



minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
October 2008



150 YEARS
of STATEHOOD
1858-2008

FIRE DEPARTMENT AND CITY-WIDE OPEN HOUSE IS OCT. 7

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. 7, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Minnetonka Civic Center campus, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd.

This year, join the city in celebrating Minnesota's sesquicentennial! Strolling characters will be dressed in costumes from the mid 1850s, and will be handing out facts about the state's history. 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, strolling characters and entertainment. Bring a digital camera so you don't miss this year's great photo opportunities!



YEARLY FAVORITES!

- Ride in a fire truck. (5-8 p.m., Fire Station.)
- Sit inside heavy equipment from the public works department, and have your picture taken. Don't forget to pick up an ice pop or hot chocolate! (5-8 p.m., Community Center south entrance)
- Enjoy entertainment from the cast of Minnetonka High School's fall musical "South Pacific" (5:15-6:15 p.m., Community Center), followed by 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! (5-8 p.m., Community Center)
- Browse displays from city departments and boards and commissions; as well as community organizations. (5-8 p.m., Community Center lower level)
- See woodcarving demonstrations (5-8 p.m., Community Center upper level)
- Snack on free refreshments, including hot dogs and pop (5-8 p.m., Fire Station) and cookies, popcorn, and lemonade. (5-8 p.m., Community Center)



EXCITING ACTIVITIES!

- Take a tour of the Minnetonka Police Department's jail and visit with members of the city's Emergency Response Team. (5-8 p.m., police department)
- Get moving with activities sponsored by Recreation Services. (5-8 p.m., Community Center lower level)
- View this year's photo contest entries and vote for your favorite (5-8 p.m., Community Center lower level)
- Find the four strolling characters representing a slice of Minnesota's history, and learn more about the history of the state! (5-8 p.m.)



General election is Tuesday, November 4

THE GENERAL ELECTION IS SET FOR Tuesday, November 4, with federal, state, and county offices to be on the ballot. There is also a constitutional amendment question on the ballot. Minnetonka traditionally has a very high voter turnout for presidential elections, so please read on in order to ensure that your voting experience goes as smoothly as possible.

For more specific or current information about these topics, call Minnetonka City Hall at (952) 939-8204 or visit the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com.

What's on the ballot?

Offices on the general election ballot are:

- President/Vice President
- U.S. Senator
- U.S. Representative (District 3)
- State Representative (Districts 33B, 42A and 43B)
- County Commissioner (District 6)
- Three Rivers Park Commissioner (District 4)
- Soil and Water Commissioner (Districts 1, 3, 5)
- Judicial races

In addition, a constitutional amendment question on the ballot will be on the ballot. No local issues are slated for the general election ballot.

Who can vote absentee?

Absentee voting is available if you cannot get to the polling place on Election Day due to absence from the precinct; illness or disability; religious observance; or service as an election judge in another precinct.

How do I vote absentee?

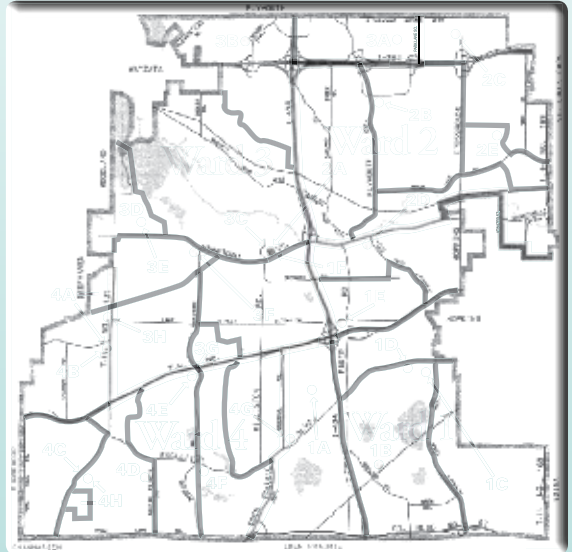
- **In person:** Minnetonka voters may vote absentee at Minnetonka City Hall or at the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Extended absentee voting hours will also be available at both locations on Saturday, November 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and on Monday, November 3, until 5 p.m.
- **By mail:** Absentee voting also may be done by mail. Remember, the voted ballot must be received at city hall by Election Day for the vote to count. Please allow sufficient time for postal service delivery.

Minnetonka Wards and Precincts

Ward Boundary	Precinct Numbers	4A
Precinct Lines	Polling Locations	•

Polling Locations

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1A Glen Lake Elementary School
4801 Woodridge Road | 3D/ 3E 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 | 3F Minnetonka Lutheran Church
16023 Minnetonka Boulevard | 4E Redeemer Bible Church
16031 Woodland Curve |
| 1C Cross of Glory Baptist Church
4600 Shady Oak Road | 3G Redeemer Bible Church
16031 Woodland Curve | 4F All Saints Lutheran Church
15915 Excelsior Boulevard |
| 1D Faith Presbyterian Church
12007 Excelsior Boulevard | 3H 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 | 4A/ 4B 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 | 4C Minnetonka District Service Center
5621 County Road 101 | |
| 2A Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard | | |
| 2B Ridgedale Hennepin County Library
12601 Ridgedale Drive | | |
| 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 and where do I vote?

Polling places will open at 7 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4, and remain open until 8 p.m. If you are in line at 8 p.m., you will be allowed to vote.

There have been two polling place changes since 2007: Voters in Ward 4, Precinct C and Ward 4, Precinct H will now vote at the Minnetonka District Service Center at 5621 County Road 101. Notices were sent to affected voters in August. All other polling locations in the city have remained the same. To find your specific polling location, visit www.emminnetonka.com and click on Elections, then click on Polling place finder.

