

WINTER

2022



# WEST BRANCH

IOWA

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



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IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE EMAIL  
DISTRIBUTION LIST, OR WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT  
AN ENTRY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE  
CONTACT [STAFF@WBPL.ORG](mailto:STAFF@WBPL.ORG)

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# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

DREW FINNEGAN



**PUBLIC WORKS-  
MAINTENANCE**

**From:** West Branch

**Previous jobs:** Landscape foreman/laborer for Nolan's Lawn Care

**Family:** Mom, brother, and sister all live in town. I am an uncle to a very sweet niece.

**Hobbies:** -working out  
-hunting  
-fishing  
-anything outdoors

**Why West Branch?** I grew up in West Branch and live in West Branch and now look forward to serving the community.

**What you like most about the job:** My fellow employees are great to work with.

**From:** Iowa City, Iowa

**Previous jobs:** Advanced Electrical Services laborer/operator, Maggie's Farm Pizza server, University Of Iowa security officer, Moore Landscaping laborer/owner

**Family:** My father (Jake) is the owner of Advanced Electrical Services. My mother (Heather) is a respiratory therapist at Carepro home medical. My sister (Lindsey) is the wellness and recreation coordinator at Oaknoll Retirement Residence. My brother (Zac) is a Deputy at Johnson County Sheriff's Office.

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, watching sports and spending time with my friends and family.

**Why West Branch?** With the population being right around 3000, I feel it is the perfect size town to have my name and face known in a positive way amongst the community.

**What you like most about the job:** I take honor in my capabilities as an officer, but appreciate the times I can help someone in need. As a police officer, you meet people having the worst days of their lives. To make that day go a little bit better for them goes a long way.

**LUCAS MOORE**



**WEST BRANCH  
POLICE OFFICER**

*\*Photo by the West Branch Times*



# FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR



ADAM KOFOED  
ADAM@WESTBRANCHIOWA.ORG

As the Christmas story goes, "T'was the night before Christmas when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."


Regardless of what winter holiday you celebrate, it is not so quiet in the City's house. During the holiday breaks you may hear the following noises: a keyboard clicking as the City Office breaks down its 1,100-line item budget to Council. The sound of metal scraping along the streets as Public Works plows our streets. Tires crunching through snow as our Police Officers patrol the town. And the voices of department supervisors and Council as they debate the final budget.

To make our jobs easier this winter, please remember the following:

1. During a designated snow event, no vehicle shall be parked in or on any part of the public street or public right of way.
2. Property owners shall remove snow, ice, and accumulations from sidewalks within 24 hours.
3. It's physics- the heavier the snow, the faster our plows need to drive to push it. Faster driving means snow gets pushed further onto your property. We wish we could drive slower when plowing, but it's not always possible.
4. Water and sewer main breaks generally take place in freezing temperatures. Please follow our Facebook page for the quickest information. If you have no running water during non-office hours, please call Cedar County Dispatch at (563) 886-2121.

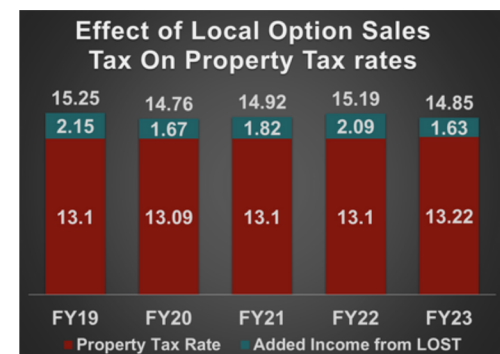
Please save the following dates in your Calendars:

- Friday, Dec. 2- Saturday Dec. 3; Christmas Past celebration
- Mondays, Dec. 26- Jan. 30; Holiday tree curbside pickup



Friday, Dec. 23- Monday, Dec. 26- Christmas  
Monday, Jan. 2- New Year's Day  
Monday, Jan. 16, Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Monday, Feb. 20 President's Day

## CITY NOTES TO KNOW



### LOST Referendum: Vote No and Your Property Taxes Increase

November 4, 2014 voters approved a local option sales tax. The vote barely surpassed the 60% threshold. By state law, a LOST or local option sales tax referendum may only last up to ten years. The City will be working to place a referendum on the November 2023 ballot.

Where did this money go? It went to establishing two new parks; Cubby and Wapsi Park. In addition, it brought sheltered bathrooms to Lions Park and other upgrades to Beranek Park.

