



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Enriching Lives

Community Involvement 2011

Message from the Commissioner



It is an honor to serve as the Commissioner of the City of Milwaukee's Department of Public Works, this is an awesome responsibility. Being a public servant is a privilege for me, and I have enjoyed such a privilege in Public Works for the past twenty-four years. As Commissioner, I feel that by work-

ing with my fellow DPW employees, side by side every day, we will do whatever is necessary to keep enriching the lives of residents, help businesses thrive, and welcome visitors to our beautiful City. I am proud of the way we, as DPW employees, approach each challenge that comes our way, with diligence and an appreciation for public service. I think it is essential that we continue to be innovative in creating new effective and efficient ways to serve the public. New and innovative ideas are

always welcome. Let me know your thoughts on how to improve the way we serve the public – the best ideas come from those who actually do the job on a daily basis. Thanks to each hard working DPW employee for your valuable contribution, I look forward to receiving your input on how we can make the City of Milwaukee's Department of Public Works one of the best in the country.

Ghassan Korban, Commissioner

Historic Mitchell Street Completes Streetscaping Project that Continues the Renaissance

When Nancy Bush first started her job as Executive Director at the Historic Mitchell Street Association, her first order of business was to research the files. She discovered that there had been TIF monies set aside for streetscaping activities. Her first contact was Ghassan Korban, who at the time, was the Department of Public Works Coordination Manager.

The number one item the Association wanted to address was the replacement of trees on the street and on the medians. Many of the trees had been either knocked by cars, illegally removed or were dying. Baran provided photos of how trees are now planted in the sidewalk areas in order to get water and provide a more aesthetic look. Next Ms. Bush investigated getting money for the installation of harp lights along the corridor and eventually gateway signage for the two main entrance ways to the businesses' shopping district. The money for the signage came from the Department

of City Development's Community Economic Development fund.

These two entrance areas were located at 5th and Mitchell and 13th and Mitchell. At 13th and Mitchell there stood an old fir tree and brick paving. The tree and brick paving was removed and replaced with another tree with a beautiful flower bed and gateway signage that welcomes pedestrians and motorists to Historic Mitchell Street. The same flower bed treatment and signage was applied to 5th and Mitchell. A boulevard located in the area was planted with trees and plants as well. Forestry's Andy Witczak was instru-



The Renaissance Continues on Historic Mitchell Street!

-Nancy Bush

mental in the installation of the irrigation system and the South Side

Continues on Back Page

“Recycle for Good” Works with Local Agencies to Promote Recycling

Community involvement plays a vital role in DPW’s Recycle For Good (RFG) campaign which was launched in September of 2008. Based upon social marketing research involving Milwaukee residents, the campaign is designed to break down barriers to recycling. Partnerships with community groups help to accomplish this by strengthening education and outreach efforts on various fronts including neighborhood canvassing and educational programs. “A premise of social marketing suggests that personal contact largely influences how a message is received and the results that it generates. With the help of volunteers, we can increase the number of residents we are able to reach,

face-to-face, through our door-to-door efforts” said Rick Meyers, Recycling Specialist for DPW. During the summers of 2009 and 2010, volunteers and staff distributed recycling literature and information to thousands of inner city households.



Preparing a tote box for delivery

2009 campaigns were carried out through the Southside Organizing Committee and Sherman Park Community Association. In 2010, non-profit environmental group Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful (KGMB) facilitated partnerships with several community groups to coordinate outreach efforts. “Our one-to-one community outreach activities directly affect the behavior of the citizens through local interaction. Partnering with the City, we have been able to vastly improve education efforts

with the cooperation of the neighborhood groups”, said Joe Wilson, Executive Director. Representatives from six different community groups attended an outreach training session provided by KGMB - King Drive BID, Merrill Park Neighborhood Association, Westtown Association, Walnut Way Neighborhood Association, Avenues West Associa-

tion & SOHI BID, and Menomonee Valley Partners.

In 2009, the inner city experienced an increase in recycling while total waste generation declined, which resulted in a 9.7% positive change in the percent of total waste recycled when compared with the same period during the previous year. After the 2010 neighborhood campaigns, a Recycle For Good campaign goal of increasing recycling by 30% in this same area was achieved.

Partnerships also provide a valuable avenue for partners to strengthen their ties to the community. “It’s great to have our volunteers helping with outreach because it gives people a reason to make human connections. By taking the opportunity to have conversations with neighbors, you can really get to know the neighborhood as a place”, said Caroline Phoenix of the Historic King Drive Business Improvement District.