Voters may only vote in person at their assigned polling place. Be sure to know your correct polling place — it will save you time.

Can I register to vote on Election Day?

Minnesota allows voters to register to vote at the polls on Election Day. You will need to register if you have never registered to vote; you have changed your name or address (including just moving to another apartment in the same building) since you last voted; or if you have not voted in four years.

What identification is needed to register?

Minnesota state law requires specific forms of identification to register at the polling place. For information about these forms, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Elections, the click on Voting ID.

General Election, continued on next page

Flashpoints

From the Minnetonka Fire Department



IN FIREFIGHTING LINGO, A FLASHPOINT is the temperature at which combustible materials can 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. 5 – 11

Fire Prevention Week 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 to October 1871, when two fires — the Great Chicago Fire and the Peshtigo, Wisc. Fire — killed more than 1,400 people, destroyed 16 towns and blackened more than 1.2 million acres.

This year's National Fire Prevention Week is October 5 through 11, with the theme "Prevent Home Fires." The Minnetonka Fire Department encourages residents to take this one step further by practicing both of their ReadyMinnetonka plans: a fire escape plan and an emergency plan.

Fire escape plans

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, or other area outside your home where family members can meet once they have left the home. Now that you have developed

the plan, practice it by sounding a smoke detector and having everyone evacuate to the meeting place.

Family emergency plans

A second plan that should be in place is a family emergency plan, which is also simple to create. Meet with all family members to discuss how to respond to all types of emergencies that could occur, including flooding, power outages and storms. Then, take the following steps:

- Decide on a storm shelter, which should be a small, windowless room on the lowest level of the home.
- 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 or valve.
- Pick a meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Choose two contacts (one local and one out-of-state) for family members to call in case of emergency.

ReadyMinnetonka

Visit the city of Minnetonka's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com for more information on ReadyMinnetonka and other emergency preparations you can make. If you have questions or would like more information, email ready@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8334.



The ReadyMinnetonka email listserv is another method by which Minnetonka residents, businesses and organizations may be notified of significant events affecting the city. It's designed to be another notification method, in addition to a NOAA weather radio and related equipment. To be added to the listserv, email ready@eminnetonka.com.

Third Quarter Activities

During the third quarter of 2008, the fire department responded to about 100 calls for service. Approximately 15 volunteer firefighters respond to every regular call, while 40 volunteers report to structure fires.

Among the more significant events this quarter:

- Residential structure fires on Fairlawn Drive, Spring Crest Drive, Michael Lane and Sunset Drive;
- An apartment building fire on 34th Street West;
- A nursing home fire on Wayzata Boulevard;
- A dumpster fire in a row-garage building on Cedar Bend;
- A trench rescue in Eden Prairie; and
- Assisting the police in removing a cat from between walls in a building on Excelsior Boulevard. ☺

General election, continued

Where will election results be available?

Results will be posted on the Minnesota Secretary of State's Web site at www.sos.state.mn.us and the Hennepin County Web site at www.hennepin.us.

What is the city's role in the election?

Although no local issues are on the ballot, the city plays a key role in the election process. City staff recruits and trains elections judges; provides polling place supplies; answers questions; and ensures voter results are sent to Hennepin County. The city thanks all of the

wonderful election judges who maintain the integrity of the voting process.

For more information

Because the General Election is set for Tuesday, Nov. 4 — very close to the first of the month — all General Election information is provided in this *Minnetonka Memo*. Be sure to visit our Web site, or contact city hall for the latest updates.

We encourage you to get out and vote on November 4. Contact city hall at (952) 939-8200 if you need assistance. ☺

Stalking the burdock plant

MANY PEOPLE MISTAKENLY CALL burdock (*Arctium minus*) wild rhubarb because the large leaves look very similar to true rhubarb in size and arrangement. If you're wondering which of these you have, look at the leaf undersides and stems; if they have tiny, soft, whitish hairs, the plant is likely burdock. There is no wild rhubarb in Minnesota.

Burdock is a widely distributed Eurasian weed with large leaves and a stout taproot that can be found across the continental United States. Locally, it's found in unmaintained open areas, woods, pastures and feedlots. It spreads only by seed.

Burdock is a biennial that completes its full life cycle in two growing seasons, producing a rosette of very large leaves the first year — the stage that looks like rhubarb — and a tall branched stem with flowers the second year. The second-year stem can grow up to six feet tall and have many alternating branches. Stem leaves are egg-shaped and become smaller toward the top of the stalk. The flowers occur mid-summer in clusters at the top and in the leaf axils of second-year plants. They look much like thistle flowers with lavender, thread-like petals.

The short-lived flower sits on top of a half-inch-diameter ball-shaped green bur that turns brown in early autumn. With their small hooked barbs, burs easily cling to clothing, shoes, and animal fur. Each bur contains about 40 seeds. Once the seed has ripened, the whole plant turns brown and dies. Inside the burrs of the dead plant are viable seed.

Understanding this plant's life cycle allows easy control without herbicide



Large burdock taproot



Burdock seedhead burrs

during two stages of the plant's life. Seedling plants can be easily dug when the tap root is small. Once the plants are larger, digging is very difficult, since taproots can grow one to two feet deep. If the tap root is cut with a shovel, the plant grows back similar to a dandelion.

At the end of the plant's life cycle, the brown burs containing seeds can be cut off of the dead plant and bagged or burned. Since it is likely that many weed seeds remain in the soil, these two techniques will likely need to be done annually until the seed bank in the soil is exhausted.

