



# 9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

September 12, 2008

## City to sort through RNC complaints

Mayor Rybak and Chief Tim Dolan announced Thursday that the Minneapolis Police Department will conduct a review into Republican National Convention events, and report to the City Council's Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee by the end of October. The report will focus on the major incidents that occurred in Minneapolis including the Rage against the Machine Concert as well as overall downtown security and court costs. The City Attorney's office will review the process used for citations and arrests in Minneapolis and may make recommendations for policy changes.



The arrest of journalist Amy Goodman and two of her producers drew national attention to questionable treatment of the press during RNC protests. Click on the image above to see the video.

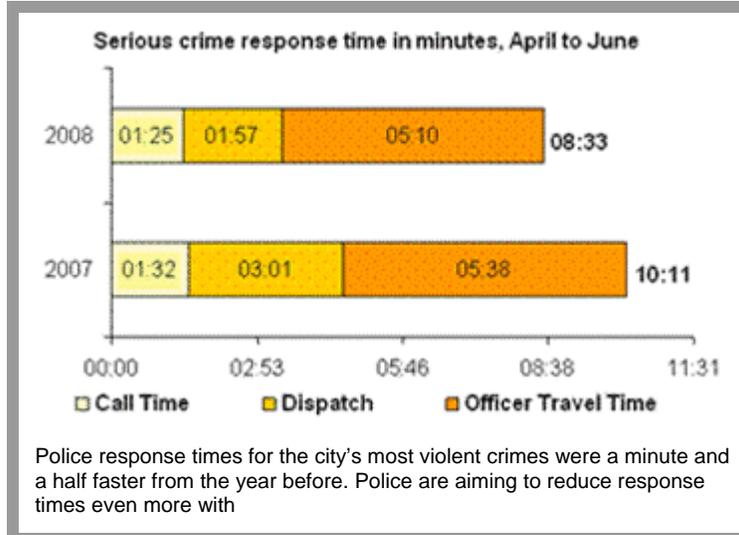
A second report, reviewing media and citizen complaints regarding mass arrests will be conducted by February of 2009 by the Minneapolis Police Department and the Civil Rights Department.

Last week, Council Members Gary Schiff and Cam Gordon, Second Ward, [called for an investigation](#) into the events surrounding treatment of the media and other security issues during the RNC. Schiff, who sits on the Council's public safety committee, said he supports the city review, but said he hoped a review of federal activity by the Department of Homeland Security would also be included.

Schiff echoed concerns by Amnesty International and the [Minnesota Civil Liberties Union](#) that several journalists covering the RNC were arbitrarily arrested while filming and reporting on the demonstrations. They include Democracy Now host Amy Goodman, and two of the program's producers. A photographer for the Associated Press and other journalists were also arrested while covering the demonstrations. According to a [recent statement by Amnesty International](#) "some of the police actions appear to have breached United Nations standards on the use of force by law enforcement officials".

Council Members Schiff and Gordon were the [dissenting votes](#) on a November 2007 Council action to enter into a contract with the Republican National Committee. The contract established an incident command structure during the RNC that put some Minneapolis Police officers under the chain of command of Department of Homeland Security. Both Council Members took issue with loss of local control over MPD staff, and stated that "while violence and property damage by protesters or others should not be tolerated we also know that safety should not be used as an excuse to limit a free press or stifle free speech."

## Police response times trending down



The Minneapolis Police Department has released new numbers showing faster response times for emergency calls. In the Spring of 2007, the average response time to an emergency call was 10 minutes and 11 seconds. In 2008 the response time during the same period dropped to 8 minutes and 33 seconds.

The faster response times is credited to

fixes to the city's new computer aided dispatch system. "Since the new system was implemented at the beginning of 2008 there has been a decrease in both the time it takes for a call to be dispatched to an officer and the time it takes the squad to reach the scene," John Dejung, director of emergency communications said.

Council Member Schiff also attributed better response times to increased staffing as well as other technology investments. "The city has increased staffing in the police department and invested in new cameras, global information system units in every squad car and gun shot detection equipment. "Response times are headed in the right direction, but we aren't where we want to be yet. We will continue to make smart investments in technology for greater citizen safety."

Response times for serious crimes so far in 2008 are faster than anytime since 2004. For more crime statistics and reports, [click here](#).

## Breakfast with Gary: Ending animal shelter killing

Over five million unwanted cats and dogs are killed in shelters across the United States every year, including thousands in Minnesota. Join Council Member Gary Schiff on Friday, September 26th to talk about making Minneapolis more animal friendly by [following the lead of San Francisco](#) and other cities, by instituting high volume, low cost spay and neuter programs and other no kill policies.

Guest speakers include Minneapolis Animal Control Director Dan Niziolek, [Underdog Rescue](#) Director Shannon McKenzie and Mike Frey from [Animal Ark](#). To learn more about no kill policies, [click here](#).



The largest no-kill shelter in the Twin Cities, Animal Ark serves more than a thousand pets each year. Click on the photo to see pets up for adoption.

Breakfast with Gary takes place from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. the final Friday of every month at Mercado Central, 1515 East Lake St. \$5 buys breakfast.

## Save a tree, get utility bills through e-mail

Minneapolis residents and businesses can help reduce costs and help the environment by signing up for utility mails via email. Visit [the utility billing website](#) or fill out the form on back of a utility bill and mail it in. Once set up, residents choosing this option will no longer receive a bill in the mail but instead will get an e-mail each month with instructions on how to view and pay utility bills online.

The City also continues to encourage utility customers to pay their utility bills electronically. Electronic payment has been available to Minneapolis utility customers for more than ten years, yet only 16 percent of utility customers pay electronically. For

more information or to sign up, [click here](#).

According to city finance director Pat Born, mailing 100,000 utility bills every month costs more than half a million dollars in postage. If all Minneapolis utility customers signed up for electronic billing, each year the city would save the paper made from 44 tons of wood (or the equivalent of 302 trees), 600 BTUs of energy (enough to power seven homes) and keep 91,040 lbs of greenhouse gases (the equivalent of exhaust from about eight cars) out of the atmosphere. For more information about your utility bill call 311 or the utility billing office at 612-673-1114.

## Suzanne Murphy joins Ninth Ward office



Experienced community and union organizer Suzanne Murphy is the newest member of the Ninth Ward staff. She comes to City Hall from Progressive Majority, where she helped to train and elect progressive local candidates in swing districts.

“Suzanne brings years of experience in non-profits, community organizing and the arts,” Council Member Schiff said. “I’m thrilled she is joining Heidi Quezada as a member of the Ninth Ward office,” Council Member Schiff said.

Murphy was an organizer for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride in 2003, part of a national mobilization for the rights of immigrants. She is a graduate of the Organizing Apprenticeship Project and has worked as development director of a number of non-profits including Progressive Minnesota.

“There are so many great things going on in the Ninth Ward, with growing immigrant businesses and transportation alternatives. It’s exciting to be around that energy and such a strong sense of community among the residents,” Murphy said.

At Progressive Minnesota, Murphy also participated in union organizing, helping negotiate a union contract and serving as steward of her Steelworkers local. Suzanne earned her B.A. in studio art from Lawrence University in 1999 and worked as Assistant Director of Soo Visual Arts Center in Uptown before being lured back into politics. She is a proud member of the Grants Committee of the Social Change Fund at Headwaters Foundation.

