

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
March 2012

Williston Center offers spring break, parents' night out options

Spring break fun

Need something fun for your kids, ages 6 – 12, to do while school is out **April 4 – 6**? Look no further than the Williston Center! Each day from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., kids will take part in arts and crafts, gym games, swimming, play time in the Williston Treehouse and, time permitting, a movie. Participants should bring a swimming suit, towel and gym shoes. Lunch and snacks will be provided. Tuesday's lunch will be sub sandwiches; Wednesday and Friday's lunch will be pizza. Drop off is between 8 and 9 a.m. and pick-up is between 4 and 5 p.m. Cost is \$36 per day. Register online at www.eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8203 to register. Refer to Course #23985



for April 4; Course #23992 for April 5; and Course #23993 for April 6.

Parents' night out

Need a night away from the kids? Bring children ages 4 to 10 to the Williston Center for a night of fun: **Friday, March 16!** The kids will have a pizza dinner, go swimming or play in the Williston Treehouse, play games, make arts and crafts and watch a movie! Dinner is at 6 p.m. Swimming is optional. Kids may be dropped off at 5:30 p.m. and must be picked up by 10 p.m. Make sure to bring a swimsuit and towel. Cost is \$26 per child; \$21 per child for families with multiple children attending. Register online at www.eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8203 to register. Refer to Course #24007. ☺

Patty Acomb wins city council election

Patty Acomb was the winner of the February 14 special election for Minnetonka City Council At Large Seat B. Acomb earned 967 of 2,770 votes cast, or 34.9%. Turnout for the special election was 8.1% of the 34,250 registered Minnetonka voters.

The Minnetonka City Council canvassed the election results February 21, and Acomb will be sworn in at the March 5 city council meeting. ☺

Serve your city as an election judge

Want to serve your country? Be an election judge! Election judges ensure that the voting process goes smoothly and honestly. Serving as an election judge is a great way to meet your neighbors and protect one of our most cherished freedoms — the right to vote.

Judges are needed for both the state primary and the state general election.

This is a paid opportunity and training is provided. For more information visit the city website at www.eminnetonka.com or call Laura Ronbeck at (952) 939-8219. ☺

Redistricting of U.S. Congressional and state legislative boundaries announced

The Minnesota Supreme Court-appointed redistricting panel recently issued the new U.S. Congressional and state legislative boundaries for Minnesota. Redistricting takes place every 10 years following the release of U.S. Census data, with the goal of equalizing population distribution at various representative levels.

The city of Minnetonka remains in U.S. Congressional District 3. The city also remains in three separate state house and state senate districts. Minnetonka voters in the new legislative district 44 will share a representative and senator with voters in the cities of Plymouth and Woodland. Minnetonka voters in the new legislative district 48 will share a representative and senator with voters in the city of Eden Prairie. Minnetonka voters in the

new legislative district 49 will share a representative and senator with voters in the cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Eden Prairie.

The next step in the redistricting process is adjusting the city's ward and precinct lines. Because the ward boundaries are contained within Minnetonka's city code of ordinances, the redistricting of those boundaries must be done by ordinance. The ordinance will be introduced at the March 5 city council meeting, with a public hearing of the proposed ordinance at its March 26 meeting. At that meeting the council will vote on the proposed ward and precinct boundary adjustments. By law, the city is required to have its redistricting complete by April 3. ☺

Register for summer rec

Registration for Recreation Services summer programs starts Monday, March 5, for Hopkins and Minnetonka residents, and March 19 for non-residents.

Recreation Services' summer brochure is available online at www.eminnetonka.com.

To register by phone call (952) 939-8203 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Visa, Discover or Master Card is accepted. Or, register online for most programs by visiting www.eminnetonka.com. ☺



News for Neighbors

From the Minnetonka Police Department

How to avoid human or pet encounters with coyotes

The Minnetonka Police Department frequently hears from residents who have questions about the various wildlife roaming Minnetonka's natural areas, from deer to fox to turkeys and coyotes.

Minnetonka is far from alone in hosting coyotes. Hardly any animal in America is more adaptable to changing conditions than the coyote, which can live just about anywhere. They are found in deserts, swamps, tundra, grasslands brush and dense forests. They have also learned to live in suburbs and cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix and Denver.

It's important to know that coyote attacks on people are extremely isolated and very rare. Minnesota has never seen a documented case of a coyote attack on a human.

Why can't coyotes be removed?

Removal programs don't work to reduce coyote populations. When coyotes are removed from an area through artificial means, other coyotes quickly fill the void, with more females reproducing and also breeding larger litters.

In addition, the only effective methods of coyote removal are leg-hold traps, neck snares or poison, all of which present a much larger risk to domestic animals and children than to coyotes.

What can I do to prevent my pet from being attacked by a coyote?

One of the keys to the coyote's success is its diet. A true scavenger, the coyote will eat just about anything, including small livestock, poultry and deer, snakes and foxes, rodents and rabbits, birds, frogs, grass and grasshoppers, pet cats and cat food, pet dogs and dog food, carrion, fruits and vegetables, doughnuts and sandwiches and even garbage. A coyote does not differentiate between its normal diet of raccoons, squirrels, woodchucks, etc. and domestic animals such as cats and dogs.

Follow these tips to reduce the chances of a coyote encounter:

- Don't feed coyotes, even unintentionally. Feed pets indoors whenever possible. Pick up any leftovers if feeding outdoors. Store pet and livestock feed where it is inaccessible to wildlife.

