

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
March 2009

Sixth annual Eco-Fair set for March 14

ARICH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT — including trees, wetlands and open space — is a hallmark of the city of Minnetonka, setting it apart from many of its suburban neighbors. The city and its residents are committed to protecting this rich heritage. However, knowing how to manage these resources is not always easy.

If you want to learn more about nurturing and protecting the natural landscape that you own or live near, plan to attend Minnetonka's Eco-Fair Saturday, March 14, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka.

Best of all, the Eco-Fair is a free event! Exhibits open at 8:30 a.m. and range from native plant suppliers and consultants to local agencies and volunteer groups. Master gardeners and tree care advisors will be available to help answer questions you may have about planting and maintaining your yard. Refreshments will be available in the exhibit area.

Workshops start at 9 and 10:30 a.m. and at 12 p.m. Seminar topics and times are listed below. Please note that due to the popularity of the topic, the seminar "Managing Woodlands: Buckthorn and Beyond" will be offered on a separate day this year (see the Academy of Walks and Talks listing at right for the scheduled date and time).

Native Shrubs for Shady Places (9 a.m. and 12 p.m.)

Wondering what to plant in place of the buckthorn and honeysuckle you've removed from your landscape? Janet Van Sloun Larson, city of Minnetonka natural resource specialist, will explain which shrubs should be growing in the spaces that were previously occupied by invasive species and how you can use them in your landscape. See slides of native cherries, dogwoods, juneberries, viburnums, and others. Flowering, fruits, fall color, wildlife value, winter interest, and location will be discussed for many of the diminishing understory native shrubs. Plant list provided.

Native Plants for Sunny Places (10:30 a.m. and 12 p.m.)

Would you like to convert a sunny corner of your lawn to native plantings? Jake Janski of Minnesota Native Landscapes will introduce you to some sun-loving plants that grow together naturally. Learn where they can be used best in your landscape such as a butterfly garden, rain garden, or shoreland buffer. Herbaceous plants and a few woody plants will be covered.

Reusing Your Runoff (9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.)

Learn how to turn runoff problems into solutions. Shawn Tracy, landscape restoration specialist for the Association of Metropolitan Soil and Water Conservation Districts, will discuss how you can use and absorb the water from your house and yard with rain gardens, rain barrels, green roofs, pervious pavers, and other techniques. He also will discuss some of the issues regarding stormwater runoff and ways you can help keep your neighborhood waters clean while beautifying your yard with water-smart landscaping.

Eco-Fair continued on page 2



An Eco-Fair visitor learns about wetlands.

Minnetonka's Eco-Series: Academy of Walks and Talks

BECAUSE NOT EVERYONE IS ABLE TO ATTEND ECO-FAIR, CITY STAFF OFFERS ECO-TOPICS throughout the year. Watch the *Minnetonka Memo* for dates and times. The upcoming March events are listed below. All events are at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka.

Lake Function and Ecology

Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Do you live on a larger lake like Shady Oak or Glen Lake? Do you want to learn about lake function and how lakes are affected by human behavior? Join Gregg Thompson and Shawn Tracy of the Association of Metropolitan Soil and Water Conservation Districts as they discuss the special characteristics of lakes and what we can do to protect them. RSVP at (952) 988-8400.

Managing Woodlands: Buckthorn and Beyond

Thursday, March 26, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Do you still have buckthorn but missed our previous workshops? Did you know that late March and early April can be a pleasant time to work on controlling this invasive woody plant? Did you know that stump treatment still works at this time of year? Come learn about the dos and don'ts of woodland management from Janet Van Sloun Larson, city of Minnetonka natural resource specialist. RSVP at (952) 988-8400. ☺

Eco-Fair *continued from page 1*

Invasive and Nasty Upland Plants (9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.)

Back by popular demand! Still wondering about “wild rhubarb,” but missed this talk last year? Learn about this plant that’s no fun to dig out. Are you wondering what to remove and what to keep in that area that was left to “go natural?” Tamara Martin of Top Notch Tree Care and Bartlet Tree Experts will teach you how to identify some of the most common non-woody invasive species and nasty plants in the Minnetonka area, like garlic mustard, leafy spurge, thistles, and burdock. She also will discuss the life cycles of these weed plants, the best time to tackle removal, and smart control measures.

Greening Your Home and Yard (10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.)

With the “greening” of just about everything, how do you know what choices to make? Where are the best places to find credible information? This panel presentation, moderated by Dean Elstad, city of Minnetonka recycling coordinator, will focus on things you can do and choices you can make in and around your home

and yard to “green up your property” (and maybe even your wallet). Resource list provided.

Growing the Green Way (9 a.m. and 12 p.m.)

Looking for some surefire ways to keep your yard and garden looking good, functioning well and truly “green”—free of harmful chemicals? Or are you skeptical about organic gardening because it just seems too complicated? Either way, you’ll want to join Bob Dahm, also known as Organic Bob, to learn how you can have an organic garden in your yard. You’ll also get tips on low-impact lawn care and “green” ways to handle those pesky slugs, box elder bugs, moles, mice and shrews.