Other campaign activities included the collection of recycling pledges from residents, inclusion of recycling articles in community newspapers, and the integration of campaign materials and information into community activities. For example, the RFG campaign enjoyed a several week run during the summer of 2010 at the Westtown Farmers’ market, where an educational kiosk was set up and staffed by KGMB. ■



Recycle For Good kiosk at the bustling Westtown Farmers’ Market

Submitted by Becky Curtis, Recycling Assistant

City Hall Vegetable Gardens Continue to Flourish

The City Hall vegetable gardens implemented in 2009 by Mayor Tom Barrett and the Department of Public Works are still flourishing. With Growing Power as a partner in the venture, Mayor Barrett and DPW determined the gardens could serve as urban agricultural demonstration gardens encouraging others in the community to plant gardens in their neighborhoods.

Forestry staff added on to existing planters located outside the Zeidler Building to plant the City Hall Complex urban agricultural demonstration gardens. The planters were chosen because they could be retro-fitted with chicken wire to prevent animals from feasting on the vegetables.

When the project began, Public Works’

In 2011, Growing Power is responsible for the planting, maintenance



Photos By: Becky Curtis

and the harvesting of these vegetables. The organization prepared the soil with compost then planted seeds just as they have in previous years.

The City of Milwaukee supports and encourages urban agricultural gardens. Many are located in backyards, community and school gardens, and on rooftops. Some have been planted on City-owned vacant lots with community

organizations as partners.

The gardens have several benefits:

- Access to fresh, local affordable food
- Positive use for vacant and under-utilized urban land
- Community building and neighborhood beautification
- Improve air and water quality

- Save on household expenses: 60% of family income goes to food

This year the harvested vegetables will be donated to Disabled Veterans organization. The organization has a new facility located at 35th and Wisconsin Avenue and has a commercial kitchen which is used to feed the veterans that live there. The gardens should yield 250 to 300 pounds of vegetables. ■

Public Art Project “Pedestrian Drama” Entertains Pedestrians on East Wisconsin Avenue

The public art project that began in 2009 has come to fruition and is entertaining hundreds of unsuspecting pedestrians on the sidewalks in front of Northwestern Mutual. “Pedestrian Drama” is a series of short animated videos of Milwaukeeans that come to life when pedestrians approach the 5 light poles where kiosks are mounted. The public art project was managed by the Department of Public Works’ Infrastructure Services Division. The project was coordinated by Bob Bryson, Chief Engineer of Traffic and Lighting.

The project has taken time to develop because the artist, Janet Zweig, wanted to include local members of the theater and dance community to assist with the creative process. Although 2 years is a fairly typical time frame for public art fabrication, Ms. Zweig wanted to spend as much of the commission as possible in Milwaukee and involve as many Milwaukeeans as possible. “I wanted the cast to be as diverse as possible and include both professional and amateur performers,” was her comment. Approximately fifty five percent of the commission, \$163,000, was spent in Milwaukee. To create the videos, a contest was held to get local playwrights to submit ideas for very short plays using Milwaukee as the inspiration. Once the winning entries had been selected, Zweig then worked with local theater dramatists and dancers to improvise various parts of the plays for further development.

Two hundred Milwaukeeans were involved in the project which included thirty contest winners. Some of the local individuals and organizations that participated included Deb Lowen, Wildspace Dance Company, Rebecca



“I wanted the cast to be as diverse as possible and include both professional and amateur performers”

-Janet Zweig

Holderness, UW-Milwaukee, Dance and Theater, Dan Wilson, and Bartoli Film. While the creative process of producing the videos was occurring, the fabrication of the kiosks was also taking place, including re-engineering all electronic parts to withstand weather conditions.

The public art project “Pedestrian Drama” is the outcome of the original “Downtown Master Plan.” Based on the recommendation of the “Downtown Master Plan,” a grant was requested and received from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation under the Federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ). Walking was

suggested as an alternative means of transportation through improvements to the pedestrian right of way. Public art was one of the amenities suggested as part of the project. As a result, a Streetscape Public Art Advisory Committee was formed and a public art consultant, Regina Flanagan, was hired to create a Public Art and Design Study for the City of Milwaukee.

One of the members of the Streetscape Public Art Advisory Committee was Beth Nicols, Executive Director of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. Upon completion of the project, Ms. Nicols stated, “It has been fun to see visitors, workers and students checking out our latest public art installation. The feedback has been really positive. Communities that invest in public art are communities that engage and inspire”.

