



Spring 2011

# CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

## A letter from the Mayor



Welcome to spring, I hope!!! Since our last newsletter we have experienced a rather normal winter. Although, not that many days were extremely cold nor did the extreme amount of snow come as blizzards curtailing our activities for a lengthy periods of time. I think we were all getting to the point where we were wondering where to push the next big snow fall when it finally started to melt. However, I was thinking it would have been something to talk about if we would have received that other 7 or 8 inches to break an all time record.

This summer for the first time in years, I have no road closures or detours to warn you about. In Maple Plain, Highway 12 will be resurfaced, but that kind of work can be done at night with minor delays. There may be some more restoration work around the railroad bridge project.

We have just completed our Board of Review Process for 2011. Nearly all home owners saw a reduction again on their property values for taxes payable in 2012. That is not the case of agriculture land owners under Green Acres or the Agriculture Land Preservation Program. Increases were also noticed on larger wetland properties. The agriculture land valuation increase is a result of high farm commodity prices and what has happened with land sales in southwestern Minnesota. The Legislature has mandated southwestern Minnesota land values as a benchmark for agriculture land in the metro area and it is a real concern for the near future.

With the number of sales of property we have experienced in Independence in the past few months, we may have come to a point where our property values have stabilized. We have experienced average sales volume for a previously normal year.

Now that the Legislature is in session, you have heard a lot about Local Government Aid to Cities (LGA). For your information, our city has not received LGA for years. We have received some money under the Fiscal Disparities Program. There was some attempt to eliminate that fund this year, but I believe that died in the committee process. However, we will not know what changes will face us until the Minnesota Legislature adjourns at the end of May.

*Continued on page 3*

### Planning Commission

Chair Carl Phillips  
Greg Gardella  
Robert Gardner  
Craig Olson  
Keith Triplett

### City Council

Mayor Marvin Johnson  
Lynn Betts  
Brad Spencer  
Lindsay Wallace  
Norm Wenck

Circus  
Monday, July 25  
For more info. visit  
<http://independence.govoffice.com/>

# STEP TO IT CHALLENGE

**MAY 9-JUNE 5**

## ***What is the Step To It Challenge?***

The Step To It Challenge, sponsored by Hennepin County Active Living, is a four-week physical activity campaign to motivate people of all ages and abilities to become more physically active. Family members, co-workers, schoolmates, neighbors, and friends come together in walking groups or teams to participate in this friendly competition between communities.

## ***How do I get Involved?***

Track your physical activity by recording your steps online. You may also convert other activities (swimming, tennis, dance) into steps using the step conversion chart. All steps will be counted in your city's step totals in the competition for the Most Active City award.

[www.steptoit.org](http://www.steptoit.org)

## ***Who else is participating?***

The cities of Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Crystal, Dayton, Excelsior, Golden Valley, Hopkins, Independence, Maple Grove, Maple Plain, Minnetonka, Mound, New Hope, Orono, Osseo, Plymouth, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Rogers, St. Louis Park, and Shorewood.

The **Minnesota Twins** join Hennepin County as proud sponsors of the 2011 Step To It Challenge. *Winning participants from each city will be recognized during a Twins game this summer.*

## ***Awards***

By participating in the Step To It Challenge, you can help Independence win the "Most Steps Walked" or "Highest Average Number of Steps per Resident" Award. Individual participants can also win an award by participating in all four weeks of the Step To It Challenge.

- Ten youth age 17 and younger will be randomly drawn to win a pair of Minnesota Twins tickets
- One individual in each participating city who has the highest step total will win a pair of Minnesota Twins tickets and be recognized on the field during a game this summer.
- Four individuals in each participating city will be randomly drawn to win a pair of Minnesota Twins tickets.

# COMMUNITY CORNER

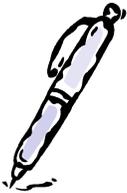
## *Continued from Page 1*

We are in the final stages of our annual city audit. The auditors will not be able to give their report to the council until May 24th, but we are quite confident we will have a good report.

Now is the time to start thinking about the future decision makers for our city. This November the seats for the Mayor and two Council Members are open. Filings will be open in late August. All seats are four year terms. Some of our school districts will have School Board Elections too. There may also be a levy vote for one or two of our school districts. Election Day is November 8th, as late as it can be.

As we approach the warmer days of summer and begin the task of cultivation and mowing, enjoy the beauty of the new life and 'smell the roses'. Take time to enjoy family and maybe a brief vacation.

Drive safely. Have a great summer!



Your Mayor,

*Marvin D. Johnson*

## **Active Living Hennepin County**

### **Active Living**

Active Living Hennepin County is a partnership among cities, businesses, nonprofits, parks and other government agencies. Active Living is about integrating physical activity into daily routines to help make the healthy, active choice the easy choice in our communities. Active Living is guided by a simple principal: the more active you are, the less chance of being overweight or developing chronic diseases.

### **Incentive Program**

The incentive program helps you to discover the various resources and activities available around Hennepin County. There are three sessions (i) April, May, June (ii) July, August, September, and (iii) October, November, December. Participants are asked to participate in five out of nine suggested activities per session. When that is completed you can turn in your participation slip for a commemorative pin. Complete all three sessions and you will be entered into a grand prize drawing for a Minnesota State Parks passes.

For more information, please visit: [www.hennepin.us/activeliving](http://www.hennepin.us/activeliving)

# PUBLIC SAFETY

## **West Hennepin Public Safety the first Police Department in Hennepin County using eCharging for DWI.**

The Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) reporting process is not changing, but rather changing how the process is being done. West Hennepin Public Safety is a high tech pioneer as the first Police Department in Hennepin County to submit their DWI records electronically. The new system was funded in part by the State Office of Traffic Safety, who had sought a more effective means of dealing with the over 30,000 DWI arrests that are made each year in Minnesota. One of the most impressive features of the system, is the fool-proof method of driving record validation, creates the appropriate form sets needed for the arrest, based on prior driving offenses and convictions recorded. DWI arrests can be complicated. This new tool helps make the paperwork process much more efficient, and even more accurate.

*eCharging*, a web-based application provided for law enforcement agencies by the State of Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, allows law enforcement officers to electronically submit the required DWI paperwork to the State Vehicle Services Division. The law enforcement officer enters the subject information only once and the eCharging application populates the multiple DWI forms with the correct information. Director Ray McCoy stated, "This is big time savings for our officers now that they no longer have to enter the same information (the subject's name, date of birth, address, stop location, etc.) multiple times. eCharging also allows the officer to start the forms, save them and then go back to complete them later". This reduces wasted staff time, allows officers to manage their time more effectively, and reduces support time necessary to process the completed paperwork.

An electronic signature pad allows the subject driver to electronically sign forms such as the license revocation notice and forfeiture forms. The officer biometrically signs the forms using his / her fingerprints, the same way they would sign a complaint. Once the forms are completed, WHPS records clerk submits the reports electronically to court and DMV.

W HPS has successfully submitted several eCharging DWI's to the state. The eCharging system is a tremendous cost savings to communities and the taxpayers, as it eliminates the redundant entry of criminal justice data, reduces the costs normally associated with the mailing or hand transport documents between agencies and it will eventually reduce the time that officers spend in court.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## **SOLICITORS & PEDDLERS** **City Code Section 1130**

The City of Independence requires a license for all door to door sales. Each licensed individual undergoes a background check and will be issued an identification badge by the City of Independence.

Door to door activities are only permitted during the following hours:

<b>Mon-Fri:</b>	9:00 a.m.—8:00 p.m.
<b>Sat:</b>	9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
<b>Sun:</b>	No door to door sales

Those exempt from the licensing requirements are children under age 18 for school, Scouts or Little League as well as any religious or any other charitable organizations.



## **SALVATION ARMY** **DROP OFF BOX**

The City of Independence will have a drop off container in the City Center parking lot for clothes and household items.

The organization accepts all types of clothing such as shirts, pants, jackets and shoes, for any gender, size and age. Clothes must be washed.

Household items such as linens, towels, rugs, curtains, decorative pictures, tools, toys, books, board games, decorative fixtures, sporting goods and dishes are also acceptable donations.

For furniture pickup, please call 612-332-5855.

## **DOG LICENSING AND LEASH LAW** **City Code Section 910**

### **LICENSES:**

No person shall own, harbor, keep or have custody of a dog over six months of age within the city, unless a current license for the dog has been obtained and the tag affixed. Licenses are a one time license in the amount of \$15. All license applications must be accompanied by a certificate issued by a veterinarian licensed to practice in the state of Minnesota, showing that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies within a period of two years preceding the application for a license.

### **LEASH LAW:**

Dogs are prohibited from running at large. No owner of a dog shall permit it to be at large within the city. Every owner of a dog shall keep it under restraint at all times. "At large" means off the property of the owner and not under restraint of the owner or a member of the owner's immediate family. "Under restraint" means controlled (i) by a fence, leash or owner's command within the confines of the owner's property, or (ii) by a leash under the control and direction of the owner or a member of the immediate family, so as to be as effectively restrained, or (iii) within a vehicle that is enclosed sufficiently so as to prevent the animal from exiting the vehicle.



# ENVIRONMENTAL



## COST SHARING IDEAS

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is kicking off a program that offers grants for projects that protect water resources by stabilizing shorelines and streambanks or utilizing stormwater best management practices (BMPs).

Polluted stormwater runoff is the biggest water quality problem in Minnesota. In a natural environment, most rainwater soaks into the ground or is captured by trees or other plants. But in developed areas, rainwater runs off roads, parking lots and rooftops, carrying dirt, fertilizer, pesticides and other harmful material into lakes, streams and wetlands. The poor water quality that results affects recreation, fish and wildlife, and reduces property values near affected lakes and streams.

The MCWD's Cost Share programs help property owners make improvements that prevent runoff from occurring. Eligible projects for Stormwater BMP Cost Share grants include rain gardens, which filter stormwater, and pervious pavement, which allows rain to pass through the material to a drainage system below. Eligible projects for Shoreline and Streambank Stabilization Cost Share grants include native plant borders. There are many benefits of using native plants along streambanks and shorelines. Their roots filter and absorb polluted runoff, they prevent erosion by anchoring the soil and they beautify the shoreline. Their natural height and density also discourage geese, which are attracted to turf adjacent to water.

Grants are available for improvements to private property including residential, business and private schools. Shoreline and Streambank Cost Share grants also are available to public entities. For more information, contact MCWD Cost Share Specialist Aldis Kurmis at 952-641-4523 or [akurmis@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:akurmis@minnehahacreek.org).



# ENVIRONMENTAL

## RAIN BARRELS AND COMPOST BINS:

It is never too early to begin planning for spring gardening. The Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) is once again offering an easy solution to green up your backyard this spring by providing inexpensive rain barrels and compost bins for Minnesota residents at wholesale price.

By composting organic waste (vegetable scraps and yard waste) and capturing rainwater from the roof, you can reduce the need for expensive fertilizers and reduce your water bill.

To ensure you receive yours at the discounted price, Minnesota residents must pre-order on RAM's website, [www.recycleminnesota.org](http://www.recycleminnesota.org). There are several distribution events this spring throughout the greater metro area as well as greater Minnesota so it is easier and more convenient than ever to get a rain barrel or compost bin this spring.

RAM provides everything you need to get started - even a 'how to guide' to learn about composting and rain barrel use best practices compiled by industry experts.

Pre-ordered compost bins and rain barrels will be available for pick up April through June at various location, see the website for details. For more info and to order visit [www.recycleminnesota.org](http://www.recycleminnesota.org)



## Battery Recycling: Do I or Don't I?

Not all batteries need to be recycled.

Single use alkaline and carbon zinc batteries can be put in the trash.

These types of batteries are found in calculators, electronic games, flashlights, fire and smoke detectors, garage door openers, lanterns, radios, remote controls, and toys.

All other types of batteries must be recycled properly. See the website below for more information:

[www.hennepinatz.org/azguide/item/30](http://www.hennepinatz.org/azguide/item/30)

## Xcel Energy's Refrigerator Recycling Program

Recycle your old, working refrigerator and receive a \$35 check as a thank you.

To participate in the program you must:

- Be a residential customer of Xcel Energy living in MN.
- Have a valid account number with Xcel Energy.
- Have the appliance picked up from the residential address listed on your billing account.
- Own the refrigerator you are recycling.
- Have the operational secondary refrigerator unit in your home for at least six months. No primary units will be recycled.
- Only recycle one refrigerator per program year.
- Refrigerator must be 10-30 cubic feet to participate.

For more information, call 1-800-599-5795 or visit [www.arcaincutility.com](http://www.arcaincutility.com).

**City of Independence**  
**1920 County Road 90**  
**Independence, MN 55359**

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MAPLE PLAIN, MN 55359  
PERMIT NO. 30

## **WANTED:**

The City of Independence is looking for a freezer or refrigerator/freezer to use in City Hall. A white or stainless steel model would be preferred.

Please contact City Hall at 763-479-0527 to make arrangements. Please no drop offs without contacting city staff.

Your generosity is appreciated!



# CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

1920 County Road 90  
Independence, MN 55359  
Phone: 763-479-0527  
Fax: 763-479-0528  
<http://Independence.GovOffice.com>

### **City Hall Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Friday 8 a.m. - Noon

### **City Calendar**

#### **May**

7 City Clean Up Day - 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.  
10 City Council - 7:30 p.m.  
24 City Council - 7:30 p.m.  
30 Memorial Day - City Hall Closed

#### **June**

13 Planning Commission—7:30 p.m.  
14 City Council - 7:30 p.m.  
28 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

#### **July**

4 Independence Day -City Hall Closed  
11 Planning Commission— 7:30 p.m.  
12 City Council - 7:30 p.m.  
25 Circus  
26 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

*\*Planning and City Council Meetings  
Subject to Change*