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## Twenty two new Minneapolis police officers hit the streets

An additional twenty two officers joined the Minneapolis Police Department this summer, bringing the number of sworn officers to their highest levels since 2001. The group of four women and 18 men include 25% people of color. "Not only is it important to increase our police force, it is also necessary for the force to see an increase in diversity" Council Member Gary Schiff said. "These new officers represent both of these needs."

Funding for police has been strained since a loss of \$50 million in federal and state since 2002. The new officers have completed seven months of academy training, and are now paired with a seasoned officer to work in the field for five months, after which they will receive precinct assignments.

Year	Total Actual Sworn	Total Authorized Sworn
2007	857	866
2006	834	827
2005	798	779
2004	794	796
2003	800	798
2002	852	861

Click on the chart for staffing levels over the last 20 years.

## Bridge collapse provides early test of Wi-Fi



Minneapolis' wireless internet network proved helpful for emergency responders at the I-35W Bridge collapse, providing critical real-time information during the recovery efforts. At the time of the bridge collapse, the wireless network was partially completed in the area around the bridge.

"In less than 16 hours, the network was extended to cover the recovery area and we were transmitting large electronic maps to the site to assist rescue efforts, and establish a live feed of the bridge site to the emergency operation center," said Jim Farstad, city wireless coordinator. To read more about how the wireless system is aiding the 35W bridge disaster recovery process, [click here](#).

Public safety uses was the chief reason Minneapolis sought the construction of a citywide wireless network. Firefighters will use wireless to access building floor plans on the way to a fire. Security cameras and the ShotSpotter system are linked wirelessly to police precincts. In 2006, the City of Minneapolis signed a 10-year contract with US Internet to build and manage the network, with Minneapolis government signed on as the anchor customer. The high-speed wireless network is still under construction, and when completed later this year, will allow wireless internet access throughout the city. To sign up for service, [click here](#).

## Initial I-35W damage assessment over ten million

The City Finance Department estimates that Minneapolis' costs related to the collapse of the I-35W Bridge to be \$10 million to date. Most of the costs are expected to be reimbursed from federal sources. More than a dozen city departments provided resources, people, and equipment to the rescue and recovery efforts in the days following the collapse. The city maintains a \$50 million reserve fund for emergencies. "This balance reflects Minneapolis' strong financial management, sound budgeting, and long-term financial planning," said Pat Born, city finance officer. To read all about Minneapolis' ongoing response to the I-35W bridge collapse, [click here](#).



## Little Earth constructs amphitheater

A memorial wall and amphitheater is the latest addition in the comprehensive renovation underway at Little Earth of United Tribes, a housing complex in Phillips.

According to Little Earth's Executive Director, Bill Ziegler, the space will be a gathering place for picnics, ceremonies and a performance stage for children to participate in traditional song and dance.

"Both the amphitheatre and especially the memorial wall is something our people, no matter how much or how little knowledge they have in our traditional native ways, will show respect for" Ziegler said. Other aspects of the renovation include new fencing and landscaping as well as the renovation of three Little Earth housing clusters. This Spring there will be a public blessing and community feast, along with performances by the Little Earth drum group and dancers.

## New online tool gives greater say in criminal sentencing

Residents and business owners know how livability crimes affect their neighborhoods. Now, an Internet tool makes it possible for them to share that information with the courts, so the true impact of crime in the community can be taken into account when sentencing an offender. For the first time, the City of Minneapolis has made it possible to give a community impact statement online rather than in person. By filling out a short community impact statement, people can tell the courts how crimes affect the livability of their neighborhood. Prosecutors can then present these statements to judges during sentencing.

In addition to the online convenience, the search tool makes it easier than ever to search through the database of cases. Residents can look up cases by offense, alleged offender, street address or general location of the offense. Access the community impact statement Internet page by going to the [City Attorney's Web site](#).

Before the creation of this tool, people had to go to one of the five Minneapolis Police Department precincts to file community impact statements. And even then, they did not have the ability to browse cases like they can now. The online tool covers people charged with livability offenses, such as trespassing, consuming in public, disorderly conduct, loitering with intent to buy or sell narcotics, lurking and public urination. These offenses can have a significant impact on people who live and work in the area. By giving a voice to these affected people, community impact statements show the court that these are not victimless crimes.

