

Fridley

COMMUNITY REPORT

APRIL 2009
NO. 157

A report to
the citizens of Fridley

6431 University Avenue NE
Fridley, MN 55432

phone: 763-571-3450

website:
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. Bolkom

City Manager – William W. Burns



2009 Recycling Drop-off Days

Saturday, April 11 and
Saturday, October 10
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Public Works Garage,
400 – 71st Ave NE

Fridley residents only—Bring ID

See City website for list of
acceptable materials or
call 572-3594

building materials will not be accepted

PRESORTED STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2886
Minneapolis, MN

ECRWSS
Postal Customer

Northstar Project Keeps Chugging Along

On Tuesday, March 3, the spotlight was on Fridley and the groundbreaking for Fridley's Northstar commuter rail station site. Although the windchill was brutal, the occasion drew more than 150 residents, City and County officials, and officials from MnDOT, the County Transportation Improvement Board, the Metropolitan Council, and neighboring cities. Following the groundbreaking, the participants moved to a warmer Fridley Municipal Center for a reception that went well into the early evening. The mood at both events was one of satisfaction for a momentous task that was accomplished through teamwork among many players.

The City of Fridley is particularly grateful for the persistence and support of the Anoka County Rail Authority (led by Tim Yantos, its Executive Director), the City's state legislative delegation (particularly Representatives Carolyn Laine and Tom Tillberry who authored legislation on the City's behalf), the Anoka County Commissioners (particularly Commissioners Jim Kordiak and Dan Erhart), and Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin who provided strong support for \$9.9 million in County Transportation Board funding for the Fridley project. It is also important to give credit to Mayor Scott Lund who spent many hours at the legislature working with the City's legislative delegation on behalf of funding for the Fridley station site. Additionally, kudos are very much in order for former Fridley Councilmember Steve Billings, and Councilmember Bob Barnette who supported the Fridley project through very active participation on the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA).

Now that the celebrations are over, the contractor for the \$7 million station construction project, Lund Martin Construction of Minneapolis, has begun construction of the component parts of the station. These include parking lots on both sides of the tracks for 612 vehicles, head houses on either side of the tracks that will enable rail passengers to gain access via underground tunnel to the station platform, and the 425' by 35' station platform that will be equipped with three 8' x 20' glass-enclosed shelters. Other features of the station construction include installation of lighting, security cameras, detention ponds, fencing, ticket kiosks, bike lockers, and landscaping.

Construction began on March 16 with the opening of the tunnel that was installed in May of 2008. While we know that the first construction activities consisted of

preliminary earthwork and installation of sheet piling to support the station platform, we have yet to receive a construction schedule for the various construction phases. As we learn more, we will be posting the information on the City's website. We understand that all of the work will be completed by the end of September and that the Fridley station will be online for the start of Northstar.

Our readers should also know that the five engines that will serve Northstar have been delivered and that the fifteen passenger rail cars are expected to arrive at the Big Lake maintenance facility in May. The engines and the cars are all being purchased by the Metropolitan Transit Authority, a division of the Metropolitan Council

As construction proceeds, the Fridley HRA will continue its work with the Metropolitan Council toward completion of a ground lease agreement. The agreement will grant the Metropolitan Council a 200 year lease for the 4.5 acre area on the east side of the tracks that was recently acquired by the Fridley HRA for the construction of a large (340 stall) park and ride site. The agreement also will make the HRA's land available for a nominal fee. It will give the HRA the future flexibility to replace surface level parking with structured parking, should future redevelopment efforts require this change. The major terms for the lease agreement were recently identified in a memorandum of understanding between the HRA and the Metropolitan Council. The agreement is expected to be completed in June. Once this has been accomplished, all of the necessary legal work for the Fridley station will have been accomplished.

In addition to providing convenient and energy efficient transportation for employees who travel to Fridley businesses on a daily basis from the northwest suburbs and exurbs, Northstar will also provide convenient transportation for Fridley residents to downtown Minneapolis and, by way of the Hiawatha light rail linkage, to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. This access to Northstar is also expected to have very positive impacts on Fridley property values and redevelopment opportunities.

If you have questions about Northstar, we suggest that you visit the NCDA website at www.mn-GetOnBoard.com. ■





85th Avenue Bikeway Project Underway

At a special Council meeting on January 12, the Fridley City Council approved a contract for construction of the 85th Avenue bikeway that will extend from the current bikeway on University Avenue to a point just west of the railroad tracks on 85th Avenue. The low bid was provided by Colt Construction Services, LLC, of Pewaukee, Wisconsin, in the amount of \$772,639. The project cost estimate was \$1,150,000. The local share of the cost will be derived from state aid highway funding.

This project has been in the works for five years. Construction is funded by an 80% Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund grant, which could have been lost had the City not chosen to construct the project this year. The City will be responsible for 20% of the construction costs (\$155,000) and engineering costs estimated at \$20,000. While there are no commitments from the City of Coon Rapids, Fridley staff has been in contact with Coon Rapids officials regarding their completion of the portion of the bikeway between the railroad tracks and East River Road. Once that has been accomplished, cyclists will have access from 85th Avenue to a major north-south bikeway system that extends to the Coon Rapids Dam.

Construction on the Fridley portion of the bikeway started in late February and should be completed by mid-July. The 2.5" paved surface of the bikeway will be 8' wide with 2' shoulders on each side. There are five decked sections of the bikeway that will be built over wetlands within the Springbrook Nature Center. The decked sections will be 12' wide from railing to railing. There will also be a kiosk with benches, bike racks, and map boards located near the entrance to the Springbrook Nature Center. The bikeway will be set back between 25' and 130' from the 85th Avenue paving. At the entrance to the Springbrook Nature Center, it will be located approximately 130' from 85th Avenue paving. Special railroad crossing signage and striping will be installed to assist cyclists who are crossing the railroad tracks.

If you have questions about this project, please direct them to Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar at 572-3550. ■

Come Join the Band!

The Fridley City Band is looking for musicians of all ages. The Band performs at local community events and rehearses every Monday evening from 7:15 - 8:45 p.m., in the band room of Fridley Middle School. If you play an instrument now or have in the past and would like to join others who enjoy making music in a welcoming, friendly group setting, attend a rehearsal to consider joining the Band. Become a part of the musical voice of Fridley! See their website at fridleycityband.org. For more information, contact Band President, Maija Sedzielarz at 572-9765. ■

2009 Mill and Overlay Project Focus Is on Two Areas

The 2009 mill and overlay project will focus on the West University Avenue Service Drive between 69th Avenue and 85th Avenue, and the Sylvan Hills area to the north of 61st Avenue (see maps). The City Council is scheduled to consider this contract award at their April 13 meeting.

Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar expects the Sylvan Hills portion of the contract to be constructed as early as May or June. The West University Service Drive portion of the project will be delayed until MnDOT completes its mill and overlay work on University Avenue in August. While the City will allow the contractor some flexibility in choosing start dates, it does expect that the contractor will aggressively work toward completion of the project once the work starts. Property owners should expect that there will be a two to three week delay between the time the existing paving is renewed and new paving is put in place. The City will be notifying affected residents and property owners of a project schedule after the City Council has selected a contractor.

The mill and overlay portion of project costs in the Sylvan Hills neighborhood will be paid for primarily through property owner assessments based on a fixed cost per lot for single family units. Costs for water, sewer, and storm water repairs and adjustments will be paid for out of the respective utility funds. Commercial properties along the West University Service Drive will be assessed for half of the street. The University Avenue half of the street will be paid for from state MSAS funds. The replacement of the 6" water main that is located between 73rd Avenue and Osborne Road will also be paid for from utility funds.

At the neighborhood meetings as well as when these projects were considered by Council, a number of residents and businesses questioned why



these project areas were selected for 2009. The answer is that the City's engineering staff bases their selection for street construction projects on annual rating surveys of Fridley City streets. Those streets that are in the poorest condition are selected for mill and overlay. They are also selected with the realization that if streets are allowed to progressively deteriorate, they will soon reach the condition where full depth street reconstruction rather than a mill and overlay may be needed. In this case, costs would likely be two or three times more expensive. Other considerations in the City's decision to proceed with the 2009 mill and overlay project were the favorable cost of oil (a key component of asphalt) and a very slow economy in which bidding is likely to be more competitive than usual.

The water main along a portion of the West University Avenue Service Drive was selected for replacement due to a history of increasing water main breaks and the high water table in this area, which makes emergency repairs very time consuming, expensive, and disruptive to local businesses. The water main replacement project was bid separately from the mill and overlay projects in order to avoid commissions that are typically charged by contractors for their subcontractors, and with the realization that our preferred method of replacement, trenchless technology (as opposed to open cut construction), was a very specialized process. The water main replacement can be completed this spring well ahead of MnDOT's work on University Avenue.

As usual, the City will be making contacts with property owners regarding construction schedules as it gets closer to construction dates. If you have questions at any time, please contact Assistant Public Works Director Layne Otteson at 572-3551 or ottesonl@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

We're Flushing Again

Yes indeed, Fridley's Water Supervisor Kory Jorgenson expects to be flushing hydrants again between April 6 and April 24. 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 email Kory Jorgensen at jorgensenk@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■



Allina Building New Oncology Center at Unity Hospital

According to Unity Hospital President Rickie Ressler, Unity Hospital will soon be taking bids for construction of a new oncology center on the Osborne Road side of their campus. The new center is to be modeled after the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and will provide a variety of diagnostic and treatment services that will eliminate the need for Fridley residents to travel to Abbott Northwestern. It will also combine a number of cancer patient services that, up to now, have been scattered throughout the Unity campus. The expectation is that combining these services in one location at Unity will provide for a more coordinated and convenient experience for Unity's cancer patients.

The new center will be built on two floors. The main level will include 15,525 square feet of floor space; the lower level will include 2,597 square feet of floor space. The Cancer Center will be connected to the main hospital structure on the lower level by a 125' tunnel. The building will displace forty-four existing parking stalls, which will be replaced by adding parking stalls to an existing lot near Osborne Road.

The services provided in the new center will include a medical oncology clinic that will be staffed by four medical oncologists. They will be available to examine patients and, through collaboration with specialty physicians and surgeons, will determine the best course of treatment for cancer patients. The building will also house a sixteen-chair "infusion center" where patients will come for chemotherapy, blood product administration, and other infusions, such as antibiotics or hydration. Additionally, the center will host an onsite lab, a pharmacy, and will provide space for patient support services, including a social worker, a financial counselor, and a clinical dietician.

The center will host approximately 25,000 outpatient clinic visits and 11,000 infusion center visits per year. Cancer patients requiring hospitalization will be housed in an inpatient oncology unit within the main hospital.

The new cancer center at Unity hospital will become one of several cancer centers within the Allina Hospital system. Other cancer centers include those at Mercy Hospital, United Hospital, and at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. While the new oncology center will meet most of the diagnostic and treatment needs of area cancer patients, patients with more specialized needs will continue to have access to other cancer centers in the Allina hospital system.



pictured left to right: Scott Lund, Fridley Mayor; Rickie Ressler, president, Unity Hospital; Connie Fiebiger, director, oncology patient care services, Unity Hospital, and Stephen Mann, MD, medical oncologist, Unity Hospital and the Humphrey Cancer Center

The new oncology center, together with the inpatient hospital unit at Unity Hospital, will provide the latest in cancer diagnostic and treatment alternatives including digital mammography, a process that hosts quickly accessible x-ray images on a computer rather than film cassettes that require much longer wait times. Patients will also have access to PET (positron emission tomography) and CT (computed tomography) scans. Together, these scans provide a non-invasive technique for accurate imaging of the body and for determination of information about size, shape and location of tumors that may be developing within the body.

On the treatment side, Unity and its sister hospitals will continue to adopt and use ever improving surgical and radiation therapy techniques, including various forms of minimally invasive surgery, intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) which allows the intensity of radiation to be adjusted during treatment, and image guided radiation therapy (IGRT) which combines digital scanning and radiation in the same surgical procedure. The Allina system also has access to the latest techniques in robotic surgery through "da Vinci Surgery" an alternative to open surgery and conventional laparoscopy (a surgery that uses thin lighted tubes placed through an incision in the belly). With the "da Vinci" system, the surgeon performs the most complex and delicate procedures through very small incisions and the use of robotically controlled surgical tools.

Our readers may learn more about the proposed oncology center at Unity Hospital as well as other improvements that have been made there recently to accommodate the medical and diagnostic needs of Fridley residents by visiting the Unity Hospital website at www.Allina.com/unitygrowth. ■



Seniors Celebrate Mardi Gras

Fridley seniors participated in the annual Mardi Gras event at the Fridley Community Center on Tuesday, February 24 between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. As in past years, the event offered a very exciting afternoon of playing games of chance, including Black Jack, Bingo, Texas Hold'em, and Pokeno.

The event attracted 175 seniors and dealers, including Mayor Scott Lund, Councilmember Bob Barnette, Planning Commission Chair Dave Kondrick, Public Safety Director Don Abbott, Parks and Recreation Director Jack Kirk, Ardella Buss, Dick Morin, Steve Hadad, Don Ziegler, Community Education Director Toni Craft, Senior Outreach Worker Nancy Shaw, Recreation Supervisor Mark Daly and City Manager Bill Burns.

In addition to the opportunity to socialize with each other and their dealers, senior participants played some serious cards with play money for more than \$600 in door and game prizes. While the main sponsor of this year's senior Mardi Gras was the Humana Corporation, there were several local businesses who also donated prizes. These included Mojo's Pizza, Four Corners Gas and Convenience, Embers Restaurant, Asia Chinese Restaurant, and Gary's Automotive.

There were also other helpers for the event including Dorothy Hegna from the American Legion Auxiliary, Senior Program Assistant Terri Brooke, and Senior Program Assistant Colette Johnson. We would also like to thank Sandy Locker, President of the American Legion Auxiliary, for once again coordinating volunteers to make dessert bars for the event.

Thanks and congratulations are also in order to Senior Coordinator Connie Thompson who did another great job coordinating this year's Senior Mardi Gras. She asks that our senior readers put February 16, 2010, on your calendars for next year's event. ■

Fridley Community Calendar

April

- 1 Planning Commission
- 2 Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- 6 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 13 City Council
- 14 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 22 Appeals Commission
- 27 City Council
- Charter Commission

May

- 4 City Council
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- 6 Planning Commission
- 7 Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- 12 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 13 Appeals Commission
- 18 City Council
- 20 Planning Commission
- 25 City Offices Closed for Memorial Day
- 27 Appeals Commission

NOTE: City Council meetings start at 7:30 p.m. All other meetings start at 7:00 p.m. 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.

Mark Your Calendar '49er Days Festival

June 25 - 27

Visit the City's website
for more information.

www.ci.fridley.mn.us

City Continues Water System Improvements

Fridley residents no doubt remember seeing the Highway 65 water storage tank being painted in 2008. In 2009, the City's Public Works Department is continuing the process of catching up on water system maintenance that was delayed by utility rate restrictions in the City Charter.

Currently, the City's contractor (Shank Contractors, Inc.) is replacing filter media and making repairs on the backwash and air-wash systems at the Commons Park filter plant. They are also painting and making other structural modifications to this facility. Thus far, the old filter media has been removed. Additionally, work has begun on changing out the controls and retrofitting the backwash tank. The contractor has also begun making improvements to the air-wash system, which is used to blow air through the rock and sand to loosen iron and manganese deposits from the filter media prior to backwashing the media. Additionally, he is modifying the backwash basin to allow for more efficient reclamation of water used in backwashing the filters. Once all of these adjustments are made, new filter media will be put in place in each of the five filters.

Although there has been one change order for the removal of old filter media from the air-wash system, the work thus far has gone smoothly. Staff estimates that the overall cost for the project with change orders will be \$650,000.

There are several other water system projects in the works. One of the biggest of these is the repair and painting of the 500,000 gallon elevated water storage tank in Commons Park. This will include interior and exterior structural repairs and safety upgrades as well as interior and exterior painting of the tank. The City has \$600,000 budgeted for this project. Bidding will occur in late spring with construction happening this summer.

Depending on the bids for the elevated water storage tank at Commons Park, staff is also evaluating the possibility of painting and repair of the 3,000,000 gallon reservoir that is also located there. Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar estimates that this painting and repair work will cost considerably less than the work for the elevated tank.

The other large water system project for 2009 is the replacement of about a half mile of 6" water main in the West University Service Drive right-of-way in conjunction with the milling and overlaying of the service drive. This will be done by separate contract using "trenchless" construction techniques. Staff estimates a construction cost of \$290,000. The work is currently out for bid and will be completed this summer.

There are also smaller water system projects for 2009. These include the redevelopment of two City wells, and the installation of variable speed pumps at two other wells, and the reconditioning of a 15 horse power booster pump at yet another well. There are also plans to reconstruct the alley from 7th Street on the far north side of Commons Park that runs to two well pump houses. These smaller projects are budgeted at \$225,000 and will be done this summer.

If you have questions about these projects, please direct them to Water Supervisor Kory Jorgensen at jorgensenk@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

City to Make Budget Cuts

The Fridley City Council has endorsed \$739,000 in cuts to the 2009 General Fund budget and \$1,086,000 in cuts for 2010. The cuts are in response to the state's elimination of \$541,761 in Local Government Aid that Fridley was scheduled to receive in 2009 and \$1,139,643 that it would have received in 2010. The cuts include elimination of funding for the mowing of the University Avenue corridor in 2009 (a responsibility of the State of Minnesota), the funding for code enforcement interns, cutbacks in expenditures for police vehicles, planned reductions in employee health insurance expenditures, and the freezing of employee salaries for 2010. The proposed budget adjustment recommendations were developed in a series of four meetings that City Manager Bill Burns held with the City's department managers.

The adjustments assume that there will be no further LGA cuts, and the adjustments will enable the City to maintain the cash balance and working capital projections that were made during the 2008 budgeting process. The adjustments also assume the City needs to find new sources of revenue if the current level of City services is to be maintained beyond 2010. The adjustments, which are considered temporary, will leave the City with an annual General Fund operating deficit in the neighborhood of \$1.6 million.

It is important to note that none of these adjustments involved reduction in the number of employees. The City cut nine full-time employees and numerous other part-time positions in response to LGA cutbacks in 2003. The City has also maintained a very tight rein on annual expenditures since then. According to City Manager Bill Burns, we are at the point where further employee cutbacks will result in reduction of very valuable City services. Prior to reduction in these services, the City will be looking at means for expanding revenues during the coming months.

More details about the 2009 and 2010 budget adjustments are listed below.

2009 Adjustments

The revenue adjustments for 2009 will include temporarily rededicating the City's parks capital improvement levy (estimated at \$107,000 for 2009) to the General Fund. This will require a reduction of 2009 and 2010 parks capital improvements. Other revenue adjustments will include an adjustment of the General Fund overhead charge to the City's utility funds. Staff expects to accomplish this \$50,000 increase by drawing the additional charge from utility reserves. Additionally, staff will be closely examining other

fees with a close eye on rental licensing fees. It expects to raise fees by an estimated \$10,000. Altogether, revenue adjustments will generate an additional \$167,000.

The largest of the expenditure adjustments will be the elimination of the IT depreciation charge (\$163,000) that is levied annually from the City's MIS Fund (an internal services fund) to the General Fund. Other adjustments include recognition of the non-budgeted savings for employee health insurance in 2009 (\$117,000). Staff will also pare back the budgeted amount for fuel by \$100,000. Other adjustments include the elimination of University Avenue corridor mowing (\$25,000), the elimination of funding for contract building inspectors (\$30,000), the elimination of funding for two summer interns (one engineering intern and one code enforcement intern -\$23,000), elimination of the purchase of one police squad (\$25,000), elimination of conference expenditures (\$30,000), elimination of the 2009 citizen survey (\$25,000), reductions in employee wellness testing expenditures (\$12,000), and reductions in other miscellaneous expenditures (\$24,000). The total savings from these expenditure adjustments is estimated at \$572,000. When combined with revenue adjustments for 2009, the value of all adjustments will rise to an estimated \$739,000.

2010 Adjustments

The 2009 revenue and expenditure adjustments will be continued in 2010. Other expenditure adjustments for 2010 will include a wage freeze for all City employees. Staff estimates that the General Fund savings from this freeze will be \$256,000. Other adjustments for 2010 will include a 50% reduction in the City's appropriation for employee tuition reimbursement (\$15,000), reduction in contract expenditures for GIS consulting services (\$18,000), elimination of the City's annual employee leave sell-back (\$40,000), and the elimination of funding for a Police Department IT consultant (\$18,000). The total savings from these expenditure adjustments is estimated at \$921,000. When combined with revenue adjustments, the value of all adjustments will rise to an estimated \$1,086,000.

If you have question or comments on the City's budget adjustments, please contact City Manager Bill Burns by calling 572-3500 or emailing him at burnsw@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

2009 Safety Camp

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

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 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 17, there will be a graduation ceremony held in the evening (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

Tuesday & Wednesday
June 16-17, 2009 • 8 am - 4 pm
\$30.00 (pre-registration required)
Commons Park



2009 Home and Garden Show

Thanks to Girl Scout Troop #50165 whose members kept a count of people entering the 2009 North Metro Home and Garden Show at the Schwan Center on Saturday, February 28, we know there were 1,456 area residents, including many from Fridley, who attended this year's event. Notwithstanding some chilly winter weather, there was a continuous stream of people entering the Center from 9:00 a.m. until closing at 2:00 p.m.

As in past years, the Home and Garden Show was a project of the cities of Blaine, Fridley, New Brighton and Mounds View. The four cities hire a firm to contact vendors, advertise, make arrangements for the use of the Schwan Center, organize seminars, and set up booths. Representatives of each of the four cities staff city booths and respond to participants.



As was the case in 2008, Paul Bolin, Scott Hickok, and Julie Jones from the City's Community Development Department staffed the Fridley booth. Brian Strand was there from the City Manager's office to take pictures. Together, Fridley staff talked to more than fifty residents about the City's home improvement loan program, the Northstar commuter rail, new developments in Fridley, and a wide variety of other topics. Many had questions about the Northstar construction schedule as well as about the new senior project that has been proposed for property on Old Central Avenue across from Sandee's.

Residents also had an opportunity to talk with eighty-three vendors including those who build

decks, patios and sunrooms. Other available vendors included asphalt and concrete contractors, plumbing and heating contractors, landscape and irrigation contractors, siding and roofing contractors, and window and door contractors. There was also a wide variety of specialty contractors including home security contractors, cabinet makers, garage door contractors, window treatment contractors and a tree care contractor.

In addition to city and exhibitor booths, there were also nine different seminars on subjects as diverse as making homes accessible for the handicapped, landscaping, energy saving window and siding ideas, kitchen upgrades, being your own general contractor, kitchen and bath remodeling, yard and garden problems, and the ins and outs of using hostas and companion plants. Based on staff feedback the seminars were well attended and very informative.

Participants also benefited from door prizes that were awarded during hourly, random drawings. Ten companies provided a wide array of prizes including faucets, a tool kit, carbon monoxide detectors, a Tiki lamp set, outdoor thermometers, a U.S. flag and a \$50 gift certificate.

All of the costs for the Home and Garden Show are covered by vendor payments, and the generous contributions of sponsors. This year's sponsors included Clear Channel Communication, Boyer Building Corporation, Cedar Construction Company, Custom Remodelers, Inc., Gary Anderson Landscaping, Inc., Lennox Builders, Inc., M&I Bank, and SMW Credit Union. We would also like to recognize the members of Girl Scout Troop #50165 for serving as greeters, Lowe's Home Improvement for providing attendee bags and helping with the distribution of door prizes, and the Soil and Sunshine Garden Club for also helping with door prizes.

If you have seminar ideas or other ideas for next year's Home and Garden Show, please email them to Paul Bolin at bolinp@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Recreation Gears Up For Online Registration

The City's Parks and Recreation Department has been working with the City's IT staff to initiate on-line registration. This means that rather than phoning, faxing, or dropping off registration forms and fees, residents may go online to www.ci.fridley.mn.us view the Recreation brochure, as well as search, register, and pay for programs.

The City is purchasing the software for \$13,000 from Vermont Systems. It will also be purchasing annual software upgrades and maintenance at a cost of about \$1,300. In preparation for the installation of the new software, the City has made all changes necessary to meet hardware and network requirements. The vendor will be installing the software in April, and will be providing training for all Parks and Recreation staff by late spring. The City's IT Coordinator Jim Erickson expects the new online registration system to be available for public use by mid to late summer.

Based on comments from citizens and the experience that the City of Blaine has had with their online registration system it initiated in 2008, Fridley's recreation staff feels confident that access to online registration will be used for more than 75% of all registrations. In addition to allowing residents to register in the comfort of their homes and at a time when it is convenient, it will help to relieve pressure on Recreation staff.

If you have questions, please contact Sue Johnson in the Fridley Parks and Recreation Department by calling 572-3573 or by emailing her at johnsons@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Police Department Upgrading Video Systems in Squads

In 2002, the Fridley Police Department participated in a Minnesota racial profiling study that, through state grants, enabled it to purchase ten video recording systems for its police squads. These analog systems are automatically activated whenever an officer turns on his/her emergency lights or sirens. The system may also be manually triggered at other times when the officer deems it appropriate.

The purpose of these video recording systems in squads is to collect evidence that may be used to prosecute those who violate the law. The systems also serve to protect police officers from allegations of misconduct and provide objective information concerning police/citizen contacts.

These analog systems include a video cassette recorder that is mounted in the trunk of the squad, a camera that is mounted in the windshield of the passenger side of the vehicle, and a wireless microphone and transmitter that is pinned to the officer's uniform. The system requires the officers to maintain recorded VHS video tapes for each shift they work. It also requires that the officers manually search for video tapes that may be needed for court or administrative review. Since the video is not indexed, this can be a time-consuming process. Additionally, over the years, the video cassette recorders, which are exposed to wide temperature

extremes and jarring vehicle motion, have required increasingly more frequent and costly repairs. Also, as the IT industry abandons VHS technology, replacement parts are increasingly more difficult to obtain.

While a costly venture, the Fridley Police Department has developed a plan to replace the analog video recording equipment in the ten squads with more user-friendly digital recording equipment. In 2008, the Police Department received a \$20,000 grant from the State of Minnesota which enabled the purchase of four new digital systems. 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. Thus far, conversions have been made to two of four squads. The remaining conversions should be complete by the end of April. Public Safety Director Don Abbott expects to make additional video system conversions to six other squads as funding permits.

The newly converted video systems automatically upload video recordings, by way of a wireless router as officers park their squads on the lower level of the Fridley Municipal Center at the end of each shift. The new recordings are indexed and stored according to priority level. Recordings of arrests are stored



for 120 days; recordings involving citations are stored 90 days; searches and other incidents are stored 60 days; and stops where no action was taken are stored for 30 days. Officers, detectives, supervisors, and administrators can archive recordings indefinitely, or have them burned onto a DVD, if they choose.

One other significant advantage of the new squad video systems is that they significantly reduce the time needed to provide copies of recordings to prosecutors and defense attorneys in DUI and other cases. Under the analog systems, a one-hour recording takes an hour to copy. Under the digital system, copies of data from the server to a DVD take only a minute or two at most.

If you have questions about the new video system, please contact Captain Bob Rewitzer at rewitzerr@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Police Department Gearing Up for Online Reporting

Have you ever been discouraged from reporting a crime or an annoying situation, such as a barking dog, due to the inconvenience of calling or visiting the Police Department and the added inconvenience of waiting for an officer to take a report? The Fridley Police Department is working to eliminate that inconvenience through the establishment of an online reporting system called Desk Officer Reporting System or DORS. The Department has arranged for use of the software through a "software as a service arrangement" with a San Ramon, California company known as Cop Logic. The initial cost for adapting the software for use by the Fridley Police Department as well as for training, upgrades, and maintenance during the first year is \$21,175. The department will pay \$3,850 annually for maintenance and upgrades in subsequent years.

Once the software becomes available in late April, a resident who wants to file a police report will be able to go online to the City's website and access the online reporting system through a link to DORS. The system will walk them through an online form specifically tailored to capture the information needed to report the particular incident. A reviewing officer (probably an officer assigned to light duty) will be reviewing the reports on a daily basis and responding to the person(s) who filed the report. Although there may be circumstances that require a personal contact with the resident, most of the time, the computer-generated response will be the only response residents receive.

Police Department Online,
continued on page 8



Dog License Application

May 1, 2009 - April 30, 2010

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: A Balmy Break for Family Fun

The 2009 Winterfest attracted more than 500 participants on a balmy 46 degree January 31st in Fridley. The participants enjoyed a wide variety of outdoor activities at Commons Park, and many indoor activities at the Fridley Community Center. As was the case in 2008, there were more than fifty volunteers from many different community organizations who assisted with the event.

The outdoor activities included horse-drawn hayrides, sledding, skating, dog sled rides, and a medallion hunt. Inside, there was a family dance, carnival games, arts and crafts, bingo, and concessions.

The more than fifty volunteers included those from the Fridley High School Key Club, the Fridley High School National Honor Society, the Single Volunteers of the Twin Cities, Boy Scout Troop #167, and the Fridley Senior Program. Several other organizations sponsored specific activities. The District #14 Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program provided an ice fishing game. The District #14 Tiger Club sponsored a Treat Walk. The Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts took responsibility for an Arts and Crafts Room. The Fridley Lions provided a bonfire, and Mojo's Pizza staffed a concession booth and provided free pizza for volunteers. The Fridley Lions and the Golden Kiwanis Club made generous financial contributions.

Tara Rogness and Margo Prasek of the Fridley Recreation Department coordinated the event. They had a lot of help from their staff colleagues,

Jack Kirk, Siah St. Clair, Connie Thompson, Sue Johnson, Kerry Rathsack, Jan Swanson, and Mark Daly. The Fridley Police Reserves also deserve credit for providing traffic control. The Fridley Fire Department once again was there with a fire engine and stood ready to respond to injuries. Thanks also to the members of the Parks Maintenance Division of the Fridley Public Works Department who plowed paths for the hay ride and dog sled ride, brought out hay bales and wood pallets for the bonfire, and prepared the skating rinks.



Congratulations to all who were involved, including Kevin and Paula Johnson, and their three sons, Jake, Luke, and Kyle who were the winners of 2009 Winterfest Medallion Hunt. This was truly a community-wide event that was made possible by great teamwork from many different individuals and organizations. We look forward to seeing all of you at next year's Winterfest. ■

The Assessors Are Back

The City's Appraiser, Lynn Krachmer, is ready to roam. This year, he will be visiting approximately 1,700 residential properties in the northwestern part of Fridley that is bounded by Mississippi Street on the south, University Avenue on the east, the Mississippi River on the west and Coon Rapids on the north. He and a summer assistant will be conducting inspections Monday through Thursday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. On Friday, their visitations will occur between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

As they go door-to-door in this area, they will show their identification and ask residents to allow them to do a visual inspection of the inside of their property. If no one is home, they will leave a pink tag on the door, which explains the reassessment process and asks the property owner to contact them to make an appointment. While they typically hear from most property owners, if they do not hear from them within a month, they will send a reminder letter. If they do not hear from the property owner within the two to three weeks following the reminder letter, they will estimate the value of the property. If the property owner disagrees with the value assigned on the value statement, received the following spring, the only way he/she may appeal assigned values to the Local Board of Equalization is by allowing the appraiser to physically review the property.

As the City appraiser surveys your property, he/she will be looking for major improvements to the property that add value. New basement finishes, extensive kitchen remodeling, and new additions, garages, porches, and decks will typically add value to your home. Replacement items, such as roofs, siding and windows will raise the value of your property slightly in that they increase the longevity of your home.

Approximately 20% of Fridley residences are reappraised each year. The values identified in 2009

through the appraisal process along with the analysis of 2009 sales will be used to establish the 2010 tax value for taxes payable in 2011. Similarly, values that were established in 2008 through analysis of sales data and home appraisals will be reflected in taxes that are to be paid in 2010. The bottom line is that there is always a two-year lag between the time that values are collected and the time they are reflected in property taxes.

Understanding this lag in values will help residents understand the tax statements they receive in the spring of each year. Residents should also understand that diminishing values do not necessarily translate into diminishing taxes. As property values decline in the current economic environment, the amounts needed to operate the various categories of local government are redistributed over a smaller tax base. The extent to which residential property owners are helped by this redistribution is dependent on the extent to which these values have shrunk to a greater extent than values for other classes of property, i.e. commercial/industrial property and apartment buildings.

After taking these factors into account, if you still disagree with the value assigned to your property, please contact the City Assessor, Mary Smith, at 572-3537, or Lynn Krachmer at 572-3536. In many cases, Mary or Lynn will be able to resolve your problems and you will be able to avoid the appeal process described in your tax statement.

Please note: City assessors do carry City of Fridley identification. Please make sure you request to see it before granting the person entry into your home. If you have questions about the person or the process, please call City Assessor Mary Smith. ■

Firefighters Train on Lucas Machines

Two years ago, the City published a front-page article on the use of new techniques for saving the victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest. We talked about a new machine that provides for automatic chest compressions. We also discussed a variety of items, including a little gadget known as a Res-Q-Pod that prevents ambient air from getting into the lungs when the victim is being ventilated. Additionally, we discussed how AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators) are used to restore normal electrical activity of the heart. All three legs of this resuscitation stool are used in close proximity and in conjunction with one another.

Assuming the firefighters arrive first to the scene of a sudden cardiac arrest, they will begin with two minutes of manual chest compressions and ventilations (CPR) followed by the use of the AED. When Allina arrives, they will apply the Lucas chest compression equipment. Firefighters typically will strap on the machine and get it started while Allina personnel begin IVs, intubation, and other procedures.

While the Lucas machines are only one of several brands of chest compression equipment, they have the advantage of being smaller and lighter than other products. The machines, in general, also have the advantage of providing automated compressions that save wear and tear on the backs of firefighters and ambulance personnel. They are also much more effective than manual compressions in delivering vital oxygen to the brain and other parts of the body and allow the patient to maintain good circulation throughout the rescue process. Additionally, the machines reduce crowding around the victim and leave room for paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians to



do other things such as provide medication, defibrillation, and ventilation.

In addition to using the compressed air driven Lucas machines for automated chest compressions, medical personnel who arrive at the scene of a sudden cardiac arrest have recently started using ice packs to cool the neck, legs, and groin areas of the victim while the remainder of the resuscitation activities are in play. This rapid cooling of the core body has been found to reduce brain damage during cardiac arrest.

While the new chest compression equipment has been very important to increasing the success rate of cardiac arrest resuscitation, Captain Renee Hamdorf of the Fridley Fire Department, is quick to point out that early application of manual CPR and the use of AEDs remains extremely important to the survival of sudden cardiac arrest victims.

She is also very interested in expanding the availability of AEDs in public places and businesses in Fridley. If our readers are interested in purchasing an AED for a place of business, or if you have already purchased one, she wants to hear from you. She also would like to remind those who have AEDs that AED batteries and pads have a shelf life and must be periodically replaced and AEDs regularly checked. One way to keep track of your AED replacement needs is to register your AED at www.aedlink.com. Additionally if you would like information about CPR training opportunities, please call her or contact the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. Renee can be reached by calling the Fridley Fire Department at 572-3612. Alternatively, email her at hamdorfr@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

New Fire Captains Sworn In

On February 10 at special ceremonies held in the Fridley Fire Department, Fridley Fire Chief John Berg swore in three new Fire Captains. They are Kevin Swanson, Kim Herrmann, and Renee Hamdorf. Kevin Swanson has been a Fridley firefighter for 28 years, Kim Herrmann for 21 years and Renee Hamdorf for 9 years.

The rationale behind the appointment was to provide supervision for all three of the Fire Department's twenty-four hour shifts. As a shift commander, they will be responsible for firefighter accountability, performance reviews, scheduling, crew supervision, and, in the absence of the Chief or Assistant Chief, will serve as incident commanders at the scene of an emergency. They will also be planning and conducting firefighter training as directed by the Assistant Fire Chief. Additionally, they will be responsible for the maintenance of equipment and stations during their shift and as directed by the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief.

The three new Fire Captains were selected after undergoing testing by a psychologist to determine their fitness for leadership. They also participated in interviews with a panel that included the Fridley Human Resources Director Debbie Dahl, the Fridley Assistant Fire Chief John Crelly, Police Captain Bob Rewitzer, and Chief Lee Gatlin of the



L-R: Kim Herrmann, Renee Hamdorf, Kevin Swanson

Brooklyn Center Fire Department. Fire Chief John Berg also interviewed each firefighter.

The promotions are expected to cost the City \$5,678 in additional personal service costs for 2009. Having full-time people in charge of shifts should, however, pay for itself in terms of additional efficiencies and opportunities for coordination. The use of full-time firefighters as shift supervisors has been a growing trend among area fire departments that are staffed by a combination of firefighters and paid-on-call firefighters.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Fire Chief John Berg at 572-3612 or bergj@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■



We're Lining the Sewers Again This Year

While most people can't get too excited to know that the City is lining the sewers again this year, excitement or not, it's about to happen in Fridley for the 20th year in a row. While there are a number of sewer-lining processes, the process typically 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 existing sanitary sewers in five locations. The locations were selected by the City's Public Works Director and Sewer Maintenance Supervisor based upon the age of the pipes and for past inflow and infiltration problems. They are as follows:

1. 3rd Street from 48th Avenue to Panorama Drive.
2. 53rd Avenue across Trunk Highway 65, continuing south to 52nd Avenue.
3. East Moore Lake Drive south of 63rd Avenue.
4. 58th Avenue to 7th Street via Washington Street, continuing south on 7th Street to Medtronic Parkway
5. Between Sylvan Lane and Rainbow Drive west of University Avenue.

The City Council awarded the bid for the project to Veit & Company of Rogers, Minnesota, at its March 23 meeting. The low bid was \$154,785. This compares with \$180,000 that was budgeted from this year's capital improvement budget. Funding for the project is derived from the City's sewer rate revenues.

Public Works Director Jim Kosluchar expects the work to 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 groundwater infiltration into the City's sanitary sewer system. The strengthening of the pipes reduces the chances for structural failure and the sewer backups that result from this 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 about this year's sewer lining project, call Sewer Maintenance Supervisor Greg Kottsick at 572-3560 or email him at kottsickg@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■

Fridley's Very Valuable Volunteer

As we have pointed out in the past, the quality of city government is heavily dependent on the interest and participation of its residents. Through their support, many things get done and the overall quality of government is improved. Mary Thell, who has been a member of the Police Reserves since July of 2004, serves as a great example of someone who regularly works on her own time to assist the City with a variety of important duties.

Mary is a very active member of the Fridley Police Reserves. While Reserve members are asked to put in at least ten hours a month doing things like transporting prisoners to the Anoka County Jail, providing patrol of City parks, and helping with traffic control at community events, Mary often puts in more than twice that number of hours and has averaged twenty to twenty-five hours per month since she first joined the Reserves.

Mary grew up in Northeast Minneapolis, attended Edison High School, and spent about two years at the University of Minnesota before beginning work at Pillsbury. After her second child was born, she became a stay-at-home mom; however, when the last of her four children started kindergarten she began volunteer work in the media center at the

Marcy Open School in Minneapolis. She also tutored elementary age kids, helped in the classrooms, served on the school's leadership team, and became very involved in the Parent Teacher Association.

After moving to Fridley with her husband David and four children in 2002, her neighbor, Don Mauer (former Police Reserves member) told her about the Fridley Police Reserves. In 2004, she joined the Reserves. She attended the Anoka County Reserve Academy, and graduated in April of 2005. In July of 2006, she was promoted to Police Reserve Sergeant. In November she continued her meteoric rise in the Reserves hierarchy by becoming a lieutenant.

Mary says she loves volunteering for the Police Reserves as well as working with the other Reserve members. She also likes working with people in the Fridley neighborhoods through delivering crime alerts, answering questions about the police, teaching safety to children, meeting people at



community events, and helping people who need assistance when their cars break down. She also enjoys her relationships with Fridley police officers who seem to genuinely appreciate her work in transporting prisoners, helping with traffic control at accident scenes, and dealing with other things such as animal complaints. She says she derives great satisfaction in knowing she is helping the full-time police officers stay in circulation to respond to other calls.

When asked about her priorities for the Fridley Police Reserves, she says that she would like to see the Reserves attract even more people than it currently has. She sees the work of the Reserves as constantly expanding and the opportunities to help the community growing. If you are interested in these opportunities, please contact Sergeant Jeff Guest, Police Reserves Coordinator at 572-3629.

We thank Mary for her hard work and dedication to Fridley and its Police Department. ■

Spring and Code Enforcement Issues Have Sprung

It's the time of year when the City seeks help from residents with property maintenance. While most Fridley residents mow their lawns, dispose of their brush, and repair their broken garage doors, a growing number of them do not. As we enter the heart of the 2009 growing season, the City asks that you attend to these and other maintenance issues. By doing so, you will avoid a lot of hassle and potentially a lot of cost that could occur if the City is forced by circumstances to do it for you.

In 2008, the City doubled its summer code enforcement efforts by hiring an additional summer intern to complete inspections. As a result, the City also sent 46% more letters regarding code violations and logged 50% more inspections than the prior year. The most frequent code violations were those associated with illegal outdoor storage, weeds/tall grass, vehicles not parked on hard surfaces, brush, garbage, and a variety of housing maintenance items, such as rotting soffits, broken windows, fallen down spouts, missing garage doors, and roofs that were in need of repair.

As we look forward to systematic code inspections in 2009, the City's summer staffing will, due to lost Local Government Aid, be reduced to one summer intern. According to Julie Jones, the City's Planning Manager, "While we will continue to conduct residential inspections, much of the summer intern's time will likely be devoted to systematic inspection of commercial and industrial properties."

As we play catch-up with commercial/industrial inspections, the number of mortgage foreclosures in Fridley continues to contribute to an increasing number of abatements where the City is forced by neglect to correct a code enforcement issue. Of the ninety-nine property abatements in 2008 (many of which were lawn-mowing related abatements) forty were conducted on foreclosed properties. The 2008 abatements were nearly twice as great as the number of abatements conducted in 2007.

Fridley's code enforcement personnel will also direct their efforts toward illegal signs, many of which are temporary signs illegally placed on public right-of-way. In 2008, City inspectors removed 246 illegal signs. Police Department Community Service Officers also removed numerous other signs.

In April of 2008, Council approved a housing maintenance code that identified certain structural issues, such as those mentioned above, that were



subject to code enforcement. The new legislation resulted in the identification of 127 housing maintenance violations in 2008. Of these, only seven were cited in court. A few of the others, however, are for properties that are in foreclosure and difficult to cite due to the complicated ownership rights associated with these properties. Others are represented by individual owners who are making good faith efforts to correct their structural problems.

As we approach the time when code enforcement issues become more visible, the City's code enforcement staff asks that residents avoid the cost of having the City mow your property. If you receive a code enforcement letter, please respond immediately rather than wait beyond the ten-day period that is allowed for correction of mowing issues. To do so could cost you more than \$400 for the City's mowing contractor plus additional costs associated with chargeable staff time.

If you have a code enforcement issue that you wish to report, we ask that you report it to the City's Community Development Department. By calling the City's code enforcement staff, we can immediately check our records to let you know whether others have complained about the property and what the status of our processing of those complaints may be. A call to Community Development also provides an opportunity for City staff to record your complaint information directly into the City's code enforcement data base. Anyone on the City's Planning staff can help if you call their main number at 572-3592. We pledge that your complaint will remain anonymous. ■

Police Department Online, continued from page 6

In general, the system is designed for reports that do not require an officer to report to the site of the complaint. Although the list of case types that are suitable for online reporting is still being compiled, it is likely that it will include theft, lost property, damage to property, hit and run traffic accidents, abandoned vehicle reports, traffic complaints, house watch requests, harassing phone calls, narcotics information, and identity theft.

Once the reported crime has been assigned and investigated, the system will generate a report and temporary case number. When Fridley police have determined that they have completed their work on the case, it will automatically be filed with the Anoka County recordkeeping system.

In addition to having significant benefits for residents, the online reporting system will undoubtedly provide major benefits for the Police Department. According to Public Safety Director Don Abbott, the potential exists to divert 100 to 120 calls per month to online reporting. Each of these calls would otherwise require an officer in a patrol car to either drive to the caller's address to take a report in person, or find some place to park to take a report over the phone. In either circumstance, the officer would have to write a report and records staff would need to retype the officer's report into the records management system. Online reporting keeps officers on the street handling priority calls and enforcing the laws. In very busy circumstances, it avoids not responding to certain types of calls.

Although the Minneapolis Police Department has adopted online reporting, Fridley will be the first city in Anoka County to adopt it. Currently we are working with Anoka County to establish an online computer linkage between the City and the County for the new system. As we start up the system and get a feel for how it is working, we will be providing additional newsletter updates. In the meantime, if you have questions or comments, please contact Captain Bob Rewitzer at 572-3637 or by email at rewitzerr@ci.fridley.mn.us. ■