

Earliest spring in recent memory, Alton Public Works Department says

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - This year has seen the benefits of spring early, **Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart** said.

Barnhart, along with workers from the Alton Parks and Rec Department were inspecting sprinklers at Gordon Moore Park Friday around lunchtime. He added several spots across the park were also being seeded. Barnhart said this is the earliest crews have been

able to do so at least in the last decade. He said the early spring is giving city workers a much-needed boost to work toward improving the parks across the city - especially Gordon Moore.

"It's the earliest in everyone's memories we've gone and checked sprinklers and seeded without the threat of freezing," Barnhart said.

When asked if he was sure the threat of freezing was truly over, Barnhart said, "I'm not sure about anything, but I'm making a good estimated guess we won't have to worry about a hard freeze in April."

The sprinkler systems were being inspected before new heads can be placed onto them. The new heads were provided by an anonymous donor, who Barnhart said not only covered the cost, but is also assisting with the labor. Barnhart said the new heads were needed to ensure the fields were evenly watered.

"The cost and labor have been donated by a private individual who prefers to remain anonymous," Barnhart said. "It's what it's going to take; volunteering and donating from the community to rebuild our parks and our city. I'm looking forward to working more with the community to do that."

Eliminating dry spots will be crucial in the coming months, since the city is working to regrade and re-turf Soccer Field Five this season, and is eyeing both Soccer Field Three and Soccer Field Four for completion by the end of this coming autumn.

Soccer fields are only the opening stages of Gordon Moore's coming improvements, Barnhart said. Within the next two months, ground will be broken on an upcoming "all inclusive play area" and demolitions will begin on the first concession stand. A rebuilding process will begin immediately after demolition.

"We're really excited for a lot of projects this year," Barnhart said. "This early spring has gotten our guys excited to get out and get things done."