

WARD 11 NEWSLETTER



Council Member Scott Benson

DIAMOND LAKE, FIELD, HALE, KINGFIELD NORTHRUP, PAGE, TANGLETOWN, WINDOM, and WENONA

City adopts environmental purchasing policy

In keeping with Minneapolis' commitment to creating a more sustainable community, the City will begin to make business choices that minimize our impact on the environment. One simple but significant choice is the move to purchase wherever feasible, environmentally preferable products that contain fewer toxic materials, contain recycled content, are recyclable and conserve water and energy.

To this effect, the City of Minneapolis strengthened its existing Low Environmental Impact Cleaning Policy by adopting an [Environmental Purchasing Policy](#) (EPP) that requires that wherever possible, the City will identify and purchase environmentally preferable products and conserve natural resources and reduce the City's carbon footprint.

Environmentally preferable products are goods and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment, when compared with other goods and services that serve the same purpose. The EPP formalizes the City's commitment to purchase environmentally preferable products.

The policy encourages each department to start considering the impacts of its purchases, because many smaller purchases do not go directly through the Procurement (Purchasing) Division. It is an attempt to create a culture of sustainability where city employees make environmental choices when making purchases for the City.

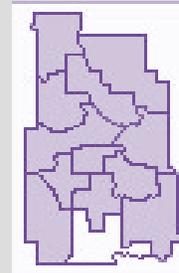
Switch to many green products will be seamless

A seamless change that is now being finalized is the switch to a green product wherever possible. Any items ordered through the regular office supply website that have comparably priced, quality 'green' matches will be automatically replaced with the new product.

The Procurement Division will continue to work with vendors to find the best possible comparable green products, always keeping cost and quality in mind. As more items become available, departments will be encouraged to make the shift to the green product in keeping with the policy or switch automatically as they order the designated comparable items. The entire scope and purpose of the new EPP is available at the link below:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20081010/docs/EPP-RCA.pdf>

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Minneapolis makes major improvements in construction-related services

Residents looking to do some major improvements on their homes will find it easier to work with the City than ever before. That's because the new Minneapolis Development Review has improved the way the city reviews and issues construction-related permits and licenses.

Processing times for Minneapolis Development Review have dropped 75 percent over the past two years. At the same time customer satisfaction has reached 93 percent, compared to 68 percent back in 2004.

Residents and developers are required to seek permits from the City whenever they want to start a construction project. Minneapolis Development Review was created as the place they can turn to in order to get information and help on getting those needed permits.

Minneapolis Development Review has made more than 100 operational changes and improvements over the City's previous permitting system. For the first time, many City of Minneapolis development services are now located in one place rather than in separate buildings. The new space, located in the Minneapolis Public Service Center, is twice the size of the old space, and brings together services including Community Planning and Economic Development, construction code services plan review, environmental health, business licensing, housing, and inspections.

Being in close proximity to one another creates efficiency and means staff can more easily consult with one another. Customers are no longer forced to start the process in one building and trek to another to continue the development application process. The new model makes it much easier for customers to avoid confusion and take care of everything they need before moving ahead with their projects.

Because of the enhanced coordination between different City development functions, processing times have dropped by more than 75 percent. Three years ago, it took an average of 37 business days for the City of Minneapolis to complete formal plan routing for Preliminary Development Review. Today, that number is down to just nine business days.

For more information on the new MDR, visit its Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/mdr/.

Important Phone Numbers

Ward 11 office:
673-2211

35W/Crosstown
Construction
Hotline:
1-866-743-6590



Digital television coming to a screen near you

The way we get our television programming is about to change for good. That means you may need to make some changes as well in order keep getting off-the-air TV channels.

At midnight on February 17, 2009, local television stations in the metro area and across the country will stop broadcasting in analog and will only offer programming in digital. If you currently get your channels off the airwaves, you may need to get TV with a digital tuner or a decoder box for your old TV.

People with Comcast or satellite services like Dish Network and DirecTV will not need to do anything. These companies will keep providing their services for subscribers who don't have digital tuners.

Digital TV is a new way of bringing television to your home that's more flexible and efficient than analog television. It allows for higher-quality images, sound, and more programming choices than your current analog does.

For more information, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/digitaltv.asp.

Minneapolis' new electric cars take to the streets quietly, cleanly

The City of Minneapolis has taken the expansion of its green vehicle fleet to a new level, by adding two new 100-percent electric cars. The cars are charged by plugging them into an outlet, and they require no additional fuel. The electric cars will be used by Regulatory Services inspectors in their work around town, and will travel up to 25 miles per hour on city streets. They are the latest additions to the existing Minneapolis Green Fleet, which includes one converted plug-in hybrid, 50 hybrids, 238 E-85 vehicles and 10 clean diesel vehicles.

One of the new electric vehicles is an e-ride EXV4 manufactured in Princeton, MN. The other is a ZENN (zero emissions no noise), made in France and retrofitted with an electric motor and batteries in Canada. The estimated five-year cost for a ZENN and fuel is \$19,000. For comparison, a Ford Taurus costs \$33,515 and a Chevy Cobalt costs \$25,290 for five years (assuming 10,000 miles per year at \$3.50 per gallon for fuel).

The vehicles have a range of 20 to 35 miles on a full charge. A full charge takes an estimated 7 kWh of electricity, which costs just \$0.56. The electric engine uses alternating current (AC). Electric motors require very little maintenance – no oil changes, no filters to replace, no radiator to fix and no tune-ups. Electricity is more efficiently produced than burning gasoline, has fewer pollution emissions and can come from a variety of low- or no-emissions sources (wind, nuclear, solar). The CO₂ release per mile for an electric car is less than half that of a gas car that gets 25 mpg.

In June 2008, the City of Minneapolis approved new limits on vehicle idling that aim to reduce air pollution in the city. The new ordinance limits most vehicle idling to three minutes, except in traffic. Reducing vehicle idling in Minneapolis translates into less air pollution, protecting the public health and the environment and saving money in fuel. Vehicle motors release particulate matter, dirt, nitrous oxides, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into the air.



ZENN car on the left and EXV4 on the right.

Monthly Community Meetings

Field Regina Northrop FRNNG.org Meets Third Wednesday 6:30 PM Lake Nokomis Presb.	Hale Page Diamond Lake HPDL.org Meets Fourth Monday 7:00 PM Emmanuel United Methodist	Kingfield Kingfield.org Meets Second Wednesday 7:00 PM Martin Luther King Park
NENA Nokomiseast.org Meets Fourth Thursday 7:00 PM NENA Office	Tangletown Tangletown.org Meets Third Monday 7:00 PM Fuller Community Center	Windom Windomcommunity.org Meets Second Thursday 7:00 PM Windom Community Center

Open Appointments

The City of Minneapolis has more than 45 boards, commissions and advisory committees. These organizations, composed of citizen volunteers, advise the City on current issues and assist the City in policy development and administration of services.

[Animal Care & Control Advisory Board \(Closes 12/12/08\)](#)

[Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission Vacancy \(Closes 12/05/2008\)](#)

[Minneapolis Telecommunications Network \(MTN\) Vacancy \(closes 12/19/2008\)](#)

[Public Health Advisory Committee \(PHAC\) Vacancy \(closes 12/19/08\)](#)

[Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission Vacancy \(closes 12/5/08\)](#)

[Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee Vacancy \(closes 12/12/08\)](#)

For more information:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/>

or call the City Clerk's office at 612-673-3358

Electronic Newsletter

Council Member Benson publishes an electronic newsletter to keep you up to date on what is happening at City Hall. If you would like to receive this update, please e-mail me at scott.benson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us and put the words "E-mail Update" in the subject line.