



THE SOUTHWEST ANGLE

An Annual Report for Residents of the 13th Ward

Growing a Community

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**Paper or Internet—
It's Your Choice.**

Several times in the *Southwest Angle*, we refer to websites you can visit for more information on a subject.

We understand that many residents do not use the Internet or just prefer paper copies.

If you would like to receive a paper copy of any of the information referenced in this newsletter, please call our office at 612/673-2213 and we will send you any information you request.

For many years, as a city, we have discussed the need to build citizen capacity in neighborhoods so that our citizens can better work with and through our local government. So far, much of this work has been done in the areas of land use planning, traffic management, and neighborhood safety initiatives. More recent efforts have focused on increasing participation in the state and local political process and understanding the city budget.

Strong neighborhood associations have formed the backbone of these efforts. With resources from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program as well as other public and private sources, these associations have helped neighbors come together to improve their neighborhoods and city.

We invite you to join our newest effort to strengthen our communities. In collaboration with the Ward 13 Office and the Minneapolis Fire Department, Ward 13 neighborhoods are offering citizens another way to get involved at the neighborhood level. The City's Community

Emergency Response Team (CERT) program trains citizens to care for themselves, their families, and their communities in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Ward 13 residents who complete CERT training have the opportunity to join their neighborhood CERT team to maintain and grow their emergency response skills. *(Please see the article on page 6 to learn more)*

This is one of the most promising grassroots efforts I have seen. By taking simple precautions and maintaining some basic skills, citizens can ease the burden on our professional first responders in an emergency. While this effort does not attempt to replace professional responders, prepared citizens can augment and support their efforts.

For example, buying a three-day supply of water to have on hand is a nominal expense on any normal day. However, the difficulty of delivering that same amount of water to you in the wake of a major storm could multiply its cost many times.

Moreover, every family which has resources of its own on hand means that volunteer agencies like the

Red Cross would have one less family in immediate need.

These scenarios are not unfamiliar in our neighborhoods. In 2003, a wind-storm damaged homes and blew down power lines and trees throughout Southwest Minneapolis. Access for first responders and our ability to move in and out of our neighborhoods depended on how quickly roads could be cleared. For a day or more, our ability to handle that situation was directly dependent on resources we had on hand.

We hear much chatter in our neighborhoods around the subject of "community engagement." Here is a chance to meet that talk with grassroots action; action which will deliver significant results in the event our community is ever confronted with an emergency. Please join with me and other CERT members and get involved in this initiative.

Inside: The Heart of the City Budget—The General Fund • Local Government Aid • The Latest Developments on Lyndale—Your Community Wants Your Help • Crime and Safety in Ward 13 • CERT—A New Opportunity to Get Involved • Update on 35W/Crosstown • What's that New Line on Your Utility Bill? • Come by the Neighborhood

The General Fund—The City's Checking Account

Residents ask why the City doesn't cut one department to increase another in order to balance the budget or make room for certain priorities. For example, why not delay water construction to increase the fire budget? We explain that the two activities are supported by different revenue.

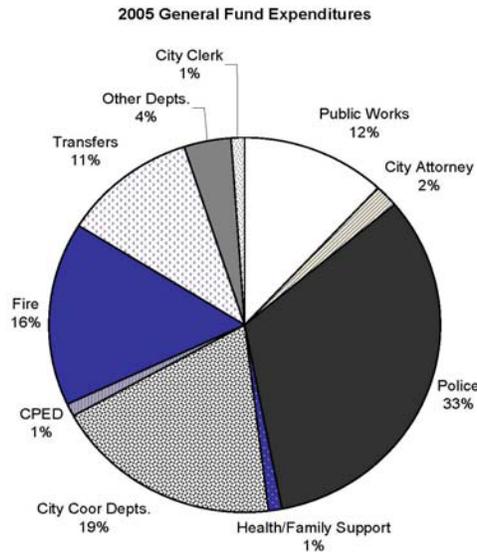
Isn't City money all the same? Not exactly. The City budget is made up of several "funds." By law, money in each fund is restricted to a particular use. It cannot be transferred to another fund simply due to a change in City priorities or needs.

There is one fund, however, that gathers money not restricted to a particular use: the General Fund. This fund finances basic city services. It is also the fund most subject to changes in taxes or state aid. If residents see a change in services like pothole repair or police, it is likely due to a change in the General Fund. When people discuss the "budget," they often mean the General Fund.

