

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
October 2009

General election is Tuesday, November 3

THE CITY'S GENERAL ELECTION IS SET for Tuesday, November 3, and the ballot will include the following city offices and candidates:

Mayor

- Terry Schneider

Council Member At Large, Seat A

- Dick Allendorf
- Bonnie Bina

Council Member At Large, Seat B

- David Asp
- Amber Greves

In addition, all three school districts in the city (Hopkins, Minnetonka and Wayzata) will be electing school board members. Voters' ballots in the Wayzata School District will include two referenda questions.

Absentee voting

Absentee ballots are available beginning Friday, October 2. Voters who can't get to the polls on Election Day may vote absentee in the following ways:

- In person at Minnetonka City Hall during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday). Extended absentee voting hours will also be available Saturday, October 31, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Monday, November 2, until 5 p.m.
- By mail by requesting an absentee ballot application by fax, phone or through www.eminnetonka.com. Upon receipt of your completed application, a ballot will be mailed. Be sure to allow sufficient time for postal delivery because ballots must be received by the city by Election Day in order to count.

Registering to vote

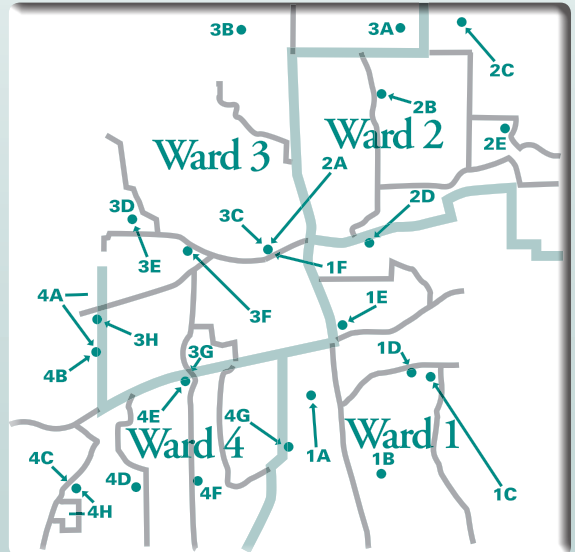
If you have moved or changed your name or address since the last election, you will need to register. Pre-registration is available until October 13. Registration forms are available on the city's Web site, or by calling or stopping by Minnetonka City Hall. Pre-registering will save you a great deal of time

Minnetonka Wards and Precincts

Ward Boundary	Precinct Numbers	4A
Precinct Lines	Polling Locations	•

Polling Locations

1A Glen Lake Elementary School 4801 Woodridge Road	3D/ St. Luke Presbyterian Church 3121 Groveland School Road	4D Scenic Heights Elementary School 5650 Scenic Heights Drive
1B Old Apostolic Lutheran Church 5617 Rowland Road	3E Minnetonka Lutheran Church 16023 Minnetonka Boulevard	4E Redeemer Bible Church 16031 Woodland Curve
1C Cross of Glory Baptist Church 4600 Shady Oak Road	3F Redeemer Bible Church 16031 Woodland Curve	4F All Saints Lutheran Church 15915 Excelsior Boulevard
1D Faith Presbyterian Church 12007 Excelsior Boulevard	3G Minnetonka United Methodist Church 17611 Lake Street Extension	4G Glen Lake Activity Center 14350 Excelsior Boulevard
1E St. Paul's Lutheran Church 13207 Lake Street Extension	3H Ridgewood Church (formerly Minnetonka Baptist) 4420 County Road 101	4H Minnetonka District Service Center 5621 County Road 101
1F Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard	4A/ Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard	
2A Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard	4B Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard	
2B Ridgedale Hennepin County Library 12601 Ridgedale Drive	4C Minnetonka District Service Center 5621 County Road 101	
2C Oak Knoll Lutheran Church 600 Hopkins Crossroad		
2D The Episcopal Parish of St. David's Church 13000 St. David's Road		
2E Lindbergh Center 2400 Lindbergh Drive		
3A Ridgepointe 12600 Marion Lane W.		
3B Freedom Pointe 500 Carlson Parkway		
3C Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard		



when you vote at the polls. If you have not registered by the October 13 cutoff date, check www.eminnetonka.com for the types of identification the law allows for Election Day registration or call city hall.

Polling place locations

If you don't know where to vote, you can find your polling place by:

- Referring to the map in this *Memo*.
- Checking out www.eminnetonka.com
- Calling city hall

General Election Day information

Polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Be sure to exercise your right and privilege to vote. ☺

Fire Department and City Open House set for Oct. 6

FIND MORE DETAILS ON THIS FUN annual event on page 3 of the *Minnetonka Memo!* ☺

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.

Fire Prevention Week: Oct. 4–10

Nationally, fire prevention has been officially observed during October since 1920, when President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation. This period traces its roots back to 1871 when the Great Chicago (IL) and Phestigo (WI) fires occurred, killing more than 1,400 people, destroying 16 towns, and blackening more than 1.2 million acres.

This year's National Fire Prevention Week theme is "Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned." For a comprehensive list of fire prevention tips, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on the "Fire" tab. The city also encourages residents to take this opportunity to practice both their ReadyMinnetonka fire escape plan and emergency plan.

Creating a fire escape plan is very simple. Walk through your home with your family and agree on two ways out of every room. Explain how to check doors for heat prior to opening them. Then determine a place such as a tree, boulder, mailbox, etc. outside your home where the family can meet once they have left the residence. Now that you have presented the plan, practice it by sounding a smoke detector and having everyone evacuate to the meeting place.

A family emergency plan is also important and just as simple to create. Meet with family members to discuss how to respond to emergencies that could occur such as flooding, power outages and storms, then:

- Determine a storm shelter. This should be a small, windowless room on the lowest level of your residence.
- Teach everyone when and how to call 9-1-1.

- Post 9-1-1 and other emergency numbers such as poison control and doctors by every phone.
- Show competent family members how to shut off gas, electricity, and water at the main switch/valve.
- Pick a meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Pick two contacts (one local and one out-of-state) for family members to call in case of an emergency.
- Ensure your house numbers are visible from the street.



