



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

October 10, 2008

Global credit crisis already affecting Minneapolis



For more information about the city's finances, click [here](#).

The global financial crisis is already affecting the City of Minneapolis' finances, but the effects so far are within budgeted estimates. "The concern will come if these trends continue, as well as the long term impacts of a slower economy and more people out of work," Council Member Gary Schiff said.

About twenty percent or \$220 million of Minneapolis' bonds are variable rate bonds, affected by weekly swings of the bond market. According to Chief Financial Officer

Pat Born, the interest rate at the end of September was 7.9%, up from 1.6% two weeks prior. That spike in rates cost the city \$220,000. Because the city had budgeted for an average of 5% in interest payments for all of 2008, the rate increase won't result in layoffs or budget reallocations.

As of last week, interest rates dropped slightly. Born explained that interest rates would have to stay near 8% for the rest of the year for there to be a significant effect on the city budget. "It's a signal that there are problems in the market that we have to look out for," Born said. "If we thought that this would persist, then we would issue fixed rate bonds to replace the variable rate bonds. It's good we don't have a \$100 million bond to issue this week because it hasn't been a good week to be in the bond market. Our next bond issue is planned for mid-November, and it could be delayed if necessary."

Two other companies in the news this month are being watched by city finance staff. The city's cash reserves investments include \$800,000 in short-term commercial paper notes from Merrill Lynch and AIG. Despite the problems of these financial service giants, the notes are guaranteed by banks and are expected to be paid back on schedule in November.

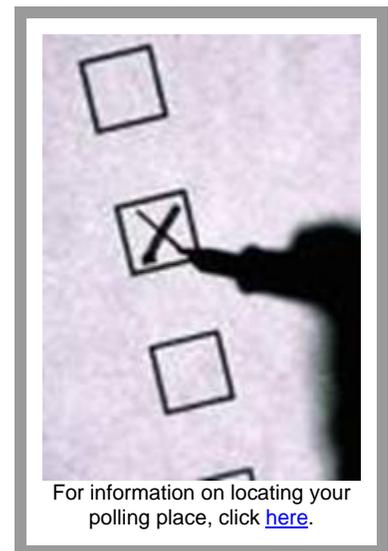
The city's exposure to the stock market is limited to the police and fire pension funds. Under State of Minnesota law, the City of Minneapolis is required to make up any loss in value of those investments. "It's likely if present trends continue that our contributions will be more than we thought in 2009," Born said.

Schools, environment and art on November 4 ballot

Three ballot questions will appear before Minneapolis voters this year, overshadowed by the high profile candidate races.

In Minneapolis, residents will vote on whether or not to approve a property tax increases to provide funding for the Minneapolis Public Schools. In addition, voters in Minneapolis will be asked their opinion on a new districting proposal for School Board representation. Voters from the entire state of Minnesota are voting on an amendment to dedicate funding for clean water, game and wildlife habitat, arts and parks and trails.

The Minneapolis Public Schools [2008 Strong Schools Strong City referendum](#) would raise \$60 million annually for eight years for education, textbooks and technology. Half of the referendum dollars will go to continue the district's commitment to managing class size. If the referendum passes, the average Minneapolis household will pay an additional \$17 a month in property taxes.



For information on locating your polling place, click [here](#).

Another Minneapolis Public School ballot questions asks voters to change the School Board from an entirely at-large board to six members elected by district and three members elected at-large. If the voters approve the measure, the six districts will

coincide with the six Park Board districts.

All voters in Minnesota will decide the future of the [Clean Water, Land and Legacy](#) constitutional amendment. The amendment will increase the sales tax by three-eighths of one percent through 2034. Funds will be dedicated to drinking water resources, wetlands, prairie and forest habitat, as well as arts, cultural heritage and trails.

Historic hydropower riverfront tour

E-news Exclusive



The Water Power Park focuses on the Mississippi River's past as an industrial power source and provides stunning close-ups of St. Anthony Falls.

As the nation looks to develop more renewable energy sources, [hydropower](#) remains the most common example, with a long history of use on the Minneapolis riverfront.

Ninth Ward E-News readers can have an exclusive peek at this oldest of green technologies. The first 20 residents who [RSVP](#) will get a one hour guided tour of the Minneapolis Water Power Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The tour will take place on Wednesday, October 15 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The site has provided electricity for over 120 years, and even powered the city's streetcar system. Information plaques help tell the history of the falls going back to the first settlers, and how the power of the river was first used to saw lumber and grind flour. In the late 1800s, it became home to one of the nation's first electric generating plants, which was used to light up downtown Minneapolis at the turn of the 20th century.

The site offers an unmatched view of the St. Anthony Falls from a vantage point so close that "on many days you can feel the mist from the falling water," according to Xcel's Paul Adelman. The Water Power Park is owned by Xcel Energy and operated by the Park Board. It is open from approximately March 15 through November 30 and open from 8 a.m. to 30 minutes after sunset.

ShotSpotter system receives federal grant

The City of Minneapolis has received half a million dollars from the U.S. Department of Justice to expand its gunfire detection system, currently operational in both South and North Minneapolis. The gunfire detection system, ShotSpotter, uses wireless sensors to detect gunfire.

The money will allow the purchase of new computers that will let squads receive notice of gun shot locations as soon as they happen. The current system requires gunshot locations to be routed through 911 operators, adding potentially life-saving minutes to the dispatch process. Police say the faster system will not only increase the likelihood of apprehending a shooter, but safety will be improved by allowing police to respond with adequate backup.



For monthly maps of ShotSpotter activity, click [here](#).

The new mobile digital computers will also have the capability to stream video feeds from public safety cameras. "Once the shotspotter system is integrated with cameras, if a gun shot is fired and detected, any camera in that area would automatically pan to that location with potential of capturing the incident on video", said Deputy Chief Scott Gerlicher. "The new mobile digital computers are a critical piece of equipment which will allow for these enhancements to our gun fire detection system."

Oct. 24th Breakfast with Gary: Refugee resettlement



Minnesota is home to more African immigrants and refugees per capita than any other state.

As immigration concerns dominate political landscapes, the specific needs of refugee populations are often overlooked. Friday, October's 24th's Breakfast with Gary will explore why 25-50% of Minnesota's immigrants are refugees, compared to 8% nationally.

Guest speakers include Douglas Johnson, executive director of Center for Victims of Torture, Hussein Samatar, director of the African Development Center, and Pham Thi Hoa, executive director of CAPI. They will talk about the history of [refugees](#) in Minneapolis

and why Minnesota is home to so many [refugees](#) including [Hmong](#), [Somali](#), and other communities.

Breakfast with Gary takes place 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. at Mercado Central, 1515 East Lake Street. \$5 buys breakfast. Breakfast with Gary will not take place November or December due to the holidays.