

# Fridley

OCTOBER 2009  
NO. 160

COMMUNITY REPORT

A report to  
the citizens of Fridley

6431 University Avenue NE  
Fridley, MN 55432  
phone: 763-571-3450  
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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

## Pumpkin Night in the Park!

(A Non-Violent Family Adventure)

Saturday, October 17  
\$6 per person (under age 2 free)



The Ghost of Elvis returns....  
Don't miss his final performance.



**Price includes:** Hiking the Enchanted Outdoor Trail with hundreds of Carved Pumpkins; Treats for Everyone; Pumpkin Patch Dance with a live DJ; Indoor Trail of Spooky Delights; Bonfires; and the Roadkill Café.

**Extra Activities For A Minimal Cost:**  
Spooky BINGO & Food Sales

Continuous activities 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

For more info, call 763-572-3588.

Advance tickets on sale at the Nature Center.

Overflow parking available free of charge across from the Nature Center. Chaperoned children only.

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## Night to Unite Parties Attract Many Neighbors

The 2009 “Night to Unite Parties” once again provided many opportunities for representatives of the Fridley Police and Fire Departments to build community partnerships between public emergency service providers and residents in numerous neighborhoods. Approximately 2,500 residents joined with thirty-three Police Department employees, thirteen firefighters, the Mayor and Council, the three members of the ‘49er Days Royalty, and five Fridley Fire Explorers in celebrating “Night to Unite” on a very comfortable August 4 evening.

As is usually the case, there was a great variety among the 102 parties that were spread throughout Fridley. Like last year, there was a coloring contest for kids. Target employees conducted games for kids with bikes and bike helmets as prizes at a large party held in the Edgewater Garden neighborhood. A Springbrook Apartment party recognized residents who had lived



there five years. There was even a wine tasting party at one residence.

As in past years, BoB's Produce provided fresh peaches for party goers. In addition to providing bikes and bike helmets to some lucky kids in the Edgewater Gardens area, Target Corporation provided cups and spoons for each party. They also provided beach balls for many parties and three gift cards for the winners of the coloring contests.

Judging by the positive feedback, Myra Harris, Ginny Helseth-Miller, and Liz Chevalier of the Fridley Police Department once again did a great job in organizing this year's event. Many thanks to BoB's Produce, and Target for serving as community-wide sponsors. Thanks also to those who held the parties and to the many participants who attended. ■



## 85th Avenue Bike Trail Completed

Mayor Scott Lund, members of Council, representatives of the Parks and Recreation Commission, representatives of the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation and staff were on hand on Monday, August 17, to cut the ribbon for the first section of the 85th Avenue Bike Trail. The trail begins at the intersection of 85th and University Avenues and extends a distance of 4,200 feet (about 0.8 miles) to a point just past the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks on 85th Avenue. Ultimately the bikeway will extend to East River Road and will link up with the Mississippi River Regional Trail that extends north to the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and south to the Minneapolis Parkway System. Once at the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, bikers may cross the river and gain access to the Hennepin County Trail

System, including access to the 5,000-acre Elm Creek Park Reserve.

The trail is 10 feet wide, leaving ample room for bicyclists to pass. In order to avoid having to relocate the trail in the future, it was separated from 85th Avenue. The alignment was developed to avoid impacts to sensitive tree stands and wetlands. As a result of these factors, there are five decked sections of the bikeway, 12 feet wide from railing to railing, built over the wetlands. There is also a kiosk with benches, bike racks, and map boards located near the entrance to the Springbrook Nature Center.

The bikeway cost \$800,000. The City used Federal Transportation Enhancement funds to cover 80% of the costs. The 20% local match came from state aid to highway funds. Had the federal portion of the funding not been used in 2009, the City would have lost it. While the bikeway ends at the Coon Rapids border, the City of Coon Rapids is exploring ways to move their end of the project forward. As we learn more, we will provide updates.

If you have questions or comments about the bikeway construction, please contact Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar at koslucharj@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■



## City Council Approves Comprehensive Plan

On July 27, 2009, the Fridley City Council gave its final approval to the Comprehensive Plan amendments. The final plan was adopted as an outgrowth of a long, complicated process that is required by the Minnesota Land Planning Act of 1976

as a means of helping the metropolitan region plan for regional infrastructure and transportation needs.

The process started with a series of housing forums in 2005 that were established to address the City's housing goals and policies. In 2006, eight staff committees were formed to review and update the various chapters of the current plan (adopted in March of 2001). From there, the Community Development Staff, led by Planning Manager Julie Jones, coordinated a series of public neighborhood meetings held in March and April of 2007. The neighborhood meetings were followed by questions placed in the 2007 citizen survey as a means of comparing the citizen input received at the neighborhood meetings with the viewpoints of a randomly selected community-wide sample of residents. Since most of the input to that point had been from residents, staff also set up a business workshop in November of 2007 that was designed to gain the input of the Fridley business community. Staff also brought the relevant sections of the plan to the various City advisory committees.

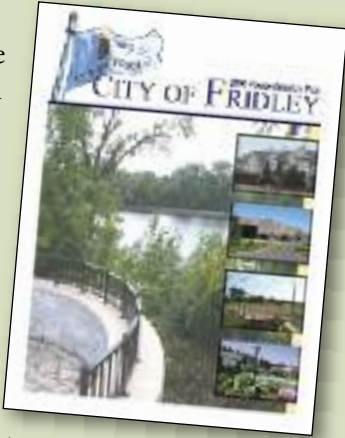
On December 19, 2007, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on a completed draft of the plan. The City Council also took public comment at their February 11, 2008, meeting and directed staff to forward the plan to seventeen surrounding jurisdictions. After the required six months of jurisdictional review and comment, staff, with Council's approval, submitted the plan to the Metropolitan Council on November 24, 2008. After review and comment by various Metropolitan Council committees, a final version of the plan was approved by the full Metropolitan Council on June 10, 2009.

The completed copy of the Comprehensive Plan has been printed and is available at the Fridley Branch of the Anoka County Public Library as well as at the Fridley Municipal Center for review. It is also available on the Fridley website at [www.ci.fridley.mn.us](http://www.ci.fridley.mn.us). Once at the site, click on the Property and Housing tab to find a link to the Comprehensive Plan.

The plan is a comprehensive set of guidelines and action steps that cover land use, economic development and redevelopment, housing, transportation, parks and trails, natural resources, the Mississippi River Corridor, sewer, water, stormwater, and public facilities. While it is meant to be a ten-year plan, it may be amended at any time.

The next scheduled update of the Fridley Comprehensive Plan will begin in 2015 and must be completed by 2018.

We invite you to review the plan. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Julie Jones at [jonesj@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:jonesj@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■



## Fridley's Very Valuable Volunteer

This month's very valuable volunteer, Jim Lawrence, passed away on July 4, 2009. Jim was well liked by everyone as a real people person. While the extent of all of his volunteer activities is unknown, we do know that he served as a Senior Volunteer for about nineteen years at Hayes Elementary School and the Fridley Middle School. According to Margaret Liebfried, Principal of the Fridley Middle School, "Jim Lawrence was an amazing volunteer who was dependable, loyal, and great with kids. He volunteered for many years with Title I and Special Education students. He helped any child who needed help with reading and was fantastic."



Jim also served as a Senior Program volunteer and team counselor for fifteen years at Safety Camp. According to Myra Harris, Special Projects Coordinator in the Fridley Police Department, Jim always wanted to be assigned to a team rather than simply be a support person at Safety Camp. He loved being with youth and loved to learn new things from the presenters at Safety Camp.

In addition to improving the lives of Fridley's children, Jim was also a facilitator for an Alcoholics

Anonymous group at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Columbia Heights where he mentored individuals starting out on the road to sobriety. He also served in many other volunteer activities at the church.

Additionally, Jim was a very active member in the Fridley Senior Program. According to Connie Thompson, Senior Program Coordinator, Jim loved cribbage, cards, the Senior Mardi Gras Festival, the Holiday Lights Tour, and the Holiday Dinner. Most of all, he loved to visit and just loved being with people.

Prior to retirement, Jim worked for Mutual of Omaha as an insurance broker. He was married for fifty-one years to his wife Delores who passed away in early April. According to a spokesperson at his church, Jim dearly loved his wife and was heartbroken when she passed away.

While there are undoubtedly other contributions of Jim Lawrence that we have missed, we are certain he was a tireless volunteer who just kept on giving to his community and to the numerous people in his life. We appreciate Jim for sharing so much of his life with others. ■

## City Receives Stimulus Money for 61st Avenue and Moore Lake Drive

Early this year, Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar applied for economic stimulus money provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. He learned that the grant was forthcoming in June and prepared a feasibility report for Council's consideration on July 27, 2009. The grant will amount to the lesser of \$262,500 or 75% of the project cost for the milling and overlaying of 61st Avenue and Moore Lake Drive. The money will be funneled through the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

The project will begin on the western end of 61st Avenue at Starlite Boulevard and continue eastwardly toward University Avenue. Since 61st Avenue between University Avenue and 7th Street has recently been upgraded, resurfacing of this section will not be part of the project. After crossing University Avenue, work will begin again at 7th Street and extend eastwardly down 61st Avenue through Moore Lake Drive to Old Central Avenue. The length of the project is 1.7 miles, including 1.3 miles of full-width road paving. The project will also include bike-way/walkway upgrades that will improve access to the Northstar Commuter Rail Station, Fridley schools, and businesses along the corridor.

In addition to the street overlay and bike-way/walkway work, there will be limited storm sewer

and sanitary sewer repairs, along with adjustments to sanitary sewer manholes and water valves. We estimate that the total amount of utility work will cost about \$16,000. The funds will be drawn proportionately from the three utility funds.

As with other mill and overlay projects, a portion of the project will be assessed to benefiting property owners. Preliminary information indicates that residential properties will be assessed approximately \$1,300 to \$1,400 per lot. Based on past practice, the School District #14 portion of the assessment will be waived. The preliminary assessment hearing was scheduled for the August 24 City Council meeting. The final assessment hearing will be held in 2010.

Assuming permitting and federal paperwork is processed quickly, the City could open bids as early as September 22, 2009. The bid award will be made at the October 12 City Council meeting.

Although construction may begin in October, chances appear to be good that most of the construction will be delayed until next spring. When it does occur, it will last about five weeks. During construction, there may be some short-term detours lasting a day or two. When this occurs, alternative access will be made for businesses and public properties. While short-term access to residential properties may also be blocked, we expect to minimize these blockages and also suggest temporary parking arrangements. Representatives from Public Works have met with District #14 school personnel to coordinate plans for maintaining access to public schools. We appreciate the public's patience and cooperation during this construction event.

If you have comments or questions regarding this project, please contact Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar at [koslucharj@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:koslucharj@ci.fridley.mn.us) or call him at 572-3552. ■



## City and Fairview Agree on Sign

Earlier this year, representatives of Fairview Health Services approached the City's Community Development Department with a request to place a sign in front of their clinic on University Avenue. The preferred location, however, happened to be on property owned by the Fridley Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). To make a long story short, the Fairview Clinic representatives came back with an offer to build a changeable sign on HRA property for joint use by Fairview and the City.

The proposed sign will be placed along the University Avenue Service Drive, just south of Fourmies Avenue. It will contain 102 square feet and have a height of 25 feet. The bottom 38 square feet of the sign will be devoted to Fairview. The top 82 square feet will be permanently reserved for City usage as a changeable message board. It will use the sign to advertise community events and to further identify the Fridley Municipal Center. The old sign in front of the Fire Station will be removed. Under City code, messages on the sign may be changed every forty-five seconds. The sign will accommodate six messages which will alternate throughout the day.

Although all of the costs for the construction and operation of the sign will be borne by Fairview, the operation of the changeable portion of the sign will occur from a computer located within the Municipal Center. The City will also bear the cost of removing and replacing four trees in the vicinity of the sign location.



The terms of this arrangement between the City and Fairview have been incorporated into a fifty-year lease between the HRA and Fairview. The lease was approved at the September 3 HRA meeting. We expect that construction of the sign will begin in early October. The sign should be operational by the first part of November.

Once the sign is in place, community non-profit organizations may use the sign for events by calling Roberta Collins in the City Manager's office at 572-3500. If you have questions about the City's agreement with Fairview, contact Community Development Director Scott Hickok at hickoks@ci.fridley.mn.us.

Thank you Fairview for this generous arrangement! ■

## Parks Crews Complete Summer Projects

As usual, the City's parks maintenance crews have been very busy completing a list of parks capital improvement projects. Unfortunately, due to the need to transfer parks capital funding to support the General Fund the list of projects is shrinking. In 2008, it included \$220,000 worth of projects. This year, we budgeted for \$183,000 worth of parks improvements. In 2010, the parks capital budget has been reduced to \$67,000.

