



Business Messenger

Published by the City of Rolling Meadows

First Quarter 2020



City officials welcome Amish Farmers to Rolling Meadows during the grocer's ceremonial ribbon-cutting.

Open for Business

Rolling Meadows Welcomes 51 New Businesses in 2019; Economic Development Initiatives Target Growth & Success

Fifty-one new businesses put down roots in Rolling Meadows last year, and City staff continue to forge ahead on a variety of initiatives to promote business success, according to a "2019 Year in Review" report presented at City Council's February 18th Committee-of-the-Whole.

The report emphasized the importance of new business to the community's continued economic health, while also highlighting several recent openings that reflect the diverse range of companies now calling Rolling Meadows home. These include:

- **Amish Farmers** (2122 Plum Grove Road) - neighborhood grocer.
- **Autobon AI** (3653 Blackhawk Drive) - commercial vehicle autonomous driving solutions.
- **School Health Corporation** (5600 Apollo Drive) - health supplies/services for schools & educational facilities.

- **Cottage Door Press** (5005 Newport Drive) - children's book publisher.

Now Trending: New Business Growth

These additions continue an impressive multi-year growth streak that has seen nearly 300 companies come "home" to Rolling Meadows in the past five years. The numbers reinforce the City's growing reputation as a business-friendly community that is viewed favorably by organizational decision-makers.

While annual new business openings are predicated on a number of external factors, such as economic conditions and available vacancies, City officials pride themselves on their commitment to working closely with business owners to help them realize their goals.

"Our business development and retention program is designed to promote success,"

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Street Banner Program Markets City Businesses

Rolling Meadows' annual street banner program offers local businesses and community groups a high-profile opportunity to market themselves to residents.

The 30"x60" banners (\$250 each or \$350 for two) hang from streetlights along Kirchoff Road and other high-traffic areas around town. They help promote upcoming City events and may be customized to include a sponsoring company's name and/or logo.

Order forms are available online at cityrm.org.





**BUSINESS
& COMMUNITY
SHOWCASE**
Connect 2020 Network

April 'Showcase' to Connect Local Businesses with Prospective Employees

The City's 3rd annual Business & Community Showcase will feature a new "job fair" component that allows participating companies to meet with prospective employees - part of an ongoing effort to help local businesses succeed in a highly-competitive job market.

This year's Showcase, held Thursday, April 23rd, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m., at Meridian Banquets, will also provide opportunities for local business leaders to network with other professionals and engage with residents who may be current or future customers.

"As we developed the 2020 program, we saw an opportunity to help participating companies navigate one of the current job market's biggest challenges: connecting with talented workers in an environment where record-low unemployment levels make it increasingly difficult to hire and retain staff," Business Advocate Martha Corner explained. "We also continue to build on the event's business-to-business (B2B) networking opportunities to deliver greater value for exhibitors."

Local businesses may register for this year's Showcase at cityrm.org. The \$25 event fee includes use of covered display tables to showcase marketing materials and a listing in the

event's official exhibitor's guide. Non-exhibiting businesses are welcome to submit informational materials highlighting job openings at their respective companies.

The program's first hour will be dedicated to private B2B networking. The Showcase is free to the public from 5:00 - 8:00 pm.



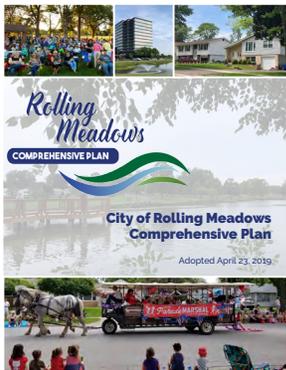
Business & Community Showcase

Thursday, April 23rd | Register at cityrm.org
4:00 - 5:00 pm (B2B networking) | 5:00 - 8:00 pm (Open to the public)
Meridian Banquet & Conference Center | 1701 West Algonquin Road

Connect with us at www.cityrm.org or through:



City Presents Progress Report on Business Survey Follow-Up Efforts



City officials have made substantial progress on establishing programs and initiatives to meet the needs of Rolling Meadows businesses, based on the findings of a 2017 comprehensive survey that offered insights/suggestions from local business owners.

Actions taken over the past two years to further nurture an environment that encourages economic growth and development include:

- ✓ Promoting local networking and sales opportunities by hosting the Annual Business & Community Showcase.
- ✓ Improving communication with business leaders by publishing the quarterly *Business Messenger* newsletter.
- ✓ Expanding local business outreach via the City's Economic Development Committee.
- ✓ Updating Rolling Meadows' Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Establishing a full-time "Business Advocate" position at City Hall.
- ✓ Developing a Rolling Meadows Dining Guide (*print and online versions*).
- ✓ Approving a video gaming ordinance.
- ✓ Streamlining processes/operations at the Community Development Division.
- ✓ Recognizing businesses that sponsor community events and other programs.
- ✓ Co-founding the Next Level Northwest business accelerator program.
- ✓ Revising the City's Zoning Code (*in progress*).

Find other resources online by selecting the "Business" subhead on the City's website, www.cityrm.org.