More fun facts about burdock

- The barbs on the burs of burdock were the inspiration for Velcro, invented in the early 1940s by Swiss inventor George De Mestral.
- The taproots of young burdock plants are eaten in Asia, particularly in Japan where *Arctium lappa* (greater burdock) is harvested and eaten as a root vegetable. Burdock root is crisp, sweet and mild, with a pungent flavor.
- Burdock is a traditional medicinal herb that is used for many ailments, and generally referred to as a "blood purifier." Though the roots of the plant are most commonly used for medicinal purposes, all parts of the plant have their recommended uses. Burdock root oil extract is popular in Europe as a scalp treatment applied to improve hair strength, shine and body, help reverse scalp conditions such as dandruff, and combat hair loss.
- Though burdock is not widely used relative to many other botanicals, it is still employed by some herbalists as a diuretic, as a laxative, for rheumatic complaints, to treat gout, and to relieve various skin problems including eczema, psoriasis, boils and sores. Burdock is typically consumed as a tea. ☺

Gypsy moth eggs found in city

A RECENT SURVEY BY THE MINNESOTA Department of Agriculture (MDA) found that an isolated population of gypsy moths has become established in Minnetonka. Ranked as one of America's single most destructive pest of trees and shrubs, this infestation is a threat to trees on both private and public land in Minnetonka.

Earlier this month, MDA conducted a survey looking for egg masses — telltale signs of a self-sustaining gypsy moth infestation. The goal of the survey was to determine if there is a viable gypsy moth population and if additional management efforts are needed. Conducted by MDA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the city of Minnetonka, the survey targeted Minnetonka due to a high number of male moths detected in previous general statewide survey efforts.

The effort turned up several egg masses, and based on this finding, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be working closely with the residents as well as city and federal cooperators in the next several months on management efforts to eradicate this population of gypsy moths before they can spread.

Gypsy moths were introduced to America from Europe in the 1860s in an attempt to breed a hardier silk worm. Instead, the caterpillars escaped and headed for the trees with disastrous effects. Their ability to feed and survive on more than 300 trees and woody plant species makes the moths at home in North America as they slowly spread westward in recent decades. Gypsy moth populations are currently established from Wisconsin to the east coast.

People often unknowingly transport this pest to new areas. Gypsy moth egg masses are usually deposited on trees, houses or any outdoor household gear. Individual egg masses can contain between 500 and 1,000 moth eggs. These eggs hatch into caterpillars in the spring and each caterpillar can eat up to three square feet of foliage in its lifetime.

Residents should be on the lookout for these buff-colored egg masses, which are about the size of a quarter. If you find an egg mass, immediately call the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Arrest the Pest Hotline at (651) 201-MOTH (6684). ☺



Gypsy moth egg mass

Use common sense to spot con artists

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO SPOT CON artists. They're smart, extremely persuasive, and aggressive. They invade your home through the telephone, computer, and the mail; advertise in well-known newspapers and magazines; and come to your door. They're well mannered, friendly, and helpful — at first. Most people think they're too smart to fall for a scam. But con artists rob all kinds of people — from investment counselors and doctors to teenagers and senior citizens — of billions of dollars every year. Cons, scams, and frauds disproportionately victimize seniors with false promises of miracle cures, financial security, and luxury prizes. One easy rule to remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Protect yourself

- Never give out your credit card, phone card, Social Security number, or bank account number over the phone.
- Beware of 900 numbers. Remember, if you call a 900 number to claim a "prize," you end up paying for the call. Make sure you understand all charges before making the call.
- Take your time and shop around. Don't let an aggressive con artist pressure you into making a decision. Ask your family, friends, and neighbors what they think about certain offers.
- Stay informed about current scams in your area. Contact the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, district

Dial-a-Ride fares increase by 25 cents

AS PART OF THE REGIONAL METRO Transit fare increase, fixed route and Dial-a-Ride transit fares will increase 25 cents on October 1, 2008. The new Lake Minnetonka Dial-a-Ride fare will be \$2.25 per trip. In addition, Metro Mobility service will increase by 50 cents. Additional information on fare increases can be found at www.metrotransit.org.



attorney's office, or the Better Business Bureau for more information.

- Remember, you have the right, the ability, and the power to say no! If the caller on the other end of the phone makes you wary, be assertive and end the conversation. Cons know that the longer they keep you on the phone, the higher their chance of success. By saying no and hanging up the phone, you can prevent a crime from taking place.

Be a wise consumer

Look closely at offers that come in the mail. Con artists often use official-looking forms and language and bold graphics to lure victims. If you receive items in the mail that you didn't order, you are under no obligation to pay for them.

Beware of cheap home repair work that would otherwise be expensive. The con artist may do only part of the work, use shoddy materials and untrained workers, or simply take your deposit and never return. Never pay with cash. Never accept offers from drive-up workers who "just happen" to be in the neighborhood. If they're reliable, they'll come back after you check them out.

If you are conned

Don't be embarrassed to report con games to your local police department. Chances are you're not alone in being conned — other very smart people have been taken in by these pros!

Minnetonka parks readied for winter

THIS MONTH, MINNETONKA PARK STAFF will shut down and winterize all outdoor drinking fountains as well as the restrooms at Big Willow, Guiliams, and Lone Lake parks. Restrooms are available for park and trail users year-round at Meadow, Gro Tonka and Purgatory parks.



Open house dates set for SWLRT

THE NEXT PHASE OF THE SOUTHWEST Transitway (SWLRT) study has begun, and now is the time to join the conversation about the proposed transitway, which would serve Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis.