As is the case every year, court resurfacing projects tend to head the list of improvements. In 2009, the City spent \$43,000 on various resurfacing projects including tennis courts in Flanery, Moore Lake, Briardale, Commons, Logan, Summit, and Terrace Parks. The City also resurfaced the basketball courts in Flanery, Moore Lake, Logan, Skyline, and Terrace Parks.

While we had planned to replace the two picnic shelters in Moore Lake Park in 2008, the new shelters did not arrive in time to complete the work before winter. The two 24' x 24' shelters were completed in 2009 within the \$40,000 that was carried over from last year's budget.

Another carryover project is the upgrading of the trail system at Innsbruck Park. The budget includes a total of \$30,000 of which \$15,000 has been made available through a federal grant. Wooden stairway



portions of the trail have been completed, and City crews have completed a portion of the 1¼ mile walking trail. The work includes brush clearing, leveling, and placement of wood chips. Crews from the Twin Cities Tree Trust have assisted with this project. We will likely finish the project next spring.

The 2009 parks capital budget also included \$25,000 for fencing replacements. Much of this work included replacement of fencing at the Community Park softball fields, the Little League Baseball fields, and the Commons Park softball fields. We also plan to replace the fencing around the football fields at Commons Park and the soccer field at Locke Park by the end of October.

Other 2009 parks capital projects include the replacement of sand at the Moore Lake Park volleyball courts (\$12,000), and the completion of drainage improvements at two of the six softball fields at Community Park (\$37,000). The work involves removing sod and topsoil and adding two feet of sand. The topsoil is then regraded over the fields to allow runoff and the fields are reseeded. The project also involves replacing the irrigation systems in the two fields as well as the creation of two rain gardens and repaving the entrance to the ball fields. The work was begun in 2008, but had to be carried over into 2009. It completes the third and final phase of the Community Park ball field improvements.

Although not a parks capital improvements project, the 85th Avenue Bikeway project was also completed in 2009 through use of a federal grant which covered 80% of the project cost (\$800,000). The Springbrook Nature Center will benefit from this project through added visibility, added accessibility to bikers, and the replacement of fencing along the northern perimeter of the park.

Projects designated for 2010 will be restricted to court resurfacing, replacement of deteriorated park furnishings, and the restoration of park fencing. If you have ideas for future park improvements, we welcome your comments. Please forward them to Parks and Recreation Director Jack Kirk at kirkj@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

## Metro Transit Adjusts Bus Routes for Northstar

Metro Transit will be making bus route changes for buses running on East River Road and University Avenue to accommodate Northstar Commuter Rail passengers. These changes will become effective with the start-up of Northstar Commuter Rail service later this year. More information about the Northstar Line schedules and fares is available at [metrotransit.org/northstar](http://metrotransit.org/northstar)

**Route 824** - Buses operating on Route 824 travel north and south on University Avenue north of 40th Avenue. The stops include, but are not limited to, 53rd Avenue, 73rd Avenue, and Osborne Road. To accommodate Northstar passengers who live south of 85th Avenue, this bus will be re-routed one quarter mile west on 61st Avenue to serve Fridley's Northstar station. The bus schedule will also be adjusted to match train arrival and departure times.

**Route 852** - Buses operating on Route 852 travel north and south on East River Road north of I-694. They make stops along East River Road and 85th Avenue, including a stop at the Georgetown Apartments. Buses on this route will also feed into the Northstar station via 61st Avenue at times coordinated with Northstar arrival and departure times. They will accommodate peak hour Northstar riders living between 85th and 61st Avenues along East River Road.

**Route 10** - Buses operating on this route also travel north and south on University Avenue between Northtown Mall and 53rd Avenue. While these buses will not be diverted to the station, they do operate within a quarter mile of the station, and their schedules will be adjusted to coordinate with the Northstar arrivals and departures. These buses provide great Northstar access for Fridley residents living both north and south of 61st Avenue.

**Route 854** - Buses on this route offer limited-stop service between I-694 and the Northtown park and ride site on University Avenue. While no detours to the station site are planned at this point, Metro Transit will be monitoring customer use of this route, and will make appropriate adjustments.

In addition to the schedule changes made for Fridley bus routes, Metro Transit has made numerous bus route changes in other cities along the Northstar Line between Minneapolis and Big Lake. We should also note that there will be a coach bus service between a St. Cloud park and ride site and the Big Lake commuter rail station that will connect with all weekday Northstar runs. Outlines of all the planned bus route changes are available online at [www.metrotransit.org/Northstar/NSBusPlan.pdf](http://www.metrotransit.org/Northstar/NSBusPlan.pdf).

Although the existing Route 10 will offer reverse commute connections for some Fridley employers along University Avenue and Highway 65, Metro Transit has no current plans to add suburban shuttles in Fridley or elsewhere to serve local employers. Metro Transit is, however, reviewing the feasibility of new bus connections between the downtown Minneapolis station and the south end of downtown.

For questions regarding Northstar connections, please visit the Northstar Line website at [metrotransit.org/northstar](http://metrotransit.org/northstar). If you have any other Northstar-related questions or comments please call Metro Transit Customer Relations at 612-373-3333 or filling out a comment card at [metrotransit.org/aboutus/transitservicecomments.asp](http://metrotransit.org/aboutus/transitservicecomments.asp).

## Senior Program Offers Health Insurance Counseling

The Fridley Senior Program offers private health insurance counseling sessions by trained volunteer counselors on the first and third Thursdays of each month at the Fridley Community Center. The purpose of the sessions is to help seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries explore all of their options for supplemental Medicare insurance. The counselors also serve as advocates for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries who experience supplemental insurance problems.

The counselors are from the State Health Insurance Program of Anoka County and have been trained by the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging. As of the end of July, twenty Medicare beneficiaries had taken part in these private counseling sessions. The busiest season of the year, however, begins in late October when insurance providers announce their changes in coverage and cost just prior to the open enrollment season (November 15 - December 31). During this part of the year, all four of the private counseling slots are usually filled on the days counseling is held at the Fridley Senior Program. During the remainder of the year between two and three of the slots are often used.

The sessions generally focus on Part D prescription coverage and Medicare Supplemental coverage (including Medicare Advantage Plans and Medigap policies). The plans take into account that basic Medicare coverage is limited, covering roughly 80% of expenses and no prescriptions, and serve as a means of extending coverage and reducing out-of-pocket expenses.

The most well known of these standardized plans is Part D coverage, which applies to prescription drugs. Since these plans are not provided directly by the government, the plans can vary in terms and types of drugs that are covered. The counselors work with seniors to discuss their medication and other needs that they are considering the appropriate supplemental plans.

The counselors also help seniors with billing questions and problems, and assist them in applying for other low-income health programs. Additionally, they assist seniors in applying for Medicare and in understanding how the Medicare system works. The sessions are open to all Anoka County residents.

If you are interested in signing up for a counseling session on Medicare and supplemental Medicare insurance you may call the Senior Linkage Line at 1-800-333-2433. You may also call Kristin Tossey at 763-422-7528.

If any of our readers are interested in becoming volunteer counselors and are willing to participate in a three-day training event sponsored by the Metro Area Agency on Aging on October 19, 21, and 23, call either Kristin Tossey at the number above, or Fridley's Senior Coordinator Connie Thompson at 763-502-5150. ■

## The Scoop on Wildlife Management

From time to time, including very recently, City staff and Council members have received calls regarding the control of the City's deer population. Some people have become frustrated with the number of deer eating their expensive backyard vegetation. At the same time, others continue to feed the deer and view the presence of deer on their property as an attraction. In view of this situation, it seemed appropriate to review some of the facts regarding the City's actual and potential roles in wildlife management.

It is important to begin by stating that the City of Fridley, unlike several other suburban communities, does not have a City-wide wildlife management plan. This means that, aside from managing the deer population at the Springbrook Nature Center and the spring harvesting of geese at Moore Lake Park, the City is not involved in coming to residential areas to deal with deer or other species of wildlife that are eating residential gardens. Springbrook Nature Center Director Siah St. Clair does, however, offer frequent advice to residents who call about managing wildlife that appear on their property.

Assuming the City is not available to manage wildlife, what rights do individual citizens have to deal with wildlife on their property? According to City Attorney Fritz Knaak, while individuals are allowed to use chemical and other repellent devices, and may, under certain circumstances, trap rodents, residents are not permitted to hunt or shoot animals. While poisons are allowed for non-game animals, such as mice and rats, residents are potentially liable for damage this may inflict on other animals, including domestic pets and non-game wildlife, such as herons, eagles, and other birds.

Does the City have a legal obligation to manage wildlife? Once again Attorney Knaak opines that the City has no legal obligation to manage deer and other wildlife populations in residential areas. On the other hand, if an animal, such as a rabid skunk or a bear poses an imminent threat to public health and safety, it is authorized to intervene immediately. It is also authorized to eradicate wild dogs which run in packs in pursuit of deer or other wildlife.

How might the City become involved in residential wildlife management? According to Siah St. Clair, the State of Minnesota through its Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires municipal governments to have a permit prior to establishing a wildlife management program. The permitting process requires a City-wide aerial survey to determine the density of the deer population in the community and to determine the maximum number of deer that should be permitted in the community. DNR policy also requires the City to



poll residents regarding their preferences before implementing a wildlife management program.

As a practical matter, Siah St. Clair offers that most cities who have enacted a wildlife management program have set up a temporary citizen committee to seek input from residents regarding damage being done to their properties by wildlife. The committee would then develop a list of recommendations to Council regarding wildlife species that should be managed and the means of managing them. Council would then be asked to approve the plan and designate personnel and financial resources to carry out the plan.

Examples of other cities that have wildlife management programs include Golden Valley, Brooklyn Center, St. Louis Park, Burnsville, Edina, Bloomington, Eden Prairie, North Oaks, and Minnetonka. There is also a separate wildlife management program for the Highland Park area of St. Paul. According to Siah St. Clair, these programs typically cost these cities between \$15,000 and \$40,000 a year to implement. He also points out that since deer and other wildlife know nothing about city boundaries, it would be important to establish these wildlife management programs in conjunction with surrounding cities.

According to Attorney Knaak, the costs of the program could legally be assessed to Fridley property owners. Given the other financial needs of the City, one would have to wonder whether or not wildlife management is a higher priority than maintaining existing City programs and services. Rather than create new City costs, it may be preferable for the City to simply encourage residents not to feed deer and other wildlife. It is also possible that some of the problems can be controlled through property owner remedies, such as through the use of a spray containing water and eggs, netting around plants, fencing for smaller animals, and by selecting plants that animals typically do not eat.

If you have questions about these remedies or simply wish to voice a concern on one side or the other of this issue, please contact Siah St. Clair at the Springbrook Nature Center at [stclair@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:stclair@ci.fridley.mn.us) or phone him at 572-3589. ■

## Code Enforcement Goes to Court

While the City's Community Development staff works very hard with residents and businesses to correct code enforcement issues without issuing a citation, there are a few repeat offenders who continue to break the law and offend their neighbors no matter how many letters they receive or nuisance abatements the City conducts. In 2008, we issued twenty-five citations that are very similar to traffic tickets. Once the citation is issued, the recipient must go to court whether or not they have corrected their code enforcement problem(s).

As of mid-August, Community Development staff has handled eleven new court cases and five other cases carried over from 2008. At a minimum, each case requires about ten hours of staff time and about two hours of the City Attorney's time. Many require more time. In most of these cases, we expect to settle the case without a jury trial or trial before a judge.

The settlement varies depending on the property owner's willingness to work with the City. Typically the property owner must pay \$1,000 in court fees with a portion of the fees and/or jail time suspended if the owner does not re-offend within a year.

While the City tries to take care of code enforcement issues as quickly as possible for the benefit of neighbors who are impacted by garbage, junk cars, tall grass, and other code violations, in about 3% of the cases, it is forced to pursue the court process. Ultimately, the City wins. Unfortunately, the legal process sometimes leaves a very few neighbors with a longer term blight. If you want to know the status of any code enforcement issue, please contact Deb Biorn in the Community Development Department at 572-3598 or at [biorn@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:biorn@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■

## Kyle Knutson Completes Work As Summer Intern

The Fridley Community Development Department has once again benefited from the work of a very talented and hard working summer intern. Kyle Knutson, who began working for Fridley in May, completed a comprehensive code compliance survey of all commercial and industrial properties in Fridley. This task had not been done since another summer intern last did it in 2003.

As he traveled through Fridley's commercial and industrial districts, he was on the lookout for any exterior conditions that did not meet City code. In particular, he looked for outdoor storage violations, property maintenance issues (including landscaping, parking lot and fencing conditions), dumpster screening, vehicles parked off paved surfaces, unlicensed vehicles, long grass, illegal signs, and special use permit violations. Altogether he visited 608 properties and sent out 337 letters noting violations, including first and second notices.