Janet Zweig was selected from 50 artists that responded to the Request for Qualifications by the Streetscape Public Art Advisory Committee to complete design and implementation of the project. Denis Kozelek played a key role in the installation; others that assisted included Kerwin Redmond and Feliks Zajackowski. Clark Wantoch, Administration and Transportation Design Manager, played a valuable role in the financing of the project. Len Moye and Roger Davison, will assist with future on site inspection. All are a part of Infrastructure. ■

Photo By: Milwaukee Downtown

Plankinton Avenue Receives a Much Needed Renovation

The Plankinton Avenue project, from Wells Street to Wisconsin Avenue, involved underground utility work (sewer and water replacement) as well as street reconstruction. The segment of the sewer main that was replaced dated from 1875. The majority of the water main that was replaced dated back to 1932. The sewer work took place first, followed by the water main work, which encompassed the full length of the street. Once the water main work was completed, street reconstruction started. The street reconstruction includes the replacement of curb and gutter, driveway approaches, and some sidewalks.

The work was phased to accommodate the St. Patrick's Day Parade, with sewer work beginning on February 25th and being completed by March 11th. The contractor backfilled the sewer trench and placed cold-weather asphalt to provide a smooth surface for parade participants. The contractor also removed all construction equipment from the site. The Westown Association, organizers of the event, expressed appreciation for the accommodations.

During the project access to driveways

and alleys were maintained and temporary restrictions affecting access due to reconstruction was coordinated with the adjacent businesses and residents. Mo's A Place for Steaks, located on Plankinton, continued their valet service during the project, which was vital to their operation.

Gary Witt, of the Pabst Theater Foundation, which also operates The Riverside Theater, stated, "The Department of Public Works has been an excellent partner to The Riverside Theater during the renovation of Plankinton Avenue. They have worked with us every step of the way to find solutions that have enabled us to keep our business operating while making these tremendous improvements." The Riverside Theater utilizes the alley off of Plankinton for their load in for shows, and parks their tour buses on Plankinton as well.

Other businesses such as, Mo's a Place for Steaks and Mo's Irish Pub has made similar comments regarding access during the reconstruction project as well as the residents of the River Lofts Condominiums.

Prior to the reconstruction project several meet-

ings were held with the stakeholders in the area to explain the nature of the project and listen to their concerns. Stakeholders were kept informed by a Public Liaison, Jenann Olsen, who worked with the Department of Public Works and the contractor to keep them informed of the work on a weekly and sometimes daily basis via email. This is part of the Department's Support for Business Program. ■



March 2011



October 2011

DPW Recreational Facilities Develops Hartung Park and Refurbishes the 29th & Melvina Play Area

The residents near Hartung Park started a neighborhood association to try to take the former one time quarry and landfill and turn it into a community gathering place. The area is located on the City's far northwest side along the Menomonee River parkway, on the border of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa. The residents turned to Alderman Jim

Bohl and recruited his help to get funding to start the project.

The legislative process began in July, 2006, and this year in June 2011, the park had a dedication ceremony to celebrate what had taken place over the past five years. Hartung Park now includes a playground, picnic area, dem-

onstrated rain garden, Silurian Reef outcroppings, a detention pond, and a labyrinth.

This could not have happened without the Hartung Park Community Association (HPCA) and the Department of Public Works' Recreational Facilities Section. The Association played an



Planting a rain garden with native plants.

active and vital role in the planning, design, development, and promotion of the park. Recreational Facilities took their ideas and made them work. Jason Wilke, of HPCA, designed the first phase of the project. Michael Sanders, of DPW,



Siluriam Reef Sculptures

worked with the Association members to help plant the rain garden with plants native to the area, as part of the storm water diversion plan. Emad Nadi, of DPW, was responsible for the design and construction of the detention pond and the labyrinth. Commissioner Ghasan Korban worked with Alderman Bohl and the HPCA in his former role as the Public Works Coordination Manager.

The bronze sculptures, designed by local artist Laura Priebe of HPCA, are of Silurian Reef marine animals, they pay homage to the area's prehistoric beginnings. Also a bench was donated for the children's play area by the Hagoopian Family.

"This park is the result of a partnership between neighbors, City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and state government, along with area businesses and foundations", stated Lynn Woehrle, president of the Hartung Park Community Association. "It is an example of what good can come from building community and partnerships among these entities".

