

City's financial situation appears OK

There is no crystal ball to predict the financial condition of the City, only long-range planning based on the best information available at any particular time.

The City's long-utilized philosophy of pay-as-you-go and its conservatively-invested strong cash reserves are proving very beneficial now during these uncertain economic times.

Consumer spending and the resulting sales tax revenue is the City's single largest source of operating monies, funding the general fund that supports critical services including public safety and transportation. During 2008, the sales tax collected exceeded the conservative budget estimate, but not by as much as was anticipated.



Based on current information, staff anticipates that 2009 sales tax collections could be as much as \$2.1 million below the amount originally budgeted for 2009. However, 2008 ended with \$6.6 million unspent or undesignated in the general fund—money “already in the bank.”

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[More about City finances inside](#)

Utility joins statewide effort

Platte River Power Authority, Loveland's electricity provider, has recently voluntarily signed on to participate in Governor Ritter's Colorado Climate Action Plan.

According to the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), Platte River is the first utility in the state to commit to creating a carbon emissions reduction plan to be submitted to GEO by June, 2009.

The goal of the governor's plan is to rally Colorado's municipal governments, businesses and citizens

to work together to reduce carbon emissions 20 percent by the year 2020, relative to 2005 emissions, and to achieve even greater reductions in emissions by 2050.



“Platte River's staff and board of directors plan to work closely together to create a realistic and adaptable plan that meets Platte River's core values and goals,” said Brian Moeck, Platte River's general manager.

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Celebrate Kids at 6th Annual Children's Day

Loveland youngsters again will be able to enjoy a day of fun and activities dedicated entirely to them. The annual City of Loveland Children's Day will be Wed., March 4, from 1-4 pm at designated City facilities downtown.

Activities include:

- ‘Touch- a- truck’- police cars, fire engines, trash trucks, road graders and more at Fire Station #1 (410 E. 5th St.).
- Free cartoons at the Rialto Theater (228 E. 4th St.).
- Horse-drawn wagon rides provided by Wolf Thunder Draft Horses on the north side of Civic Center for \$1/ride (500 E. 3rd St.).



- Dr. Seuss story time and activities at the Loveland Public Library (300 N. Adams St.).
- Bus Safety and Storm Water Education puppet shows at the Loveland Public Library (300 N. Adams St.).

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“Money Talks”

Paying for college

The idea of funding your child's college education in a down economy can be pretty daunting, but planning ahead can help ease some of the financial burden.



On March 10, Joyce Caufman, M.Ed., of Peak to Peak Educational Consulting, will discuss ways in which families can save money before college and cut costs during college.

Caufman has worked as an educational counselor for 30 years and has helped hundreds of families develop strategies on how to finance their children's college educations.

This presentation is part of the library's monthly Money Talks series. The program begins at noon in the Gertrude B. Scott room at the library. Attendees can bring sack lunches and beverages are provided. For more information call 962-2402.

Personal rate most important

On a personal basis, it doesn't matter what the statistics indicate. For someone who has recently lost a job or is having difficulty landing one, the current unemployment rate for that person is 100 percent.

But for the rest of the workforce in Colorado, northern Colorado and especially Loveland, the numbers look a lot better than elsewhere. The bottom line is that according to state labor department figures from November, Loveland had the second lowest unemployment rate in Colorado. Parker was the lowest.

Below is a comparison of unemployment rates through November, 2008 as provided by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. Final Colorado figures for 2008 including December were not available until after *City Update* went to press. The most current figures can be found at the Current Labor Statistics link at www.coworkforce.com. The national unemployment rate for December, 2008 has been announced at 7.2 percent.

Also, be aware that the figures

provided for national, state and county unemployment are seasonally adjusted while the city figures are not. Seasonally adjusted statistics are not available for any Colorado city.

It's important to realize that according to economic theory, "full employment" is not considered to be 0 percent but between 2 and 7 percent depending on the country, time period and other factors. In the U.S., about 4 percent has typically been considered full employment, including workers who are between jobs but still in the labor force.

While the situation in Loveland and northern Colorado is hardly bleak compared to elsewhere, it's not rosy, either. Further employment declines are forecast for the coming months but are expected to be less severe than in other areas of the state and nation.

Unemployment percentage rates

	Nov., 2008	Oct., 2008	Nov., 2007
National	6.7	6.5	4.7
Colorado	5.8	5.7	4.0
Larimer Co.	4.9	4.7	3.6
Loveland*	4.1	3.7	3.0

*not seasonally adjusted.

City's financial situation appears OK (continued from page 1)

Future revenue collections will set the parameters of financial stability.