The City Budget

In 2005, the entire Minneapolis budget is approx. \$1.271 billion. This includes the separate budgets of the City of Minneapolis (City), the Park Board, the Library Board, and a few other independent boards. City of Minneapolis operations constitute about 71% – or \$905 million - of this total. The main funds in the City budget are Enterprise, Special Revenue, Internal Service, and Capital Improvement Funds, and the General Fund.

Enterprise Funds are City services that run as businesses and use only the revenues they generate. For example, the Water Department operates using water fees paid by residential and business customers. It does not use property tax money. The fees cover ongoing operations and short and long term equipment invest-



ments. Enterprise funds must break even. If the City's water, sewer, or solid waste funds have excess money at the end of the year, the excess may not be transferred to the General Fund, since the fees were collected to provide utility services. One enterprise fund—parking—can transfer excess money to the General Fund. The parking business, however, has declined for several years and the parking fund has been less able to transfer funds.

Special Revenue Funds account for City services that are provided under specific agreements. For example, by state law, the City's sales taxes are received in a special revenue fund and dedicated to convention center-related purposes. Other examples of special revenues include state and federal grant agreements for particular projects.

Internal Service Funds are funded from fees for services that City departments provide to each other. They operate as businesses, but generate their revenues from inside the City, not from residents or businesses. For example, the copy center operates on the money paid by City departments for copying services.

The Capital Improvement Funds

finance infrastructure and property improvements in the city. This includes renovating roads or constructing new police stations. This fund is financed by bonds, grants, and assessments. Money in this fund must be used for its intended purpose. If the City were to cancel the reconstruction of a road, it would have to reallocate the money to another project eligible for bond financing. Once bonds are issued, using their proceeds to fund operating costs is strictly prohibited by the IRS.

The General Fund

In essence, the General Fund is the City's checking account that pays for day to day services. These are services that, in general, do not generate revenue. They are essential to a city, but cannot be apportioned based on need or use. No one knows when they will need the Fire Department, but it must be available when needed to protect an individual building and its surrounding community. Since fire protection is a community interest, the city does not charge users directly for it; its cost is shared by the entire city. It is financed by the General Fund. Water is also essential, but the cost to any customer can be measured and based on the amount he/she uses – use more, pay more. It operates as an enterprise fund.

The main General Fund's main components are Police and Fire (33% and 16% of the Fund respectively) and the Public Works' maintenance budget (12%, filling potholes or fixing traffic signals). It also supports departments such as Regulatory Services and Inspections, City Council and Mayor, Finance, Community Planning and Economic Development, and Civil Rights.

What Money Is in the Fund?

The General Fund includes all money not designated/obligated to

(Continued on page 3)

Local Government Aid

Local Government Aid (LGA) from the State is essential to the General Fund and to the City's ability to provide core services. Yet, since 2002, the State has cut LGA to cities.

Source and Composition

In 1971, the Legislature created LGA to provide revenue to cities, reduce property taxes, and prevent expansion of local sales taxes to raise general revenues.

The State funds LGA from sales and income taxes. It apportions LGA under a formula that calculates each city's "need." Among the factors in the formula are: population over the last ten years, number of housing units built before 1940 (indicator of housing stock health and the need to maintain/replace it), commercial property values, auto accidents, and the size of households.

Larger cities receive credit for population. Cities with more commercial property get less than those with a greater proportion of residential property. Rural and urban cities

receive more for older housing stocks than do suburbs. Cities with more accidents receive more than those with less. Under the LGA formula, Minneapolis has received large annual allotments due to its population, older housing stock, and residential/commercial property mix.

Before 2003, a share of the LGA Minneapolis received was exempt from LGA reductions even if changes in formula factors indicated that the City's "need" had declined. This was called being "off the formula." Since 2003, Minneapolis' aid allotment has been based on its formula score.

The State allocates LGA to Minneapolis as a whole—City of Minneapolis (City) and the independent boards (Park Board, Library Board, and other independent boards) combined; the City receives 80% of the allotment and the boards 20%.

Effect on the General Fund

The City allocates all its LGA to the General Fund. However, that reliance is decreasing as LGA decreases.

Since 2003, the State has cut LGA as the State addresses its deficits. For example, in 2003, Minneapolis as a whole was scheduled to receive \$118 million, but that amount was cut to \$97 million, of which the City received \$74 million. In 2004, instead of \$117 million, the combined city jurisdictions received \$83 million, of which the City received \$65 million.

