

Tiffin City Council Work Session

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September 01, 2026 05:30 pm



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@ 5:30 PM

City Council

Work Session

Tiffin City Hall

300 Railroad Street, Tiffin, Iowa 52340

www.tiffin-iowa.org

Mayor:	Tim Kasparek	Public Works Director:	Brian Detert
Council At Large:	Tim Orris – Mayor Pro-Tem	Water/WW Superintendent:	Brett Mehmen
Council At Large:	Tony Johnson	Building Official:	Brian Shay
Council At Large:	Skylar Limkemann	Recreation Director:	Grant Weber
Council At Large:	Chris Olney	Library Director:	Liz Petersen Grier
Council At Large:	Eric Schnedler	Interim Fire Chief:	Tom Hartshorn
City Administrator:	Doug Boldt	City Engineer:	MSA Professional Services
Asst. City Admin.	Ashley Platz		
City Attorney	Crystal Raiber		
City Clerk	Abigail Hora		

1. Call to Order

File: [Agenda](#)

2. A. Roll Call

File: [Work Session Notes](#)

3. **B. Agenda Additions/Agenda Approval**
4. **C. Discussion and Review of Fire Department Operations, Activities and Outlook Report**
File: [Staff Report](#)
5. **D. Discussion and Review of 2026 Community Events and Sponsorship Report – Rec Fest**
File: [Staff Report](#)
6. **E. Questions from Council Members regarding items on the Regular City Council Agenda or Reports**
7. **F. Other Business**
8. **G. Adjournment**

City of Tiffin, Iowa

Meeting: Tiffin City Council Work Session
Place: Tiffin City Hall, 300 Railroad Street, Tiffin, Iowa 52340
Date/Time: September 1, 2026 – 5:30 PM
Web Page: www.tiffin-iowa.org
Posted: August 27, 2026 (website & front entry of City Hall)

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CITY OF TIFFIN
CITY ADMINISTRATOR
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL – NOTES FOR WORK SESSION ITEMS
August 27, 2026

- Interim Fire Chief Hartshorn will review with the Council the attached Fire Department Operations, Activities, and Outlook report Tuesday night. The report provides an overview of the department's past and current operations, activities, current priorities and future needs. The report is intended to give the Council a better understanding of the department's day-to-day responsibilities, services provided to the community, and the challenges and opportunities facing the department. It will also highlight key areas of focus as the Fire Department continues to keep up with the growth of Tiffin while continuing to provide effective, efficient, and responsive emergency services to the community.

CITY OF TIFFIN, IOWA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Progress Report



Prepared by:
Tom Hartshorn

September 2026

September 2026 Council Progress Report – City of Tiffin, Iowa

Summary

When I began serving as Interim Fire Chief, my initial focus was to provide stability and consistent leadership to the Tiffin Fire Department while evaluating the department’s organizational structure, culture, operational readiness, policies, staffing, training, and long-term needs.

The intent was not to simply maintain the department during a transition period, but to identify areas where we could improve accountability, establish clearer expectations, strengthen our operational capabilities, and better position the department for the future.

Over the last three months, significant work has been completed or initiated toward those goals. This update provides the Council with an overview of that progress and identifies several areas that will require continued attention.

Current Department Status

The department is very inexperienced and has experienced continued turnover over the past several years while call volume continues to increase. The increasing demands of the department will prove to be challenging in the coming years.

Call Volume	2026	2025	2024
Calls YTD	453	426	414
Annual Calls	695 (expected)	664	620
% Growth	4.7%	7.1%	

Staffing Changes	Incoming	Outgoing
2023	3	6
2024	5	1
2025	6	6
2026 (YTD)	3	5

Member Status	
Certified/ Non-probationary	13
Non-certified/Probationary	7
>5 yrs of service	4
2 -5 yrs of service	8
<2 yrs of service	8

% of Calls with 2 or fewer responders	2026 (YTD)
Total	32.8%
Midnight – 6am	57.1%
Overlapping Calls	
34 Times YTD	7.51%

Incident Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses (YTD)
Alec Skubal	149	33%
Allison Pettinger	42	9%
Chris Lenocho	105	23%
Cole Van Brocklin	31	7%
David Handley	76	17%
Erron Hilton	11	2%
Jason Fangman	148	33%
Jessica Fick	27	6%
Jett Skrien	18	4%
Jon Lamb	150	34%

Matthew Fangman	52	12%
Nolan Crawford	61	14%
Robert Gibson	14	3%
Skylar Limkemann	204	46%
Sofia Ramirez	47	11%
Steven Connelly	54	12%
Tom Hartshorn	10	2%
Trevor Jack	43	10%
Ty Wright	52	12%
Tyler Muhlbauer	140	31%
William Erb	159	36%

Organizational Stability and Leadership

One of the first priorities was establishing a clearer organizational structure and defining responsibilities within the department.