The ReadyMinnetonka portion of the city's Web site has brochures explaining in greater detail these and other preparations you can make for emergencies. Visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on "Fire." Or email ready@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8334 with questions.

You may also email ready@eminnetonka.com if you would like to be added to the ReadyMinnetonka listserv, and visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on CodeRED to update your information in the CodeRED reverse 9-1-1 system. These two systems are methods by which residents and businesses are notified of significant events affecting the city, and are designed to act as another notification method in addition to your NOAA weather radio.



Fire responses

During the second quarter of 2009, the fire department responded to 755 calls for service, compared to 155 calls for the same period last year. The three-person duty crew handles most of the calls, while about 40 paid-on-call members show up for every structure fire.

Significant events this quarter included:

- Residential structure fires on Deer Hill Court, Eastwood Road, Lake Street Extension, and Scenic Heights Drive
- An apartment building deck fire on Plymouth Road
- A home damaged by a brush fire on Chestnut Lane
- An electrical fire at a gas station on Highway 7
- A carbon monoxide incident at a condominium complex on Atrium Way
- A water rescue request with the Wayzata Fire Department on Gray's Bay

Survey cards

As part of the fire department's ongoing efforts to provide excellent customer service, department members are handing out survey cards at every call. These yellow, postage-paid cards have three simple "rate-the-service" questions and room for comments. The information from these cards will be used to help ensure residents were satisfied with the service provided and to help identify any outstanding individuals or crews.

Influenza

As the United States enters the annual cold and flu season, you will undoubtedly continue to hear news reports on the worldwide flu pandemic. The Minnetonka Fire, Emergency Management, and Environmental Health Departments would like to remind residents that as with any cold and flu season, having an emergency plan, a kit, and proper information is critical.

While the city of Minnetonka has an all-hazards emergency plan in place, there is no substitute for good individual preparation for this type of event.

Please visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on "Fire," then "Emergency Management," then "Pandemics" for details on influenza as well as more Web sites to visit for details on preparation and prevention.

For more information, contact Minnetonka Fire Department Chief Joe Wallin at (952) 939-8333 or Minnetonka Fire Department Assistant Chief Jim Flanders at (952) 939-8334. ☺

Fire Department and City Open House is Oct. 6

DON'T MISS OUT ON A GREAT CHANCE to meet city staff and learn more about local government, as well as mingle with your friends and neighbors, at the Minnetonka Fire Department and City Open House Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Minnetonka Civic Center campus, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd.

Kids four and over can ride in city fire trucks, and everyone can enjoy free hot dogs, cookies, pop and lemonade along with department tours and entertainment. Bring a digital camera so you don't miss out this year's great photo opportunities!

Be sure to check out this year's exciting activities:

- Take a tour of the Minnetonka Police Department's jail and visit with members of the city's Emergency Response Team. *(Police department)*
- Get moving with activities sponsored by Recreation Services. *(Community Center lower level)*
- View this year's photo contest entries and vote for your favorite. *(Community Center lower level)*

Of course, it wouldn't be Open House without everyone's favorite yearly activities:

- Ride in a fire truck. *(Fire Station)*
- Sit inside heavy equipment from the public works department. Don't forget to pick up an ice pop or hot chocolate! Bring your own camera to take photos. *(Community Center south entrance)*
- Enjoy entertainment from the Music Association of Minnetonka Reflections Chorale. *(6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Community Center upper level)*
- Visit the House of Germs and learn how to stay healthy! *(Community Center)*
- Browse displays from city departments and boards and commissions; as well as community organizations. *(Community Center lower level)*
- See woodcarving demonstrations *(Community Center upper level)*
- Snack on free refreshments, including hot dogs and pop *(Fire Station)* and cookies, popcorn, and lemonade. *(Community Center)* ☺





News for Neighbors

From the Minnetonka Police Department

NEWSPER 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.

- Minnetonka's **Night for Neighbors** event Tuesday, August 4, included 159 organized block parties, up from 141 parties in 2008. An estimated 7,700 residents participated and one-third of those were children. In addition, 59 block parties collected a total of 4,148 pounds of food for the ICA foodshelf. The winning block club, Stoney Bridge Court, received 31 Minnesota Twins tickets from ICA.
- This year's Night for Neighbors **coloring contest winners** were Brianna

Davenport (K-1), Gleason Lake Elementary; and Kaitlin Roberts (Gr. 2-4), Clear Springs Elementary. Both winners received a ride to school in a Minnetonka police vehicle the week of Sept. 14, chauffeured by Minnetonka Police Chief Mark Raquet. Thanks to the Minnetonka Senior Center staff and participants who judged more than 50 entries for this year's contest.

- Minnetonka Police **Officer Ryan Piper and K-9 Krieger** were recently recognized by the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) with a Unit Citation and Medallion for an August 2008 accomplishment. At the request of Plymouth police, Officer Piper and Krieger tracked an assault suspect for 30 minutes before locating him in a home several blocks away from the

original location. Plymouth police were able to take the suspect into custody without incident due to the excellent work of Officer Piper and Krieger.

- The Minnetonka ePrevent Program allows residents to receive **email updates about crime alerts, crime prevention tips** and information about programs offered by the police department. Subscription information provided is entirely confidential and will not be used for any purposes other than those stated. Information is sent to subscribers as it becomes available. In addition, crime prevention tips are sent on a monthly basis. To sign up, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Police, then Crime Prevention. Click on ePrevent and follow the directions to subscribe. ☺

Minnetonka Mike upgraded to provide better service with knowledge database

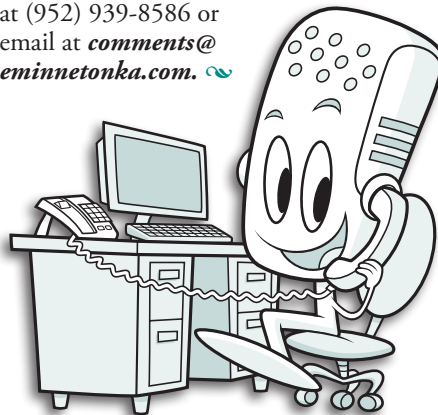
FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, MINNETONKA residents have been able to use the Minnetonka Mike online request system to submit service requests and questions to city staff, for topics ranging from potholes to streetlights to barking dogs and deer concerns. Once submitted, the question is routed to the correct staff person, and residents can then check on the status of their request anytime.

Now the online request system has been upgraded, allowing residents easier access to answers for their questions. For example, the new system keeps track of the most popular questions being asked and their answers, then lists the ten most frequently asked questions and answers on the online request system home page.

In addition, users may search the complete knowledge database for possible answers to their questions, thus getting their answers quickly and avoiding the need to even submit a request. If a question cannot be found that answers a user's question, it is forwarded on to the appropriate staff person for personal response. Users can still submit service requests, like fixing potholes, as they could in the previous system.

Users with an already existing account for the Minnetonka Mike online request system may sign in to the new system using their email address to access any previous information stored in the system. Or, new users may create an account using the simple setup process.

To access the system, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on the Minnetonka Mike logo on the lefthand side of the page. Questions that can't be answered using the online system? Contact Mike via telephone at (952) 939-8586 or email at comments@eminnetonka.com. ☺



Tell us about your missing links!

MINNETONKA has an extensive and impressive trails system for its residents, but some "missing links" remain. While the completion of missing links is currently unfunded in the city's budget, we'd like to hear from you on where you think missing links should be completed. Your input will help the city prioritize construction of trail links as money becomes available.

Minnetonka Park Board members and city staff will be available at the City Open House Tuesday, October 6, (*see page three for more information*) to take input from residents on where missing trail links should be completed. The newest edition of the Minnetonka parks and trails maps will also be available and is free. For more information call Minnetonka Public Works at (952) 988-8400. ☺



Discover the natural beauty of Jidana Park's trails

JIDANA PARK'S 60 ACRES ARE CLASSIFIED as a community preserve that provide passive recreational opportunities — hiking, picnicking or bird watching. The park contains no swings, slides or play apparatus, play courts or shelters, but instead boasts walking paths, scattered picnic tables, benches and a dock and canoe landing on the Minnehaha Creek. Visitors may access Jidana Park by either the trail and boardwalk from the lower Minnetonka Community Center parking lot, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, or by the small parking area at the north end of Jidana Lane, with room for about five vehicles.

Jidana boardwalk trail

From the Minnetonka Community Center parking lot, it's just over a half-mile on the paved trail and boardwalk to the beginning of Jidana Park. The 635-foot boardwalk was installed during the 2005–06 winter season, and allows visitors to experience the expansive wetland surrounding Minnehaha Creek by passing right through the wetland vegetation. The boardwalk is similar to the one installed the same time at the Minnehaha Creek Headwaters Park.

Follow the trail up the hill to the northwest for a wonderful overview of the wetlands surrounding Minnehaha Creek.

Canoe landing and dock

Jidana is the first canoe landing downstream from the Minnehaha Creek Headwaters. The benches and improvements to the canoe landing were recently completed by Michael Schnack, a senior at Wayzata High School, for his Eagle Scout project. Michael also installed a bench on the hill near the dock with a panoramic view of the creek and wetlands to the northwest.



Jidana Park is used every summer by Recreation Services for its popular day camp program.



Enjoy views of the Minnehaha Creek wetland from the 635-foot Jidana boardwalk.

If you go

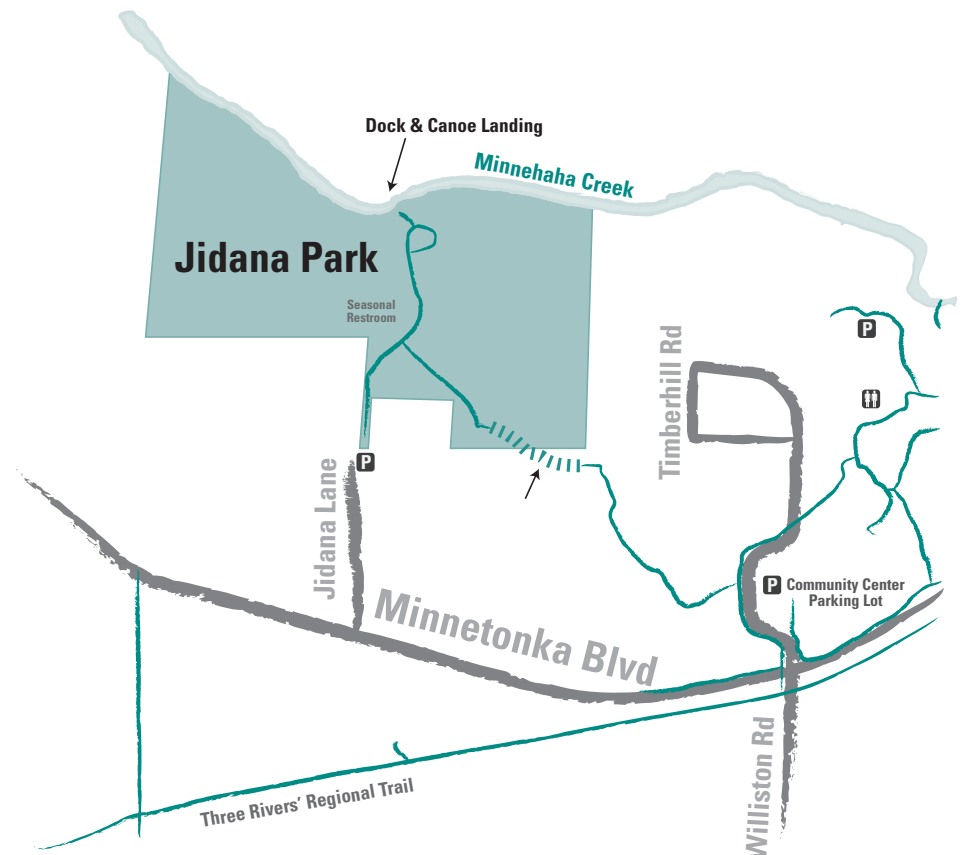
- Park is open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy picnic tables throughout the park.
- A seasonal restroom is located just north of the trail from the Minnetonka Community Center.
- Dogs must be on a leash (no longer than 6 feet) on the trails, in the formal areas of the park and in the parking lot. Please pick up after your pet in natural and formal areas. A Mutt Mitt dispenser is

available at the gate by the parking area off Jidana Lane.

- The park is accessible by car from Minnetonka Boulevard at the end of Jidana Lane (five parking stalls). A better way to access the park is to park at the lower parking lot at the Minnetonka Community Center and hike in, using the one-half mile paved trail to the park.

Did you know?

- On the west side of the boardwalk, the straight segment of trail is built on a private landing strip from the 1950s. ♪



Winter park preparation

IN OCTOBER, PARK STAFF WILL shut down and winterize all outdoor drinking fountains and the restrooms at Big Willow, Guillems and Lone Lake parks.

Restrooms are available for park and trail users year round at Meadow, Gro Tonka and Purgatory parks. ♪

County Commissioner Jan Callison hosts October budget conversations

HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER Jan Callison will host a series of conversations in October with District 6 residents to gain their insights on county budget priorities for 2010. One hour of the session will be spent on the budget, including a presentation of the county administrator’s recommendations, highlights of difficult trade-offs and listening to feedback. Following the budget discussion, attendees are invited to share any other comments or concerns about other topics related to the county.

Presentations are set for:

- Thursday, October 8, 2009, 7–8:30 p.m., Wayzata City Hall, 600 Rice St.
- Wednesday, October 14, 2009, 7–8:30 p.m., Minnetonka City Hall, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd.
- Wednesday, October 21, 7–8:30 p.m., Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th Street

For more information visit Commissioner Callison’s Web site at www.hennepin.us/jancallison or call (612) 348-7886. ☺

HOME program: helping older adults

HOUSEHOLD & OUTSIDE MAINTENANCE for Elderly (HOME) is a program offered by Senior Community Services (SCS), a 59-year-old nonprofit agency dedicated to helping meet the special needs of older adults and their caregivers through a variety of outreach and support services. For nearly a quarter century, HOME has provided chore services—minor household repairs, housekeeping, mowing, snow removal and interior and exterior painting—to suburban Hennepin County residents over 60, helping them remain in their homes.

Because outdoor chores are some of the largest obstacles to seniors maintaining independent living, each spring and fall, HOME’s all-volunteer yard clean-up projects provide help with raking, window washing and other outside jobs.

These “helping hands” are often enough to make it possible for seniors to stay in the homes, the neighborhoods and the communities where they’ve raised their families, built lasting friendships and have real feelings of connection, security and belonging.

Helping seniors remain in their homes isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the smart one too, since the cost of alternative elder housing and care far exceeds that of keeping a service like HOME strong and available. With services like HOME, older residents continue to be property taxpayers, consumers and contributors of diversity and perspective that enrich our communities, our families and ourselves.

To learn more about HOME, contact Jeanne Swedberg, program coordinator, at (952) 939-8363 or jswedberg@eminnetonka.com ☺

Home repair loans available October 7

DO YOU NEED TO MAKE EXTENSIVE repairs to your home but don’t have the money? Do you own your own home? For a limited time, the city of Minnetonka will be accepting applications for its Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Loan, which will provide a no interest, no payment, deferred loan up to \$20,000 for 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 is completely forgiven!

To be eligible, your income must not exceed the following:

Household Size	Income Limit
1 person	\$46,984
2 person	\$53,696
3 person	\$60,408
4 person	\$67,120
5 person	\$72,490
6 person	\$77,859
7 person	\$83,229
8 person	\$88,598

Applications will be available starting at 8 a.m. Wednesday, October 7. Completed applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applications will be available on the city’s Web site at www.eminnetonka.com, at city hall, or by calling (952) 939-8200. Remember, there are a limited number of loans available, so you must act quickly! ☺

Plastic yard waste bags banned starting January 1

AS YOU BEGIN PREPARING FOR YOUR 2009 fall yard and leaf cleanup, please be aware of a new state law effective January 1, 2010, requiring that yard waste set out for curbside collection in the metro area be placed in compostable bags—either paper or **compostable** plastic bags.

If your refuse hauler provides yard waste carts, it’s best to simply place materials inside the carts loose, with no bags. However, if you want to use bags, be sure to use paper or compostable ones starting next year.

If you use the city spring and fall leaf drop-off programs, they will continue to be “bag free.” The bulk leaf drop-off area will accept loose loads of leaves, or residents may empty bagged yard waste and take their bags home, no matter the type of bag. Staff at the five drop-off sites will also unload the bagged yard waste into the packer trucks and return the bags to the resident.

Since regular plastic, recycled-content plastic or degradable plastic bags cannot be used next year, it’s a good idea to use up these bags this season. If you purchase plastic leaf bags, you may want to buy only enough for this year, or make the switch to compostable bags now.

Allowable bags next year may be either paper Kraft bags (large brown paper bags) or compostable plastic bags, both of which are available in stores. Look for compostable plastic bags that state on the box they “meet ASTM D6400 standards for composting” and are “compostable.” **Biodegradable or degradable plastic bags do not meet the state law requirements.** Compostable plastic bags are usually clear or tinted an opaque shade of green, white or pink.

If you have any questions, check with your refuse hauler or visit the city of Minnetonka Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. ☺





2009 MINNETONKA RECYCLING UPDATE

Fall Leaf Drop-off Program

Saturdays: October 24 and 31, November 7 and 14
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Minnetonka residents may bring **bagged** leaves, yard and garden materials to one of five drop-off sites on the dates and times indicated. Brush larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter will **not** be accepted at leaf drop-off sites. (See the brush drop-off article.)

If you have other means of handling your leaves such as collection by your garbage hauler or backyard composting, **please use that option!** All garbage haulers offer curbside collection of yard waste on the same day as your garbage collection for a reasonable annual or monthly fee.

