

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
February 2004



HOME REMODELING FAIR

A FREE HOME REMODELING Fair featuring 76 contractor exhibits, 12 seminars, and an "Ask the Pro" booth will be held Sunday, February 22, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Eisenhower Community Center, 1001 Highway 7, Hopkins (one mile east of the Highway 7 and County Road 73/Hopkins Crossroad intersection). Fairgoers may park at Eisenhower Community Center or take the free shuttle bus from the parking lot at Oak Ridge Country Club (700 Oak Ridge Road— one block north of Highway 7 on the west side of Oak Ridge Road [5th Ave to the south of Hwy. 7], look for signs).

Exhibitors include remodeling contractors, architects, landscapers, electricians, tool and dumpster rental services, roofers, siding and window contractors, lenders, and city inspectors/staff. Architects, landscape designers, and interior designers will staff the "Ask the Pro" booth and provide free, no-obligation advice to visitors; fairgoers are encouraged to bring their photos or sketches.

Seminar topics include: kitchen and bathroom trends/remodeling; decks and porches; window replacement; refinish-

Home Fair continued on page 2

For family fun, don't miss Kids' Fest!

TO HELP CELEBRATE "We Love Our Kids Month," Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services has scheduled its annual "Kids' Fest" for Sunday, February 8, 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. A variety of programs and activities will take place at the Minnetonka Community Center, Williston Fitness Center, and Minnetonka Ice Arena. A free shuttle bus will be provided.

Activities include dog sled rides, mini golf, bingo, Remarkable Reptile show, magicians, face painting, ice skating/rental, a medallion hunt, jugglers, crafting old-fashioned Valentines, a history game, and more. There is no charge for any program or activity.

Check out the city web site, www.eminnetonka.com, for more information and a complete schedule. □



Pictured are last year's Kids' Fest Medallion Hunt winners. This year's hunt event is scheduled to start at 3:10 p.m. on Sunday, February 8, in the Minnetonka Community Center.

Boat slip applications now being accepted

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, at 7 p.m., the City of Minnetonka will hold a lottery drawing for 2004 Gray's Bay Marina boat slip vacancies and waiting list. Only Minnetonka residents are eligible for these slips.

Slips are 10 feet in width and can accommodate boats up to a maximum of 26 feet in total length. Cost per slip for the 2004 boating season is \$2,800.

Applications must be received at Minnetonka City Hall no later than 4:30 p.m Monday, February 9. The lottery will be held at the Minnetonka Community Center and will be

Boat Slips continued on page 2

Protecting Minnetonka's environment

ONE OF THE things that makes Minnetonka truly special is our natural environment. It's why many of us chose to live here—there isn't another community in the Twin Cities that has such a beautiful setting.

In coming months, the *Minnetonka Memo* will feature a series of articles on what we're doing as a city to protect our environment, and also what our residents can do to help. We'll be covering such issues as wetlands and forest protection, open space preservation, prairie restoration, and even innovative storm water control techniques like rain gardens.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our first annual Eco-Fair the morning of

March 13 at the Community Center. We'll be offering seminars on such topics as native plant gardening, low impact lawn and tree care, composting, water conservation, suburban wildlife, and my personal favorite—buckthorn busting!

We think you'll find the Eco-Fair and our upcoming *Minnetonka Memo* series to be informative, and we sincerely hope that you'll join in to help us keep our community special.


John Gunoy
City Manager

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Looking for an affordable health club?

WHAT ARE YOU looking for in a health club? If you're looking for affordable rates, a convenient location, a variety of amenities, and a friendly/comfortable environment, then the Williston Fitness Center, 14509 Minnetonka Dr., is the place for you!

As a Minnetonka resident, you automatically receive a 20% discount off the standard (non-resident) rates. Both three-month and annual memberships are offered without any hidden initiation fees or start-up costs. There are also affordable daily rates for those who might like to stop in from time to time. You're encouraged to compare Williston Center rates, amenities, and location to your favorite club, so you can see for yourself why the Williston Fitness Center is the best buy in town.

The Williston Fitness Center has something for everyone. Amenities include: five indoor tennis courts; baseball and softball batting cages; 25-yard swimming pool; basketball court; elliptical cross-trainers; treadmills; stair-climbers; stationary bikes; weight machines; free weights; certified personal training; aerobics studio; whirlpool and saunas; child care (6 months and older); tennis leagues/lessons available through "P.A.T.S. Tennis"; Baseball and Softball Skills Training available through "Baseball U.S.A."

