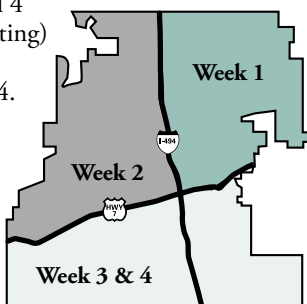


minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
April 2005

Street sweeping begins April 4

MINNETONKA PUBLIC WORKS WILL begin sweeping streets throughout the city on April 4 (weather permitting) and continue through April 24. Using a double shift, sweeping will start at 4:30 a.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. (see map to determine your area).



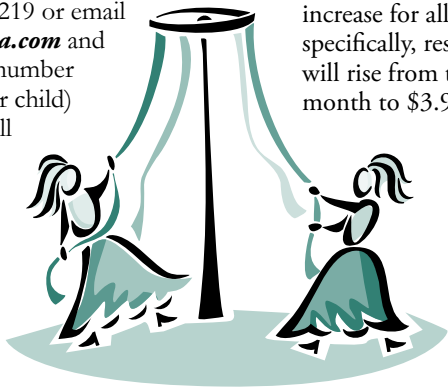
Water main flushing continues through April 15. During this flushing period, it is normal to experience some discolored water. This water is safe to drink and can be cleared up by running the cold water in your laundry tub.

If you have questions about street sweeping or water main flushing, call Public Works at (952) 988-8400. □

Celebrate spring with a May basket!

THE MINNETONKA COMMUNITY Heritage Commission invites you and your family to create May baskets and join in dancing around the Maypole Friday, April 29, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center.

The event is free, but donations will be accepted for the Burwell house furnishings fund. All supplies will be provided. Please register by Friday, April 22, to ensure enough supplies will be available. Call Laura Ronbeck at (952) 939-8219 or email lrnbeck@eminnetonka.com and leave the name, phone number and age group (adults or child) for each person who will attend. □



Watch out for school bus stop arms!

DRIVERS WHO DISOBEY SCHOOL BUS stop arms — it's a problem that's on the rise in the metro area, and Minnetonka is no exception. Drivers give many reasons for not stopping — they were late for work, or talking on the phone, or just not paying attention — but the consequences of that carelessness can be tragic.

The Minnetonka Police Department is concerned about the safety of children, and is working with local school bus transportation companies to reduce the incidence of these violations. Bus companies are providing a list of problem areas to the Minnetonka police, who will then devote special attention to those areas and issue citations to offending motorists.

School bus drivers or citizens who obtain a license number and driver description from a vehicle seen violating a stop arm may report that information to the police. Police officers may make probable cause arrests of drivers within four hours of a reported violation.

Penalties for school bus stop arm violations range from a petty misdemeanor, with a minimum \$300 fine, to a gross misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of \$3,000 and up to a year in jail for passing a school bus while children are present and the amber lights and stop arm are activated.

Please help keep children safe by slowing down, paying attention and anticipating children where school buses are present. Thanks for doing your part to keep our children safe! □



Municipal utility fees to increase, late payment fee added

ON MARCH 7, 2005, THE CITY COUNCIL adopted annual increases for municipal utility fees and adopted a new late payment fee for both residential and commercial customers. Fee increases include the following:

- Water rates will rise by \$0.05 per thousand gallons.
- Sanitary sewer rates will rise by \$0.10 per thousand gallons.
- Storm water utility fees will also increase for all classes of customers, and specifically, residential customer rates will rise from the current \$3.50 per month to \$3.95 per month.

In addition, a new late payment fee will be assessed against all accounts that are ten days past due. For residential accounts, the amount assessed will be a flat \$10 past due on a quarterly basis, and commercial accounts will be assessed 10 percent of the past due amount on a monthly basis.

All new rates and fees became effective April 1, 2005. □

Inside...

