



minnetonka memo

*A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
November 2004*

Minnetonka residents win big at Open House



Grand Prize Winners

Tom Swanson (right) and his son Lars (left) won the evening's grand prize, a personalized city of Minnetonka street sign. Lars requested the sign be imprinted with the name of his fledgling recording studio, Tone Farm Studios. We hope the street sign will be a positive omen for his new endeavor!

MORE THAN 6,000 Minnetonka residents attended the 2004 Fire Department and City-Wide Open House, and a few walked away big winners!

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's open house—we enjoyed meeting all of you! Mark your calendars now for the 12th Annual Fire Department and City-Wide Open House, set for Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2005. □



Recycling Drawing

David (pictured) and Amy Olson were the winners of the compost bin, awarded through the city's recycling program. Happy composting, Amy and David, and may your garden soil always be rich and loamy!



Photo Contest

More than 70 entries were received for this year's photo contest, but only three emerged as winners. Vern Drilling won first prize and \$100 for his photo (shown) "Miss Claire Manning Becomes a Minnetonka Firefighter on National Night Out." Second-prize winner was Cathy Armajani and third-prize winner was Jeanine Shesterkin. All photos are on display at Minnetonka City Hall.

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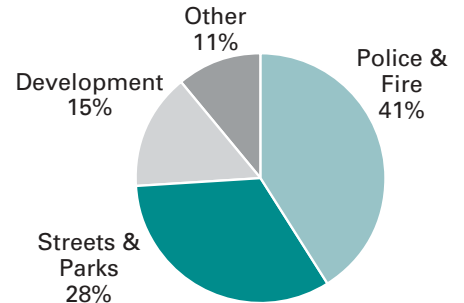
Minnetonka's 2005 Budget

Quality services at a reasonable price

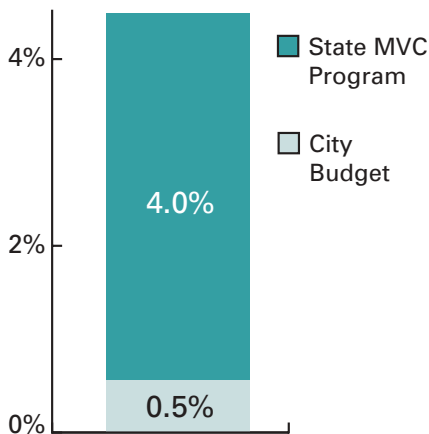
Our residents consistently rank Minnetonka's services as a good value for the money. However, during recent years, we've had to absorb state revenue cuts of up to a million dollars a year within artificial levy limits. Specifically, the city of Minnetonka enacted spending caps to save \$3 million over five years and cut capital spending by 10 percent.

These cuts have affected basic city services like public safety, street and park maintenance. To meet our residents' expectations, the 2005 budget increases by about four percent, from \$21.4 million to \$22.3 million. Nearly nine out of every 10 new dollars are used to restore these service priorities, and fully 60 percent of the additional dollars are dedicated to public safety improvements.

2005 General Operating Budget



2005 Property Tax Increase



2005 funding uncertainty

Property taxes pay for more than two-thirds of Minnetonka's general operating budget, with the remainder coming mainly from service charges. While the city receives no general state aid, the state has required the city to pay for the state's Market Value Credit (MVC) property tax relief program for the past two years. The state has promised to resume its responsibility for this \$800,000 unfunded mandate beginning in 2005.

If the state honors its pledge, city taxes would only increase by one-half of one percent in 2005. However, the state still faces another billion-dollar deficit, so this likelihood is very uncertain. Since it would not be responsible to spend these state funds before they are received, taxes must increase by 4.5 percent. If any of the promised funds are actually received in late 2005, their use will be determined in the 2006 budget discussions.

Budget Hearings

City of Minnetonka

Monday, December 6, 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.
Minnetonka, MN 55345
(952) 939-8200

Hennepin County

Thursday, December 2, 5:30 p.m.
Commissioners' Board Room
A-2400 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55438
(612) 348-3011

Hopkins School District #270

Tuesday, November 30, 6:30 p.m.
Eisenhower Community Center
1001 Highway 7
Hopkins, MN 55305
(952) 988-4001

Minnetonka School District #276

Tuesday, November 30, 7:00 p.m.
Community Room
5621 Co. Rd. 101 So.
Minnetonka, MN 55345
(952) 401-5024

