

minnetonka memo

*A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
January 2010*

Don't miss out on these great winter events!

WINTER IS LESS THAN HALF OVER, AND THERE'S STILL PLENTY of fun to be had! Don't miss these great January and February events.

2010 Citizen Academy

Registration due January 15

Learn more about your city at the 2010 Minnetonka Citizen Academy, a free program that takes place over six Tuesday sessions, 7–9 p.m., February 9, 16, 23, and March 2, 9 and 16 at Minnetonka City Hall. Throughout the sessions, you'll hear from the various city departments including police, fire, administration, community development, engineering, public works, recreation, legal and finance. Also enjoy a short presentation on Minnetonka history by Betty Johnson, official city historian and long-time Minnetonka resident!

Graduates of the program — those who attend four or more sessions — receive special city council recognition. To enroll, email Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8207. Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address. Registration deadline is January 15, 2010. While registration is open to both residents and non-residents, Minnetonka residents will be given priority should demand exceed the spaces available.

Caring Youth Awards

Nominations due

February 5, 2010

If you know a young person in grades 7 through 12 who shows an ongoing awareness of others through volunteering or other activities, consider nominating him or her for a 2010 Caring Youth Award.

Each year the cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins and Golden Valley, the Hopkins and Minnetonka school districts and the Glen Lake Optimists host a Caring Youth Recognition event to honor the contributions of caring young people. This year's event is set for Thursday, March 11, 2010, at 7 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka.

To qualify for the award, a Caring Youth must meet at least one of the following criteria: live in Minnetonka, Hopkins or Golden Valley; attend school in Hopkins or Minnetonka; and/or volunteer (unpaid and not as a requirement for a class or co-curricular program) in Minnetonka, Hopkins, or Golden Valley.

Young people may only be nominated by the organization they are serving. Nominations are due by Friday, Feb. 5, 2010. For more information, visit www.eminnetonka.com or call Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at (952) 939-8207.



State of the City

February 10, 2010

You're invited to the 2010 State of the City Address by Mayor Terry Schneider Wednesday, Feb. 10, from 7:30–9 a.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Please RSVP by Wednesday, January 27, to Karen Telega at ktelega@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8211.

Kids' Fest

February 14, 2010

Mark your calendars now for the annual Kids' Fest, set for Sunday, February 14, from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, Ice Arena and Williston Fitness Center. Enjoy dog sled rides, bingo with prizes, magic shows, face painting, ice sculpture demonstrations, s'mores by the fire, crafts, entertainment, open swimming, open batting cages, open skating, and more. For a complete schedule of activities, see the February *Minnetonka Memo*.



Home Remodeling Fair

Sunday, February 28, 2010

A free Home Remodeling Fair featuring more than 75 contractor exhibits, seminars, and an "Ask the Pro" booth is set for Sunday, February 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Eisenhower Community Center, 1001 Highway 7, Hopkins. More information will be in the February 2010 *Minnetonka Memo*, or visit www.homeremodelingfair.com.



Flashpoints

From the Minnetonka Fire Department



IN FIREFIGHTING LINGO, A FLASHPOINT is the temperature at which combustible materials may burst into flame. The flashpoints in this quarterly feature, however, are not so volatile — rather, they are the initiatives and events that serve as the catalyst for the excellent service provided every day by the Minnetonka Fire Department to city residents and businesses. For more information about any of these items, call the fire department at (952) 939-8598.

Adopt a hydrant

The Minnetonka Fire and Public Works departments ask residents to adopt a nearby hydrant and keep it clear of snow throughout the winter. Whenever possible, hydrants should be cleared four feet on each side to give the fire department the fastest and best access. The property you save may be your own!

Fire alarm fee reminder

The Minnetonka Fire Department is primarily a paid-on-call fire department; therefore, there are significant non-fixed payroll costs associated with response to fire alarm calls. On March 1, 2004, the Minnetonka City Council implemented a \$250 charge for each fire department response to an automatic fire alarm except fire sprinkler water flow alarms. There is also no charge for residents reporting a fire alarm sounding when it is reported through the 9-1-1 system.

School programs

Using paid-on-call firefighters, 69 fire safety presentations were given to nearly 1,700 elementary school students in Minnetonka. Several parents contacted the fire department to report that on the same day the presentation was given, their students returned home and insisted on visiting the store that evening to purchase smoke detectors for the home.

