

Ward 11 Monthly Newsletter

Council Member Scott Benson

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Wi Fi is Coming

The City's effort to establish a citywide WiFi (Wireless Fidelity) internet broadband system has generated lively debate. It has been great to see the resident interest in this topic and I believe WiFi will have tremendous benefits for the city.

In 2004, the City Council directed city staff to pursue a citywide WiFi system. As an organization, the city was interested WiFi because it could improve our public safety communications and give our employees a chance to do more work in the field. It also could provide benefits to residents, including lower cost broadband internet service and a way to give internet access to people who traditionally have had limited access to the internet (commonly referred to as the digital divide).

The biggest decision for the city became the method for building the system and providing the service to customers. The three available options were a 100% private system, a 100% public system, or a combination of the two. Members of the project team met with future customers, technology experts, and researched the global broadband market to gather as much information as possible on similar broadband networks. It was ultimately determined that the Public/Private partnership business model was best model for Minneapolis for a number of reasons:

- It allows the City to maintain full ownership of the existing and expanded fiber optic infrastructure; a valuable City asset.
- The City will take no financial risk. The capital investment and issues related to construction, start up, systems operations and maintenance, and rapidly evolving wireless technology refresh/replacement will be borne by the private partner.
- The City will require a comprehensive Community Benefits Agreement.
- Because the city is a primary customer, network coverage

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Important Phone Numbers

- Ward 11 Office
673-2211



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must reach every point in the City at a level that will satisfy our demanding public safety standards.

- The City will not have to be involved in the marketing, sales, revenue generation and 7x24x365 customer service required to sustain this business.

Since Minneapolis made this decision, WiFi efforts in other cities such as Chicago and Houston have followed our lead. This model allows the city to meet our public safety and city operational goals, offer a lower cost broadband option for residents, and through a Community Benefits Agreement, make the biggest step in the history of the city toward bridging the digital divide, all with no financial risk to the city.

The community benefits agreement is a very important portion of this discussion. We will negotiate an agreement that will set the terms for what the community will receive in exchange for the contract. That could include a variety of items designed to provide benefit above and beyond the actual service. For example, Philadelphia negotiated a revenue sharing agreement to fund a program that purchases computers for low income students.

The two RFP finalists, Earthlink and U.S. Internet, will be hosting pilot projects in north Minneapolis and the Cedar Riverside area. At the conclusion of the pilot project, the city will negotiate with one or both of the providers and bring the final contract to the City Council for approval. If everything goes well, we will sign an agreement by the end of the year and service to residents will be available in late 2007.

2006 Construction

The slow drip of melting snow reminds us that soon the road construction season will be upon us. The behemoth of the projects for Ward 11, 35W/Crosstown, is scheduled to start after the 4th of July this year. The bids are set to go out, and once the bids are back and accepted, the contractor will be firming up the schedule. Look for information about a community wide meeting to talk about the schedule and what will be closed when, tentatively scheduled for the later part of May.

Other projects affecting residents in Ward 11 include:

- **Portland Ave bridge over Minnehaha Creek**– Hennepin County will remove and reconstruct the bridge, starting in the spring and re-opening in late fall. The bridge will be closed for most of the construction period.
- **Nokomis Parkway**- Resurfacing will continue, completing the section of the parkway that was not resurfaced last year.

Trees Available

The City of Minneapolis is making a thousand trees available to its residents, to help repair some of the damage done by storms and Dutch elm disease in 2005. Residents can order one tree per address, and folks can choose from four varieties: Autumn Spire Maple, Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry, Bicolor Oak, and Black Hills Spruce.

Ordering a tree:

The trees cost \$15 each, and are each about 6 feet high with a 1 ¼-inch trunk. The thousand trees will be made available on a first come, first served basis, and trees should be ordered by April 15. To order a tree, visit Council Member Benson's website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/Ward11/> or go to the Tree Trust site at www.treetrust.org.

Pick up your tree:

After submitting an order form, residents will need to pick up their tree on one of two pick-up dates: May 13, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Xcel Energy Riverside Plant, 3100 Marshall Street NE May 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Jenny Lind School, 900 50th Avenue N

Learn to care for your trees:

Tree Trust is providing free workshops, which are available for residents to learn more about how to plant a tree the right way, how to care for it, and how to be your tree's first responder! Learn how to identify insect and disease problems, hazardous trees, and other tree health issues. The workshop dates are: April 4, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Northeast Bank, 77 NE Broadway April 8, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Nokomis Community Center, 2401 East Minnehaha Parkway

For more information, contact Lorrie Stromme with the City of Minneapolis at 612-673-2003, or call Mimi Hottinger with Tree Trust at 651-644-5800.

City Volunteer Opportunities

The City of Minneapolis has more than 45 boards, commissions and advisory committees. These organizations, composed of citizen volunteers, advise the City on current issues and assist the City in policy development and administration of services.

A complete list of the various boards and commissions as well as a brief description of the responsibilities and lengths of terms for each of the boards is available at:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions>

The application process is usually very straight forward and the vast majority of the boards merely require the applicant to fill out a standard application which is available on the website

February Crime Statistics

NEIGHBORHOOD	TOTAL	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Arson
Diamond Lake	14						8	6	
Field	8					3	4	1	
Hale	5						3	2	
Kingfield	23				1	12	7	2	1
Northrop	9					2	4	3	
Page	1			1					
Tangletown	11			1		1	7	2	
Wenonah	12			2	1	1	6	2	
Windom	9					1	7	1	

Monthly Community Meetings

<p>Field Regina Northrop</p> <p>Meets Third Wednesday 6:30 PM Lake Nokomis Presbyterian 46th St. & 17th Ave</p>	<p>Hale Page Diamond Lake</p> <p>Meets Fourth Monday 7:00 PM Emmanuel United Methodist 5144 13th Ave S</p>	<p>Kingfield</p> <p>Meets Second Wednesday 7:00 PM Martin Luther King Park 4055 Nicollet Ave S</p>
<p>NENA</p> <p>Meets Fourth Thursday 7:00 PM NENA Office 3000 E. 50th St</p>	<p>Tangletown</p> <p>Meets Third Monday 7:00 PM Fuller Community Center 4800 Grand Ave S</p>	<p>Windom</p> <p>Meets Second Thursday 7:00 PM Windom Community Center 5821 Wentworth Ave S</p>

Coffee With Scott

Whatever is on your mind, you can sit down with **Scott Benson** and talk about it over a cup of coffee, from **8:00 AM until 9:00 AM** at coffee shops around the 11th ward.

April 6	Betsy's Backporch 5447 Nicollet	June 1	Anodyne @ 43rd 4301 Nicollet
May 6	Sister's Sludge 4557 Bloomington	July 6	Mike's Corner Store

Open Appointments

[Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee \(CEAC\) \(closes 3/17/2006\)](#)

[Public Health Advisory Committee \(PHAC\) \(closes 3/24/2006\)](#)

[Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People With Disabilities \(closes 3/24/06\)](#)

[Minneapolis Planning Commission \(closes 3/22/06\)](#)

[Minneapolis Charter Commission \(closes 3/23/06\)](#)

For more information: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/>