



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

February 8, 2008

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City launches *Graffiti Solutions* webpage

The City of Minneapolis is starting a new webpage to allow neighbors to share creative tips for preventing graffiti. "Every day I see more and more creativity from neighbors who are using art and landscaping to prevent graffiti." Council Member Gary Schiff said. "I hope this website becomes a tool for neighbors to submit their own photos and share ideas across the city."



Creative responses to graffiti include murals, landscaping and more.

The webpage

www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/graffiti/solutions.asp

shows examples such as landscaping, murals and types of fencing that deter graffiti. Residents are encouraged to send in photos of their own efforts, and share helpful tips.

Graffiti often collects on large flat blank surfaces, such as buildings, garages and flat fences. Landscaping, like ivy or other clinging plants helps to reduce the likelihood of graffiti on a surface. Some fences are less likely to be spray painted such as fences with board gaps, alternating boards or lattices.

Schiff proposes cap on excessive towing fees



A review of towing fees shows a wide range, from \$120 to \$325.

An ordinance introduced by Council Member Gary Schiff and co-authored by Lisa Goodman and Don Samuels proposes that Minneapolis follow the lead of other cities in capping the amount of money companies can charge when towing a vehicle. "The city can and should protect consumers from excessive towing fees," Schiff says. The State of Virginia and cities such as Phoenix, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Grand Forks already limit tow charges.

A review of towing fees in the City of Minneapolis shows a wide range, from \$120 to \$325. For example, Wrecker Services, Inc., contracts with the City to tow vehicles during snow emergencies for \$120. When towing a vehicle from a private parking lot, the company charges \$260.

The public hearing on the proposed ordinance will be at 1:30pm on March 5th in the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee meeting, City Hall, room 317. Consumers with experiences regarding towing fees can [submit comments via e-mail](#).

Neighborhoods to be studied for historic preservation

This year the City of Minneapolis will begin to study historic buildings and sites in the neighborhoods of Seward, Longfellow, Cooper, Howe, and Hiawatha. The survey data will identify properties that may be eligible for historic designation and will help influence future economic development efforts. Historic surveys of all Minneapolis neighborhoods will be complete within five years thanks to grants from the State of Minnesota.

Council Member Schiff says historic preservation is important to the city's economic development efforts. "The best developments in recent years have centered around historic buildings like the old Sears building on Lake Street or mill buildings near the riverfront," said Schiff. "Preserving unique buildings that tell our history can bring private investment and revitalize a neighborhood."



[Dowling Community garden](#) in Longfellow dates back to World War II and is the second oldest Victory Garden remaining in the U.S

Today, only four individually designated buildings and two small historic districts exist in all of Seward, Longfellow, Cooper, Howe and Hiawatha neighborhoods. To see these buildings and learn about their history in an interactive map, [click here](#). To be eligible for designation, properties must exemplify a distinct architectural style or be associated with a famous person or event. [Click here](#) to learn more about historic preservation in Minneapolis.

Free tax help for senior and low income residents

Free tax help including income tax form preparation and electronic filing is available for senior and low-income residents. The program is through the American Association of Retired Persons Tax Aide Volunteer Program. Eligible residents should bring all W2 forms and other necessary papers, including photo identification and Social Security cards for the tax filer, spouse and all dependents.

Help will be available through April 16, at the Hennepin County Government Center, 300 S. Sixth St., in the public service level, or in Minneapolis City Hall, 350 S. Fifth St. in Room 11 from to 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Join state legislators at Breakfast with Gary



Clockwise from top left: Sen. Patricia Torres Ray, Sen. Linda Berglin, Rep. Jim Davnie and Rep. Karen Clark

State Senators and Representatives from the Ninth Ward will speak at February's Breakfast with Gary on Friday, February 29, 2008. [Sen. Patricia Torres Ray](#), [Sen. Linda Berglin](#), [Rep. Jim Davnie](#), and [Rep. Karen Clark](#), will attend along with [Council Member Betsy Hodges](#), Chair of the City Council's Intergovernmental Relations committee.

"Local government aid, education finance reform and transportation funding will all be hot issues before the legislature this year as the DFL majority shifts focus away from divisive social issues and attends to the needs of working Minnesotans," Council Member Gary Schiff said.

Breakfast with Gary is a monthly meeting for 9th Ward constituents held from 7:30 to 9:00am the final Friday of the month at the Mercado Central, 1515 East Lake Street. \$5 buys breakfast.