As part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement phase, the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority will host meetings to give the public an opportunity to review and comment on the three transitway routes under consideration. These meetings are scheduled for:

- **Tuesday, October 7**
Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis
Open house: 2 p.m.
Meeting: 3 p.m.
- **Tuesday, October 14**
St. Louis Park City Hall
Open house: 5 p.m.
Meeting: 3 p.m.
- **Thursday, October 23**
Eden Prairie Community Center
Open house: 5 p.m.
Meeting: 6 p.m.

For more detailed information about meetings or to learn more about the study, visit www.southwesttransitway.org. Information is also available in the Minnetonka City Hall lobby.

MAM presents October concerts

THE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF Minnetonka will present the following free October concerts. For more information call (952) 401-5954 or visit www.musicassociation.org.

"I've Heard That Somewhere" Concert

Minnetonka Concert Band — Dan Geldert, director
Thursday, October 9, 7:30 pm
Black Box Theater at
Minnetonka High School
18301 Highway 7, Minnetonka

"Spooktacular" Concert

Minnetonka Symphony Orchestra
Saturday & Sunday, October 25 & 26,
both at 3:30 pm
Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Blvd. Minnetonka



2008 MINNETONKA RECYCLING UPDATE

Fall Leaf Drop-off Program

Saturdays: October 25, November 1, 8 and 15

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 shown below. Brush larger than **½ 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., ¼ 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

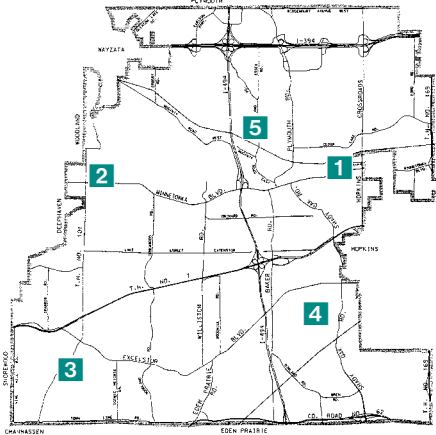
5621 Hwy. 101 (at Hanus Rd.)

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 25 and November 1, 8 & 15.

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:

- **Saturdays:** 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 4, 11, 18, and 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, and 22
- **Mondays:** Noon to 8 p.m. Oct. 6, 13, 20, and 27, Nov. 3, 10, and 17
- **Tuesdays:** Noon to 8 p.m. Oct. 7, 14, 21, and 28, Nov. 4, and 18 (closed Nov. 11 for Veteran's Day)

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 closes Nov. 22

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 site will be closed Veteran's Day, Nov. 11. Brush drop-off ends November 22, 2008.

The brush drop-off is located at Minnetonka Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd. 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. Proof of Minnetonka residency (driver's license or utility bill) is required to drop off brush.

Please note: trash, metal, concrete, lumber, fences, or wood scraps are **not** accepted. **Do not** bring these materials with your load of brush. **Do not** put grass, weeds, loose leaves, dirt, sod or other non woody materials in with the brush pile. Find the appropriate disposal option for the unacceptable items. No brush will be accepted from commercial tree or lawn services.

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

Stuff to get rid of?

WHILE IT MIGHT BE TEMPTING TO place that velvet loveseat at the side of the curb with a "free" sign and hope it disappears, the sight of these castaways lingering at curb's edge is not always so appealing to neighbors — not to mention that the outdoor elements may quickly transform these reusable items into garbage, useless to anyone.

Instead, consider listing your reusable items with the Twin Cities Free Market, located online at www.twincitiesfreemarket.org. Funding for the service is provided by the city of St. Paul and several metro-area counties, including Hennepin County. In addition, there are many commercial Web sites, such as Craig's List (www.craigslist.org) at which you may list your unwanted, but usable, free items.

For more information about businesses that trade, repair, buy, resell or accept donations of unwanted clothing and household goods, visit Hennepin County's Choose to Reuse Directory — visit www.hennepin.us and enter keyword search: choose to reuse directory.

For more information, contact Dean Elstad, city of Minnetonka recycling coordinator, at (952) 988-8430. ☞

Ask Minnetonka Mike: Plastics Recycling



MINNETONKA MIKE, THE CITY OF Minnetonka's online request system, is always standing by to help you with any questions, comments or concerns you may have about your city. This month, Mike received several recycling questions, so he's invited Dean Elstad, city of Minnetonka recycling coordinator, to be this month's guest columnist.

Dear Minnetonka Mike:

Even though I've heard that in Minnetonka only plastic containers with a neck can be recycled, I throw all my plastic containers in the recycling bin—yogurt cups, margarine tubs, produce containers—and the recycler takes them away each week. This means they're getting recycled, right?

Signed, Penny Plastic

Dear Penny:

"I receive more questions about plastics than any other recyclable material," Dean Elstad explains. "It is a confusing and often frustrating material, because more and more items are packed and sold in plastic, and much of it looks the same. And, much to their credit, Minnetonka residents want to recycle as many items as they can.

"The rules for recycling plastics are determined by technology, as well as by supply-and-demand economics. Plastic bottles (those with necks) are blow molded, meaning the bottle is created by blowing air into a mold, similar to blowing air into a balloon. In contrast, the tub, tray, jar, or cup-shaped plastic and other plastic packaging are injection molded, meaning the plastic is stamped into its shape. Because these plastics melt and cool at different temperatures, they are not compatible in the reprocessing stage.

"Sorting the different plastics into acceptable mixes takes a significant amount of resources at the Waste Management recyclable processing center in Minneapolis. Mechanical, manual and optical scanner sorting are all used to prepare the correct plastic items ready to be shipped to processors. Items not accepted in the mix are included in the discards and taken to an incinerator or landfill. In the worst-case scenario,

unacceptable items not caught in the sort cycle may end up contaminating an entire load of recycled plastic, rendering it unusable.

