

Minneapolis Responds



The City of Minneapolis emergency response to the Aug. 1, 2007, tragedy

Aug. 7, 2007

A MOMENT OF SILENCE

Tonight at 6:05 p.m., we encourage National Night Out gatherings to observe a minute of silence for the bridge collapse victims, their families, and emergency responders. At 6:06, City Hall bells will chime and churches are also encouraged to ring their bells.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The brave and tireless efforts of our firefighters, police, and other emergency responders who put themselves in danger to help has touched us all. We are grateful for their hard work, and for that of staff from every City department who put in countless hours in response to the emergency.

STAY INFORMED

The bridge collapse recovery will take many months — even years. You can get the latest on recovery-related issues and traffic updates at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/minneapolisresponds

United in tragedy

We grieve together for the victims and their families of the tragic collapse of the I-35W bridge on Aug. 1, 2007.

The City of Minneapolis thanks the community for the support it has shown and extends its gratitude to our local, state and federal partners who assisted in our

response effort and will help as we begin the recovery.

As the City's first-response rescue and recovery operation concludes and national media attention fades, there are months — even years — of work and sacrifice ahead. Patience will be required as we cope with the recovery and rebuild.

Minneapolis and the community respond

On Aug. 1, 2007, the first 911 call reporting the bridge collapse was received at 6:05 p.m. Emergency units were on the scene by 6:11 p.m. The City of Minneapolis activated its Emergency Operations Center at 6:20 p.m., and Minneapolis Fire established an Incident Command on the 10th Avenue Bridge, which runs alongside the I-35W Bridge.

In the hours that followed, responders worked tirelessly to rescue victims of the collapse. At the height of the response, more than 75 firefighting personnel and 75 law enforcement units were on

the scene, including the collapse structure rescue and dive teams.

Mayor R.T. Rybak declared a local emergency Aug. 2, and the Minneapolis City Council approved a Declaration of Emergency to extend the Mayor's declaration indefinitely. The declaration is necessary to receive special disaster-related funding from State and Federal sources, and it allows the City to operate within its emergency plan for as long as needed. Gov. Tim Pawlenty declared a peacetime emergency Aug. 2.

What is happening at the disaster site?

Emergency response and recovery teams have been working round the clock at the site since Aug. 1. Dive teams led by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office have been working daily, with Minneapolis Police maintaining security around the perimeter of the site. All materials within the bridge area are part of an ongoing investigation into the collapse, which means the area is treated much like a crime scene. The National Transportation Safety Board is conducting the

investigation and will examine all facets of the collapse in that effort. On Aug. 5, Minneapolis Police tightened (made smaller) the perimeter of the secured area, which allowed for the opening of the Stone Arch Bridge.

In the coming days, the Minnesota Department of Transportation will become the lead agency in the cleanup of the site and the rebuild effort.

TO PAY YOUR RESPECTS

Minneapolis reopened the Stone Arch Bridge at 1 p.m., Sunday to give people a place to pay their respects. The pedestrian and bicycle bridge had been closed since shortly after the collapse.

People who wish to leave flowers or other memorials are asked to place them at Gold Medal Park, which overlooks the riverfront. The park is located between West River Parkway and Second Street South, at 11th Avenue South, next to the Guthrie Theater.

Please note, people who wish to leave flowers or other memorials should place them on or near the viewing mound in the wood chips surrounding the park's many trees, rather than on the grass.

RESPECT THE SECURITY EFFORTS

Minneapolis Police ask that the public respect the security perimeter at the collapse site for your own safety, and to allow recovery personnel to do their work in the most effective way possible.



A request to the president

This weekend Mayor Rybak delivered to President Bush a list of "preliminary requests" for federal assistance. The list includes: transit funding; a favorable decision on the City's Urban Partnership Agreement grant submission; expedited approval of appropriations for the reconstruction of the bridge; other

repairs to the 35W freeway; defraying costs of emergency and recovery efforts; completion of the full funding agreement for the Northstar Corridor; assessment and relief for adverse impacts to businesses large and small; and federal cabinet-level involvement in the relief effort.

Meeting transportation challenges

The I-35W Bridge played a major role in our area's transportation network, and we recognize that new traffic patterns will emerge with the loss of that corridor. Public Works staff have been working hard to make modifications to our street system that allow traffic to flow as smoothly as possible. They include changing traffic signal timing, creating new turn lanes, and prohibiting some turns in Northeast to improve traffic flow across the Third Avenue and Hennepin Avenue bridges.

Several local streets in the collapse area are closed, including the 10th Avenue Bridge and sections of Second Street Southeast and West River Parkway. Many city streets and area freeways will see higher traffic as a result. Find a list of streets and areas that we anticipate will have extra congestion, find updates on road closures, and sign up for automatic e-mail updates at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/traffic.

Folks are encouraged to take advantage of mass transit, car pooling and bike routes to minimize traffic backups as much as possible. Metro Transit has added extra buses to several routes to handle extra riders. For more information on transit, visit www.metrotransit.org or go to the Downtown Minneapolis Transportation Management Organization's Web site at www.mplstmo.org.

Public Works will continue to look for ways to improve the system, and anyone who wants to report observations or suggestions is encouraged to call 311 to provide their input.

To get the latest from MnDOT on freeway and entrance/exit ramp closures, visit www.dot.state.mn.us.

What you can do to help

Local organizations have created the "Minnesota Helps – Bridge Disaster Fund" to raise and direct contributions to where they are needed most. The fund will assist nonprofit organizations that help those most affected by the tragedy, including victims, families and rescuers. To help, visit www.MinnesotaHelps.org.

Anyone who witnessed the bridge collapse or was on the bridge is asked to call the National Transportation Safety Board witness line at 1-866-328-6347. Please note, this line is strictly for use by eyewitnesses.