

City of Hastings RIVERTOWN NEWS

101 Fourth Street East, Hastings, MN 55033-1955

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www.ci.hastings.mn.us

Spring 2012

COMMUNICATION

We Are Committed to Communication: We value and promote participation and interactions with citizens and staff. We will seek to assure timely and open communication while providing background and context for the decisions that are made.

CITY FOCUSES ON SERVICE DELIVERY INNOVATIONS IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

As 2011 came to an end, there was considerable news outlining elements of the 2012 City Budget that, in some cases were relatively unpleasant from a number of perspectives. Whether it was employee layoffs or changes in State laws impacting property taxes, reduction in work hours for certain City employees or property tax increases; the news was not necessarily encouraging. However, despite the difficult times, elements of positivity abound within the 2012 Budget.

Staffing Creativity

The City has successfully transitioned Police Department customer service contacts to City Hall. This change allows citizens to go directly to City Hall for all services, including law enforcement needs.

While unable to continue to fund for a paid staff person in the City's historic [Pioneer Room](#), the City is excited that curator Cindy Smith and others are graciously supporting this function on a part-time volunteer basis. Come and visit us Mondays and Wednesdays!

A New Way of Doing Business

While preparing 2012 budget requests, departments were expected to review existing operations to suggest where efficiencies could be enhanced. Through the innovative efforts of our Public Works Staff, the 2012 Budget includes a new system to monitor salt usage and location, as well as travel paths and speed of plows; this will in turn allow for long term budget savings and more environmentally sensitive spreading of salt on the streets. The City will also achieve a secondary goal by improving efficiency on plow routes.

The City continues to expand its online presence and functionality. In 2012, certain online licensing and permitting will debut in an effort to be more efficient. We also continue to use multiple modes ([website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), etc.) to enhance our communication, and are excited to unveil a new electronic newsletter this year to complement the mailed newsletter.

Efficiency is the Name of the Game

- With over 100 miles of roads to maintain, it is important to strategically care for this infrastructure. The City was able to include additional funding in the 2012 Budget, allowing for increased seal coating efforts this summer.
- Much needed repairs near Malcom Avenue will be completed in 2012 which will correct an issue with standing water and mud.
- We understand the value of well maintained recreational opportunities, and the City is planning improvements to the Roadside Park Tennis Courts as well as playground equipment replacement at Crestview Park. Individual parks will also be improved, including fence replacements at Vet's Park and rubber flooring at the Civic Arena.

Volunteer for Your Community!

We, the City, recognize the reality of continuing financial constraints, and are currently developing additional volunteer opportunities. Help support the great work within our community through rewarding volunteering experiences.

CORE Values: At the core of what we do

COMMUNICATION

Respect for Resources

Service

ENTHUSIASM

These four words are more than just words; they are the values of our organization. The City Council and City Staff work diligently to balance the needs of residents and businesses with the service demands on our community. As an organization, we are continually striving to be more efficient, effective, transparent, and responsive. The employees of the City are professionals committed to providing high quality services. I welcome your feedback on how we are meeting these goals.

David M. Osberg,
City Administrator
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dosberg@ci.hastings.mn.us

Spring Clean-Up

Due to efforts to reduce operating costs and trim the 2012 City budget, there will be **NO Spring Clean-Up event this year** for City of Hastings residents or hazardous waste drop off for Dakota County residents.

Look for next year's event to be held on April 27, 2013.



Do You Have items

you were planning on bringing to Clean-up Day? Here are other low-cost and convenient ways to get rid of things. Recycling of most household items through curbside pick up by Waste Management will still be your best option. You can go to [Waste Management's website](#) to find out what can be put into trash containers, recycling containers, and what yard waste can be picked up through curbside service or dropped off in person at their location in the Hastings Industrial Park.

Have Hazardous Waste to Dispose of That Can't be Thrown Away or Recycled?

Household hazardous waste items not accepted by Waste Management can be taken to The [Recycling Zone](#) at 3365 Dodd Road in Eagan. Check out The [Recycling Zone website](#) to find out what type of materials are accepted, to get their recycling hours, and to get directions to their location. The Recycling Zone also has an Aluminum Can Buy-Back area. Bring over your empty aluminum cans to redeem at current prices!



Redistricting 2012

As a result of the 2010 census, the Charter Commission and City Council recently adopted a new ward/precinct map. Cities are required to review boundaries and make changes to try to balance the population among wards and precincts.

These new boundaries will be in effect for this year's election, and residents will be notified by postcard in July of their ward, precinct, and polling location.

Check out our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) for [Election](#) information, including where to vote, important dates, and how to get involved!

HASTINGS KITE DAY

Regina Medical Center and the Hastings Parks & Recreation will be hosting **Hastings Kite Day** at Veterans Athletic Complex on May 5th from 10am-12pm. This is a great opportunity for families, neighbors, and friends to get outside and interact in the simple joys of recreation. **The event is free but preregistration is required** due to the limited amount of kites available. Visit our [website](#) for more information and join us as we "Fly for Fitness"!

HYDRANT FLUSHING

City crews will be flushing fire hydrants throughout the community starting in mid-April. When hydrants are flushed, turbulence is created within the water mains which removes sediments in the water system. At the same time, crews can make sure the fire hydrant in your neighborhood is in good operating condition.

Though flushing may occasionally discolor the water for a few minutes, it is safe to drink. Residents should check for signs of discoloration before washing clothes. If the water is discolored when you turn on your tap, just run cold water until it is clear. If stains from the water appear on laundered clothes, keep the clothes wet. Washing the clothes again usually will remove any discoloration. You can also contact Public Works at 480-6185 and they will provide you with a product that you can use to rewash your clothes and remove the discoloration.



Wetland Monitoring Volunteers Needed

Dakota County is seeking people to help monitor wetlands through the [Wetland Health Evaluation Program \(WHEP\)](#). Volunteers receive training in field methods, insect collection and identification, and plant survey techniques. Under the direction of a team leader, volunteers commit between 10-30 hours between May and August. For more information on volunteering, visit www.mnwhep.org or call the Dakota County Water Resources at 952-891-7000.

HELP REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BEING A CRIME VICTIM

*"It will never happen to me."
"I'll only be a minute."
"I'll leave it unlocked so they don't break the window."
"There are a lot of people around, it won't happen here."
"No one would want my stuff."*

Who among us hasn't had these thoughts? However, in the time it took to read this, practiced thieves could have taken a purse, wallet, briefcase, or gym bag from a car. The total number of these thefts are growing across the nation and thieves are becoming far more brazen. Vehicles that are parked in a well lit or active areas may reduce some risk of theft, but it won't totally eliminate it.

Beyond the typical items like GPS units and iPods, thieves seek credit cards and checks, which then provide them a second opportunity for criminal activity through check and credit card fraud.

The following steps can to help reduce your risks:

- Never leave valuables, such as wallets, purses, computers, cell phones or jewelry in plain view.
- Lock your doors and roll the windows up tight.
- Valuables in the trunk are at risk too. If you must put valuables in the trunk, place them there **before** arriving at your parking destination.
- Watch for suspicious acting people loitering or lurking in the area of parked vehicles. Call 911 and

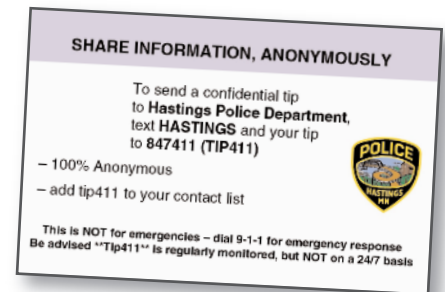
describe the person **in detail**:

- o Gender, race, height, weight, clothing, age, etc.
- o License number (if available) or mode of transportation.
- o Exact location.
- Park in a well lit area if you expect to return to your car after dark.
- Keep a record of all your credit card numbers. Write down the serial numbers, makes and models of your personal property.

What to Do If It Happens to You
Call 911 immediately if property is stolen from your car. If possible, stay where you were parked. Prepare a list of what was taken. The police will further advise you.