- Bird feeders should be positioned so that coyotes can't get to the feed. Coyotes are attracted by bread, table scraps and even seed. They may also be attracted by birds and rodents that come to the feeders.
- Secure garbage containers and eliminate garbage odors.
- Don't allow pets to run free. Keep them safely confined and provide secure nighttime housing for them. Walk your dog on a leash and accompany your pet outside, especially at night.
- Trim and clean, near ground level, any shrubbery that provides cover for coyotes or prey.

What can we do to discourage coyote contact?

By doing nothing when we see coyotes, we've caused them to become less fearful of humans. Often, if we see a coyote, we'll stop and look at it without disturbing it. This teaches the coyote that humans are not a threat.

Hazing — a series of activities that re-instills fear of humans in coyotes — has been shown to be the most effective tool in co-existing with coyotes. The city of Denver had the same issue with coyotes now being experienced in Minnetonka. After trying artificial removal for years with no success, a hazing program was implemented. Once residents began using this technique, the number of coyote sightings dropped drastically.

How does hazing work?

It's simple. When you see a coyote, make yourself large, wave your arms, shout, blow a whistle, bang pots, spray a hose, even charge after them if you feel comfortable enough to do so.

The goal is to scare the coyote completely out of the area. Do not stop before it is completely gone or you will reinforce its belief that humans are harmless. A coyote that is very habituated to people may take up to five separate hazing experiences before it re-learns to fear humans. It will then teach the others in its family group that humans are to be avoided.

It's important to haze coyotes whenever you have contact with them. This means any time you are outside and the coyote sees you. If done from inside the house or a car, the coyote will not connect the hazing behavior with humans. For hazing to be most effective, every resident should participate.

Questions?

On the positive side, coyotes play an important role by helping to control other wild animals frequently found in Minnetonka, including rodents and Canada geese.

If you have questions about coyotes or would like the city's animal control officer to talk to your neighborhood group about wildlife, please contact the Minnetonka Police Department at (952) 939-8500.

New officer joins Minnetonka Police Department

In January, Officer Patrick Eggleston joined the Minnetonka Police Department. Officer Eggleston grew up in Cottage Grove and graduated from Park High School, then earned his law enforcement degree from Century College in White Bear Lake. Prior to being hired by Minnetonka, Patrick worked for the Minnesota Department of Corrections as a corrections officer at the Oak Park Heights facility.



Officer Patrick Eggleston

March activities for older adults

Plan to attend one of these exciting activities offered each month for adults, all of which are advertised in a weekly email as well as a free monthly publication, the *Minnetonka Script*. Subscribe to one or both of these publications by visiting www.eminnetonka.com, or contact Nicole Gorman at ngorman@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8369. For general information about any of the activities listed below, call (952) 939-8393.

All About Black Bears

March 5, 10:30 a.m.

All the latest information about black bears, including research and activities of the North American Bear Center in northern Minnesota.



Garden Club

March 12, 1 p.m.

Jay and Dory Venero of Venero Gardens will talk about new plant varieties for the coming year, and how to amend the soil to grow beautiful plants.

St. Patrick's Day Party

March 16, 12 p.m.

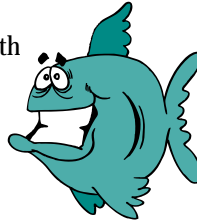
Enjoy a traditional Irish meal and live entertainment. Cost is \$7, due by March 12.



All-You-Can-Eat Fish Dinner

March 30, 5:30 p.m.

Enjoy a social outing with friends and a delicious meal of battered cod, fries, coleslaw, biscuits and dessert. Cost is \$7, due by March 26.



Adult Bike Club Kick-O

March 30, 9:30 a.m.

The bike club rides twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), for distances of 10 to 20 miles at moderate speed.

Attend this season's kick-off and info meeting. Annual fee is \$5. Call (952) 939-8203 to register. New members welcome.

Defensive Driving Classes

To register, call the Minnesota Safety Center at 1-888-234-1294 or visit www.mnsafetycenter.org. AAA members receive \$30 class registration by providing member number and expiration date.

Four-Hour Courses

March 6, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

March 22, 6 – 10 p.m.

Refreshments provided (no meal). Cost: \$20 ☺

City street sweeping starts March 26

Street sweeping by Minnetonka Public Works will begin Monday, March 26, weather permitting — and if the weather does not cooperate, the start date will be moved to Monday, April 2.

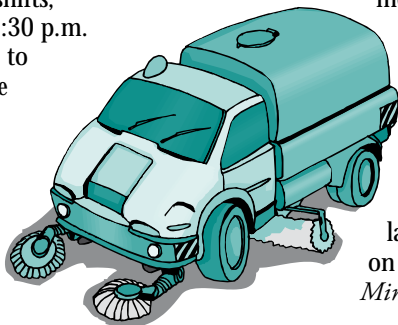
For four weeks or until the city is complete, public works crews will sweep streets in two shifts, from 4:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Double shifts are necessary in order to finish sweeping in time to begin seasonal blacktop work on city streets.

Although crews try to stay out of

residential areas in the early morning hours, it is not always possible. In these cases, crews try to minimize the noise and time spent in the neighborhood.

While the street sweeper does a good job cleaning streets, it can't capture all the debris, so we need your help! As the snow melts, identify the catch basins in your neighborhood, then remove and dispose of the accumulated debris and litter. This will help the street sweeping process.

Once sweeping has concluded, flushing of water mains will take place starting in late April. Look for information on water main flushing in the April *Minnetonka Memo*. ☺



Sign up for the Citizen Alert System

Since the Citizen Alert system was introduced in the February *Minnetonka Memo*, many Minnetonka residents have signed up. Here's why you should too!

By signing up, you'll be alerted about emergencies or important community alerts, however you choose — via phone, email, text message and more. Read on for the answers to some other questions frequently asked about the program:

Do I have to sign up to receive alerts?

If you have a landline telephone and are listed in the telephone book, your phone number should be entered in the system to receive emergency alerts. However, it's still a good idea to sign up to ensure your telephone number is correct and you receive emergency notifications.

I'll get the alerts on my landline. Why should I take the time to sign up?

By signing up for the Citizen Alert system, you can:

- Receive non-emergency community alerts, such as notification of a water main break in your area.
- Add more points of contact, such as cell phones, emails or text messages.
- Add contact information for multiple members of your household.
- Add additional locations in Minnetonka you'd like to be notified about, such as a workplace, school, church, etc.

Register online at www.eminnetonka.com

(click on the icon on the home page) — it only takes a few minutes!

If you need assistance, call Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at (952) 939-8207. ☺



Sign up online at www.eminnetonka.com for the city's Citizen Alert system. Need help or have questions? Call (952) 939-8207.

Get in the recycling mood, room by room

The city of Minnetonka's new recycling program lets you recycle more than ever before! Your new, wheeled cart contains a list of acceptable and unacceptable items imprinted in the lid for easy reference, but here's a room-by-room guide showing some of the many items you can recycle. Remember, this list is by no means complete, so if you have questions about an item not listed, please contact Allied Waste at (952) 941-5174.

On collection days, remember to place your new recycling cart and your garbage can on opposite sides of the driveway, and at least three feet apart from each other and any other objects. This ensures carts aren't mixed up by the haulers and also makes it easier for the truck arms to retrieve and empty carts. Need a larger or smaller cart? Contact Allied Waste at (952) 941-5174.

Finally, some people choose to keep recycling and garbage containers outside due to limited garage space. Remember, city ordinances require that all trash and recycling bins be stored from public view, either inside a garage or behind a screened enclosure, except for the evening before and the day of trash and/or recycling collection. ♪

Holiday recycling collection in 2012

In 2012, only three holidays will delay curbside recycling collection in Minnetonka and only for the residents whose service dates fall in the week with that holiday:



- Memorial Day, May 28**
 If May 28 is in the week of your recycling service date, then collection is Tuesday, May 29, for residents west of I-494; and Wednesday, May 30, for residents east of I-494.
- Labor Day, Sept. 3**
 If Sept. 3 is in the week of your recycling service date, then collection is Tuesday, Sept. 4, for residents west of I-494; and Wednesday, Sept. 5, for residents east of I-494.
- Christmas Day, Dec. 25**
 If Dec. 25 is in the week of your recycling service date, then collection is Wednesday, Dec. 26, for residents east of I-494. ♪

Kitchen



Aluminum food & beverage cans



Clear plastic clamshell containers like those used for produce or bakery goods.



Plastic trays, like those used for microwave dinners

Plus, plastics galore:

- Coffee creamer, chocolate syrup, ketchup & mustard bottles
- Mayonnaise and peanut butter jars
- Milk jugs
- Honey, vegetable oil, syrup and pancake mix bottles



Water, juice & soda bottles (with caps on)



Glass food & beverage jars



Cardboard containers (except those that go in the freezer, like waffle boxes)



Bathroom



Plastic prescription drug containers (properly dispose of any unused medicine)



Plastic bottles of shampoo/conditioner, soap, lotion, etc.

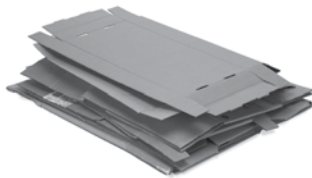


Plastic baby wipe containers



Bathroom boxboard & empty toilet paper rolls

Laundry room



Cardboard boxes (must fit in recycling container)



Plastic containers of laundry & household cleaning supplies (discard sprayer portion)



Plastic cat litter jugs

Recycling Basics

- **Plastic:** Look for a number in the triangle on the bottom. If the number is between 1 and 7, recycle it (caps too).
- **Cardboard:** If the container is not intended to go in the freezer, recycle it. This includes paper milk and juice cartons.
- **Glass or metal:** If it held a household item, recycle it.

Make sure all items are clean and free of residue.

Photos provided courtesy of the city of Golden Valley.

On the go



Plastic soda cups, to-go containers & carry-out bags (clean, with no food or grease residue)



Plastic retail bags (stuff them all in one big bag so they don't blow out of the bin)

Living Room



Newspaper



Paper (school, office, shredded mail, magazines, greeting cards)

Not sure if a specific item can be recycled?
Call Allied Waste at (952) 941-5174.

2012 Property Taxes

Help is available for property taxpayers

Several state programs, described below, exist to assist eligible residents with the rising cost of property taxes. For additional information and links to the government agencies that run these programs, visit the city's website at www.eminnetonka.com or call the Minnesota Department of Revenue's tax helpline at (651) 296-3781.

Property tax refund program

The first program is the **property tax refund program**, or "circuit breaker." For taxes paid in 2012, homeowners with 2011 household incomes up to \$100,780 are eligible for a refund, and the maximum refund is \$2,460. Some renters with 2011 household incomes up to \$54,620 are also eligible for a refund. The maximum refund that may be available to a renter is \$1,550, and the amount provided also depends upon the total rent paid in 2011. There are additional eligibility allowances for renters/homeowners over age 65; those who are disabled; and for the number of dependents. Forms can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) and must be filed with the DOR by August 15, 2013.

Special property tax refund program

A second state program is the **special property tax refund program** for homeowners whose property taxes payable in 2012 have increased by more than 12 percent and are at least \$100 over their 2011 taxes. The increase must not be attributable to new improvements, and homeowners must have owned and lived in their home on both January 2, 2011, and January 2, 2012. There is no limit on household income to be eligible under this program. The special property tax refund form is also available from the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) and also must be filed with the DOR by August 15, 2013.

Senior citizens property tax deferral program

The **senior citizens property tax deferral program** allows people 65 years of age or older, whose household incomes are \$60,000 or less, to defer a portion of their property taxes on their homes. The program limits the amount of property taxes to three percent of the total household income for eligible property owners, and the amount of taxes to be paid each year will not change for as long as the homeowner participates in the program.

However, this is **not a tax forgiveness program — it is a low interest loan from the state**. The deferred tax is paid by the state to the county, and a **lien will attach to your property**. Annually adjusted interest will be charged on the loan, but will never exceed five percent. Application forms are available from the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and must be filed with the Hennepin County Auditor's Office by July 1 the year before the deferral would begin.

Foreclosure prevention counseling

The city of Minnetonka provides foreclosure prevention counseling through Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin County. Call (952) 933-1993 for information.

Tax Notices

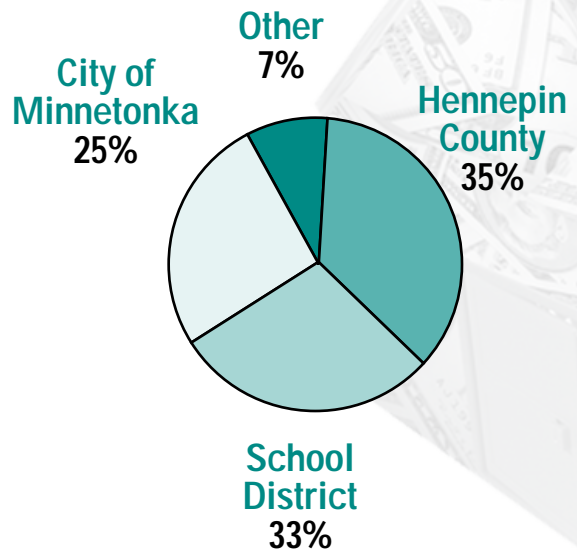
Residents will receive two notices this month related to property taxes. One is the **market value notice** from the city, which will affect property taxes to be paid in 2013 and is explained on the facing page. The other is the **property tax bill** for 2012, which is mailed by Hennepin County and must be paid this year.

City Tax Bill

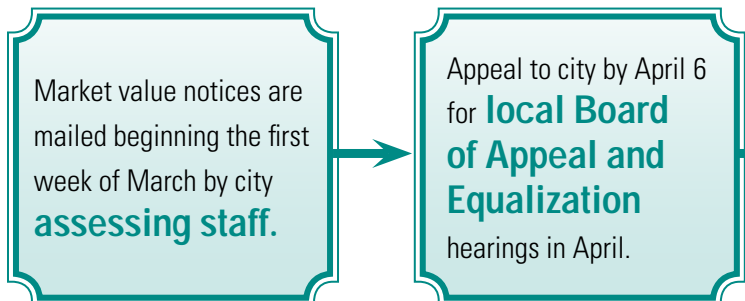
The city of Minnetonka continues to provide quality services at a reasonable price. The city provides a fuller range of municipal services than many other cities, and does not use special assessments to fund road and other improvements. More than seven of every ten dollars in city property taxes paid support streets and public safety, and most of the remainder is spent on parks and natural resources. Nevertheless, the city's tax rate remains among the lowest of comparable metro cities. Our residents continue to receive the high quality of services they have come to expect.

2012 homeowner's property taxes

The city of Minnetonka accounts for about one-fourth of a homeowner's total property tax bill. The remainder is comprised of taxes for your school district (33 percent), county (35 percent), and other jurisdictions (7 percent).



Market Value Appeals Process



2012 Market Value Notice

(Your market value notice applies to property taxes payable in 2013.)

Minnetonka's home value decline slows

As with most locations in the metro area and across the nation, Minnetonka's real estate has continued to experience a decline in market values which began in 2008, but now appears to have slowed and may be starting to stabilize. Following a decline of around 2.5% last year, Minnetonka single-family homes declined another 3.5% this year. Similarly, condos and townhomes have continued to experience more significant declines. Changes in commercial property values will be different than residential properties. It's important to remember that individual properties may vary greatly, and that adjustments vary by market, thus some properties may experience increases in value while others decrease.

Market values based on 2011 data

Property tax assessment in Minnesota is a complicated process strictly governed by state law. Although the city of Minnetonka administers the assessment, the city's work is overseen by Hennepin County and the State Department of Revenue. The state-mandated schedule requires that the values on your property, as reflected in the market value notice that you will receive in the mail this month, are based upon an analysis of real estate market trends during 2011. Changes this year will be reflected in the 2013 notices.

How is market value determined?

The Minnetonka Assessing Division maintains records for every property in the city. Adjustments are made to the market values of most properties, based on actual real estate sales from the past year for comparable properties. Approximately one-fifth of the properties are physically inspected each year, and adjustments to these are made based on the results of that inspection. 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, please call the Minnetonka assessing staff at (952) 939-8220. The staff can review property records and sales information with you.

Based on this discussion and review, the appraiser may or may not make a change to your market value. If not, you have the right to appeal.

How does the appeal process work?

The value subject to appeal is the taxable market value. Two avenues of appeal are available. Property owners may appeal directly to the State Tax Court. More common, however, is an appeal through the local Board of Appeal and Equalization, and if desired, then to the Hennepin County Board of Equalization.

The Minnetonka City Council convenes each year as the local Board of Appeal and Equalization and has local real estate professionals serve

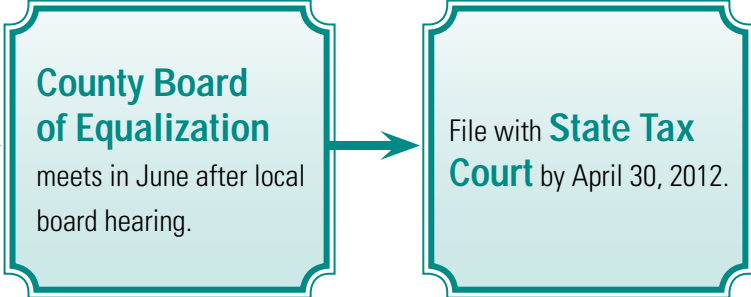
as its advisors. To make an appeal to the local board, you should first discuss your property's market value with the Minnetonka assessing staff. After that, you may make an appeal to the local Board of Appeal and Equalization by April 6 simply by asking that your property be listed for appeal. However, it is important to know that the local and county boards have the authority to raise or lower an appealed market value.

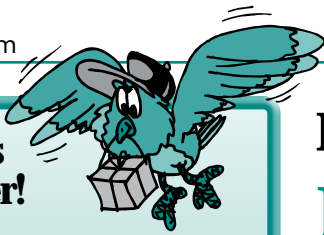
Remember, if you have questions or concerns about your property's market value or about the assessment process, please call the Minnetonka assessing staff at (952) 939-8220. ☎

What do these numbers mean?

In early March, Minnetonka property owners will receive their 2012 market value notices. Four value amounts will appear on the notices:

-  **Estimated Market Value**
The assessor's estimate of the total market value of the property, or what the property would likely sell for on the open market during the year ending September 2011.
-  **Veterans Exclusion**
Qualifying disabled veterans may be eligible for a valuation exclusion on their homestead property, which would reduce the amount subject to taxation.
-  **Qualifying Improvement Value**
This figure shows that portion of the value of improvements made to an older home under the former "This Old House" law. This program expired with the 2003 assessment. However, property may still be receiving the value exclusion under this program.
-  **Taxable Market Value**
This is the value that your property taxes are actually based on, after all reductions, exemptions and deferrals are taken out.





Follow us on Twitter!

Get your news delivered via “tweets!” You can receive news releases, project updates, meeting agendas and minutes and much more, by following the city on Twitter: @MinnetonkaMN.

Order rain barrels, compost bins

The city of Minnetonka is again partnering with the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) to offer rain barrels and compost bins for sale to residents, at a discount. Rain barrels are \$69 plus tax, and compost bins are \$55 plus tax.



Orders must be placed online through RAM at www.recycleminnesota.org by Friday, April 6. Orders will be accepted online until sold out. Orders may be picked up at Minnetonka Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd., on Friday, April 20 or Saturday, April 21.

RAM will offer sales throughout the spring at other locations. Mark your calendar with the correct pick-up dates and location you select when you place your order. No refunds are available. You do not need to be a Minnetonka resident to order. For questions visit the RAM website or contact RAM directly at (952) 473-0048.

Watershed district grants available

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed’s District’s cost share grant to protect and improve water quality is now available: www.ninemilecreek.org

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District also has cost share grant opportunities: www.minnehahacreek.org

These grants are only available to those that live in the watershed district. Visit www.eminnetonka.com and search “watershed district” to determine your watershed district.

Ban bullies at your backyard bird feeder

Do you have bullies at your bird feeder? Invasive European bird species can cause a problem for native birds by throwing their weight around bird feeders, nest boxes and natural cavities in trees, outcompeting the native species in their home territory.

These bad guys are two year-round invasive birds, European starlings and house sparrows. Introduced to New York City in the 1800s, these city birds now number in the millions, inhabiting the United States and the southern half of Canada and eating most of the food at bird feeders.

During the nesting season, these bully birds aggressively compete with native birds for cavity nesting sites in trees and in bird houses, displacing bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, tree swallows and others. While changing the hole-size and shape on bird houses can discourage non-native birds from nesting in bird houses, the natural cavities are up for grabs. Frequently the bully birds will displace or attack and kill desirable birds, then build their nest on top their remains.

Follow these tips to discourage invasive European birds:

- Use specialty bird feeders and specific seed. Tube feeders filled with small seed (like Niger thistle and sunflower pieces) with openings for small bills work well for chickadees, nuthatches, pine siskins and redpolls.
- Limit the seed types in feeders with larger openings. For example, fill one feeder with black sunflower seed and another with safflower seed for the cardinals, chickadees and nuthatches.
- Try “squirrel proof” feeders, which have bases or weighted perches that cause trouble for larger birds. Avoid millet, milo and bread, since they attract the bully birds. Hang a suet feeder under a domed squirrel baffle to discourage starlings.

For more information about banning bully birds, visit <http://bit.ly/BullyBirds> or use your smartphone to scan this code to be taken directly to the website!



Winter tree pruning drop-off opens in March

The city forester recommends November through March as the ideal time to prune oaks, as they are least susceptible to oak wilt disease during these months. This is also a great time to prune other trees, since insects and diseases are not active.

To assist residents who conduct proper winter pruning, the drop-off site at the Minnetonka Public Works facility (11522 Minnetonka Blvd.) will be open Saturdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The site will **not be open weekdays** in March. The regular brush drop-off program starts Monday, April 9.

Branches up to 12” in diameter will be accepted. Christmas trees (without plastic bags, stands or decorations) will also be accepted. Proof of Minnetonka residency — driver’s license or Minnetonka utility bill — is required to drop off brush.

Please note: trash, grass, leaves, dirt, sod, lumber, fencing, or wood scraps are **not** accepted.

No brush or trimmings will be accepted from commercial tree or lawn services.



The winter tree pruning drop-off is one way to kick your Christmas tree to the curb!

Prune now to train your young tree

Want to keep your young tree shapely and in tip-top condition? Pruning, especially when trees are young, is the key. It helps ensure the safety of people and property, promotes tree health and strong branch structure and improves the aesthetics both of the tree and the overall landscape.

Prune for safety

Trees in the forest self-prune — when leaves don't get enough sunlight, they can't support the branch, which then dies over time and falls off. A falling branch in the woods may only affect trees around it, but falling branches in a yard may hurt a person or a nearby structure. Proactive pruning helps avoid those unexpected falling branches.

Prune at the right time

It's best to prune in February and March, just before spring growth starts. Diseases and insects are inactive, and it's nearly time for trees to start growing and sealing off wounds. The smaller the cut the better the chance the tree will close the wound completely. And remember: never prune oak trees between April and June, the high-risk season for oak wilt disease transmission.

Professional pruning

If you can remove a branch with a hand pruner or handsaw from the ground or by using a small "orchard" ladder (a special three-legged ladder), then you can complete the pruning work yourself. However, if you have to get on a large ladder or use a chainsaw to prune a branch, then consider hiring a certified arborist. These two criteria can indicate a large tree, and you can do a lot of damage to the tree and yourself. Never prune trees near or under utility lines — contact Xcel Energy for assistance.

To find a certified arborist, visit the city website at www.eminnetonka.com and type "tree contractor" in the search bar. Look for companies with an asterisk next to their name. Or, visit <http://msa-live.org/>.

Pruning workshop, web resources

Want to learn more and see a pruning demonstration? Be sure to attend the pruning workshop March 13 (see page 11) For pruning tips, tools and resources, along with



photos, visit <http://bit.ly/TreePruning> or scan this QR code to be taken directly to the web page. ☺

Adopt a Minnetonka park sign this year

Minnetonka's "Adopt-A-Park-Sign" program has been a great way for individuals, families, and organizations in the community to come together and share their gardening talents with others by planting flowers around city park signs.

The city collaborates with a local greenhouse to provide some annuals/perennials of the volunteer's choice to plant and maintain during the 2012 growing season. Last year's volunteers will be given first priority to adopt the sign they cared for in 2011.

Registration for new participants is April 2. The participating park signs and their availability will be posted on www.eminnetonka.com the last week of March.

If you are interested in adopting a park sign or would like more information, contact Kathy Kline at (952) 939-8391 or kkline@eminnetonka.com. ☺



Tips for late winter buckthorn removal

Why work on buckthorn now:

- No heat, humidity or mosquitoes
- More daylight and higher temps
- Layered clothing prevents scratches by brush
- Doesn't take away from fun summer activities.

Why cut stumps high now and use herbicide later:

- Separate cutting and herbicide steps make the job easier.
- Use of water-based herbicide is difficult when temps are below freezing.
- Tall stumps — at least a foot high — are a visual reminder that herbicide has not yet been applied.
- When the snow melts, the stumps can be re-cut to one or two inches from the ground. Apply herbicide to fresh-cut stumps before the end of April.

More buckthorn control tips

- Before you start, find and mark native plants so they aren't cut along with buckthorn. Ribbon tagging works well.

- Remove female buckthorn first, because it produces black fruit with seeds. Free native plants by clearing buckthorn around them. Protect them from rabbits and deer with tree guards or fencing.
- Only the outer growth rings of the stump need to be treated with herbicide, but the cut must be fresh.
- Remove non-native honeysuckle, too. It's the second-most invasive woodland shrub.
- Don't scrape the woods clean. Recycle some of the wood by placing logs on slopes and chipping brush on site. This helps reduce erosion.
- Glyphosate is a good water-based herbicide that is less harmful than other brush herbicides. It is the active ingredient in several herbicide brands, including Round-Up. Apply it to stumps at 10 – 20% concentration.
- Wick (sponge) applicators are a great way to apply herbicide directly to the stump, reducing the risk of exposure to the applicator and the environment.

To learn more, attend the buckthorn workshop March 22 (see page 11). ☺

Ask Mike: "Eco" websites for the whole family

Minnetonka Mike, the city of Minnetonka's online request system, is always standing by to help you with any questions, comments or concerns you may have about your city. This month, Mike addresses eco resources on the web!

Hi Mike:

Our family tries to be green. We know the importance of buying products locally, purchasing items that don't have a lot of extra packaging, saving electricity by turning off the lights when we leave a room and turning off the faucet while we brush our teeth. We even planted a native tree that we bought last year through the city's tree sale; the birds love it!

As a family we thought there may be other things that we can do.

Our two kids, Hunter and Kelly, are really interested in being green so we are looking for resources that we can view as a family.

Forest and Olive Green

Hi Forest and Olive:

It's great that you and your kids know that your actions have an impact on our world and that you are trying to be more sustainable. I've enjoyed these websites, and I think you and your family will too!

Energy Conservation

This website has a carbon footprint calculator for kids, with sections for transportation, eating, home and school, electricity and water, and trash. After each set of questions, get a list of ideas for reducing your carbon footprint in that area. At the end of the quiz, it shows the number of "carbon earths" for the user. You can also compare the average for the United States with other countries. Give it a try!

<http://www.meetthegreens.org/features/carbon-calculator.html>

This website allows you to create



an avatar to represent yourself. The end result is easy to understand and allows you to see how changes in your lifestyle will alter your effect on the planet.

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>

Water Conservation

This website has a water footprint calculator for kids, with sections for home, yard, diet, transportation and consumer choices. Some of the questions provide the average for Americans. At the end of the quiz, your family can pledge to change certain actions to save water and then calculate how many gallons of water you'll save.

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/water-footprint-calculator/>

Your kids (and you) can test your water use knowledge at the following website. It's harder than you might think. Enjoy!

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/games/puzzlesquizzes/water-wiz/>



If you have a question, comment or concern about the city, let Minnetonka Mike know! Visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Minnetonka Mike's image. Follow the directions to set up your account, then go ahead and submit your comment. Or, call (952) 939-8386 to leave your comment. ☺

All about the What If? program

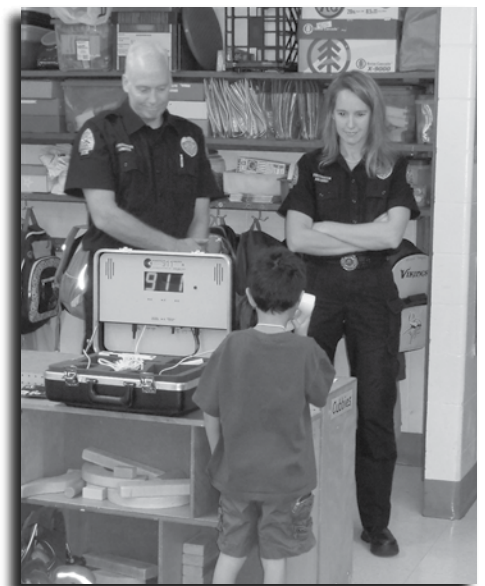
The Minnetonka Fire Department's What if? education program is designed to better prepare residents for emergencies, big or small, with the goal of creating a proactive community.



Public educators from the program have had the opportunity to visit with many Minnetonka residents over the past several months. The What if? program includes a fire extinguisher simulator, which provides a safe opportunity to learn how to put out fires. Another part of the program includes multi-media fire and life safety presentations to groups of all ages and sizes. Our program has the flexibility to be customized to meet your needs.

The Minnetonka Farmers' Market, local events, grocery stores, assisted living homes, local businesses, grade schools and pre-schools are just a few places where the What if? program has visited over the past few years. We have also given fire station tours, worked with both Boy and Girl Scout troops, provided activities at the fire station and worked with public educators throughout the state to expand our programs.

We are excited to share the program with you. For questions or to schedule an upcoming event, please call (952) 939-8331. ☺



Fire educators Jim Lundeen & Sara Ahlquist

Presenting the 2012 Eco Walks & Talks series: Sign up today!

This spring, participate in a host of workshops and plant walks offered by the city of Minnetonka. Here's an overview of what's available:

- **March:** Organic lawns and sustainable yards, small tree pruning and buckthorn workshops.
- **April:** Pick up pre-ordered rain barrels or trees, and attend a garlic mustard workshop.
- **May:** Attend a garlic mustard workshop or guided plant walk in a park.
- **June:** Native Plant Market & Eco Fun Fest
- **August & beyond:** Prairie plant walks and buckthorn education

Small tree pruning

One of the best ways to ensure your tree will have a long life is to encourage strong branch structure as it grows. Find out why open-grown trees in a landscape require more pruning than a forest-grown tree, where to start pruning, how to make the proper cut, guidelines on how much to cut, best time of year, tools to use and the benefits of formative tree pruning. The first hour will include a presentation by City Forester Emily Ball followed by an outdoor pruning demonstration from 3:15 – 4 p.m. Outdoor portion will be shortened if temperatures are below zero. Registration is required and limited to 35. Call (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com.

Tuesday, March 13, 2–4 p.m.
Shady Oak Room
Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Organic lawns and sustainable yards

Greg Emerick of Vermagreen Organics will discuss how using organics such as earthworm castings, compost, aerated compost tea and specialized equipment can help homeowners improve the health of grass, trees, plants and gardens while reducing dependence on synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Registration required: call (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com.

Wednesday, March 14, 6:30–8 p.m.
Community Room
Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Buckthorn workshops

Late March and early April can be a great time to control invasive woody plants, like buckthorn and non-native honeysuckle. Join Janet Van Sloun, natural resources specialist, to learn the ins and outs of ridding yourself of buckthorn, and how to restore woodlands once the buckthorn is gone.

Registration is required—register online at www.eminnetonka.com or call (952) 988-8400. Can't make it on this date? Fall buckthorn workshops will be offered in September and October—watch the Memo for dates and times.

Thursday, March 22, 6:30–8 p.m.
Boards and Commissions Room
Minnetonka City Hall
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Wednesday, September 19, 6:30–8 p.m.
Thursday, October 4, 6:30–8 p.m.
Community Room
Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Garlic mustard workshops

Wednesday, April 18, 6:30–8 p.m.
Boards and Commissions Room
Minnetonka City Hall
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Wednesday, May 2, 6:30–8 p.m.
Thursday, May 31, 6:30–8 p.m.
Community Room
Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Rain barrel & compost bin pick-up

(see page 8 for more information)

Fri. and Sat., April 20–21, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Minnetonka Public Works
11522 Minnetonka Boulevard

All rain barrels and compost bins must be pre-ordered through www.recyclemnnesota.org before the pick-up event.

Tree sale pick-up

Friday, April 27, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Saturday, April 28, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Minnetonka Public Works
11522 Minnetonka Boulevard

All trees must be pre-ordered **before** the pick-up event.

Guided plant walks

Walks take place in a Minnetonka park where native habitat restoration is underway. Walk with the city's restoration specialist and identify wild flowers. See native shrubs the city is working to restore. Learn about restoration practices the city is using and how to identify the invasive "bad guys." The wildlife benefits of some native trees and shrubs will be included.

- Walks are held rain or shine. Wear appropriate outdoor clothing and sturdy footwear.
- Recommended equipment: water bottle, binoculars and notebook.
- Meet on-site at location specified in table.

RSVP is required and limited to 15 for each walk. Call Minnetonka Public Works at 952.988.8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com.

Big Willow Park

Thursday, May 3, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Meet at small parking lot on Minnetonka Blvd. (across from 12201 Mtka Blvd). Over flow parking is across the street to the east at Guilliams Park.

Lake Rose Park

Thursday, May 17, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
Park entrance is a city strip of land between homes 5724 and 5732 Lake Rose Drive. Be considerate of the neighbors: park on the east side of the street and meet between the houses.

Lone Lake Park

Thursday, May 24, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
Community Room
5624 Shady Oak Rd. Meet in the lower parking lot by the restrooms.

Green Circle Park

Thursday, August 2, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
Get directions on city website or call (952) 988-8423. ♾



Plant walk in Purgatory Park: February 2009

minnetonka memo

March 2012



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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Mayor Terry Schneider (952) 939-8389 Home: (952) 934-9529 tschneider@eminnetonka.com Meetings with the mayor may be scheduled by calling (952) 939-8211.	Council <i>At Large:</i> Dick Allendorf... (952) 933-6231 dallendorf@eminnetonka.com Patty Acomb... (952) 807-8635 pacomb@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 1:</i> Bob Ellingson... (952) 931-3065 bellingson@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 2:</i> Tony Wagner... (952) 512-1817 twagner@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 3:</i> Brad Wiersum... (612) 723-3907 bwiersum@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 4:</i> James Hiller... (952) 974-1003 jhiller@eminnetonka.com
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Internet: www.eminnetonka.com	

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Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

March
2012

Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Call (952) 939-8200 for meeting locations.
				1	2	3	1 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							15 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
							7 Park Board, 7 p.m.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
							22 Economic Development Authority Commission, 6:30 p.m.
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	26 City Council study session, 6:30 p.m.; Community commission, 6 p.m.
							29 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

All meetings listed above are open to the public. Meeting dates and times are subject to change — please check www.eminnetonka.com for the latest information.

Minnetonka City Council and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16, and replays are available Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at noon, or anytime via videostream at www.eminnetonka.com. Agendas for council meetings are available on the city's website by the Friday afternoon prior to the meeting, and planning commission agendas are available by the Monday prior to the meeting.

Staying informed about city projects

The city regularly receives applications for projects that require planning commission and/or city council approval. Information on these, as well as many other city projects, is regularly updated on the city's website. If you'd like to stay informed, visit "MyMinnetonka" under "Top Picks." rough MyMinnetonka, you can learn about new projects in the city; provide online feedback on projects during their approval process, and receive email updates on projects. Planning commission meeting agendas are posted the Monday prior to the meeting. Visit www.eminnetonka.com for information.

Summer employment available

If you're looking for summer employment opportunities visit www.eminnetonka.com. Departments hiring for the summer include recreation, public works and natural resources. Jobs range from part-time to full-time and many positions involve working evenings, weekends and/or holidays. Descriptions of positions available can be found on the website.

To apply, a completed city application form must be submitted. To apply visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Employment under "Most Requested" in the right-hand navigation bar.