Calls for service

Through mid-November of this year, the fire department responded to more than 2,000 calls for service. Those calls included 17 building fires, nearly 1,400 medical calls, 95 rescue calls, 41 natural gas leaks, 91 lift assists, 33 mutual aid requests, 89 “good intent” calls (for ex: smoke scares), and 144 fire alarm calls, among others. ☺

ReadyMinnetonka: Winter what-ifs

ASK PEOPLE ABOUT EMERGENCY preparedness, and they think catastrophe: fire, flood, tornado or pandemic. However, preparing for an emergency can be as simple as thinking about the smaller what-ifs, like:

- What if school is let out early due to a winter storm, which also prevents you from reaching home. Do your children know what to do and where to go?
- What if a large-scale power outage renders cell phones useless? Do you have another means of communicating with those closest to you?

The Minnetonka Fire Department’s emergency preparedness program, ReadyMinnetonka, is designed to help you plan for those what-ifs. For more information about the ReadyMinnetonka program, or to be added to the email alert list, email ready@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8334.

Conquer the winter what-ifs by following these tips:

- Keep informed about the latest weather forecasts, including storm watches and warnings.
- Be sure your vehicle is properly winterized, with appropriate tires, fully charged battery, full windshield wiper fluid reservoir, etc. At the very least, have a snow and ice scraper in your car!
- If you are outside during storms or extreme cold, dress in layered clothing and avoid overexertion.



- Be cautious when shoveling snow — it’s very hard work and may induce a heart attack.
- Stay off thin ice. It takes at least four inches of clear ice to support an adult. There is no such thing as 100% safe ice.
- If you are snowmobiling, avoid alcohol. Most snowmobile deaths are alcohol-related. Take a snowmobile course offered by the Minnesota DNR or check with your snowmobile dealer.
- Heating fires are a major cause of residential fires in Minnesota. Turn off portable heating devices when you are away from home or when you go to bed at night. Have a working, UL-listed smoke alarm on every level of your home and in every bedroom.
- Have your fireplace and chimney professionally inspected and cleaned before winter.
- Carbon monoxide is most likely to accumulate inside homes during winter. Check your heating systems and ensure your home has proper ventilation. Install a UL-listed carbon monoxide detector with alarm within 10 feet of every sleeping room. In multi-family dwellings, they may be placed between 15 and 25 feet from fuel-fired equipment. Detectors with digital readouts are highly recommended.

Look for more ReadyMinnetonka “what-if” tips in future editions of the *Minnetonka Memo*. ☺

Ski Glen Lake Golf Course this season

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA IS partnering once again with Three Rivers Park District and Hennepin County to provide a cross country ski trail for the 2009–10 season at Glen Lake Golf Course. Using the golf course's natural landscape, the 2.5-kilometer cross country trail provides skiers of all levels and abilities with a dedicated trail groomed exclusively for both ski skating and traditional skiing.

Snow will not be made at this location, so the planned dates for the course — December



Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Park District.

15 through March 15 — are weather dependent. Ski trails are not lit. The golf center will be open for ski rental, concession sales and restrooms. Ski trails and golf center will be open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A season or daily pass will be required for use of the Glen Lake trail. Season ski passes may be purchased for \$30 for the first family member and \$15 for each additional family member. Passes may be purchased on site or in advance by calling Minnetonka Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203. Daily ski passes may be purchased on site for \$4. In addition, Three Rivers Park District season passes will be honored at the Glen Lake location. Visit www.threeriversparkdistrict.org for more information.

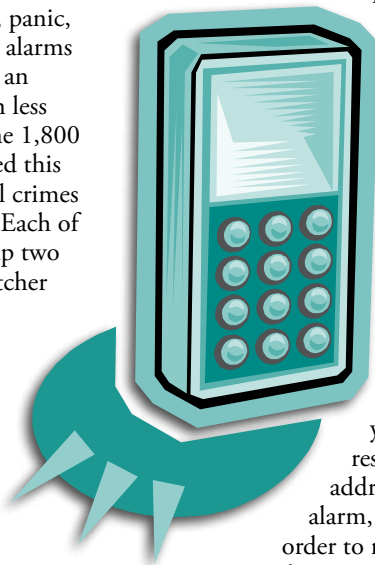
For more information, or to purchase a ski pass, call Minnetonka Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203 or the Glen Lake Golf Course at (763) 694-7824. ☺

Remember to renew your alarm registration

THE RATE OF FALSE ALARM calls for medical, panic, robbery and intrusion alarms within Minnetonka is an ongoing concern, with less than one percent of the 1,800 calls for service received this year resulting in actual crimes or medical situations. Each of these alarm calls ties up two officers and one dispatcher for about 20 minutes.