Check with your garbage hauler for details.

Saturday Leaf Drop-off Sites

1 Public Works Facility Parking Lot

11522 Minnetonka Blvd., $\frac{1}{4}$ mi. west of Cty. Rd. 73; **use west entrance.**

Two areas: one for **bulk** leaf drop-off, one for **bagged** leaf drop-off; follow signs.

2 Groveland School Parking Lot

Minnetonka Blvd., east of Hwy. 101

3 Minnetonka Public Schools Service Center, North Parking Lot

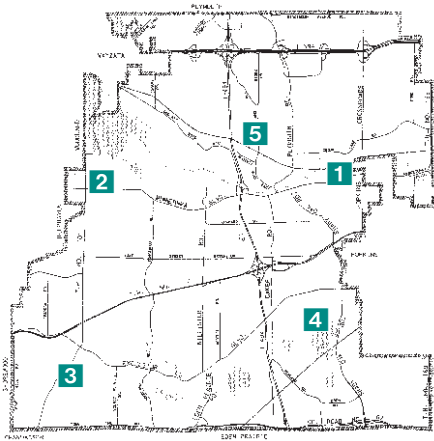
5621 Hwy. 101 (at Hanus Rd.)

4 West Oaks Community Church Parking Lot

Excelsior Blvd. west of Shady Oak Rd., upper parking lot

5 Meadow Park Parking Lot

Oakland Road across from Stone Rd.



BAGGED LEAVES — will be accepted at all sites on Saturdays, October 24 & 31 and November 7 & 14.

City staff will assist residents with unloading bags of leaves on Saturdays. Residents will be asked to take empty bags home for reuse or disposal. **Please loosely tie bags for easy emptying.**

BULK LEAVES — Truck and trailer loads of bulk leaves will be accepted only at Minnetonka Public Works and only during brush drop-off hours on the following dates:

- **Mondays:** Noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 28, Oct. 5, 12, 19, and 26, Nov. 2 and 9
- **Tuesdays:** Noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 29, Oct. 6, 13, 20, and 27, Nov. 3 and 10
- **Saturdays:** 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, Nov. 7 and 14

Loads of leaves **must** be covered during transport!

Enter on the west side of the building (near the Big Willow ball fields). Residents will unload their own leaves onto the bulk leaf pile (**bring proper equipment to unload your own leaves**). Try using many layers of tarps between a foot or two of leaves to make unloading your leaves easier and faster.

Information about composting and yard waste management is available from Dean Elstad, recycling coordinator, at (952) 988-8430.

Brush drop-off ends Nov. 21

The brush drop-off program for Minnetonka residents is open Mondays and Tuesdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The brush drop-off ends November 21, 2009.

The brush drop-off is located at Minnetonka Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Boulevard. Use the west entrance near the Big Willow Park ball fields.

Branches up to 12" in diameter will be accepted. Please secure your load during transport, do not drag branches on the road and do not cover your taillights. This service is only available to Minnetonka residents and proof of Minnetonka residency is required (driver's license or utility bill).

Please note: trash, grass, loose leaves, lumber or wood scraps are not accepted. Loose leaves, pine needles, straw, plant and garden materials go into the leaf drop-off program (see accompanying article). No brush will be accepted from commercial tree or lawn services.

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

Keep streets and storm drains clean

Minnetonka City Ordinances (see below) prohibit blowing and/or leaving grass clippings or other organic materials in the street. Please mention this to your lawn service.

845.010 Public Nuisances Affecting Peace, Safety and General Welfare.17.

Prohibits the intentional discharge of items such as leaves, grass clippings, solvents, antifreeze, oil, fireplace ashes, paint, and cement rinsings into a street, storm sewer system, or water resource such as a wetland, creek, pond or lake.



**Protect
Our
Water
Quality!**

Learning more about Minnetonka's Bennett Family Park

LOCATED AT 3717 COUNTY ROAD 101, just south of Minnetonka Boulevard, Bennett Family Park has a long history in the community, starting in the 1950s when the first Little League baseball teams in Minnesota began playing at the park. Bennett Family Park has long supported a number of successful athletic programs, from girls softball to Little League and Babe Ruth baseball.

In recognition of the important opportunities provided to the community by Bennett Family Park, the city of Minnetonka has over time provided the park with financial support. From 1997 to 2001, \$250,000 was allocated to assist with overall park improvements, including athletic field upgrades, parking lot improvements, trail and path construction, drainage corrections and building repair.

More recently, at a May 2008 meeting, the Minnetonka Park Board reviewed the Bennett Family Park master plan for improvements, and recommended to the city council that \$50,000 be allocated in

the 2010 Capital Improvements Program to assist in the construction of a new 13-year-old prep baseball field. This contribution addresses community-wide athletic field needs that had been previously identified in the city's 2004 Athletic Field Needs Study.

The council later approved the allocation, and as a result, Bennett Family Park was able to shift dollars to the construction of the Miracle Field, which provides enhanced athletic opportunities for children with disabilities.

According to Dave Johnson, recreation director for the city of Minnetonka, the city's history of supporting Bennett is based on the fact that the park provides community opportunities while assuming all responsibility for operating the park. In contrast, other similar community-based youth programs are operated on park property owned and operated by the city, thus saving those associations considerable operating expenditures.

Want to learn more about Bennett's history in the community? Last year, the

Minnetonka Historical Society hosted a presentation with long-time Minnetonka residents sharing their memories of the park. To view the presentation, visit www.eminnetonka.com, and click on "Live and on-demand videostreaming" on the right, then click on "Presentations" and find "History of Bennett Family Park." Click on the "video" link to view the 51-minute presentation online. You can also visit the Bennett Family Park Web site at www.bennettfamilypark.org for more information. ☺



Upcoming October and November 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 *Senior Script*, visit www.eminnetonka.com.

Defensive Driving Classes

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

Four-Hour Courses: \$18

Oct. 8, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Refreshments provided but no lunch.

Oct. 22, 6 – 10 p.m.

Refreshments provided.

Special Events

Green Stamps to Hot Pants: Growing up in the 50s and 60s

Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m.

Light lunch included.

Cost: \$3, due by Oct. 5.

Managing Yourself through the Retirement Transition

Oct. 8 & 15, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Presenter Karen Grier will help participants understand more about navigating through changes both large and small. Cost: \$30, due by Oct. 5.

Hilloway Park Hike

Oct. 8, 9 a.m.

Call (952) 939-8383 if you plan to attend. Meet at Hilloway Park, one-half mile south of Ridgedale, and bring water.

Butterflies and Berries

Oct. 12, 10:30 a.m.

Grant Bower from the University of Minnesota will give a presentation on the monarch butterfly. Light berry snack provided after the program, courtesy RidgePointe. Cost: \$2, due by Oct. 9.

Anniversary Party

Oct. 15, 12 p.m.

Enjoy a catered meal and entertainment by Tim Patrick, Sinatra singer. Cost: \$7, due by Oct. 12.

New Friend Social Club

Oct. 21, 6:30 p.m.

Meet new people in a non-threatening social environment.

Learning about Total Joint Replacement

Oct. 28, 10:15 a.m.

For donation details call (952) 939-8393. Cost: \$2, due by Oct. 26.

Twenty Ways to Save More and Spend Less

Nov. 4, 7 p.m.

Star Tribune Dollars and Sense Columnist John Ewoldt presents more than 20 ways to save everyday expenses. Please bring a cash or food donation for ICA for this free event. Register at (952) 939-8393.

The Holocaust in Greece

Nov. 5, 10:30 a.m.

Producer Laura Zelle presents and discusses her film, "In the Shadow of the Acropolis: The Untold Story of the Holocaust in Greece." Light lunch served after presentation. Cost: \$5, due by Nov. 2.

Bridges of Minneapolis

Nov. 17, 10:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50, includes tours, lunch, transportation and escort. Pay by Oct. 30. ☺

MAM presents free fall concerts

THE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF Minnetonka (MAM) presents the following concerts in October and November. All concerts are free, but donations are gratefully accepted. For more information, visit www.musicassociation.org or call (952) 401-5954.

Spooktacular Concert

Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd

Sunday, October 25, 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 31, 3:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Symphony Orchestra

Enjoy Berlioz: March to the Scaffold; Saint-Saens: Dance Macabre; Kopp: The Scary House

Concert Band Fall Concert

Directed by Dan Geldert

Sunday, November 8, 3 p.m.

Arts Center on 7

18285 Highway 7, Minnetonka ☺

Learn how to grow fruit trees Oct. 22

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PICK FRESH apples, pears, apricots, plums, or cherries straight from the tree... in your own backyard? In addition to producing an edible and healthy treat, most fruit trees produce attractive blossoms in the spring or summer and can be a welcome addition to your landscape.

If you'd like to learn more about the varieties of fruit trees suitable for planting in Minnetonka, as well as proper care techniques, attend this talk by Rebecca Koetter of the University of Minnesota Thursday, Oct. 22, at 6:30 p.m. in the boards and commissions room at Minnetonka City Hall, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Registration is required — call (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com. ☺



Help your trees triumph over turf

TRUE OR FALSE: A TREE PLANTED AND growing in a yard surrounded by turf grass has the same chance at good health as a tree surrounded by wood-based mulch or within a wooded area.

The answer is false — research has found that in the battle between grass and tree roots, grass wins. It may seem hard to believe that tiny blades of grass and their roots could out-compete a tree for water and nutrients, but read on to learn more about the “three punches” that knock trees out in turf environments.

First, turf grass disrupts normal nutrient cycling and doesn't conserve soil moisture. Consider a forest floor, where leaves fall to the ground, pile up and slowly decompose. The leaves act to shade and shelter tree roots from heat and drastic temperature changes, and to conserve soil moisture. As the leaves break down, they are incorporated into the soil, adding nutrients back in a form the tree can eventually use. However, in a lawn setting, leaves are typically raked up immediately and disposed of before they have a chance to break down. Additionally, grass uses water, so it does not conserve soil moisture.

Second, the watering requirements for grass and trees differ. The watering provided by sprinkler systems rarely penetrates more than a couple inches of soil. Furthermore, watering for short bursts of time with a sprinkler each day encourages shallow root systems in nearby trees, which becomes a problem for trees when the watering decreases or if summer temperatures increase quickly in short time periods. This can cause a tree with a shallow root system to lose more water than it is able of capturing from the soil. It also becomes an issue during drought conditions, which can cause roots to dry out, or when winter temperatures drop rapidly in short periods of time, causing roots to freeze. Instead, trees need less frequent, but deep watering. After properly watering a tree, the soil should be moist 6–8 inches deep. For proper watering guidelines, visit the University of Minnesota Extension Web site at http://www.forestry.umn.edu/extension/urban_com/Watering.html.

Third, trees growing in lawns without mulch are more prone to damage. Lawn mower and string trimmer damage around the lower part of tree trunks is pervasive in and adds significantly to declines in tree health and condition. A wound on the outer part of a young tree or on a tree with thin bark damages the living tissues just beneath the bark, which then lose their

ability to transport water and nutrients. Wounds also create an entry point for fungi that can lead to decay, which in turn breaks down the strength of the wood and increases the chance the tree could break at the point of injury. ☺

Use mulch to help trees battle turf

- Mulch can consist of a layer of shredded wood and bark, compost, pine needles, and/or leaves, spread on the surface of the soil under trees and plants. Mulch is especially crucial during summer and times of drought when water is a limiting factor for growth.
- Place mulch around the tree's drip line, three to four inches deep, keeping the mulch away from the trunk.
- Mulch will conserve soil moisture and encourage greater fine root development in the tree. Greater fine roots underground mean the tree has an increased ability to support the above-ground portion of the tree. The more vigorous a tree is, the less likely it will become susceptible to the knock-out punch of insects and disease.
- More info on tree care and maintenance, including proper mulching, can be found at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Web site at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/woodchips/index.html> or at the University of Minnesota Web site at <http://www.sustland.umn.edu/maint/trees.html#3c>. ☺



2010 budget cap 2% lower than 2009 budget; \$2 million in permanent spending cuts made

ON SEPTEMBER 14, THE MINNETONKA city council set priorities and directions for the city's 2010 budget and also established a preliminary tax levy. The council will review detailed budget proposals in November and December, prior to adoption of the city's final budget and levy on December 21.

