



minnetonka memo

*A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
January 2003*

New water rates will encourage conservation **HT**

NEW WATER RATES are being put into place to encourage water conservation. Twice during recent years, the city experienced severe water shortages that threatened public safety. The new rate structure is not designed to generate more revenue. Rather, it complements our recent water system expansion and sprinkling restrictions as another tool to encourage conservation.

With the new residential rate structure, there's no longer a minimum usage charge. The previous minimum charge of 15,000 gallons per quarter (about \$20) is being replaced with a \$1 account maintenance fee to cover our billing and processing costs.

From now on, you'll only pay for the water you actually use. And the more you use, the higher rate you'll pay. Rates vary from a low of \$1.45 per thousand gallons for less than 25,000 gallons per quarter, to a high of \$2.35 per thousand gallons for usage over 70,000 gallons. There are two intermediate rates:

	Gallons used per quarter	Cost per 1,000 gallons
Tier 1	0 to 25,000	\$1.45
Tier 2	25,001 to 40,000	\$1.65
Tier 3	40,001 to 70,000	\$1.95
Tier 4	70,001 and over	\$2.35

Nearly two-thirds of our customers are in Tier 1 during the winter months, and about one-half remain in this lowest price tier during the peak summer sprinkling season. Only 10% of our residential customers are in Tier 4 during the summer, but they use one-third of all the water! The new rate structure is designed to encourage these customers to adopt better conservation practices.

If you're an average user, there should be very small or little change in your quarterly water bill, especially during the fall, winter and spring. The average customer

uses about 19,000 gallons during each of these quarters and about 34,000 gallons in the summer. If your water usage is below average, you'll notice a major drop in your bill, but if you continue to use a lot of water, your bill could be quite a bit higher:

Gallons used per quarter	Old Bill	New Bill	Change
5,000	\$21.75	\$8.25	(\$13.50)
25,000	\$36.25	\$37.25	\$1.00
40,000	\$58.00	\$62.00	\$4.00
80,000	\$116.00	\$144.00	\$28.00

Our commercial customers also have a new rate structure to encourage their water conservation. Instead of the residential tiered rate structure, office, retail, industrial and multifamily residential accounts are now subject to a \$0.10/1,000 gallon surcharge on water use during the peak summer months of May through September. Sprinkling-only accounts are assessed a much higher \$0.25/1,000 gallons surcharge during the same time period.

Similar to the new residential rate structure, the former minimum usage charge is replaced with a \$1.00 per monthly billing Account Maintenance Fee plus a Meter Maintenance Fee based on the size of the service water meter. Commercial customers also only pay for the water they actually use.

Commercial customers will see little change during winter months. Greater impacts will be evidenced during the summer peak usage period, especially for sprinkling accounts. Smaller customers will actually experience a decrease in their water bills. Percentage changes for commercial users will be similar to those experienced by average residential users over the course of the entire year.

More information on these new rates will be provided in your water bills. If you have any questions, please be sure to call Director of Public Works Brian Wagstrom, (952) 988-8403. □

Brad Wiersum will be new Ward 3 representative

THE MINNETONKA CITY Council selected Brad Wiersum as the replacement Ward 3 council member. The ward vacancy occurred as a result of Linda Koblick's recent election to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. Thirty-one applications were received for the position. Wiersum, a self-employed marketing and management consultant, will be officially appointed and sworn in at the January 6 council meeting. □

Informational meeting scheduled for commercial water customers

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL water customers are invited to an informational meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2003 to discuss the effect of the new water utility rate structure. The proposed structure would include a summer surcharge of \$0.10 per thousand gallons for regular meters and \$0.25 for sprinkler only accounts during the months of May through September.

The informational meeting will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Boards and Commissions Room at city hall. The meeting format is informal, and customers can walk in anytime between the designated hours. Staff will be on hand to review accounts and answer specific questions about the proposed rate structure. □

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Council considers a new stormwater utility HT

ON JANUARY 27, 2003, the Minnetonka City Council will consider implementation of a new stormwater utility, similar to those already operated by other communities. Similar to water and sewer utilities, the new stormwater utility would charge property owners a fee to pay for stormwater management and drainage improvement projects.

All residential homes would be charged \$2.50 per month. This is at the lower end of what other communities charge their residents, and no additional project assessments would be made for specific improvements. Commercial and industrial

lots would pay more due to their higher runoff rates. For more information on this proposed utility, please visit the City of Minnetonka's web site, eminnetonka.com, and click on Hot Topics followed by This Month's Hot Topics.