His list of violations includes 130 dumpsters that were not properly screened, 119 outdoor storage violations, and 47 property maintenance issues. The violations included overflowing dumpster enclosures, abandoned vehicles in which people had been sleeping, a case where a tenant had brought in a large POD for storage of his lawn mower and snow blower, and many cases where equipment and materials were stored all over the site. He also found semi-trailers parked on several properties that were not road worthy and being used for storage.

For the most part, Kyle reports that the property owners he dealt with were very cooperative. While some became very vocal, there were no instances where Kyle needed police protection to complete his job and nearly all owners either cleaned up their violations or made arrangements to clean up properties at an agreed-upon future date. Several also began the process to apply for special use permits to accommodate their outdoor storage needs. As of mid-August, 79 of 119 outdoor storage issues had been corrected.

When asked about how he helped the Community Development Department, he indicates that he feels he helped it to ease its code enforcement workload.

He also feels that his work with commercial and industrial properties has brought some consistency to the way these properties have been treated. He says, "It's unfair that some businesses have outdoor storage without going through the special use permitting process faced by other businesses. It's also unfair that some businesses leave their garbage unscreened, while other businesses have put in the time and effort to make their properties look nice. Hopefully the results will be noticeable to Fridley residents."

Kyle's supervisors also believe Kyle performed well in accomplishing a very demanding job. According to Planning Manager Julie Jones, she is very excited to see so many long-term problems resolved in a comprehensive manner. Given staff's time limitations, she indicates the City would have had to continue dealing with these problems on a complaint basis had it not been for Kyle's hard work.

Kyle not only feels that his work was important, he believes he learned more about city codes and code enforcement in three months through his Fridley internship than he learned in six years of undergraduate and graduate work. He says, "Working here has exposed me to a wide variety of learning experiences in planning that a lot of internships might not have. I feel much more confident in my education and experience in urban planning as I begin my career."

Kyle has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Minnesota at Duluth in Urban and Regional Studies, and a Master of Arts Degree in Urban Planning from Minnesota State University in Mankato. He is currently seeking full-time employment in urban planning.

As Kyle leaves the City of Fridley, we thank him for his many accomplishments, and wish him well in both his job search and his future career. ■



### Pumpkin Carving at Springbrook

Help us carve over 500 pumpkins & save money on your admission to Pumpkin Night in the Park. We supply pumpkins, tools, and space. You supply the creativity.

Tickets will be available to carvers at the carving location for \$5 per person.

**Pre-registration is required. Call 763-572-3588 to schedule your date and time for carving pumpkins at Springbrook Nature Center.**

Sunday, October 11	1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Monday, October 12	5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 13	5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, October 14	5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, October 15	5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

### Fridley Community Calendar

#### October

- 1 Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- 5 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 7 Planning Commission
- 12 City Council
- 13 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 14 Appeals Commission
- 21 Planning Commission
- 26 City Council
- Charter Commission
- 28 Appeals Commission

#### November

- 2 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 3 Election Day
- 4 Planning Commission
- 5 Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- 9 City Council
- 10 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 11 City Offices Closed for Veterans' Day
- 16 City Council
- 18 Planning Commission
- 23 Charter Commission
- 26, 27 City Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

**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.

## Stevenson/ERR Signalization Project Update

In the June newsletter, we reported plans by the Anoka County Highway Department to change the traffic signals located on East River Road (ERR) at 61st Avenue and Stevenson Elementary School. We also told you that the project will include replacing existing wood poles and span wire with new steel poles and mast arms. Additionally, we reported that the project would include directional turn lane signals for all traffic movements and that the southbound turn lane would be extended to create additional room for stacking vehicles turning into the Northstar station site. This latter change will cause the median opening at Rivers Edge Way to be closed.

The June article reported that the estimated project cost was \$500,000 and that bidding would occur in June. The project cost is now estimated at \$300,000 and the bidding began on August 21 with a bid opening on September 11. Construction should begin by October 5 and conclude near the end of 2009.

Although the actual price of the project will depend largely on the price of steel at the time of bidding, City Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar believes that the \$300,000 Community Development

Block Grant (CDBG) that was awarded for the project should cover project costs. The Anoka County Highway Department has prepared a joint powers agreement incorporating the project terms for approval by the Fridley School District, the City of Fridley and Anoka County in late September.

On July 30, the Anoka County Highway Department held a project open house at the Fridley Municipal Center. This provided an opportunity for neighbors on Rivers Edge Way to share their concerns regarding the closure of direct access to their street to traffic traveling north on East River Road. Although the neighbors presented several options to extending a concrete median northward in a manner that forces them to make U turns from northbound East River Road, the County cited safety concerns associated with failure to provide sufficiently protected stacking areas. While the final decision on this issue was not known to the City at the time of writing this article, the prognosis for change in the County's plans is doubtful. The County Highway Department is, however, likely to adjust the signal timing at the East River Road intersection with Mississippi Street in a manner that allows more time for U turns into Rivers Edge Way.



While the signalization project provides concerns for Rivers Edge Way residents that are difficult to resolve in their favor, overall, the project will provide a safer intersection through the installation of additional vehicle storage and through the provision of both southbound and northbound directional signals. It also provides significant safety improvements for pedestrian and bicycle access to and from Stevenson Elementary School and the Northstar station site. It does this through updated pedestrian ramps, new countdown-style pedestrian crossing timers, more responsive pedestrian detectors, and larger traffic signals.

If you have any questions or comments, contact Jim Kosluchar at koslucharj@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■



## The Tale Of Two Robbery Suspects

Last October, we reported that two individuals had committed three pedestrian robberies at gunpoint at two Fridley locations and a Columbia Heights location on the night of June 24-25. On August 5, the same suspects approached a resident who was parking his car in the 5800 block of 2nd Street. They took the owner's keys and cell phone at gunpoint and fled in his car. Following the August 5 robbery, the stolen car was spotted by a Minneapolis police officer and the two suspects were arrested. Detective Jenny Markham of the Fridley Police Department later interviewed one of the two suspects and obtained a confession. Our story ended by telling our readers that the other suspect was charged with the carjacking and that the Police Department was making efforts to tie him to the three pedestrian robberies.

One year later the cases of the two suspects are still in court. The first suspect is a seventeen-year-old juvenile from Columbia Heights. After pleading guilty to the robberies and the carjacking, he was housed at the Lino Lakes Juvenile Detention Center and is currently awaiting sentencing. The other suspect is twenty-year-old Shawn Lee Jackson of 5290 3rd Street in Fridley. Jackson is out on \$15,000 bail as he awaits the start of his trial that was postponed from August 24 to October 12.

While the processing of these two cases seems agonizingly slow, Lieutenant Mike Monsrud of the Fridley Police Department explains that a one to two year period for prosecution of a felony criminal case is more the rule than the exception. He attributes this to the huge caseload being handled by a relatively small number of prosecutors in the Anoka County Attorney's office.

Fortunately for Fridley residents, there have been no further pedestrian robberies since the June 2008 incidents. The overall number of robberies in Fridley has also decreased. During the first eight months of 2008 we had twenty-six robberies in Fridley. This compares with ten robberies committed in the first eight months of 2009.

If you have questions or comments about this article, please forward them to Lieutenant Mike Monsrud at [monsrudm@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:monsrudm@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■

## Register Online for Recreation Programs

As of August 17, the Parks and Recreation Department was ready to provide online registration for its fall programs. To get there "google" the Fridley website, go to the tab that reads "Parks and Recreation." You will see a drop-down menu that includes online registration. Once again, just click on the link and you will be directed to the appropriate page. Also, there is a link to the on-line registration on each of the Parks and Recreation pages.

To access the Parks and Recreation Brochure, click on the Parks and Recreation tab. Look for the blue box to the right and click on brochure. If you have questions, give us a call at 572-3570.

## Firefighters Have an Easy Day

Last October, we reported a very hectic firefighter day for July 18, 2008. As a follow-up, we decided to examine the call load for the third Friday in July of 2009. In contrast to last year's third Friday in July, this year's call load was mild. While last year's call load included thirteen calls, there were only seven calls this year. While last year's calls tended to be bunched together, this year's calls were spread throughout the day. Unlike last year, there were no structural fires, no general alarm call outs, and no vehicle rollovers on I-694. There were also no mutual aid requests from other cities.

The first of the calls for July 17, 2009 came in at 4:41 a.m. It was a medical assist call for an eighteen month old baby who was having a seizure. The next call came in at 8:05 a.m. This one occurred in response to a fire alarm that was accidentally set off by an electrician at Stevenson Elementary School. Call number three came in at 11:21 a.m. In this case a 67 year old female was having a seizure. At 1:19 p.m. firefighters were called to assist in lifting a diabetic who had been on the toilet since 5:00 a.m. A few minutes later a fire crew was called to assist a 30 year old female who was having a seizure after giving plasma at Talecris Plasma Resources on University Avenue. At 3:04 p.m. they were called to Medtronic for an unknown medical assist that had already been handled by Allina paramedics. The day ended with a response to an address on 2 1/2 Street at 10:39 p.m. This one had been called in by a 5 or 6 year old child to the Minneapolis Police Department. The child complained that he couldn't wake his 33 year old mom. When firefighters and police arrived they found the front and back doors locked. After forcing entry, they found her upstairs, and brought her downstairs confused and disoriented. At that point paramedics from Allina arrived to provide treatment.



While the call load on this day was comparatively light, there are many other days when firefighters respond to as many as eighteen calls, including structural fires. To handle these potentially busy loads, they schedule two firefighters on duty between midnight and 8:00 a.m. From 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. there are five firefighters on duty, including the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. After 5:00 p.m., there are typically three firefighters on duty until midnight. Generally, each of the medical assist calls is handled by two firefighters and at least one police officer. Structural fire calls and other more serious calls are handled by calling out paid-on-call firefighters.

The number of fire and medical assist calls grew by 28% between 2001 and 2008. During the first seven months of 2009, firefighters responded to 1,568 calls, or 2.8% more calls than they responded to during the same period last year. The bottom line is they are typically very busy and performing a very valuable service to Fridley residents.

If you have questions or comments about this article, please contact Fire Chief John Berg at [bergj@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:bergj@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■

## Police Online Reporting System Still Loading

In the April newsletter, we told our readers that the Police Department would have an online crime reporting system up and running by late April. Due to a number of problems associated with the interface between the new software, called DORS (Desk Officer Reporting System) and the County-wide central records system, the Fridley Police Department and its software vendor, Coplogic, must find a way to deposit police reports into the County-wide law enforcement record system. In the meantime, the City's IT Director Jim Erickson will complete the DORS interface with the Fridley Police Reporting System. This will give Fridley residents the option of reporting crimes online rather than phoning them in to the County dispatcher and then waiting for the officer to meet them and take their report. According to Public Safety Director Don Abbott, residents should be able to use the new system by the time this newsletter is distributed to Fridley homes in early October.

Once this system is active, residents may report a long list of concerns online. These include lost property reports, theft reports, damage to property reports, abandoned vehicle reports, vacation house check requests, traffic complaints, and crime tips. We will continue to ask that residents call 911 to have an officer respond if a crime is in progress, or if someone is being or has been hurt or threatened, or in any case where the person would prefer to speak with an officer. Other calls that must be reported using 911 include circumstances where the resident

can provide information about someone who may have committed a crime; circumstances where their home, business or other building has been entered illegally; situations where something was taken while an individual was holding or carrying it; or other cases where a motor vehicle or firearm has been stolen.

A quick review of police incidents in 2007 shows that we handled over 400 thefts, over 500 damage to property calls, and 70 lost property calls that would have been suitable for online reporting. The use of online reporting for these types of calls will keep officers on the street for higher priority calls and give them more time to spend on officer-initiated law enforcement.

The Fridley Police Department would like to encourage our readers to use the new online reporting system where appropriate. You may do so by visiting the Fridley website at [www.ci.fridley.mn.us](http://www.ci.fridley.mn.us). Once there, look for the link labeled "Online Crime Reporting." After clicking on it, the system will walk the user through an online form specifically tailored to capture the information needed to report the incident or complaint. An officer will review all online reports on a daily basis and reply to the person who filed the report.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Captain Bob Rewitzer at 572-3637 or by email at [rewitzerr@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:rewitzerr@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■

## DWI Saturation Campaigns Bring Many Arrests and Stiff Penalties

In our October 2008 *Fridley Community Report*, we told our readers that eleven Anoka County cities, the Anoka County Sheriff, and the Minnesota State Patrol were jointly providing eight to twenty officers for DWI saturation campaigns in Anoka County cities three to four times per month. We also told you the campaigns were coordinated by Sergeant Bill Hammes of the Lino Lakes Police Department and Lieutenant Paul Van Voorhis of the Minnesota State Patrol. Additionally we talked about the different levels of DWI arrests and the penalties associated with each level. We also addressed the impacts of DWI campaigns.

While DWI saturation campaigns may be bad news for some, it is a fact that the same law enforcement agencies are aggressively conducting these campaigns in 2009 in Fridley, Columbia Heights, Spring Lake Park, Blaine, Coon Rapids, Ramsey, St. Francis, Anoka, Lino Lakes, and Centennial Lakes. Between January 1 and July 3 of 2009, the saturation campaigns have resulted in 202 DWI arrests in these cities. This compares with 282 DWI arrests made during the same period in 2008.

The campaigns focus on roads that have high alcohol-related vehicle accidents in Anoka County. When in Fridley, they focus on Highway 65, University Avenue, I-694 and portions of East River Road. The officers involved look for any traffic violation and/or equipment violation as a basis for stopping a vehicle. The officers average sixteen stops each per saturation campaign. With an average of twelve officers out at a time, this means that 192 vehicles are likely to be stopped in any saturation campaign evening. Typically, about 9% of these will face a DWI arrest.

If the officer suspects that the operator of the vehicle is possibly under the influence of alcohol or drugs, he or she will conduct some roadside field sobriety tests to determine if the driver is, in fact, impaired. If the tests indicate the driver is under the influence of alcohol, he or she will be placed under arrest and asked to submit to an intoxilyzer examination, which, in most cases, will be conducted at a local police department by a trained operator. According to state law, all persons arrested for DWI must be jailed. Unless there is a sober person in the vehicle that can, with the owner's consent, drive the vehicle, the arresting officer will impound the vehicle.

As our readers might suspect, there are many costs associated with a DWI arrest, not including the emotional and psychological costs. A recent article by Christopher Solomon on MSN Money calls a DWI arrest a "financial wrecking ball" which typically costs about \$10,000 by the time the person arrested pays for bail, fines, attorney fees, towing, and insurance increases. Insurance increases alone for the next three to five years are likely to cost the DWI offender a minimum of \$4,500, according to Solomon.

Then there are the costs to the taxpayer to operate the saturation campaigns. While costs vary, depending on the number of officers involved, the typical saturation event will cost between \$3,300 and \$7,400 for the overtime of the officers involved. Currently, and for at least another year, these costs (amounting to \$260,000 in 2009) are borne by a Federal Highway Traffic Safety Administration Grant.

What about the benefits of saturation campaigns? Last year, we reported that both DWI arrests in Fridley had more than doubled between 2004 and 2008. During the same period the number of alcohol-related traffic accidents had increased from 13 in 2004 to 26 in 2008. While these numbers for Fridley do not support a positive impact of saturation campaigns, other county and state numbers are much more encouraging. In Anoka County, for example, alcohol-related traffic fatalities have decreased from 12 for 2006 to eight in both 2007 and 2008. State-wide, there were 190 alcohol related deaths in 2007. This number was reduced to 163 alcohol-related deaths in 2008. During the first half of 2009, there were 70 alcohol-related traffic deaths in Minnesota. We also know that overall the number of DWI arrests made in the State of Minnesota has decreased from 42,000 in 2007 to 35,736 in 2008. There are also ancillary benefits to the saturation campaigns. During the first half of 2009, the saturation campaigns generated 38 warrant arrests and 21 drug-related arrests.

If you have comments or questions about the participation of the Fridley Police Department in DWI saturation campaigns, contact Public Safety Director Don Abbott at [abbottd@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:abbottd@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■



## Police Department Receives Additional JAG Funding for Squad Cameras

In the April newsletter, we reported that the Fridley Police Department had received \$20,000 in state funding for the conversion of squad cameras from analog to digital format. We also indicated that the City directed another \$16,000 from its Information Systems Fund to purchase a wireless router and storage server for the wireless upload and storage of digital recordings. These recording systems are automatically activated whenever an officer turns on his red lights and sirens and are used in the squads to collect evidence that may be helpful in the prosecution of those who violate the law. They may also be activated at the officer's discretion.

In July of this year, we learned that the Fridley Police Department would receive another \$78,707 in funding from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant. These Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) may be used to address crime through the provision of services directly to individuals and/or communities by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal justice systems, processes, and procedures.

Of the new JAG funding, \$26,209 will be used to purchase five additional squad cameras. Two additional cameras will be purchased from the proceeds of another state grant that is specifically targeted at upgrading squad video systems from analog to digital. One other camera will be purchased through the use of DWI forfeiture funds. This will bring to twelve the number of marked vehicles (ten squads and two SUVs that are driven by supervisors) that will be equipped with the new digital cameras.

The new cameras have all been installed and provide much greater efficiencies for officers who now are able to automatically upload data through a wireless router as they park their squads at the Municipal Center. The stored data is easily retrievable for use in court or for other purposes. Captain Bob Rewitzer, for example, reports that he recently located digital footage needed at a trial within fifteen minutes of the time the request was made. In contrast, the old VCR tape system would have required an officer to locate the correct tape from a tape library, watch the tape to locate the appropriate footage, and then use a complicated transfer process to create DVD copies of the footage.

If you have questions or comments about this information please forward them to Captain Bob Rewitzer at [rewitzerb@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:rewitzerb@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■

## Winter Athletic Leagues

The Parks & Recreation Department offers a number of leagues to keep you having fun and staying fit throughout the winter. For further information call 572-3570.

**Men's "D" League Basketball.** This officiated, five-on-five league will begin December 2 and played at the Fridley Middle School on Wednesday evenings. Registration deadline is November 6. Entry Fee: \$495 per team

**Co-Rec Volleyball.** We've teamed up with the City of Blaine to offer this non-officiated fun league, which will be played on Wednesday evenings beginning December 2 for 14 weeks. Games will be played at the Hayes Elementary School gymnasium located at 615 Mississippi N.E. and Roosevelt Middle School located at 650 Main Street in Blaine. Registration deadline is November 12. Entry Fee: \$110 per team

**Men's "Fun" League Basketball.** This officiated, five-on-five league will begin December 3 and played at the

Fridley Middle School on Thursday evenings. Registration deadline is November 6. Entry Fee: \$495 per team

**Co-Rec Broomball.** This officiated; no-checking league will play Tuesday evenings beginning December 8 (weather permitting). Registration deadline is November 30. Entry Fee: \$255 per team

**Broomball (D League).** This officiated, no-checking league will play Thursday evenings beginning December 10 (weather permitting). Registration deadline is November 30. Entry Fee: \$255 per team

**Boot Hockey (D League).** This officiated, no-checking, men's league will be played on Sunday afternoons/evenings beginning December 13 (weather permitting). Registration deadline is December 4. Entry Fee: \$299 per team

## After-School and ZONE Opportunities

Each year, we use a portion of the October newsletter to promote and brag about the City's after-school opportunities for elementary and middle school age kids. This year is no exception. There are many opportunities this year for after-school classes, special school-out day trips, and after school socializing at the ZONE. There are also some great classes and activities scheduled for evenings and Saturdays. To check them out, go online to the Fridley website. Look for the words "Fall Recreation Registration" on the home page and click on "on-line brochure".

The after-school programs for elementary school kids are held mainly at Hayes and Stevenson Elementary Schools. While many of the classes will be underway when this newsletter reaches homes, there are many classes that start after the first week in October. There's a sewing class, for example, called "Tweedle-D-Needle" that will be taught at both Hayes and Stevenson. Another October class is called "Halloween Fun." In this class, your kids will play Halloween games, make Halloween crafts, and enjoy Halloween treats. There's also a Friday Bowling Club for Stevenson kids that begins on October 9 and another class called "Snackables," where kids learn to make easy microwave snacks, offered at both Hayes and Stevenson beginning in early November. Additionally, there's a "Sports Sampler" that teaches the fundamentals of basketball, floor hockey, kickball, bowling, and more. This one is also held at both Hayes and Stevenson in early November. And there's more! There's a painting class held in early November at Hayes and Stevenson and a six-week basketball league that features both practice and real competition between Hayes and Stevenson teams. It also starts in early November.

The price for these classes would normally range between \$14 and \$38. There is a special deal, however, for October and November. If you sign one child up for a class you can get a second class for that child or another child in the same family at half price. For those who are on free or reduced meals at school, there is a fee assistance program. It is also possible to arrange to pick up children as late as 6:00 p.m.

There are also some really nice trips and outings for elementary age kids. These include an outing to the



Afton Apple Orchard on October 15, where kids will explore a petting zoo, walk through a corn maze, pick apples, and enjoy a hayride through the fields. The very next day, October 16, there's an outing to the Shrine Circus at the Target Center in Minneapolis. There's also another "Bowling and Bonfire" event on October 19 where kids will enjoy a trip to Maple Lanes, a hot dog cookout at the Fridley Community Center, crafts, and games. Finally, there's a trip to the Cinema Grill in New Hope on November 13 for a pizza lunch and a movie followed by crafts and games at the ZONE. The costs for these outings range between \$23 and \$28.



Although there are no classes for middle school age kids (grades 5 to 8), there are opportunities for socializing at the ZONE on Mondays through Friday between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. On Friday, the ZONE is also open between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Here, the kids can play video games, foosball, air hockey, billiards, watch movies, play board games, do craft projects, get help with their homework, play in the gym, and dance to music. These activities are supervised by trained college and high school personnel and

are available for half price during the months of October and November. During this period, the cost is just \$1 for daily admission, \$7.50 for a ten day pass, and \$12.50 for a twenty-five day pass.

You can register for these recreation events by calling the Fridley Parks and Recreation Department at 572-3570 or by visiting them in the lower level of the Fridley Municipal Center. You may also register online by clicking on the Parks and Recreation tab at the top of the Fridley home page. When you see the drop down menu, click on "on-line registration." As always, if you have questions please give us a call. ■

## Commons Park Water Storage Tank Repairs Underway

The City Council awarded the bid for the painting of the 500,000-gallon Commons Park elevated water storage tank on May 18. Work, consisting of structural repairs, mandated safety measures, and multi-layer painting of both the interior and exterior of the tank and the tank structure, began on July 6 and was completed by October 1.

The bid price for the tank repair and recoating was \$433,000 compared with the budgeted amount of \$600,000. The low bid, one of five bids, was provided by Odland Protective Coatings of Rockford, Minnesota. The cost will initially be covered by the proceeds of a general obligation revenue bond sold in 2008. Repayment of the bond will come from the City's water rate revenue.

Neighbors in the immediate vicinity of the tank, park users, and vehicles on 61st Avenue were protected from overspray by a containment system that was in place for both the removal of the old paint and the application of new paint. Telecom equipment on the tank was temporarily relocated at a cost to the telecom providers.

The tank was originally constructed in 1963 at a cost of \$99,000, was repaired and recoated in 1974 for \$28,000, and was last refurbished in 1992 at a cost of \$385,000. We expect the current repairs to last for twenty years.

If you have questions, please contact to the City's Water Supervisor, Kory Jorgensen, at 572-3546 or by email at [jorgensenk@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:jorgensenk@ci.fridley.mn.us). ■



## The Fridley Housing Picture

We have been periodically updating Fridley residents on the condition of the Fridley housing market. The bottom line is while there has been a significant escalation of housing sales, the number of foreclosures remains about the same as we experienced in 2008. Average sales prices are also continuing to fall at a significant year-over-year rate. Here are the details.

Kate Thunstrom of the Anoka County Housing and Redevelopment Authority reports that there were 68 foreclosure Sheriff Sales in Fridley between January 1 and July 17. This compares with 69 foreclosure Sheriff Sales during the same period in 2008. Fridley had 140 foreclosure Sheriff Sales in all of 2008. It's reasonable to expect that there will be a very similar number for 2009. If there is a bright spot in these numbers, it is that Fridley's foreclosure rates are below the average for the 21 Anoka County cities. For 2009, Fridley has the 7th lowest foreclosure rates in the County.

We also went online and retrieved housing sales numbers from the North Metro Realtors Association website. The August 2009 data indicates new listings are down by 12.3% for the year. The number of closed sales is, however, up by 22.2%. The average sales price has fallen by 17.8% (from \$173,485 to \$142,676 between the end of August, 2008 and the end of August, 2009). The percent of the original list price received has dropped from 92.1% to 91.4%, or by 0.8%. The average number of days on the market until sale has also fallen from 156 days to 140 days, or by 10.3%.

The North Metro Realtors Association also provided some interesting data on lender-mediated vs. traditional sales. From their data as of the end of July, 37.5% of all Fridley housing sales were lender-mediated (sold through a short sale or foreclosure process). Their data also shows that the percentage of traditional sales has increased over the last two quarters from 52.6% to 62.5% of all sales. Additionally, the supply of lender-mediated inventory has fallen from 12.6 months worth of inventory to 4.1 months of inventory. While at the same time, the supply of traditional inventory has fallen from 10.9 months of inventory to 7.5 months of inventory.

For more housing sale statistics, check out the North Metro Realtors Association website at [www.northmetro.com](http://www.northmetro.com). ■