Join city staff and other knowledgeable consultants to learn more about our environment. Remember, it’s free and no reservations are necessary. Come and get ready for spring!

For more information, contact Aaron Schwartz, natural resource specialist, at (952) 988-8422 or by email at aschwartz@eminnetonka.com.

Keep it green!

PLEASE HELP KEEP THE ECO-FAIR a green event by bringing your own water bottle, coffee mug or thermos, pen or pencil, notepad, bag, and other reusable items for your personal use during the event. Some disposable and reusable items will be available; however, any reusable items that you can bring for yourself will help reduce waste.

Brush drop-off open Saturdays in March

MINNETONKA’S CITY FORESTER recommends that oaks be pruned November through March, as pruning outside this time leaves oak trees extremely susceptible to oak wilt disease. This is also a great time to prune other trees, since insects and diseases are not active.

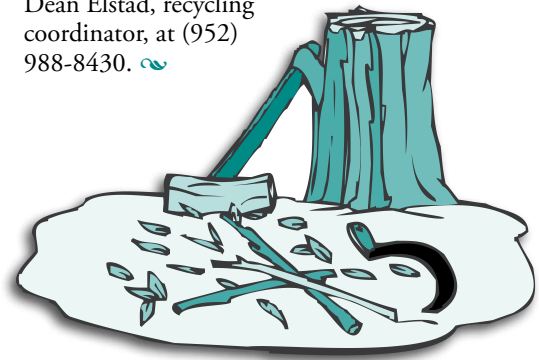
To assist residents who conduct proper winter pruning, the brush drop-off site at Minnetonka Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Boulevard, will be open all Saturdays in March — March 7, 14, 21 and 28 — from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The brush drop-off will not be open weekdays in March. The regular brush drop-off program starts April 13.

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

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.

For more information call Dean Elstad, recycling coordinator, at (952) 988-8430.



	Council Chambers	Purgatory Creek Room	Shady Oak Room	Boards and Commissions
8:30 a.m.	-----> <i>Start!</i>			
9 – 10 a.m.	Native Shrubs for Shady Places <i>Janet Van Sloun Larson</i>	Invasive and Nasty Upland Plants <i>Tamara Martin</i>	Growing the Green Way <i>Bob Dahm</i>	Reusing Your Runoff <i>Shawn Tracy</i>
10 – 10:30 a.m.	Break			
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Native Plants for Sunny Places <i>Jake Janski</i>	Invasive and Nasty Upland Plants <i>Tamara Martin</i>	Greening Your Home and Yard <i>Panel moderated by Dean Elstad</i>	Reusing Your Runoff <i>Shawn Tracy</i>
11:30 – 12 p.m.	Break			
12 – 1 p.m.	Native Plants for Sunny Places <i>Jake Janski</i>	Growing the Green Way <i>Bob Dahm</i>	Greening Your Home and Yard <i>Panel moderated by Dean Elstad</i>	Native Shrubs for Shady Places <i>Janet Van Sloun Larson</i>

Coffee, juice, water and treats will be available in the Eco-Fair Café from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Discover Meadow Park's trails



LOCATED IN NORTH CENTRAL MINNETONKA, MEADOW PARK is a large 110-acre park with the majority of the site dedicated to natural areas. Trails crisscross the park through the nature areas and wetlands. On the west end of the park, off Oakland Road, park amenities include restrooms, seasonal drinking fountain, tot lot and play equipment, tennis and basketball courts, two all-season hockey rinks and off-street parking.

The two miles of trails within Meadow Park are great for short strolls or as connectors to other city parks in all directions, including Linner, Hilloway, Civic Center and Big Willow parks and the Regional LRT trails. Meadow Park has numerous neighborhood connections providing access to the trail system from the neighborhoods.

Park history

Meadow Park was envisioned in the late 1970's, but gathering all of the property needed wasn't so easy. Some parcels originally considered for the park became too valuable and were developed into the apartment complex on the west side of Plymouth Road. However, developers provided easements for the trails that run around the property perimeter and connect the north and south sections of the park.

Meadow's trails

Meadow's two miles of trails are mostly surfaced with crushed limestone. During the winter season, the main trails are plowed after a snowfall of two inches or more.

The East-West Leg

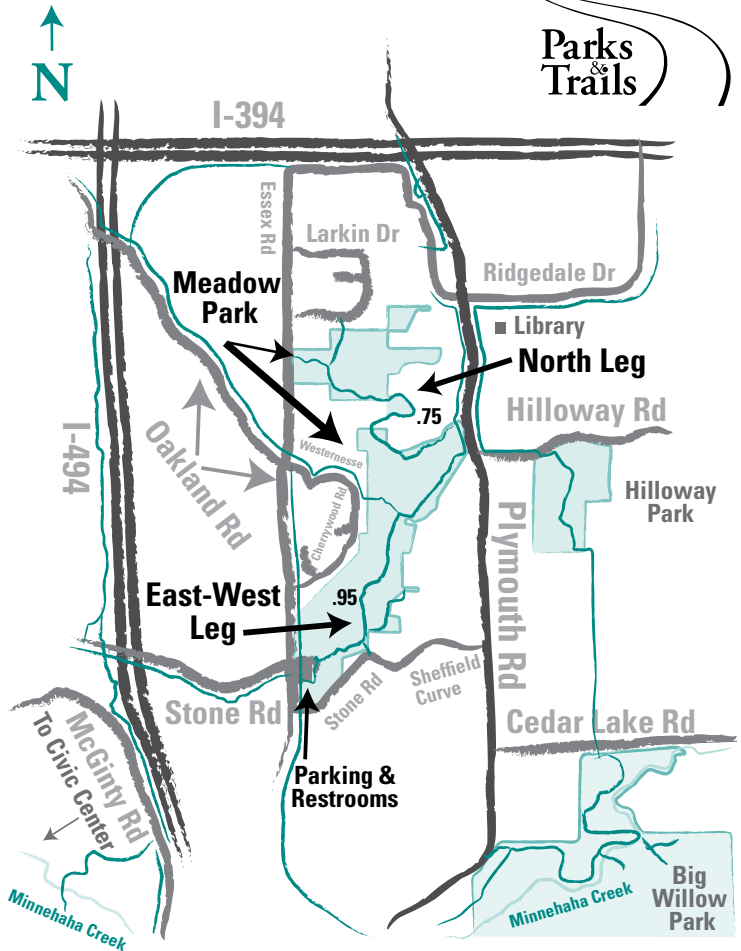
The main trail through the park is 0.95 miles long, connecting Plymouth Road on the east side of the park to Oakland Road on the west side. The trail is level except for a small hill on the east end.

The North Leg

The trail connection from the north end of the park to the south side by Oakland Road is 0.75 miles. As the trail meanders around the wooded areas near Plymouth Road and then heads southwest to Oakland Road, users can enjoy many views of the vast natural areas of the park.



Playing in kid-friendly Meadow Park



Trail Connections

The Meadow Park trail serves as a connection to Hilloway and Big Willow parks to the east, Linner Park to the northwest and the Civic Center and Jidana parks and the Three Rivers LRT Regional Trail to the west.

If you go

- Park is open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- The park is accessible by vehicle from Oakland Road, one-half mile north of Plymouth Road (across from Stone Road), west side of the park.
- A park building with restrooms and a seasonal drinking fountain is located near the parking lot on the west side of the park.
- Dogs must be on a leash (no longer than 6 feet) on the trails, in the play areas and the parking lot.
- Please pick up after your pet. Mutt Mitt dispensers are available along the trail.

Fun fact

If you are standing on the trail in the middle of Meadow Park, you are only a mile away from the Ridgedale shopping complex. 🌿



News for Neighbors

From the Minnetonka Police Department

NEWSPAPERS FOR NEIGHBORS APPEARS quarterly in the *Minnetonka Memo* with news for you about happenings in the Minnetonka Police Department. If you have questions about these items, call Nicole Nelson, crime prevention analyst, at (952) 939-8546.

- Officer Darlene Ford was selected by the Hennepin County Traffic Advisory Committee as the **2008 Traffic Officer of the Year**. The award is based on many factors but focuses on traffic enforcement and community education activities. Officer Ford's efforts have extended beyond traffic stops to many other activities, including conducting numerous child safety seat inspections;

acting as co-presenter of a driving class for Minnetonka seniors; organizing local and multi-jurisdictional traffic enforcement details; and implementing the use of in-car cameras to record red-light violations for easier prosecution. Congratulations Officer Ford!

- On February 3, the police department hosted the second session of the **2009 Citizen Academy**. This year's Citizen Academy class learned about the department's Emergency Response Team (ERT); heard a presentation from Officer Corey Schmidt on DWI enforcement; and were visited by Officer Ryan Piper and his K9. ☺

Safety for apartment and condo dwellers

THE SAFETY ISSUES FOR APARTMENT and condo residents may be slightly different from those living in homes. Follow these tips from the Minnetonka Police Department to help you stay safe.

- Write only your last name or initials on your mailbox.
- Make sure the locks on all doors leading into your apartment have been changed since the last tenant was living there. For safety reasons, keep copies of keys in your hands only.
- Apartment doors should have peephole viewers. If you don't have one, ask your landlord to install one.
- **Don't** talk on your cell phone or look preoccupied when walking toward your building. Criminals look for a weak target and are more likely to pass up someone who appears focused, aware and strong.
- Report indoor or outdoor lighting concerns or overgrown shrubbery to your landlord.
- Inventory the description, serial number and cost of your valuables. Keep a copy of your records online, in a fireproof locked box or in a safe deposit box in a bank.
- Have renters insurance. For most renters an annual fee of about \$100 will insure your belongings in the event of theft or fire.
- Keep a broom handle or other long stick in the track of sliding glass doors to deter breakins.
- Purchase light timers and set them so that your lights turn on when you're away from home in the evening.
- Take in your newspaper and packages daily.
- Get to know your neighbors and the management well — organize a Neighborhood Crime Watch by contacting Nicole Nelson at the Minnetonka Police Department via email at nnelson@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8546.
- When driving into an underground parking unit, stop at the entrance to make sure the door closes before proceeding to park your car. Call 911 or security if someone tries to sneak in.
- **Don't** leave valuables near apartment windows or in your car.
- **Don't** leave notes for roommates or guests on your door saying that you are gone but will be home soon.
- **Don't** prop the lobby door open or allow others to do so.
- **Don't** leave your apartment door unlocked, even for a minute. ☺

Spotlight on the Police Advisory Committee

THIS YEAR, EACH *Minnetonka Memo* will feature information about one of the city's seven boards and commissions, starting with the Police Advisory Committee!

The Police Advisory Committee was created in 2001 to provide public input to the Minnetonka Police Department regarding service needs within the community; to enhance understanding of the capabilities of the police to provide services to the community; to provide comment on the city's Best Practices Liquor program, a voluntary program for liquor license holders in the city; and to identify programming of interest in safety education, crime prevention and youth initiatives.

In 2008, the police advisory committee provided input to the city's parks and trails division on proposed ordinance changes related to dogs in parks; participated in ride alongs with police officers; and heard about the role the Minnetonka Police Department played in providing security at the Republican National Convention.

The committee includes nine to 11 members who reflect the diversity of the community, including representatives of the city council, youth, business, Crime Watch block captains, and the four city wards. Student representatives serve a two-year term, and all other members serve two- or three-year terms. For a complete list of committee members visit www.eminnetonka.com — click on Your Government, then Boards and Commissions, then Police Advisory Committee.

Applications are accepted year-round for openings that may occur on city boards and commissions. For more information, or for an application, contact Karen Telega at ktelega@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8211. ☺

2009 Summer and Year-Round Employment Opportunities

You must be 16 years of age or older to apply. Please review job requirements at www.eminnetonka.com.

Recreation Services Summer and Year-Round Jobs (952) 939-8203

RECREATION SERVICES OFFERS MANY part-time jobs throughout the year, as well as summer-only positions. Many positions require working days, evenings, weekends and holidays.

To apply, a completed city application form must be submitted. For an application form, call Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203, or stop in Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. To apply online or download an application form, visit www.eminnetonka.com (click on Administration, Employment tab, Current Job Openings, Recreation). ☺



Available positions include:

- **Youth Programs**
FT/PT: Playground Leader (*June – Aug*)
PT: T-Ball/Instructional Baseball Instructor (*June – July*)
FT/PT: Water Safety Instructors, Aides (*Summer/Year-Round*)
FT/PT: Kids' Corner Leader (*June – August*)
- **Gray's Bay Marina**
PT: Marina Coordinator (*minimum age of 18*), Attendant (*April – October*)
- **Shady Oak Beach** (*May – August*)
FT/PT: Lifeguards
PT: Concessions
- **Libbs Lake Beach** (*May – August*)
FT/PT: Lifeguards
- **Park Attendants**
PT: Glen Lake, Lone Lake, Gro-Tonka (*May – Sept.*)

Public Works Summer Jobs (952) 988-8400

All Minnetonka Public Works seasonal positions are 40 hours per week. Flexible scheduling is likely and some positions require working weekends. For more information, visit www.eminnetonka.com.

To apply, a completed city application form must be submitted. For an application form, call the JobLine at (952) 939-8212. Visit the city Web site at www.eminnetonka.com to apply online or download an application form, (click on Administration, Employment, Current Job Openings, Public Works/Natural Resources).

- **Maintenance: Street, Water & Sewer Utility**
 \$10.55/hour.
Minimum age of 16.
- **Natural Resources**
Tree Inspector, Maintenance Technician and Administrative Assistant: \$11.65/hour.
Minimum age of 18.

Spring street sweeping starts March 30

IN A SURE SIGN OF SPRING, STREET sweeping by Minnetonka Public Works will begin Monday, March 30, weather permitting — and if the weather does not cooperate, the start date will be moved to Monday, April 6.

For four weeks, 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. The 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, water hydrant flushing will take place starting in late April. Look for information on hydrant flushing in the April *Minnetonka Memo*. ☺



Need emergency home repairs?

DO YOU NEED TO MAKE SMALL REPAIRS to your home but don't have the money? Do you own your own home? The city of Minnetonka is accepting applications for its Emergency Rehabilitation Loan on an ongoing basis. This is a no-interest, no-payment, deferred loan up to \$5,000 for income-eligible homeowners to make eligible home improvements. If you continue to own and live in your home for 10 years after receiving a loan, the loan will be completely forgiven. Applications are available at Minnetonka City Hall and on the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com (click on Community Development, then Housing). Call Elise Durbin or Stephanie Scott-Sims at (952) 939-8200 for more information. ☺

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.

Call (952) 939-8393 to register for events and classes, for more information, or to learn about volunteer opportunities. All class registration and payments should be directed to Minnetonka Senior Services. VISA or MasterCard are now accepted. Payment must be submitted at the time of registration for classes, trips or programs.

Defensive Driving Classes

Call the Minnesota Highway Safety Center at 1-888-234-1294 to register.

Four-Hour Day Courses

Tuesday, March 10, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Refreshments provided but no lunch. \$18 per course.

Four-Hour Evening Course

Tuesday, March 24, 6–10 p.m.

Refreshments provided. \$18 per course.

Special Events

Call (952) 939-8393 to register.

Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully

Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Driving is a key to independence from the moment we receive our first driver's license,

and most of us want to hold on to that key as long as possible. However, the effects of aging may impair your ability to drive safely. The Minnetonka Police Department invites drivers age 55 and over and their family members to attend a special free seminar Saturday, March 7, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. You'll learn how the effects of the natural aging process may affect your driving ability; how to adjust your driving habits during the aging process; and how to evaluate when it may be time to hand over the keys. Register at (952) 939-8393.

Senior Bike Group

Thursday, March 12, 10 a.m.

Interested in a new biking group whose members bike 12 to 15 miles at a time? Join the 2009 planning meeting in the Glen Lake Activity Room. Please RSVP at (952) 939-8393 if you plan to attend and/or would like to join this group.

St. Patrick's Day Party

Tuesday, March 17, 12 p.m.

Entertainment by Larry Malmberg. Cost is \$7, due by March 10.

Breakfast at Applebee's

Saturday, March 28, 8–10 a.m.

Enjoy breakfast at Applebee's, located near the west side entrance of Ridgedale Mall. Menu includes pancakes, syrup, scrambled eggs, sausage, butter, orange juice and coffee. Cost is \$6, due by March 24. Tickets should be purchased from senior services. Musical groups will be on hand to provide entertainment. Proceeds will support ongoing senior activities. ☺

Wanted: History Lovers

MINNETONKA'S HISTORIC Charles H. Burwell House is a treasured city resource, and tours play a critical role in bringing this site to life for visitors.

If you've thought about being a tour guide, consider volunteering at the Burwell House this year. It's a great way to get involved in the community and to share this special site with others.

Tours take place on Saturdays in May and September; on Saturdays and Tuesdays from June through August, and by special appointment. The house is air conditioned, and tour guides do not wear costumes. Training is provided.

If you enjoy people, love history, and would be available at least once a month during tour season, we'd love to talk with you! For more information, contact Laura Ronbeck, administrative projects specialist, at (952) 939-8219 or Ironbeck@eminnetonka.com. ☺



2009 Reflections Award winner and nominee recognized by council

IN JANUARY, THE MINNETONKA CITY Council recognized Jerry Greene, owner of EverGreene Jewelers in Minnetonka, as the 2009 Reflections Award winner.

Greene has been intimately involved in the community for decades, contributing to numerous local organizations including Hopkins Minnetonka Family Resource Center, Minnetonka Public Schools, Bennett Field, Minnetonka Marching Band, Minnetonka Diamond Club, and Minnetonka Early Childhood Family Education. Greene was nominated for the Reflections Award by Judy Elling, executive director of the Hopkins Minnetonka Family Resource Center.

Also nominated for this year's award was Deanne Roberg, owner of Deanne's Dance Studio in Minnetonka. She was nominated by Steven Jahns, who explained in his nomination that Deanne has touched the lives of more than 17,000 students in her 35 years of business, providing a fun and accepting environment and helping students learn to express themselves and gain self confidence.

The city of Minnetonka began its Reflections Award program in 1997 in an effort to recognize individuals, businesses and programs whose outstanding contributions reflect positively on Minnetonka. ☺



Jerry Greene, owner of EverGreene Jewelers, received the 2009 Reflections Award.

Sign up for an April book club

THE MINNETONKA READS COMMUNITY reading initiative, a partnership of the Minnetonka Community Commission and Hennepin County Library, kicked off its third year at Kids' Fest in February.

This year's book is a children's fiction book, "Home of the Brave" by Katherine Applegate. It's the story of Kek, an African refugee who is confronted by many strange things at the Minneapolis home of his aunt and cousin, as well as in his fifth grade classroom, and longs for his missing mother, but finds comfort in the company of a cow and her owner. The book is appropriate for young people in grades five through seven.

In addition to the book clubs listed below, the community commission and library are very excited this year to announce that author Katherine Applegate will make a personal appearance in early May in Minnetonka to talk about "Home of the Brave," and to sign books. More information on this appearance will be available in the upcoming months.

Read "Home of the Brave," then plan to attend one of the following book discussions, hosted by Hennepin County Library staff! While supplies last, a free paperback copy of "Home of the Brave" will be given to those who register for a book club. One per family please. ☺



Girls Only Book Club

Saturday, April 4, 11:30 a.m.

Ridgedale Library

Register at www.hclib.org

Parent/Child Book Club

Saturday, April 18, 10:30 a.m.

Minnetonka Library

Register at www.hclib.org

Home of the Brave Parent/Child Book Club

Saturday, April 25, 10:30 a.m.

Minnetonka Community Center

14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka

Contact Jacque Larson at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8207

Katherine Applegate Appearance

Monday, May 4, 2009

Ridgedale Library

Don't miss the spring eggstravaganza!

ENJOY A MORNING OF SPRING ACTIVITIES Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard. This spring event, for children ages 10 and under, will include an indoor/outdoor egg hunt, face painting, spin art, cookie decorating and a variety of games. Musical entertainment will be provided by Tessa of Minnetonka's own Dancercise Kids. Tessa's performances are a great opportunity for young kids to jump, clap, dance and sing while also learning lessons about nutrition, fitness and fun!

The Spring Bunny will be on hand, so parents, bring your cameras. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Don't forget your basket for collecting eggs! Cost is \$6 per child and registration is required by Tuesday, April 7. To register, please call Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203. Space is limited so call today! ☺

March into spring with music concerts

NOW IN ITS 35TH YEAR, THE MUSIC Association of Minnetonka (MAM) provides enriching musical experiences for people of all ages and abilities. The following concerts are slated for March. All concerts are free unless otherwise indicated. Donations are gratefully accepted. Call (952) 401-5954 for information.

Minnetonka Youth Choirs Gala Benefit

Saturday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.

**Arts Center on 7
18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka**

Featuring the Minnetonka Youth Chamber, Concert and Cappella choirs

Benefit fundraiser featuring silent auction and raffle. Tickets available at door: \$15 for adults, \$5 for students.

Strauss and Pärt of the Viennese School

Monday, March 30, 7:30 p.m.

**Black Box Theater, Minnetonka High School Campus-west entrance
18301 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka**

Featuring the Minnetonka Civic Orchestra playing Haydn: Symphony No. 11 "The Military Symphony"; Pärt: Fratres; Schubert: Octet Op. 166; and Strauss: Horn Concerto No. 1 in E flat Op. 11. ☺

Need summer childcare for your school-aged child?

THIS SUMMER, HOPKINS-MINNETONKA RECREATION

Services introduces a new 11-week active day program to meet the needs of area families. Based at the Williston Fitness Center, the Kid's Corner summer program will offer field trips, sporting activities, arts and crafts, and much more. Children will take a bus for one off-site field trip per week and will walk to surrounding recreational sites, such as the Minnetonka Ice Arena and Jidana Park, several times a week. The goal of this program is to provide a fun and active summer for children.

Kid's Corner details:

- **Dates:** Monday – Friday, June 8 – August 21
- **Time:** 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- **Cost:** \$135/week (10 weeks minimum required)
- **Grades:** 1 – 5

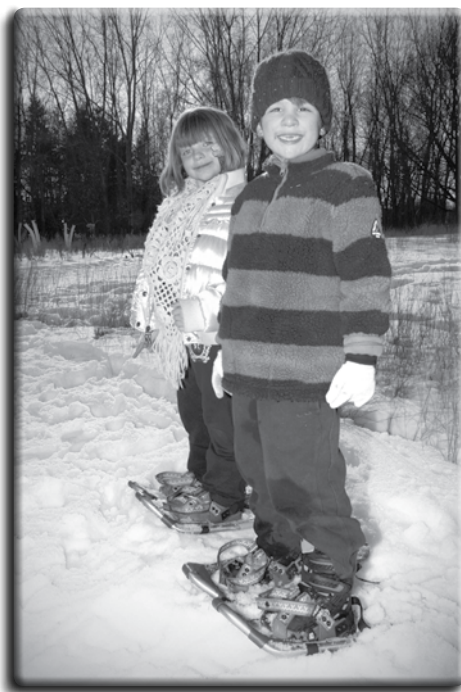
Look for the complete program description and registration information in the Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services summer brochure, coming in early March. For more information call (952) 939-8203. ☺



More than 2,000 attend Kids' Fest

MORE THAN 2,000 KIDS AND THEIR families attended this year's Kids' Fest, sponsored by Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services Feb. 8 at the Minnetonka Civic Center campus. Events included dog sled rides, s'more making at an outdoor bonfire, ice carving demonstrations, face painting, magic shows, mask making, ice skating and swimming. Mark your calendars now for next year's Kids' Fest, set for Sunday, January 31, 2010.

Photos courtesy of Jason Stenvold.



I lost it... at Williston Center

HOW ARE YOU COMING ON THAT NEW year's resolution to lose weight? If you haven't made the progress you'd hoped, consider joining the Williston Fitness Center's eight-week weight loss program, which includes:

- Four nutrition and/or healthy living seminars
- Three 30-minute personal training sessions
- Sample foods and drinks
- Weekly weigh-ins
- For non-members, an eight-week membership to Williston

Sessions are coordinated by a registered dietician and other health professionals, but the program requires participants to work on food choices and to exercise outside of meetings. Space is limited, so sign up today! Cost is \$179 for members; \$259 for Minnetonka and Hopkins residents; and \$279 for non-members.

Official weight loss program kickoff is set for Sunday, March 8, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the Williston Center. For more information, call Karyn at (952) 939-8370.

Visit the Williston Fitness Center!