"So in answer to your question, don't assume that because it disappears from your recycling bin on pickup day that it is being recycled. When you throw plastic items into your recycling that are not acceptable recycling materials, the recycling company may take them, but at the sorting facility they are either thrown into the garbage, or they end up contaminating an entire load of recycled plastic."

Remember: The **only** acceptable plastics for the Minnetonka recycling program are plastic bottles that come to a neck. Please rinse bottles clean, and discard all caps, tops, lids, or pumps, as these are not recyclable. Plastic bottles that contained motor oil should be thrown in the garbage.

Dear Mike:

I understand why different types of plastic can't be mixed in the recycling process, but I still don't understand why we don't recycle plastic tubs, produce containers, and other plastic packaging. Couldn't Minnetonka lead the way on this?

Signed, Avid Recycler

Dear Avid:

"A working recycling system depends not only on a supply of plastic waste but also on a demand for recycled plastics, and there hasn't been much growth in end markets that use the non-bottle grade reclaimed plastic as raw material for new items," Dean says. "However, some limited growth is occurring, and as a result some places are beginning to accept injection molded plastic for recycling.

"Most recently, the city of Coon Rapids began accepting other plastic containers at its staffed recycling drop-off center, and found a local processor to take the items. Residents sort the items into specially marked bins. If you would like to take your plastic to Coon Rapids, visit <http://tinyurl.com/5q2s4t>.

"Since Minnetonka's drop-off center is unattended and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, additional containers to collect

more plastics are not planned at this time. Supervision of the sort process is required, as plastics not properly sorted at the source become garbage."

"As far as leading the way, Minnetonka and Minneapolis were the only two cities that participated in Hennepin County's initial curbside plastics collection pilot in 1990, accepting pop, milk, water and laundry product bottles. Since then, we have expanded to accepting all plastic bottles with necks (except those that contain motor oil or hazardous waste). In 1991, we tried to expand the mix to include #1 and #2 tubs and trays, with the thought that a ready supply might create an end market. It didn't work, and in 1992 we returned to recycling only plastic bottles with necks. It's been that way ever since.

"We continue to ask Waste Management, our recycling processor since 1990, about expanding the acceptable materials. I hope we are eventually able to find ways to add the currently unacceptable plastic items, but for now there simply isn't a demand for this type of plastic."

Thank you Dean, for taking over my column today and answering residents' recycling questions! If you have more questions for Dean Elstad, city of Minnetonka recycling coordinator, contact him at delstad@eminnetonka.com or at (952) 939-8430.

If you have a question, comment or concern about the city of Minnetonka, let Minnetonka Mike know! It's easy to set up an account. Just visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Minnetonka Mike. Follow the directions to set up your account, then go ahead and submit your comment. ☺

October 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.

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.

Services offered at the center include blood pressure checks, health insurance counseling, outreach, HOME, bus trips, hearing screening, foot care and community resources. Call (952) 939-8393 for information.

The following groups meet at senior services and welcome new participants: art drop in, adopt-a-highway, AA, Al-Anon, billiards, bingo, bridge, chess, computer, book clubs, ham radio, 500, quilting, Red Hat Society, writing groups, singles, readers theater, woodcarving and discussion groups.

Defensive Driving Classes

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

Four-Hour Day Course

Thursday, Oct. 2, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Refreshments provided but no lunch. \$18

Four-Hour Night Course

Monday, Oct. 20, 6–10 p.m.

Refreshments provided. \$18

Special Events

Call (952) 939-8393 to register.

Oktoberfest

Friday, Oct. 3, 12 p.m.

Join the senior center in celebrating fall and feast on bratwurst, German potato salad, cantaloupe and dessert. Larry Malmberg will perform. Event takes place at the Shady Oak Beach Picnic Shelter (in the event of inclement weather, alternate location is the Minnetonka Community Center dining room). Cost is \$7, due by Oct. 1.

Come Dance with Me

Friday, Oct. 10, 6–10 p.m.

The second annual community ballroom dance will take place at the Eisenhower

Community Center in Hopkins, and will feature the Big Band Sounds of Dick Macko. Cost is \$10 for pre-registration, \$13 at the door.

Grand Canyon Presentation

Monday, Oct. 13, 1 p.m.

Steve and Barb Pieh will present a slide show and talk about rafting through the Grand Canyon. Free. Register by Oct. 10.

Anniversary Party

Thursday, Oct. 16, 12 p.m.

The Minnetonka Senior Center celebrates its 28th anniversary. Cliff Brunzell and the Golden Strings will perform. Menu includes baked chicken, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, dinner roll and dessert. Cost is \$9, due by Oct. 8.

Fujiyama Trays and Oshibori Towels

Thursday, Oct. 23, 1 p.m.

Hear Anne Kerr's stories of being an airline stewardess in the 1950s. Feel free to share your stories too. Refreshments provided. Cost is \$2, due by Oct. 21.

TV Going Digital

Friday, Oct. 24, 10 a.m.

Attend a free informational meeting about television sets going digital as of Feb. 18, 2009. The new change will not affect TVs connected to cable, satellite, or fiber optic services. Registration required.

Using Your Body Wisely

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 10:30 a.m.

Hear an overview of arthritis and learn how to protect joints during daily living. Refreshments provided. Cost is \$2, due by Oct. 27.

Agnes Daluge's Heroic Efforts of WWII

Monday, Nov. 10, 10:30 a.m.