Simply put, if voters don't agree to tax everyone who spends money in town, the City will have to raise taxes on property owners by default. Until the Cubby Park bond is paid off, taxes have to come from somewhere.

The sales tax graph above illustrates what your tax rate will be if the next LOST referendum isn't passed. A \$2.00 increase is roughly \$225 a year for a home valued at \$200,000. In terms of the last 10 years it has saved a property owner roughly \$2,250.

We hope you continue to follow the LOST referendum and vote yes in support of future projects at a lower property tax rate.

# HERBERT HOOVER PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION



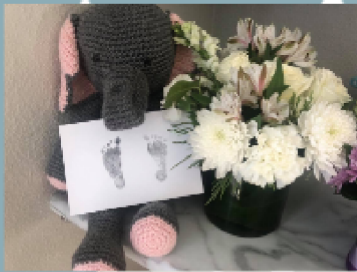
## FESTIVAL OF TREES

Friday, December 2 - Thursday, December 29  
(CLOSED December 24)

Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 4:30 pm  
Rummells Center (127 W Main St)

Visit a 'Winter Wonderland' and see a variety of beautifully decorated Christmas Trees at the Rummells Center!

Can you find the hidden pickle ornament on each tree?



### WHITNEY'S WINGS

2nd Annual Holiday

## ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Help us Adopt over 50 Local Children this Holiday Season!

We created the Adopt-A-Family Holiday Program  
to Celebrate Whitney's Birthday (12/6)!

Help us wish her a Very Magical and Joyful 2nd  
Birthday in heaven by purchasing a Toy or Gift  
off our Amazon Wish List!



*Please leave your First and Last Name & Address in the Gift Receipt box on Amazon so we can thank and acknowledge you, & send a donation receipt!*

*Whitney's Wings is a 501(c)3 dedicated to Spreading Joy. Your gift donation is Tax Deductible!*





# HERBERT HOOVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

## A CHRISTMAS PAST

**Friday, December 2 &  
Saturday, December 3,  
5:30-9pm**

Take a step back in time as you stroll through the park's historic neighborhood decorated and illuminated in period-appropriate, festive style. Warm up next to a bonfire adjacent to the Hayrack Stage where you can enjoy the talents of various student groups from the West Branch Community School District. Stop by the visitor center for holiday crafts, a 'Hoover at Christmas' talk, a 'Christmas in Yellowstone' documentary, and more. Or learn about blacksmithing with demonstrations at the blacksmith shop.



## WINTER SOLSTICE WALK

**Wednesday, December 21 at 12pm**

Embrace the light! Commemorate the shortest day of the year by getting outside for a midday walk with a park ranger at Herbert Hoover NHS. Along the way, you will hear snippets on how the day is celebrated by various cultures around the world. Meet at the Hoover Birthplace Cottage at noon. Dress for the weather! The route will be determined by the conditions.

## NEW YEAR'S PARK HIKE

**Tuesday, January 3 at 9am**

Start the New Year out right and join a park ranger at Herbert Hoover NHS for a 2-mile hike, with a shorter option at the 1-mile point. No reservations required for this hike. Meet at the park visitor center. Dress for the weather! The route will be determined by the conditions.

## PRESIDENTIAL FILM FESTIVAL

**Sunday, February 19 & Saturday, February 25 at 3pm**

To celebrate Presidents Day, the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site will host a presidential film festival. Come and enjoy the official park films from three other National Park sites: Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, and the Harry S. Truman National Historic Site. This is a free event, no registration required. The films will be shown in the theatre at the park's visitor center.

Director Melissa Russell  
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West Branch, Iowa 52358  
melissa@westbranchiowa.org 319.643.5888  
westbranchiowa.org/wbpr  
www.facebook.com/West-Branch-Parks-and-Recreation



Find registration and payment information for all programs at [westbranchiowa.org/wbpr](http://westbranchiowa.org/wbpr)!  
Many teams have a minimum and maximum class size, so sign up early. Schedules are subject to change, so check Facebook and the website for the most up-to-date information.

## ONGOING PARKS & REC PROGRAMS

### Zumba

**Monday and Wednesday at 5:15pm at Town Hall**

Zumba is a fitness program that involves cardio and Latin-inspired dance. Join the fun with instructor Abby Noelck! Register for a session or drop in with a punch pass.

### Tot Time/Baby Time

**with the West Branch Public Library**

**Wednesdays 9-10:30am at Town Hall**

Get active regardless of the weather! Bring your friends and be prepared to make some new ones. We provide a variety of toys for babies and toddlers, including scooters and ride-on toys -- but feel free to bring your own!

Come at 9:00 for baby storytime with Ms. Becky from the West Branch Public Library!

In the event school is delayed or closed to weather, Tot Time will be cancelled for the day.

## NEW PROGRAM!

### 1000 Hours Outside Challenge

Nature can restore and strengthen mental capacities, increase focus, attention, relieve stress and improve overall well-being. 1000 hours outdoors in a year can seem daunting (2.75 hours a day on average), but not when you do it with a support network. West Branch Parks and Recreation Staff will have activity suggestions and target outdoor numbers and deadlines to reach to help you can stay on track and motivated throughout the year.

Registration will be available in mid-December. This program is for all ages. Get outdoors!





# RETURNING PROGRAM



## Iowa Gym-nest mobile gymnastic/tumbling program

Day and Time TBD

Is your child interested in tumbling, but you want to try a program close to home? Iowa Gym-nest is back with their mobile gymnastic program. Join us for a 30-minute, 10-week program from February-April. This program is designed for children 3-5 that are potty trained. The cost is \$100 payable to Iowa Gym-nest the first day of class. Registration opens in December.

## SAVE THE DATES

Register January 23rd-March 7th (or when teams are full):

- Kindergarten T-ball
- 1-2 grade machine pitch
- 3rd-4th grade softball
- 5th-6th grade softball
- 3rd-4th grade baseball

Practices will start in April for some divisions, games will start mid-May.

- Preschool Soccer

Tentative season April 10-May 8th.



## OTHER INFORMATION

### Teach a Class

Do you have a talent you would like to share? We are always looking for fun instructors to start new programs! To submit your program idea or to find out more about teaching, contact Melissa Russell at [melissa@westbranchiowa.org](mailto:melissa@westbranchiowa.org).

### Scout Troops

Are you looking for an activity that will help your troop complete a specific journey or badge requirement? We can help with focus hikes and many hands-on activities to help meet your troop needs.

We also offer a way for you or your troop to complete a service project at your own leisure. Pick up litter, look for problems to report back to our Park and Recreation Department. Take a stroll through a park of your choice, fill out the form and either drop it off or mail it to the West Branch Parks and Recreation for staff to review.

To learn more about how you can help, contact Melissa for a trail inspection form.

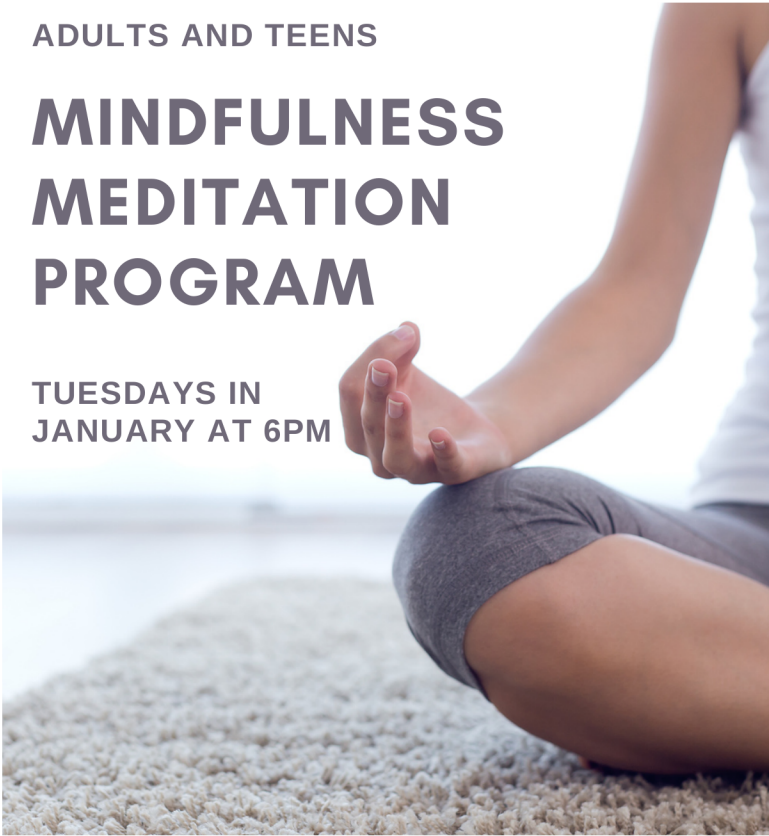
### Donations needed for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt

A complete list of items will be available at [westbranchiowa.org/wbpr](http://westbranchiowa.org/wbpr) or stop by the West Branch Parks and Recreation giving tree at Christmas Past in Town Hall and pick an item from the list.

