

MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



Serving seniors for more than 40 years

For 40 years, Minnetonka Senior Services and Activities Manager Steve Pieh has helped senior services shift from congregate dining, cards and bus trips to a wide spectrum of programs.

Pieh, who began his tenure at Minnetonka with Senior Community Services in 1978, has been a city employee for the last 15 years, managing the senior center, working with programs and helping cultivate computer clubs, pickleball groups, book clubs and more. He regularly leads canoe and hiking trips and has played an active role in developing the Memory Café program for caregivers and care receivers living with Alzheimer's. He also coordinates the summer Music in the Park series.



Pieh's passion for seniors and senior programs permeates from within, and it's hard to imagine the senior center without him. But next month, Pieh is retiring and embarking on his other passions - traveling, canoeing, music and more.

"The years go by very fast when you enjoy what you do and who you work with," he said.

As Pieh reflects on his tenure through the decades of photos scattered across his desk, he marvels at how much - and how little - has changed.

"We make a positive difference in the [lives] of thousands of seniors, every year," Pieh said. "And that has been tremendously rewarding."

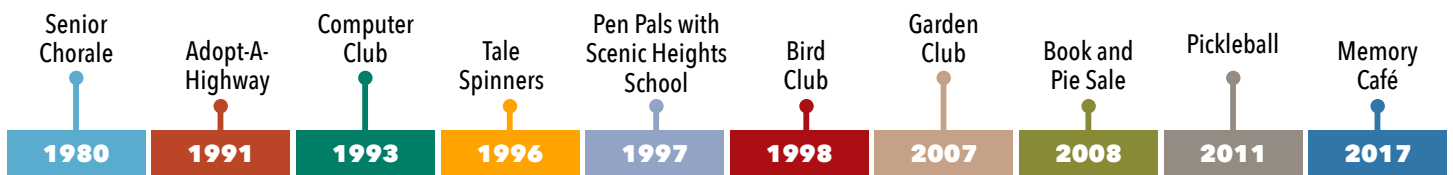
Today, fitness and education classes are among the senior center's most popular offerings, and Pieh attributes that to the diversity of seniors who participate in Minnetonka's senior programs.

"The needs of someone who is in their mid-50s and someone who is 95 are radically different," Pieh said. "For one group, you need foot care, and for somebody else, they want a bike ride. Our job is to be very diverse in what we offer."



For Pieh, Minnetonka senior services is about more than recreation; it's people seeking community connection and wanting to be part of something. "Participants want to feel connected to their community, to be of service to others, to have fun, learn new skills, be active and involved."

Minnetonka Senior Services offers programs for every interest - some dating back more than 40 years.



Learn more and register at minnetonkamn.gov/seniorservices



Survey provides insight on Minnetonka business climate

This summer, King Technology is making a significant investment in Minnetonka as it prepares to relocate its headquarters from Hopkins and expand its operations.

The investment makes sense given the results of the city's recent business survey.

Conducted in fall 2021, the survey provides insight on the state of the local economy. Overall, businesses expressed optimism, as two-thirds of respondents said their business health was the same or better since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think that speaks to the resiliency of the economy of the city," said the city's Economic Development Coordinator Robert Hanson.



Minnetonka is home to many resilient industries that are less affected by economic ebbs and flows, Hanson said. Even with the rise in telecommuting, 84 percent of businesses anticipate their office space needs to grow or stay the same.

King Technology President Randy Roseth said space was a big consideration in his company's move to Minnetonka. The business wanted a more open, spacious building that could support its growth and offer a healthy work environment. King Technology researches, develops and manufactures specialized sanitizing solutions for the recreational water industry.

"We wanted to move into a building that has a footprint that allows for growth," said CFO Scott Kramer. "[And] Minnetonka's proximity to main arteries is strategically placed for us to attract talent."

Workforce was one concern identified in the survey, as businesses everywhere struggle to fill positions. King Technology chose its new location in part for its visibility along I-494 as a means to build its brand and attract talent, Roseth said. The company is expanding its research and development center and plans to recruit potential employees from the area.

King Technology is not alone. Forty-one percent of survey respondents expect their employment levels to grow in the next two years.

In addition to the survey, the city's economic development team is also reviewing data for specific commercial nodes to compare pre-, intra- and post-pandemic numbers. The data will determine if there's real recovery or identify areas that are still struggling, Hanson said.

For example, the Ridgedale Mall area saw a dramatic decrease in visitors from December 2019 (1.4 million) to April 2020 (300,000). However, as of June 2021, visitor numbers had rebounded (1.5 million).

