

# CITY OF ORONOCO SUMMER 2024 NEWLETTER

*How can we help you today?*  
**Make City Hall your first call! 507-367-4405**

For questions, comments, or compliments (the code violation complaint form on the website can be used for any complaints), City Hall staff – Administrative Assistant Mary Queensland, Deputy Clerk Ranae While, and City Administrator Jason Baker– are happy to assist you!

## ***MAYOR INPUT – RYLAND EICHHORST***

The City of Oronoco has an official operational Municipal Sewer System! The treatment plant and lift stations became operational mid-March and the first connection to the wastewater treatment plant was the Oronoco Estates mobile home community. Since then, Riverwood Hills, Cedar Woodlands 1 and 2, River Park, Oronoco Crossing-People's, Casey's, and RV dealers have been connected to the system. In addition, the 83 grinder systems are being hooked up. As you can see around downtown Oronoco, excavator companies are busy connecting many residents' gravity sewer system, as well!



SBR tank on the left, final treatment building in the middle, and administration building on the right.

The plant is operated and maintained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through a contract with PeopleService of Omaha, Nebraska. It is being operated manually while automatic sensors are being installed and calibrated. Within a few weeks, the plant will operate automatically. Our Public Works personnel are shadowing the PeopleService employees to learn more about the plant operation.

An open house celebration is being planned for early fall! More information will follow.

Fitzgerald contracting will continue working downtown. Final bituminous paving will begin in June, followed by more restoration of street shoulders.

The following Gravity Sewer and Water Connection Guidelines have been updated:

**Resident Guidance for Gravity Sanitary Sewer System Connection to Oronoco Phase 1A - Wastewater System & Water Distribution Improvements Updated May 2024**

**Resident Guidance for Water System Connection to Oronoco Phase 1A - Wastewater System & Water Distribution Improvements Updated May 2024**

**Reference: Oronoco Wastewater System–Startup Schedule Notification Letter #2**

These updates, schedule, Funding Assistance and other comments on the **City of Oronoco Wastewater Project Updates** can be found at

<https://www.oronoco.com/index.asp?SEC=9FF06188-BB72-456D-8865-7A0EE2DCC317&DE=654617F2-23E9-4DFE-AF1C-26D817E869F9>

Resident construction status updates will be posted on the City's website, emailed directly to residents who have provided their email address to the city, and printed for pickup at City Hall by the west door. To facilitate enhanced dissemination of the update to residents, we ask that residents sign up for email updates by sending an email to [Oronococonstruction@gmail.com](mailto:Oronococonstruction@gmail.com). Additional information about sewer and water service connections is provided in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents previously provided or available on the City of Oronoco website under the "Community" heading – "Wastewater Project". If you have additional questions, you can contact City Engineer Joe Palen directly at Stantec Phone (507) 529-6036 or Email him at [Joseph.palen@stantec](mailto:Joseph.palen@stantec).

### ***ORONOCO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (OEDA)***

Rebecca Charles, Executive Director in February of 2023 the City of Oronoco established our first Economic Development Authority for the purpose of focusing on the development needs set forth by the city. In 2024, the OEDA has partnered with Community & Economic Development Associates (CEDA) and hired on of their team members to lead and help with the work of the OEDA on achieving the city's development goals. Economic Development is a critical component that drives growth in an economy, creating new job opportunities and facilitating an improved quality of life that includes increased access to opportunities for existing and future residents. The top six reasons why economic development plays a critical role in any city's economy include: Job Creation, Industry Diversification, Business Retention & Expansion, Economy Fortification, Increased Tax Revenue and Improved Quality of Life.

Early in the OEDA began working on community engagement with the goal of learning the needs and wants of residents when it comes to development and the future of the community. This included a survey that was mailed to all residents within city limits that received more than 120 completed surveys. On February 27<sup>th</sup>, an in-person community engagement event took place at the Oronoco Fire Hall and got residents talking about their visions and ideas for the future of Oronoco. More than 40 residents took part in this exercise. At the present time, the OEDA is working to complete a strategic plan for growth and development of Oronoco that we hope will also assist with updating the city's Comprehensive Plan.

The last couple years of construction have required a lot of patience. This has been a challenging time for Oronoco residents and businesses with street closings and other interruptions to our normal daily activities.

Thank you for your understanding! We look forward to what Oronoco has to offer our current residents as well as our future residents and businesses.

Growth is happening in Oronoco. To include residents in that process, our Economic Development Authority (EDA) initiated a Strategic Planning project that included a Community Engagement survey and an in-person input meeting in February. Growth will help increase our tax base, and more users, both residential and commercial, will help support our new sewer system. Once the final report for the Community Engagement process has been completed, results will be posted on the EDA page of the website. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the EDA or are looking at executing your own development project, please reach out to Executive Director, Rebecca Charles to see if the EDA may be able to help. She can be reached at

[Rebecca.Charles@cedausa.com](mailto:Rebecca.Charles@cedausa.com)



### **AGE-FRIENDLY ORONOCO AREA**

Age-Friendly Oronoco Area committee members have been actively creating more awareness in the community. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> a Listening Session was held to seek input from residents as to what they feel is needed in Oronoco. This insight will help us make plans moving forward. April 24<sup>th</sup> a Resource Fair was held at the School House Events building. Fifteen service organizations displayed and presented information, talked with citizens and answered questions about services available in the area. It was well attended and beneficial for both organizations and those attending. A brochure will be developed listing some of the resources and services available.

Committee members developed a three-year action plan. It was approved by the city council on March 19<sup>th</sup> and has been submitted to AARP's Age-Friendly Minnesota. Our action plan goals focus on five domains: Community and Health Services, Communication and Information, Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Social Participation.

Our next step is moving forward to become a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. This will be beneficial in helping us in securing grants for various projects.

We are looking for more interested residents who may want to join the core committee or serve on a sub-committee. If you are interested in getting involved, have questions or would like more information, please contact one of the following committee members: Dana Bergner, Joy Bertsinger, Holly Brown, Katie Dudley, Ryland Eichhorst, Kevin McDermott, Kay Lovett, Rosemary VanHouten

### **ORONOCO LIONS CLUB UPDATE**



Join us for the Oronoco Lions Club's annual Community BBQ on June 8th at Oronoco City Hall Park! This year, we're excited to have Pitmaster Jeff Fasbender and his Hoochie 'Que Competition BBQ Team providing delicious

pulled pork. Enjoy a freewill donation meal of pulled pork, smoked beans, buns, salads, cookies, and water from 3pm-6pm. Bring the whole family for a fun-filled afternoon with a bounce house, yard games, and great company. See you there!

## Fly Your Flag

We are also sponsoring our **Fly Your Flag** fundraising project. The Lions will put out an American flag in your yard to celebrate 7 patriotic holidays during the year. The cost is only \$40 and the proceeds from this fundraiser will be used toward Lions projects. We would love to see the **Fly Your Flag** program become as big as Santa's were last Christmas. Please call or text (507) 421-2730 if you would like to participate in this program.



We hope you've marked your calendars for Downtown Oronoco Gold Rush Days 2024! Don't miss us August 16, 17 & 18 for our 52nd annual, all outdoor antique show hosting nearly 400 vendors with LOADS of family fun and events too! Enjoy live outdoor music all weekend, grab a beverage in one of two beer gardens hosted by the Oronoco Fire Department, First Responders and Oronoco Lions club, swing in for breakfast or lunch at the Oronoco VFW or test your tastebuds at one of our 25+ food trucks!

Our 5th annual Classic Car Parade will be held on MN Ave @2pm Saturday with a full line up and car show to follow at Oronoco Park until 4:30pm. Come on down to catch some candy or vote on your favorite RIDE!

ALL NEW 2024 EVENTS include:

1. Our first ever Medallion hunt! Full details are coming soon, follow us on Facebook for more info.
2. NEW Kids Zone & play area with jump house, panning for gold, face painting, cotton candy and SO much more!
3. DON'T MISS OUT on the very exciting and ALL NEW Zumbro River Duck Derby! Saturday at 5pm @Oronoco Park. Ducks will be for sale all summer long at various Oronoco locations/events or contact Oronoco Fire Department or the fine folks at the VFW to purchase anytime.

We hope you'll join us!

All information about events @ Downtown Oronoco Gold Rush Days for 2024 are posted on our Facebook page, "Downtown Oronoco Gold Rush Days" and will be added to our website by June 1st @ [www.goldrushmn.com](http://www.goldrushmn.com)

If you would like to be part of the team by volunteering, would like to have a booth to sell goods or you are a local business who would like to sponsor one of our new community events, help us with our fundraising goals or donate goods/services for the event, contact Melissa Griggs via email at [oronocogoldrushdays@gmail.com](mailto:oronocogoldrushdays@gmail.com). We would LOVE to hear from you.

It takes a Village Oronoco! Thank you for your support and we'll see you there!

## **ORONOCO VFW**

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Stop in if you are interested in becoming a member. Eligibility requirements include Honorable Service and service in a war, campaign, or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters. If you are not eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars but you have a parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or spouse who would be eligible, then you may apply for membership in the VFW Auxiliary.



## ORONOCO FOOD SHELF

The Oronoco Food Shelf is open from 5pm-6:30pm on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month at the Oronoco Presbyterian Church located at 20 3rd St SW, Oronoco.

Donations can be dropped off from 4:30-5pm those same days or any time in the bins located at Casey's and City Hall.

## LENDING LIBRARY

Don't forget to check out our free "little library" inside City Hall. Take a book (or two!), enjoy, and return at your leisure! We welcome donations too! You can drop off your past reads in the box below the little desk between the bookcases. Thank you and happy reading!

## STREETLIGHTS

If you notice that your streetlight is out, please contact People's Co-op Power by going to [www.peoplesenergy.coop](http://www.peoplesenergy.coop) → "Contact Us" tab → and fill out the appropriate information. 507-367-7000

**TACO TUESDAY**

Come share a meal with us at the **Oronoco VFW!**

- Always the 2nd Tuesday of the month
- Open 4-7pm
- 2 tacos for \$8 or 3 tacos for \$9

**ORONOCO VFW POST 9648**  
5 Minnesota Ave N Oronoco, MN

Join us for breakfast! Always the **2nd and 4th Sunday** of the month.

**\$8 All you can eat pancakes and sausage or biscuits and gravy**

**Oronoco VFW Post 9647**  
5 Minnesota Ave N Oronoco, MN

**7:15am to 11:30am**  
All are welcome.

**Oronoco VFW Breakfast**

**Oronoco VFW Breakfast**  
Always the **2nd and 4th Sunday** of the month  
7:15am - 11:30am

**Join Us!**  
**\$8 All You Can Eat**

- Pancakes and Sausage
- Biscuits and Gravy

Oronoco Post Building  
5 Minnesota Ave S, Oronoco

Open to the public

**Oronoco Gold Rush Days Duck Derby August 17th**

**Sponsored by the VFW and OFD**  
Stay tuned for more information!

**JOIN US**  
**Oronoco VFW Meeting**  
Always the first Tuesday of the month, at 7pm  
Post Building  
5 N Minnesota Ave Oronoco, MN

## ORONOCO AREA HISTORY CENTER

Facebook

Online: [oronocoareahistory.org](http://oronocoareahistory.org)

**Upcoming event:** Pie Social on June 20 from 6-7:30 at the History Center. We look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces!

## Seeking Information about the Oronoco Switch or Sunken Heaven

Railroad: A visitor came in a few weeks ago, seeking information about the train station that was near Oronoco on what is now the Douglas trail in New Haven Township. It was known as the Oronoco Switch. Unfortunately, we have very little information regarding that and ask anyone who remembers when the railroad still operated, when the

tracks were still there, knows where the station was located, has a story about the railroad, or even has a picture, to contact us. We would love to talk with you and add to the scant information we have.

Sunken Heaven: Does anyone have information regarding the infamous “Sunken Heaven”, which was located on the lower level of what was Berg’s antique store, located at the north end of the Oronoco Bridge? Many people ask about it, but we don’t have much information to provide.

If you can assist with either of these topics, please contact Mary Fuller at [mmfuller@bevcom.net](mailto:mmfuller@bevcom.net), Joy Bertsinger at [jbertsinger@yahoo.com](mailto:jbertsinger@yahoo.com), or Kris Wiens at [klwiens55@gmail.com](mailto:klwiens55@gmail.com). We will appreciate anything you might have to add.

## The Oronoco News

Several years ago, we received a donation of issues of The Oronoco News, which was published between April 1897 and May 1905. We wanted to share them with anyone who is interested, so they were sent to the Minnesota Historical Society, where they have been scanned and digitized, and are available to view and search online for free at [newspapers.mnhs.org](http://newspapers.mnhs.org). Enter a place or name and you could find out something new about your family history!

## Happy Spring from your Oronoco First Responders!

What’s all the buzz about?



Spring time brings out all the creepy crawlies. 🐝 We want to highlight one that some of you know all too well! We get several calls a year in the spring, summer, and fall regarding bee stings. Here are several things we’d like you to know about bees and bee stings:

- Only honeybees lose their stinger when they sting someone. It has a barbed end that sticks into the thick skin of most mammals. Only females have stingers in most bee species.
- Wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets can sting you more than once.
- About 3% of adults and 0.5% of children are truly allergic to stings.
- What to do if you are stung:
  - Remain calm.
  - Remove the stinger as soon as possible by using your fingers or the edge of a credit card. Flick the stinger out sideways.
  - For mild to moderate stings, apply ice to the affected area. Take antihistamines or OTC pain medications to relieve any pain/swelling.
  - For severe reactions such as difficulty swallowing, swelling of the throat, skin reactions, including hives and itching and flushed or pale skin, difficulty breathing, a weak, rapid pulse, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, dizziness or fainting or loss of consciousness call 911 for immediate medical attention.
- Tips to help reduce your risk of getting stung by bees:
  - Take care when drinking sweet beverages outside. Wide, open best option because you can see if a bee is in them. Inspect before drinking from them.
  - Tightly cover food containers and trash cans.
  - Clear away garbage, fallen fruit, and dog or other animal feces (flies can attract wasps).
  - Wear closed-toe shoes when walking outside.
  - Don’t wear bright colors or floral prints, which can attract bees.
  - Don’t wear loose clothing, which can trap bees between the cloth and your skin.
  - When driving, keep your windows rolled up.
  - Be careful when mowing the lawn or trimming vegetation, activities that might arouse insects in a beehive or wasp nest.
  - Have hives and nests near your home removed by a professional.



weak, rapid pulse, consciousness call

cups may be your cans and straws

We’d like to thank the following people this quarter for their years of service:

Lori B: 2 years; Kathy B-R: 1 year; Kristina D: 17 years; Tonya D: 3 years; Denise H-W: 13 years; Shannan H: 2 years; Colby L: 1 year; Jenny R: 1 year; Johann S: 3 years; Dan S: 17 years.  
 Please also help us welcome our newest member: Carter S!!

Interested in volunteering? Feel free to attend a meeting or reach out to us to get more information. We meet the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm at the fire hall.

Oronoco First Responders  
[oronocofirstresponders@gmail.com](mailto:oronocofirstresponders@gmail.com)

***YOUNG AT HEART EXERCISE GROUP***

The Young at Heart Exercise Group meets in the Oronoco Community Center on Wednesday mornings at 9 am followed by yoga at 10. Come for either or both and feel the benefits.

Exercise will help get those muscles and joints moving, maintain or improve flexibility, improve balance and range of motion. Hand and ankle weights are available to improve strength and help with bone building.

We tend to be more active in the summer. Keep those joints moving and muscles flexible so you can enjoy all those outdoor summer activities. Consider joining the group and feel the benefits.

Stay healthy and keep moving!

Rosemary Van Houten

**City of Oronoco Meetings**

City Council: 3rd Tuesday each month @ 6:30 pm
Planning & Zoning: 2nd Thursday of each month @ 6:30 pm
EDA: 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of July @ 6:30 pm 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday beginning August @ 6:30 pm
1st Responders: 1st Monday of each month @ 6:30 pm
Fire Department: 2nd Monday of each month @ 6:30 pm 4th Monday of each month @ 6:30 pm
Parks & Trails: 1st Monday of each month @ 7:00 pm
Water & Sewer Committee: 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 6:30 pm

**City Hall Office Hours & Contacts**

Monday - Thursday	7:00 am - 4:00 pm
Friday	7:00 am - 11:00 am
<b>507-367-4405</b>	
Mary Queensland - Administrative Assistant <a href="mailto:mqueensland@oronoco.com">mqueensland@oronoco.com</a>	
Ranae While - Deputy Clerk <a href="mailto:rwhile@oronoco.com">rwhile@oronoco.com</a>	
Jason Baker - City Administrator <a href="mailto:jbaker@oronoco.com">jbaker@oronoco.com</a>	

City of Oronoco  
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Oronoco MN 55960

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