Remember: Immediately cancel all credit card and bank accounts if credit cards or checks are stolen.

Please share the above tips with family, friends, coworkers and neighbors. Always report suspicious activity by calling 911!



Neighborhood Street Reconstruction Project

The 2012 neighborhood street reconstruction project will include most streets between Highway 61 and Pine Street, north of 18th Street and south of 15th Street. Detailed information about the neighborhood street reconstruction project that was approved by the City Council on Monday, March 5th can be found on the [City's web site](#) (under [PublicWorks/PWEngCurrentProjects.html](#)).

Construction could begin as soon as mid-May, and should be substantially completed by the end of August.

Other Possible 2012 Projects:
The Engineering Department is also busy working on designs for additional 2012 projects that could include:

- A trail connection along County Road 47;
- A downtown commuter parking lot near the train depot;
- Reconstructing 18th Street/Highway 291 from east of the Vermillion River bridge to 10th Street.

Future Plans:

- Reconstructing 18th Street between Highway 61 and the bridge is proposed for 2013.



We recognize the importance of providing timely, courteous and respectful service to the public and to one another. We will seek to serve the public and other employees in a constructive, creative and practical manner

SERVICE SERVICE SERVICE SERVICE SERVICE

Parks & Recreation Registration Day is April 2!



On Monday, April 2nd, register online for Swim Lessons, Safety Camp, Football & Lacrosse Camps, and more.

Don't Forget Yourself! Check out the website for adult athletics like softball,

kickball, and a **new** yard game league. If you are unable to register online, call today and register over the phone with a credit card, 480-6175 or stop by the Parks & Recreation Department located at 920 West 10th Street.

SKIP THE LINES!

Purchase your HFAC season passes and punch cards now at the Hastings Parks & Recreation Department or download forms from our website and mail it in with payment.



2012 Budget Summary Now Available Online

The 2012 Budget was adopted by City council on December 19, 2011. A brief summary of the adopted budget is available online at www.ci.hastings.mn.us under Finance/Budget. A printed version of the budget book can also be found at the Pleasant Hill Library.

If you have any questions regarding the 2012 Budget, please feel free to contact City Administrator, Dave Osberg or Finance Director, Charlene Stark at 480-2350.

By law, the City must have a budget summary available for citizen review. The document available on the City's website meets this requirement.

Pavement Management

Is your street scheduled to be seal coated or crack sealed this year? **Find out by checking the project maps**, on www.ci.hastings.mn.us and click on Public Works/ Engineering Dept page under Construction Updates.

LAWN MOWING

As the lawn mowing season approaches, keep in mind fertilizer and/or freshly mowed lawn clippings should **not** be left behind in the street. Fertilizer and clippings can travel through storm sewers to rivers and lakes where they can increase algae growth and reduce oxygen available to fish and other aquatic life.

Shifting from Pier Work to Main Span Assembly

Lots of hard work – and a mild winter – mean that crews were able to get a substantial amount of work done on the river piers for the new Hastings Bridge. The project is now focused on readying the two piers that will become the connecting points for the main span.

Once the materials start to arrive, crews will start assembly of the main span in the staging area near the Flint Hills Nature Preserve on Lock and Dam Road. Work on the roadways leading up to the new bridge will also continue.

As bridge construction continues, keep in mind:

- Two lanes of traffic will remain open across the river.
- The existing bridge will not be closed and deconstructed until AFTER traffic can be switched to the new bridge.
- All downtown businesses remain fully accessible.
- Expanded downtown parking on Sibley Street and the east ramp remains in place.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Do you have a fire extinguisher? Is your fire extinguisher accessible? Has your fire extinguisher been maintained so it's ready for use?

These are questions that you may not have given much thought to, but in the event that you need to use one, it's important for it to be accessible and properly maintained.

Tips: Fire extinguishers should be placed near an exit path; they should not be stored near the stove or other fire risk areas. Storing fire extinguishers near an exit allows you to keep your distance from flames, heat, and smoke. This also keeps your exit route accessible and clear if you are unable to extinguish the fire.