ADULTS AND TEENS

## MINDFULNESS MEDITATION PROGRAM

TUESDAYS IN  
JANUARY AT 6PM



21 AND OVER

## AFTER HOURS MOVIE NIGHT

Visit [wbpl.org](http://wbpl.org) to see the schedule  
and movie titles.



EVERY MONTH  
FRIDAY @ 7 PM  
AT THE LIBRARY



Library programs are available to all abilities. Contact us if you have accessibility needs.

## GIFT WRAPPING PARTY

DECEMBER 16, 7-9 PM  
AT THE LIBRARY

ADULTS 21+

Wrap your gifts at the library, away  
from prying eyes!

Bring your own wrapping paper or  
use ours!

We'll have snacks  
and play a holiday  
movie on the big  
screen. Stop by  
even if you don't  
have presents  
to wrap.



## WBPL BOOK DISCUSSION

Third Tuesday of the month

7pm at the Public Library and on Zoom

It's a book club anyone can join! We read a wide variety of  
entertaining and informative books, from mysteries to  
memoirs and everything in between. Looking for a good  
book? All adults are welcome to read along, even if you can't  
make it to our meetings!

Contact the library to reserve a copy of this month's book.



December 20  
*The Library Book*  
by Susan Orlean



January 17  
*American Dirt*  
by Jeanine Cummins



2023 reading list TBA!  
Vote for your picks  
in December!





Sign up for The Loop and receive periodic email updates that inform you of new library events and help remind you of the things you want to see and attend. The Loop will be published by the WBPL, but will contain info from around the community.

**Sign up at [wbpl.org/theloop](http://wbpl.org/theloop)**

## STORYTIMES

Join Ms. Becky for books and fun at the library!

### **Tuesday evenings at 6:45pm**

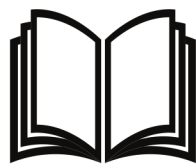
Tuesday night Family Storytime offers stories followed by a bedtime snack, geared for all ages.

### **Friday mornings at 10:15am**

Friday Storytimes are followed by a quick craft activity that the children can complete and take home, more geared toward preschool age through early elementary (but all ages are welcome).

### **Classroom visits**

Once a month, Hoover Elementary Preschool-3rd Grade students get to visit the library for a special Storytime!



## WBPL TEENS

### **2nd Tuesday of the month, after school**

Activities for youth in 6th-12th grade.

## EARLY-OUT PROGRAMS

### **Wednesdays at 2pm**

Early out programs provide a variety of activities, games, movies, crafts, Legos, and more for students on early-out Wednesdays.

# COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

## BABY TIME- DURING WB PARKS & REC TOT TIME

### **Wednesdays at 9am at Town Hall**

During Tot Time every week, Ms. Becky will be hosting activities to help babies develop early literacy skills with songs, rhymes, and books- geared for children who are pre-walkers or crawlers.

## CHRISTMAS PAST

### **Friday, December 2, 5-8 pm at Town Hall**

Fun crafts at Town Hall while you wait to get your picture taken with Santa!

## WINTER READING CHALLENGE

### **February 2023**

Remember the days when you could read books and earn a personal pan pizza? Relive those days this February with WBPL and Herb n' Lou's. All ages can participate! Pick up your bookmark in January.