The City of Loveland has carefully positioned itself for the recessionary economic conditions and some steps have already been taken. Planned additions to the budget in 2009 have been frozen, any vacant staff positions are under extreme scrutiny and will be filled only if they are mission critical, money set aside for performance-based staff raises has been reduced, and other operations expenditures are being curtailed.

Between expenditure management and available "savings," the City is expected to weather the impacts of

the recession well in 2009. We do anticipate that if the recession lasts longer than mid-year 2009 and sales tax collections drop more than currently anticipated, service reductions will need to be considered for 2010.

The City regularly updates the financial master plan that projects financial positions for the next ten years based on historical trends and the best information available. The City of Loveland will continue to closely evaluate community activity, as well as the expected influences of the local, state and national economies.



More power to Loveland

Loveland will soon be home to a new 230 thousand volt (230kV) power line that will run from south Fort Collins to a new substation at the north end of Loveland. Platte River Power Authority will run the line and build the substation to connect this new line to the existing Loveland transmission system.

According to Mike Dahl, division manager of electric operations for Platte River, the new line that has been in the planning stages for several years will serve to enhance Loveland's existing power system. "Our goal is to always stay ahead of the curve. This new line will increase the robustness for power transmission to and throughout Loveland," said Dahl.

Currently Loveland has seven total substations, one of which is a 230kV

station. The other six are 115kV stations. The addition of the new 230kV line will help power move more fluidly through the system, further enhancing power reliability in Loveland. "We haven't had any problems with power supply in Loveland and we want to keep it that way. This line will help us do that for the foreseeable future," Dahl added.

Crews are currently working on underground segments of the installation and above-ground areas of installation will be constructed over the next couple years. Completion of this project is slated for spring of 2011. Power customers should not experience any interruption in service during this construction.

Web tip yields arrest and

Thanks to a concerned citizen and a local website, a suspect has been arrested, another suspect has been identified, a high profile Loveland crime has been solved and a reward has been paid.

A tip to police through the Larimer County Crime Stoppers website at www.stopcriminals.org led to the arrest and confession of a man for the nighttime burglary of two Loveland churches.

More than \$20,000 in cash and gift cards planned for Christmas gifts to the needy was stolen from the churches just prior to Christmas. A citizen saw a security camera picture of the suspect that was published in an area newspaper, provided information using www.stopcriminals.org and the suspect was arrested.

Loveland police said the online, anonymous tip was instrumental in identifying and arresting the suspect.

Loveland jobs a City priority

Loveland's City government is not directly responsible for either the creation or loss of jobs in private companies. But the City has been and continues to make significant efforts to provide support for existing and new Loveland firms and the jobs they provide.

As evidenced by a quick drive through town, City government, along with other economic development partners in Loveland, Larimer County and the State of Colorado, has been very successful in maintaining and increasing local jobs. The effort continues under City Council direction with ongoing financial incentives, City staff's labors, cooperation with firms and businesses, and other efforts in support of business success and Loveland jobs.

A full-time Business Development Manager plus administrative helpers work to oversee the City's business development strategy. Through a multifaceted approach to job creation, business retention and attraction of new business, the City utilizes resources to promote employment opportunities and to sustain Loveland's economic health.

Loveland has succeeded in being the home of thousands of new jobs during the past decade or so—jobs that are more resistant to swings in the national or global economy. Jobs in the fields of health care, engineering and technology are common here along with the emergence of retail centers that have kept citizens' purchases and resulting employment local.

- **The Loveland Business Assistance Network**—works toward the mutual benefit of several local organizations

involved with promoting the success of Loveland businesses:

- **Loveland Center for Business Development**—works in conjunction with the Larimer County Small Business Development Center in support of local businesses.
- **Loveland Economic Gardening Program**—assists small business by providing services such as market research and analysis.
- **Loveland Chamber of Commerce support**—assists the Chamber with special projects that benefit local businesses.
- **Engaging Loveland, Inc.**—coordinates development and marketing of events in Loveland that benefit businesses and support jobs.
- **Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative**—The City is a supporting

partner of this effort to stimulate business development and job creation by northern Colorado entrepreneurs.

- **Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation**—The City is an investor in this agency that works to retain and attract business to Loveland and the region.
- **City Council Economic Development Incentive Fund**—On a case-by-case basis, City Council considers providing financial incentives to businesses investing in the community and providing quality jobs.

During 2008, the City provided \$1.3 million in incentives to new or expanding local businesses. Those incentives resulted in \$13 million in investments, 172 full-time and 401 part-time jobs by those businesses.

Rate changes for 2009

Residents may have noticed changes in rates, charges or fees from the City that began the first of the year. To make everything a bit clearer, we're providing a summary here in *City Update*. The summary addresses changes that impact typical Loveland households.