In 2005, Minneapolis' LGA will be reduced due to the city's increased prosperity. Under the "need" formula discussed earlier, Minneapolis is stronger. LGA, which would have been \$84 million under the city's former score, is now \$80 million under its new score. The City will receive \$64 million of the \$80 million.

In three years, Minneapolis' LGA has declined \$21 to \$34 million each year. It has gone from 32% to 22% of the General Fund, while property tax has gone from 25% to 35%.

(Continued on page 5)

General Fund—cont.

another fund. In addition to core services, it pays for unexpected costs, emergencies, and some debt.

Of the City's \$905 million operating budget, only \$291 million, or 32% is in the General Fund. The Fund includes 53% of the property taxes paid to the City and all local government aid (LGA—*see the article above*) from the State. Property taxes are 35% of the General Fund and LGA is 22%.

The fund also includes revenues from franchise fees that utility companies pay to use the public right of way; revenues from licenses and permits, such as liquor licenses and building permits; and a number of other minor revenue sources. Each

of the non-tax/LGA sources constitutes less than 10% of the Fund.

Subject to Change

Since the General Fund relies so heavily on two sources, it is vulnerable to changes in taxes and state aid. If taxes and/or state aid increase, the General Fund grows; if they go down, the Fund goes down. When changes occur, the City must react. If LGA goes down, does the City increase taxes or cut services? For the last few years, the choice has been to cut services in response to LGA cuts.

When the Fund grows beyond the rate of inflation, should the City expand services or pay off debt

early? When faced, this is subject to much debate.

Since only 32% of the City budget is not obligated to specific uses, the City's ability to react when the unexpected arises is limited. For example, some State aid cuts have occurred after the City budget has been passed. The City has had to cut millions without warning. Once the tax levy is passed in December, the City can't raise the levy, even if it wanted to. In such an environment, how do you decide what to cut? Police? Fire? Road Repair?

It is these limits on the General Fund that force the City to make tough choices about services that most concern residents.

The Future of Lyndale Avenue

A new vision for Lyndale Avenue south of Minnehaha Creek continues to be an important project for the City and the Windom, Kenny, Tangletown, and Lynnhurst neighborhoods. In 2004, Lyndale Avenue South Renewal – Creek to Crosstown (LASR-CC), the four-neighborhood committee working with the City on the future of Lyndale, completed a streetscape plan and began to prepare for a master planning process. To complete the master planning, LASR-CC needs help from residents.

Reconstruction

Hennepin County and the City continue to plan to reconstruct and re-engineer Lyndale between Lake and 56th Streets, beginning in 2007/2008.

Streetscape Plan

Last year, LASR-CC worked with a local land use planning firm to develop a plan for streetscape and greenscape improvements along Lyndale. This followed LASR-CC's 2002 development of community

values to guide projects on Lyndale Avenue.

In March, LASR-CC invited residents and businesses to give input about the Lyndale corridor. Then, in May, residents were invited to review the final plan. Those in attendance responded favorably. The implementation and funding of the plan will be part of the city's preparation for the reconstruction of Lyndale.

Master Plan

LASR-CC's next project is to develop a land use plan for the Lyndale corridor that will guide change along the avenue for the next 10 to 15 years. During a master planning process, a community considers the zoning, development, and economic issues that will influence how the community will evolve. The master plan that is developed then reflects community views about how the area should develop. This plan can be used by existing and prospective property owners to make decisions about their properties. The community uses the plan to guide their re-

views of new developments. The City uses the plan as part of its zoning approval processes.

In December, the City invited local and national land use firms to submit their ideas on how they would work with the City and community on a master planning process. Eight proposals were received. Three firms were interviewed by City staff and LASR-CC. The City is currently completing the contract with the selected firm.

After the contract is in place, a plan to gather community input will be developed and announced through mailings, newsletters, and websites. Input from residents and businesses is essential for developing a successful plan that meets the community's needs. We encourage residents to be part of the master planning process to help develop an exciting vision for this important corridor.

To review the streetscape plan or learn more about the Lyndale project, please visit the "Current Ward Issues" section of the ward website.

Splitting the Difference

In the articles about the General Fund and Local Government Aid (LGA), we explained that the City has cut services in response to LGA cuts, rather than raise taxes. However, if that is the case, readers may be wondering why their property taxes go up each year?

It is accurate that with each cut in LGA, the City has cut services to cover the loss of revenue. No taxes have been raised to make up for the loss of LGA funds.

However, parallel to responding to LGA cuts, Minneapolis has had to address other budget issues. Since 2002, Minneapolis has maintained its 8% tax levy policy. Under this

policy, each year the combined Minneapolis jurisdictions raise the total tax levy no more than 8%. Half of the increase is used to pay debt, including the voter-approved new central library. Half is used to address inflationary increases in the city budget. However, in order to balance the budget and maintain the 8% limit, the City has also had cut services.

For the next five years, this balance will be maintained. But, as the library is completed and other debts paid, the balance between debt and inflation will shift and more will be used to address inflation.

Over the last few years, for resi-

dential property owners, an 8% increase in the levy has meant about a 2% increase in the Minneapolis portion of property taxes. Other increases in property taxes are due to changes in State tax law and the decisions of other jurisdictions.

To learn more about the 8% tax levy policy, all the components that contribute to increasing taxes, and/or how property taxes are calculated for each property, please read last year's *Southwest Angle*. It can be obtained from the Ward 13 website or by calling the ward office.

Keeping the Neighborhoods Safe

In 2004, crime rates across the ward remained level as compared to 2003. Four neighborhoods were steady or saw a decline in crime, while two saw increases.

While crime has remained steady, the ward continues to be afflicted by the same types of crime as in previous years—burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft. Burglary occurs when a thief has to force access into a home while theft is stealing with easy opportunity such as leaving a wallet on a coffee shop table.

To help prevent crime in the ward, the Police Department encourages all residents to consider the following tips:

- Never leave anything on your car seat—including cds, gym bags, and wallets. Store them in your trunk at home—not at your destination. Thieves hang around places like parks just to see who puts their bag in the trunk.
- Don't leave your garage open. A snow blower can be stolen in the time it takes to run in the house.
- Don't leave your car unlocked or running if you are not in it. The police can have a car towed, if it is running with the keys in it on a public street.
- Call 911 if you see crime in progress or suspicious behavior.

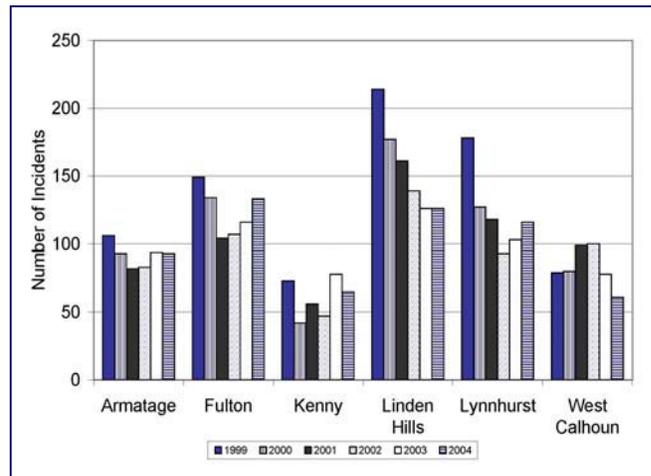
- Report graffiti to the graffiti hotline, 673-2090.
- Participate in, or organize, your block club. Neighbors looking out for each other prevents crime.

To learn more, contact the Police Department's Community Crime Prevention/SAFE (CCP/SAFE) team. It can help you learn more about prevention, set up a block club, and/or conduct a security check at your home or business. Visit the CCP/SAFE site on the City website to learn more.

CCP/SAFE continues to be an important partner with our communities to prevent crime. However, over the last year, the police department has made changes to the program. Sworn officers who used to be part of CCP/SAFE teams have returned to regular patrol duty. Civilian crime prevention specialists (CPS) continue to work with communities, with assistance from a 5th Precinct sector lieutenant.

Police Lt. Marie Przynski works with CPS Jennifer Neale and CPS Jennifer Waisanen to serve the 13th Ward. Please contact CCP/SAFE if you have questions about crime and/or prevention in your community.

The 13th Ward is the safest part of Minneapolis. With continued vigilance from neighbors it will stay that way.



Ward 13 CCP/SAFE

Sector Lieutenant

Lt. Marie Przynski, 612/673-5595

Armatage, Fulton, Kenny, Linden Hills, and Lynnhurst,
CPS Jennifer Neale, 612/673-2819

West Calhoun

CPS Jennifer Waisanen, 612/673-2815

Local Government Aid—cont.

Lower Property Taxes?

The basis of LGA is that cities calculate total revenue needed to operate, subtract all revenue including LGA, and the difference should be the amount of the property tax levy.

The difficulty is if one revenue source is greatly reduced, a city may not be able to raise an equal amount of property tax. For example, with annual LGA cuts of \$21 to \$34 million, Minneapolis would have to in-

crease the levy 25 to 30% to make up the loss. That is an unreasonable demand on residents.

To date, the Council and Mayor have not increased taxes to replace lost LGA. Rather, they have maintained the 8% levy growth policy, and cut the budget in response to LGA cuts.

Continued LGA cuts will place further pressure on property tax—at a time when the property tax burden is

shifting from commercial to residential property owners.

How cities respond to LGA cuts is not just a matter of cutting excess in city government. Rather the cuts hit at cities' ability to deliver core services. Minneapolis has joined with other cities to remind the Legislature that LGA was intended to replace locally raised revenues and budgets can only be cut so far.

Join the Team

We would like to invite residents to join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). This program is free of charge and open to all residents and businesses.

The Minneapolis Fire Department offers CERT, which is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It trains residents how to respond to local emergencies before first responders are able to arrive. They also learn how to assist police and fire when those agencies are in place. During the 21-hour course, participants learn disaster preparedness, fire safety, emergency first aid and triage, and search

and rescue.

Cities across the country adopted CERT in the wake of the 1994 Northridge (CA) earthquake. More people were injured helping those in need than were injured by the earthquake. FEMA launched CERT to better prepare residents to safely help families and neighbors in a crisis.

Minneapolis launched the CERT program in 2003 and over 100 residents have been trained, including 26 Ward 13 residents. This year, the Fire Department will offer five more trainings – in April, June, August, October, and December. The June, August, and December train-

ings are held Tuesday and Thursday evenings for a total of 7 sessions. The April and October trainings begin with a Friday evening session followed by all-day sessions on Saturday and Sunday.

In addition, the Ward is launching a pilot program to develop neighborhood-based CERT teams. After completing training, CERT members can join their neighborhood team to increase their emergency preparedness knowledge, maintain skills, and educate their communities.

To learn more or obtain registration materials, visit the ward website or call the 13th Ward office.

And the Address Is . . .

To learn more about a number of city and ward issues—both those discussed in this report and others—please visit the Ward 13 website at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward13.

In addition to obtaining information on a wide variety of issues, you can also contact our office directly from the site. Please visit!

Update on 35W/Crosstown

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the City of Minneapolis continue to plan for the 35W/Crosstown reconstruction.

Municipal Consent

Under State law, Richfield and Minneapolis have to give consent to the 35W/Crosstown project before it can begin. In September, the City Council voted to deny consent with conditions.

The Council did not object to the proposed design, *per se*. Rather, it felt the plan ought to better consider mass transit needs, in particular Bus Rapid Transit, a high-speed bus line with dedicated lanes from the suburbs to downtown.

State law outlines a process for the State to appeal a city's

denial. A board of one representative chosen by MnDOT, one by the City, and one by the State Supreme Court was appointed to consider the points of disagreement between the City and the State. The board made their decision on March 18.

Among its many findings, the board determined that plans for bus rapid transit ought to be part of the State's transportation planning for 35W and a bus station ought to be built at 46th Street to accommodate bus rapid transit.

Community Meetings

Throughout the appeal process, the City has continued to work with MnDOT to resolve details not under de-

bate and update communities.

Last spring, MnDOT held a series of open houses so residents could review the plans for the reconstruction.

Last fall, meetings were held in each neighborhood bordering the project to review the sound mitigation and aesthetic plans for the new roadway. A meeting for Kenny and Armatage residents was held in December.

The City and MnDOT will use feedback received at the meeting to finalize plans for sound walls and other improvements along the corridor.

To learn more, visit the "Current Ward Issues" section of the ward website. From that site, you can link to MnDOT's project website.

Changes to Your Utility Bill

In March, property owners saw a change in their monthly utility bill. The line that read “Sewer/ Stormwater” became two lines: “Sewer” and “Stormwater.”

For the average single-family residential property (6 units of water), the new system will result in sewer/stormwater charges equal to or slightly less than their old sewer charge.