The Williston Fitness Center also offers a variety of land and water aerobic classes for all ability levels. Basic land classes such as step and floor aerobics are mixed with specialty classes like yoga, kickboxing, and pilates. Water aerobics and water arthritis classes are also offered at many different times for your convenience.

You don't always have to pay more to get more. Make this the year for a change and make the switch to the Williston Fitness Center. We look forward to seeing you soon! For more information, just call (952) 939-8370. □

Home Fair *continued from page 1*

ing wood floors; finishing a lower level; landscape design; "preventing cold weather problems"; and others. There will also be demonstrations for the do-it-yourselfer on faux painting and closet organizing.

Advance registration is not required, and admission is free. Food concessions will be available at the fair.

This is the 12th year that the fair has been organized by several western suburbs to promote improvements to the sponsoring communities' housing stock. Sponsors are the cities of Golden Valley, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and St. Louis Park, as well as Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minnetonka Community Education Services.

For details and seminar times, visit www.eminnetonka.com, go to "Hot Topics — Upcoming Events," then "2004 Home Remodeling Fair." Also look for information in the *Minnetonka Sun Sailor* or call (952) 939-8200. □

Boat Slips *continued from page 1*

broadcast on Minnetonka Municipal Channel 16 (applicants need not be present).

You can download information from the city web site, www.eminnetonka.com, or call the Minnetonka Facilities Division, (952) 939-8390, or e-mail mweseloh@eminnetonka.com to request an application form. □

Try mediation to settle disputes

MEDIATION IS A voluntary process that brings disputing parties together in a neutral setting to resolve issues. It has been used effectively for conflict between: builders/homeowners; divorced parties; parents/grandparents raising children from separate households; juveniles; landlord/tenants; plus others.

The City of Minnetonka works with North Hennepin Mediation Program to assist local residents and business owners with an alternative method for resolving disagreements. Meeting room space for the mediation process is provided in the Minnetonka Civic Center complex. At the mediation session, the mediator facilitates the discussion, asks questions, and writes up any agreement the parties reach. A typical mediation lasts one or two hours and can be scheduled for days, evenings, or weekends.

Mediators are not judges and do not impose a solution. The parties themselves decide on the actual agreement. Over 90% of voluntary mediations result in an agreement, and over 90% of those who reach agreements abide by them.

For additional information, call North Hennepin Mediation Program, (763) 561-0033. □

Caring young people will be recognized

IN A COLLABORATIVE effort, the cities of Golden Valley, Hopkins, and Minnetonka, joined by the Hopkins and Minnetonka School Districts, are sponsoring the Caring Youth Recognition event. Designed to recognize the caring contributions of area young people in grades 7 through 12, the event will be held in Golden Valley City Hall on Tuesday, March 16.

A caring youth is someone who shows an ongoing awareness of others through volunteer or other activities. Sponsors are soliciting nominations for caring young people from schools, the faith community, civic and service organizations, and the community at large. Nominations are due February 15. For more information, contact Cheryl Weiler, City of Golden Valley, (763) 593-8004. □

Community Action Recognition Award winners announced

AT ITS DECEMBER 15 meeting, the Minnetonka City Council recognized Brad and Madge Thorsen and the Rake-a-thon program as recipients of the Community Action Recognition (CAR) Award.

Brad and Madge Thorsen were nominated by the Mini-Hops organization for their involvement for many years with the organization's Special Olympics team. Minnetonka Community Services' Rake-a-thon program was nominated by Michael Jacob. This seasonal leaf raking service has been available to area seniors and others unable to rake their own yards for more than 15 years.

The CAR award program targets projects that enrich the quality of life in our community, show human connections, preserve natural resources, beautify the community, or exemplify good citizenship. If you know of a project that you think merits this recognition, please submit a completed nomination form which may be downloaded from the city web site, www.eminnetonka.com, or e-mail Mike@eminnetonka.com. You may also call Becca Harris, (952) 939-8384 for more information. □

2004 Property Taxes

What determines your property taxes

2004 taxes are based on your property's 2003 estimated market value, the impact of various state law changes, and tax levies adopted by Hennepin County, the City of Minnetonka, and your local school district. Because of the many state law changes, the property tax statement you receive in late February is even more confusing than usual.

Local spending is NOT driving up your tax bill. 2004 city budget growth is limited to just 2%, which is less than half the normal increase, and well below the real growth and inflation that drive up service costs. In fact, the property taxes we receive to fund police, fire, streets, and parks will actually *go down by 1%* next year. These basic city services will cost less.