Caring youth recognized	page 2
Garage sale signs	page 2
Preserving open space	page 2
Coming soon to I-394...	page 3
Fertilizing and lawn care tips	page 3
Recycling update	page 4
Wetlands and you	page 5

Caring Youth recognized

FOURTEEN CARING YOUNG PEOPLE WERE RECOGNIZED TUESDAY, March 8, at the Minnetonka Community Center during the 2005 Caring Youth event. The cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins and Golden Valley, as well as the Minnetonka and Hopkins school districts, sponsor this annual program that recognizes young people in grades 7 through 12 who have given outstanding service to others. For more information about this year's Caring Youth award winners, visit www.eminnetonka.com.



This year's winners (nominators in parentheses) from left to right are: Alex Cooper (ICA); Kristine Miller (Stages Theatre Company); Jon Kent (The Depot Coffee House); Erika Schulte (We Can Ride, Inc.); Zhi Li (Hopkins High School); Katie Coldwell (St. Therese of Deephaven); Sarah Fish (Tri-Parish Youth Ministry); Lilly Carlon (Midwest Avian Adoption and Rescue Services, Inc.); Erica Haugen (All Saints Lutheran Church); Alexy Snede (Minnetonka Heights Apartments); Samantha Mehrotra (Methodist Hospital); and Giselle Ugarte (Breck School). Not pictured are Rachel Parnes (Girl Scouts) and Brook Tesfaye (Hopkins High School).

Planning a garage sale? Know the sign rules!

BABY ANIMALS, TULIPS AND GARAGE SALES — ALL HARBINGERS of spring in Minnesota! To prevent garage sale signs from multiplying like bunnies, the city of Minnetonka has a few rules, listed below.

- **Do** display signs from Thursday through Sunday only.
- **DON'T** post signs larger than three square feet or taller than six feet.
- **Do** limit signs to one per intersection, per garage sale.
- **DON'T** post signs on county or state highway right-of-way.
- **Do** post signs at least five feet from the edge of a public street.
- **DON'T** post signs where they will obstruct driver visibility.
- **Do** receive permission from the underlying property owner before posting signs.

If you have questions about garage sale signs, please call Kyle Sobota, Minnetonka Planning Department, at (952) 939-8293. □

Volunteers welcome

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED WITH YOUR CITY? Then consider participating in Minnetonka's new volunteer program! Share your skills and time working with staff members on specific projects and learn more about the city, its operations and its services. Gain the satisfaction of giving back to your community while helping the city stretch its tax dollars!

Volunteers can range in age from teens to older adults. Current volunteer opportunities include Burwell House tour guide, grounds maintenance, Hilloway Park restoration, history event staff, juvenile diversion program leader, maintenance, Minnetonka Mike mascot, oral history interviewers/transcribers, storm drain monitor, Summer Festival worker, utility billing assistant, police records assistant and wetland health evaluation program participant (see article below).

More information is available from the city Web site, www.eminnetonka.com (Volunteer Opportunities) or call Joan Post, volunteer coordinator, at (952) 939-8215. □

Wetland volunteers needed

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO WADE IN A WETLAND, GET YOUR hands muddy, and discover plants and animals that live in murky shallows? If so, consider volunteering with the Wetland Health Evaluation Project, a program that uses biological criteria to determine the health of wetlands within the city.

Volunteers work under the direction of a team leader and receive training on wetland monitoring protocol, including plant and insect identification. A science background or previous monitoring experience is not required to participate. The time commitment is approximately 40 to 50 hours per week from May through July and includes all training, field work and lab work. All equipment is provided. For more information contact Jo Collieran, environmental resources coordinator, at (952) 939-8299 or email jcolleran@eminnetonka.com. □

Preserving open space

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT PRESERVING OPEN SPACE IN YOUR neighborhood? You're not alone. The city of Minnetonka considers open space a valuable community asset and a feature that sets Minnetonka apart from its neighboring suburbs.

In response to concerns raised by neighborhoods about development, the Minnetonka City Council has set aside \$500,000 of the 2001 Park Referendum proceeds for neighborhood partnerships to save environmentally sensitive areas that might otherwise be developed.

