

12th Ward news

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[January]

Ring in 2010 with Good News

City re-hires 15 Police Officers laid off due to budget cuts and 2009 homicides at 25 year low.

There is a lot of reason for optimism in this new Year. Crime rates are down in all categories and homicides are at their lowest level in 25 years. There were 19 homicides in 2009, half the number in 2008. The unemployment rate in our city is still below that of surrounding suburbs and the job counseling/ employment programs that brought success continue to help out of work individuals to find good employment. More than 10,000 kids in Minneapolis schools have visited their College & Career Center to plan for their futures and those centers are busy now with the newest class of seniors. Big, regional transportation changes guided by planning we've done in Minneapolis are keeping our city at the center of a regional economy that will rebound and grow, well into the future.

In other good news, the City has been able to rehire 15 police officers whose jobs were cut in the face of severe budget challenges. The Department of Justice approved the City's application to modify a federal grant for the COPS Hiring Recovery Program. Thanks to the federal stimulus dollars, MPD will re-hire 13 of the officers who were recently laid off; 2 more will be re-hired to work as sworn officers in Regulatory Services, one with the problem properties unit and one with Animal Control. As a member of the Ways and Means / Budget Committee I can tell you that the decision to cut positions from the Police Department was extremely difficult. The police department posed a great challenge since it came into the 2010 budget process with a 4 million dollar deficit.

We worked very hard to save as many public safety jobs as possible. We were able to avoid cuts in the Fire Department but it took a number of sacrifices including cuts to the Health Department, technology assistance, and 911. It also required a shift of responsibilities for boarding vacant properties from Regulatory Services to the Fire Department as well as a re-allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds.

I am so glad that we are able to re-hire some of our police officers, many of them recent graduates from the Academy. A few of them spoke to Ways & Means Committee members and it was clear that they care about this city, have a passion for service and are ready to get to work.

I know that a reduction in crime is not the same as no crime. The Standish Ericsson neighborhood, for example, has seen an increase in burglaries and the recent robberies of two pizza delivery people has residents on high alert. Police have increased patrols in the area and citizens are keeping their eyes out for anything suspicious, communicating with each other and their Crime Prevention Specialists. Working together, I am confident that we can find the people responsible for these crimes.

Best wishes from your 12th Ward office for a healthy and successful year.

Sandy



Don't Get Towed!

There are numerous ways to find out when a snow emergency has been declared.

In addition to notices in the media, automated calls, and text messages Minneapolis is using Twitter and Facebook to spread the word about snow emergencies.

Become Facebook Friends with "Minneapolis Snow Emergency" or follow on Twitter "Minneapolisnow"

As always, you can also call 348-SNOW.

Fourth Man Indicted for US Bank Robberies

Nathan Stewart, a 20 year old from South Minneapolis, was the fourth man to be indicted for the robberies of US Bank at 4930 34th Av. S. Stewart is accused of robbing US Bank three times. On two occasions, he was armed. Three other men were previously indicted for their role in one of the hold-ups. The other men are Curtis Devone Williams, 23; Michael Deon Hughes, 23, and Darco Kellum, 22.

New Bikeway Coming to Standish-Ericsson and Longfellow

Construction is expected to begin this spring on a bike route that will connect the Mississippi River to Lake Harriet and pass through six neighborhoods including Standish/Ericsson and Longfellow. The RiverLake Greenway is the result of a grassroots effort to develop green space and an alternative transportation route within the existing public right-of-way in south Minneapolis. It is an integral part of the Minneapolis 5-year Bike Plan to provide a safe, designated system of bike routes for commuter and recreational bicyclists.

The 4.5-mile-long pathway runs mostly along 40th Street, providing an east-west bicycle friendly route midway between the Midtown Greenway (parallel to 29th Street) and the Minnehaha Creek corridor.

According to Council Member Colvin Roy, the new bikeway does not just provide benefits to bikers, “Pedestrians and residents are going to see a lot of positive changes as a result of the bikeway. There will be safety enhancements for people on foot, traffic calming measures and additional green space, all as a part of this federally funded project.”

Near Sibley Park at 40th Street and 18th Avenue there will be new raised center medians which will make it safer for pedestrians to cross the street. The median will also provide additional green space and should have the affect of narrowing the lane of traffic thus encouraging drivers to slow down. Changes on Cedar Avenue will also help the situation by reducing vehicle traffic along 40th Street. Traffic on Cedar will no longer be able to turn onto 40th Street. Hiawatha School and Park will also see enhancements, including new bump outs at two intersections to make safer crossings near the school.

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Community Events & Meetings

Howe & Northrop School Site Redevelopment – Affordable Senior Housing

Introductory informational meetings where United Properties will present details on the building designs, maintenance-free cooperative lifestyle, floor plans and pricing for Applewood Pointe Senior Cooperative projects. Affordable alternative for seniors 55+.

Howe January 11 1 p.m. Riverview Theater, 38th St & 42nd Ave S.

Northrop January 14 9 a.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1720 E. Minnehaha Pkwy.

Longfellow Garden Club, January 13, 7-9 pm at Epworth United Methodist Church (3207 37th Ave So, Mpls). Let's talk gardening! Peruse seed and tool catalogues, swap favorite seeds for spring planting and discuss your upcoming plans. Bring gardening books you've already read and exchange them with others. Refreshments will be served. Club meetings are free and open to the public.

Minneapolis Public Schools “New Schools” Community Meeting

January 14, 6:30-8 p.m. Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC), 2001 Plymouth Ave N, Mpls. Proposals for “New Schools” applying for approval from the Minneapolis Board of Education will be presented and school leaders will address questions from the public.