Wayzata School District #284

Tuesday December 7, 7:00 p.m.
District Administration Bldg.
210 Co. Rd. 101 No.
Wayzata, MN 55391
(763) 745-5023

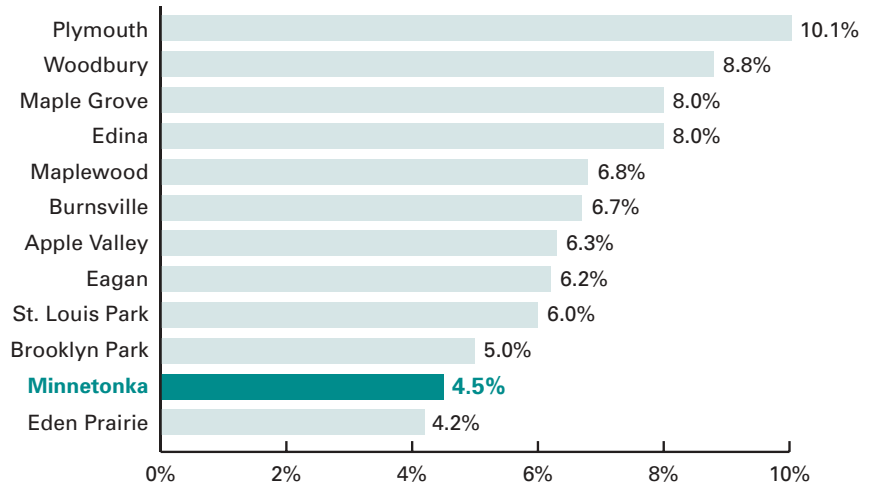
Your input on our budgets is welcomed and appreciated!

Your 2005 Property Taxes

Minnetonka's 4.5 percent property tax increase for 2005 is among the lowest for comparable cities.

You will soon receive a county notice that estimates the property taxes your school district, county and city might collect in 2005. Your actual tax statement will arrive in the spring. Because of various state law changes, this notice can be confusing. As explained on this page, Minnetonka homeowners and businesses will see larger increases in their total tax bills due to many factors.

2005 Property Tax Increases



Property Tax Notice

The tax notice you receive does not distinguish between the city's 4.5 percent tax increase (4.0 percent of which is for the state's MVC program) and an additional 2.3 percent increase our voters approved in the park and open space referendum. The city accounts for about one-fourth of your total tax bill.

Proposed 2005 Property Tax
For an Average Minnetonka Home
(\$302,000)

	2004	2005
County	\$1,272	\$1,288
City	824	882
School*		
Voter approved	812	830
Other	226	203
School Total	1,038	1,033
Metro Districts	94	97
Other Districts	128	159
Solid Waste Fee	50	48
Total	\$3,406	\$3,507

* Hopkins School District

Many factors affect your property tax bill

Total 2005 property taxes for the average Minnetonka homeowner could be \$101 to \$361 higher than this year. City, county, and school taxes account for less than 20 percent of this increase.

Most significantly, the state is phasing out a program that artificially held down market values for many years. This means that about 60 percent of our homeowners will experience even greater increases in their property tax bills. Faster growth in residential market value further compounds this tax shift.

The state takeover of school funding also complicates the property tax picture. However, total 2005 property taxes on the average valued home are roughly similar to total 2001 taxes prior to this major tax reform.

2003-04	\$302,000
Change	Home
City of Minnetonka	
City Services	\$4
State MVC Program	34
Voter-approved	
Parks Referendum	20
Other jurisdictions	
Hennepin County	16
School District*	(5)
Other Agencies	32
Other factors	
State Limited Market	
Value Phase-out	9 to 260
Total Increase	\$101 to 361

* Hopkins School District

State law changes and funding uncertainty account for up to 81 percent of your 2005 property tax increase.

 **2004 MINNETONKA RECYCLING UPDATE**

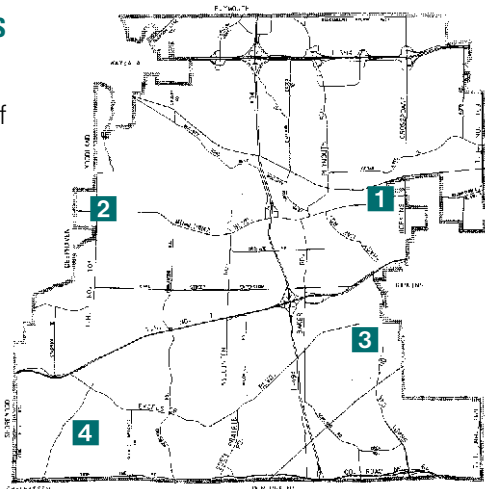
Fall Leaf Drop-off Program

Minnnetonka residents may bring bagged leaves, yard and garden materials to one of the four drop-off sites on the dates and times shown below. Brush larger than 1/2" in diameter will not be accepted at leaf drop-off sites.