The Neighborhood Match Program is especially helpful to neighborhoods when nearby property is proposed for subdivision or for lot splits that might threaten wooded areas or other environmentally sensitive areas.

The program allows the city to pay for up to 50 percent of the acquisition cost up to a maximum city contribution of \$50,000, with the neighbors contributing the balance.

This program will only be available until March 31, 2006, so act now if you're interested in preserving your neighborhood's open space. For more information call Kathy Magrew, assistant to the city manager, at (952) 939-8218, or email kmagrew@eminnetonka.com. □

Fertilizing and lawn care tips

ACCORDING TO A STUDY CONDUCTED SEVERAL YEARS AGO, most Minnetonka lawns already contain high or very high levels of phosphorus. Results of random soil testing of lawns in Minnetonka, Plymouth, Eden Prairie and Maple Grove show that people who fertilize their lawns applied far too much phosphorus. In general, Minnesota has soils already rich in phosphorus, which is harmful to wetlands, creeks, streams, rivers and lakes. One pound of phosphorus entering a storm sewer system can yield 500 pounds of algae growth.

State law restricts the sale and use of fertilizer containing phosphorus. Phosphorus is the middle of the three numbers, i.e. 10-0-10, on a bag of fertilizer. Look for a "zero" in the middle spot. **Please note:** if you have a newly seeded or sodded lawn, you may need phosphorus to promote root growth.

Testing your soil before purchasing any fertilizer will allow you to provide your lawn what it needs, not what is on sale. A soil test kit is available from the University of Minnesota (<http://soiltest.coafes.umn.edu>). A fee is charged for this service.

A few tips on properly applying fertilizer:

- Do not fertilize until the grass is actively growing and you are ready to mow, usually in mid-May.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions printed on the bag.
- Never fertilize before a heavy rain. Never apply fertilizer to wet grass, but water thoroughly after application.
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on hard surfaces where spills can be swept up. Never wash fertilizer spills into the street.
- Close the gate on the spreader when crossing over hard surfaces such as driveways, walkways, or patios.
- Rinse the spreader over the lawn, not a driveway or hard surface.
- Drop spreaders are more precise, but slower than rotary spreaders. Near shorelines, use a drop spreader.
- Avoid getting fertilizer into natural drainage areas or pathways where it can be carried to surface water.
- Near shorelines, leave a buffer of natural vegetation to prevent erosion and retain nutrients.

Minnetonka Boulevard/ Hopkins Crossroad intersection to close in April

HENNEPIN COUNTY RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE intersection at Minnetonka Boulevard and Hopkins Crossroad will close in April, rather than in mid-May. The intersection is expected to be closed through mid-October for improvements, including installation of a traffic signal, upgrades to water main and sanitary sewer lines, and burial of overhead utility lines.

Information about this and other road projects in the area can be found on the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. To have information about road projects delivered directly to your email inbox, sign up for the city's weekly e-newsletter, Hot Topics. Visit www.eminnetonka.com, click on Hot Topics, and follow the registration instructions. □

Adopt a park sign

MINNETONKA'S ADOPT-A-SIGN PROGRAM HAS PROVEN TO BE A great success due to the outstanding efforts of families, civic organizations, and individuals who have adopted the various park signs around Minnetonka.

Again this year, the city will prepare the sites and provide an allowance for volunteers to choose annuals to plant and maintain through the 2005 growing season. Last year's volunteers will be given first option to adopt the sign they took care of previously, but some will choose to pass the trowel, making several additional sites available. If you or your organization would like to adopt a park sign, please call (952) 939-8364 or email dweidler@eminnetonka.com. □



Consider non-toxic alternatives for your lawn

WITH CONCERNS ABOUT USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES ON gardens and lawns, many residents are reducing their use of chemicals and finding alternatives. Many lawn care companies now use non-toxic methods. Consider these alternatives:

- Create healthy soil by leaving clippings on the lawn and mulching leaves. This replaces one fertilizer application by putting the nitrogen contained in the clippings back on the lawn, thus saving time and money.
- Water infrequently but deeply to promote deep root growth.
- Mow high (2 to 4 inches) to discourage weed growth. Keep mower blade sharp.
- Aerate lawn in spring or fall.
- Pull weeds by hand. After weeding gardens, apply a thick layer of mulch.
- Learn to live with some weeds.

