



EYE ON KIRKWOOD

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WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET®

KIRKWOOD NOW BANS TEXTING WHILE DRIVING FOR ALL AGES

by Nancy Luetzow, Kirkwood City Council

Kirkwood prides itself on being home to more than 27,000 residents. Many are families with young children who love to walk and bike or active seniors who walk everywhere, activities that are actively encouraged in this walkable community. Concern for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other motorists led to the Kirkwood City Council's recent unanimous passage of a bill that bans texting while driving for persons older than 21 years of age. The State of Missouri currently only bans texting for persons 21 years of age or younger. The City's goal is to reduce distracted driving and the crashes and injuries that can result when a driver has his or her eyes on a cell phone while sending a text message.

Council decided to take action on this after a Kirkwood resident reported nearly being struck at a crosswalk by a texting-while-driving driver who "blew through a stop sign." While researching the problem, I received much initial support from Mayor Art McDonnell, City Attorney John Hessel, and Police Chief Jack Plummer. Since passage of the bill, public support for the ban has been very positive from citizens of Kirkwood as well as residents throughout the state, who also expressed a need for a similar state-wide ban.

In addition to media coverage, efforts to inform drivers in Kirkwood of the new ban may include posting road signs, use of digital message boards, information on utility bill inserts, the City's weekly e-newsletter, information campaigns by school resource officers and block captains, plus citizens helping to spread the word. Just as with enforcement of

drunk-driving laws, enforcing the texting-while-driving ban may pose challenges. However, extending the ban to all ages means police no longer have to first judge the driver's age. Voluntary compliance will be key to implementing this ban. Parents can encourage their young drivers to comply as they lead by example.

Citations thus far in other municipalities with a total ban include: Florissant – one per month; Manchester – warnings and four tickets since Jan 2014, three of them crash-related; and St. John – none yet since its total ban was enacted in August 2013. In Kirkwood, a citation for drivers over age 21 carries a maximum \$1000 fine and six months in jail.

Forty-four other states ban texting while driving for all ages. This came about in part because of the study commissioned by the National Traffic Safety Board after the horrific, deadly pile-up at Gray Summit, Missouri, in 2010 caused by a pickup truck driver who was texting. Illinois has banned hand-held cell phone use while driving. Missouri is one of a small number of states that bans texting while driving only for those 21 and younger. The National Safety Council estimates that at least 28 percent of all crashes, or at least 1.6 million crashes per year, involve cell phone use; about 200,000 of these involve drivers who were texting. New research by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety indicates that 96 percent of study participants believe texting behind the wheel is a serious threat; 43 percent of drivers ages 25 to 39 studied admitted to texting often or regularly while driving. The Centers for Disease Control



reports that 31 percent of drivers ages 18 to 64 admitted to reading or sending text messages while driving at least once within the 30 days prior to being surveyed. Moreover, hands-free phones offer no significant safety benefit over handheld phones.

With cell phone use steadily on the rise, these numbers will likely increase unless drivers give their full attention to the road. Texting while driving creates an unnecessary and dangerous hazard that is costing lives and millions of dollars while creating human misery. If a text can't wait, then the driver should pull over and park.

A Message from the Mayor by Art McDonnell

Greetings! I hope your summer is going well. My grandchildren have arrived and our house is a happy, busy one. There's nothing like grandchildren to help you think young. We have visited the Magic House and the Kirkwood Pool and the Kirkwood Park sand play area and playground. The custard stands with their delicious ice cream and the cotton candy at the candy store are great treats. My son and daughter-in-law, who live in a big city, love the atmosphere and walkability of Kirkwood. Now how about this weather?

City Council and staff worked this past weekend, as part a strategic planning session, on a number of topics of importance

to the City. There were lots of great suggestions and discussion. We will be sharing the results of this effort with you in the future. There is a thrilling sense of teamwork among us all. If you ever have suggestions on how we may do things better, please let me or the City Council know.

Many budgeted construction projects are underway, and ongoing design studies for Kirkwood Electric and Kirkwood Water will make these systems more efficient and more dependable.

Keep Shopping Kirkwood First, eat a piece of watermelon,



Mayor McDonnell greeted two visitors to Downtown Kirkwood this week. Ashlee (L) from City of St. Louis and Maddie (R) from Chesterfield were taking advantage of the good weather and the walkability of the downtown business district.

go to a baseball game, visit the Transportation Museum, laugh a lot, enjoy your family and friends, go to the concerts in Kirkwood Park, go ride the lazy river at the pool, give to KirkCare, and if you wish to chat, call me at 314-497-4036. See you around Kirkwood!

WHAT'S COMING UP IN KIRKWOOD

• **Downtown Lighting Design Charette July 31:** The public is invited to attend a street lighting design charette, hosted by Kirkwood Electric, on Thursday, July 31, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., at City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road. The design firm of Ross & Baruzzini will briefly trace the history of artificial lighting in historic Downtown Kirkwood, present attractive options for the future, and solicit input from stakeholders.

• **Summer Festival of Arts:** Saturday, August 2, and Sunday, August 3, at the Community Center, 111 S. Geyer Road. A fine arts / fine crafts event. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

• **Art at the Station:** The Kirkwood Area Arts Council will feature the photography of Hal Moran August 4 through September 2. Please join us for his opening reception on Thursday, August 7, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Kirkwood Train Station located at the corner of Argonne and Kirkwood Road. Exhibits and receptions are free and open to the public. Art may be viewed when the station is open for passengers. KAAC features the paper cutting work of Stephen Davis through the end of July.

KIRKWOOD SAFETY PROGRAM GARNERS EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS

The City of Kirkwood implemented a self-insured Safety Plan seven years ago. Under the leadership of Safety Manager Christian Dunman, the City's Experience Modification Rate (EMR) has now dropped to .77, as measured by the National Committee on Compensation and Insurance. Last year, when the City's EMR was .83, the City had the best rate of any municipality in the State of Missouri. Kirkwood's EMR is particularly remarkable given that the City provides water, electric, and sanitation services, where workers have a higher potential for injury than if they were sitting behind a desk. An employer's EMR is used by insurance companies to gauge both past cost of injuries and future chances of risk. The lower the EMR, the lower your worker compensation insurance premiums will be. An EMR of 1.0 is considered the industry average.

CONSTRUCTION ON CITY HALL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT WILL CONTINUE THROUGH OCTOBER



Phase One of the project to improve the façade and front lawn/pedestrian area at Kirkwood's historic City Hall began the week of July 14. Currently, the entire area facing Kirkwood Road is fenced off while workers demolish the pavement and remove plantings before beginning the construction process. Pedestrians are advised to use the sidewalk on the east side of Kirkwood Road. The temporary fence will remain in place until the completion of Phase One, in September. Phase Two will begin immediately after the completion of Phase One. All work is expected to be completed before the end of the year, barring any unforeseen complications or bad weather.

MAKING MUSIC 2014 IN KIRKWOOD PARK, AUGUST SCHEDULE

• **August 9: Samba Bom.** This Midwest-based music ensemble plays authentic Brazilian music at schools, night clubs, wineries, festivals and private events. The group plays a unique mix of Brazilian popular music styles, including, Samba, Bossa Nova, Brazilian Jazz, Olodum, Forro, and Chorinho, among others. There will be Brazilian dancers with authentic costumes, so bring your dancing shoes. Visit their Website: www.sambabom.com. **Food Trucks:** Holy Crepe and Steak Louie.

• **August 23: Route 66 Jazz Orchestra.** This 20-piece jazz band, formerly known as the Meramec Jazz Band, is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of "Big Band" jazz through performance, education and community involvement. Visit their Website at: www.route66jazz.com. **Food Trucks:** Steak Louie and Destination Desserts. The food trucks will be parked adjacent to the amphitheater. Concerts begin at 7:00 p.m., in the Lions' Amphitheater.

KIRKWOOD RECEIVES MISSOURI RECYCLING AWARD

The City of Kirkwood received the 2014 Missouri Recycling Association award for "Outstanding Government Program." The City was nominated for this award by its recycling hauler Resource Management in the category of Single Stream Curbside/Drop-off programs. The City's diversion rate, which represents the amount of waste diverted from landfills, continues to average about 43.2 percent through the city-wide single stream curbside program. The City also continues to average about 74 pounds of recycling per household per month. The City will be recognized at the MRA conference in September.

Kirkwood Meetings Calendar

- 8/4 Architectural Review Board, 7pm
- 8/6 Planning/Zoning, 7pm
- 8/7 City Council 7pm, WS 6pm
- 8/11 Board of Adjustment, 7pm
- 8/12 Human Rights Commission, 6:30pm
- 8/13 Landmarks Commission, 6:30pm
- 8/14 Council Work Session, 7am
- 8/18 Park Board, 7pm, Community Center
- 8/18 Architectural Review Board, 7pm
- 8/19 Arts Commission, 5:30pm
- 8/20 Library Board, 5:30pm, at Library
- 8/20 Planning/Zoning, 7pm
- 8/21 City Council 7pm, WS 6pm
- 8/26 Urban Forestry, 7pm
- 8/27 Greentree, 7pm, Community Center

Except where noted, meetings are typically held at Kirkwood City Hall, 139 South Kirkwood Road. Please check the Meetings Calendar on the City's Website for agendas, room locations, or any last-minute changes. Meeting agendas are also posted at City Hall. CC=Community Center

Eye on Kirkwood is published 12 times per year on the last Friday of every month by the City of Kirkwood, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122. For information or questions about content, contact the City's Public Information Officer, Beth von Behren, at 314-822-5894. To sign up for the weekly electronic newsletter, send an email to Info@KirkwoodMo.org.

Kirkwood City Council: Mayor: Arthur J. McDonnell. Council Members: Gerry Biedenstein, Gina M. Jaksetic, Paul Ward, Bob Sears, Nancy Luetzow, Tim Griffin. **Kirkwood Administration:** Chief Administrative Officer: Russell B. Hawes. City Clerk: Betty Montano. To reach the City Clerk or Council, call 822-5802. To reach City offices, call 822-5800 for a list of extensions. The City Council meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road. The public is invited to attend. For information about other meetings, City services, and events, visit the City's Website: www.kirkwoodmo.org.

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