Leading causes of false alarms include poor installation or defective alarm equipment; improper use of the alarm; and/or lack of proper maintenance. It's important for alarm owners to check the system regularly and ensure family members and/or employees are trained to use the alarm properly.

In addition, the city of Minnetonka requires all businesses and homeowners to register their intrusion alarm system, at an annual cost of \$10. Upon completion of an application and payment of the registration fee, the user receives a sticker to be placed



prominently in a window so the responding officers will know the alarm has been registered. Sticker colors change annually.

If the police department responds to an unregistered alarm system, a notice will be left. Police have the authority at that time not to respond to future alarms until the system is registered. In addition, alarm response may be suspended if the alarm user has incurred three or more false alarms within the calendar year. The police department will respond to two false alarms per address per year. Upon the third false alarm, a \$50 fine will be imposed. In order to reinstate an alarm system, the alarm user must demonstrate they have taken corrective action on the system problems and paid all outstanding fees.

Please note: response to medical, panic, hold-up or fire alarms will never be suspended.

Call (952) 939-8500 to request an application and brochure explaining the provisions of the ordinance regarding intrusion alarms, or download the information at www.eminnetonka.com. ☺

INNOVATION

City participates in electronic poll book pilot project

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA HAS had a longstanding reputation for instituting innovative ideas in order to provide excellent customer service to residents while also using taxpayer dollars wisely. Most recently, Minnetonka has been looking at ways to streamline election processes.

In 1985, Minnetonka was the first city in the state to use optical scan voting equipment, now used in every Minnesota polling place. This technology replaced the punch card voting system, which gained notoriety for its limitations in the 2000 presidential election.

During the 2009 General Election, the city found itself once again on the forefront of polling technology as two of Minnetonka's Ward 1 election precincts participated in a pilot program pioneering the use of electronic poll books. Electronic poll books — essentially a laptop computer with scanner and printer attached — could one day replace the paper poll books that have been in use throughout the state since elections began. This technology has the potential to assist election judges in the administration of the polling place by helping them find the correct voter information more efficiently and thus also reducing time voters have to stand in line.

In addition, the ability of electronic poll books to capture data electronically has the potential to reduce the data entry errors that sometimes occur as the county processes all of the information from Election Day into the state's voter registration system.

This electronic transfer of information has the potential to greatly reduce county staff costs, and as a result of the positive feedback received from both judges and voters in Minnetonka's pilot program, Hennepin County is seriously considering the purchase of electronic poll book equipment for use in future elections. ☺

Neighborhood association completes shoreland project

IN 2008, THE WING LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD Association received a \$3,000 grant from the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, as well as more than \$2,000 in-kind assistance from city of Minnetonka natural resources staff and crew, to restore natural habitat along two segments of Wing Lake's east shoreline. The two locations are at the northwest corner of the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and Highland Road, and 175 feet of lakeshore on the northeast edge of the lake, along Highland Road.

In May 2009, 23 homeowners and youth volunteered 92 hours to plant native trees, shrubs and wildflowers as a shoreline buffer to help improve water quality. Prior to this event, site preparation by the city included marking native plants, removing invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle, treating stumps and poison ivy with herbicide, designing the buffer and placing the plant order. On planting day, volunteers also stabilized steep slopes by placing logs and mulch on hillsides, which along with the new plants' roots will slow and filter rain, preventing erosion and runoff into the lake at these two locations.

After planting day, association volunteers continued watering plants throughout the dry summer months, designed and installed lake restoration project signs, created a neighborhood Web site with shoreline buffer education materials, and developed an e-newsletter with project photos and results for all association members.

Congratulations to the Wing Lake Neighborhood Association for their joint completion of a valuable project! ♪



Wing Lake neighbors work on planting native trees and shrubs for a shoreline buffer.

Williston Fitness Center public hearing is Jan. 25

THE MINNETONKA CITY COUNCIL WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING MONDAY, January 25, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. in the council chambers to consider use of the Community Investment Fund (CIF) for renovation and expansion of the Williston Fitness Center.

Use of the CIF is being proposed to make \$3.525 million in improvements to the Williston Fitness Center, including renovations to the entrance area, locker rooms, swimming pool, and fitness areas; as well as expansion of the facility to incorporate activities for children. Renovations are scheduled to begin in May 2010 and be completed early in 2011.

Residents are welcome to attend and provide input. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you may forward your comments to Recreation Director Dave Johnson at djohnson@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8360. Per city ordinance, this public hearing will be continued through the March 8, 2010, city council meeting. ♪

It's winter. Do you know where your wildlife is?

WHILE WINTER CAN BE ONE OF THE easiest times to spot wildlife in Minnetonka, there are also fewer species to see. We all know many birds fly south to warmer climates, but painted turtles clearly don't walk to Florida. So where do they go?

Birds

While migration is a common winter survival strategy for some birds, other species such as cardinals and chickadees will "tough it out" living off of the seeds and nuts that are often less palatable to some of the migratory species that favor insects. Wintering birds often fluff out their feathers or huddle together to help stay warm.

Mammals

Hibernation is a common wintering strategy for mammals. In fall or winter, hibernators enter a state in which their heart and breathing rates drop significantly as they live off of stored body fat. Most hibernators, such as bats, ground squirrels and woodchucks, are rarely active in winter; but chipmunks may awaken on occasion. Mammals that remain active in winter, such as deer, coyotes and foxes, may adjust their diets to survive. Red squirrels will often store evergreen cones for the winter. Many mammals develop a thick coat of winter fur to stay warm and some species, such as weasels, grow a coat of white fur for camouflage. Voles stay hidden and warm by tunneling under the insulation of the snow.

Reptiles and amphibians

Unlike mammals and birds, reptiles and amphibians cannot generate their own heat and are left with few options. Most will hibernate or remain generally inactive to

survive. Aquatic turtles and frogs burrow into the muddy bottoms of wetlands, lakes, and creeks for the winter (absorbing oxygen through their skin from the surrounding soil), while woodland species may dig themselves under a rock, log or leaf litter. Snakes may group together in protected openings such as burrows or rock crevices.

To attract more wildlife to your yard this winter, add feeders and water sources, but chose your feed and feeder wisely to avoid attracting nuisance species, and remember to keep them clean to keep the wildlife healthy. This spring, consider planting and protecting vegetation that produces persistent seeds, nuts and fruits. Also, remember to leave some naturally occurring leaves, branches, and logs in the woods, but avoid dumping new ones. Helping to protect animals' natural habitats and understanding their behaviors can help increase your enjoyment of Minnetonka wildlife for many winters to come.

Winter animal facts

- Some species migrate to Minnesota in the winter, including the dark-eyed junco from Canada, and the snowy owl, which often migrates to northern Minnesota after breeding in the Arctic tundra.
- The ruby-throated hummingbird beats its wings an estimated 4.5 million times just to make the 600-mile journey across the Gulf of Mexico.
- Wood frogs let their heart and breathing stop in the winter, because they have a special antifreeze in their bodies that prevents their cells from dying while they wait under the leaves for spring to arrive. ♪

Weight loss program offered at Williston

START THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT BY joining the Williston Fitness Center's ten-week weight loss program, which includes:

- Four nutrition and/or healthy living seminars
- 90 minutes of personal training
- Two group training sessions
- Weekly weigh-ins
- For non-Williston center members, a ten-week Williston membership (Jan. 24–April 3)

Sessions are coordinated by a health professional, but the program requires participants to work on food choices and to exercise outside of meetings. Program kick-off meeting is Sunday, Jan. 24, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Nutritional seminars and group trainings take place Tuesdays at 6:30

p.m. Weekly wellness consultant meetings are scheduled individually and take place Mondays between 6 and 8 a.m. and 5 and 7 p.m. Personal training appointments are scheduled individually with trainers.

Cost is \$189 for Williston Center members, \$269 for non-member Minnetonka and Hopkins residents; and \$289 for non-member, non-residents. Space is limited, so sign up today! Call (952) 93-8203 to register. For more information call Karyn MacNeill at (952) 939-8372. The Williston Center is located at 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka.

Free group fitness classes

Stop by the city of Minnetonka's Williston Fitness Center, 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka, and check out a free group fitness class January 11 through 15, 2010, at 6:05 a.m. For more information call (952) 939-8370. ☺

Prepare for EAB with spring tree sale

BY NOW, MOST HOMEOWNERS HAVE heard about the non-native invasive insect called emerald ash borer (EAB) that was found in St. Paul in 2009. EAB kills ash trees and has not been successfully eradicated in areas where it has been found.

While emerald ash borer has not yet been found in Minnetonka, the city is planning for its inevitable arrival. One of the best ways to prepare for EAB is to plant a diversity of species, so while annual chemical treatments are available to help prevent EAB from killing select trees, most homeowners should also begin planting new trees. This is especially true if your yard is over-planted with ash trees.

The city and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture do not recommend that homeowners cut down healthy ash trees, but it is important to get new trees established now to minimize tree losses over time. Trees serve many essential functions for a community such as absorbing storm water runoff, preventing erosion, providing energy savings, cleaning the air, providing habitat and food for birds and wildlife and beautifying our community.

The city's annual tree sale program allows residents to pre-order and pre-pay for up to two trees per property owner, with a tree pick-up day in early spring. Between ten and 12 different species will be offered, ranging from three to seven feet tall at the time of purchase.

Look in the February *Minnetonka Memo* for an order form and list of available tree species. Some species sell out quickly, so plan to send your order as early as possible!

For questions, contact City Forester Emily (Barbeau) Ball at ebarbeau@eminnetonka.com or (952) 988-8400. ☺



Trees awaited pickup at the 2009 tree sale.



Do you have bullies at your bird feeders?

DURING THE WINTER, MANY BACKYARD bird watchers step up the offerings at their feeders in order to attract native birds. However, invasive bird species can out-compete native birds in their home territory by bullying them at the birdfeeder and at nesting sites.

Two of the biggest year-round bird bullies are European starlings and house sparrows, which were introduced to New York in the 1800s and have since multiplied into the millions, spreading across all of the United States and the southern half of Canada. They rob grain storage areas and eat most of the food at bird feeders.

During the nesting season, these bully birds aggressively out-compete native birds, such as bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, tree swallows and wrens, for occupancy of cavity nesting sites in trees and in bird houses. While changing the hole-size and shape on bird houses can discourage these species from nesting in your man-made bird houses, the natural cavities are up for grabs.

Here's how to discourage these invasive European birds during the winter:

- 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, finches, 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" that have baffles 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 tips, visit:

www.yourgardenretreatblog.com. ☺

Share your musical talent!

THE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF Minnetonka (MAM) invites interested musicians to join one of its choral or instrumental ensembles in January. Visit www.musicassociation.org to learn more or call (952) 401-5954. ☺

Testing for radon

RADON IS THE SECOND-LEADING CAUSE of lung cancer, and according to the Environmental Protection Agency, it affects approximately 20,000 people a year. Produced by the decay of uranium in the soil, radon is a naturally occurring, colorless and odorless gas produced by the decay of uranium in the soil. Radon then enters homes through cracks in concrete floors or in walls, construction joints, gaps in suspended floors or around service pipes, cavities inside walls, and the water supply.

Hennepin County is located in Zone 1, which has the highest potential in Minnesota for elevated levels of radon. While radon levels may vary from home to home, as part of January National Radon Awareness Month, the Minnetonka Environmental Health division encourages Minnetonka homeowners to test their homes for radon, since that is the only way to find out if a home has dangerous levels of radon.

New building code regulations that became effective in 2009 due to the potential elevated levels of radon require all new homes to be built with a passive radon mitigation system. However, all homeowners should test their existing homes to determine what level of radon is present in their home. If the level exceeds 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter), the homeowner can take measures to decrease levels to acceptable amounts by sealing cracks and/or penetrations in the concrete or by installing a sub-slab depressurization system.

Radon test kits are available for \$9 through Hennepin County. To purchase a kit, call the Radon Hotline at (612) 543-5225. Test kits may also be purchased at local hardware stores or online.

For further information or if you have questions regarding radon, please call John Weinand, environmental health supervisor, at (952) 939-8272. ☺

Upcoming events for Minnetonka seniors

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE FUN AND friendship at Minnetonka Senior Services! Located at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, Senior Services offers a wide variety of classes, programs, and activities for active older adults. For more information, or to sign up for the free monthly newsletter, the *Minnetonka Script*, visit www.eminnetonka.com.

Indoor Golf League

Jan. 11, 8:30 a.m.

Enjoy golf at the Bunker Indoor Golf Center Monday mornings during the winter. Bring your golf clubs and ball for a free demo January 11. Call (952) 939-8369 to register for demo.

Wild Bill's Chili Cook-Off

Jan. 13, 12 p.m.

Join the senior center for its second chili cook-off, with five cooks present their recipes for the title of best chili. Enjoy tastings of the five chilis, cornbread and dessert. Cost is \$6 due by Jan. 8.

Minnesota Buffet

Jan. 19, 12 p.m.

Embrace winter by eating Minnesota hot dishes and casseroles. Cost is \$7 due by Jan. 13.

Defensive Driving Classes

Refreshments provided. Cost: \$20. Call the Minnesota Safety Center at 1-888-234-1294 to register.

Four-Hour Courses:

- *Jan. 21, 6-10 p.m.*
- *Jan. 28, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.*



Enjoy a winter hike and hot dog roast February 10 at Jidana Park!

Winter Creek Hike

Feb. 10, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Celebrate winter with a two-mile walk along Minnehaha Creek. Stop to roast hot dogs by a campfire at Jidana Park. Cost is \$4 due by Feb. 8.

Community Dance

Feb. 12, 6:15 - 10 p.m.

Enjoy this annual community ballroom dance with entertainment by Paul Heffron. Cost is \$13 per person and pre-registration is required. Register by calling (952) 401-6800 or visit www.minnetonkacommunityed.org

JFK Assassination: Mystery and Legend

Feb. 16, 10:30 a.m.

Presentation by David Jones. Refreshments provided. Cost is \$2 due by Feb. 12.

Chronic Conditions Workshop

Caregivers or individuals with chronic conditions are invited to meet weekly for six weeks to learn how to live well with chronic conditions. Call (952) 939-8393 for details. ☺

Williston Center raises \$700 for food shelf

FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON, WILLISTON Fitness Center staff started a Cash for Charity event, creating piggy banks from empty tennis ball containers, then putting them out at the center for employees, members and guests to donate their spare change.

By mid-December, more than \$700 was raised, all of which was donated to the ICA food shelf in Minnetonka. Through ICA's purchasing power, that \$700 will purchase nearly \$7,000 worth of food for the community members who use food shelf services. Williston Center staff hope to make this an annual event. ☺



Williston Center staff created piggy banks for this year's Cash for Charity event.

Building neighborhoods block by block

SIXTY PERCENT — THAT'S THE percentage of Minnetonka residents who feel a close connection to their neighborhoods. *

The Minnetonka Community Commission wants to help residents organize to strengthen existing neighborhoods or to build connections where neighborhoods aren't already in place or easily identified.

Organizing is mostly about developing relationships with others in your neighborhood. When deciding the level of organization your neighborhood would like to achieve, ask yourself and others the following questions:

- Do you know how to get in touch with neighbors in case of an emergency?
- Would you like to address some problems in your neighborhood that need to be corrected?
- If your children needed to reach someone nearby for help when you're not home, would they know who to call?
- In case of a neighborhood emergency, would neighbors know how to get in touch with you?
- Could your neighborhood be friendlier?
- Would you enjoy more planned activities in your neighborhood?

Getting organized could be as simple as starting an email distribution list to share information among neighbors, then arranging activities in which neighbors can take part. Here are some activity ideas:

- The city of Minnetonka has a very active Neighborhood Watch organization, with more than 100 Neighborhood Watch captains across the city. Do you have a Neighborhood Watch captain in your neighborhood? If you aren't sure, contact Nicole Nelson, Minnetonka Police Department crime prevention analyst, at (952) 939-8500 or nnelson@eminnetonka.com.
- Learn how you and your family can be better prepared for emergencies and "what-ifs" of all kinds through the city's ReadyMinnetonka program. For more information or to arrange a visit to your neighborhood group by the Minnetonka Fire Department, call (952) 939-8334.



- Do you have a natural resource challenge in your neighborhood that you'd like to tackle, like removing garlic mustard or buckthorn? Contact the city's natural resources division at (952) 988-8400 to find out more about organizing to improve the appearance of your neighborhood. Or, find out where in the city's parks your neighborhood group can volunteer to help out with a natural resources project!
- Adopt a park, trail, park sign or garden plot in 2010 and care for it throughout the year! For parks and trails, call (952) 988-8400; for park signs and garden plots contact Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203.
- Gather a group of your neighbors and attend one of the city's special events, most of which are free! Visit www.eminnetonka.com for information on all of the city's events.
- Organize a Night for Neighbors event in August, along with the rest of the city and the nation. Night for Neighbors takes place annually the first Tuesday evening of August, and is an opportunity for neighbors to get outside and get to know one another in an effort to fight crime. Visit www.eminnetonka.com to learn more and to register your party for a visit by a police, fire or city representative.
- Keep informed about city projects and discussions affecting your neighborhood by signing up for MyMinnetonka. You choose the projects and information you want to receive, and MyMinnetonka will send you automatic updates each time new information is posted on the city Web site.
- Or keep up to date on city news via Twitter — follow the city [@MinnetonkaMN!](https://twitter.com/MinnetonkaMN)

Watch future editions of the *Minnetonka Memo*, and the city Web site for more information about building your neighborhood! Questions? Contact Jacque Larson, city of Minnetonka community relations manager, at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8207. ☺

* According to data collected in the 2009 residential survey.

2010 U.S. Census starts in March

IN MARCH, UNITED STATES CENSUS FORMS will be delivered to every residence in the United States and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States, and is required by the Constitution to take place every ten years. The 2010 Census is important because it will help determine the number of seats each state, including Minnesota, has in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as informing planning and funding decisions for federal tax dollars.

This year's census will be one of the shortest and simplest ever, requiring less personal information

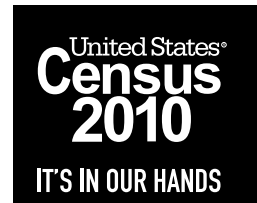
than a typical credit card application. For example, the 2010 Census does not ask about bank account information, salary or income, citizenship or immigration status, and the census will never ask you for your Social Security number.

Instead, the 2010 Census has ten basic questions including name, sex, age and date of birth, Hispanic origin, race, household relationship, and if you own or rent your home. If you are concerned about sharing your personal information, remember, census information is protected by law, and the census cannot share your personal information with anyone — including other federal agencies and law enforcement.

When you receive your census form, answer the ten short questions, then mail the form back in the postage-paid envelope provided. Households that do not return a form may receive a visit from a census taker, who will ask the questions from the form. Most people return their census forms via mail, which is the preferred method, and also helps save tax dollars.

If you're wondering why you can't fill out your census form online, the U.S. Census researched an Internet option for 2010 and found that it didn't provide enough protection for individual responses, didn't increase the percentage of people who responded, and didn't save money — so it is not an option in 2010. However, the U.S. Census is designing an Internet response option for the 2020 Census.

For more information about the U.S. Census, visit www.census.gov. ☺



minnetonka memo

January 2010



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CITY OF MINNETONKA

A publication of the city of Minnetonka
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, MN 55345 • (952) 939-8200
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

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Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

January
2010

Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Call (952) 939-8200 for meeting locations.
					1	2	1 New Year's Day, <i>city offices closed</i>
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	6 Park Board, 7 p.m.
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	7 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	11 Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m.
31							12 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Joint meeting of the Minnetonka and Hopkins city councils, 6:30 p.m., Hopkins City Hall (<i>Topic: Light rail transit stations</i>)
							18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, <i>city offices closed</i>
							21 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							25 City Council, 6:30 p.m.; Community Commission, 6:30 p.m.

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 Web site 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 Web site. If you'd like to stay informed, visit "MyMinnetonka" at www.eminnetonka.com—click on "MyMinnetonka" under "Top Picks." Through 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. ☺

Remember winter water quality

WHEN YOU ARE OUT ON YOUR FAVORITE LAKE OR POND THIS WINTER, REMEMBER THAT your actions can affect our water quality. Anything you leave on the ice when you are walking Fido, ice skating, or ice fishing will be there next spring. Please pick up after Fido to prevent bacteria and pollution from contaminating the water and remember that candy wrappers, pop bottles and cigarette butts all float and will be waiting for us in the spring! ☺



Protect
Our
Water
Quality!