

Fridley

APRIL 2010
NO. 163

COMMUNITY REPORT

A report to
the citizens of Fridley

6431 University Avenue NE
Fridley, MN 55432
phone: 763-571-3450
www.ci.fridley.mn.us
e-mail:
Fridley@ci.fridley.mn.us

Mayor – Scott J. Lund

Councilmember-at-Large – Robert L. Barnette

Councilmember 1st Ward – James T. Saefke

Councilmember 2nd Ward – Dolores M. Varichak

Councilmember 3rd Ward – Ann R. Bolkcom

City Manager – William W. Burns

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Northstar Update

The Northstar Commuter Rail is operating smoothly with only a few adjustments according to Robert Gibbons, Director of Customer Services for Metro Transit. Since its opening in mid-November through the end of January, Northstar trains carried 126,122 customers. About 6% of these, or 7,625 customers, used the Fridley station. Given the proximity of Fridley to downtown Minneapolis as well as the availability of bus service, it is not surprising that the Fridley numbers are the lowest of the five suburban rail stations.

During Northstar's initial months of operation, the trains have achieved an on-time performance rating of 97.7%. In only one instance, a Saturday trip in December, was a train canceled due to mechanical issues. In this instance, an actuator in the throttle of one locomotive malfunctioned, prohibiting a train from leaving the Target station. In this instance, buses replaced the train for the two trips.

How are passengers purchasing tickets? Most passengers are using Go-To Cards which they touch to readers at the station. These cards may be purchased from vendors identified online at www.metrotransit.org. In Fridley, the Go-To Card retailer is the 57th Avenue Cub Foods store. While tickets may not be purchased in advance, customers may add value to their cards online or at the station. In the future, Metro Transit will also have a phone number that may be used for this purpose. Go-To Card customers get a 10% bonus when they add value to their cards.

Tickets may also be purchased with cash or credit cards from ticketing machines at the station. Weekday fares are \$3.50 each way. Weekend fares are \$2.50 each way. On weekends and holidays, those over 65 and youth between six and twelve years old may ride for just \$.75 each way. Kids who are five and under ride free. Properly certified persons with disabilities may ride any regularly scheduled train for just \$.75. Their personal care attendants may ride for free.

The Northstar trains are fully accessible for persons with disabilities. At the Fridley station, there is priority parking for the handicapped and elevators to carry them to and from the boarding platform. Customers using wheelchairs may either board train cars using onboard



lifts or access level boarding from a ramp at the end of the platform. A conductor on the train will assist.

Has there been much crime at the stations or on the trains? Other than a very few incidents of vandalism and graffiti, there have been no incidents of crime on the trains or at the stations during the first two and one-half months of operation.

Have there been problems with passengers not paying to ride? The six Metro Transit police officers and conductors on each train have been able to maintain fare compliance at the 99% level. Those who try to ride without tickets are assessed a \$180 fine.

What about the relationship between Metro Transit and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF)? The Metro Transit relationship with BNSF is strong. BNSF, which owns the tracks, provides Northstar with locomotive engineers and conductors as well as with dispatching services. Metro Transit maintains Northstar's six locomotives and eighteen passenger cars at their maintenance facility in Big Lake. Metro Transit also maintains Northstar's six passenger stations.

To what extent has the Northstar operation been changed to accommodate issues raised during the first two and one-half months of operation? Shortly after services began in November, departure times for northbound afternoon trips were shifted five minutes later. This was in response to commuters who asked for more time to get from downtown Minneapolis offices to the Target Field station for trips home. Due to customer concerns about slippery passenger car floors, Metro Transit placed slush mats in the entry vestibules for each car. They have also responded to those who asked for overnight parking by initiating a six-month pilot program for overnight parking with up to ten parking spots marked at each station. Cars may stay in those spots for up to seven days.

Northstar, continued on page 7

Summer activities begin in June!
Check out our website for more information at www.ci.fridley.mn.us

Join the fun!

Fridley Parks & Recreation
763-572-3570

Pre-school
Playgrounds Soccer
T-ball Gymnastics
Puppet Shows

Elementary School
ROCKS Playgrounds
Day Camps T-ball
Tennis Gymnastics
Morning Classes
Wednesday Field Trips

Middle School
ROCKS
Morning Classes
Wednesday Field Trips
Chill

The Assessors are Coming!

The City's Appraiser Lynn Krachmer and a temporary summer appraiser will be visiting approximately 1,800 residential properties identified on the map below. These visitations will begin by mid-May and conclude by the end of September.

They will be going door-to-door in this area, and conducting inspections Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If the resident is home, they will show their City identification and ask to do a visual inspection of the inside of the property. If no one is home, they will leave a tag on the door which explains the purpose of the visit and asks that the property owner contact staff to schedule an appointment. If they do not hear from the property owner within a month, a reminder letter will be sent. In the event there is no response within two to three weeks following the reminder letter, the value of the property will be estimated. If the property owner disagrees with the value assigned on the tax statement received next spring, the only way he/she may appeal to the Local Board of Equalization is by allowing the appraiser to physically review the property.

As the appraisers review your property, they will be looking for major improvements to the property that add value. Remodeled kitchens; new finished areas, such as additions, finished basements, decks, and porches; and auxiliary buildings, such as sheds and garages, will typically add value to your home. Normal maintenance such as new roofs, furnaces, siding, windows and doors, and cosmetic updating do not generally affect the value of your home.

Approximately 20 percent of Fridley residences are reappraised each year. The data collected this year will be used for the January 2, 2011, assessment for taxes payable in 2012. There is always a two-year lag between the time the data on values are collected and the time they are reflected in property taxes.

We hope this information will help residents understand their tax statements. After taking this into account, if you still disagree with the value assigned to your property, please contact the City's Assessor, Mary Smith, at 572-3537. In many cases Mary will be able to resolve your problems without resorting to the formal appeal process described on your tax statement.

Please note that City staff carry a photo identification card. Please make sure you ask to see it. We look forward to working with you in updating your property values and making the process as easy as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Smith, City Assessor, at 572-3537; or Lynn Krachmer, City Appraiser, at 572-3536. ■



2010 Mill and Overlay Project Update

Since our last newsletter, City staff has learned that Anoka County is willing to reimburse the City of Fridley for the milling and overlaying of Mississippi Street between Old Central Avenue and Stinson Boulevard as well as Rice Creek Road this summer. They will not, however, be assessing residents for any portion of their project. Fridley will bid these two streets as part of the larger City mill and overlay project for 2010. Staff has depicted the streets that are in both the City and County projects in the maps shown.

More than 400 residents from the project areas were contacted and invited to a "neighborhoods" meeting on January 19. Approximately 70 people attended, and they generally agreed the projects needed to be done. A few were concerned with the cost for the City's assessment on its portion of the streets to be resurfaced. Other residents raised questions about access during construction, minor drainage issues, special access needs, curb repairs, sanitary sewer service televising, the availability of stimulus funding, the project schedule, and project notification. Staff was also asked about refuse vehicles and their impacts on City streets.

In addition to hosting the "neighborhoods" meeting, staff also mailed out a property owner questionnaire in the latter part of January. The questionnaire asked residents in the project areas whether or not they were planning to replace their sanitary sewer services or their driveways in conjunction with street reconstruction. They also asked that these replacements be completed prior to the beginning of work on street resurfacing (approximately June 1).

Many of the issues raised in the "neighborhoods" meeting were also raised at the preliminary assessment hearing held by the City Council on February 8. In addition to addressing issues and answering questions, the Council approved a resolution authorizing the advertisement for project bids. Council subsequently awarded the contract to Northwest Asphalt of Shakopee at their February 22 meeting. Construction will occur within a three-week window between the middle of June and the middle of August.

Between now and the beginning of street construction, the City and CenterPoint Energy will be making underground repairs. The same time period will be used for curb repairs and is also a time during which residents should make any driveway replacements or sewer lateral repairs that they may wish to make.

As part of the City's underground work, the City's Sewer Division has televised thirty residential sewer



laterals at the request of property owners. Thus far, they have found minimal deterioration to these service laterals. While the City covers the cost of televising laterals, the property owner is responsible

for any cost associated with repairs to the laterals.

The City has also been televising its sewer mains, reviewing water main break history, and identifying storm drainage issues in the street rehabilitation areas. As a result of these studies, the City expects to spend around \$12,000 on sewer main repairs (mostly around poorly installed connections with sewer laterals), replace about 200' of water main on Mississippi Street and Rice Creek Road at a cost of roughly \$40,000, and address minor storm system repairs, including some reconstruction of storm sewer inlets and some relining of storm sewer lines. The cost for the City's underground work will be covered by the City's three utility funds.

Once all of the underground work has been completed, including any work by CenterPoint Energy, the existing concrete curb will be reviewed for spot replacement. The contractor will adjust the height of utility castings, including valve and manhole castings. The contractor then moves in to remove about 2" of the existing paving by milling. The contractor will recycle a portion of the old street pavement into the new street pavement. The repaving will be followed by re-striping of the street and any sign replacement that is necessary. During the project, the contractor will seek to maintain at least one lane of traffic on all streets. Since vehicles can damage newly laid pavement, access will be restricted for about six hours until the pavement cools. Prior to and during the project, City staff will provide property owners with multiple project updates and notices.

If you have questions about how the project will impact your property, please contact Assistant Public Works Director Layne Otteson at 572-3551. ■

Fridley Community Calendar

April

- 5 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 12 City Council
- 21 Planning Commission
- 26 City Council
- Charter Commission

May

- 3 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 5 Appeals Commission
- 6 Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- 10 City Council
- 11 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 19 Planning Commission
- 24 City Council
- Charter Commission
- 31 City Offices Closed for Memorial Day

NOTE: City Council meetings start at 7:30 p.m.; all other meetings at 7:00 p.m. All meetings are held at the Municipal Center, 6431 University Avenue, NE. The public is welcome. Hearing impaired persons who need an interpreter or other persons with disabilities who require auxiliary aids and would like to attend a meeting, should contact Roberta Collins at 572-3500 at least one week in advance.

Fridley's Very Valuable Volunteers

Fridley's Very Valuable Volunteers for April 2010 were nominated by Senior Program Coordinator Connie Thompson. They are Dave and Marguerite Gilbert who have been Fridley residents since 1966. They have been very active volunteers with the Fridley Senior Program for the last twenty-five years. Both individuals have devoted considerable time to serving the needs of other seniors and both have received awards in recognition of their many contributions to the community.

They began their participation in the Fridley Senior Program after they retired and after they began looking for something meaningful to do in their retirement. Although they have been involved in many senior programs and activities, fundraising for senior programs has been a central part of their efforts. These activities include managing the senior concession stand at the Community Park softball fields for five years. They have also served as workers for the Senior Program's annual Holiday wreath sale since it began more than ten years ago. Each year Marguerite cooks a breakfast on delivery day for her kids and their families. Thereafter, they deliver wreaths to over 75 households in their neighborhood.

In addition to their fundraising activities, each of the Gilberts has been involved in a wide variety of other Senior Program activities. Marguerite, for example, has served on the Senior Program Board for the last twenty years. She also served in the early nineties on the Regional Senior Center Advisory Board that was established to explore the possibility of establishing a regional senior center. Additionally, she has served as President of Friendly Fridley Folks, served on the ISD #14 Community Education Advisory Council, and has performed as a Senior Program volunteer office receptionist on many occasions. In 2000, she was recognized by the county as the Outstanding Senior of Anoka County.

Dave has also been very busy. He was a substitute driver for the Senior Lift Bus for five years. He has also served for six years as a volunteer Driver for the Anoka County Volunteer Drivers, a program which takes seniors to medical appointments. He was a Charter member of the Fridley Golden Lions, and was named Outstanding Fridley Senior by the Fridley Senior Program in 1992. In addition to his activities with the Fridley Senior Program, Dave has been a member of the Fridley American Legion for thirty-five years.

Dave and Marguerite were married one month before the attack on Pearl Harbor. With the onset of World



War II, Dave served as a First Lieutenant and earned a Bronze Star for his service as an advance man in the Battle of the Bulge. Following the war, they took up farming in Hitchcock, South Dakota, where they started their family. After sixteen years of farming, they moved to Fridley. Dave took a job with Hydraulic Manufacturing and Marguerite worked processing Medicare claims for the Traveler's Insurance Company.

When asked about their memorable moments with the Senior Program, Dave and Marguerite respond by saying that it was the dedication of the Fridley Community Center in 1998. When asked about their view of the challenges facing the Senior Program in 2010, they report that the major challenge will be accommodating the interests and needs of the younger senior population. They see this group as having much different interests and needs than the older seniors that have been their colleagues through many years of participation in the Senior Program. According to the Gilberts, these younger seniors have been much more career-oriented and much more exposed to technology than the current group of active seniors. Whether they will be as attracted to the same services provided traditionally to Fridley's senior population is a matter of speculation. How the Senior Program will accommodate this change in service orientation will be a major challenge.

Regardless of these challenges, Dave and Marguerite are very grateful for what they have learned as senior volunteers with the Fridley Senior Program, as well as for the web of meaningful friendships they have made during their time with the program. They are also quick to point out that there are many other seniors doing great things for Fridley.

As we end this tribute, we'd like to thank you Dave and Marguerite for the great things you have done for the Fridley Senior Program and for Fridley. While you have obviously benefited from the program, you have also given greatly to others and to an organization that serves a very valuable community purpose. ■

2010 Election Filing Is Nearly Here

Fridley's ward Council positions are scheduled to be filled in 2010. If residents are interested in filing for a seat on the City Council, filing opens at 8:00 a.m. on May 18 and closes at 5:00 p.m. on June 1. The dates are consistent with legislation that was passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2010. If more than two candidates file for any of the three seats, under the terms of the Fridley City Charter, they must compete in a primary election that would be held on August 10, 2010. The General Election is scheduled for November 2, 2010.

At the time of filing, the persons filing must complete an "Affidavit of Candidacy" attesting to their qualifications for the office they are seeking. They must also provide a nominating petition signed by ten registered voters during the filing period, submit a public disclosure statement attesting to their real estate and business interests, and pay a \$10 filing fee. In order to file, they must have lived in Minnesota for at least thirty days and be residents of the ward where they are seeking election. All of the forms required for filing may be found on the City's website at www.ci.fridley.mn.us.

During the campaign, candidates should keep a record of campaign contributions and expenditures. State law requires that they file a campaign finance report within fourteen days of receipt or expenditure of \$750 during the election campaign. Otherwise, they must file a report attesting to the fact that they did not spend or receive more than \$750.

Those competing in the campaigns for Council seats must observe standards of campaign conduct found in Chapters 211A and 211B of the Minnesota Statutes. These statutes include regulations regarding campaign contributions, the types of campaign expenditures that can be made, advertising and literature requirements, standards regarding the influencing of voters, and those regulating election day activities.

Residents planning to vote in the 2010 election, who will be away from the City on Election Day, or are homebound, disabled, serving as election judges, or observing a religious holiday on Election Day, may file an application for an absentee ballot by contacting the City Clerk's Office at 572-3523 or by accessing an absentee ballot application on the City's website. They may remit their applications by sending it to the City Clerk's Office at 6431 University Avenue NE, Fridley, Minnesota 55432, by faxing it to the City Clerk by dialing 763-502-4981, or by emailing their absentee ballot applications to the City Clerk at skogend@ci.fridley.mn.us. Absentee balloting is available thirty days prior to either a primary or general election.

If you have questions about filing for a Council seat or about absentee balloting, please contact the Fridley City Clerk. ■

Exercise Can Be Fun! Focus on Fun & Fitness 2010



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Softball
Basketball
Volleyball
Football
& more!

Online Recreation Registration is Slow to Grow

One of the changes made for 2009 was to introduce online Recreation registration. The hope was that Fridley residents would read the Recreation brochure online, and register online for the programs they wanted to attend. While use of the online registration has been growing, it still represents only 3.5% of the 2,126 registrations that occurred between August of 2009 and mid-January. The vast majority of registrations are mail-in registrations, walk-in registrations, and telephone or fax registrations.

Of the registrations that are being made online, 74% are youth registrations made for elementary school and middle school age youth. At the other extreme, there have been no senior registrations and very few online registrations for Springbrook Nature Center programming.

Although the online registration system is up and running, there are some issues and improvements that need to be made to the system. One of the biggest problems is that it does not permit athletic league scheduling for adults. We've also experienced reluctance by registrants to use their birth date. Additionally, not all of the information we would like to have is prompted by the registration software. As the City seeks to iron out these problems, it asks for your patience and encourages our readers to take advantage of the convenience of registering online. If you encounter problems, or need assistance, please give us a call at 572-3570. Thank you for your help. ■

Code Enforcement Numbers for 2009

One of the most challenging services the City of Fridley provides its residents is the code enforcement service. Generally, this means responding to complaints about tall grass, various outdoor storage problems, illegal signs, improperly parked vehicles, and dilapidated structures. It also means using a summer intern to conduct proactive reviews of properties throughout the City. These latter reviews are often referred to as comprehensive code enforcement reviews as opposed to complaint-based reviews. All of these reviews as well as the sending of letters and the pursuit of court actions, where necessary, are carried out by three full-time and two part-time staff in the City's Community Development Department. Each of these staff members has numerous other duties in addition to code enforcement.

In 2009, staff conducted 2,276 inspections of Fridley property.

This number is significantly down from 2008 due to the change in focus for comprehensive code enforcement from residential, where there are approximately 9,000 properties, to commercial/industrial properties, where there are only about 600 properties. The 2009 inspections included 1,234 first inspections, 634 second inspections, and 172 final inspections.

For the most part, Fridley residents are very cooperative with the City's code enforcement efforts. Of the 1,516 original notices mailed to property owners, only 301 (about 20%) required additional notification. Altogether, the 2009 code enforcement process resulted in 144 abatements or actions where the City was required to eliminate the problem. These abatements included 106 weed abatements, and 32 outdoor storage abatements. Additionally, City staff boarded up four foreclosed properties and removed two dead trees. Altogether, 18 cases were taken to court.

The 2009 code enforcement cases included 30 building maintenance cases. Problems were corrected in 25 of these cases. Five other cases are still being addressed.

Illegal sign cases are not included in the property specific cases mentioned above. Altogether, Community Development staff removed 154 illegal signs during the 2009 inspection year.

Most Common Violations in 2009

Outside Storage (residential and commercial/industrial)	314
Dumpster Enclosures	134
Weeds (tall grass)	133
Vehicles Parked off the Pavement	107
Property Maintenance	76
Garbage violations	63
Inoperable or Unlicensed Vehicles	53

Special mention should also be made of the cases involving commercial or industrial properties. As indicated in past newsletter articles, the City devoted its 2009 comprehensive code enforcement efforts toward cleaning up commercial and industrial properties. Altogether, staff mailed out 391 first notices and 139 second notices to commercial or industrial property owners. These resulted in the mailing of four abatement letters and one abatement. The efforts made toward cleaning up these properties have resulted in six special use permits for outdoor storage during 2009. There are five other cases in which staff continues to work with the business owner to determine whether they will pursue a special use permit or remove the outside storage problem.

That's our code enforcement story for 2009. If you wish to report a code enforcement issue, please contact the Community Development Department at 572-3592. ■

Senior Tax Assistance Is Free at the FCC

Believe it or not, the Fridley Senior Program has been offering free tax assistance to seniors for the past twenty-eight years. A group of trained volunteers provide the assistance at the Fridley Community Center on Wednesdays between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. as well as between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. They provide this assistance between February 1 and April 15 each year. Volunteers are also available for evening tax assistance sessions at Michael Servetus Church on Monday evenings by appointment.



In 2009 these volunteers served over 400 seniors without charge for the counseling or copying associated with their tax preparation. While the volunteers are trained to assist with some of the more complicated tax schedules, such as Schedule D, most of the preparation assistance is with the completion of form 1040 and Schedule A, which is used for itemized deductions. More complicated tax issues are referred to professional tax preparers.

The volunteer preparers use a special IRS tax filing program which allows them to do all of the IRS data entry and complete the individual's income tax return on computers. Most of the returns, including state tax returns, are filed online free of charge. The exception would be for any returns requiring the

attachment of legal documents. The Fridley Senior Program was one of the first senior programs in Minnesota to provide this service and the first to electronically file federal and state taxes in Anoka County.

The assistance includes help with both federal and state tax forms, and property tax rebates, which are allowable under Minnesota tax law. Additionally, the volunteer preparers are trained to deal with tax issues related to home foreclosures, first time home buyer issues, and tax credits, such as those that apply to home energy improvements. According to Don Holum, former Fridley High School accounting teacher, who has been using the Fridley Senior Program Tax Assistance program for many years, the

tax assistance program provided by the Fridley Senior Program is a very professional form of tax help and is greatly appreciated by all of the seniors who participate.

If you are a senior, the City Senior Program invites you to participate in their 2010 Tax Assistance Program. There are no appointments for the day time assistance. It is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Whether you participate in the daytime tax assistance program or the evening program at Michael Servetus

Church, the volunteer preparers ask that you bring your 2009 tax forms, W-2s, interest statements, documentation of medical expenses, records of charitable contributions, any Certificates of Rent Paid (CRPs) from landlords, property tax statements, and your 2008 tax return. If you have questions or wish to make an appointment for the Monday evening sessions, you may do so by calling the Fridley Senior Program at 502-5150.

If you would like to assist with tax preparation or simply participate as a greeter for the tax preparation program, Senior Citizen Program Supervisor Connie Thompson invites you to give her a call at the Senior Program offices. ■

Fridley Fire Department Participates in Mass Casualty Exercise

In our tough economic climate, there are many who push for structural reform of our local government and public school systems. Before we give up what we have, however, we should carefully look at the options as well as how what we have works. One example of this is the local fire services that we have in this neck of the woods. They stand out in terms of their ability to provide broad support to each other through joint training exercises, sharing of equipment, and providing personnel to the scene of all kinds of emergencies.

A very good example of this occurred in early November of last year when the Fridley, Columbia Heights, and St. Anthony Fire Departments collaborated in a mass casualty training exercise at the Columbia Heights Middle School. At 7:00 p.m. on November 9, the three departments were dispatched by the County dispatching center to respond to a hypothetical explosion at the Middle School where many injuries had occurred.



The first units to arrive were an Allina ambulance staffed with students from Inver Hills Community College and Columbia Heights Police Officers. Due to the thick smoke, they quickly recognized that they would be unable to enter the building. A Columbia Heights engine arrived shortly thereafter and began the process of assessing the scene, establishing an incident command unit, and rescuing students that were mobile and able to be moved quickly to safety. They then identified the cause of the explosion and subsequent fire. They determined very quickly that the source of the explosion and fire was a leaking natural gas line which they quickly secured. As more fire trucks and ambulances arrived at the scene, they quickly began air quality monitoring and directed arriving crews to remove students to the outside triage area where medical personnel prioritized the simulated injuries and treated patients based on the seriousness of their injuries. In the process, firefighters had to remove many immobile patients using carries and backboards.

These triaged patients were taken to waiting ambulances where as many as four patients were loaded into a single ambulance and transported to the emergency department at Unity Hospital in Fridley. Altogether five ambulances transported twenty-two patients in less than an hour from the time of the original call to dispatch.

As the number of responders from the three fire departments grew, the incident command was transferred from the initial responders to the Fire Chiefs from Columbia Heights and Fridley. The incident command post was also transformed from a Columbia Heights Captain, who was working from a portable radio, to the Columbia Heights Fire Chief's vehicle, where a computer and multiple radios were used to provide a strong communications network with all responders as well as with outside agencies. Allina Medical Transportation also set up a separate command post for coordination of the transportation of patients in ambulances.

Nicole Petroff from Allina and Columbia Heights Assistant Fire Chief John Larkin coordinated the simulation exercise, which, in addition to the three fire departments and the Columbia Heights Police Department, included students from Inver Heights Community College and emergency room personnel at Unity Hospital. Altogether, Columbia Heights provided twenty-four firefighters and eight vehicles. The Fridley Fire Department provided twenty-five firefighters and seven vehicles. The St. Anthony Fire Department provided four firefighters and two vehicles. Inver Hills Community College provided thirty-five Emergency Medical Technician students. Allina provided a fully staffed ambulance and a command vehicle with staff. The Columbia Heights Police Department provided three units, and Unity Hospital dedicated their emergency room and personnel for the drill.

When asked about the benefits of the drill, Fire Chief John Berg points out that the exercise tested all of the participants' ability to remove, triage, and transport a large number of patients. He indicated it also gave them experience in mobilizing multiple agencies, provided training in recognizing and mitigating hazards, and provided experience in coordination of emergency crews with receiving units at the hospital. He pointed out further that it is impossible to experience something like this in the classroom, and he is confident the experience of multiple agencies working together in practice will serve us well in the future. ■



Fire Service Calls Down in 2009

Fire Chief John Berg reports that there were 2,864 calls for Fridley Fire Department services in 2009. This compares with 2,945 calls for service in 2008. He reports the following calls by category for the two years.

	2008	2009
Fires/Explosions	130	141
Rescues/Medicals	1,970	1,932
Hazardous Conditions	95	104
Miscellaneous Service Calls	137	110
Other	613	571

The Fires/Explosions category includes building, vehicle, rubbish and wild land fires. Explosions include gas and vapor explosions.

The Rescues/Medicals category includes medical emergencies (including those incurred in vehicle accidents), searches for lost persons, and technical rescues, such as those involving confined space and machinery.

Hazardous condition calls include gas spills, natural gas leaks, chemical releases, electrical wiring problems, wires down, unsafe structures and bomb calls.

Miscellaneous service calls include jewelry and ring removal, water problems, smoke removal, illegal fires, animal rescue, and lifting calls.

Other calls include calls cancelled en route, false alarms, severe weather calls, and special incident calls.

While the number of service calls was down slightly for 2009, the dollar loss to fixed structures increased from \$1,971,950 in 2008 to \$2,138,040 in 2009. These numbers include one major fire in each year that each contributed more than \$1.5 million in damage. In 2009 there were two other fires where the loss was greater than \$300,000.

Property loss from fires in single family dwellings went down from \$430,000 in 2008 to \$179,190 in 2009. There were twelve single family residential fires in 2008 and eleven single family fires in 2009.

Property loss in multifamily dwellings increased from \$4,800 in 2008 to \$68,600 in 2009. There were four multifamily dwelling fires in 2008 and seven multifamily dwelling fires in 2009.

It is also of interest to note that the Fridley Fire Department responded on ten occasions to automatic mutual aid calls. Four of these calls were to Columbia Heights; four others were in the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire District; and two were in St. Anthony Village. On eighteen other occasions, Fridley responded to mutual aid requests from ten area cities. Fridley was also the recipient of automatic mutual aid on ten occasions; and, on thirteen other occasions, Fridley received mutual aid after requesting it.

If you have questions about these statistics, please contact Fire Chief John Berg at bergj@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Safety Camp

For youth completing grades 2-3 (if openings remain after June 1, those who have completed grade 4 may register.)

Tuesday & Wednesday
June 15 & 16, 2010 • 8 am - 4 pm
\$30.00 (pre-registration required)
Commons Park

Members of the Fridley Fire, Police and Recreation Departments will once again be hosting this exciting program designed for kids to have fun while learning good safety practices. Safety topics to be covered may include: fire, seat belt, animals, electrical, bicycle, first aid, swimming, personal and more!

The camp will be held at the Commons Park shelter (555 61st Ave. NE) **rain or shine**. There will be snacks and lunch served daily. On June 16, there will be a graduation ceremony held at 6:00 p.m. at the Fridley High School. It is very important that your child (and family) attend this ceremony, as it is an important conclusion to this two-day experience.

Questions: Call Liz @ 572-3626

Registration: Call 572-3570

On-line Registration: <https://webtrac.ci.fridley.mn.us>



We're Lining the Sewers Again in 2010

The lining of City sewers will happen again in 2010 for the 21st year in a row. While there are a number of sewer-lining processes, the process used in Fridley involves insertion of a resin-saturated felt tube into the sanitary sewer lines. After the insertion of the tube, hot water or steam is used to cure the resin and form a tight fitting, jointless, and corrosion resistant replacement lining. After the lining takes place, the contractor restores access to service laterals by using a robotically controlled cutting device. He also uses closed circuit television cameras to inspect his work.

This year's lining will encompass about a mile of sanitary sewers in two locations. They were selected by the City's Public Works Director and Sewer Maintenance Supervisor based upon the age of the pipes and past inflow and infiltration problems. They include the lining of 4,193' of 15" vitrified clay pipe on the west side of University Avenue between Rice Creek Terrace and 61st Avenue. The City is also lining 1,025' of 8" vitrified clay pipe along Stinson Boulevard between Gardena Avenue and 61st Avenue.

The City Council awarded the project bid to Veit and Company of Rogers in March. The low bid was \$176,547. This compares with \$185,000 that was budgeted. Funding for the project is derived from the City's sewer rate revenues.

The work will begin as early as April 15 and extend to September 15. Residents in the areas affected by the work will receive letters explaining the process. During the very brief period when laterals will be covered by the new liner, residents will be asked not to use water or flush toilets. Once the liner is in place and the lateral openings have been cut, residents will also be asked to use as little water as possible for another short period of time while the resin in the new liner is curing. The entire disruption should be no longer than about two hours.

The purpose of the sewer lining is to strengthen pipes and prevent ground water infiltration into the City's sanitary sewer system. The strengthening of the pipes reduces the chances for structural failure and the sewer backups that might result from a potential collapse. By preventing groundwater infiltration, the City and its residents avoid higher costs for sewage treatment that are based on sewage flows.

If you have questions, call Sewer Maintenance Supervisor Greg Kottsick at 572-3560. ■

We're Flushing Again

Yes indeed, Fridley's Water Supervisor Kory Jorgensen expects to be flushing hydrants between April 5 and April 23. They will begin in the neighborhoods nearest the Commons Park Treatment Plant and move from there outward toward the City's boundaries. The purpose of the flushing is to remove small amounts of sediments (typically iron and manganese) that settle in certain water mains over the course of the year. We also use this as an opportunity to check for hydrant repairs that may be needed and return later to make repairs.

During the flushing, deposits from the water lines may create a yellowish to brownish discoloration of water in homes near the flushing. While this water is generally safe for drinking, it may discolor laundry. If this discoloration lasts longer than two days, residents are asked to call the City's Public Works Department at 572-3566 or e-mail Kory Jorgensen at jorgensenk@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Residents Respond Regarding Refuse Collection

In the December issue of the *Fridley Community Report*, we pointed out that residents had been questioning why the City of Fridley did not have an organized garbage collection system similar to those in Minneapolis, Blaine, and Columbia Heights. We also described organized collection in terms of cost, impact on illegal dumping, hidden costs to cities, impact on the life of City streets, and environmental impacts. Additionally, we pointed out that, as recently as 2007, the majority of Fridley residents who responded to our citizen survey opposed the adoption of an organized collection system in Fridley. Finally, we asked you whether circumstances had changed and whether you thought Fridley should be adopting an organized collection system. You were asked to contact Mayor Scott Lund with your responses.

Mayor Lund received twenty-six emails and two telephone calls. Of the twenty-eight responses, twenty-one said that the City should proceed with organized collection. Six said that we shouldn't. One other person inquired about recycling containers with no apparent position on the organized collection issue.

Here is a sampling of some of the comments the Mayor received.

Comments from those who agreed that Fridley should have an organized collection system.

"The City should be able to negotiate a much better price per household than the individual homeowners..."

"There seems to be too many garbage trucks driving through our streets each week spewing pollution, making noise, and damaging our roads."

"Having numerous garbage trucks on City streets is too costly to ignore."

"The garbage trucks are known for their extreme axle loads. Their negative effect on the roadways, especially City streets that are not designed for heavy loads, is a fact. Another factor often overlooked is the effect of acceleration, and even more so, heavy braking on streets' surfaces."

"If capacity is an issue, perhaps the City could be split into territories and the two lowest bidders could cover separate areas."

"I believe in the free enterprise system, but I also



believe that there are basic services, which include garbage removal, that should be managed by the City to obtain the best results and not create the problems I see today."

"I would like to go on record in favor of a move away from free market to organized collection. Our garbage is collected on Wednesdays and we have garbage trucks making at least four round trips up and down our street. In the summer when they pick up yard waste, there are three more round trips."

Comments from those who believe the City should keep its current, free market collection system.

"The air and noise pollution alluded to in the recent newsletter appear to be non-existent in our neighborhood."

"I feel as though we must be careful in our decision to switch to an organized system. We as citizens are slowly surrendering our rights in many aspects of our lives."

"The City does not need to take on the financial responsibility of contract negotiation and delinquent accounts."

"Private enterprise is the only solution."

"I do not want someone regulating who can drive through my neighborhood."

"I can't find anywhere in the Constitution that garbage collection is a government function."

Mike from Ace Solid Waste asks that our readers read the haulers' point of view at mngarbagefacts.com.

Although these comments are more the results of a straw poll than a random sample, they do represent those who responded. We would like to thank those who took the time to respond. City staff will continue to investigate the merits of the two collection systems and report its findings in future newsletters. ■

Mardi Gras Celebrates Seniors

What? Well, it wasn't quite like this; but, we needed to catch your attention! What we really want to say is that the Fridley Senior Program once again held their annual Mardi Gras celebration on the afternoon of February 16 at the Fridley Community Center. Altogether, 130 seniors attended what was again a fun-filled afternoon of game playing with play money. Games included Bingo, Texas Hold'em, and Black Jack.

As in past years, a variety of City, School District, and other community leaders served as dealers or Bingo callers for the senior participants who joined them in groups of six to eight around individual tables. While there were many prizes, the biggest prize of the afternoon was the spirit of light-hearted fun and camaraderie among the seniors, as well as between the seniors and their dealers. The dealers included Janene Ducharme; Senior Outreach Worker, Nancy Shaw; Dorothy Hegna from the American Legion Auxiliary; Councilmember Jim Saefke; Captain Brian Weierke from the Fridley Police Department; Dave Kondrick, Chairman of the City's Planning Commission; Toni Craft, Director of Community Education ISD#14;

Fridley School Superintendent Peggy Flathman, Senior Advisory Council member Don Zeigler, Councilmember Bob Barnette; Recreation Program Supervisor Mark Daly; Fire Chief John Berg; Parks and Recreation Director Jack Kirk; and City Manager Bill Burns.

The American Legion Auxiliary, and in particular Dorothy Hegna, provided cookie bars, punch, and coffee for the hungry players. The Bingo and card players also benefited from more than \$500 in door prizes and prizes for the winners at each table. The door prizes, incidentally, were purchased from Senior Program funds by members of the Senior Advisory Board.

Thanks to the senior participants who paid their \$2 to attend this fun event. Thanks also to the dealers, and to Senior Coordinator Connie Thompson, who once again did an outstanding job coordinating the event. We look forward to seeing all of you next year. ■



Police Fight Illegal Narcotics Through Drug Task Forces

One of the least publicized services provided by the City of Fridley is the service provided through the Fridley Police Department's participation in two multi-agency drug task forces. These task forces are the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force (DTF) and the Federal DEA Task Force. Fridley has one officer assigned to each agency.

The Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force includes officers from the Anoka County Sheriff's Department, Blaine, Coon Rapids, Columbia Heights, Champlin, Fridley, Maple Grove, and Anoka. Fridley has provided representation in this organization since 1996. Currently, the Fridley representative on the Task Force is a sergeant who is in charge of the day-to-day operation of the Task Force. The Commander for the Task Force is Criminal Investigation Division Lieutenant Kevin Halweg from the Anoka County Sheriff's Office. The Task Force reports to a nine-member Advisory Board composed of representatives from participating agencies and a representative from the County Attorney's Office.

Funding for the Task Force comes from federal, state, and local sources, including matching City funds. In addition to monetary contributions, local law enforcement agencies fund the officers for the Task Force as well as maintain and insure the officer's assigned vehicle. The Task Force also benefits from the proceeds of the sale of property seized during narcotics investigations. These asset forfeitures are also shared with the State Department of Public Safety, and the county attorneys' offices for the two counties. From time-to-time, the Advisory Board authorizes expenditures on behalf of member agencies for use in member agencies' communities.

Task Force is monitored on a daily basis by the DTF Sergeant and on a weekly basis by the Task Force Commander. The Task Force Advisory Board monitors the work of the Task Force through a weekly briefing email and quarterly meetings. The State Gang and Drug Coordinator, an employee of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, also conducts periodic on site audits.

When asked about accomplishments of the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force, Public Safety Director Don Abbott points out that in 2008, the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force conducted 780 investigations, served 242 search warrants, and made 821 arrests. It also eliminated eleven clandestine meth labs and fourteen marijuana gardens. These statistics earned the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force a first place ranking among the twenty state-funded task forces in terms of arrests, felony charges filed, hand guns seized, number of narcotics sales arrests, and number of meth arrests. They were also among the top five task forces in the state for amount of cocaine, meth, and marijuana plants seized.

Abbott also points out that there is no way that individual law enforcement agencies could come close to providing the results generated by the task force. They simply do not have the time, money, and staffing to do what the multi-jurisdictional task forces have been able to accomplish.

In contrast to the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force, which has primarily county jurisdiction, the federal DEA Task Force has nation-wide jurisdiction. Fridley assigned an officer to this group in the fall of 2008 after Public Safety Director Abbott received a request from the DEA. The officer assigned is an experienced narcotics detective who had been trained as a member of the Anoka Hennepin Drug Task Force.

When asked why we need two drug task forces, Public Safety Director Abbott explains that the focus of the work of the two groups is different. The Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force, for example works primarily on local cases. The DEA, on the other hand, works cases having a broader focus that often involve ties across state and national boundaries. Moreover, he sees the two task forces as complementary rather than duplicative. He points out that quite often the DTF hands off local cases that involve non-local ties to the DEA. The DEA also hands cases which they have found to be focused locally to the DTF. Perhaps the greatest benefit of Fridley participation in the DEA Task Force has been an increased cooperation between the DEA and the DTF and improved access to DEA personnel and funds to help address drug issues in Fridley and the DTF service area.

The bottom line is that Fridley benefits greatly through its participation in both drug task forces. Also, unlike the Gang Strike Force that has generated much adverse publicity over its property forfeiture practices, both of the drug task forces operate very narrowly within a variety of laws, policies and guidelines and both groups are driven by the goal of stamping out illegal narcotics trade rather than by how much money and property they seize. The results of their work provide testimony to this characterization of these groups.

If you have questions about the work of either drug task force and Fridley's involvement in them, please contact Lieutenant Mike Monsrud of the Fridley Police Department at monsrudm@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■



Since the property seizure practices of the Minnesota Gang Strike Force have been publicly called into question, it is important to note that the Drug Task Force adheres strictly to Minnesota law. This law defines the limited number of crimes where property seizure may occur as well as lays out a very detailed seizure and forfeiture process. This process, among other things, requires the notification of forfeiture to defendants, defines an appeal process for defendants, and dictates that the law enforcement agency must keep records, and establish acceptable disposition methods for seized property. Further, the law enforcement agencies must report forfeitures and dispositions to the state's Department of Public Safety.

The Task Force's work and the work of nineteen other drug task forces scattered throughout Minnesota are governed by Minnesota law. In the case of the Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force, the work of the task force is also governed by a Multi-Jurisdictional Policy and Procedures Manual created by the State Gang and Oversight Council and by Anoka-Hennepin Drug Task Force Standard Operating Procedures. The work of the

Northstar, continued from page 1

Has Metro Transit provided shuttle services at any of the station sites? Most of the passengers arriving in Minneapolis transfer to the Hiawatha light rail line or walk a short distance to the Ramp B/5th Street Transit Center to access the downtown skyway network. At Ramp B, they also offer a shuttle bus service for those whose offices are closer to 9th and 10th street downtown. While there are currently no other shuttle services from any of the suburban stations, Metro Transit is evaluating the need for a Fridley shuttle service. Connecting service is available at Fridley's Northstar Station to bus routes 824 and 852.

What kind of feedback has Metro Transit received regarding Northstar? Customers have reacted positively to the reliability and comfort of the Northstar service.

Are there any new services that Metro Transit plans for 2010? Northstar will use regular service and special event trains to accommodate those wishing to attend fifty-three of eighty-one Minnesota Twins home games as Target Field opens its inaugural season. Service will be available to the home opening series as well as to all weekend games and all weekday night games between June and August. Metro Transit will also be creating a deeply discounted roundtrip pass for families who want to attend Twins games or simply go on weekend outings. Please stay tuned for further details.

If you have other questions about Northstar fares, ticket purchases, schedules or anything else, please submit them by way of the "Contact Us" tab at www.metrotransit.org. You may also get your questions answered by calling "The Transit Information Center" at 612-373-3333. ■



Dog License Application

May 1, 2010 - April 30, 2011

To apply for a dog license, please complete this form and submit it to the City of Fridley along with proof of rabies vaccination and a \$5.00 fee.

Owner's Name _____
 (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

Phone _____

Pet's name _____

Pet's Breed _____

Sex _____ Age _____ Weight _____

For Office Use Only

Vaccination Due _____

Dog Tag # _____ Receipt # _____

City of Fridley — Dog Licenses
 6431 University Av. NE, Fridley, MN 55432

WinterFest Was Wonderful

The 2010 WinterFest celebration that was held on Saturday, January 30 was a wonderful event that attracted about 650 participants, including many volunteers from a wide variety of community organizations. While the temperature reached only 15 degrees, there was little wind and the sun helped to add cheer to an exciting array of winter activities.

As has been the case at the ten preceding WinterFest events, there were both outdoor and indoor activities. The outdoor activities included dog sled rides, snowball launching, a bonfire, a horse drawn hayride, sledding, ice skating, and a medallion hunt. The indoor activities included a kid's dance, winter tattoos, carnival games, a treat walk, Bingo, arts and crafts, and a spaghetti dinner.

Parks and Recreation Supervisor Margo Prasek organized the event with help from her Parks and Recreation colleagues, other City departments, other community partners, and a host of volunteers. The other community partners included the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, which hosted the arts and crafts room; Fridley District #14's Early Childhood and Family Education Program, which ran an ice fishing



game; and the Fridley District #14's Tiger Club, which ran the treat walk. Other community partners included the Fridley '49er Days Committee, which organized the spaghetti dinner; the Fridley Lions Club, which sponsored the horse drawn hayride; and Fridley American Legion Post #303 which sponsored prizes for the carnival room.



Quite a few community organizations also provided volunteers for the event. Boy Scout Troop #167 provided volunteers for the bonfire; Fridley High School Key Club volunteers helped with the carnival games and costumed characters; and Fridley High School National Honor Society volunteers helped with winter tattoos and dog sled rides. Other sources of volunteers included the Single Volunteers of the Twin Cities who helped with the sledding hill, the snowball launcher, the hayride, and the bonfire; the Fridley Senior Program volunteers who staffed the Bingo room and the concession stand; and the Fridley Police Explorers who assisted with traffic control.

The Fridley staff participants in the event included all of the Parks and Recreation staff; the City's Parks Maintenance Division, which prepared the outdoor activity sites; and Brian Strand from the City Manager's office, who videotaped and helped with the event.

Many thanks are also in order to the Fridley Lions Club for donating \$1,100 to the event, and the Fridley American Legion Post #303 and Fridley VFW Post #363 for each donating \$200 to the event. We'd also like to congratulate Zackary Hoy for finding the medallion that had been hidden by Springbrook Nature Center Siah St. Clair. Zackary is an eleven year old student at Fridley Middle School and a resident of Fridley. Last, but far from least, we'd like to thank all of the families who participated in the 2010 WinterFest. We look forward to seeing you at next year's event. ■

Fridley Senior Program Receives Award for Its Medication Review Program

Connie Thompson, Fridley's Senior Citizen Program Supervisor, recently reported that the Fridley Senior Program had received a \$1,500 award known as the National Council on Aging/CVS Pharmacy Community Award for their medication review program. This is a program provided by CVS pharmacist, Jennifer Kim, since 2007. Under this program Jennifer travels from her Mounds View CVS location to the Fridley Senior Center twice a year to meet individually with seniors to review their medications and to develop an appropriate schedule for taking them.

During these thirty minute consultations, Jennifer discusses each of the medications, which senior participants bring to her. In addition to explaining the purpose of the medications, she talks about the side effects of the medication and potential drug interactions. She also answers questions and works with seniors to establish schedules for taking medications that help seniors avoid side effects and harmful drug interactions. She also tries to accommodate differences in the seniors' life styles.

The seniors who participate in the program indicate that as a result of their counseling sessions they do feel better, and are able to be more active. They also report a sense of relief from the bondage of medication schedules that have been set by one or more doctors.

The Fridley Senior Program offers the medication review sessions in the spring and fall of each year. The next review sessions will occur on April 29, 2010 between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at the Fridley Community Center. If you are a senior and are interested in participating, you may schedule an appointment by calling the Senior Program office at 502-5150. ■

Wal-Mart to Redevelop Their Fridley Store

According to Community Development Director Scott Hickok, Wal-Mart has indicated their desire to renovate their store in Fridley. While the size of the building footprint will not change, the layout of the retail space will be changed to include a significantly expanded grocery section. The Wal-Mart parcel will also change through the addition of a new, 1.36 acre out lot on the north edge of their parking lot that will house an unnamed commercial entity.

Some of the other features of the new Wal-Mart include the moving of the garden center from the east face of the building to the northwest face of the building. The front entrance of the store will also be moved from the west side of the north face of the building to the east side of the north face of the building. Additionally, the architectural style of the building's exterior will be modified, and will take on a new, modern appearance. The various planes of the building will be painted one of three shades of earth tone color. Wal-Mart will also install a new covered drop-off area in front of the building. While we're not yet sure yet what changes will be made in merchandising, it is very evident from the plans received that the new emphasis on grocery space will result in some downsizing or elimination of other retail sections.



There are also some changes proposed for the parking area. Since the City is recommending that the parking requirements be changed from five parking stalls for every 1,000 square feet of floor space to four parking stalls for the same space, the reduced parking requirement will allow the construction of the new out lot. Wal-Mart also plans to provide for a bikeway/walkway connecting the parking area to the University Avenue bike path. Additionally, it will be constructing a sidewalk that will connect the senior housing at Banfill Crossing to the store.

These changes required a special use permit from the City as well as a revised plat. These land use applications came before the Fridley Planning

Commission on February 17 where they were unanimously approved. They reached the City Council at their meeting on March 8 when, after considerable discussion, the changes were approved by Council as well.

Wal-Mart expects to begin construction this spring and to have the modifications completed by the end of the year. While the logistics will, no doubt be challenging, Wal-Mart plans to remain open throughout the construction process.

If you have questions about the Wal-Mart project, please contact Community Development Director Hickok by calling 572-3592 or by email at hickoks@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■