The final phase will include sledding hills and other amenities. Paul Fredrich, Terrence Brumirski, and Matthew Manhardt are part of the DPW team that will make that happen.

The 29th and Melvina Park Play Area had been a play area for a number of years. But recently the play area had become an eyesore and started attracting trouble. Concerned neighbors contacted Alderman Willie Wade and asked if something could be done and the alderman recruited the Department of Public Works to assist.

"The 29th and Melvina Play Area had seen a minimum of maintenance and upkeep due to budget issues over the past several years. As a result of a neighborhood mobilization to upgrade the park, an appeal went out to the City of Milwaukee, community partners and private funders", stated Yvonne McCaskill a neighborhood resident.

On Thursday, August 4, 2011 and Saturday, August 6, 2011 volunteers made improvements to the play area. The guardrails were painted by community artists; the benches at the basketball courts had pavers installed to cover the exposed ground; the former unused tennis court areas were painted with white lines to form hopscotch and four square games, and a sensory/healing garden with plants that are aromatic to attract butterflies was installed, with a new bench nearby.

"The Department of Public Works responded by providing much needed technical assistance and materials. The basketball courts have been refurbished and repainted. What was a weed infested tennis court is now a play area with sidewalk games; there is an addition of a garden, and the Tot Lot has been refurbished. All labor was provided by DPW with volunteer help", Ms. McCaskill said.

Prior to the renovations of the play area, the Milwaukee Police Department

was also concerned about the area as well. Officer Raymond Robakowski, from the 5th District said, "The main reason for the refurbishing of the park was to provide a safe place for the children to play. Before the work was done the park was run down and the over growth of bushes made the park dangerous, with too many concealment areas. Cutting the vegetation down,



opening the park up gave residents a better view, and it reduced the spaces where the bad element could take advantage of the residents, and more importantly, the children".

In conclusion, Ms. McCaskill stated, "The 29th and Melvina Street

Play Area is now an area that children and adults can enjoy. This community has plans to move to Phase II of the play area upgrade in the spring. This is truly an example of what happens when neighborhoods and the City departments work together to insure that communities are a safe place to live, work and play".

Various individuals, Departments, and organizations came together to transform the 29th and Melvina Play Area; they included: Benjamin Wesson, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office; Raymond Rabokowski, Milwaukee Police Department; Diane De La Santos, City on a Hill; Paula Butler, Northwest Side Community Development Corporation; Caitlin Ewing, Rock the Lakes, Milwaukee; Yvonne McCaskill, resident; Department of City Development, Milwaukee Public Schools, Division of Recreation and Community Services, Alderman Willie Wade, and DPW. ■



Rock The Lake Volunteers

South 1st Street Triangle Park: “Practical, Beautiful, and Very Cool”

The triangle that stood at the junction of South 1st Street, South 2nd Street, and Seebooth became part of the South 2nd Street reconstruction project.

The renovation of the underutilized green space included input from area businesses and neighbors regarding the design and use of the space. The final product consists of decorative paving, which created a more defined space, with new planting beds, renovated landscaping, new trees, decorative benches and art. Also included are artifacts removed from City Hall during the restoration.

DPW's Forestry Landscape Architect Scott Baran worked with the neighbors very closely in designing the space, particularly Jennifer Espenscheid, a local artist who lives in the area. Ms. Espenscheid was very excited to work on the project. She explained that many of the materials used to construct the planters came from the bricks that were removed from 2nd Street. She constructed gabions or wire mesh cages to enclose the brick planters and also to enclose the prized artifacts used in the design. Those prized artifacts were removed from City Hall during the restoration project.

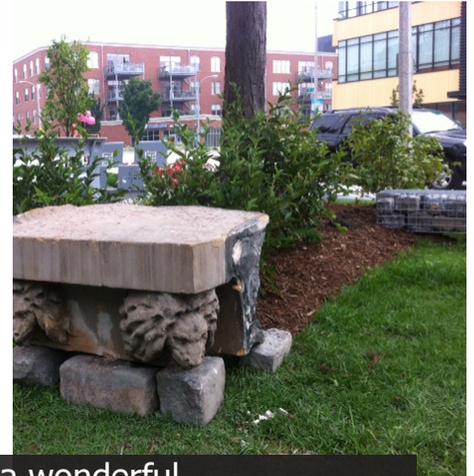
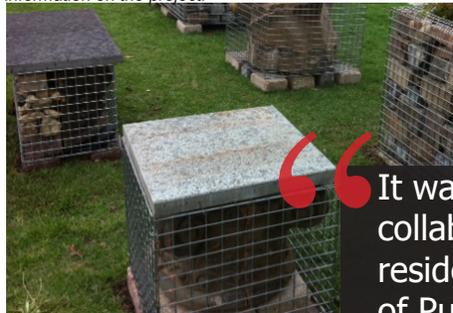
Commissioner Ghassan Korban, who at the time, was the Public Works Coordination Manager, assisted in procuring a lion's head and several other artifacts that are now featured as part of the landscaping. Ms. Espenscheid stated, "It was really fun to work with Scott Baran and Ghassan Korban on the project. It was a wonderful collaboration between the residents and Department of Public Works. The plants that were planted are very hardy and low maintenance, but add beauty to area".

One of the residents, Paul David Rasmussen, has purchased an eighteen inch Toro mulching mower to help keep the Triangle Garden looking good. Other residents in the area have volun-

teered to assist with the maintenance of the garden.

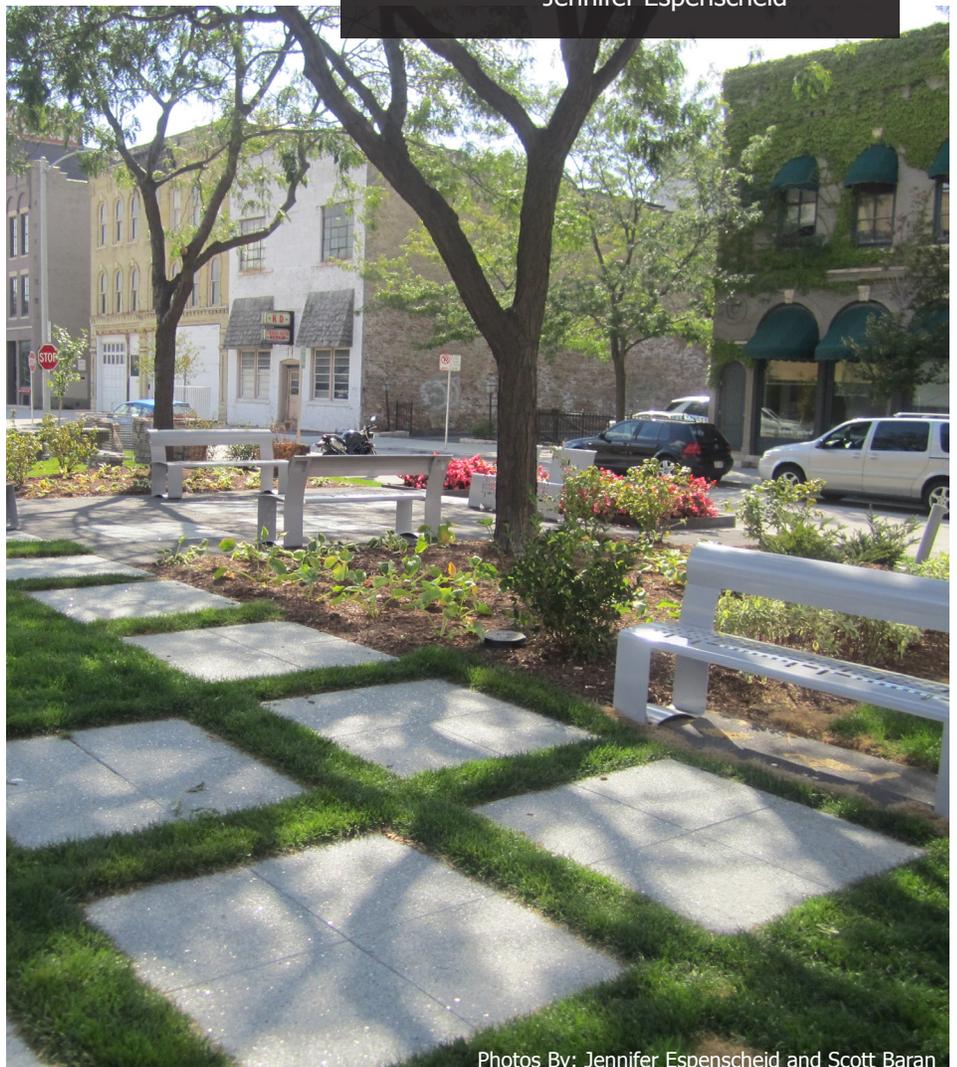
In conclusion, Ms. Espenscheid stated, "The garden is reflective of our neighborhood. We are all very different, but when we come together we produce something that is practical, beautiful, and very cool". ■

Thanks to Scott Baran, Landscape Architect, Forestry for information on the project.



“It was a wonderful collaboration between the residents and Department of Public Works.”

-Jennifer Espenscheid



Photos By: Jennifer Espenscheid and Scott Baran

Revitalizing Milwaukee's South 2nd Street Industrial Corridor

South 2nd Street between West National Avenue and the Menomonee River was an old industrial corridor primarily used as an alternate route to and from Milwaukee's Central Business District. It is, however, also home to many, and the location of several locally run businesses and future potential redevelopment. The roadway, built originally in 1910, saw its last maintenance treatment in 1962, receiving an asphaltic overlay and had gone without improvement until 2010. Revitalization took place on South 2nd Street in the Summer of 2010 when reconstruction took place through the joint collaboration of the Department of Public Works and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

This project involved several public meetings where the plans were shared with businesses and residents. The final design of the project was based on public input.

The scope of the work involved street paving, removal of existing pavement and railroad ties, and the installation of new curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and driveway approaches. The project also included construction of a new tree-filled, green terrace area, as well as decorative street lighting poles and fixtures, which includes harps and lanterns.

The push by residents and stakeholders to introduce more green space to the corridor, which had no grass or trees, fit in well with the City of Milwaukee's Greening Initiative that had recently been legislated. They City worked with property owners on a case by case basis to determine what green aspects would fit their property best.



“There are more than a half dozen outdoor seating opportunities and increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We now have a Main Street!”
-Juli Kaufman

Although the South 2nd Street roadway was officially open to the public in November 2010, the remaining work which included the planting of trees and installing the decorative lighting was completed the spring of 2011. The Walker's Point Association hosted an event on May 19th to celebrate the successful completion of the reconstruction project. This included a - for FIX, a new 3 story office building, the opening of the Milwaukee Brewing Company, 613 South 2nd Street, and finally a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mayor Tom Barrett, Alderman Jim Witkowiak, and several community and public sector representatives.

The project was managed by Infrastructure's Chad Chrisbaum, but included assistance from Ghassan Korban, who was the Public Works Coordination Manager at the time, Lois Gresl, Lynn Des Jardins, Dan Wimmer, and numerous others.

The stakeholders were provided construction updates, assisted with park-

ing and driveway access issues by a Public Liaison, Kris Martinsek. She also made sure "Open for Businesses" signs were provided to inform the public that the businesses were open during construction. This was done as a part of the Department's "Support for Business Program".

Juli Kaufmann, owner of a property located at 538 South 2nd Street, summed up what the project means to everyone on the street, "The South 2nd Street project is a really good role model for what the public sector and the community can do when they work together. It's not just a physical transformation, it's beyond that – it is so much more. It is a community transformation. There are more than a half dozen outdoor seating opportunities and increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We now have a Main Street!" ■

Thanks to Clark Wantoch, Administration and Transportation Design Manager and Chad Chrisbaum Project Engineer, Infrastructure Services

Continued from Front Page

Forestry District played a major role in the streetscape project. Nancy Bush, Executive Director of Historic Mitchell Street, stated, "With the outstanding cooperation of Ghassan Korban, the Department of Public Works, and the Forestry Department's Scott Baran,

Historic Mitchell Street now has a new, fresh and inviting look, due to the recently completed streetscaping project. The landscaping of the median beds between 5th and 13th Streets, and the new Gateway signs welcome destination shoppers to the retail stores and businesses on Historic Mitchell Street.

This has been an exciting project -- The Renaissance Continues on Historic Mitchell Street"! ■

Department of Public Works Newsletter Gets A New Look

The DPW Newsletter has been revamped and from this point forward follows a new structure. Coming up in 2012 look for the subsequent Newsletters to be released

- 1st quarter – *2012: The Look Forward*
- 2nd quarter – *Sustainability*
- 3rd quarter – *Community Involvement*
- 4th quarter – *The Real Cost of Infrastructure*

Department of Public Works Newsletter



Zeidler Municipal Building
 841 North Broadway, Room
 501
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

For Information Contact:
Cecilia.Gilbert@milwaukee.gov
 414-286-3261

Ghassan Korban.....Commissioner
 Preston Cole.....Director of Operations
 Cecilia Gilbert.....Permits & Communications Manager
 Gina Bisesi.....Graphic Designer