SATURDAYS: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. • November 6 and 13

SATURDAY LEAF DROP-OFF SITES

- 1 Public Works Facility Back Lot**
(11522 Minnetonka Blvd., 1/4 mile west of Co. Rd. 73)
- 2 Groveland School Parking Lot**
(Minnetonka Blvd., east of Hwy. 101)
- 3 West Oaks Community Church Parking Lot**
(Excelsior Blvd. west of Shady Oak Rd., upper parking lot)
- 4 Minnetonka Public Schools Service Center North Parking Lot**
(5621 Hwy. 101)



BULK LEAVES only accepted at Public Works site during brush drop-off hours (Monday and Tuesday, noon to 8 p.m., Saturday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.) on the following dates: 11/1, 11/2, 11/6, 11/8, 11/9, 11/13, 11/15, 11/16, 11/20

November 20 is the last day to drop off bulk leaves!

Truck and trailer loads of bulk leaves will only be accepted at the Public Works facility, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd. Enter on the west side of the building across from the Big Willow ball fields. Residents will 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!

Loads of leaves MUST be covered during transport.

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 garbage collection for a reasonable annual or monthly fee. Check with your garbage hauler for details.

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

BAGGED LEAVES accepted at all sites on Saturday dates (11/6, 11/13)

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 easier emptying.**

Brush drop-off will end November 20, 2004

THE BRUSH DROP-OFF site is open Monday and Tuesday from noon to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Branches up to 8" in diameter will be accepted. This service is only available to Minnetonka residents — a valid I.D. is required.

Please note: trash, dirt, rocks, grass, loose leaves, lumber, or wood scraps are not accepted. (The brush is ground into the mulch that the city gives away to residents for landscaping.) Loose leaves, grass, pine needles, straw, plant and garden materials go to the leaf drop-off program.

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


The brush drop-off program will re-open April 11, 2005.

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

Every curb is a shoreline

Be a good steward and prevent your leaves from entering the street and storm sewer system. *Please don't rake your leaves into the street and when mowing, don't blow your grass clippings into the street.*

Our storm drains are connected to our ponds, creeks, and wetlands. Remember, street sweepers do not sweep in the fall. Thank you for helping to protect our water resources.



The ABCs of snow removal in Minnetonka



AUTUMN IS HERE, and snowflakes can't be far behind. Here are some reminders about snow removal in Minnetonka, as well as a few tips for enjoying the winter weather safely!

Adopt a hydrant! Minnetonka has more than 3,500 hydrants and it's impossible for the city to clear them all. Your contribution could save precious minutes in the event of a fire in your neighborhood.

Backing up is something snowplows do many times during snow removal operations. Please give them space to do their jobs.

Clear snow from your driveway, but don't push it into or across the street. City ordinances require that snow be placed on the right-of-way adjacent to your property.

Discourage kids from playing in or tunneling through the large piles of snow left behind by plows. Snow piles can collapse and trap children; while passing snowplows could hit the pile and injure children hidden inside. The backyard is a fun—and safe—place to play in the snow!

Every snow operation requires city crews to clear 1,100 miles of roadway—the equivalent of driving to Nashville, Tennessee!

Frost patrol starts in December and continues through February. Public Works employees are on the roads at 5 a.m. five days a week to check for frost and light snow. Should they find these conditions, a salt/sand mix is spread to increase traction and promote melting.

Garbage cans and recycling containers should be set out behind the curb line so they won't be knocked over by snowplows or the snow coming off the plow.

Have patience—in an average snowfall, it's a three-day operation to clear (in this order) parking lots, sidewalks, trails and ice rinks. Removal of snow from the city streets (see "I") is the first priority, and since the amount of personnel and equipment working on the parking lots, sidewalks, trails and ice rinks is smaller, it takes more time to clear these areas.

In an average snowfall, it is the goal of Public Works to clear snow from the streets and cul-de-sacs within 10 hours.

Just about every day...that's how often sanding trucks work during a normal winter, with major sanding efforts occurring about 25 times per year. Major plowing events occur about 12 times each year.

Kee parked vehicles off city streets between 2 and 6 a.m., according to city ordinance. Illegally parked vehicles may hinder snowplows from fully clearing streets. Contact the Minnetonka Police Department at (952) 939-8500 if you are concerned about a vehicle parked in your street.

Lace on your snowshoes, or ice skates, or skis, and enjoy the winter weather!

Mailboxes that are physically hit and damaged by city snowplows will be repaired. However, mailboxes that are damaged from the *force of snow coming off the plow* will not be repaired.

No county or state highways or private roads are plowed by city personnel. They are only responsible for city roadways.

Over the bridge and through the woods to grandmother's house you go! But drive slowly, as bridges are notoriously slick in the winter even when surrounding roadways are not.

Put in curb markers to show the edge of your lawn or driveway and make the snowplow driver's job easier. The city provides free markers to residents—stop by Minnetonka City Hall, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., or the Public Works Facility, 11522 Minnetonka Blvd, to pick up your markers. Remember, installation is easier when the ground isn't frozen solid!

Quality snowballs begin with wet, heavy snow. Never underestimate the power of a snowball fight to bring out your inner kid!

Respect snowplows, both as a pedestrian and as a motorist. Snowplows travel much slower than the posted speed and the driver's field of vision is severely limited. Never pass on the right, since plows are pushing snow and spreading sand to the right. Stay 70 feet (four car lengths) from the snowplow so the driver can see you.

Sod damage resulting from city snowplows will be repaired by the city. The city does not repair sprinklers, fences

or rock gardens that are placed in the city right-of-way. Report sod damage through the Public Works department at (952) 988-8400 or through Minnetonka Mike at www.eminnetonka.com. Repairs usually are made in May and June.

Two or more inches of snow accumulation marks the beginning of city-wide snow removal. In most cases, plowing operations begin between midnight and 4 a.m.; the exact time depends on the predicted start of the snowfall, its intensity and the expected end of the snowfall.

Using cruise control in your vehicle is not recommended when driving on snow- or ice-covered roads.

Vehicles—more than 29 ranging from dump trucks to motorgraders to pickups—have been prepped by the Public Works department and are ready for snow removal service this winter.

Wather forecasts are useful in preparing for the conditions. Keep up on forecasts. Drive carefully, even if the streets have been plowed and sanded.

X&*\${@#!—or something similar—might be uttered by a Minnetonka resident watching a snowplow fill in a newly shoveled driveway. Remember, during heavy snowfalls, citywide snowplowing is accomplished in three separate steps:

- The first pass provides an initial access path down the streets.
- Full-width plowing can occur a couple of hours later after all streets have received a first pass.
- Final cleanup occurs the next day and provides for intersection cleanup, sanding and plowing where vehicles were parked.

You can call the Public Works Department at (952) 988-8400 if you have any questions about snow removal in Minnetonka. Or, if your concern does not require an immediate response, contact Minnetonka Mike at www.eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8586.

Zones are assigned to each snowplow driver. Most drivers stay in that area for the entire winter, allowing him or her to become very familiar with the roadway features in a specific area. Mainline, or collector, streets are plowed first with residential streets and cul-de-sacs plowed last. □

Get to know your city — sign up for the 2005 Citizenship Academy

WHAT'S THE ROLE of the city council? What are the city's zoning and subdivision regulations? What recreational opportunities does the city offer? These are just a few of the questions you'll be able to answer after attending the 2005 Minnetonka Citizenship Academy.

This free program runs for four Tuesdays—March 8, 15, 22 and 29, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Minnetonka City Hall. Throughout the four sessions, you'll hear presentations from various departments of the city including police, fire, administration, planning, community development, engineering, public works, recreation, legal and finance. Graduates receive special city council recognition upon completion of the program.

To enroll, please contact Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at (952) 939-8207, or via email at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com. Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address. The deadline for registration is February 11, 2005. □

City launches new volunteer program

DO YOU WANT to be more involved with your city? Then consider joining Minnetonka's new volunteer program! By sharing your skills and time working with staff members on projects, you'll become more familiar with city programs, services and issues. It's a win-win situation—you gain the satisfaction of giving back to the community and the city stretches its tax dollars!

We welcome volunteers from teens to older adults, individuals to groups. Positions range from one-time special events to short-term projects to ongoing opportunities. Listed below are some of the current volunteer opportunities available. *Those opportunities marked with an asterisk require a background check.*

Coaching*

Provide basketball and soccer instruction to a group of 10 to 15 youngsters, emphasizing sportsmanship and fair play
Time commitment: three to four hours per week with one practice mid-week and one game on weekends.