Come listen to the story of Agnes Daluge, an undercover teenager during WWII, as told by her husband Willard Daluge of Eden Prairie. Refreshments provided. Cost is \$2, due by Nov. 5.

Meet the Author

Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1 p.m.

Meet Author Judy McCabe. Refreshments provided. Cost is \$2, due by Nov. 17.

Special Interest Groups

Digital Camera Help

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Glen Keener will help you with your digital camera during half-hour segments. Call (952) 939-8393 to schedule an appointment. Bring your camera to your appointment!

Garden Club

2nd Monday, 1 p.m.

Enjoy a variety of speakers, discussions, hands-on events and tours.

Poetry Group

1st Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Enjoy readings from a variety of poets, sharing, and writing poetry.

500 Cards Daytime Group

2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 9 a.m.

Sheephead

1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 9 a.m.

Trips

Old Log Theater "Unnecessary Farce"

Wednesday, Oct. 8, 11:05 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.

Cost is \$45, includes lunch, show, transportation and escort.

Fall Festival at the Waconia Lakeside Ballroom

Wednesday, Oct. 22, 10:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Cost is \$36, includes lunch, entertainment, transportation and escort.

Baker Park Hike

Thursday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Cost is \$2, includes beverage, transportation and escort.

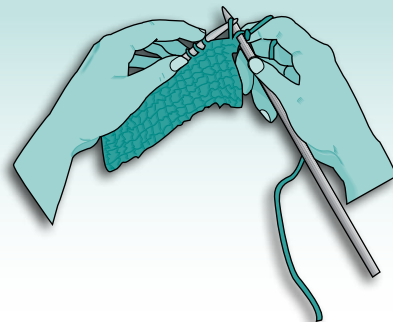
Victorian Christmas

Thursday, Dec. 4, 10:15 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Cost is \$56, includes lunch, tours, transportation and escort. ☺

Mills Landing Gift Shoppe

Stop by the Mills Landing Gift Shoppe, 12810 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, to browse a collection of homemade gifts. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information visit the store Web site at www.millslandingshoppe.com, or call (952) 933-5214. ☺



Soil—it's not just for standing on

TREES, SHRUBS AND PLANTS NEED healthy soil to maintain strength, especially during the summer. For lush vegetation that does not require constant watering, consider supplementing your soil.

Soil is a dynamic system, composed of minerals, organic matter, water, and air. It is the medium that allows plants to grow, and it soaks up and stores water and nutrients until the plant needs them. Soil is formed over time and develops horizons, or sections, like layers in a cake. Each layer has a different composition and is gradually changed over time by several factors, including climate and the organisms living around it.

Humans modify soils in a short amount of time by scraping off layers for construction, compacting it with heavy machinery, or moving soil to create homes. Many of these activities change the soil structure forever, making it a difficult place for plants to grow.

A plant in compacted soil may wilt and be more susceptible to drought stress in the summer, may not grow as fast as it should, and may show more dead twigs and brown needles during a cold winter with little snow cover. Compacted soil makes it harder for roots to expand through the soil and find available water. A lack of water leads to a



lack of resources to support the plant in extreme weather, resulting in a stressed and stunted plant that is more susceptible to insects and fungal attacks.

While picking up leaves, branches and other plant debris keeps the lawn tidy, it robs the soil of valuable replenishing nutrients. Before applying fertilizer, consider testing the soil first to determine the pH level and nutrient needs.

You can improve the soil structure and add nutrients to your soil by adding organic material such as shredded wood mulch, shredded leaves or compost in your planting area, or the drip line underneath a tree. The drip line of the tree can be found by drawing an invisible line from the outer branch tips to the ground. If you are planting a new tree, or cultivating a garden you can incorporate the material into the first 2–3 inches of soil before planting. If you are trying to improve the soil structure under a tree, do not till or dig up the area in the drip line of the tree since this will disrupt the tree's root system, which exists primarily in the first 12" of soil. Instead, place a 2–4 inch thick layer of organic material around tree, making sure not to pile it next to the tree's stem.

Organic material helps break up compacted soil as it decomposes; creating channels for water and roots to move through. It also provides a food source for microorganisms which will act to accelerate decomposition, improving and maintaining soil structure.

For information on conducting a soil test in your yard, go to: <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>.

For more information on mulch and compost, go to: http://www.forestry.umn.edu/extension/urban_com/MulchingComposting.html. ☺

Residents measure wetland health

THIS YEAR, 20 MINNETONKA RESIDENTS spent 326 hours—about 16 hours per person—volunteering to monitor Minnetonka wetlands as part of the Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP).

This is the seventh year that Minnetonka has participated in WHEP, a program that began in Dakota County in 1997 as an opportunity for citizens to gather data to assess the general health of wetlands in their community as well as gain some first-hand experience with these complex ecosystems. Minnetonka joined the program when it expanded into Hennepin County in 2002.

Each year, Minnetonka residents volunteer to monitor four wetlands in the city. Each of the wetlands is typically monitored for at least two years, so since Minnetonka joined the WHEP, 15 Minnetonka wetlands have been monitored.

Volunteers work in the field under the direction of a county-appointed team leader, and are trained in field methods as well as plant and invertebrate identification. Volunteers use protocols designed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to collect and analyze their data.

Each June, the volunteers set and check bottle traps as well as use dip nets to sample invertebrates in the wetlands, storing the samples for later identification in the lab. In July, small plots selected to represent the vegetation in the whole wetland are set up to identify plant life.

Each city team that participates in the program conducts a cross-check of a wetland in another community, and one wetland in each community is checked independently by trained staff familiar with the methods used. The data from each season is compiled and used to calculate an index of biological diversity for each wetland. Most of the wetlands monitored in Minnetonka have been rated as having moderate levels of diversity, but a few have rated higher.

In addition to providing valuable information about Minnetonka's wetlands, volunteers occasionally encounter unique plants and animals in the wetlands as well as often have some fun in the process.

To learn more about the program, visit www.mnwhp.org. If you are interested in volunteering for the Minnetonka team, please look for an announcement in the *Minnetonka Memo* next spring. ☺



Minnetonka named a “Watershed Hero”

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA RECENTLY received the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's 2008 Watershed Hero Innovation in Government Award for its land conservation program and for its commitment to environmental restoration and protection in development and redevelopment efforts. Awards were presented at a reception in late September. ☺

City council establishes 2009 budget directions and priorities

ON SEPTEMBER 15, THE MINNETONKA city council set priorities and directions for the city's 2009 budget, and also established a preliminary tax levy. The council will review budget proposals details in November and December, prior to adoption of the city's final budget and levy.

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 ongoing ability to provide residents and businesses with the quality services they have come to expect, and at a reasonable price.

Budget pressures

Similar to the private sector, the city's cost of doing business is facing increasing pressures. Unlike private businesses, however, the city cannot unilaterally choose its client base, nor the services it wishes to sell, nor even the geographic market areas it serves.

About 75 percent of the city's operating budget is spent on personnel costs, including salaries, health insurance and the state-managed pension plans. Over the last three years, salaries have increased modestly—by 2.25 percent, 2.25 percent and 3 percent. However, despite an employee wellness program, the city's health insurance premiums are going up 16 percent next year. Additionally, Minnetonka is obligated to pay an additional \$200,000 in pension contributions to the state public employee retirement fund in 2009.

Like all residents and businesses, energy costs continue to outpace all other operating expenses. Although the city has adopted an aggressive energy conservation plan, savings in usage have not been able to completely offset the dramatic rise in fuel and natural gas rates. For example, the city's energy conservation program has managed to save approximately 137,000 kilowatt-hours of electrical energy over the last year. However, fuel costs have risen 45 percent and natural gas costs have risen 59 percent since 2006.

Budget directives

Recognizing that city property owners face similar inflation pressures at a time of increasing economic uncertainty, the city council directed staff to cut \$600,000 out of the projected 2009 budget in order to limit the levy increase for basic city services to no more than 5.2 percent. Taxes would increase another 0.9 percent for debt

Council budget direction

- Cut \$600,000 from projected 2009 budget and put \$500,000 of capital projects on hold
- Limit tax increase for basic services to **5.2%**
- Additional **0.9%** for debt service on **voter-approved park and open space bonds**
- Consider additional **0.7%** levy for **HRA services**

service on the voter-approved park and open space bonds.

Meeting these guidelines, will require a number of actions including:

- an immediate "soft freeze" on replacing vacancies;
- funding any new initiatives in 2009 by reallocating current resources, freezing non-personnel costs at current levels and continuing the city's aggressive program to reduce energy use; and
- Putting \$500,000 of capital projects on hold, and restructuring some fees so that development pays its own way.

In addition to the costs for regular operating programs and capital projects, the city's Economic Development Authority (EDA) has recommended adoption of a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy to support the city's housing and economic development programs. The largely one-time sources of funding for these efforts are rapidly being diminished and the recent decrease in housing values presents an opportunity to purchase homes or properties for less than historical prices.

The city council approved for further discussion an HRA levy \$200,000, which would increase the total levy by another 0.7 percent. If approved in December, these additional funds would be used to meet the Metropolitan Council's assigned goals for affordable housing in Minnetonka and to finance some of the city's costs of future redevelopment needs in such areas as the

I-394 corridor, Minnetonka Mills and Opus business parks.

Minnetonka's proposed total levies for basic services, voter-approved bonds and HRA programs is in the lower one-half of the increases being considered by other cities. The final 2009 levy and budget, to be adopted by council in December, cannot be greater than 6.8 percent over last year, but may be less.

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. Most of the variance between revenue collected and homeowner tax impact is due to the continued market shift in property tax burden to commercial properties. Recent turmoil in the real estate market has had less impact on commercial property values than on residential values.

Although 2009 property tax revenue would increase 6.8 percent for city services, voter-approved bonds and HRA levies, city property taxes will increase by 4.7 percent for the average Minnetonka homeowner. This increase is below the CPI (5.0%), and Government Price Deflator (6.2%).

City taxes only represent a portion of total property taxes. Minnetonka levies about 25 percent of the property taxes on homeowners. Total taxes (city, county, school) for the average homeowner in the state and metro area are projected to increase 4.7 and 4.2 percent respectively. Total property taxes in Southwest Hennepin County are expected to increase by 5.4 percent.

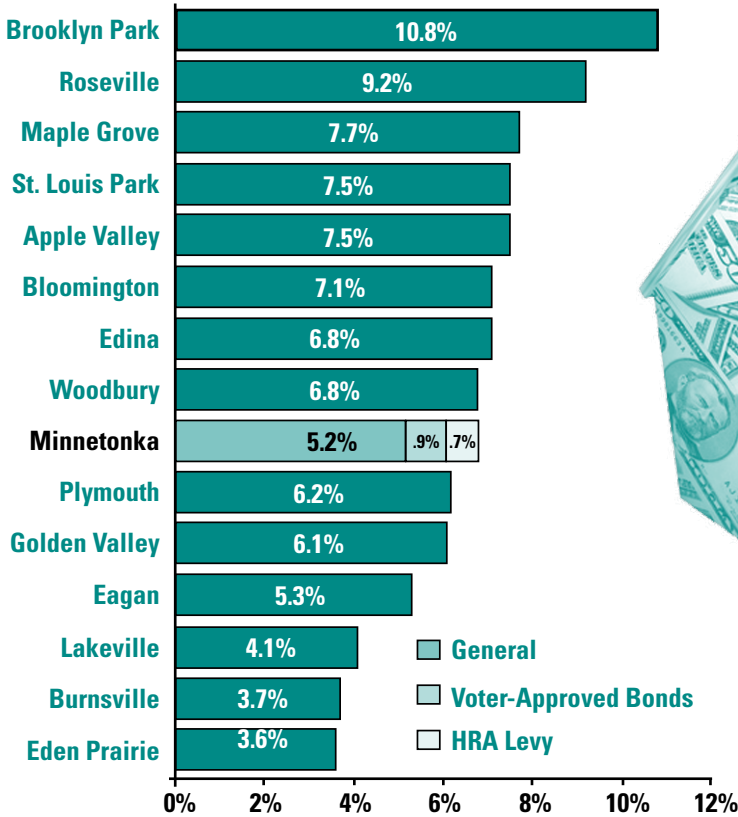
Responsible fiscal stewardship

As a result of responsible long-term financial planning, the city of Minnetonka continues to be better positioned than many other communities to deal with recurring budget pressures and state imposed mandates and limitations. The council's 2009 budget directives will again ensure the city's ongoing stability and quality delivery of services.

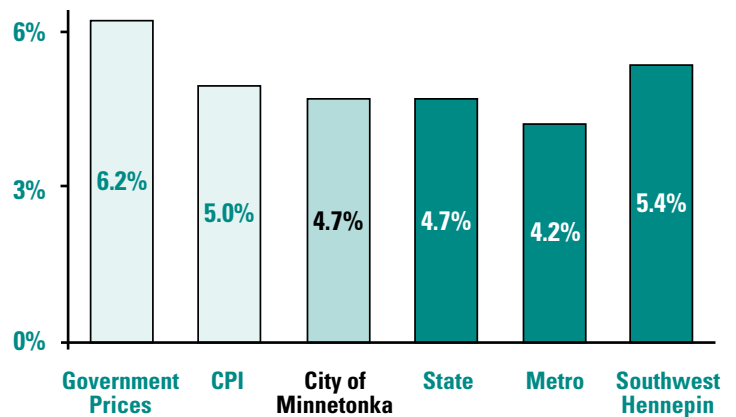
The city of Minnetonka always encourages public budget input. In addition to the Truth-in-Taxation hearing in December, residents and businesses have an opportunity to provide feedback via the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. Comments will be shared with council as budget options are considered. ♪

How do we compare?

Comparison to other cities 2009 Tax Increases



Average homeowner 2009 Tax Increase



Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

October
2008

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	2 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	7 Fire Department and City Open House, 5–8 p.m.
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	8 Park Board, 7 p.m.
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	13 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
26	27	28	29	30	31		14 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m. 16 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m. 27 City Council, 6:30 p.m.

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

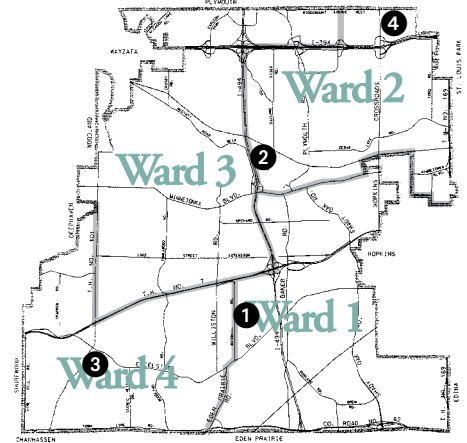
Minnetonka City Council and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16, and replays are available Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at noon, or anytime via videostream at www.eminnetonka.com. Agendas for council meetings are available on the city's Web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

STAYING INFORMED ABOUT CITY PROJECTS

The following projects are scheduled for October 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.

- 1 Conditional use permit for T-Mobile to place a 90-foot low-profile monopole telecommunications facility at **Glen Lake Elementary School, 4801 Woodridge Road.** (96011.08a)
- 2 Rezoning and preliminary plat for an Terratonka, an eight-lot, residential subdivision at 3100 Forest Lane and **3200 and 3218 Eldorado Trail West.** (92018.08a)
- 3 Setback variance for a deck addition at **5430 Tracy Lynn Terrace.** (08030.08a)
- 4 Conditional use permit and parking variance for Eddie Merlot's, a new restaurant building on the previous Stewart Anderson's Cattle Company site at **10600 Wayzata Boulevard.** (08017.08a)

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.



minnetonka
memo *October 2008*



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CITY OF MINNETONKA

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

Mayor

Janis Callison.....(952) 939-8389
..... Home: (952) 935-7010
..... jcallison@eminnetonka.com
Meetings with the mayor may be
scheduled by calling (952) 939-8211.

City Manager

John Gunyou.....(952) 939-8200

Newsletter Editor

Jacque Larson.....(952) 939-8200

E-mail:..... comments@eminnetonka.com

Internet:..... www.eminnetonka.com

Council

At Large: Dick Allendorf... (952) 933-6231 dallendorf@eminnetonka.com
Terry Schneider..... (952) 934-9529 tschneider@eminnetonka.com
Ward 1: Bob Ellingson (952) 931-3065 bellingson@eminnetonka.com
Ward 2: Tony Wagner..... (952) 512-1817 twagner@eminnetonka.com
Ward 3: Brad Wiersum.... (612) 817-3713 bwiersum@eminnetonka.com
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