All the information will help the city identify program, assistance and outreach opportunities that could assist businesses moving forward. Julie Wischnack, the city's Community Development Director, said, "Our connections to businesses and understanding their needs is vital for community sustainability."

Economic Health



41% Expect their employment levels to grow in the next two years



27% Say their business health is better today than before the pandemic



50% Expect their employment levels to remain stable in the next two years



84% expect their businesses to stay the same or grow

Curbside organics recycling now available

Organic materials, including food and some compostable paper products, make up about 25 percent of the trash in Hennepin County. Recycling is an effective strategy to reduce waste. Studies have shown it can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create local jobs.

At the end of last year, the city council passed an ordinance requiring licensed waste haulers to offer curbside organics recycling to all residential customers.

Ashley Pattain, a member of Minnetonka's Sustainability Commission, has noticed a reduction in her trash in the two years she has been recycling organics.

"Now we are very intentional when we shop for perishable items and ensure that we have a purpose for them when we purchase them," Commissioner Pattain said.



After receiving a free year of organics recycling service through the city's promotional offer, she continued participating. "I was surprised to find out how reasonable our hauler's annual rate was once our promotion ended."

How to get started

- Contact your waste hauler,
- Collect food scraps and other organics in a kitchen container,
- Empty it into the outdoor bin once each evening,
- Keep a list of compostable items handy. Many haulers provide one.

Organics end up at a composting facility where they are recycled into nutrient-rich compost used for landscaping and road construction projects.

Want to learn more?

Attend the Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar on April 26 at 6 p.m. to learn how you can get started with organics recycling. To register, go to minnetonkamn.gov/green.

City seeks election judges

Are you looking for a fun part-time job or want to get involved in the election process? Apply to serve as an election judge!

We're currently seeking election judges for the August primary and November general elections. These paid positions ensure the voting process goes smoothly and honestly.

Student election judges

Students ages 16 and up are invited to apply to serve as student election judges and provide key support at polling places on Election Day. This is a paid opportunity and training is provided.



Learn more

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/electionjudges to learn more and apply online. Call 952-939-8205 or email elections@minnetonkamn.gov to ask questions.

Police add mobile camera to deter crime

The Minnetonka Police Department recently added a new tool to its efforts to deter crime.

The department purchased a mobile camera trailer that allows police to stream real-time video in areas without permanent cameras or areas that could benefit from additional video feeds.

"We appreciate that the city council saw the deterrent value in a mobile camera that can help us temporarily monitor activity when we cannot always be present," said Capt. Andy Gardner.

The marked trailer will be set up in areas that have seen an uptick in crime. Its first deployment was at an apartment building, which was experiencing an unusually high number of reports of thefts from vehicles. During the three-week deployment, no thefts were reported.

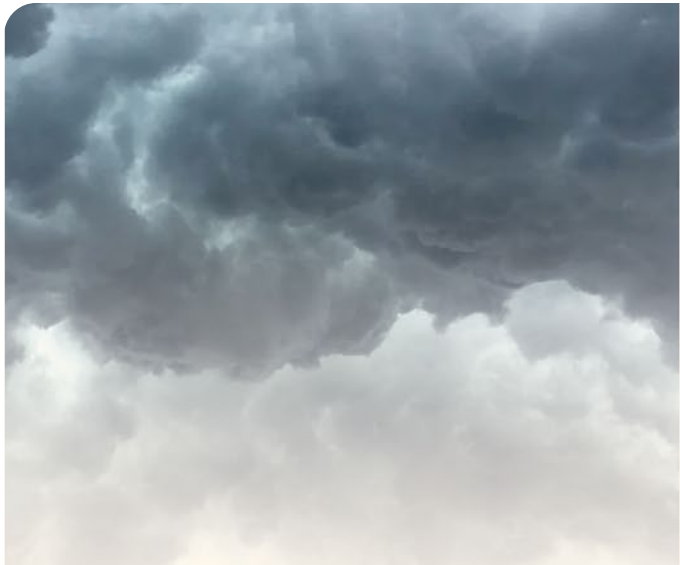
The visibility of the trailer is intended not only to deter crime, but also assist event organizers during large-

scale gatherings. The camera can provide real-time information regarding traffic and crowd size.



Police annual report available

The Minnetonka Police Department's 2021 annual report will be available in April. Read about the many ways the department served the community this past year, and find 2021 crime statistics and more at minnetonkamn.gov/police.