Contact: Bo Powell, (952) 939-8357

Grounds Maintenance

Weed grounds, parking areas and walkways at Williston Fitness Center and/or Minnetonka Community Center.

Requirements: Volunteers must be able to bend/kneel for extended periods of time.

Time commitment: one to three hours, two or three times a year.

Maintenance

Various cleaning projects at Williston Fitness Center weekly, monthly, or quarterly.

Time commitment: one to 10 hours per job; various hours available seven days per week.

Minnetonka Mike Mascot*

Appear at various city functions in costume (provided) and share basic information about the city with the public.

Storm Drain Monitor

Regularly inspect a storm drain in your neighborhood to keep it free of debris.

Time commitment: Once a week.

Utility Billing Assistant*

Assist utility billing clerk in processing utility payments (open bills, total payments for deposit, other clerical duties); 10-key calculator experience and experience working with numbers desired.

Time commitment: Work would generally occur mid-month, two to four hours per day, for up to 10 days a month, and would be ongoing.

For more information or to download an application, check the city Web site at www.eminnetonka.com under Volunteer Opportunities, or call Joan Post, volunteer coordinator, at (952) 939-8215. □

Police officers sworn in

OFFICERS CARLA ERTMAN and Travis Heinrich, newly hired by the Minnetonka Police Department, were sworn in at a ceremony Friday, Oct. 15, in the Minnetonka City Council Chambers. At the same ceremony, Officer Dennis



Carla Ertman



Travis Heinrich

Warosh was promoted to the rank of sergeant, while Sergeant Gary Cayo was recognized for his extraordinary contributions to the department's Police Explorer program. Finally, Suwana Reynolds, police cadet, and Cheryl Bischof, police secretary, were welcomed to the department. □

Footloose at ArtsCenter of Minnetonka

IN NOVEMBER, THE Minnetonka High School performing arts department will present the musical "Footloose," based on the popular 1984 movie starring Kevin Bacon. *Footloose* runs Nov. 5 (sold out), 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 14, at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and may be reserved by calling (952) 401-5898 or by visiting www.minnetonkatheatre.com.

The ArtsCenter of Minnetonka is located on the campus of Minnetonka High School, 18285 Highway 7, Minnetonka. □

I-494 lanes to switch in November HT

(from Dan Galvin, public information coordinator, Granite McCrossan)

WITH THE APPROACH of winter, a great deal of progress can already be seen on the I-494 design-build project.

Working two shifts to beat the colder weather that makes paving all but impossible, crews have already constructed most of the temporary lanes along the east side of the freeway. Once the new lanes are in place and cross-street bridges are widened, all southbound traffic between Minnetonka Boulevard and Highway 5 will be shifted through the median onto what is currently northbound I-494, while northbound drivers will be shifted to the east onto the new temporary lanes. A concrete barrier will separate traffic. This traffic shift is currently scheduled for mid-November.

With southbound traffic out of the way, construction crews will demolish and rebuild the southbound lanes of I-494, adding a travel lane and barrier wall in the median. Once that work is completed (sometime in the summer of 2005) all traffic will be shifted back across the median onto the new lanes and the same reconstruction will occur on northbound I-494.

In all, approximately eight miles of I-494 and 13 cross-street bridges will be reconstructed and widened between now and the summer of 2006. A new pedestrian bridge also will be added to replace the one that was removed south of Excelsior Boulevard. Additionally, the collector distributor road on I-394 between I-494 and Plymouth Road will be widened and Ridgedale Drive, the business access road that runs parallel to I-394, also will be reconstructed beginning in early 2005.

For daily updates about freeway lane restrictions and ramp closures, visit <http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/gcinc/494> or call the telephone hotline at (952) 908-2929. If you would like to receive regular construction updates contact Dan Galvin, public information coordinator, Granite McCrossan, at dan.galvin@gcinc.com. The city of Minnetonka also provides regular updates of construction progress on its Web site and via the weekly Hot Topics e-newsletter, distributed each Friday to subscribers—visit www.eminnetonka.com for more information. □



Looking for a lift? Dial-a-Ride!

T IRED OF RELYING on friends and family to give you rides to the places you want to go? Then it's time to try Dial-a-Ride, a handicap-accessible bus service providing rides within the city limits of Minnetonka.

This curb-to-curb service operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. taking people to places of entertainment, appointments, shopping and other transit hubs. Group rides of three or more people also can be arranged.

Reservations should be made at least 24 hours in advance, although same-day reservations may be accommodated if space is available. Fares are \$1.50 each way; or for group rides, \$1 roundtrip per rider. For more information, or to schedule a reservation, please call (952) 401-1749. □

Senior Center van program ends service

BEGINNING NOV. 1, 2004, the Minnetonka Senior Center Van Program will no longer be in service, and riders will be directed to the Minnetonka Dial-a-Ride program.

Since 1981, the van program has relied on more than 40 drivers and 12 routers to help drive and schedule routes for the program. Thanks to all of the drivers, routers and other volunteers who donated their time over the past 23 years. Your help has been greatly appreciated! □

Time for tea!

YOU'RE INVITED TO the Burwell House Sunday, Dec. 5, from 1 to 4 p.m., for a Victorian holiday tea, hosted by the Minnetonka Historical Society. The house will be decorated in the Victorian holiday tradition. This is a free event open to the public. The Burwell House is located at 13209 East McGinty Road in Minnetonka, near the intersection of Minnetonka Boulevard and Plymouth Road. Parking will be available at St. David's Family Center. For more information, call Florence Bogle at (952) 938-3758. □

Sign up today for Williston Fitness Center!

BEAT THE WINTER blues before they begin—come and experience Williston Fitness Center, the city of Minnetonka's fitness facility. Sign up today for either an annual or a three-month membership. There are no initiation fees or startup costs!

Your membership includes access to:

- Five indoor tennis courts
- Basketball court
- Four baseball/softball batting cages

- 25-yard swimming pool
- Land and water aerobics classes
- Weight machines, cardio equipment and free weights
- Whirlpool and sauna

For more information and rates, call (952) 939-8370 or visit the city's Web site, www.eminnetonka.com. Williston Fitness Center is located at 14509 Minnetonka Drive in Minnetonka. □

City offices closed

MINNETONKA CITY OFFICES will be closed Thursday, Nov. 11, for Veteran's Day; and Thursday, Nov. 25, and Friday, Nov. 26, for the Thanksgiving Day holiday. □

Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

November
2004

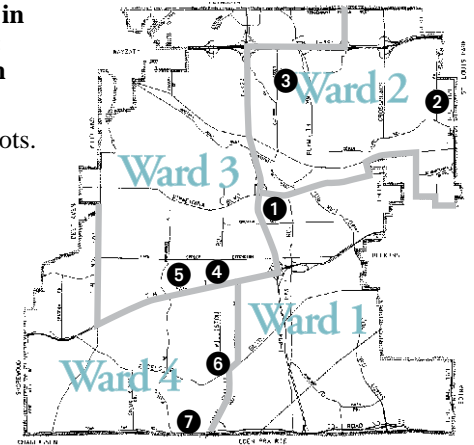
Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	2	General Election, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3	Joint Park Board/City Council meeting, 5:30 p.m.; Park Board, 7 p.m.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	4	Charter Commission, 7 p.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	8	City Council regular meeting, 6:30 p.m.
28	29	30					9	Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m.
							11	Veteran's Day holiday, city offices closed
							15	City Council study session, 6:30 p.m.
							25	Thanksgiving holiday, city offices closed
							26	Thanksgiving holiday, city offices closed

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following items are tentatively scheduled to come before the Planning Commission in November. 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 Preliminary plat to divide the properties at 13709 and 13717 Inverness Road into three lots. (86153.04a)
- 2 Side yard setback variance from 30 feet to 20 feet for an addition at 2348 Ford Road. (04075.04a)
- 3 Preliminary plat and variance for a lot division at 1927 Essex Road. (04051.04a)
- 4 Conditional use permit, site and building plan review and a preliminary plat for a bank with drive-up windows at 14816 Hwy. 7. (04073.04a)
- 5 Setback variance for a new home at 4401 Wilson Street. (99052.04a)
- 6 Guide plan amendment, rezoning, preliminary plat, and site and building plan review for a senior housing structure at 5431/5439 Williston Road. (04037.04a)
- 7 Variance to relocate an existing driveway at 6043 Fairwood Circle. (04074.04a)



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November 2004



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CITY OF MINNETONKA

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

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by calling the mayor's office, (952) 939-8389.

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Ward 3: Brad Wiersum .. (952) 930-3681 bwiersum@eminnetonka.com
Ward 4: Al Thomas (952) 949-9027 athomas@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