The Sewer System

Minneapolis has two parallel sewer systems. Sanitary sewers carry water from buildings to the water treatment center. Storm drains return rainwater from hard surfaces to local rivers and lakes. Each month, property owners are charged for their use of these systems. In other words, since property owners send water to these systems, they help pay the cost of maintaining them.

Why Change the System?

The former billing system, which included a combined charge for sanitary and storm sewer, was based on how much water a property uses and did not account for its stormwater runoff. For example, a property that uses 10 units of water and has a large lawn paid the same charge as a property that uses 10 units and has a large parking lot that sends more water to the storm sewer. The former billing system did not account for impervious surface; the new system does.

Old Billing Process

In the past, the City combined the charge for both systems into one “Sewer” line item. The basis for the combined sewer fee was how much water is used by a property.

Here is an example of how the sewer fee was calculated. Between December and March when virtually all water from faucets goes into the sanitary sewers, residential customers

were billed for the same number of sewer units as for the number of water units used. If a property used 5 five units of water (1 unit = 100 cubic square feet = 750 gallons), it was charged for 5 units of combined sewer. If it used 10 units of water, it paid for 10 units of combined sewer.

In warm weather, residents use more water, but some of it is used outside for the lawn, garden, kiddie pools, etc. and is absorbed by the lawn. Therefore, charging sewer on the same basis as water usage does not work. To adjust for this difference, a residential property’s sewer charge was based on the average amount of water used between December and March. Remember, water used during the winter months goes into the sanitary sewer system. Therefore, if a home was billed for 4 units in December, 5 in January, 5 in February, and 4 in March, the average is 4.5 units. The City rounds down so the home was charged for 4 sewer units each month from April to November.*

New Billing System

As mentioned, the sewer charge is now split between “Sewer” and “Stormwater.”

Sewer. Under the new system, the “Sewer” charge for sanitary sewers will remain the same as described in the section above. *The cost per unit, however, has been reduced.* In 2005, sewer will be \$2.00 per unit as opposed to \$3.64 per unit under the combined charge.

Stormwater. The new stormwater charge is based on a property’s estimated amount of impervious area. Impervious area includes all building area, driveways, paths, and any other hard surface. The more impervious surface, the greater the charge.

After conducting a statistical sampling of single-family residential properties citywide, the City developed a tiered rate model based on impervious

area. The City has set three levels of impervious area for single-family residential properties: low, medium, and high. Each level has been assigned a fixed monthly charge.

Small is a property with less than 1,485 square feet of impervious surface; medium is 1,485 to 1,578 square feet; and large is more than 1,578 square feet. If a property is categorized as medium, it will pay \$8.72 per month in stormwater charges (the charge for low is \$6.54 and high \$10.90). The average single family residential property is in the medium category.**

Corrections

If a property owner believes his/her property should be in a lower category, the City will consider a shift. However, before contacting the City, we recommend that the property owner calculate his/her property’s impervious surface. *Remember to include all buildings as well as paths, and driveways.*

In addition, the City knows that some property owners have taken exceptional measures to minimize impervious surface and/or to manage stormwater on their property. For example, some property owners have installed rain gardens that keep more water than usual on their property. The City will offer a credit program for these properties.

The new system began this month, March 2005. If you would like to learn more about the program, property categorization, or the credit program, visit: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/what-we-do/Stormwater-Rate.asp.

*Commercial/institutional property owners pay sewer based on actual water use year-round.

** Commercial/institutional properties pay based on their number of equivalent stormwater units (ESU = 1, 530 square feet of impervious surface on a property) multiplied by the cost of one ESU. In 2005, an ESU is \$ 8.72.

THE SOUTHWEST ANGLE

An Annual Report for Residents of the
13th Ward

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Website: [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/
ward13](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward13)

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Thank You!

We would like to thank the following City departments for their assistance in preparing this newsletter.

Finance Department Fire Department
Police Department Public Works Department

Come by the Neighborhood

Armatage Neighborhood Association

Armatage Park
3rd Tuesday, every other month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/668-3206

Fulton Neighborhood Association

Pershing Park
2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/922-3106

Kenny Neighborhood Association

Coldwell Banker, 55th and Lyndale
3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/392-4477

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

Linden Hills Park
1st Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/926-2906

Lynnhurst Neighborhood Association

Lynnhurst Community Center
2nd Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/822-7466

West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

Classroom—Whole Foods at Calhoun Commons
2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm
For information: 612/928-3511