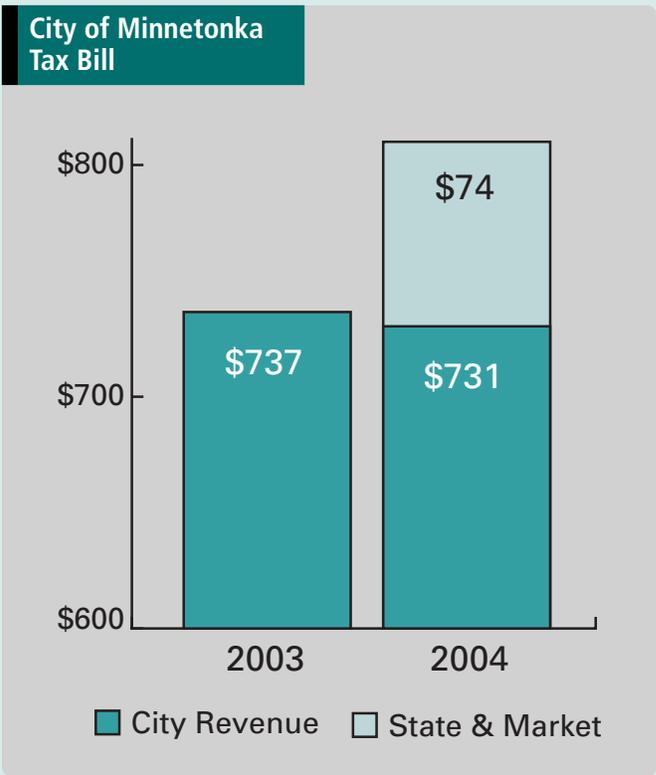
Nevertheless, the city portion of the average homeowner's property tax bill will go up by about 8%. Here's why your taxes will increase even though we get less money:

- The state's making the city pay for a "market value credit" property tax relief program they decided not to fund, but didn't want to cut. Instead, the state's making the city

raise its property taxes an additional \$800,000 to pay for this unfunded mandate. Although it shows up as a "city" tax, the City of Minnetonka never sees a penny of this money.

- The state's also phasing out its "limited market value" program that artificially held property taxes down to below the actual increase in market value. Since the state's making up for all those past deferments, that means your taxable value can go up by 12%, even if the actual value of your property doesn't. And, that limit increases to 15% and 25% in future years.
- Finally, the value of residential property continues to grow faster than commercial property as a result of the lingering recession. That shifts even more of the property tax burden onto homeowners.

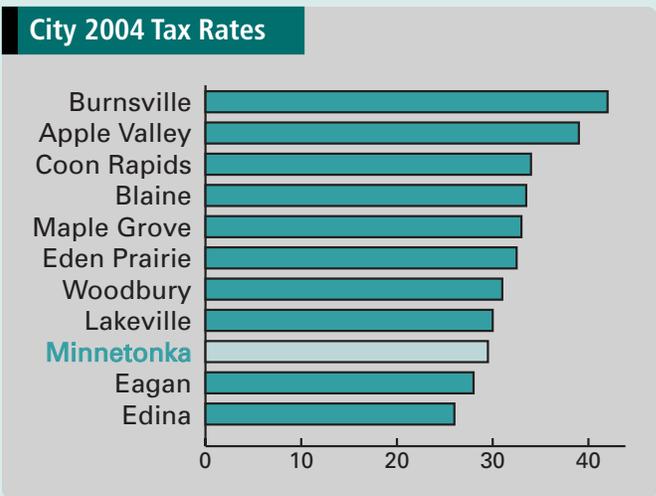
In summary, the increase in homeowner property taxes for 2004 is not caused by city spending. The City of Minnetonka will actually receive *less property tax revenue* to fund basic services. Taxes for the average homeowner will go up because of changes in state law, state mandates, and related market factors.



Quality services at a reasonable price

The City of Minnetonka provides a fuller range of municipal services than many other cities, and does not use special assessments to fund road and other improvements.

Nevertheless, Minnetonka tax rates remain among the lowest of similarly sized metropolitan cities. Our citizens continue to receive the quality services they have come to expect, and at a reasonable price.



2004 Market Value Notice

(Your Market Value Notice applies to property taxes payable in 2005)

How is market value determined?

The Minnetonka Assessing Division maintains records for every property in the city. Based on actual real estate sales from the past year for comparable properties, adjustments are made to the market values of most properties. Approximately one-fourth of the properties are physically inspected each year, and adjustments to these are made based on the results of that inspection. Market value adjustments are also made for building additions, remodeling, and other improvements.

What if I don't agree with the market value set for my property?

If you have concerns or questions about your market value notice or the assessment process, please contact the Minnetonka Assessing staff, (952) 939-8200. The staff can review its property records and sales information with you.

