

# Community 11 Connections

*News from Council Member John Quincy*



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## *Minneapolis Responds to Gas Main Explosion in Windom*

I am sure you are aware of the gas explosion and fire that happened on Thursday morning, March 17. It was dramatic and scary for many people, but thankfully, there were no injuries or loss of buildings.

A leak from a natural gas main under 60th Street by the Cub Foods Store triggered a fire that stopped rush-hour commuters, detoured traffic and prompted evacuations of nearby homes and buildings. Minneapolis Fire crews secured the scene within minutes, and the fire went out when CenterPoint Energy was able to safely shut off the gas.

Ironically, I was out of town in Maryland, participating in an emergency operations test sponsored by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The team of City staff was refining our emergency preparedness and response operations as part of our commitment to maintain the highest level of disaster preparedness.

I was able to stay on top of this incident in the same room as the Minneapolis Fire Chief who was closely following the City's response. It's clear that emergency responders did remarkable work to protect the people in our community and handle this dangerous situation. Trust that we're already undertaking the necessary steps to deal with the after-effects of this incident in coordination with our private partners.

Minneapolis emergency responders received the first call about the fire near East 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue South at 8:36 am and the first Minneapolis Fire Department crew arrived on the scene at 8:40 am. Crews from the Minneapolis Fire Department, Minneapolis Police Department, and a number of other local law enforcement agencies responded to the blaze. Once arriving on the scene, Fire officials ordered an evacuation of the immediate area, and established a larger perimeter shortly after 9 am until the fire was out at around 10:30 am. At 11:05 am the Minneapolis Fire Department allowed all residents back in their homes.

It will take several weeks to determine the cause of the gas leak and the ignition. Minneapolis 911 did not receive any calls about a gas leak in the area prior to the fire. CenterPoint Energy is investigating to determine the cause. 60th Street remains closed to traffic from Nicollet to 35W. Heat from the fire damaged some power lines, street lights, electrical poles, and vehicles in the immediate area. Damage estimates have yet to be determined. Unbelievably enough, a nearby sycamore tree still stands unscathed.

Mayor R.T. Rybak said, "Above all, I'm thankful that no one was hurt today. I'm also grateful for the quick response of our first responders, including from neighboring cities, who immediately made sure that people were safe and that a terrible situation didn't get any worse. And I'm proud of our residents. I witnessed countless acts of their cooperating with first responders and helping each other through a difficult time. Terrible events like today's show that our emergency-management plans work, our public servants are world-class professionals and our residents look out for each other."

I could not agree more. Thank you all for your cooperation, patience and offers of help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Quincy".