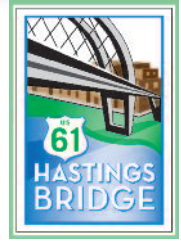
There are a few things you will need to do first if you have to use an extinguisher. First, get everyone out immediately and have someone call 911. This allows firefighters to get to your home as quickly as possible, which will hopefully lessen the fire damage to your home.

Second, attempt to extinguish the fire by using the **P.A.S.S.** technique with your fire extinguisher. **P**ull the pin, **A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire, **S**queeze the handle, and **S**weep the nozzle across the base of the flame.



Remember to maintain your extinguishers. You should check gauges, hoses, and nozzles for debris or signs of damage, and shake dry chemical extinguishers monthly to keep powder from settling or packing. Immediately replace or service any extinguisher with any signs of damage or wear.

Fire extinguisher will only do you good if it has been maintained and if you know **how** to use it!



To sign up for automatic weekly construction updates, see photos and view the construction webcam, visit www.dot.state.mn.us/hastingsbridge.

If you have any questions, please call the Project Hotline at 651-775-5244 or send an email to hastingsbridge.dot@state.mn.us

City of Hastings

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Engineering: 480-2334
Fire Business Office: 480-6150
Hastings Aquatic Center: 480-2385
Parks & Recreation: 480-6175
Public Works: 480-6185
Utility Billing: 480-2350

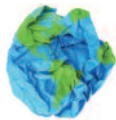


CITY OF HASTINGS

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Earth Day



Join us on Saturday, May 5th for a Parks & Trails Clean-up! The event will start at 9:00am at Lake Rebecca Park. Register your family, community group, business, or just yourself and come help keep Hastings beautiful! To register, call 480-6175 or visit our [website](#).

ARBOR DAY

The City of Hastings will be celebrating Arbor Day this year on April 27 at 1:00pm by planting trees at Tuttle Park. If you would like to help, please contact our City Forester, Paul Mahoney, at 480-6177 or at pmahoney@ci.hastings.mn.us *Hope to see you there!*



CITY'S FINANCIAL REPORTING CONTINUES TO EXCEL

As stewards of public dollars, the City of Hastings is aware of the importance of accurate and complete financial record keeping. Annual audits are conducted as required by state law, and City policy requires that a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) for audit work be done at least every six years. Following this policy, a new auditor has been selected for budget years 2011-2013. This change results in a \$12,000 savings for the 2012 budget.

Audits are important to ensure that the City's financial record keeping is accurate and complete. Part of the audit process are internal policy recommendations and the preparation of a report known as a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The

City has been the recipient of the Certificate of Achievement from the Government Finance Officers Association for our annual CAFR for the last 15 years. This award recognizes the completeness of the City's financial reporting processes.

Additionally, positive audits can impact the City's bond rating, which in turn have a direct result on the interest rates charged for debt for certain City projects, such as road construction. The City currently holds a strong AA rating, which was upgraded a few years ago in recognition of the City's sound financial status. City budget information is available on our [website](#).

FREE STUFF AT PUBLIC WORKS

Wood Chips – there's a bin full of wood chips at the Cal Ruedy Public Works Facility, 1225 Progress Drive, that is free for the taking – first come/first served. Public Works crews typically trim boulevard trees in the winter between snowfall events. Last season's heavy snowfall prevented crews from doing too much trimming at all, but they are making up for it this year! We have several piles of wood chips stockpiled in a yard area come help yourself.

Compost – beginning in May, Public Works will also have a bin full of compost available for residents. Ever wonder what Public Works does with all of the leaves we sweep up from the streets each fall? They are allowed to naturally degrade at the closed landfill on Glendale Road, and every two or three years, the material is screened to remove litter and sticks, with the resulting compost made available for residents' use.

Reminder: While the wood chips and compost is free for the taking, Public Works crews will not be available to load the material into your pickup truck or trailer.

We are committed to protect and promote the unique characteristics of our community, including its history and scenic beauty. We will seek to infuse enthusiasm and enjoyment into our daily interactions with citizens, visitors and other employees.