Zoning Code Revisions to Encourage Development, Reinvestment

The City's updated Zoning Code will offer greater flexibility for business owners and developers seeking to invest or expand in Rolling Meadows following its completion later this year, Assistant Public Works Director Jo Ellen Charlton reports.

City leaders are in the process of revising the current Code, which dates to the 1970s, with the help of Teska Associates, an urban planning consulting firm that also assisted on last year's Comprehensive Plan update.

"The community vision that emerged during the Comprehensive Plan upgrade really helped define our approach to the Zoning Code," Charlton explained.

"Encouraging business reinvestment and establishing new area development standards were among the major economic development themes that arose during that whole process."

Spur New & Alternative Development

Those themes created a space for City officials and Teska Associates to focus their attention on specific Zoning Code improvements, including:

- Identifying alternative uses for vacant properties.

- Offering guidelines for newer uses – brewpubs, for example.
- Creating a more user-friendly code by incorporating modern terminology and expanding use of graphics.

"How do we help make Rolling Meadows a great place to do business? By creating a Zoning Code that is more responsive to the changing needs of local companies," Charlton added.



Planning & Zoning Committee Updates

The City will schedule public hearings to evaluate proposed Zoning Code revisions once they are complete. In

the meantime, Charlton encourages business owners to attend monthly meetings of the City's Planning & Zoning Commission to receive periodic updates.

Regular meetings are held at 7:30 p.m., at City Hall, on the first Tuesday of the month. Visit cityrm.org/AgendaCenter to access agendas for upcoming Commission meetings. Minutes of past meetings are also available for review.

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explained City Manager Barry Krumstok. "City staff members have a variety of resources and information available to help business owners and their representatives make sound decisions that support their specific goals.

"From vacant property listings to a newly upgraded Comprehensive Plan, we can offer information and insights that help them achieve long-term success," he added.



Community Development to Introduce Online Permit Application Process in 2021

A streamlined permit process that allows customers to submit required documents and apply for building permits online will be introduced by the Community Development Division next year, as Rolling Meadows implements Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software across all City departments.

ERP offers a way to streamline operations and improve customer service by combining data stored in multiple databases into an integrated system. Another benefit of ERP is the ability to provide expanded web-based transactions and service capabilities.

Current timetables call for online permit applications to be offered in the first quarter of 2021. It will follow on the heels of several other customer service initiatives that have been adopted by Community Development, including:

- Developing updated application forms that are more concise and user-friendly.
- Establishing clearly defined timeframes for plan reviews/issuing permits.
- More efficient approval of applications for business, home occupation, special event, and temporary sign licenses.

Visit the Community Development Division's webpage (cityrm.org/148/Community-Development) or call 847-506-6030 to learn more about available services.



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 Police Department (non-emergency).847-255-2416
 Public Works Department.847-963-0500
 Community Development Division847-506-6030

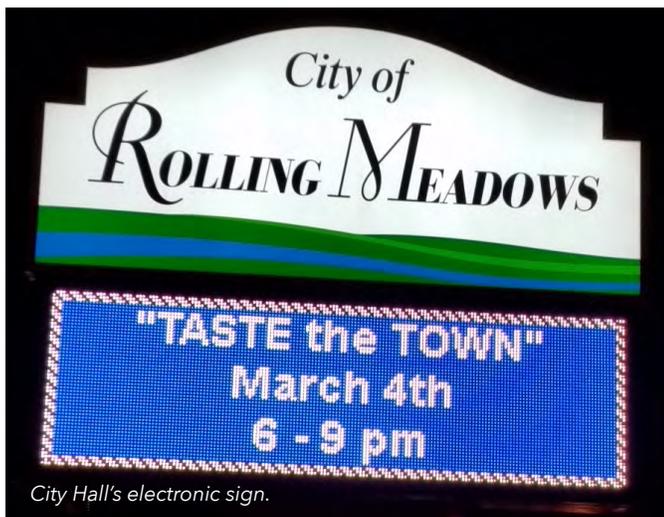
Web-based 'Tool Kit' Offers Roadmap for Successful Marketing

A business marketing tool kit now available on the City's website provides information and guidance for promoting local business brands via City communications platforms and event sponsorships; and generating awareness for products and services in local and social media.

The kit, available at cityrm.org (choose "Tool Kit" under the website's "Business" sub-head), spotlights a wide variety of opportunities available for reaching key audiences and target markets, including:

Business & Community Showcase (April 23rd) - Network with other business leaders and forge new relationships while also meeting with job seekers and potential customers (see page 2 for further information).

Electronic signs - Announce new business openings, events, milestones/anniversaries, and more on LED displays located outside City Hall (3600 Kirchoff Road) and Fire Station 15 (3201 Algonquin Road).



City website & social media - Share your company's news on Rolling Meadows' website, and Facebook and Twitter platforms.

Business Messenger - Highlight your company's successes in the *Business Messenger*, which serves Rolling Meadows' business community.

Local media contacts - Access contact information for marketing and editorial professionals at the Daily Herald Media Group and Journal & Topics Newspapers, the two primary news organizations that cover the northwest suburbs.

Tool kit users also have access to a complete listing of 2020 community events, options for supporting the 501(c)3 Rolling Meadows Community Events Foundation, contact information for Meet Chicago Northwest (regional convention/visitor's bureau), and more.