In the wake of the state's worsening fiscal crisis, and like local governments throughout the state, Minnetonka has been making difficult decisions about staffing, service levels, and business operations to absorb the effects of the ongoing recession and state funding cuts.

The city of Minnetonka takes a responsible long-term perspective with financial planning and management. Decisions are made with the future in mind to ensure the city's ongoing ability to provide residents and businesses with the quality services they have come to expect, and at a reasonable price.

Budget Challenges

Early analysis indicated that the city will face a potential \$2.6 million budget shortfall in the 2010 budget. While almost half of the fiscal problem is related to regular operating cost pressures such as inflation and employee health insurance increases, the economic downturn and state

mandates present significant additional challenges.

Primary revenue sources other than property taxes will continue to decline into 2010. Specifically, investment income will persist in a decline begun this year, and the city is forecasting a substantial decrease in revenue from building permits. Although Minnetonka's market still remains relatively strong, it is not immune to the weakening of real estate development metro wide.

Additionally, the state persists in imposing its own fiscal crisis upon local governments. Although the city of Minnetonka does not receive local government aid from the state, as do many other cities, the state has once again shifted the burden of funding its Market Value Homestead Credit program to the city. As a result, the city will be shorted over \$530,000 that it must make up from other revenue sources.

Finally, antiquated state law requires the city to amortize a projected long-term liability in its firefighter pension fund three times faster than national accounting standards. Like all pension funds and investments nationwide, the city's firefighters' fund experienced losses at the end of last year, and the relatively healthy fund will continue to recover with the economy. Unfortunately, the state mandates that the city begin making annual payments of nearly \$350,000 in 2010.

Repositioning the city for long-term financial stability

Consistent with its long-term management philosophy, the city of Minnetonka anticipated the economic downturn and state's actions more than a year ago, and has already implemented various measures to reposition itself to ensure its long-term capacity to continue to provide residents with excellent services, and at a reasonable price.

With the state no longer a reliable partner, this repositioning will make basic city services less vulnerable to unpredictable future state actions. Actions were taken to meet four objectives: **achieve long-term budget balance, sustain direct core services, continue infrastructure investments, and moderate property tax growth.**

The strategies did not simply cut budgets, but rather, involved new ways of doing business, including cooperative service agreements with other agencies, productivity investments that help deliver

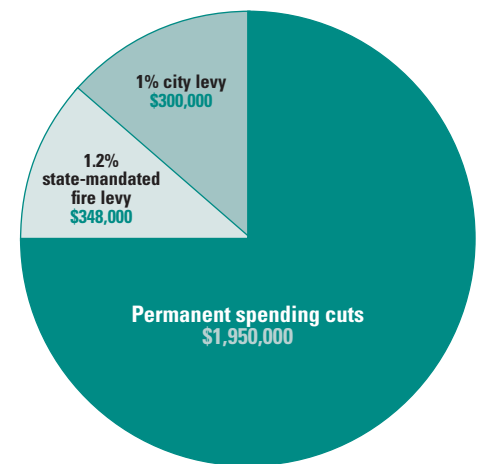
services more efficiently, and department reorganizations that reposition the city to better serve its constituents, both now and well into the future.

Personnel cost reductions

Like any service business, about 75 percent of the city's major expenses are personnel related. With recent reorganizations, seven employees were laid off, half of whom were managers. Seven vacant positions were also eliminated, and with part-time staff reorganizations, the city's **total workforce was reduced by six percent.**

The city also renegotiated its largest union contract to **limit future base wage increases to one percent annually**, with an allowance for market adjustments, when warranted to remain competitive. This same structure will be used city-wide. While furloughs and wage freezes were considered, these options were ruled out as one-time, arbitrary steps that would introduce major inequities into the city's unique MERIT compensation system and do little to meet long-term challenges.

Budget solution (No one-time gimmicks)



Budget savings & directives

This repositioning resulted in significant decreases in the city's 2009 operating budget, with additional savings accruing in 2010. As a result the city council adopted a **preliminary 2010 general fund budget cap that is two percent lower than the adopted 2009 budget.**

Reflecting the city of Minnetonka's long-standing tradition of responsibly managing for the long-term, and recognizing the effect of the economic downturn on community

Council budget direction

- Balance the budget for the long-term with no one-time gimmicks.
- Cap the 2010 budget at 2% below the adopted 2009 budget, and make \$2 million in permanent spending cuts.
- Limit tax increase to 1% for all operating and capital costs, with another 1.2% for the state-mandated fire pension payment.
- Consider an additional 0.3% increase for homebuyer assistance and renovation.

Minnetonka remains among the lower city tax increases in 2010

residents and businesses, the city council directed that **property taxes for all city operations and capital investments be held to an increase of only one percent for 2010**, with an additional 1.2 percent to cover the state-mandated fire pension relief payment.

More significantly, nearly **\$2 million, or three-fourths of Minnetonka’s budget solution, involves permanent spending cuts**, and **none** of the one-time “smoke and mirrors” that would simply postpone and worsen long-term budget challenges. This extraordinary achievement is attributable to the city’s focus on the permanent restructuring of its operations, rather than just temporary patches.

In addition to the general city tax levy, the city’s Economic Development Authority (EDA) recommended and the city council adopted a preliminary \$175,000 Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy for 2010, which represents a \$75,000 increase over the current levy, to be used for homebuyer assistance and home renovation programs.

