershot) ... that could actually throw it from here above the concrete wall, and it dented the siding from the inside out.

“Needless to say, we’ll find someplace else to put that ring.”
That monument to dominant M-S shot put and discus hurlers may be going away, but there’s plenty for the Bulldogs’ remaining and upcoming high school athletes to be happy about when it comes to the fieldhouse attached to their gymnasium.
The 20-year-old fieldhouse is getting an overhaul as part of a school district project, with Hensley noting some funding also came from the Mahomet-Seymour Educational Foundation and prep athletic boosters club.
“This project has kind of been in the works since last year,” said Hensley, who is preparing for his 15th year as the M-S athletic director. “We were able to finally pull the trigger on it this year, and so now we’re off and running.
“I wasn’t here when the building was built, but I’ve seen the building get an awful lot of use over the last 15 years that I’ve been here. It’s nice to give it a facelift, and it’s so beneficial for both our programs here at the high school, as well as the community to have this facility.”
Interestingly, the project’s timeline is ahead – not behind – because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fieldhouse became unused nearly three months ago when the pandemic brought sports to a halt.

“With school going to remote learning, we think we gained maybe three weeks,” Hensley said. “I don’t know that we’ll hit the scheduled Aug. 10 start of (IHSA) fall practices, but I don’t know if fall practices are going to start in August, either.”
Whenever kids are able to return to the fieldhouse, they’ll see a facility flush with changes.
Essentially the only items not being altered are the wall-based scoreboards and basketball backboards – though an adjustment was made to the way in which the latter will be raised and lowered, now done with the simple push of a button. New curtains also were purchased to surround and separate the fieldhouse gymnasium’s two basketball courts.
A few painters were present in the fieldhouse Thursday, working on a second coat of “aloof” gray that spreads across the walls. The ceiling now is black, the beams underneath the roof are a bright M-S orange and the doors are “peppercorn” gray.

Those gray walls soon will be adorned with graphics:
- The words “Mahomet-Seymour High School,” colored orange and navy, along the west wall’s base;
- The words “Bulldog Pride,” colored orange and navy, above several of the east wall’s doors, with a large Bulldog emblem directly to the words’ left;
- The orange and navy M-S logo, with a Bulldog in the middle, centered on the north wall;
- The words “Home Of The MSHS Bulldogs,” colored orange and navy, along the south wall above the weight room’s door and windows, with an additional orange-and-navy banner reading “Jim Risley Weight Room” in orange lettering directly above the weight room door, named in honor of the longtime Bulldogs wrestling assistant coach who is in the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association Hall of Fame.

Flooring is the last aspect that will be handled. The basketball courts will be clothed with rubberized sheathing that, to the naked eye, looks like traditional hardwood. The surrounding rubber track will change only in color, from all navy to alternating navy and gray lanes.

Two adjoining locker rooms – one for football, wrestling and boys’ track and field, the other for girls’ basketball and softball – already are being worked on as well.

“We sanded down and repainted all these lockers (blue),” Hensley said. “We did some HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) work as it relates to shower areas. Some upgrades in the shower area and the floor and the ceiling. New ceiling tiles.

“These lockers were getting to be in pretty rough shape with 20 years’ worth of football pads being throw in them, and helmets.”

Perhaps those who used the fieldhouse pre-renovations won’t even recognize it when local and state health officials deem it safe to return.

Either way, it will continue to be a boon for the community.

“It gives us the capability to practice all of our basketball teams at one time and to have space for our cheerleading team and have space for our dance team,” Hensley said, “let our spring sports – baseball and softball and track – (practice inside) when the weather is bad outside. It’s just a huge advantage that we never take for granted.”
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