



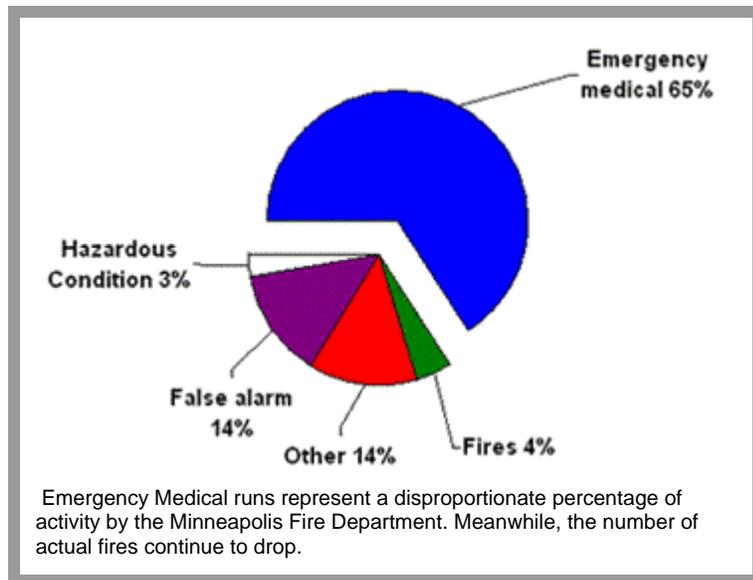
# 9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

September 18, 2009

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## Soaring healthcare costs affect city budget



New estimates by the City of Minneapolis finance department shows that if employee health care costs continue to rise at their current rate, health care will surpass salaries as the city's biggest expense by 2021.

In the past year, health and dental insurance expenditures increased from \$56 million to \$62 million. Health insurance costs are now 16 percent of the city budget.

"The need for national health care reform hits Minneapolis residents on multiple levels," Council Member Gary Schiff said. "In order to fully fund basic city services we need to lessen the strain of health care costs. As the number of uninsured Americans rise, so do the number of emergency medical calls that fire departments are asked to respond to. We can't afford to cover the gaps in our national health care system with regressive property taxes."

An analysis of 911 calls show Minneapolis firefighters are increasingly serving as primary care providers. In 2008 emergency medical calls rose to nearly 22,500 incidents, totaling 65% of all calls. Meanwhile, actual fires continue to drop, to less than 1,500 calls or 4%.

[The New York Times](#) reports “fire departments went on about 15.8 million medical calls in 2008, up from about 5 million in 1980, a 213 percent increase.” The article also states that, “In many big cities, the problem is compounded by budget shortfalls that have led to the elimination or proposed elimination of 6,000 firefighter jobs in the past year, or about 2 percent of all firefighters, according to the [International Association of Fire Fighters](#).”

## **Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> Breakfast with Gary: Shattered Hearts**

In 2008, The FBI identified Minneapolis as one of thirteen U.S. cities with high levels of commercial sexual exploitation of juveniles. While this is an alarming distinction, even more shocking is the 2007 Human Trafficking Task Force estimate that at least 345 American Indian women and girls had been sexually trafficked in a three-year period, a rate almost double to that of other ethnicities.



A 2007 report to the Minnesota Legislature estimated at least 345 American Indian women and girls had been sexually trafficked in a three year period.

Suzanne Koeplinger, Executive Director of the [Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center](#) will be speaking about this alarming trend. She will share [new information](#) that provides some insight into the disproportionate number of Native American women in prostitution. Suzanne Tibbets Young from the Division of Indian Work will also share her perspective from her organization's work in the community, reaching out to young at risk Native women.

*Breakfast with Gary* is a monthly meeting for held from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. the final Friday of the month at [Mercado Central](#), 1515 East Lake Street. \$5 buys breakfast.

## **Preserving history at the city's oldest**

## cemetery



The fence at Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery in need of restoration has over 3,500 pickets.

[Friends of the Cemetery is raising funds](#)

to preserve the city's oldest cemetery. Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery was established in 1853, and in 1928 had a decorative

fence erected to pay tribute to the Minnesota pioneers and soldiers buried within its grounds. This fence is now eroded due to pollution, vandalism, and natural aging. To help restore the nearly 2,000 foot long fence, individuals or organizations can [Adopt-a-Picket](#) for \$30, or even adopt entire sections of the fence.

This is the only cemetery in the state listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the final resting place for over 21,000 people. This includes workers who died in [mill explosions](#), over 150 [Civil War Veterans](#), and more than [10,000 children](#). "South Minneapolis has lost too many of its original buildings through demolition and lack of investment," said City Council Member Gary Schiff. "I think now's a great opportunity to say thank you to the pioneers who made this state great." The restoration will cost approximately \$750,000. The city has agreed to pay \$350,000 through a combination of bond funds and grant money.

## KFAI hosts mortgage and foreclosure forum

On Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> KFAI Radio will hold a housing and mortgage foreclosure forum, [Facing Challenges and Creating Solutions](#). The 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. event in Sabathani Community Center's banquet room at 310 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street will focus on the housing and mortgage foreclosure crisis in the Twin Cities. The forum will include interactive group discussion, information from community organizations working on solutions to the housing and mortgage foreclosure crisis, and an opportunity to create action plans toward solutions.

Guest speakers include Marcus Mays of ACORN, Richard Amos from St. Stephen's Human Services, and Cheryl Peterson from

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity. This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments and lunch will be served. KFAI broadcasts on 90.3 FM in Minneapolis and 106.7 FM in Saint Paul.

## Attend workshop for greener homes and win

[Longfellow Community Council](#) is offering [two free workshops](#) in September for residents to learn how to make their home more sustainable. From decreasing energy bills to environmentally friendly home remodeling, expert presenters will share information on how to install renewable energy sources, winterize homes, low cost energy efficiency strategies, green remodeling, and options for financing such home improvement projects. A range of exhibitors will also



Residents can attend a workshop this month to learn how to make their home more environmentally friendly.

be on hand to round out the event. Related workshops will be offered in the spring, with a focus on the yard and garden.

Attendees will be eligible to receive prizes that will help reduce energy costs such as free in-home energy consultations, programmable thermostats, low-flow showerheads and window kits. Light refreshments will be provided. The Longfellow Sustainable Homes Workshops will be held on Thursday, September 24 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. or on Saturday, September 26, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Both workshops will be held at Sanford Middle School, located at 3524 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. The Sustainable Homes Workshops are presented by the Longfellow Community Council. For more information [email](#) or call Kim Jakus at 612.722.4529 ext. 5.

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