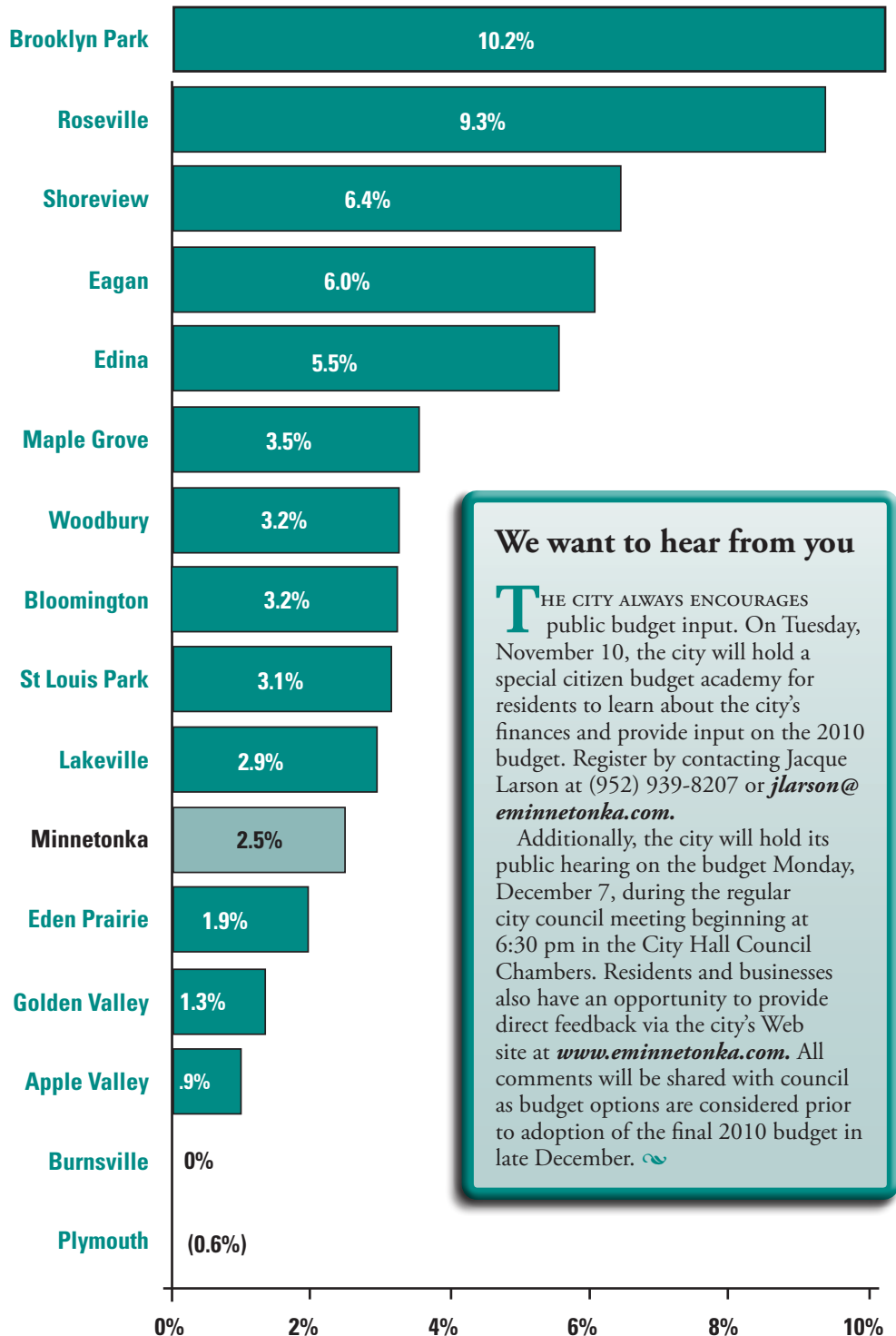
Property taxes

Various factors affect the total property taxes paid by individual homeowners, including changes in market value, state law, and city, county and school district budgets. As a result, the impact upon any one individual property tax bill will vary from other individual property owners elsewhere in the city.

The adopted preliminary levy continues the city’s tradition of modest tax increases for basic services, and would translate into an estimated two percent increase (\$20) for the average Minnetonka homeowner of a \$310,000 home. The \$75,000 increase in the HRA levy would increase taxes by an additional 0.3 percent, or \$2.65 for the average homeowner.

Responsible fiscal stewardship

As a result of responsible repositioning and reorganization begun earlier this year, the city of Minnetonka is much better positioned to withstand the next several years of a projected slow economic recovery and continued mandates and limitations imposed by the state. ∞



We want to hear from you

THE CITY ALWAYS ENCOURAGES public budget input. On Tuesday, November 10, the city will hold a special citizen budget academy for residents to learn about the city’s finances and provide input on the 2010 budget. Register by contacting Jacque Larson at (952) 939-8207 or jl Larson@eminnetonka.com.

Additionally, the city will hold its public hearing on the budget Monday, December 7, during the regular city council meeting beginning at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers. Residents and businesses also have an opportunity to provide direct feedback via the city’s Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. All comments will be shared with council as budget options are considered prior to adoption of the final 2010 budget in late December. ∞

Note: Unlike most other cities, Minnetonka does not special assess for capital investments.

minnetonka memo

October 2009



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Non-emergency..... (952) 939-8500 or 9-1-1

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Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

October
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	1 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							13 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
							19 Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	26 City Council, 6:30 p.m.; Community Commission, 6:30 p.m.
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	7 Park Board, 7 p.m.
							12 Council study session, 5 p.m. (Topic: Glen Lake Plaza)
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 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.

Register now for Oct. 25 fall family festival

ENJOY A DAY OF OUTDOOR FALL FUN on Sunday, October 25, from 1–3 p.m. at the Minnetonka outdoor amphitheater, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Activities include musical entertainment by Will Hale, storytellers, hay rides, face-painting, hot apple cider by the fire, games, treats and more! Costumes are encouraged, but not required. Registration is required for this event. Please call Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203 to register. The cost is \$8 per child and adults are free. All registered participants will receive a treat bag. In case of rain, this event will be moved into the Minnetonka Community Center.



Decorate pumpkins to your heart's delight at the frightfully fun fall family festival!