If you do use pesticides, read the product label and follow all precautions. Mix and use only at the recommended strength and apply only where needed. Don't spray on windy days. Look for synthetic pyrethroid products instead of organophosphates or carbamates.

For more information on pesticide use, a copy of the EPA's "Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety" is available at http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/Cit_Guide/citguide.pdf.

Anyone interested in low-maintenance lawn care practices can call the Minnesota County Extension Service of Hennepin County at (612) 596-2110. For more information, call Dean Elstad, recycling coordinator, at (952) 939-8217. □

Coming soon to I-394...

MNPASS, A NEW TOLL ROAD SYSTEM, IS DUE TO BE IMPLEMENTED by MnDOT on I-394 this spring. Visit www.mnpass.org for more information on the system and how it will work. □



Spring Leaf Drop-off Program

Saturdays: April 30, May 7, May 14
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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. The garbage hauler yard waste collection programs typically run mid-April through mid-November. **Check with your garbage hauler for details.**

Minnetonka residents may bring **bags** of leaves, yard and garden materials to one of the five drop-off sites on the dates and times shown below. Brush larger than 1/2 inch **will not** be accepted at leaf drop-off sites. See the article on brush drop-off for more details.

Saturday Leaf Drop-off Sites

1 Public Works Facility Parking Lot

11522 Minnetonka Blvd., 1/4 mi. west of Co. 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

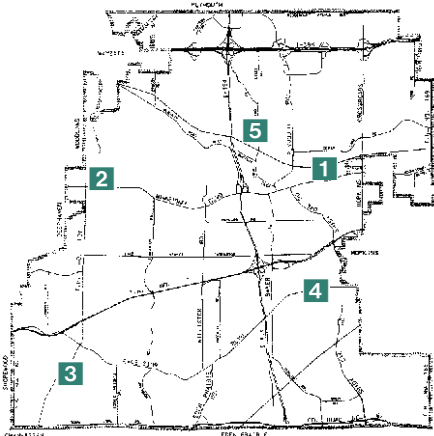
5621 Hwy. 101

4 West Oaks Community Church Parking Lot

Excelsior Blvd. west of Shady Oak Rd.

5 Meadow Park Parking Lot

Oakland Road across from Stone Rd.



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. Loosely tie bags for easy emptying.

BAGGED LEAVES accepted at all sites on Saturdays, April 30, May 7 and May 14, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

BULK LEAVES — only accepted at Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd., on the following days and times:

- **Saturdays:** 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 16, April 23, April 30, May 7, May 14, May 21
- **Mondays:** Noon to 8 p.m. April 18, April 25, May 2, May 9, May 16
- **Tuesdays:** Noon to 8 p.m. April 19, April 26, May 3, May 10, May 17

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

Residents will unbag and unload their own leaves onto the bulk pile (bring proper equipment to unload your own leaves). Using many layers of tarps between a foot or two of leaves makes unloading your leaves easier and faster. Try it!

Information about composting and yard waste management is available from Dean Elstad, recycling coordinator, at (952) 939-8217.

2005 brush drop-off site opens April 16

The 2005 brush drop-off site will open April 16 (weather permitting) at the Minnetonka Public Works facility, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd. The site will be open Mondays and Tuesdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Brush drop-off will end Nov. 19, 2005.

The brush drop-off site will be closed on the following holidays: Memorial Day (May 30), Independence Day (July 4), and Labor Day (Sept. 5).

Branches up to 12" in diameter will be accepted. Proof of Minnetonka residency (driver's license or utility bill) is required to drop off brush.

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

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

For more information call Dean Elstad, recycling coordinator, at (952) 939-8217.

Keep streets and storm drains clean

Minnetonka city ordinances prohibit blowing and/or leaving grass clippings or other organic materials in the street. Please be sure your lawn service is aware of the following ordinance:

Public Nuisances Affecting Peace, Safety and General Welfare: 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.

2005 Recycling Holidays

Three holidays (not two as reported in the March *Minnetonka Memo*) will delay recycling one day in 2005: Memorial Day (May 30), Independence Day (July 4), and Labor Day (Sept. 5). During the weeks these holidays occur, residents west of I-494 will have collection on Tuesdays and residents east of I-494 will have collection on Wednesdays.

Natural Resource Notes

Wetlands and you

WETLANDS ARE AN IMPORTANT component of our landscape — but what are they, why are they important, and what can you do to care for these environments? Read on for answers to these questions and more!

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are shallow depressions, not deeper than six-and-a-half feet, generally located in the lowest part of the surrounding landscape. Wetlands have three things in common:

- Vegetation that is adapted to growing in wet environments, like rushes, sedges, wildflowers, and certain trees and shrubs.
- Soils that are normally saturated or wet.
- Water at or near the soil surface.

Do you have a wetland?

Minnesota has eight different kinds of wetlands. Some wetlands look like grassy, wild areas, wet in the spring and dry in summer; while others may be a woodland forest where the soil feels a little soft or spongy underfoot. Wetlands may also have areas of open water with a fringe of wetland vegetation like cattails and rushes.

Why should you care?

Wetlands provide many benefits, including:

- Protecting drinking water by filtering out nutrients and pollutants before they seep into the groundwater.
- Preventing algae blooms in lakes and Minnehaha Creek by filtering contaminants and absorbing excess nutrients.
- Preventing flooding by absorbing excess amounts of water during spring snow melt and heavy rains.
- Providing habitat for amphibians, reptiles, ducks and other migratory bird life.

Minnetonka has less than 80 percent of its pre-settlement wetlands — many were drained and filled instead of preserved. The remaining wetlands have been adversely affected by storm water generated by development.

Since adopting its first wetland ordinance in the mid-1970s, the city of Minnetonka has been striving to protect these fragile environments. The ordinance has been updated several times since then, with one of the most recent updates requiring wetland buffers on all new developments.

In addition, the city incorporates innovative storm water techniques like bioretention and infiltration basins to filter sediment and pollutants and absorb storm water, which minimizes impacts to wetlands.

Finally, the city recently completed a natural resource inventory that will assist staff in identifying higher quality wetlands so they can be further protected and potentially restored.

What you can do

The city is committed to the protection of wetlands, but we need your help!

The following practices can help improve the quality of Minnetonka's wetlands.

- Adopt your neighborhood storm drain, which is a direct link to your neighborhood wetland. Remove the litter and debris before it can be washed into the wetland.
- Use environmentally sound lawn care practices. Keep grass clippings, leaves, and fertilizer out of the street and wetland.
- Pick up pet waste — a source of excess nutrients and bacteria — and dispose of it properly.



This flowery wetland transcends into a shrub swamp (background).

- Direct gutter downspouts onto the lawn or garden.
- Wash your car on the lawn to prevent the chemicals and nutrients found in detergents from entering wetlands.
- Properly dispose of oil, solvents, paints and pesticides. Do not pour these onto the ground or into the storm drain.
- If you are planning a remodeling or landscaping project, keep the sediment out of the street. This soil is harmful to wetlands.
- Do not mow to the wetland edge. Avoid disturbing wetlands and keep a natural vegetative buffer. Remember, the wetland boundary doesn't end where the surface water does — the plants, soils and hydrology determine the boundary.
- Develop an appreciation for wetlands. On a warm spring evening listen for the frog calls that make the neighborhood wetland alive with sound. Watch the dragonflies and damselflies display their flight abilities. Watch the local egret or great blue heron land and stalk the crayfish and frogs. Catch (and release!) tadpoles with your kids and rekindle your youthful spirit.