Based on this discussion and review, the appraiser may or may not make a change to your market value. If not, you have the right to appeal.

In late February, Minnetonka property owners will receive their 2004 market value notices. Four value amounts appear on the notices.

Estimated Market Value

The assessor's estimate of the total market value of the property.

Limited Market Value

This "caps" the value on properties where the 2004 value increased significantly over 2003. Now state law provides for increases to be capped at 15% rather than using the previous cap of 12%. Most homeowners will see increases capped at 15%. The value of new improvements is excluded from the cap.

Qualifying Improvement Value

Shows that portion of the value of improvements made to an older home under the former "This Old House" law.

Market Value Subject to Taxation

The net taxable value of the property. For many homeowners, this amount will be the same as the limited market value, not the estimated market value.

State Tax Court. More common, however, is an appeal through the local Board of Review, and if desired, then to the Hennepin County Board of Equalization.

The Minnetonka City Council convenes each year as the local Board of Review and has local real estate professionals serve as its advisors. To make an appeal to the local board, you should first discuss your market value with the Assessing staff. After that discussion, you may make an appeal to the local Board of Review by March 31 simply by asking that your property be listed for appeal. However, it is important to know that the local and county boards have the authority to raise or lower an appealed market value.

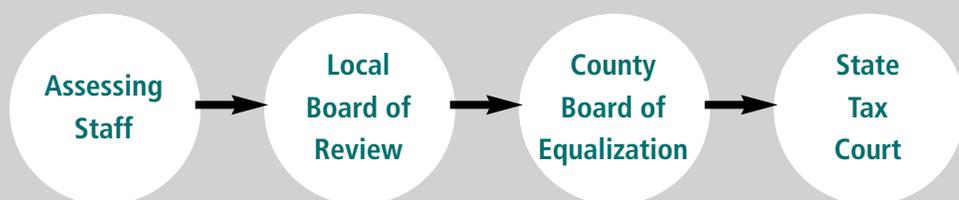
Remember, if you have concerns or questions about your market value or the assessment process, please contact the Minnetonka Assessing staff, (952) 939-8200.

How does the appeal process work?

The value subject to appeal is the estimated

market value, not the limited market value. There are two avenues of appeal available. Property owners may appeal directly to the

Market Value Appeals Process



Contacting an elected official?

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION will be useful should you wish to contact an elected official.

Minnetonka is in the 3rd Congressional District; State Senate Districts 33, 42 or 43, depending on where you live; Legislative Districts 33B, 42A or 43B, depending on where you live; 6th County Commission District; 4th Park District.

2004 MINNETONKA CITY COUNCIL

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Karen Anderson

O (952) 939-8389

H (952) 938-2808

kaanderson@eminnetonka.com

Council Member, At Large

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O (952) 401-7071

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Council Member, At Large

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Council Member, Ward 3

Brad Wiersum

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bwiersum@eminnetonka.com

Council Member, Ward 4

Al Thomas

O (763) 553-2977

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athomas@eminnetonka.com

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Senate

Sen. Norm Coleman

320 Hart Senate Office Bldg.

Washington, D. C. 20510

coleman.senate.gov/contact

2550 University Ave. W.

St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone: (651) 645-0323

Fax: (651) 645-3110

Sen. Mark Dayton

SR-346 Russell Senate Office Bldg.

Washington, D. C. 20510

dayton.senate.gov

Federal Bldg. #298

1 Federal Dr.

St. Paul, MN 55111

Phone: (612) 727-5220

Fax: (612) 727-5223

House

Rep. Jim Ramstad

103 Cannon Office Bldg.

Washington, D. C. 20515

www.house.gov/ramstad

1809 Plymouth Rd.

Minnetonka, MN 55305

Phone: (952) 738-8200

Fax: (952) 738-9362

STATE GOVERNMENT

Governor

Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 296-3391

www.governor.state.mn.us

Lt. Governor

Carol Molnau

130 State Capitol Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 296-3391

www.governor.state.mn.us

State Senate Districts

Sen. Gen Olson – 33

119 State Office Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

O: (651) 296-1282

H: (952) 472-3306

sen.gen.olson@senate.mn

Sen. David Hann – 42

Room G-27 State Office Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

O: (651) 296-1749

H: (952) 975-0933

sen.david.hann@senate.mn

Sen. David Gaither – 43

107 State Office Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

O: (651) 296-4314

H: (763) 559-2597

sen.david.gaither@senate.mn

State Legislative Districts

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403 State Office Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

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H: (952) 474-3634

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Rep. Peter Adolphson – 42A

597 State Office Bldg.

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Rep. Ron Abrams – 43B

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O: (612) 348-7886

H: (952) 475-1077

Linda.Koblick@co.hennepin.mn.us

Minnetonka Mike... Stronger and better than ever!