Work in this area has included:

- Re-organizing the department's officer roles.
- Removed the Operations Captain position.
- Created a Captain of Apparatus/Equipment.
- Reassigned the Operations Captain to Captain of EMS.
- Reassigned the EMS Captain to Captain of Apparatus/Equipment
- Currently in a 6-month evaluation period of each of these positions (December 2026).
- Established greater command-level (Chief Officers) oversight of department projects, expenditures, grants, equipment, and operational initiatives.

The overall objective has been to move the department toward an organization where responsibilities are clearly assigned and where members understand both who is responsible and what is expected.

Policies and Administrative Systems

Another significant area of focus has been reviewing and developing policies and guidelines. Many of these have not been published yet, due to on-going work towards developing a robust and thorough policy manual.

Work has included development and revisions of policies addressing:

- Personal protective equipment
- Uniforms
- Surveillance Cameras in the station
- Training
- Response guidelines

The purpose of this work is to reduce reliance on informal practices and create consistent expectations that remain in place regardless of who occupies a particular leadership position.

Training and Operational Readiness

Improving training and operational readiness has remained a major priority.

The department has been working towards a more deliberate training program that emphasizes fundamental firefighter skills and encourages everyone to participate. The department had a culture that did not encourage firefighters to conduct additional hands-on training beyond what was put out by the training division. This was evident by there only being one organized optional group training in 2025. Since arriving, this was due to processes in place related to getting the training approved and recorded. Within the first week I changed that expectation and made it clear that our members are encouraged to train on their own or in small groups and removed some of the barriers to allowing that to happen. Since that time, the Training Captain has offered 9 optional trainings to the department and conducted 4 small group or one-on-one training sessions with members seeking additional training.

Other training and operational readiness accomplishments include:

- Reinstating the Training Captain.
- Providing the Training Captain with an overview of what the minimum state requirements are for on-going firefighter and EMS training.
- Mentoring the Training Captain on the development of a training plan for the department.
- Purchased and implemented online EMS training platform to ensure minimum EMS CEU's are offered for EMT certification. Also allows members to complete training on their own time.

Recent and upcoming training:

- Combined emergency vehicles operations and pump operations training in June.
- Conducted wildland fire training in July.
- Presented Fire Behavior and Tactical Considerations of Firefighting in August.
- Basic SCBA confidence in June.
- Member attended International Society of Fire Service Instructors Conference.
- Two members attending Live Fire Trainer Course this fall.
- One member attending EMS World this fall.
- Continued optional trainings in hose deployment, search, extrication planned.

Apparatus, Equipment, and Facilities

The Tiffin FD had received our new fire engine (152) in November of 2025. When I arrived it was still not fully operational, as not all of the equipment was mounted and many compartments had a large amount of equipment just piled inside. This is a large undertaking and had just not been completed. I assisted the newly assigned Captain of Apparatus in going through the engine to finalize the inventory of equipment, mount tools, and get the engine fully operational. This occurred in August. The engine is fully operational and something the Department and City should be proud of.

Authorized and encouraged the re-design of the office space in the station to create a mini day room for members to have a place to sit, relax, take a nap if needed. This supports our members who live out of town and are putting in shift hours at the station. The new furniture will be delivered this week.

Other apparatus, equipment, and facilities initiatives include:

- Upgraded the surveillance/camera system within the fire station with more City oversight.
- Painting lines in the station to make backing apparatus into the bay safer.
- Redesigning the graphics on the current command car and adding a light bar.
- Designed and finalized the new Tahoe upfit for a Chief's vehicle. Initial plan was nearly a \$60,000 upfit. I decided to keep the current Tahoe as the command vehicle, spent \$6500 to add a new graphics package and a light bar, and then upfitted the new Tahoe for approximately \$35,000.
- Working towards moving EMS response from the light rescue to a pick-up.
- Assessing the overall volume of equipment and providing more oversight as to what is purchased vs what is actually needed.
- Meeting and discussing new fire station location and needs.

EMS Program Development

EMS represents a substantial portion of the department's workload and remains an important area of improvement.

Of the department's 664 calls last year, 422 involved EMS, motor vehicle collisions, or citizen assists. That means that approximately 64% of the department's call volume involved incidents where EMT-level, non-structural firefighters could respond. The TFD required all members to obtain Firefighter 1 & 2, HazMat Awareness and Operations, and EMT. We have multiple members who have no interest in being interior structural firefighters, but they want to run EMS calls and support the department in other ways. By our own rules we did not have a place for them on TFD. To increase our recruitment and retention, and ultimately provide more reliable call response to the community, I have tasked the EMS Captain with writing a new ordinance allowing us to have EMS only personnel. Potential benefits include:

- Increasing the number of EMS responders.
- Expanding the pool of potential department members, some of which might start as EMS only and venture into firefighting as well.
- Improve call response reliability.
- Reduce the dependence on the same, relatively small group of Firefighter/EMTs.
- Increase staffing without requiring a longer training process.

Staffing Analysis

The most significant long-term issue being evaluated is staffing.

Tiffin continues to experience substantial population and call-volume growth. The department has transitioned from approximately 300 calls in 2019 to an expected 700 calls this year. Compared to the 665 calls last year, this is another 5% increase while continuing to rely heavily on volunteer staffing.

Most recently I have been evaluating options for introducing part-time firefighter staffing while retaining the paid-per-call volunteer membership model. One model being evaluated would provide two part-time firefighters around the clock using two 12-hour shifts per day.

A second, more incremental model, would staff two part-time firefighters from 6:00pm until 6:00am Monday through Friday and provide two part-time staffed positions Saturday and Sunday for all 24hrs (2- 12hr shifts).

These models are being evaluated based on:

- Number of part-time employees required.
- Minimum and maximum hours per pay period, per employee.
- Estimated annual personnel costs.
- Call-volume patterns.
- Ability to maintain adequate staffing.

- Response reliability and response times.

The intent is not to replace the volunteer/paid-per-call model, but to determine how scheduled staffing can supplement that model as the community and call volume continue to grow.

Prior to implementing any staffing model, we need to figure out a path forward for the training division. Training is the backbone of the fire service, and we cannot hire people that we can't effectively train. Under the current model, we have a volunteer training officer who works a normal M-F job and has the same daily responsibilities of life as the rest of us. It is very clear to me that we don't have the capacity to effectively on-board and train new members and then continue to maintain a high-quality on-going training program, trained regardless of who is in the training officer position. It is nearly an impossible task. The training requirements to maintain operational readiness are high.

My recommendation moving forward is to find a way to hire a part-time training officer, working approximately 15-20hrs per week who could provide consistency and accountability for the department's training program while reducing the administrative burden currently placed on the Fire Marshal position.

This is an area that warrants future discussion as we consider staffing and budgeting.

Mutual Aid

I have met with our mutual aid partners (Oxford, Coralville, North Liberty, and Iowa City) on multiple occasions. Those discussions have centered around our mutual aid box alarm system, sharing of resources, and how to best work together to provide protection to our communities. These meetings have also led to some changes in our operational response model.

One of the biggest changes is that Tiffin FD is joining the rest of the county agencies in the standardized county numbering system. Several years ago, Chief Platz (North Liberty) proposed an idea to move towards a standardized numbering system for all county fire departments and apparatus, that clearly identified each unit by its department, apparatus type, and responding location. The rest of the county agencies (excluding Iowa City) have made the switch. I have determined that it is in the best interest of the department to make this change.

Other topics to note are:

- Discussing the function of our command car in the larger mutual aid response.
- Changes in operational response to I-380 during construction.
- A more modern response model for Oxford and Tiffin fire.
- Our interactions and relationships with community partners.

Department Culture

In my first few months here, I was asking questions, learning, making notes, and assessing the overall department. This has led me to the following assessment; the Tiffin Fire Department has a leadership group who all care. The department is extremely young in experience, and we largely lack the ability to effectively train our members to the level that should be expected. The Tiffin Fire Department is also well funded. We have a brand-new engine, top of the line SCBAs, great hoses, nozzles, and a great aerial, etc. I commend you, the Council, on supporting the fire department to the level that you have. It appears to me that there are very few things that the department has asked for that we haven't gotten. That being said, the department leadership has allowed there to be an imbalance of power and authority, and has focused largely on equipment, things, and technology. This has created a lack of trust, a lack of ownership, very little empowerment, and low morale throughout the department.

I often sum up my assessment as this, "the department has focused on processes over people." These systems, while sometime well intentioned, have created obstacles for the department. There is no equipment that I can purchase that will increase the morale and response reliability of the fire department, including a new station. We need to ensure that all team members have an opportunity to contribute, feel valued, and are encouraged to participate in a respectful and supportive manner. The department needs to know and trust that the Chief is in charge and that organizational level decisions will be handled by the Chief and/or the Chief Officers.

Looking Forward

The first phase of this transition primarily involved stabilizing, evaluating, organizing, and establishing roles and expectations.

The next phase should increasingly focus on implementation and long-term planning.

My priorities moving forward include:

- Continued implementation of the revised organizational structure and officer responsibilities.
- Invest in the culture, rebuild trust, empower and encourage members growth.
- Completing and adopting priority department policies and guidelines.
- Continued implementation of the EMS only program.
- A revised deployment model that clearly defines what apparatus to take to what calls and ensures that we are best deploying our resources.
- Strengthening our training program, look to fund a part time training officer.
- Evaluate our apparatus and determine a long term replacement plan.
- Evaluate staffing plan for the future.
- Planning of a new fire station.
- Position the department to transition to a full-time Fire Chief.

2026 Community Events & Sponsorship Report

The City of Tiffin's 2026 community events season has been a significant success and represents continued growth in the City's efforts to provide free, accessible, and engaging opportunities for residents and visitors.

This year, the City introduced the Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park, a new summer event series designed to bring the community together through live entertainment, recreation, food, and family-friendly activities. The series included events in June, July, and August and incorporated Rec Fest as its culminating two-day celebration.

In addition to the summer programming, the City continued supporting community events and partnerships throughout the year, including the Infuse Church 2026 Easter Egg Hunt, Springmier Community Library programming, and National Night Out.

Upcoming events include the CCA Homecoming Parade, Springmier Library's Touch-a-Truck Event, Halloween Hike, Holiday Hoopla/Breakfast with Santa, and the 2027 Easter Egg Hunt.

A significant accomplishment this year was the development of a formal community sponsorship program. For the July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027, sponsorship year, the City has secured \$34,000 in sponsorship commitments, in addition to several in-kind partnerships.

The City also began utilizing Placer.ai data, with assistance from Greater Iowa City, Inc., to better understand the reach and impact of Rec Fest. This will provide a valuable baseline for evaluating future events and understanding how Tiffin's community events attract both residents and visitors from surrounding communities.



2026 Community Events Strategy

As Tiffin continues to grow, community events have become an increasingly important part of creating connections among residents, supporting local businesses, activating public spaces, and building community identity.

The City's 2026 sponsorship materials describe community events as opportunities for residents to come together, build relationships, and enjoy shared experiences throughout the year. The City's goal is to provide events that remain free and accessible while creating opportunities for businesses and community organizations to participate.

Rather than relying on one or two large annual events, the 2026 programming model provided opportunities for community engagement throughout the year. The 2026 programming included:

- Springmier Community Library Summer Reading programming
- Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park
 - June 11 – Summer Kickoff
 - July 18 – Ice Cream Social & Movie Night
 - July 24 – Polka in the Park & Bingo
 - August 4 – National Night Out
 - August 7-8 – Rec Fest (Signature Event)
- Future Events:
 - Springmier Library Touch-a-Truck
 - Halloween Hike
 - Holiday Hoopla/Breakfast with Santa
 - 2027 Easter Egg Hunt

This approach allows the City to offer different types of experiences for different age groups while utilizing multiple parks, public spaces, and community facilities.

Community Events Trailer

The Tiffin City Council approved the purchase of a dedicated Community Events Trailer earlier this year to address the growing amount of equipment and supplies needed for Tiffin's community events. Prior to the trailer, staff were storing event equipment in multiple City facilities and spending significant time gathering, transporting, and returning supplies before and after each event.

The trailer has already greatly improved staff efficiency by providing one secure, centralized location for event equipment. Staff can now load and organize supplies in advance, transport everything together, and significantly streamline both event setup and teardown. This has been especially valuable as the City continues to expand its community programming, including Rec Fest, Tiffin Summer Social events, Movies in the Park, holiday celebrations, and other gatherings.

The \$6,595 investment also provides the City with a long-term asset that can continue supporting community events for years to come. The Community Events Trailer has



proven to be a practical investment that saves staff time, reduces unnecessary trips between facilities, improves event organization, and makes it easier for the City to deliver quality community events.

Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park

New in 2026, the Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park, was created as a summer event series rather than treating each event as a standalone activity. The series was designed around four primary elements:

- Community connection
- Live entertainment
- Recreation
- Family-friendly activities

Events were held at Park Place City Center, Jim Bartels Tiffin City Park, and Deerview Park throughout June, July, and August.

June 11 Kickoff – Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park

The inaugural Tiffin Summer Social – Parties in the Park series kicked off on June 11 at Park Place City Center with live music, food, beverages, and family-friendly activities. While the event faced challenging weather conditions, including rain, storms, and a tornado watch, our vendors and live entertainment remained committed to making the event happen.

Despite the weather, community members still came out to enjoy live music from Mike Ryan and food and beverages from Elara's Pizza, Kona Ice, and Lucky Wife Wine Slushies. While attendance was understandably impacted by the weather, the turnout was encouraging given the conditions.

Staff considered the event a successful kickoff to the Summer Social series. The event demonstrated the community's willingness to participate in outdoor programming and provided a strong foundation for the remaining summer events. Most importantly, the event created an opportunity for residents, families, and neighbors to gather and connect, even when Mother Nature tried her best to crash the party.

July 18 – Ice Cream Social & Movie Night

The July 18 event was a strong community gathering at the Jim Bartels Tiffin City Park, bringing families, friends, and neighbors together for an evening of summer activities. The event featured a free ice cream social, food trucks, bounce houses, Nerf battles,



yard games, and live music by Marty Garrett, followed by a community movie night under the stars featuring *The Sandlot*.

The event created opportunities for residents of all ages to participate, relax, and connect in the park. The combination of activities, live entertainment, and a family-friendly movie helped create a lively atmosphere and encouraged residents to stay and enjoy the event throughout the evening.

City staff and volunteers worked behind the scenes to coordinate activities, vendors, entertainment, and the movie presentation. The event was well received by the community and demonstrated the value of offering free, family-friendly programming in Tiffin's parks.

July 24 – Polka in the Park & Bingo

The July 24 event at Deer View Park was well attended and provided a fun, interactive evening for residents of all ages. Attendees enjoyed live polka music, food trucks, yard games, and community bingo, creating an energetic atmosphere throughout the evening.

The interactive polka music was a highlight of the event, with residents engaging with the performers and enjoying a unique style of live entertainment in the park. Following the music, the community stayed to participate in more than 10 games of bingo, keeping residents engaged and involved throughout the evening.

A special focus of the event was supporting local businesses through the bingo prizes. Gift cards to Tiffin businesses were awarded to bingo winners, giving residents an opportunity to experience and support local businesses while adding an extra incentive to participate.



August 4 – National Night Out

Tiffin's National Night Out was well attended and provided a great opportunity for residents to come together with the Tiffin Fire Department and Johnson County Sheriff's Office in a relaxed, family-friendly setting. The evening offered a mix of community activities, entertainment, food, and opportunities for residents to interact with the first responders who serve our community.

Families enjoyed live music by Marty Garrett, delicious food from the XOLO Food Truck, yard games, and an inflatable water slide that was a big hit with kids throughout the evening. Face painting by Sandi Spurrell was especially popular, with Sandi staying busy throughout the event and continuing to paint faces for approximately 30 minutes beyond the scheduled event time due to demand.

The 'Meet Your Local First Responders' portion of the evening gave residents an opportunity to visit with members of the Tiffin Fire Department and Johnson County Sheriff's Office, explore emergency vehicles, ask questions, and build connections with local public safety personnel. The classic car drive-in hosted by Bryant's Tap & Grill also added another community attraction to the evening.

2026 Rec Fest

The 2026 Rec Fest was the highlight of the City's summer event season and was the most successful Rec Fest to date. This year, Rec Fest was expanded into a two-day celebration at Park Place City Center, offering a combination of recreation, family activities, local businesses, food, and live entertainment.

Friday, August 7 – 5K & Kickoff

The Rec Fest 5K Run/Walk successfully kicked off Rec Fest weekend at Park Place City Center. The event saw 118 participants register, with approximately 54 participants ultimately taking part in the 5K Run/Walk or 1-Mile Fun Run. A few participants, including parents, participated in both events. The races brought runners, walkers, families,



and spectators together for an evening of recreation and community celebration, followed by music, food, beverages, and yard games.

The event did face a weather-related challenge, with storms in the surrounding area creating the potential for a delayed start. Staff worked closely with the public safety team to monitor conditions, and once an all-clear was received, the race was able to proceed safely as scheduled.



The weather also created an unexpected issue with the race timing system. Staff and the timing team worked through the issue, and the results were successfully reconciled and finalized over the course of the weekend.

Following the race, participants and spectators were able to stick around and enjoy music from Heartland Jamz, food trucks, a beer tent, and yard games, creating a festive atmosphere and setting the tone for the remainder of Rec Fest weekend.

Overall, the 5K was a successful opening event for Rec Fest. Despite challenging weather conditions and an unexpected timing-system issue, staff and event partners adapted quickly, prioritized safety, resolved operational challenges, and successfully delivered the event.

Saturday, August 8 – Rec Fest Celebration

The second day of Rec Fest was the most successful Rec Fest to date, bringing together families, residents, vendors, and visitors for an afternoon and evening of activities, entertainment, and community celebration at Park Place City Center.

One of the biggest takeaways from this year's Rec Fest was the decision to split the event into two days. Rather than trying to fit all activities into one long day, the two-day format allowed the event to have a more manageable schedule and created an opportunity to begin Saturday's activities later in the afternoon. This helped bridge the typical gap between daytime family activities and evening entertainment, resulting in a more consistent flow of activity throughout the event.



Saturday offered a strong mix of family-friendly activities and entertainment, including vendor booths, food trucks, bounce houses, a water slide, train rides, a petting zoo, yard games, and the Bags Tournament. The combination provided something for a wide range of ages and interests and encouraged families to spend several hours at the event.

The Rec Fest Bags Tournament brought a fun competitive element to the weekend, with 12 teams participating in the tournament. The event provided an opportunity for friends, families, and community members to enjoy some friendly competition while taking part in the larger Rec Fest celebration.

The live music lineup was another highlight. Sad Dads performed during the late afternoon while the Bags Tournament was underway, creating a lively atmosphere and helping build energy throughout the event. They effectively warmed up the crowd for the evening's headliner, Trophy Dads, who closed out Rec Fest with a high-energy concert that brought the event to a strong finish.

Overall, the 2026 Rec Fest format proved to be a significant improvement and was the most successful Rec Fest to date. The combination of a two-day schedule, later Saturday start time, family activities, interactive entertainment, and a strong evening concert created a balanced event that appealed to a broad cross-section of the community. Staff also identified several opportunities to improve event parking and traffic flow based on this year's experience. Those takeaways will be incorporated into planning for future events to improve the experience for residents, businesses, and event attendees.

Event Results

Overall, the 2026 Rec Fest exceeded staff expectations. Friday's event successfully continued despite challenging weather conditions, while Saturday produced a strong and sustained turnout throughout the evening.

The event demonstrated the value of offering a variety of activities and entertainment within one event. Families could participate in recreational activities, children could enjoy the attractions, adults could participate in the bags tournament and other activities, and attendees of all ages could enjoy the live music, food, and community atmosphere.



The two-day format also provided additional opportunities for community engagement and allowed the City to offer both an active Friday evening and a larger festival-style Saturday celebration.

Staff believes the success of the 2026 Rec Fest provides a strong foundation for continuing to grow the event in future years and establishing it as one of Tiffin's signature annual community events.

Placer.ai Event Analysis & Demographics Report

The 2026 Rec Fest demonstrated a strong regional draw and meaningful engagement from attendees. According to Placer.ai, the event attracted approximately 2,000 visitors and generated 2,100 visits, with an average dwell time of 114 minutes. This nearly two-hour average indicates that attendees were not simply stopping by briefly but were spending a significant amount of time participating in activities, enjoying the entertainment, and engaging with vendors and other event offerings.

The geographic reach of the event was particularly notable. Approximately 25% of visits came from Tiffin, meaning the majority of attendees came from outside the community. Rec Fest attracted visitors from North Liberty, Iowa City, Coralville, Oxford, Solon, Cedar Rapids, and other surrounding communities, demonstrating that the event is developing into a regional attraction rather than serving solely as a local community event.

The attendance patterns also closely aligned with staff observations during the event. While Friday's 5K and evening activities were successful despite weather concerns, Saturday was the primary draw, with the vast majority of visits occurring that day. Activity increased significantly during the afternoon and remained strong throughout the evening, with peak activity occurring during the core Saturday programming between approximately 4:00 and 8:00 p.m.



The 2026 Placer.ai report also provides the City with an important baseline for evaluating future Rec Fest events. Moving forward, this data can be used to compare attendance, visitor origin, dwell time, and regional reach from year to year and help staff

evaluate how changes in programming, marketing, sponsorships, and event format impact participation. This allows the City to measure the success of Rec Fest using data in addition to staff observations and community feedback.

Upcoming Events

The City's 2026 event season will continue into fall and winter.

CCA Homecoming Parade – September 24, 2026

The City will continue its partnership with Clear Creek Amana Schools and the community in support of the CCA Homecoming Parade on September 24. City staff and elected officials will gather to participate in the parade and represent the City of Tiffin. We encourage elected officials and staff to join us as we celebrate CCA Homecoming and show our community spirit. Staff are also currently looking for creative ideas for this year's parade float and welcome suggestions from the community.

Touch-a-Truck – October 10, 2026

Touch-a-Truck will give children and families the opportunity to see, explore, and get hands-on with the vehicles and equipment used by the City and our community partners. The event offers a fun and educational experience while showcasing the important work our City departments and community partners do every day.

Last year's event was a huge success, and we're excited to bring it back! Mark your calendars for October 10 and come experience the equipment up close. After all, we're all kids at heart, and who doesn't love pushing buttons, climbing into big trucks, and honking a few horns?

Halloween Hike – October 17, 2026

The Halloween Hike will continue to provide a fun, family-friendly Halloween experience in Tiffin while building on the tradition established in partnership with Infuse Church. This year, the City plans to expand the event by incorporating the City's trail system, with the hike beginning at the Jim Bartels Tiffin City Park. The park's concession stand will serve as a gathering point and provide seasonal favorites such as hot chocolate and apple cider.

Staff is planning to take the Halloween experience to the next level this year with a haunted-themed tent along the trail, creating a fun and spooky experience for participants. We will also be breaking out an exciting new addition, the Foam Daddy, to add another element of fun to the event. The trail will be illuminated with luminaires, string lights, and solar lights to create a festive atmosphere and help set the mood as families make their way through the hike.

The event has historically been very well attended, and we anticipate another strong turnout this year. New activities will also include a dog costume contest and additional costume contests, with more details to be announced as planning continues.

Volunteers, creative ideas, and community participation are welcome as we work to make this year's Halloween Hike bigger, better, and a memorable Tiffin tradition for families.

Holiday Hoopla – Breakfast with Santa – TBD

The City plans to continue its partnership with Tiffin Community Fund and Infuse Church for the annual Breakfast with Santa and Holiday Hoopla celebration. The event will again provide families with a festive holiday experience, beginning with a ticketed Breakfast with Santa followed by early access to Infuse Church's free Holiday Hoopla.

For 2026, staff is also exploring the opportunity to host the event at the new Tiffin Community Recreation Center, providing an exciting opportunity to utilize the new facility for one of Tiffin's growing holiday traditions. The Recreation Center would provide additional space for breakfast, activities, crafts, and holiday programming while giving residents an opportunity to experience and enjoy the new facility.

Breakfast with Santa will include a holiday breakfast, time with Santa, a holiday book, and a personalized "Nice List" certificate. Breakfast participants will also receive early access to Holiday Hoopla before it opens to the general public.

The Holiday Hoopla will continue to offer free, family-friendly activities such as letters to Santa, cookie decorating, ornament making, holiday crafts, story time, and other seasonal activities, along with opportunities to visit with Santa and enjoy the holiday atmosphere.

The event has become a popular holiday tradition in Tiffin, and staff looks forward to continuing to build on its success while exploring new ways to utilize the Recreation Center as a community gathering space. The 2026 event date has not yet been finalized and will be announced once confirmed. Additional details, including registration information and activities, will be shared as planning progresses.

Conclusion

The 2026 community events season demonstrates that Tiffin's community programming is growing alongside the community itself. Through the introduction of the Tiffin Summer Social series, the expansion of Rec Fest, continued partnerships with local organizations and public safety agencies, and the development of a formal sponsorship program, the City has created more opportunities for residents and visitors to gather, connect, and enjoy shared experiences.

The success of this year's programming also demonstrates the value of intentional event planning, strong community partnerships, and continued evaluation. The two-day

Rec Fest format, for example, created a stronger overall experience, while Placer.ai data now provides the City with a baseline to measure attendance, regional reach, and engagement in future years. The City's \$34,000 in sponsorship commitments and in-kind partnerships further demonstrates the community's willingness to invest in these shared experiences.

As Tiffin continues to grow, the City has an opportunity to build on this momentum by continuing to offer a diverse calendar of accessible, family-friendly events that activate our parks and public spaces, support local businesses, strengthen partnerships, and foster a sense of community. With several events still ahead in 2026, and the new Recreation Center providing additional opportunities for programming, staff will continue looking for ways to improve, expand, and create meaningful experiences for the community. Ultimately, the goal is simple: create opportunities for people to come together, build connections, support one another, and make Tiffin feel like home.



Expense Report

Expense Totals

MOVIES	\$918.00
ADVERTISING	\$2,107.82
JUNE 11 EXPENSES	\$690.00
JULY 18 EXPENSES	\$1,052.42
JULY 24 EXPENSES	\$700.00
AUG 4 EXPENSES	\$1,384.13
AUG 7-8 EXPENSES	\$17,898.22
SUPPLIES	\$15,971.93
LIBRARY PROGRAMING	\$2,500.00
Totals:	\$43,222.52

Revenue Report

<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
HOMEMAKERS	PRESENTING SPONSOR	\$10,000
MSA	COMMUNITY CHAMPION	\$5,000
SHG BUILDERS	COMMUNITY CHAMPION	\$5,000
CORDA CREDIT UNION	COMMUNITY BUILDER	\$2,500
WOODRUFF CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY BUILDER	\$2,500
IOWA HEALTH CARE	COMMUNITY BUILDER	\$2,500
RIVERSIDE CASINO & GOLD RESORT	COMMUNITY BUILDER	\$2,500
ADAM MILLER REALTOR	COMMUNITY PARTNER	\$1,000
D&R PEST CONTROL	COMMUNITY PARTNER	\$1,000
BELLA SALA EVENT CENTER	COMMUNITY PARTNER	\$1,000
TIFFIN DENTAL CARE	COMMUNITY PARTNER	\$1,000
BILLION AUTOMOTIVE OF IOWA CITY	COMMUNITY PARTNER	\$1,000
BRANDON BIERI AGENCY	COMMUNITY SUPPORTER	\$500
MERCY CARE NORTH LIBERTY	COMMUNITY SUPPORTER	\$500
NAVARA INSURANCE	COMMUNITY SUPPORTER	\$500
HYVEE	IN-KIND	WATER & ICE
SMITH SANITATION	IN-KIND	GARBAGE SERVICES
FAREWAY	IN-KIND	BANANAS, WATERMELLON, CANDY
CITY OF TIFFIN	BUDGETED AMOUT	17,625
	<u>TOTAL FUNDS:</u>	<u>\$54,125</u>



**TIFFIN
EVENTS
2026**

SPONSOR THE EXPERIENCE

The City of Tiffin is a growing community located in Johnson County within the Iowa City metropolitan area. As one of the fastest-growing communities in Iowa, Tiffin continues to experience steady residential and commercial development while maintaining a welcoming, small-town feel.

Home to approximately 7,500+ residents and growing, Tiffin is a family-oriented community known for its safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and strong community connections. The city is part of the Clear Creek Amana School District and benefits from its proximity to Iowa City, Coralville, and surrounding regional employers, making it an ideal place for families and businesses alike.

Community events and programs play an important role in Tiffin's identity, offering opportunities for residents to come together, build relationships, and enjoy shared experiences throughout the year. These events are offered as free, accessible community events, ensuring that all residents can participate regardless of age or background. Participation continues to grow each year, helping strengthen connections between residents, local organizations, and businesses.

As the community continues to grow, the City is also investing in new amenities and spaces, including the upcoming recreation center opening this fall, which will further enhance opportunities for wellness, activity, and community engagement.

Partnerships with local businesses remain essential in supporting and expanding community programming. Sponsorships allow the City to provide engaging, accessible events while giving businesses meaningful visibility and opportunities to connect directly with the community.

We look forward to the opportunity to connect with you and discuss how your organization can be part of Tiffin's continued growth and community-focused events.

City of Tiffin Staff Contacts

Brianna Wilkerson, Deputy City Clerk

Ashley Jay-Platz, Assistant City Administrator

Elizabeth Petersen Grier, Library Director

Grant Weber, Recreation Director



EASTER EGG HUNT

The annual Easter Egg Hunt is a springtime favorite, drawing families from across the community for a morning of excitement, laughter, & outdoor fun. Children of all ages participate in age-grouped hunts filled with prizes, treats, & special surprises. With additional attractions & community partners involved, this event continues to grow each year. This event is proudly hosted in partnership with Infuse Church, who helped establish & grow this tradition after becoming established in Tiffin. Sponsors help bring this tradition to life while gaining exposure to a large.



HALLOWEEN HIKE

The Halloween Hike transforms Tiffin into a fun & safe trick-or-treat experience for families of all ages. Children dress in costumes & walk a designated route through decorated stops hosted by local businesses & organizations. This event promotes community connection, encourages local engagement, & provides a safe alternative to traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating. This event is proudly hosted in partnership with Infuse Church, who helped establish and grow this tradition after becoming established in Tiffin. Sponsors play a key role in creating an unforgettable, family-friendly Halloween experience.



HOLIDAY HOOPLA

Breakfast with Santa / Holiday Hoopla

A cherished Tiffin holiday tradition, Breakfast with Santa brings families together for a morning of festive fun, warm meals, & memorable moments with Santa himself. This beloved event, paired with Holiday Hoopla activities, creates a welcoming kickoff to the holiday season with crafts, seasonal activities, & community cheer. It's a high-attendance, family-focused event that offers sponsors meaningful visibility while supporting a magical experience for local children & families.



TIFFIN SUMMER SOCIAL - PARTIES IN THE PARK

New in 2026, Tiffin Summer Social: Parties in the Park is a summer event series designed to bring the community together through live entertainment, recreation, food, & family-friendly fun. Hosted throughout June, July, & August at Park Place City Center & City Park, the series creates opportunities for residents & visitors to connect while enjoying Tiffin's parks and community spaces. Sponsors help bring the Tiffin Summer Social: Parties in the Park series to life, supporting a summer of connection, entertainment, & memorable community experiences for residents of all ages.

JUNE 11

The summer series kicks off at Park Place City Center with an evening of live music with Mike Ryan, food trucks, yard games & bounce houses.

JULY 18

Held at City Park, this event celebrates Parks & Recreation Month with activities for all ages. The evening will feature live music, food trucks, an ice cream social, a Nerf gun battle, and a movie at dusk. This event highlights the importance of parks, recreation, and community engagement.

AUGUST 7 & 8

Formerly a standalone event, REC Fest is now part of the Tiffin Summer Social: Parties in the Park series—expanding into a two-day community celebration focused on connection, entertainment, & hometown pride. Held at Park Place City Center, this weekend brings residents together through live entertainment, family activities, food, & interactive experiences designed for all ages.

The weekend begins Friday evening with a community 5K run, setting an energetic tone for the festivities. Following the race, attendees can enjoy live music, food trucks, a beverage tent, & yard games in a relaxed outdoor atmosphere that encourages community connection and summer fun.

Saturday continues with a full evening of family-friendly entertainment and interactive activities for all ages, including a petting zoo, train rides, inflatables, vendor booths, food trucks, bags tournament yard games & community activities. The evening concludes with live music from Trophy Dads, closing out the weekend celebration.

This event serves as a true community gathering, bringing together families, neighbors, local organizations, & businesses to celebrate summer in Tiffin.



SPRINGMIER COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Located inside the Clear Creek Amana Middle School, the Springmier Community Library has served the Tiffin community since 2001 following a generous estate gift from Howard Springmier to establish a library dedicated to literacy and lifelong learning. Through the leadership and dedication of Shirley Yeries, founder and original director, followed by long-standing director Kris Petersen, the library built a strong foundation centered on literacy, education, and community connection. Today, that mission continues through the leadership of current director Liz Petersen Grier.



The Springmier Community Library Summer Reading Program encourages readers of all ages to stay engaged, explore new interests, and continue learning throughout the summer months. Through engaging programs, books, activities, and reading incentives, the program helps build literacy skills, spark curiosity, and nurture a lifelong love of reading while making summer learning enriching and accessible for every reader in our community.

With over 1,400 patrons served, the library continues to play an important role in fostering learning, connection, and opportunity within Tiffin. Sponsors play a key role in supporting accessible programming and meaningful educational experiences for readers and families throughout the community.



Barnyard Discoveries - Traveling Farm
 Buck Jones - Illustrator
 Sting Ray Touch Tank - National Mississippi River Museum
 Johnson County Farm Bureau - Ag Introduction
 Toby Kid Mesozoic Adventures - Prehistoric Adventure
 ECICOG- Sustainability Program
 Polka in the Park - Mike Schneider
 Owl Glass Puppets - Puppet Performance
 Cold-Blooded Redhead - Reptile Program
 Rockin' Reptiles - National Mississippi River Museum
 Summer Wrap Up Party - "Donut" Stop Reading!