These practices will help improve the quality of all of our water resources, including our lakes and creeks. For more information about wetlands contact Jo Colleran, environmental resources coordinator, at (952) 939-8299 or by email at jcolleran@eminnetonka.com. □

Photos courtesy of Applied Ecological Services, Inc.



An open water wetland is bordered by a saturated vegetated edge.

Calendar

City of Minnetonka

April 2005

Call (952) 939-8200
for more
information.

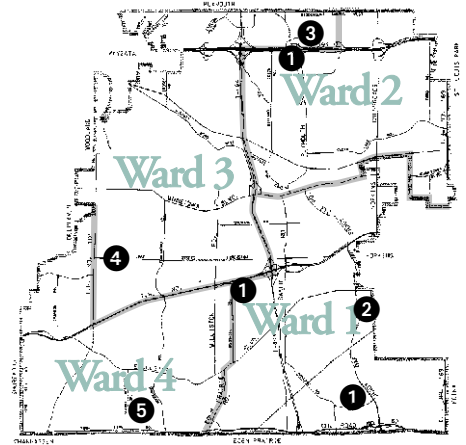
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	6 Park Board, 7 p.m.
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- 11 City council/Board of Review, 6:30 p.m.
- 12 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m.
- 14 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 18 Community Heritage Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 25 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- 26 Annual Block Captains' Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 27 Board of Review, 6 p.m.
- 28 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following items are tentatively scheduled to come before the Planning Commission in April. Please call (952) 939-8200 for updated information or visit the city Web site: www.eminnetonka.com. Meeting agendas are posted on the site the Friday prior to each commission meeting.

- 1 Conditional use permit for microwave antenna dishes to be mounted on the **Ridgedale, Williston and Bren water towers** for the city of Minnetonka.
- 2 Site and building plan review, with a parking setback variance, for a building addition at **11300 47th Street West**.
- 3 Preliminary plat, with a lot width at the right-of-way variance, at **209 Park Lane South**. (05007.05a)
- 4 Lot division to divide an existing lot into two lots at **17224 Lake Street Extension**.
- 5 Site and building plan review for park renewal improvements at **Boulder Creek Park** for the city of Minnetonka.



Looking ahead...

- Silver Skates Ice Revue — May 5, 6, and 7
- Hazardous Household Waste drop-off—May 19, 20, 21
- Special drop off (unwanted household items, batteries, tires, lumber, toilets, sinks, appliances) — June 4 and Sept. 10
- Minnetonka Summer Festival/Burwell House Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social — June 25

HT Hot Topics HT

ITEMS IDENTIFIED WITH HT are listed as Hot Topics on the city Web site, www.eminnetonka.com. Please refer to the site for additional information on these selected topics. For more information, call Minnetonka Mike, (952) 939-8586, leaving your name and address.

minnetonka memo

April 2005



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 Karen J. Anderson (952) 939-8389 Home: (952) 938-2808 kanderson@eminnetonka.com Meetings with the mayor may be scheduled by calling the mayor's office, (952) 939-8389.	Council <i>At Large:</i> Janis Callison .. (952) 935-7010 jcallison@eminnetonka.com Terry Schneider..... (952) 934-9529 tschneider@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 1:</i> Bob Ellingson .. (952) 931-3065 bellingson@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 2:</i> Tony Wagner... (952) 512-1817 twagner@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 3:</i> Brad Wiersum . (952) 930-3681 bwiersum@eminnetonka.com <i>Ward 4:</i> Al Thomas..... (952) 949-9027 athomas@eminnetonka.com
City Manager John Gunyou (952) 939-8200	Minnetonka Mike (952) 939-8586 mike@eminnetonka.com
Newsletter Editor Jacque Larson..... (952) 939-8200	POLICE-FIRE: Emergency 9-1-1 Non-emergency (952) 939-8500 or 9-1-1
E-mail: comments@eminnetonka.com	
Internet: www.eminnetonka.com	

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON