

MANDATE TAKES EFFECT AUGUST 1

COON RAPIDS CITY COUNCIL APPROVES PRE-PAY GASOLINE ORDINANCE

After nearly 90 minutes of discussion at its Feb. 21 meeting, the Coon Rapids City Council approved an amendment to the City Code that requires gas stations to sell fuels on a pre-pay basis.

The ordinance passed 5-2, with Mayor Tim Howe and City Councilor Jerry Koch (Ward 4) casting the dissenting votes. The ordinance takes effect August 1.

Seen as a means to curb fuel thievery while lessening the burden on city police to investigate such incidents, the ordinance does allow stations to not require customers to pre-pay if they are known to the station's personnel by an established relationship. The ordinance language that pertains to this exception reads, "It is an exception to the application of this Chapter if business owners enter into a civil agreement with customers, pursuant to which customers may activate a fuel pump prior to payment. Such an agreement shall include identifying information of the customer that may be used by the business owner for seeking compensation in the appropriate civil court should the customer fail to pay for fuel after activating the pump." Violation of the ordinance would be a misdemeanor.

Mayor Howe pointed out many surrounding cities' police departments have told gas station operators that they would not investigate gas thefts and discouraged them from calling police, thus leaving Coon Rapids with statistics that make it appear to be a high-crime city. In 2009, there were 314 drive-offs, 492 the following year, and 481 in 2011. The latest numbers account for nearly 20% of the total Part 1 crimes in the city. At least 15% of the gas thefts have been made with cars displaying stolen license plates.

Howe and Koch said that station owners should have more time to solve the problem on their own rather than government making decisions for them. Koch asked if the council would consider tabling the matter for a few months to wait for the outcome of a bill in the legislature that would make fuel thefts civil matters that stations could police themselves and collect debts. House File 2333 had its first committee hearing Feb. 16.

City Councilor Paul Johnson (Ward 3) said he didn't feel the bill would be passed and the city should act now, since gas prices are rising and thievery may continue.

Koch asked, "why do we have to be the only city in the state to address this?", adding that a pre-pay mandate would put some gas station owners at a disadvantage. Their costs would go up due to increased credit card transactions and the fees that are attached to them. Howe also noted that residents were concerned about not being able to use discount coupons very easily with a pre-pay ordinance.

City Councilor Scott Schulte (At Large) said "most people who have contacted me have said we should not pass this. I've also had way too many people tell me that I shouldn't be involved in this because I sell gas — I don't," referring to his vehicle repair business that stopped selling gas many years ago. "Most people think this is government overreaching, and normally I would be in that camp. I think government overreaches all the time, it's gotten too big and causes a lot of problems." He said that his priority as a city councilor is public safety, "and if you don't feel safe in your neighborhood, it's not home."

"How many license plates are stolen? How many other gateway crimes are entered into because it's easy to get gas in Coon Rapids — they don't report it anymore. That's the message we're sending here tonight if we don't approve this." Schulte went on to say that many gas stations in other parts of the country have voluntarily instituted pre-pay policies. He doesn't think it has cut into their profits.

The discussion also broached the profit motive — that large gas station chains can withstand the losses of drive-offs more than small operators. "When the loss of drive-offs exceed the costs of credit card transactions, the stations will start pre-pay," Schulte added.

Among the five councilors who voted for the ordinance, Bruce Sanders (Ward 5), Denise Klint (Ward 1) and Melissa Larson (Ward 2) made comments asserting a crime is a crime, and were disturbed that drive-offs may go unreported, and that some gas stations did not take the crime as seriously as they should.

Klint said station owners have never been actively involved with the police or city officials in finding a solution to the problem, which began to be discussed a number of years ago.

Koch said a drive-off at a gas station would not make him fear for his safety, although he has had personal property stolen. "People have asked me 'why are you punishing us?' — because there were 492 bad apples last year. I am ardently opposed to this ordinance."

Police Chief Brad Wise first brought the matter to the council last September. Coon Rapids is the first city in Minnesota that has enacted a pre-pay gasoline ordinance. **ACR**



(Top to bottom): Mayor Tim Howe, City Councilors Jerry Koch, Paul Johnson, Denise Klint and Scott Schulte

SEN. CHAMBERLAIN INTRODUCES STADIUM FINANCING PROPOSAL

St. Paul — State Senator Roger Chamberlain (R-Lino Lakes) introduced a proposal Feb. 23 to assist construction financing for a new Vikings stadium. The State of



Sen. Roger Chamberlain (left) and Sen. David Hann at Feb. 23 press conference

Minnesota's role is to leverage the state's bond rating to facilitate a low-interest loan for up to \$300 million in revenue bonds that will be repaid in the form of user fees. Additional provisions in the bills call for a sales tax exemption for construction materials and an appropriation for infrastructure improvements.

"This bill treats the Minnesota Vikings franchise the same way the legislature would treat any other private business in our state," said Sen. Chamberlain. "This proposal is fair to state taxpayers and does not use any gambling revenues to solve this ongoing problem."

The legislation introduced by Senate Republican lawmakers is site-neutral, not designating any specific location and thus, does not require any local financial contribution. Starting in payable 2014, the bill calls for a reduction and phase-out of the statewide business property tax by payable 2023 for the purpose of providing property tax relief to all Minnesota businesses. The author's intent is to free up money for businesses to provide an opportunity for them to contribute to the construction of a Vikings stadium. The bill is silent on how the rest of the construction costs are funded, but empowers the Vikings to take the lead in securing funding partners.

"We believe this bill is workable and has the potential to attract the 34 necessary votes to pass the Minnesota Senate," said Sen. Chamberlain. "This bill offers tax relief to all Minnesota businesses and gives them an opportunity to demonstrate the value of keeping the Vikings in the state. This proposal relies on user fees to pay back the bonds so that only the users of the stadium will pay for the items subject to the fees like tickets, personal seat licenses, and parking."

The bill would provide the State issuance of revenue bonds to be repaid by user fees associated with attending events at the stadium.

A 10% fee would be added to:

- all stadium event tickets and concessions sold at the stadium;
- licenses or fees charged by the team or league to reserve seats, boxes, suites or spaces including personal seat licenses, luxury boxes, etc.;
- sponsorships, signage and naming rights;
- parking;
- the team's share of media revenues; and
- stadium rental fees

The bill calls for all Vikings home games to be played in the stadium for 30 years or until the bonds have been repaid, whichever is longer. Additionally, the stadium would be privately owned and operated by the Vikings, so the state would not own another stadium and be obligated to finance operating costs. Also required is state access to the team's financial books so as to determine compliance.

The bill (Senate File 2127) met a cool reception from Vikings team management.

Co-authored by Sen. David Hann (R-Eden Prairie) and Sen. Pam Wolf (R-Spring Lake Park), the bill has been referred to the Local Government and Elections Committee. There was no companion bill in the House at press time. **ACR**

REPORT SAYS STATE'S BUSINESS CLIMATE HAS NOT IMPROVED

by Evan Paskach
Minnesota State News

Minnesota has the 6th worst state business tax climate in the nation according to a new comprehensive report from the non-partisan Tax Foundation. The North Star State is ranked 45th in the new, national report, "2012 State Business Tax Climate Index."

The report ranks each state based on several metrics related to business taxes, including corporate tax, individual income tax, sales tax, property tax, and unemployment insurance tax. The state maintained its bottom 10 rank from last year where it also earned a 45th place rank. "Even in our global economy, a state's stiffest and most direct competition often comes from other states," said Tax Foundation economist Mark Robyn. "State lawmakers need to be aware of how their states' business climates match up to their immediate neighbors and to other states in their region."

The 10 best states in this year's index remained unchanged from last year with Wyoming, South Dakota, Nevada, Alaska, and Florida rounding out the top five. The report notes that South Dakota has no corporate or individual income tax and maintains solid ranks in other categories, allowing them to maintain their superior position.

Minnesota leads only New Jersey, New York, California, Vermont, and Rhode Island at the bottom of the list. According to the report, Maryland, which was ranked 44th last year, moved to 42nd this year mostly due to the "expiration of the state's 'millionaire's tax' on high income earners." Similar so-called millionaire tax proposals have been circulated in Minnesota, as well.

Among other details, the report identifies Minnesota's 9.8% corporate income tax rate as one of the highest in the nation, and that Minnesota's high-tax history may be responsible for low rates of job creation. The state is also one of the bottom 10 states for individual income tax rates.

Minnesota fared better in property tax rank among the 50 states, earning a 26th place ranking. But with a sales tax rank worse than two-thirds of states in the nation (36th) and low ranks in the other key categories, Minnesota will keep its bottom 10 rank for the second consecutive year. Unless improvements to the business tax climate are made in the legislature this year, Minnesotans could find themselves in the same position this time next year.

The entire report can be found on the TaxFoundation.org website.

BRINGING LOCAL HISTORY TO LIFE: QUILTS AND THEIR STORIES

Quilts can warm much more than your toes. They can warm your heart, too! They tell stories, paint pictures, and bring back memories. Come to the Rum River Library, located at 4201 6th Ave. in Anoka on Sat., March 10 at 2 p.m. for a historical look at quilts and the stories they tell.

Quilts reflect our lives and the lives of the women who made them — today as well as in centuries past. This program includes slides of quilts from the collection of the Anoka County Historical Society and the stories behind those quilts. There are some hands-on components, too, as preservation tips and the history behind some of our beloved quilts patterns are shared.

"Quilting is a unique American tradition that evolved from being a necessary item into a piece of art symbolic of our traditions and heritage," said Anoka County Commissioner Dan Erhart. "A quilt can send a message, weave a story, and gives a glimpse into its creator's heart and soul."

This historical look at quilts is sponsored by the Anoka County Library and is presented by the Anoka County Historical Society. This program is free and open to the public and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

For more information about this and other library programs, call 763-576-4695.

Classes for entrepreneurs

Anoka County Library is presenting several classes in March and April for entrepreneurs, small business owners, and those planning to start a small business. Classes are free but seating is limited. The following classes will be held at the Rum River Library, located at 4201 6th Avenue in Anoka and at the North-town Library, located at 711 County Road 10 NE in Blaine:

Business Orientation — Learn what it takes to start and finance a business before you invest your time and money. Offered at: Northtown Library Sat., Mar. 3, 10:30 a.m.; and Rum River Library Sat. Apr. 7, 10:30 a.m.

How to Write a Business Plan — A business plan that can distinguish your business in a positive, concise and persuasive way, with tips for planning a feasible and viable business model. Offered at: Northtown Library, Sat., March 10, 10:30 a.m.; and Rum River Library on Sat., Apr. 14, 10:30 a.m.

Understanding Business Accounting The basics of simple bookkeeping and understanding financial statements. Offered at: Northtown Library, Sat., March 17, 10:30 a.m.; Rum River Library, Sat. April 21 10:30 a.m.

How to Get a Lender to Say Yes — Get tips on small business financing, underwriting guidelines that determine whether a loan will be approved, as well as what makes an effective business loan proposal. Offered at: Rum River Library, Sat. Apr. 28, 10:30 a.m.

"Being your own boss is the dream of many people," said Anoka County Commissioner Dan Erhart. "These classes can help an entrepreneur make the dream a reality."

These programs are presented by Women Venture and the Neighborhood Development Center and are funded by MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency).

For more information about these classes and other library programs, call 763-712-2322 or visit www.anoka.lib.mn.us.

CITY OF COON RAPIDS BUNKER HILLS GOLF COURSE TEMPORARY OPENINGS MAINTENANCE WORKERS, PRO SHOP WORKERS, GOLF FACILITY - OUTSIDE SERVICES WORKERS

The City of Coon Rapids is seeking applicants for temporary Maintenance Worker, Pro Shop Worker, and Golf Facility-Outside Services Worker positions at Bunker Hills Golf Course. Applicants must be 17 years of age or older. Previous experience in maintenance and familiarity with game of golf preferred. Must be available to work normally scheduled hours, including weekends and evenings. Salary: \$7.25/hour plus use of golf course during non-peak/off hours. Apply: visit www.coonrapidsmn.gov or call (763) 767-6447. City applications accepted until 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, March 2, 2012**. EOE/AA/ADA

Mayor says "We shouldn't be in the telecommunications business at all"

Monticello Telecom System Loses Millions of Taxpayer Dollars as Customers Depart

by Tom Steward | *Minnesota State News*

Once touted as a national model for taxpayer-funded telecommunications systems, FiberNet Monticello has instead become a showcase for the high stakes involved when local government gets in the business of competing with private providers in the fast-evolving high tech world.

FiberNet can no longer afford to offer service priced at 15% less than the city's private competitors. This was one of FiberNet's original selling points. As the rivalry for customers heats up, city fliers appeal to residents' civic pride with the slogan "because it's your company" and on behalf of city employees "who put their hearts and souls into bringing you the best."

In a recent interview with the *Monticello Times*, Mayor Clint Herbst even raised the possibility that "the city could just walk away from it and wash their hands of it and you'd get pennies on the dollar." These comments were in response to what could happen if bondholders balked at renegotiating lower interest rates on \$26 million in revenue bonds used to develop the system. "The worst case scenario would be if we sunk millions and millions of dollars into it and then walked away," Herbst told the paper.

Financial documents filed for bondholders on February 15, 2012 underscore the urgency behind the city-wide marketing campaign. The filing shows FiberNet Monticello ran a \$2.6 million loss in 2011, despite receiving a one-time \$1.5 million legal settlement. City finance director Tom Kelly confirmed the unaudited figures. Cash from the city liquor store is being utilized to subsidize FiberNet operations with an understanding it will be repaid with interest.

The outlook doesn't appear much better this year with the city projecting a nearly \$3.5 million shortfall for the government-run telecom network. The deficit is based on an estimated \$2.55 million in revenue and \$5.9 million in expenditures in 2012, including \$1.76 million in debt service.

As a start-up, FiberNet was projected to operate at a temporary loss while building a customer base for its triple play service. The newly released financial reports, however, indicate FiberNet Monticello lost ground in the last three months of 2011. The total number of FiberNet phone, internet and video customers fell by about 100 subscribers, a three percent decline. While FiberNet gained 86 phone customers from October through December, the city lost 81 internet and 111 video customers.

One thing is for certain — FiberNet is nowhere near being "self-sufficient" as a top city official and their telecom consultant once predicted. FiberNet's overall number of subscribers remains well below original projections, even compensating for a lost year of service due to legal action. The number of customers for internet services comes the closest to meeting projections with 1,058 (1,737), while the number of video customers 1,423 (3,230) and phone customers 1,002 (3,388) amounts to less than half as many as projected.

While maintaining that FiberNet will be self-sustaining someday, Mayor Herbst told the *Monticello Times* "the reality is we shouldn't be in the telecommunications business at all". In a candid assessment of the taxpayer-backed venture, Herbst underscores the need to cut operating costs and do new projections to "see how much money it would take to keep this up and going."

Herbst said the shortfall in 2011 caught the city council by surprise. "When we first did this, we made a promise to the community that we weren't going to put money into it. We were a little bit shocked when money was going into the system," the city leader said in the interview.

Besides putting pressure on bondholders, Herbst said the company that manages the system, Hiawatha Broadband Communications (HBC), must also produce savings. HBC currently receives \$15,000 a month for its services, "similar to the contract we have with the county for police coverage," Herbst said. "We're buying their expertise."

Although FiberNet was formed to foster competition, Herbst expressed surprise at how the marketplace worked in practice. "Everyone says when TDS began putting fiber in, why didn't you quit? We couldn't because once we agreed and signed for those bonds we were stuck for those bonds. If we had walked away, then the city would have had to come up with \$26 million to pay these bondholders off. Once that happened, it was the point of no return," Herbst told the paper.

"We're trying to renegotiate the bonds, we're just starting that process," Monticello finance director Tom Kelly confirmed to Minnesota State News. "Needless to say with seven percent interest rates, the market has changed."

The viability of FiberNet Monticello is being closely monitored by those in the telecom industry in and outside of Minnesota, due to the publicity and high expectations that accompanied the network's debut.

Opinion

MORE GOVERNMENT THAN WE CAN AFFORD



by Rep. Linda Runbeck

Here's an interesting piece of trivia. In 2011, the number of Minnesota cities decreased by one, and the number of townships decreased by one. One occurred through merger, and the other occurred through un-incorporation. That brings Minnesota to a total of 1,784 townships, 853 cities and 87 counties. A heckuva lot of government.

Of course, this abundance of local government is also the secret to our democracy and our stable, market-based economy. Consider a scary alternative: in countries such as Mexico and Ukraine, local governments struggle to emerge from old centralized or Soviet-era systems. Local officials are appointed by the central government, carry out the dictates of the Party and depend for revenue on central government hand-outs. The focus of local officials becomes currying favor with federal officials in order to replenish their budgets instead of fostering economic development and financial self-sufficiency in their own territories. Predictably, the by-product is corruption, dysfunction and a dearth of quality local leadership.

We Minnesotans would never trade our situation. At the same time, we've got more government than we can afford. Our system of state-local inter-dependency, set up 40 years ago, has become bloated and possibly dysfunctional itself. For example, we spread \$3 billion in formulized "aid" (subsidies) to our cities and counties. Many cities receive more than 35% of their revenues from the state, some over 60%. 359 of our cities have populations under 500 and are shrinking. What is the long-term future of such cities? How are they using this aid? Can you run tiny cities with a level of professional administration on very limited resources?

At the county level, the same questions arise. We have 7 counties with populations under 6,000 — almost too small to deliver the services expected of counties in areas of health and human services, court services, public safety and more.

Couple these realities with the state's revenue and demographic future, portrayed in sobering terms by the state's economist, Tom Stinson, and state's demographer, Tom Gillaspay. Something has to change. And the changes are coming in bipartisan fashion. In 2010, the legislature established the Council on Local Results and Innovation in order to standardize local government performance standards. Since then, the Council has established 10 performance outcomes, and several hundred city governments are participating.

The call for change is not just top-down. One county commissioner from Otter Tail County has recently called for reducing the number of counties to 35. A legislator has called for the nearly \$1 billion Local Government Aid (LGA) program to be re-purposed into a grant program for costly local infrastructure upgrades (e.g., sewer and water treatment plants). A county administrator from Beltrami County is on a mission to unleash creativity for consolidations and cost-saving efforts at the county level.

These ideas should be given due consideration. The times we live in force us to reconsider the relationship between state and local governments that, in my view, has led to a misallocation of resources. For the sake of taxpayers and the goal of quality, efficient services, we have to become better at how and where we spend people's money.

Rep. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines) represents District 53A which includes Lino Lakes, Circle Pines, Lexington, North Oaks and Shoreview.

Minnesotans' Best Interests Should Be the Governor's Only Agenda

By Senator Roger Chamberlain (R-Dist. 53) & Senator Julianne Ortman (R-Dist. 34)

Governor Dayton put his political agenda ahead of the best interests of Minnesota by vetoing lawsuit reform bills that passed both the Senate and the House with bi-partisan support. These common sense reforms would have made our courts more accessible and affordable for all Minnesotans: individuals, families and businesses, plaintiffs and defendants alike.

Minnesota's courts are over-burdened and the time to trial is lengthy. The reforms were designed to provide more cost-effective resolution of disputes.

Conciliation Court is the fastest court in Minnesota; it is an informal venue where litigants can seek quick and inexpensive review of disputes of less than \$7500. Neither party is required to have an attorney, which makes the process cost-effective. The governor vetoed a proposal to raise the limit for disputes to \$10,000, which would allow more cases to be heard in Conciliation Court. This is about equal access to justice as many Minnesotans cannot afford to bring their disputes to the District Court.

Minnesota's statutes of limitation vary depending on the type of case. Our state's default statute of limitation is six years. Minnesota is one of only three states with a six-year default statute; the national average is only three years. The governor vetoed our proposal for a four year default, which would shorten the length of time in many cases. Courts often hear cases filed on the last day of the six year period and these cases can then require an additional two years to even reach trial.

Our six year statute was adopted at statehood, when the pony express delivered mail, it took weeks to travel to interview witnesses, and lawyers hired clerks to prepare handwritten copies of court documents. The governor shouldn't take issue with our attempts to bring Minnesota's courts in to the 21st Century.

Governor Dayton also vetoed our bill authorizing Minnesota's appellate courts to conduct an early review of a district court's decision to certify a few named plaintiffs to advance a class action lawsuit. Now our appellate court may only review the decision after the lawsuit has concluded, which in most cases is too late. These are the complex questions appellate courts are designed to review, and early review would provide the parties an assessment of the merits of the claims, and assessment of risk and liability which often leads to an earlier settlement, and lower costs to consumers.

Finally, Governor Dayton vetoed the bill to tie Minnesota's pre-judgment interest rate to the U.S. Treasury Rate. Legislation from 2009 set the interest rate at ten percent! This can be a perverse incentive to invest in litigation, because the ten percent return on investment is way better than any rate in the marketplace. In 2010 Minnesota's schools, cities and counties complained that the pre-judgment interest produced too big a strain on their budgets; they lobbied for and received an exception (now they pay only the Treasury Rate or the four percent minimum). Clearly the same is true in the private sector, and the same rate should be applied to them.

Minnesotans deserve swift justice and the ability to reach fair resolution of their disputes within a reasonable amount of time and expense. The House and Senate passed these reforms with bi-partisan support. 62,000 employers and individuals across Minnesota formed a coalition to support these proposals and asked the governor for support. By vetoing the bills he denied the reasonable requests of the residents he was elected to serve, and has denied us all a more accessible and affordable judicial system.

Anoka County Watchdog: Non-News from the Vikings

Here's the biggest reportable piece of non-news in Minnesota: The Vikings aren't moving.

Not to Los Angeles or any other location you can dream up.

NFL bylaws require a franchise to notify the League in writing by mid-February of any intention to re-locate that calendar year.

We knew all along the threat to move was empty.

There is nowhere for the team to go, including Los Angeles, where a stadium is not a done deal and where the commissioner noted it was likely that LA would get an expansion franchise if they got one at all.

The Watchdog isn't convinced the state could give the Vikings a stadium without them goofing it up.

Bill of the Week

Ted Daley (R-Eagan) showed his rising star status by passing a bill that would require teachers to demonstrate a proficiency in basic skills like math before they can teach our children.

Now the bill at first glance may seem like a no brainer, but it has been long opposed by the Education Industrial Complex (EIC), that powerful web of education special interests that puts kids second.

Daley not only got his bill up over the EIC, he also got Governor Dayton to make the bill law. The Watchdog congratulates Daley for getting this bill passed AND signed into law.

And as much as it pains us, we are forced to praise Governor Dayton two weeks in a row. While he is wrong on so many issues, Dayton has demonstrated a willingness to buck the EIC and sign legislation that puts students first.

Let's hope that willingness on the governor's part extends to other important education legislation.

The Dependency Class

Well, the praise for Dayton didn't last long. This week, the Dayton administration announced a new public service campaign designed to get more people to sign up for food stamps.

Apparently, only 65% of people who could be dependent on government are so, and that pains liberals, who of course thrive on building a large and permanent dependency class.

Don't forget that the dependency class has two wings, those who are dependent and those who make a living overseeing the dependent (i.e. government employees).

Both tend to empower Democrats at the polls.

This public relations ploy is funded in part with \$200,000 of your federal tax dollars.

Here's a novel idea: how about an ad campaign touting the job openings that are out there so the maximum number of people can experience the dignity and self-sufficiency of employment?

Here's another one: how about a campaign to make the unemployed aware of the job training opportunities that are out there, many of them funded by government?

The whole situation was made worse when the Lt. Governor demonstrated a total ignorance of basic economics by claiming that food stamp dependency HELPS the economy.

"Every dollar of use of the SNAP program, there's \$1.73 that's generated for our economy, which helps our grocery stores," she opined. Oh, boy. Memo to Dayton administration: government money is nothing more than wealth diverted from the private economy and laundered through the public economy, always in a more inefficient manner.

This is another classic example of Democrats trying to claim that welfare spending somehow lifts the economy. Yet another "stimulus" crock. Wealth creation, not spending, boosts the economy and creates prosperity.

Opinion





SEN. BENJAMIN KRUSE (Dist. 47) 651-296-4154

Feb. 17. *Capitol Area Architectural And Planning Board Meeting*
Last session I was appointed to the Capitol Area Architectural and

Planning Board. The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board is responsible for preserving and enhancing the dignity, beauty, and architectural integrity of the Capitol, the buildings immediately adjacent to it, the Capitol grounds, and the Capitol area. It has been an honor serving not only this great state but also the magnificent building that is our Capitol. In our first meeting of the new year we made tough repair and restoration recommendations. I love this building and I want to make sure the "Peoples House" is around for another century.

Veterans Jobs Bill

This week, the Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Committee passed two bills that will increase employment opportunities for veterans in both the private and public sector. One bill strengthens re-employment protections for veterans returning from service and better enables them to get their old jobs back. The second will give Minnesota companies the option to put in place their own veterans hiring programs where previously the federal government had prohibited favoring veterans during the hiring process. In the years since 9/11 and the war on terrorism, American veterans are currently experiencing unemployment at rates more than twice the general population, and that needs to be set right.

Freedom To Work

A bipartisan bill introduced and passed this week would help create jobs by allowing people to pursue a lawful occupation, as well as protect against the misuse of occupational regulations to reduce competition and increase prices to consumers. Converting licensing laws to less restrictive regulations, like certification, could stimulate over 15,000 new jobs in Minnesota, according to Morris Kleiner, a leading scholar on occupational regulations and professor of labor policy at the University of Minnesota who spoke on the proposal.

Licensing costs consumers more than \$100 billion a year worth of lost output while transferring \$300 billion a year from consumers to those who work in the licensed occupations. Licensing laws reduce competition and allow licensees to increase wages by about 15 percent with no observable benefit to consumers. In Minnesota, the reduction in the number of service providers results in residents paying more than \$3.6 billion more for services a year to those with occupational licenses with little evidence of consumer protection. The bill was approved by the Senate Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee on Wednesday and moves to the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee.

REP. KURT DAUDT (Dist. 17A) 651-296-5364

Feb. 23. This week I saw some good progress on a few of my reform bills. Two of my Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) bills were passed through the House Health and Human Services Committee on Wednesday. HF2080 and HF2081 both seek to reform the state's welfare system to make it more accountable and discourage fraudulent use.

HF2080 modifies the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) by reducing the maximum time limit from 60-months to 36-months and reducing the MFIP exit level from 115 percent to 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. It also disqualifies persons convicted of a drug offense within the past ten years, requires criminal history background studies and modifies sanctions to reduce the number of

sanctions for noncompliance a participant receives before the MFIP case is closed. HF2081 makes a technical correction to one of the EBT reforms passed last year which ensures the name of the recipient be printed on the card. It also added the phrase "It is unlawful to use this card to purchase tobacco products or alcoholic beverages" to the face of the card.

I also presented my DWI bill before the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee this week. HF2246 corrects a legislative oversight that results from the 2007 reorganization of the criminal vehicular operation (CVO) statute. It allows convictions under the original criminal vehicular operation law to enhance DWI offenses.

This bill was passed through Public Safety and will move on to Judiciary Policy and Finance Committee.

This week we also heard the results of the court's decision on legislative redistricting lines. The new district 31A moved south and west to incorporate Oak Grove and Zimmerman. Cambridge, Isanti and North Branch will be a part of 32A.

REP. BOB DETTMER (Dist. 52A) 651-296-4124

Feb. 24. Yesterday I presented HF2392 to the House Committee on Government Operations. The bill creates an Anoka County Housing Authority.

Governor Dayton signed bipartisan supported HF1770 into law on Wednesday. This bill requires that teachers in Minnesota pass a basic skills exam before receiving their teacher's license. HF1770 shows a great stride in education reform that will directly benefit Minnesota's students.

Yesterday evening, Governor Dayton signed HF 2394, a bill that I co-authored. It was passed by the Senate and presented to Governor Dayton yesterday evening. The bill was first passed by the House on Monday. The bill was signed into law last night, and is effective today. The bill requires communities be notified when a person is released from the Minnesota sex offender program.

Please contact my office with any state legislative issues or concerns at 651-296-4124.

SEN. MICHELLE BENSON (Dist. 49) 651-296-3219

Feb. 24. On Thursday the Senate passed HF1467, known as the Defense of Dwelling and Person Act, which makes four changes to existing self-defense laws. It removes the "duty to retreat" provision, creates a presumption of reasonableness that protects the victim if they defend themselves, allows victims to use force against violent felonies, and protects victims who use justified force in self defense from facing criminal prosecution. The measure also addresses state government weapon seizure during state of emergencies, and recognizes permits to carry or licenses from another state.

According to the FBI, 83 percent of violent crimes occur outside the home. This bill, authored by Senator Gretchen Hoffman, extends protections to defend yourself outside your home. A similar bill has passed in the House, so bill language will need to be reconciled before being sent to the Governor. I am a strong supporter of our 2nd Amendment rights and I believe Minnesotans have the right to protect themselves and their property. The bill was passed on the Senate floor by a vote of 40 to 23 and I voted in favor of this legislation.

Redistricting Maps Introduced

Maps redrawing legislative and congressional district lines for this fall's elections were released Tuesday. The redistricting exercise is done every 10 years after the census. The number of districts remains the same but district borders are changed to make sure each district has approximately the same number of people in it, currently 80,000 per Senate district. There were some surprises in the

court-ordered plan, including 48 legislative matchups, and 23 new open districts. Please remember that you continue to be represented by your current senator and representative, as well as congressperson. To see how the change will affect you for the upcoming election, go to the state Geographic Information Services website at <http://bit.ly/wsr77S>

CITY OF CENTERVILLE ELECTION DATES 2012

Primary Election Absentee Voting Begins - June 29, 2012

End of Pre-Registration for Primary Election - 5:00 p.m. - July 24, 2012

Municipal Candidate Filing Opens - 7:30 a.m. - July 31, 2012

Saturday Absentee Voting - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - August 11, 2012

Absentee Voting - Until 5:00 p.m. - August 13, 2012

Last Day for Municipal Candidate Filing - 5:00 p.m. - August 14, 2012

Primary Election Day - 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. - August 14, 2012

General Election Absentee Voting Begins - September 21, 2012

End of Pre-Registration for General Election - October 16, 2012

Saturday Absentee Voting - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - November 3, 2012

Absentee Voting - Until 5:00 p.m. - November 5, 2012

General Election Day - 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. - November 6, 2012

Anoka County RECORD

Vol. 1 No. 12 March 1, 2012

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editor@anokacountyrecord.com

The Anoka County Record is also available on our website: anokacountyrecord.com

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Anoka County GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Anoka County Board

Anoka County Government Center
2100 3rd Ave
Anoka, MN 55303-5024
Ph.: 763-323-5700
www.co.anoka.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
Public Works Cmte — 9 am, Rm 772, ACGC
- Thurs. Mar. 8**
Parks & Rec. Cmte. — 9 am, Island of Peace Visitor Ctr
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Management Cmte — 8:30 am, Rm 772
County Board — 9:30 am, Rm 705, ACGC
- Wed. Mar. 14**
Waste Mgmt & Energy Cmte — 8:15 am, Rm 772, ACGC
- Thurs. Mar. 15**
Community Corrections Advisory Bd — Noon, Rm 710, ACGC
Public Safety Cmte — 3 pm, Rm 1140, Anoka Co Public Safety Ctr, Andover
- Mon. Mar. 19**
Public Works Cmte — 9 am, Rm 772, ACGC
Library Board — 5:30 pm, Library offices next to Northtown Library

Andover

Andover City Hall
1685 Crosstown Blvd NW
Andover, MN 55304
Ph: 763-755-5100
www.ci.andover.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
Artificial Turf/Dome Task Force — 6 pm
Parks Comm. — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 6 & 20**
City Council — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 14**
Open Space Advisory Comm. — 7 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 15**
Parks Comm. — 7 pm

Anoka

Anoka City Hall
2015 1st Ave. N.
Anoka, MN 55303-2270
Ph: 763-576-2700
www.ci.anoka.mn.us

- Mon. Mar. 5**
City Council — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 6**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 8**
Economic Devlp. Comm. — 7:30 am
- Mon. Mar. 12**
Housing & Redevlp. Authority — 5 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Heritage Preserv. Comm. — 5 pm
- Wed. Mar. 14**
Waste Reductn. & Recycling Bd — 5 pm
- Mon. Mar. 19**
City Council “work session” — 5 pm
City Council — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 20**
Parks & Rec. Advisory Bd — 7 pm
Planning Comm. “work session” — 6 pm, City Hall Committee Rm
- Wed. Mar. 21**
Parking Advisory Bd — 7:15 am, Public Safety Ctr, 275 Harrison St

Bethel

Bethel City Hall
23820 Dewey St. / PO Box 64
Bethel, MN 55005
Ph: 763-434-4366
www.bethelmn.govoffice2.com

Call City Hall for information

NOTE: All meetings listed on this page are subject to change of time or date — call ahead to verify

Blaine

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Dr NE
Blaine, MN 55449
Ph: 763-784-6700
www.ci.blaine.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
City Council “workshop” — 6:30 pm
City Council — 7:30 pm
- Mon. Mar. 5**
City Council “workshop” — 6:30 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 8**
City Council “workshop” — 6:30 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Blaine Historical Soc. — 6:30 pm
Blaine Arts Council — 6:30 pm
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 15**
City Council — 7:30 pm
- Tues. Mar. 20**
Natural Resource Conserv. Bd — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 27**
Park Board — 7 pm

Centerville

Centerville City Hall
1880 Main St
Centerville, MN 55038
Ph: 651-429-3232
centervillemn.com

- Wed. Mar. 14 & 28**
City Council — 6:30 pm
- Tues. Apr. 3**
Planning & Zoning Comm. — 6:30 pm
- Wed. Apr. 4**
Parks & Rec Cmte — 6:30 pm

Circle Pines

Circle Pines City Hall
200 Civic Heights Circle
Circle Pines, MN 55014
Ph: 763-784-5898
www.ci.circle-pines.mn.us

- Mon. Mar. 12**
Street Reconstruction Hearing — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13 & 27**
City Council — 7 pm
- Mon. Mar. 19**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 21**
Utilities Comm. — 7 pm
- Tues. Apr. 3**
Park Board — 6:30 pm

Columbia Heights

Columbia Heights City Hall
590 40th Ave NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
Ph: 763-706-3600
www.ci.columbia-heights.mn.us

- Mon. Mar. 5**
Traffic Comm. — 5:30 pm
Economic Developmt Authority — 6:30 pm
EDA/City Council “work session” — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 6**
HRA Special Meeting — 6:30 pm
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 7**
Library Board — 7 pm, Library
- Mon. Mar. 12 & 26**
City Council — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 28**
Parks & Rec. — 5:30 pm, Murzyn Hall

Columbus

Columbus City Hall
16319 Kettle River Blvd.
Columbus, MN 55025
Ph: 651-464-3120
www.ci.columbus.mn.us

- Wed. Mar. 7 & 21**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 14**
EDAB — 5 pm
Economic Devlpmnt Authority — 6 pm
City Council — 7 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 15**
Park Board — 6:30 pm
- Wed. Mar. 28**
City Council — 7 pm

Coon Rapids

Coon Rapids City Hall
11155 Robinson Dr.
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Ph: 763-755-2880
www.coonrapidsmn.gov

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
Bd of Adjustment & Appeals — 6:30 pm
- Tues. Mar. 6 & 20**
City Council — 7 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 15**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm

East Bethel

East Bethel City Hall
2241 - 221st Avenue NE
East Bethel, MN 55011
Ph: 763-367-7840
eastbethel.govoffice.com

- Wed. Mar. 7 & 21**
City Council — 7:30 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Road Commission — 6:30 pm
- Wed. Mar. 14**
Park Commission — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 27**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 28**
Econ. Develop. Auth. — 6:30 pm

Fridley

Fridley City Hall
6431 University Ave NE
Fridley, MN 55432
Ph: 763-571-3450
www.ci.fridley.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
HRA — 7 pm
- Mon. Mar. 5**
Charter Comm. — 7 pm
Parks & Rec. Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 7**
Appeals Comm. — 7 pm
- Mon. Mar. 12**
City Council — 7 pm pre-agenda; 7:30 pm meeting
- Tues. Mar. 13**
Environmental Quality & Energy Comm. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 21**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Mon. Mar. 26**
City Council — 7 pm pre-agenda; 7:30 pm meeting

Ham Lake

Ham Lake City Hall
15544 Central Ave NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304
Ph: 763-434-9555
www.ci.ham-lake.mn.us
Hours: M-Th 7 AM - 4:30 PM
Fri: 7 AM-12 NOON

- Mon. Mar. 5**
Public Hearing - CUP - 1328 McKay Dr., NE — 5:30 pm
City Council — 6 pm
- Mon. Mar. 12 & 26**
Planning Comm. — 6 pm
- Mon. Mar. 19**
City Council — 6 pm
- Wed. Mar. 21**
Park & Tree Comm. — 6 pm
- Wed. Mar. 28**
Charter Comm. — 6 pm