## Friday Only- Dec. 2nd

**2:00pm-8:00pm Christmas Present Market** - Vendor event for holiday shopping. \$10 2-day admission. *Little Lights on the Lane, 2 Ember Ln.*

**5:00pm Community Tree Lighting** - Brief ceremony and Santa's arrival. - *Village Green*

**5:00pm - 7:30pm Free Photos with Santa** - And Craft Kits from WB Public Library and Parks & Recreation. *Town Hall, 115 N 1st St.*  
*\*Please enter on Main St.*

**6:00pm DIY Wreath Class** - Tickets required in advance, see website. *Little Lights on the Lane, 2 Ember Ln.*

**7:00pm Bell Choir Concert** -  
*WB Friends Church, 116 Downey St.*

**5:00-8:00pm Liberty Communications Open House** - Free hot cider & snacks. *117 N 1st St.*

## Saturday Only- Dec. 3rd

**8:00am-Noon Candy Sale** - to benefit United Methodist Church, *203 Downey St.*

**8:30am-10:30am Free Community Breakfast** -  
*WB Friends Church, 116 Downey St.*

**9:00am-5:00pm Free Entry** - Herbert Hoover Presidential Library & Museum, *210 Parkside Dr.*

**9:00am-Noon & 4:00-8:00pm Bake Sale** - to benefit Springdale United Methodist Church.  
*Springdale Agency, 101 N Downey St.*

**9:00-10:30am Cookie Walk** - To benefit Bethany Lutheran Church, *235 S 2nd St.*

**10:00am & 2:00pm DIY Wreath Classes** - Tickets required in advance, see website.  
*Little Lights on the Lane, 2 Ember Ln.*

**10:00am-5:00pm Christmas Present Market** - Vendor event for holiday shopping. \$10 2-day admission. *Little Lights on the Lane, 2 Ember Ln.*

**10:00am-Noon Indoor Farmer's Market** -  
*Rummells Center, 127 W Main St.*

**4:00pm - 7:30pm - Free Photos with Santa** - And free Cookie Kits from WB Kiwanis club.  
*Town Hall, 115 N 1st St. \*Please enter on Main St.*

**5:00pm-7:00pm Soup Supper & Live Nativity**- WB United Methodist Church, *203 Downey St.*

**7:00-10:00pm Live Music** - Featuring duo Gabrielle Kouri & George Spielbauer and solo performer, Sam Knutson. Refreshments provided. *Hoover Fine Arts, 102 W Main St.*

## Happening Both Friday & Saturday

**9:00am -8:00pm**

**Silent Auction for the Ages** - Bid to win gift baskets, experiences and more in person or online at [32auctions.com/mainstreet](http://32auctions.com/mainstreet). Proceeds support WB Community Development Group. *Rummells Center, 127 W Main St.*

**Festival of Trees Display** - Hosted by the Hoover Presidential Foundation.  
*Rummells Center, 127 W Main St.*

**Something for My Sibling** - Hosted by Izzy's Treasures. *105 S Downey St.*

**Eat, Shop, Explore Historic Main Street** - local businesses with fantastic holiday shopping!

**5:00pm-8:00pm (Fri) & 4:00pm-8:00pm (Sat) Brick Ovens & Marshmallow Roasting** - Plus free hot cocoa provided by WB Lions Club.  
*Corner of Main St. & Downey St.*

**Bonfire & Hot Dog Roasting** - Hosted by WB Volunteer Fire Fighters. *WB Fire Station, S 2nd St.*

**Homemade Fried Donuts** - Hosted by local Boy Scouts. Free will donations encouraged.  
*209 E Main St.*

**Gibson Train Display** - Plus complimentary cookies.  
*WB Fire Station, S 2nd St.*

**5:00pm-8:00pm**

**Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides** - Enjoy a free old fashioned ride. Loading across the street from *WB Fire Station at Main St & 2nd St.*

**Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides** - Reservations required in advance. *Loading at Wapsi Creek Park.*

**Meet a Magic Elf** - Take home magic reindeer food, while supplies last. *Heritage Square*

**Fa-la-la-la-llamas** - Photo op & alpaca petting station! *Heritage Square*

**5:30pm-9:00pm**

**Winter Holiday Arts & Crafts** - *Herbert Hoover NHS Visitor Center*

**Music in the Park** - Enjoy traditional Christmas music performances by various WBCSD Fine Arts program students throughout the night while you warm up by a bonfire! - *Hayrack stage in front of Herbert Hoover's Birthplace Cottage*

**6:00pm & 8:00pm**

**Christmas in Yellowstone documentary** - PBS Nature documentary screening. -*Herbert Hoover NHS Visitor Center*

**7:00pm Herbert Hoover and Christmas: A National Park Ranger Program** - Based on the recollections of family and friends, and Hoover's own writings, this talk will open a window into the private life of a President and his family, as they celebrated a favorite holiday. - *Herbert Hoover NHS Visitor Center*



# WEST BRANCH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP



A Main Street Iowa Community

## SILENT AUCTION FOR THE AGES

Bid to win incredible gift baskets, fun experiences and unique items this holiday season. All proceeds benefit West Branch Community Development Group and are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Bidding opens online on Small Business Saturday (Nov 26) and will remain open through A Christmas Past (ending Saturday, Dec 3).