Utility rates

Electric: 2.9 percent increase due to cost increase from wholesale electric supplier. The 2008 rate was the fourth lowest in Colorado. The new rate will result in about a \$1.45 monthly cost increase for the average Loveland household.

Water: 1 percent increase with proceeds set aside for future water needs.

Wastewater: No rate change.

Trash collection: Approximately 10 percent increase for households setting out bags or carts, as well as those with dumpster service. The result will be \$.50 - \$1.50 for cart users.

Changes to fees—up, down, new, discontinued—in a number of other areas also went into effect Jan. 1. Those fees relate to facility rentals, bus fares, mosquito control, fees to developers, airport services, licenses, permits, court costs and others.

Reward

Police encourage citizens to use the crime stoppers site whenever they have information to report. Users needn't provide their identities and can collect a reward of up to \$1,000 if the tip leads to an arrest.

The Larimer County Crime Stoppers is a cooperative organization of area law enforcement agencies including the Loveland, Fort Collins, CSU, Berthoud and Estes Park police departments, Colorado State Patrol, Larimer County Sheriff's Department and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Local organizations and individuals help sponsor the program.

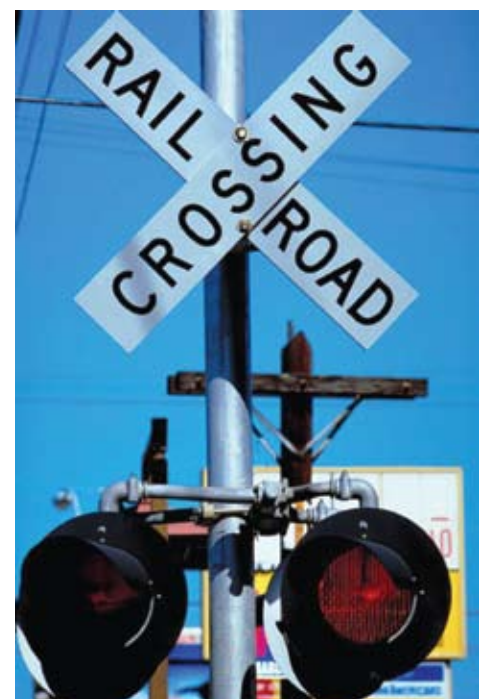
Citizens are also reminded of the Loveland's Most Wanted page on the City's website in the police section of www.cityofloveland.org. The website also offers other crime prevention information and links to other public safety websites.

Railroad Quiet Zone study in progress

Efforts continue by the City and its consulting firm to investigate the feasibility and costs of creating railroad crossings that would eliminate the need for trains to sound their horns. Quiet Zone Corridors, made up of consecutive railroad crossings, would likely require significant changes to the current crossing barricades and signals to prevent traffic flow when a train is approaching.

Three different sets of tracks owned and operated by three different railroad companies cross through Loveland. The primary concern is with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) route which parallels Garfield Avenue through the heart of the city.

Noise from train traffic has increased during the past several years due to more stringent regulations for the trains to use louder horns and to blow them



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Downtown Infrastructure Upgrade plan being finalized

A design team from the Nuzer Kopatz Urban Design Associates consulting firm hired by the City last summer has been creating and refining design concepts for beautifying the center blocks of downtown with an emphasis on making them more pedestrian friendly.

The plan will suggest prioritizing improvements to the downtown area, with top priority being the 4th Street block where the Rialto Theater is located. The plan includes options for adding 4th Street blocks east and west of the Rialto block from Garfield to Washington and, ultimately, the parallel blocks along 3rd and 5th streets.

Prioritizing the infrastructure upgrades will facilitate decision-making based on funding availability and other factors. A block-by-block approach is considered more practical than requiring an all-at-once effort.

The plan will recommend improvements to landscaping, lighting, seating, pavement surfaces and pedestrian crossings. Highlights include the possibility of eliminating all parking along the Rialto block to allow widening the sidewalks to double or triple their current widths. The enhanced pedestrian flavor and elimination of parking will encourage spending more leisure time downtown and enable temporary re-routing of traffic for both special events and routine activities perhaps on weekend evenings.