The City of Minnetonka has scheduled an informational open house to explain and answer questions regarding this proposed utility. This meeting will be Tuesday, January 14, 2003 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Minnetonka City Council Chambers. Anyone having questions about this utility can also call the Minnetonka Engineering Department, (952) 939-8236. □

Citizenship Academy — what's in it for you?

INVOLVED CITIZENS KNOW what's happening around them and participate in their community. If you would like to increase your knowledge about Minnetonka and have a great time doing it, you're invited to sign up for the Minnetonka Citizenship Academy.

Your city council and staff care deeply about this community, and we strive for excellence in the decisions that affect you. We share a common belief that the more often we spend time with you, listening to each other, the better the system works.

The academy program runs for four Tuesdays in March from 7 to 9 p.m. Each week offers a different focus. It is totally

free, but we ask that you sign up so we'll have enough materials for all who attend. Young people and adults are welcome. Graduates receive special city council recognition upon completing the program. Last year more than 30 people graduated from the program and joined past participants in giving the program high marks.

To enroll, we'll need your name, address, phone number(s) and, if you have one, your e-mail address. You can register by calling (952) 939-8219 or by sending this information to ironbeck@eminnetonka.com. Deadline for registration is February 14. Please plan to join us! □

Burn permits available online

IF YOU'RE PLANNING to have a recreational fire, you can now apply for your burn permit online at eminnetonka.com. This permit is not required to be renewed annually, but may be rescinded or cancelled by the Minnetonka Fire Department at any time. Visit the city web site to register. Residents are reminded that only clean, split firewood can be burned. □

New city bus route provides north/south connection

EXPRESS BUS ROUTE 661 now provides handicapped accessible bus service between the Plymouth Road Transit Center and the Shady Oak Park and Ride, allowing connections to Plymouth Metrolink and Southwest Metro Routes. Weekday rush hour service is provided with stops along the route at the Hopkins Transit Center, Opus, and the Minnetonka Corporate Center. Route schedules and maps are available at Minnetonka City Hall, or by calling MetroTransit, (612) 373-3333, or visiting MetroTransit's website, www.metrotransit.org.

From time to time other bus routes available to Minnetonka residents will be featured in this newsletter. □

Worthy projects deserve recognition

RESIDENTS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND businesses contribute a great deal to our Minnetonka community and deserve to be recognized. For this purpose the Community Action Recognition Award was created.



This program targets those one-time or ongoing projects that enrich the quality of life in Minnetonka, preserve natural resources, beautify the community, or exemplify good citizenship. Recent recipients include:

- *Groveland School Outdoor Classroom Project* (The Giving Tree)
- *Ken Johnson* (Minnetonka Seniors' Adopt-a-Highway Project)
- *Lloyd Law* (Character Counts program at Groveland School)
- *Robert C. H. Schmidt* (creator of a mini park-like area behind Minnetonka Library)
- *Wendy Steinmetz* (instrumental in getting a park established in her neighborhood)
- *Tonka Tale Tellers* (a group that loves to read and act out stories to children)

If you are aware of a project you think merits recognition and fits the goals of this program, please send your nomination to Becca Harris, Community Action Recognition Award, City of Minnetonka, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, MN 55345. Questions may be directed to Becca at (952) 939-8384. Applications and more information are also available online from Minnetonka Mike at the following address: Mike@eminnetonka.com. □

Natural Resource Notes

Nature's art in your yard

WHEN GREEN LAWNS are buried under the snow and spring flowers can be seen only on the pages of garden catalogs, nature still provides us with color and texture to brighten the winter days. Along trails and hillsides we can admire the velvety red fruits of the sumac, the fluffy seed heads of goldenrods and asters, the rust-colored prairie grass, and the bright stems of red twig dogwood.

Beautiful native plants can adorn your yard as well. Steep hillsides and the shores of ponds and wetlands are great places for native plants, because their deep roots hold sloping soil in place and protect water bodies from polluted runoff. Increasingly, people are putting native plantings right in the front yard, replacing all or part of the traditional lawn. Native plants (plants that originated here and were not brought from Europe or other distant locales) thrive with little care and provide food and homes for many wildlife species.

There are native plants for every habitat type—wet, dry, shady or sunny—and every landscaping desire. Here are some plants that can provide winter interest, attract songbirds, or create a wetland buffer.

Winter Interest	Songbirds	Wetland Buffer
Staghorn sumac	Elderberry	Black chokecherry
Red twig dogwood	Highbush cranberry	River birch
Highbush cranberry	Pagoda dogwood	Red twig dogwood
Winterberry	Hazelnut	Joe Pye weed
Chokeberry	Nannyberry	Blue flag iris
Little bluestem grass	Gooseberry	Turtlehead
Goldenrod	Black currant	Cardinal flower

For a useful how-to guide, see the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' native plant gardens web page, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/nativeplants/index.html>. □



Plans for traffic signal approved for Co. Rds. 5/73 intersection **HT**

THE CITIES OF Minnetonka and Hopkins recently approved a conceptual plan for installing a signal system at the intersection of Minnetonka Boulevard (County Road 5) and Hopkins Crossroad (County Road 73). The next step in this intersection improvement project involves Hennepin County's preparation of final design plans. Once completed, these plans will be submitted to both city councils for final approval which is expected to occur in the spring. The project schedule calls for road construction to begin the spring of 2004. Some utility work, however, may begin this fall.

If you would like to view the approved conceptual plan for this intersection, or for more information, visit the city web site, eminnetonka.com, click on Hot Topics, then Projects. Questions may be directed to the Minnetonka Engineering Department, (952) 939-8236. □

DID YOU KNOW?

YOU know that Minnetonka has 44 parks...but did you know that you can have a tree planted in one of them to honor a loved one, as a memorial, or to commemorate a special occasion? This is a wonderful way to give lasting recognition to an employee or volunteer, too. It's also a worthy fund-raising cause for schools and organizations.

Minnetonka's Parks for Tomorrow program accepts tax deductible donations of \$25 or more. These funds may then be used to plant young trees and native plants or to install park benches. The honoree of the donation receives a commemorative certificate. To obtain a Parks for Tomorrow brochure, or to receive additional information about this program, contact City Forester Mark Simenson, (952) 988-8415. □

Disposing of your holiday tree

CHECK WITH YOUR residential refuse hauler for pick up and recycling of your tree. *Haulers have limited and specific week or weeks that they collect trees from their customers.* Check the last bill they sent you or call your hauler. There may be an additional fee, depending on the refuse company and your level of service.

Trees will be accepted when the 2003 brush drop-off program begins in April. (Until then, place your tree in the back yard for the birds.) Some private nurseries and private compost sites accept trees (for a fee). For further information, contact your refuse hauler or the Recycling Coordinator, (952) 939-8217. □

Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

January
2003

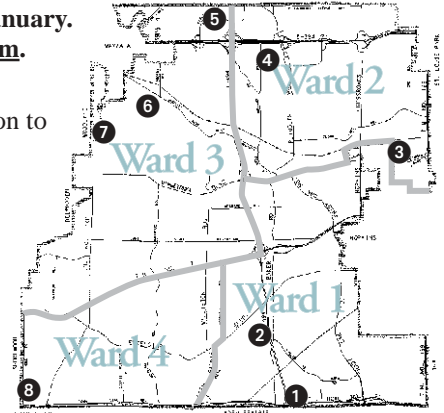
Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
			1	2	3	4	2	15
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	6	16
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	8	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	9	27
26	27	28	29	30	31		13	
							14	

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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

- 1 Amendment to PUD master development plan, Final approval site/building plans for addition to Children's Hospital and Clinic for Chester J. Yanik & Assoc. at **6050 Clearwater Dr.** (89015.02b)
- 2 Subdivision, Variance for Gary and Shirley Smith at **13326 North St.** (94013.02a)
- 3 Preliminary Plat approval, Variances for Joseph W. Jurusik at **3021, 3113 Atwater St.** (02071.02a)
- 4 Site/building plan review for Target Greatland store at **13201 Ridgedale Dr.** (94034.99)
- 5 Amendment to PUD master development plan, Final site/building plans for a parking deck for Medica at **401 Carlson Parkway** (98068.02a)
- 6 Variance for a garage for Katherina Taylor's Homes, Inc. at **2612 Crosby Rd.** (02070.02a)
- 7 Variances for a home addition for Jack and Betsy Randall at **2819 McKenzie Pt. Rd.** (02062.02a)
- 8 Conditional Use Permit for accessory apartment for Lucinda and Michael Blanchfield at **19106 Townline Rd.** (02072.02a)



HT Hot Topics HT

ITEMS IDENTIFIED WITH HT are listed as Hot Topics on the city web site, 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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memo *January 2003*



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POLICE-FIRE: Emergency 9-1-1

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

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