View & Bid online at [32auctions.com/mainstreet](https://32auctions.com/mainstreet) or stop by the Rummells Center during A Christmas Past.



## A CHRISTMAS PAST

**Friday & Saturday, December 2-3**

### Main Street

Join us for West Branch's traditional annual holiday festival featuring timeless activities throughout Main Street and beyond including horse-drawn carriage and wagon rides, photos with Santa, train display, festival of trees, silent auction, vendor market, fa-la-la-la-llamas, treats around the fire and more!

- See the full schedule of activities at [mainstreetwestbranch.org/christmaspast](https://mainstreetwestbranch.org/christmaspast).

Follow on Facebook: [fb.com/WBChristmasPast](https://fb.com/WBChristmasPast)

## HOLIDAY ELF HUNT: GNOME PLACE LIKE HOME

A group of gnomes have gone missing around Main Street, help track them down with a fun scavenger hunt to match each Elf with it's Gnome buddy between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Grab a printed scavenger hunt at the Library or Rummells Center, or view/print it online at [mainstreetwestbranch.org/elfhunt](https://mainstreetwestbranch.org/elfhunt).

Submit completed forms by January 1st for a chance to win a prize of Downtown Dollars!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Learn more and sign-up here for more information at [mainstreetwestbranch.org/get-involved](https://mainstreetwestbranch.org/get-involved)

# COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS



## 3RD THURSDAY AT HOOVER'S Third Thursday of the month at 6pm online via Zoom

On the third Thursday of each month, the Hoover Presidential Foundation and the Hoover Presidential Library and Museum present a special evening program, currently free on Zoom. Topics include everything from the history of the National Park Service to the Christmas Eve fire at the White House, and all are family-friendly.

Registration required. Co-sponsored by the West Branch Public Library.

Visit [hooverpresidentialfoundation.org](http://hooverpresidentialfoundation.org) or [wbpl.org](http://wbpl.org) (look under Events) for more information and to register!

## WEST BRANCH FIRE/RESCUE/EMS

**West Branch Fire Department is currently accepting new membership applications!**

If you have experience in Fire or Emergency Medical Services, or are looking to get involved, apply today!

The West Branch Fire Department is a **volunteer fire department**, servicing West Branch and surrounding areas, including a stretch of I-80 and a portion of the Cedar River.

WBFD serves as a **fire service** as well as a **first responder** non-transport service that responds to various call types including:

- Motor vehicle accidents
- Vegetation fires
- Hazmat
- Structure fires
- Medical emergencies
- and more

We **work closely with nearby services** such as West Liberty Fire and Ambulance, Tipton Fire and Ambulance, Atalissa Fire Department, Solon Fire Department, Johnson County Ambulance Service, Iowa City Fire Department, and many more!

We accept **various medical and fire certifications** such as Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technicians, Hazmat, and Fire I and II certifications.

For more information or to apply, contact us at [wbfire@westbranchiowa.org](mailto:wbfire@westbranchiowa.org)

[wbfire@westbranchiowa.org](mailto:wbfire@westbranchiowa.org) | (319) 643-2110 | 106 S 2nd Street, West Branch, IA 52368



## WEST BRANCH FOOD PANTRY

**1ST STREET BETWEEN TOWN HALL &  
LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS**

**319-643-2010 OR 319-359-7834**



**OPEN TUESDAYS FROM 4-5:30PM  
EXCEPT  
THE 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH  
WHEN  
HACAP MOBILE FOOD PANTRY  
IS AT THE WB FIRE STATION  
FROM 3:30-4:30PM**

## West Branch Community Calendar

**WEST  
BRANCH**  
Iowa

**Join us!** Post your Group's events and activities!

The calendar is free to join for all West Branch groups, businesses, and entities, and is provided by the West Branch Public Library.

Your free accounts can also do ticketing, payment, and registration for your events and activities.

Click **About & Join** at [westbranchiowa.events](http://westbranchiowa.events) to sign up!