The Williston Fitness Center is a great place to go for all ages! With the warmer pool, basketball court, and fitness areas, there's something for everyone to discover. Whether the kids are looking for a place to play on a rainy day or you're an adult looking to get your body moving on your own or in a group, chances are the Williston Center's gym, pool, and/or aerobics schedules will fit your needs. Guest fees are \$5 for ages 14 and under, \$8 for 15 and over. Guests must show a photo ID at the front desk and any youth 18 and under must have a photo/school ID or an adult to sign them in. Please call (952) 939-8370 for membership prices and more information, or check us out online at www.eminnetonka.com — click Williston Center on the right. ☺

City achieves excellence in financial reporting award

FOR THE 25TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, the city of Minnetonka has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR).

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. The recognition is also viewed as a positive factor by credit rating agencies and acknowledges that top-quality financial reporting is essential for governments to be fully accountable to their citizens and investors.

The award was presented to Merrill S. King, Minnetonka finance director, and to Darin Nelson, Minnetonka assistant finance director, the individuals who were primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning CAFR. The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The 2007 CAFR for which the award was received is available on the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com — click on Finance, then Budget, then Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The 2008 CAFR will be available by July 2009. ☺

Apply now for the Burwell Art Fair

IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST, CONSIDER SHOWCASING YOUR WORK AT the 2009 Burwell Art Fair, set for Saturday, June 27, at the Charles H. Burwell House, 13209 E. McGinty Road, Minnetonka. Enjoy a bucolic setting near the picturesque Minnehaha Creek and this historic Minnetonka property!

Art fair guidelines and applications are available online at www.eminnetonka.com — click on News and Events, Events, then Burwell Art Fair. Applications are due by April 30, 2009. For more information contact Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com or at (952) 939-8207. ☺



Share the news! Get updates on what's happening in Minnetonka

ON www.eminnetonka.com, YOU CAN find information about news, meeting information, jobs, projects, standings and scores for sports, and much more. We have developed several ways that you can have new information on the site come to you rather than your having to visit our site, to find updates.

Feeds, often referred to as RSS, allow you to view summaries of new updates by using feed readers, which are built in to most modern web browsers and email programs. We recently added feeds for some pages and documents, like our city calendar and our sports pages, so that you can easily see when that information has been updated.

MyMinnetonka allows you to choose topics on which you would like to receive e-mail updates when that information is posted online. In the digest version of our news feed, you receive all the news posted on a day in one e-mail.

Through Twitter, you can receive updates via text message (standard text messaging rates may apply). You can follow us at www.twitter.com/MinnetonkaMN.

On every page of www.eminnetonka.com, underneath Minnetonka Mike, you will find a "share" link that allows you to share that page with friends and family via e-mail, Facebook, MySpace, del.icio.us, Twitter, Digg, and more.

Our recently redesigned weekly e-newsletter, *Hot Topics*, provides summaries of recent and current news stories. News from senior services is available in the *Minnetonka Script*, which was also recently redesigned. You can receive both the *Script* and the *Minnetonka Memo* via e-mail. E-mail subscriptions are also available for ePrevent (crime alerts and prevention tips) and our ReadyMinnetonka program.

You can learn more about how to stay informed at www.eminnetonka.com. For technical questions, please contact Marc Drummond, web technologies coordinator, at (952) 939-8384 or mdrummond@eminnetonka.com. ☺

2009 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 Web site 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 2009, homeowners with 2008 household incomes up to \$96,940 are eligible for a refund, and the maximum refund is \$2,310. Some renters with 2008 household incomes up to \$52,300 are also eligible for a refund. The maximum refund that may be available to a renter is \$1,490, and the amount provided also depends upon the total rent paid in 2008. 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 17, 2010.

Special property tax refund program

A second state program is the **special property tax refund program** for homeowners whose property taxes payable in 2009 have increased by more than 12 percent and are at least \$100 over their 2008 taxes. The increase must not be attributable to new improvements, and homeowners must have owned and resided in their home on both January 2, 2008 and January 2, 2009. 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 17, 2010.

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

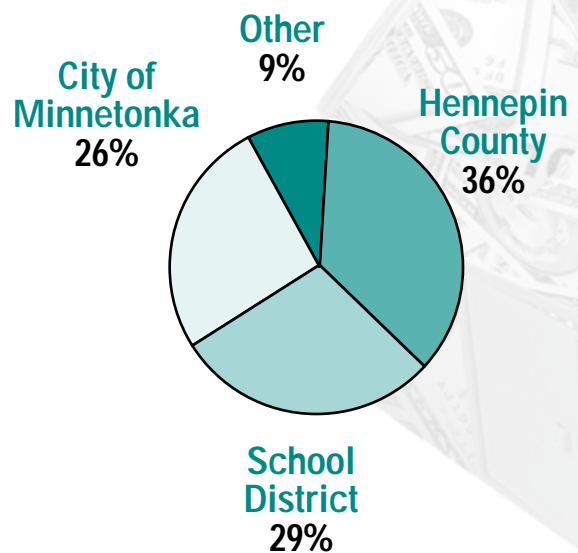
Residents will receive two notices this month related to property taxes. One is the **market value notice** from the city, which will affect property taxes to be paid in 2010 and is explained on the facing page. The other is the **property tax bill** for 2009, which is mailed by Hennepin County and must be paid this year.

City Tax Bill

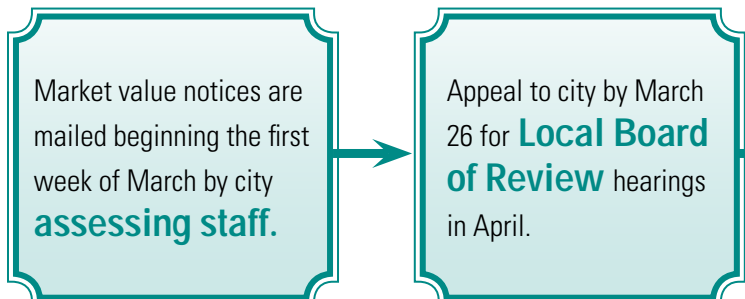
The city of Minnetonka continues to provide quality services at a reasonable price. The city provides a fuller range of municipal services than many other cities, and does not use special assessments to fund road and other improvements. Eight of every ten dollars in city property taxes paid support streets 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.

2009 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 (29 percent), county (36 percent), and other jurisdictions (9 percent).



Market Value Appeals Process



2009 Market Value Notice

(Your market value notice applies to property taxes payable in 2010.)

Minnetonka's home values decline slightly

While the real estate market has experienced a significant decline in a number of locations in the metro area and across the nation, Minnetonka's single-family homes only experienced a slight decline in market values as a whole in 2008. The median sales price in Minnetonka for 2007 was \$337,500 and in 2008 it was \$335,000. Condo and townhome values continued to experience a relatively larger downturn. Commercial property prices as a whole fell for the first time since 2002, but at a lesser rate than residential properties. It's important to remember that individual properties may vary greatly, and conditions for the next value period will likely change.

Market values based on 2008 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 2008. The values cannot reflect changes in market conditions since the end of last year. Changes this year will be reflected in the 2010 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 estimated market value, not the limited 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 Review, and if desired, then to the Hennepin County Board of Equalization.

The Minnetonka City Council convenes each year as the local Board of Review and has local real estate professionals serve as its advisors.

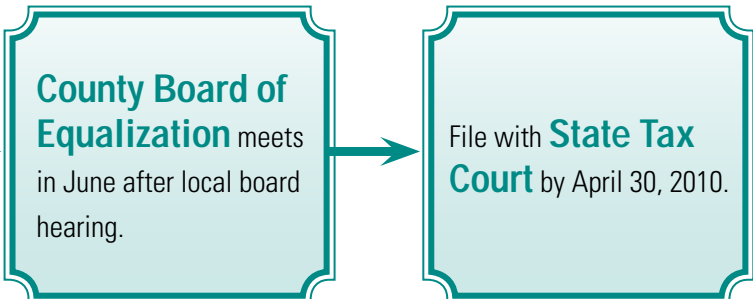
To make an appeal to the local board, you should first discuss your property's market value with the Minnetonka assessing staff. After that, you may make an appeal to the local Board of Review by March 25 simply by asking that your property be listed for appeal. However, it is important to know that 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 2009 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 2008.
- 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.



minnetonka memo

March 2009



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CITY OF MINNETONKA

A publication of the city of Minnetonka
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, MN 55345 • (952) 939-8200
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Ward 4: James Hiller... (952) 974-1003 jhiller@eminnetonka.com

Minnetonka Mike (952) 939-8586 mike@eminnetonka.com

POLICE-FIRE: Emergency 9-1-1
Non-emergency (952) 939-8500 or 9-1-1

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON

Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

March
2009

Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

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

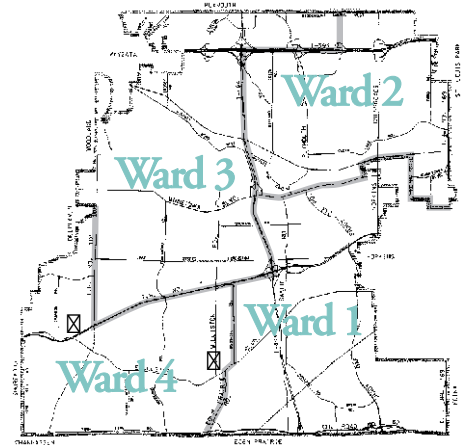
Minnetonka City Council and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16, and replays are available Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at noon, or anytime via videostream at www.eminnetonka.com. Agendas for council meetings are available on the city's Web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

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following projects are scheduled for March planning commission meetings, but are subject to change. Planning commission meeting agendas are posted the Monday prior to the meeting. Visit www.eminnetonka.com for information.

- ☒ Proposed 69-unit assisted living development at 5431 and 5439 Williston Road by Hillside Senior Living. (04037.08a)
- ☒ Preliminary plat to divide an existing residential property into two single-family lots at 18200 Old Excelsior Blvd. (08047.08a)

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.



Note: The above map is provided for general reference only. Space constraints do not allow for a larger, more detailed map. To see a specific address in detail, please use an Internet-based mapping service.