



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

January 9, 2009

Nominations sought for Ninth Ward Awards



Click photo for a list of previous Ninth Ward Award winners.

January's Breakfast with Gary will feature the 7th annual State of the Ward Address and Ninth Ward Awards. Awards will be given for Leader of the Year, Block Club of the Year, Neighborhood Project of the Year and Youth Leader of the Year.

"The Ninth Ward Awards is a time to recognize the spirit of activism that thrives in our neighborhoods," said Council Member Gary Schiff. "Volunteers who help their block club

Individuals interested in making a nomination should write a brief description of the accomplishments that they think deserve recognition. Please submit Ninth Ward Award

nominations [via email](#), fax (612-673-3940) or by mail to Council Member Gary Schiff, 350 South 5th Street, Room 307, Minneapolis, MN 55415 by Friday, January 23.

Breakfast with Gary will take place Friday, January 30, 2009 from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. at [Mercado Central](#), 1515 E. Lake Street. Breakfast is \$7. Seats fill fast so please R.S.V.P early by calling 612-673-2209 or emailing [Suzanne](#).

\$13 million in state aide cuts forces 2009 budget do-over

Less than a month after the adoption of its 2009 budget, \$13 million in [state aide cuts](#) directed by Governor Pawlenty will send the City Council back to the drawing board in search of a balanced budget. "Additional property tax increases are off the table, we will balance this additional hole in our budget entirely with cuts," said Council Member Gary Schiff, who serves on the council's budget committee.

"These reductions are significant, and are more serious because we must anticipate the likelihood of ongoing cuts to state aide to cities," said Mayor R.T. Rybak. Addressing the city's Ways and Means committee this week, the Mayor said he will bring recommended cuts forward soon and seek out ways to engage city employees and the general public to get their ideas.

Neighborhood groups get financial boost

NEIGHBORHOOD	PHASE II (April 2004)	Available (70%/3yrs)	Available (80%/3yrs)	Additional Available
American Indian	537,207	376,045	429,766	53,721
Corcoran	410,440	287,308	328,352	41,044
East Phillips Longfellow, Howe Hiawatha, Cooper	489,220 2,306,477	342,454 1,614,534	391,376 1,845,181	48,922 230,648
Midtown Phillips	243,645	170,552	194,916	24,365
Powderhorn Park	687,638	481,347	550,110	68,764
Seward	450,139	315,097	360,111	45,014
Standish, Ericsson	1,087,274	761,092	869,819	108,727
Ventura Village	688,753	482,127	551,002	68,875
TOTALS	6,900,794	4,830,556	5,520,635	690,079

The [Neighborhood Revitalization Program](#) policy board has released additional funds for neighborhood groups. Revenues to the city's Common Project fund, the source for NRP groups in their second phase, increased beyond projection in 2008.

As a result, Ninth Ward neighborhood groups will receive an additional half a million dollars in [funding](#). Kari Neathery, executive director of Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association says the additional funds are vital to her organization. "This allows us to sustain our activities. The fact that foundations are limiting their giving right now means that this is really critical."

Conservative estimates five years ago had neighborhood leaders bracing for lower revenues in the Common Project fund and up to thirty percent less funding. The updated projections improve the situations to a ten percent reduction.

NRP is an award-winning investment program empowering residents to make decisions on neighborhood improvements. Financing for the third phase of the program was approved by the City Council in December. For more on the future of NRP beyond 2009, click [here](#).

Council approves new spay/neuter effort



Animal control officer Tom Doty scans a stray dog for a microchip. Owners who microchip their pets can receive [license](#) discounts.

In a policy change approved by the City Council in December, the city will spay and neuter animals prior to adoption from the Minneapolis [animal shelter](#). The effort will save shelter costs and staff time according to Council Member Gary Schiff, the author of the motion.

“Today we allow unaltered animals to be adopted, but require the new owners to get the animal spayed and neutered. Every year staff spends hundreds of hours verifying that these adopted animals have been fixed. By doing this prior to adoption, we can reduce staff

hours, save money and help control the unwanted pet population,” Schiff said. Animal Control director Dan Niziolek says altered pets are adopted faster, which will also reduce shelter costs.

The City Council also recently approved the [creation of an animal advisory board](#) to assist with animal-related policy and community education. “This board will help us improve our animal control activities and help make Minneapolis more animal friendly,” said Council Member Schiff.

Help available for winter heating bills

With the costs of natural gas on the rise, Minneapolis residents having difficulty paying their heating bills should be aware of a few resources and a serious danger. Taking a few proactive steps can help Minneapolis residents prevent interruption of natural gas service. Residents should contact CenterPoint Energy immediately if natural gas service might be discontinued this winter for any reason, or if a notice of proposed disconnection has been received. From October 15 through April 15, residents may qualify for help under the [Minnesota Cold Weather Rule](#). This protects residential customers having difficulty paying their natural gas bill from having their service disconnected. The rule ensures that a customer’s gas line stays connected as long as CenterPoint has been contacted.

To obtain extra protection, residential customers should contact CenterPoint Energy to establish a cold weather rule [payment plan](#) and maintain their payment plan obligations. To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, residents should make sure their natural gas stays connected and that their heating system is running properly. Carbon monoxide is an odorless and tasteless gas that can be emitted by a variety of household appliances and can be fatal at high levels of concentration. For more information on gas line disconnections or CO poisoning, call CenterPoint Energy’s customer service line at 800-722-9326, or click [here](#).