Hilltop

Hilltop City Hall
4555 Jackson St. NE
Hilltop, MN 55421
Ph: 763-571-2023

City Council — 1st & 3rd Mon., 7 pm

Lexington

- Lexington City Hall
9180 Lexington Av
Lexington, MN 55014
Ph: 763-784-2792
www.ci.lexington.mn.us
- Thurs. Mar. 1 & 15**
City Council — 7 pm (workshop after the Mar. 15 meeting)
- Mon. Mar. 5**
Park Board — 6:30 pm
- Wed. Mar. 7**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm

Lino Lakes

Lino Lakes City Hall
600 Town Center Pkwy
Lino Lakes, MN 55014
Ph: 651-982-2400
www.ci.lino-lakes.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
EDAC — 8 am
- Mon. Mar. 5**
City Council “work session” — 5:30 pm
Park Board — 6:30 pm
- Mon. Mar. 12**
City Council — 6:30 pm
- Wed. Mar. 14**
Planning & Zoning Bd — 6:30 pm
- Mon. Mar. 26**
City Council “work session” & mtg — 5:30 pm
- Wed. Mar. 28**
Environmental Bd — 6:30 pm
- Mon. Apr. 2**
City Council “work session” — 5:30 pm

Linwood Township

Linwood Town Hall
22817 Typo Creek Dr. NE
Linwood, MN 55079
Ph: 651-462-2812
linwoodtownship.org

- Tues. Mar. 6**
Road & Bridge Cmte. — 7 pm
- Wed. Mar. 7**
Fire Department — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13 & 27**
Town Board — 6 pm
- Tues. Mar. 20**
Planning & Zoning Comm. — 7 pm
- Annual Township Meeting**
Tues. Mar. 13, 7 pm, Linwood Senior Center, 22817 Typo Creek Dr

Nowthen

Nowthen City Hall
19800 Nowthen Blvd.
Elk River, MN 55330
Ph: 763-441-1347
www.nowthenmn.govoffice2.com

Call City Hall for information

Oak Grove

Oak Grove City Hall
19900 Nightingale St. NW
Oak Grove, MN 55011
Ph: 763-404-7000
oakgrove.govoffice.com

2nd and last Monday of month
City Council — 7 pm (EDA 8 pm on last Mon)

- 3rd Wednesday**
Parks Comm. — 7 pm
- 3rd Thursday**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm

Ramsey

Ramsey Municipal Center
7550 Sunwood Dr. NW
Ramsey, MN 55303
Ph: 763-427-1410
Fax: 763-427-5543
www.ci.ramsey.mn.us

- Thurs. Mar. 1**
Planning Comm. — 7 pm
- Mon. Mar. 5**
EPB — 6:30 pm
- Tues. Mar. 6**
City Council “work session” to interview commission candidates; followed by HRA “work session” — 6 pm
- Thurs. Mar. 8**
EDA — 7:30 am
Park & Rec. Comm. — 6:30 pm
- Mon. Mar. 12**
Mayor’s Town Hall Mtg — 7 pm
- Tues. Mar. 13**
City Council “Work Session” — 5:30 pm; City Council — 7 pm, followed by HRA mtg

More meeting listings on next page

SOUND OFF!

All letters, columns and announcements welcome!

E-mail them to:
editor@anokacountyrecord.com

NEXT ISSUE: MARCH 15

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Anoka-Hennepin ISD #11

11299 Hanson Blvd NW
Coon Rapids MN 55433
Ph.: (763) 506-1000
anoka.k12.mn.us

Mon. Mar. 5 & Apr. 9
School Board "work session" — 6 pm
Mon. Mar. 26 & Apr. 30
School Board — 6:30 pm

Centennial ISD #12

4707 North Rd
Circle Pines, MN 55014
Ph.: (763) 792-6000
isd12.org

Mon. Mar. 5 & Apr. 2
School Board "work session" — 5:30 pm
Mon. Mar. 19 & Apr. 16
School Board — 6:30 pm

Columbia Heights ISD #13

1440 49th Ave NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
Ph.: (763) 528-4436
columbia.mn.schoolwebpages.com

Tues. Mar. 13 School Bd — 7 pm

Elk River Area ISD #128

815 Hwy 10
Elk River, MN 55330
Ph.: (763) 241-3400

School Board mtgs 2nd and 4th Monday, "generally at" Elk River City Hall, council chambers, 13065 Orono Pkwy. at 7 pm; "Listening Sessions" with public, 2nd Mondays — 6:30 pm

Forest Lake ISD #831

6100 N 210th St
Forest Lake, MN 55025
Ph.: (651) 982-8100
forestlake.k12.mn.us

School Board meetings: held, with a few exceptions, at 7 p.m. on the first Thurs. of each month in the District Office Boardroom, 6100 N. 210th St., Forest Lake. *Listening Sessions:* Residents are invited to speak informally with representatives of the board, prior to regular meetings, at 6 p.m. **Editor's note:* There are often work session meetings on the 3rd Thurs.; check website or call to verify

Fridley ISD #14

6000 W Moore Lake Dr
Fridley, MN 55432
Ph.: (763) 502-5000
fridley.k12.mn.us

School Board mtgs held at Fridley City Hall, 6431 University Ave NE; Work Session — 5:30 pm, Public Comment — 7 pm; Meeting — 7:30 pm
Next meeting: Tues. Mar. 20

St. Francis ISD #15

4115 Ambassador Blvd
St. Francis, MN 55070
Ph.: (763) 753-7040
stfrancis.k12.mn.us

2nd & 4th Mondays 6:30 pm Public comment; School Bd Meeting 7 pm

Spring Lake Park ISD #16

1415 81st Ave NE
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432
Ph.: (763) 786-5570
splkpark.k12.mn.us/

Tues. Mar. 6 — 7 pm
Tues. Mar. 27 — 6:30 pm "work session"

White Bear Lake ISD #624

4855 Bloom Ave
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-5418
Ph.: (651) 407-7501
whitebear.k12.mn.us

School Board mtgs:
Mon. Mar. 12 — 7 pm
Mon. Mar. 26 — 5:30 pm "work session"

916 Intermediate School District

2540 Cty Rd F, White Bear Lake
Board meetings at Bellaire School, District Office Board Room
Ph.: (651) 415-5562
nemetrol.k12.mn.us

Tues. Mar. 6 & Apr. 3 — 6 pm

Meetings listed on this page are subject to change — call ahead to verify

St. Francis

St. Francis City Hall
23340 Cree St. NW
St. Francis, MN 55070
Ph: 763-753-2630
stfrancismn.org

M-Th 7AM-5:30 PM (Closed Fri)
Meetings held at ISD #15 offices
4115 Ambassador Blvd NW

City Council

1st & 3rd Mondays — 6 pm
(3rd Monday meeting moved to Tues. Feb. 21 due to Presidents Day holiday on Feb. 20)

Planning Comm.

3rd Wednesday — 7 pm

Spring Lake Park

Spring Lake Park City Hall
1301 81st Ave NE
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432
Ph: 763-784-6491
www.ci.spring-lake-park.mn.us

City Council

1st & 3rd Mondays — 7 pm

ANOKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1318 McKay Dr NE #300
Ham Lake, MN 55304
Ph.: (763) 434-2030
anokaswcd.org

Tues. Mar. 19 — 5 pm

Tues. Apr. 16 — 5 pm

CITIZENS INVITED TO EMERALD ASH BORER MEETING MAR. 29

There's a 'new' pest threatening Minnesota's ash trees. Emerald Ash Borer, or EAB, is an invasive pest that was inadvertently brought to the states from Asia. EAB attacks all species of ash trees in Minnesota. EAB was discovered in St. Paul in 2009, Minneapolis in 2010 and Shoreview in 2011. This destructive pest is now threatening to move into Anoka County.

The Cities of Ramsey and Andover are jointly offering a free workshop on EAB for residents of the two communities. The workshop will provide basic information about EAB and steps that property owners can take to protect their ash trees.

The workshop will be held on **Thursday, March 29, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.** at Andover City Hall. If you would like to attend, please call Kameron Kytonen, Andover Natural Resources Technician at 763-767-5137 or k.kytonen@andovermn.gov.

CITY OF BLAINE SPECIAL BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Special Board of Review (Board of Appeal and Equalization) for the City of Blaine shall meet on **Monday, April 16, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.**, at Blaine City Hall 10801 Town Square Drive. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and to determine whether corrections need to be made.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, **please contact your assessor's office at 763-323-5400 to discuss your concerns.** If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board shall review the valu-

ation, classification, or both if necessary, and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to the county board of appeal and equalization.

Editor's Note: Appointing members of Blaine's Special Board of Review will take place during the City Council's March 1 meeting. Below is a description of the agenda item in the council meeting packet:

Ordinance No. 93-1333 adopted by the Council on January 20, 1994, established a Special Board of Review and Resolution No. 94-24 adopted by the Council on January 20, 1994 established conditions for a Special Board of Review. The ordinance and the resolution provided for the appointment of five members with the Chair appointed by the Mayor.

Resolution No. 94-24 further provided that Board members' terms will expire twenty (20) days from the Special Board of Review's adjournment. **The 2012 Special Board of Review will convene Monday, April 16, 2012 at 7 p.m. in the Blaine City Council Chambers.** In addition, pursuant to Resolution No. 94-24, **a workshop is scheduled for Monday, March 19, 2012 at 7 p.m. with the appointed Board members, the Anoka County Assessor's office and City Council** to review current assessment trends and any changes in property tax laws. The 2011 board members were sent a letter of interest in December 2011 and all five 2011 Special Board of Review members expressed an interest in serving again on the 2012 Special Board of Review.

Editor's Note: the five members are Jane Daniels, Chair, retired realtor; Randi Erickson, Vice Chair, realtor; Laurie Pekarik, retired certified appraiser; Lynda M. Riley, realtor, and Gary A. Smith, broker and realtor.

In the past Council has requested a report from the appointed Chair on the actions taken at the Special Board of Review meeting. Staff will schedule the report presentation for a Council meeting in May or as soon thereafter as possible.

SLP-BLAINE-MV FIRE DEPT. AWARDED \$144,400 FEMA FIRE PREVENTION GRANT

The Spring Lake Park – Blaine – Mounds View Fire Department will receive a \$144,000 fire prevention grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program. The grant process is competitive in nature and uses a

PEER Review process to identify finalists. This is the second fire prevention grant awarded to the department in the past ten years.

The current grant is one of the largest fire prevention grants awarded to a Minnesota fire department. The grant submission identified several areas where additional focus is needed.

First amongst these is augmenting the Home Safety Survey — a free safety inspection program of homes to identify safety and fire hazards. Grant funds will be used to develop web technology specific to the survey, and marketing and promotional materials for the survey program.

Other items funded by the grant include: upgrades to the smoke and carbon monoxide alarm program, development of a fire prevention program manual, translation of printed media and video productions into other languages, development of kitchen fire prevention education materials, a juvenile fire play intervention program, and information promoting the use flameless candles.

Fire Chief Nyle Zikmund cited a single fire death in the last 30 years and a 28% reduction in fire calls, when adjusted for population growth, over the last decade as proof of the effectiveness of fire education programs.

Prevention Chief Connie Forster added, "The three City Councils and the Fire Board have been highly supportive of fire prevention in our communities, but simply could never provide this type of funding, especially in the current economic climate. The cornerstone of the grant request is the Home Safety Survey, which is the single most important prevention program we have. More than 75% of all fire deaths occur in the home, the place people assume they are the safest. We must reach out to everyone with this free educational survey."

The department has 12 months to implement the grant program and is subject to a federal audit at any time.

BLAINE CITY COUNCIL MAKES COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments were made during the Blaine City Council's Feb. 16 meeting:

Natural Resource Conservation Board: Gene Rafferty (Dist 1), Grace Schunk (Dist 2), Kimberly Gunter (Dist 3); Park Advisory Board: Jeffrey Bird (Dist 2), Jon Langenfeld (Dist 3); Planning Commission: Monica Radtke (Dist 1), Alan Goracke (Dist 2), Janice Bergstrom (Dist 3), Joe Oelette (At Large, Chair).

NORTH SUBURBAN HOME IMPROVEMENT SHOW
SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2012
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM • FREE ADMISSION
EXHIBITORS WANTED!



www.NorthSuburbanHomeShow.org

Andover YMCA Community Center
15200 Hanson Blvd. NW • Andover, MN

100+ Home Improvement Exhibitors, Kids Workshop and More!

Interested exhibitors visit www.NorthSuburbanHomeShow.org or contact Cindy at (763) 767-5100.

The North Suburban Home Improvement Show is sponsored by the cities of Andover, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Ramsey and the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce.