



NORTHforce

A Newsletter from the City of Minneapolis

Working together to build a better future for the Northside

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About this newsletter

The Northforce Newsletter, launched in May 2007, highlights some of the City's efforts to improve livability in north Minneapolis.

To subscribe to this newsletter, visit the City's Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/subscriptions and click on "Northforce." To view past newsletters online, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.

About Northforce

Northforce is the City's coordinated strategy to address the challenges facing the Northside and integrates the work of City departments and community partners to address safety, health, housing, economic and infrastructure issues.

This coordinated strategy builds on the resources already being deployed on the Northside and uses new and creative ways to improve livability in north Minneapolis.

To learn more about Northforce, visit the City's Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.

Crime falls for 2nd straight year on Northside

For the second straight year, violent crime is down on the Northside. Violent crime in the 4th Precinct during 2008 was down 16 percent compared to 2007. (Minneapolis as a whole reported violent crime was down by 13 percent in 2008 compared to 2007.)

Information about the Northside's crime rate and crime prevention efforts was shared by 4th Precinct Inspector Mike Martin during a recent 4PAC (4th Precinct Advisory Council) meeting. Martin told attendees that, overall, Part 1 crimes—which include burglary, motor vehicle theft and arson as well as murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault—in the 4th Precinct were down 10 percent over last year and 20 percent over the last two years. In another indicator of success, arson in the 4th Precinct was down 39 percent in 2008.

According to Martin, increased enforcement by officers and technology played key roles in decreasing crime. The strategic placement and overall effectiveness of safety cameras and shot spotters have helped police curb overall criminal activity, identify suspects and reduce drug dealing on many prominent streets. The decline in street level drug activity may also be attributed to changes in the drug trade that have made it less profitable and more dangerous.

Martin noted that an unfortunate result of the camera's effectiveness is the move of drug activity to streets without safety cameras, such as Plymouth Avenue. To address this, police are stepping up efforts in areas seeing an uptick in dealing. While there has been a decrease in street level dealing, police are seeing a rise in in-house dealing and an increase in burglaries and robberies. The precinct is responding to this challenge by encouraging greater community involvement, increasing alley patrols and stepping up the efforts of the Directed Patrol Unit to address emerging trends and patterns.

4PAC meetings can keep you connected

If you'd like to hear reports like the one Inspector Martin presented, be sure to attend 4PAC (4th Precinct Advisory Council) meetings. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at 1925 Plymouth Ave. N. Past meeting topics have focused on crime updates, housing vouchers, dangerous animals and ex-offender re-entry programs. Meetings also offer an opportunity to meet officers and Northside neighbors as well as share concerns about problem properties or neighborhood issues. For an agenda, e-mail vivian@4pac.org. For general information about 4PAC, visit www.4PAC.org.

Livability Efforts

Minneapolis gets tougher on dangerous dogs

After the City Council strengthened the law governing aggressive dogs, Minneapolis Animal Control has been working with the City Attorney's office and the Police Department to boost compliance with Minneapolis' Dangerous Animal Ordinance.

In the past year, Animal Control has dealt with nearly 600 dogs that have been declared potentially dangerous or dangerous. Part of that effort involved issuing 133 administrative citations, 23 criminal citations, impounding more than 300 dangerous animals, and executing more than 50 search warrants related to non-compliance with the ordinance, dog fighting or narcotics. Currently, there are 134 animals in Minneapolis that have been declared "dangerous." These animals are listed on the City's Animal Care and Control Web site at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/animal-control/AggressiveDogs.asp>.

Currently, Animal Control is conducting compliance checks to verify that the owners of dangerous dogs are following the restrictions imposed by the ordinance.

Under the recently toughened ordinance, owners of animals that have been declared potentially dangerous or dangerous must meet these requirements if they want to keep their dog:

- Keeping the animal muzzled and on a three ft. leash that is controlled by an adult any time the animal is not inside a home or approved kennel.
- Micro chipping the animal so the dog can be located if it escapes the owner's property.
- Registering the pet with the City each year.
- Notifying the City when the dog is moved to a new address.
- Obtaining a \$300,000 liability policy to cover any dog that is declared dangerous as well as posting a "dangerous animal" sign at the home.

City ordinance also prohibits owners who have violated a destruction order or received two or more "dangerous dog declarations" within two years from owning another dog of the same species for five years. The ordinance also institutes a penalty for providing false information to Animal Control officers.

If you know of an aggressive animal or an animal that has bitten a person or another animal, call 311 so the concern can be investigated by Animal Care and Control.



James Nelson Honored By Police
Ruhland award honoree James Nelson (third from right) stands with neighbors and family members Garik Nelson, Latrell Menefee, La'Darious Williams, Auna Nelson, Wendy Nelson, Omar Lashaun Pope, Omar Katrell Pope, Cordero Montgomery, Tanjae Cosey and Ki Jhawana Cosey.

Northside resident honored for reaching out to young people

In recognition of his caring work with young people, the Minneapolis Police Department presented Northside resident James Nelson with the 2008 Teresa S. Ruhland Youth Award at a special ceremony on March 30.

Each year, the Police Department presents this award to a volunteer who does an outstanding job of involving young people in community activities. Nelson lives in the Willard-Hay neighborhood and was nominated by Crime Prevention Specialist Tim Hammett who noted that Nelson has become an invaluable part of kids' lives while also contributing to the life of the neighborhood.

When Nelson first moved to the neighborhood in 2005, he soon noticed that many children were badly in need of more positive adult contact. In just a few years, he's become an important figure in the lives of dozens of kids, 60 or 70 of whom now know him simply as "Pops." Nelson is the person kids turn to if they need to borrow a football, get some air in their bicycle tires, or just need someone to talk to. He organizes impromptu games for kids, and takes groups sledding or to the movies. Most importantly, he listens. Kids know that Pops will listen to them and be straight with them.

In talking about his efforts, Nelson said, "We do a lot of talking. I always tell them to ask lots of questions because that's how they learn. How are they going to know anything unless they ask and somebody tells them about their questions? Kids need to feel important and that they matter. I try to let the kids know that we are put on this earth to help one another — that we are not alone in our life's journey."

Safety Initiatives

Minneapolis police honor City's most active and effective block clubs

Two north Minneapolis block clubs were among the 11 clubs honored by the Police Department for outstanding work in 2008 at a special ceremony on March 30.

The Police Department encourages the formation of block clubs because they prevent crime and enhance neighborhood livability. As part of this effort, the 4th Precinct hosted a block leader training workshop on March 16 to give area residents tips for organizing a block or apartment club. The workshop introduced the 17 attendees to their neighborhood crime prevention specialist and outlined crime prevention services that are available to their neighborhood. If you'd like to learn more about organizing a block club, call the 4th Precinct at (612) 673-5704 and ask to speak to a Crime Prevention Specialist.



Maggie Rannow and Dale Hulme accept award for the St. Olaf Block Club.

St. Olaf Block Club – Jordan/Hawthorne neighborhoods

The St. Olaf Block Club, led by sisters Maggie Rannow and Mary Rice, got its start approximately 10 years ago. In the last five years, the club has teamed up with St. Olaf church to hold monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month.

This club is made up of residents from both the Jordan and Hawthorne neighborhoods and together they have tackled everything from boarded up and run down properties, to drug and party houses. By being persistent and working with the 4th Precinct, City Council members and landlords, the block club has been able to make improvements in the neighborhood.



Joanne Williams (for Jessica Williams Nguyen) and Norma Miller accepted awards for their block club.

35th Avenue N. & Aldrich/Lyndale Avenues N. Block Club - McKinley neighborhood

The 35th Avenue North and Aldrich/Lyndale Avenues North Block Club is led by Norma Miller and Jessica Williams. They have worked tirelessly to bring residents together and build community. They have both helped recruit other block club leaders in the McKinley neighborhood and have worked with them to share ideas and lessons learned to make the community better. In addition to bringing the block together for events like National Night Out, they've worked with Police on serious problem properties, encouraged residents to call 911, and helped curb the effects of the foreclosure crisis.

Home & Business Initiatives

Rental licensing ordinance strengthened

In the year since the City Council passed an ordinance instituting a \$1,000 fee for converting an owner-occupied home into a rental property, City staff has been educating soon-to-be landlords about the standards for operating a rental property and tracking down rentals that are operating without a license. The new ordinance also applies to previously rented single family dwellings that have not had an active license in the past 12 months.

They've also been inspecting these properties for compliance with minimum housing standards. The inspection — which encompasses a health and safety check from the roof to the basement — must occur within 60 days of the rental license application date. This effort to improve rental housing is especially needed on the Northside which has three times the number of rental properties than other parts of the city.

For information about rental licensing requirements, call (612) 673-5856 or visit the City's Web site at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/inspections/landlords-home.asp>.

Interest-free loan program helps eligible buyers purchase homes

In an effort to encourage homeownership, the Minneapolis Advantage Program is now accepting applications for \$10,000 interest-free loans. The loans can be used to pay for closing costs, the down payment, or even small home repairs. If the buyer lives in the home for five years, the loan would be fully forgiven.

Introduced last year as a pilot program, the Minneapolis Advantage Program aims to encourage home purchases in the 26 neighborhoods hardest hit by foreclosures. The 2009 program funds may be used to finance the purchase of foreclosed or vacant homes.

Income restrictions apply, and funding is limited to 200 purchasers. Home buyers participating in the program are required to:

- Qualify for a traditional fixed rate mortgage,
- Agree to homeownership counseling, and
- Purchase a home in one of these neighborhoods: Audubon Park, Beltrami, Bottineau, Bryant, Central, Cleveland, Corcoran, East Phillips, Folwell, Harrison, Hawthorne, Holland, Jordan, Lind-Bohanon, McKinley, Midtown Phillips, Near North, Phillips West, Powderhorn Park, Regina, Sheridan, Ventura Village, Victory, Webber-Camden, Whittier or Willard-Hay.

Loans will be given on a first come, first served basis. Homebuyers must apply for a Minneapolis Advantage loan through their first mortgage lender. To learn more, call (612) 588-3033 or visit the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation's Housing Resource Center at 2148 44th Ave. N. between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Information is also posted at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/minneapolisadvantage_home.asp.

Expo showcases Northside projects



The City of Minneapolis, West Broadway Coalition and Northside Arts Collective hosted a Community Development Expo Feb.7 to share information about development projects, zoning changes along West Broadway, light rail and bus rapid transit considered along Bottineau, and business facade grants.

4th Precinct Advisory Council

▪ Tuesday, April 21

6:30 p.m. - meet and greet / 7 p.m. - meeting
1925 Plymouth Ave. N.

Northside residents and businesspeople are invited to meet officers and hear an update on precinct activity. Attendees may also bring addresses of problem properties. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. For an agenda, e-mail vivian@4pac.org. For general information about 4PAC, visit www.4PAC.org.

Minneapolis Teen Job Fair

▪ Saturday, April 25

Noon - 4 p.m.

Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall

Teens ages 14 and older can stop by the fair to meet employers and get information on jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities. Attendees can also sign up for employment training and participate in workshops.

Free Business Advice/Assistance

▪ Tuesday, April 28

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Minneapolis Central Library
300 Nicollet Mall

Representatives from the City of Minneapolis, retired business people and attorneys will be on hand to answer questions related to starting or running a small business.

Foreclosure Workshop

▪ Thursday, May 7

6:30 – 8 p.m.

Pierre Bottineau Library, 55 Broadway N.E.

Hennepin County is offering a free workshop to explain what happens during a foreclosure, outline homeowner and tenant rights, and explain where to get help to prevent a foreclosure. The workshop is for homeowners who are worried about making mortgage payments as well as tenants whose landlords may be facing foreclosure. Participants can get free confidential advice from local nonprofit foreclosure counselors.



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