A NEW MINNETONKA MIKE service request system is coming to www.eminnetonka.com. Look for full details in the *Minnetonka Memo* next month. □



Council selects official newspaper

THE LAKESHORE WEEKLY News has been selected as Minnetonka's official newspaper for 2004. It will publish the city's legal notices, ordinances and other official information, plus general news about the city. The newspaper is available at several locations throughout the city. Call (952) 473-0890 for the location nearest to you. □

Here are winter reminders for bicyclists, walkers, and runners

WALKERS, RUNNERS, BICYCLISTS, and skiers are reminded that they must obey traffic regulations in order to be safe when using Minnetonka roadways and trails. Winter brings special considerations: possible slippery conditions, less visibility from earlier sunsets, piles of snow, and other winter weather conditions.

- When walking or running in low light conditions, dusk or dark, wear light-colored or reflective clothing to create the most visible profile for traffic.
- Carry or wear a lighted device.
- Every pedestrian or bicyclist crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk, or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk, shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway.
- Bicyclists should drive on the right side of the roadway *with traffic* and signal their turns. Bike riders are encouraged to wear a helmet.
- Watch out for snowplows and snow removal equipment on Minnetonka roads and trails. □

City of Minnetonka

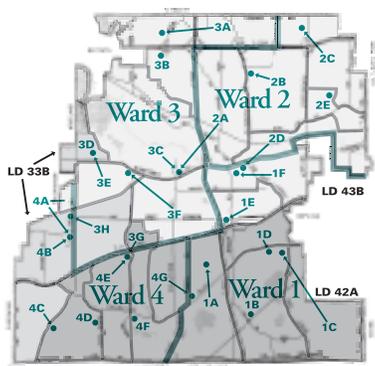
Ward Boundary

Legislative District Boundaries

Precinct Lines

Precinct Numbers

Polling Locations



Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

February
2004

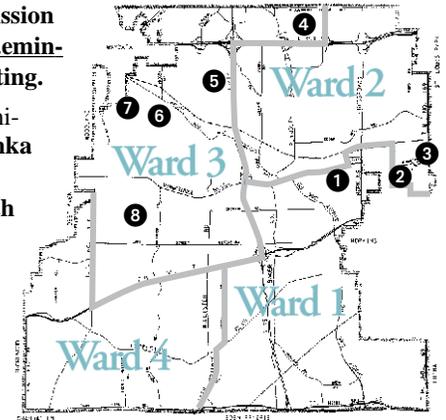
Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	4 Park Board, 7 p.m.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	5 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	8 Kids' Fest, 12:30 – 5 p.m.
29							9 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
							10 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; EDA, 6 p.m.
							11 Park Board, 7 p.m.
							16 Presidents' Day — city offices closed
							19 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							23 City Council, 6:30 p.m.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following items are tentatively scheduled to come before the Minnetonka Planning Commission in February. 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 Rezoning from R-1 to PUD, adopting a master development plan, final site/building plans, preliminary plat with variances for Dean Gannon and the City of Minnetonka at **11901, 11907 Minnetonka Blvd.** (03087)
- 2 Rezoning, preliminary plat, site plan review for Curt Fretham at **10401, 10402, 10405, 10413 34th Circle W.** (02018.03a)
- 3 Sign plan review for Imaginality, Inc. for Waterstone Place Apartments at **9700 Waterstone Place** (90021.04a)
- 4 Rezoning, preliminary plat for Gonyea Dev., LLC at **600, 665 City View Dr.** (03077.03a)
- 5 Preliminary plat with variances for Bill and Lori Baron at **2081 Meeting St.** (04001.04a)
- 6 Preliminary plat, wetland alteration permit/replacement plan for Paragon Designers and Builders at **2511, 2531, 2545 Crosby Rd.** (03092.0a)
- 7 Variances to tear down/rebuild home for Kathleen Nelson at **2504 Bantas Point Ln.** (03091.03a)
- 8 Variance, CUP for Christopher and Maria McLinn at **3911 Colgate Ave.** (03090.03a)



Oral history techniques offered

WOULD YOU LIKE to learn how to interview family members to document your family history? You can by attending a demo oral history interview on Wednesday, February 11, 6:30 p.m. at Minnetonka City Hall. Call (952) 939-8219 to reserve a spot in this discussion group or for more information.

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.

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PAID
CITY OF MINNETONKA

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Ward 4: Al Thomas (952) 949-9027 athomas@eminnetonka.com

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

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON