



2020 has been a very tough year for Marseilles and the country. It was still a busy year for city hall. Although, COVID 19 held us back from some things it did not stop us from moving forward even if it was at a slower pace.

At the beginning of the year City Hall began issuing Welcome Packets for those purchasing homes in Marseilles.

The City obtained a \$200,000.00 grant to construct a boat launch on the river just west of Marseilles Elementary School and before NUCOR. The project is estimated to be \$400,000.00 with the remaining to be paid from TIF funds. The City just awarded the contract for tree removal so we should see progress soon.

The City commenced remodeling 10 homes on the East side of town pursuant to a \$400,000 grant the City receiving assistance low to moderate income residents with home repairs. An additional \$30,000 in fund was donated by NUCOR, Twin Oaks OSB, Marseilles Bank, and the City of Marseilles for a grand total of \$430,000. Life Safety concerns were the first addressed in these homes, before cosmetic.

The City assisted 15 businesses with interest free loans for a total of \$150,000 to assist them with business loss due to COVID. The City provided businesses with information on payroll protection and other Business Interruption Funding as well. The City also teamed up with Ottawa for our businesses to request funding from the downstate business grant program. So far one business has been awarded over \$24,000. We are hoping more is yet to come. The City provided picnic tables for outdoor dining. The City also implemented the Citizens Well Being Check program where city staff, along with Marseilles Ambulance and police called elderly or handicapped residents whom reside by themselves daily to check on their wellbeing and picked up food or medicine if needed.

The City worked hard on Census 2020 in hopes of making sure we remain over 5,000 population to be eligible for grants, motor fuel taxes, and numerous other funding. The Census also helps the Marseilles Elementary School District with funding. The City should be notified of our new population for the next 10 years around May of 2021. We want to thank everyone that has aided the City by answering the Census.

The City applied for a 4.3-million-dollar grant to extend the water and sewer to Interstate 80 and also working on annexation of property at the Interstate for a new truck stop, restaurant and possibly a hotel.

The City applied for \$460,000 grant to line the sanitary sewers on Union Street and East Bluff Street.

The City applied for phase 2 and 3 ITEP Grant to construct a sidewalk from Fillebrowne Street to 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Bratton North tying in with 10<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk. This will assist with ensuring the safety of our residents that currently have to walk in the roadway when going to Dollar General and the Medical clinic.

Plans are being finalized to install restrooms at Broadway Park and the Middle East Memorial Wall come spring.

On behalf of myself and all the city staff we wish you a Happy and Blessed New Year.

Mayor Hollenbeck

# Nicor Gas offers help for small business owners with past due bills & Residential Customers with Weatherization kits.

Nicor Gas is offering special payment arrangements to small business owners who can't pay their gas bills at their businesses. An eligible business can arrange for nine monthly installments to bring the account up to date. If your business has already had a special arrangement in the last 12 months, you won't be eligible again yet. Some business owners can qualify for a grant to cover one half of a past due balance up to \$500.

Nicor Gas customers residential customers can request two free home weatherization kits to keep their houses warm and save on energy bills this winter.

The kits include outlets and light switch foam gaskets to help prevent drafts from exterior walls, weatherstripping and rope caulk for windows and doors, as well as a self-adhesive door sweep to prevent cold air from leaking under doors. Customers also can request a free energy assessment in addition to energy-saving products, according to a news release from Nicor.

"Nicor Gas remains committed to helping our customers – especially those in historically underserved communities – better manage their energy use and save on winter heating bills," President and CEO John O. Hudson III said in a news release.

Energy efficiency tools and resources give Nicor Gas customers more control over their energy consumption and bill. The company reports minor changes in the home can save energy costs.

Nicor offers these weatherization tips:

- Regularly replace air and furnace filters – most filters should be cleaned or replaced every 60 to 90 days. A clean filter will allow the system to run more efficiently.

Open window coverings during the day to allow sunlight to heat your home naturally, and close curtains at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

- Keep furniture, drapes, stuffed animals and other objects away from heating sources.
- Adjust timer controls and programmable thermostats. Some older thermostats may not have an internal clock and need to be adjusted manually.

For more weatherization tips or to order the free energy saving kits, visit [nicorgas.com/residential/ways-to-save.html](https://www.nicorgas.com/residential/ways-to-save.html).

Bill pay assistance during pandemic: As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves this winter, Nicor Gas officials announced that the company will continue to provide resources and bill pay assistance options for all customers.

"This year has been unpredictable, to say the least. For many customers, this may be the first time they've ever had to consider how they will pay their bills or meet their family's basic needs," Hudson said. "So, now more than ever, we want our customers to know – we're here to support, and there are assistance programs available to them today."

Approximately \$4 million remains available to Nicor Gas customers who may be affected by the pandemic and have past due balances. As part of the COVID-19 Bill Payment Assistance Program, customers with accounts in arrears are eligible for a one-time grant of up to \$300 to help with payments. More than 20,000 customers experiencing financial hardship have received this payment assistance to date. The program will continue until funds are exhausted.