Severe Weather Awareness Week

April 4-8



Severe Thunderstorm Warning

- Winds 58+ mph
- Hail 1"+



Tornado Warning

- Radar or spotter indicated
- Minnesota averages 28 tornadoes each year



Flash Flood Warning

- Life and property threat from high water within next six hours

Statewide Tornado Drill

April 7

Outdoor sirens and NOAA weather radios will sound twice on Thursday, April 7.

- 1:45 p.m. drill for schools and businesses
- 6:45 p.m. drill for families and businesses

Property values grow city's tax base

The Minnetonka real estate market continues to thrive, fueled by metro-wide increases in residential property value.

Last month, residents received their market value notice from the city, which will affect property taxes to be paid in 2023. Overall, the city's median home value increased to \$468,500.

Average 2022 property value change by type*

- Single-family homes - 16.1-percent increase
- Townhouses - 10.8-percent increase
- Condominiums - 7.1-percent increase
- Apartments - 12.9-percent increase

*Individual properties may vary greatly, and adjustments vary by market.

The residential real estate increases are comparable with other west metro suburbs, which averaged a growth rate of 16.2 percent, as home sales rise or hold steady.



How is market value determined?

The city's assessing division adjusts the market value of properties based on actual real estate sales of comparable properties from the past year.

At least 20 percent of all properties are physically inspected each year and adjusted based on the results of those inspections. Market value adjustments are also made for building additions, remodeling and other improvements.

What if I don't agree with my property's market value?

If you have questions or concerns about your property's market value notice or the assessment process, call 952-939-8220.

Help is available

Several state programs assist eligible residents with property taxes. Many programs are subject to income limitations. Programs include:

- Property tax refund program
- Special property tax refund program
- Senior citizens property tax deferral program
- Foreclosure prevention counseling

Learn more at minnetonkamn.gov/property-taxes or revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund, or call the Minnesota Department of Revenue's tax helpline at 651-296-3781.

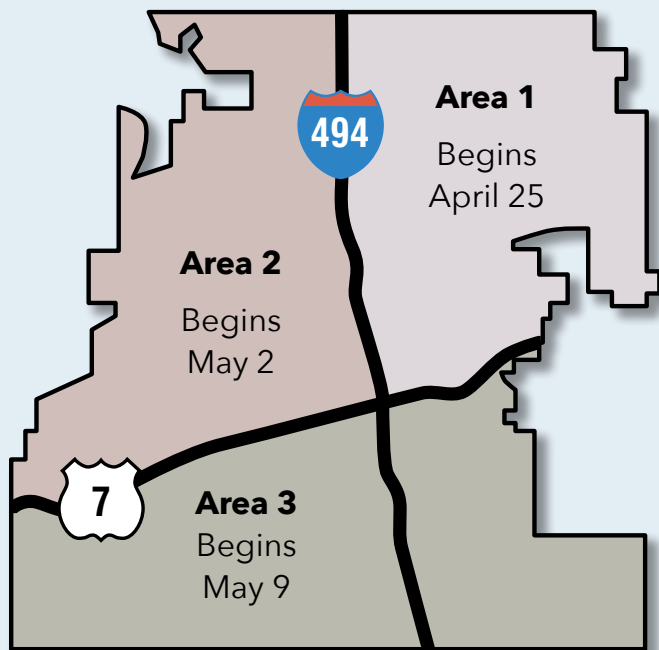
Learn more

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/market-value to learn more. Call 952-939-8220 to ask questions.



Water main flushing starts April 25

Minnetonka Public Works will flush water mains throughout the city from April 25 through May 12, weekdays from 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in most areas. Refer to the map to determine dates in your area.



Flushing in the areas listed below will occur at these special times:

April 25

Ridgedale business area

5:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

May 2

Minnetonka Industrial Road, Twelve Oaks Center, Carlson Parkway

5 a.m. - 5 p.m.

May 10

Hutchins Drive

4 a.m. - 5 p.m.

May 12

Opus, Beachside, K-Tel, Clearwater Drive, Whitewater Drive, Culligan Way

3 a.m. - 3 p.m.

During the flushing period it is normal to experience some discolored water. This water is safe to drink and can be cleared up by running the cold water in your laundry tub. If you experience problems, contact Minnetonka Public Works at 952-988-8400.

Leaf and brush drop-off site now open

Each spring and fall the city accepts leaves, yard waste and brush at the Public Works facility. Residents must present a driver's license, state ID or Minnetonka utility bill. Commercial tree and lawn services must offer proof the materials came from a Minnetonka address.

Regular hours and location

Open April 2-Nov. 19

Mondays and Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Saturdays, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

Minnetonka Public Works
11522 Minnetonka Blvd.

The drop-off site is closed on May 30, July 4, Sept. 5 and Nov. 11 in observance of holidays.



Street sweeping under way

Minnetonka Public Works crews have also begun street sweeping. This project usually last four weeks or until all city streets have been swept. Crews work in 10-hour shifts and try to avoid residential areas in the early morning hours. It is helpful to remove debris from storm sewer grates in your neighborhood and ensure trash and recycling containers are not placed in the street.

Going Solar in Minnetonka

Whether you install your own solar array or subscribe to a community solar garden, supporting renewable energy is one of the best ways to reduce your carbon footprint. Solar panels aren't just good for the environment, they provide long-term savings on electric bills and build equity in your home.

- With tax and utility incentives, these projects often pay for themselves in 8 - 12 years.
- More than 100 Minnetonka homes and businesses have already installed solar panels.

What about community solar?

A community solar garden is a large solar array supported by many subscribers. You pay a monthly subscription fee to a solar garden operator and in return receive bill credits from Xcel Energy. These programs are:

- Great for renters or homeowners with shaded yards.
- An option for residents that want to support renewable energy without paying an upfront cost.

More than 400 Minnetonka residents and businesses have invested in community solar.

DID YOU KNOW?

All city buildings, street lights and water systems are subscribed to community solar which saves the city approximately \$500,000 per year.



How do I get started?

Visit the Solar Energy page at minnetonkamn.gov/green for additional resources to help you get started with community solar or learn more about installing your own system.

Sustainable Minnetonka Awards nominations open

Have you made your home or business more sustainable? The **Sustainable Minnetonka Award** recognizes innovative projects that help our environment and make our community more resilient. Winners will be selected by the Sustainability Commission and recognized by the city council. Awards will be given in the categories including:

- **Energy:** Renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles
- **Landscape:** Native, pollinator-friendly or less resource-intensive plantings
- **Waste:** Waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting
- **Water:** Water conservation and stormwater improvements
- **Young Adult:** A project in any of the categories above created by someone under 25 years old

Projects completed in the past two years are eligible for the award. Applicants do not need to be Minnetonka residents but must be Minnetonka property owners or tenants of a Minnetonka property owner with the owner's permission to apply.

How to apply:

To learn more and apply for the award, visit minnetonkamn.gov/green. The application deadline is June 20. Winners will be announced by the Sustainability Commission at the July 19 meeting.



Sustainable Minnetonka Awards
2022

Natural Resources April Events

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/NREvents for additional information. Advance registration is required.

Garlic Mustard Workshops
Thursday, May 5
6:30-8 p.m.

Resilient Yards Workshop
Thursday, April 7
6:30-8 p.m.

Turf Alternatives Workshop
Thursday, April 28
6:30-8 p.m.

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CITY OF MINNETONKA

City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 4** City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
- 6** Park Board, 6:30 p.m.
- 7** Statewide Tornado Drill, 1:45 p.m. & 6:45 p.m.
- 7** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 11** City Council/EDA, 6:30 p.m.
- 12** Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 16** Spring Eggstravaganza, 10 a.m.
- 20** State of the City Address, 7:30 a.m.
- 25** City Council/EDA, 6:30 p.m.
- 28** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

City meetings are held in person. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/virtual-meetings to learn how to participate remotely. Watch meetings live and on-demand at minnetonkamn.gov/tv.

For up-to-date information, visit minnetonkamn.gov/calendar or call 952-939-8200.



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Council
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dcalvert@minnetonkamn.gov

Kimberly Wilburn 952-222-8142
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Ward 1: Brian Kirk 952-451-6251
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Ward 2: Rebecca Schack 612-590-3735
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Ward 3: Bradley Schaeppi 612-770-7447
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Ward 4: Kissy Coakley 952-486-9670
kcoakley@minnetonkamn.gov

Acting City Manager
Mike Funk 952-939-8200
mfunk@minnetonkamn.gov

**ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON**

Join Williston in April and pay zero joining fee!

Become a member and
enjoy fabulous amenities!

- Indoor tennis courts
- Swimming pool and splash pad
- Baseball and softball cages
- Basketball court
- Fitness center and group classes
- Indoor playground
- Child care

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/williston for details and membership rates.



SPRING EGGSTRAVAGANZA Ages 1-9

**Saturday, April 16
10-11:30 a.m.**

**Cost: \$10
Registration required
Course: 2200401-01**

**Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.**



Spring will be in the air for our annual egg scavenger hunt, photos with the bunny, dancing, face painting, crafts, treats and games. Bring a basket for egg hunting!