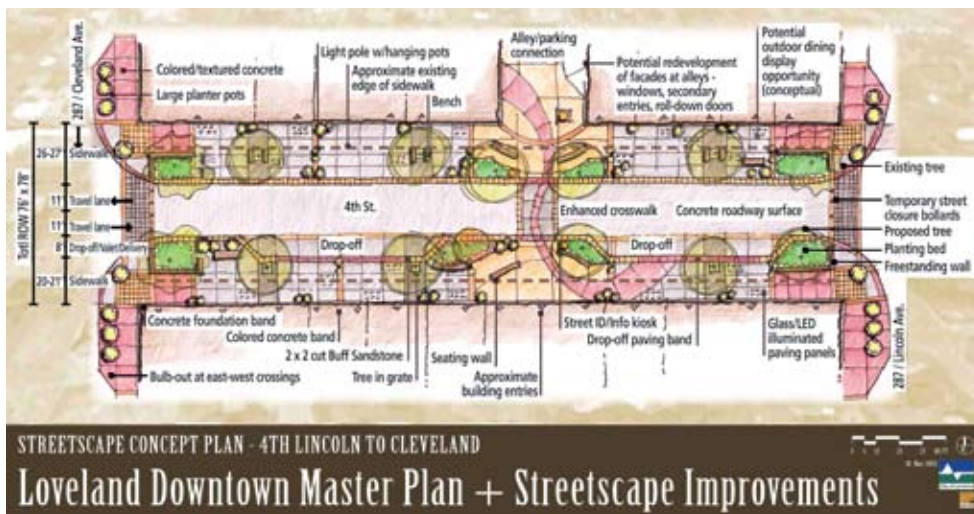
While auto parking may be eliminated in the "Rialto block," access areas for buses and valet parking services will remain.

Consideration of a downtown parking garage is not part of the infrastructure upgrade study and is instead being evaluated as part of another project.

The draft plan also suggests removing the former Mr. Neat's building now owned by the City to create a walkway from 4th Street to the Loveland/Museum Gallery. The current parking lot in the southwest corner of 5th Street and N. Lincoln Avenue would be converted to a pedestrian plaza for both daily use and special events such as performances and festivals.

The plan includes improvements to the passageway west of the Rialto block known as Kitchen Alley between 4th Street and the parking lot on 5th Street. Also included in the plan are suggestions for enhancements to the pocket park on the southeast corner of 4th and Lincoln.

The Downtown Infrastructure Upgrade Plan is the result of months of planning, meetings, and suggestions from citizens, downtown business owners, downtown property owners, the Downtown Loveland Team and representatives for cultural arts and disabled citizens. If approved and constructed, the new downtown look and feel created by the infrastructure upgrade is expected to be a major catalyst toward a change in attitude about downtown and resulting private enterprise revitalization. The Upgrade Master Plan is expected to be completed in March.



Railroad Quiet Zone study in progress (continued from page 3)

sooner and more often. In addition, the number of trains passing through town, especially BNSF traffic, has increased.

Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, the engineering consultant firm hired by the City, is moving toward a final report expected in March. The report

will include input received from a public meeting, a city council study session, and on-site crossings inspection analysis by railroad, county, federal, and city staff. In all, 35 crossing sites in Loveland are included in the study.

Celebrate Children's Day

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- Arts & crafts and autographs by Miss Loveland Valentine at the Museum/Gallery (503 N. Lincoln Ave.).
- Kids can swim, run & shoot hoops all day free with their paying adult and participate in free arts & crafts at the Chilson Recreation Center (700 E 4th St.).
- Vendor and Sponsor booths and activities at Fire Station #1 and Civic Center.
- Win prizes from Chick-fil-A by collecting stamps on a Children's Day passport.

The City of Loveland, with the help of the Thompson School District, has been celebrating Colorado Children's Day since 2002. Children's Day is the result of the long-time dream of Loveland resident Annie Hall. Through her efforts, the day is now celebrated in other cities throughout Colorado. Hall is working to make Children's Day a nationally recognized holiday.

The 2009 Colorado Children's Day event in Loveland is sponsored by the City of Loveland, Thompson School District, Loveland Daily-Reporter Herald, Northern Colorado Kids.Com, Tri-102, Build-A-Bear and Chick-fil-A.

For more information on the event, please call 962-2410 or visit www.cityofloveland.org.

Utility joins statewide effort

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Ralph Mullinix, Chairman of Platte River's board of directors, said that while consideration of the environment has always been a top priority for Platte River, that developing a pen-to-paper proposal for emissions reduction will help the utility pursue this goal in a more systematic, structured and strategic way.

Mullinix emphasizes that this is the beginning of this process. "The focus now is on developing the plan that will outline how we might go about this and how we will achieve our goals within a specified timeframe. After that we would develop action items that will likely unfold over the next several years," he said.

Loveland is one of Platte River's owner municipalities, along with Fort Collins, Longmont and Estes Park. For more information on the Climate Action Plan or how to reduce your carbon emissions, call Loveland Water & Power, 962-3000.

City Update is a monthly publication of the City of Loveland. Residents receive City Update on various dates throughout the month depending on their utility billing cycle. Timeliness of the information may be affected by recipients' bill distribution schedule. Your comments are encouraged and welcomed at 962-2302, hillea@ci.loveland.co.us. Visit the City's website at www.cityofloveland.org.