



Rivertown NEWS

Volume XVIII, Issue 3

Winter 2014

City Hall

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 Phone: 651-480-2350
 Fax: 651-437-7082
 Website: www.hastingsmn.gov

Contact Your City Council:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| Mayor: Paul Hicks
mayorhicks@hastingsmn.gov | 651-437-8866 |
| Ward 1: Anthony Alongi
aalongi@hastingsmn.gov | 651-208-7232 |
| Ward 2: Joe Balsanek
jbalsanek@hastingsmn.gov | 651-438-5998 |
| Ward 3: Tony Nelson
tnelson@hastingsmn.gov | 651-437-4194 |
| Ward 4: Danna Elling Schultz
dellingschultz@hastingsmn.gov | 651-438-3878 |
| At Large: Barb Hollenbeck
bhollenbeck@hastingsmn.gov | 651-480-0268 |
| At Large: Ed Riveness
eriveness@hastingsmn.gov | 651-437-4416 |

Contact Us:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| City Administrator:
Melanie Mesko Lee
MMesko_Lee@hastingsmn.gov | 651-480-2326 |
| Aquatic Center: | 651-480-2385 |
| Building Safety: | 651-480-2342 |
| Civic Arena: | 651-480-6195 |
| Code Enforcement: | 651-480-2376 |
| Community Development: | 651-480-2350 |
| Fire Business Office: | 651-480-6150 |
| Parks & Recreation: | 651-480-6175 |
| Police Business Office: | 651-480-2300 |
| Public Works: | 651-480-6185 |
| Utility Billing: | 651-480-2350 |

Report Suspicious Activity! Call 911

New Layers of Snow Emergency

A New Notification System & Increased Ticket Prices

In a continued effort to keep our streets safe and clear during the winter season, we are pleased to announce a new notification service we are offering residents to give advanced warning when a Snow Emergency and enforcement will begin. You can create an account at www.nixle.com and choose whether you would like to receive a text message, an email, or a phone call notifying you when our Snow Emergency cleanup procedures have begun.

A Snow Emergency AUTOMATICALLY goes into effect when two inches of snow has accumulated. At that time, all vehicles must be moved off the street until that street has been cleared to its full width. Violators will be ticketed and/or towed. The ultimate goal is to keep streets clear for emergency responders, residents, and visitors to Hastings, while keeping costs down with efficient operations.

As a result of feedback from a community survey, the city intends to increase the price of a Snow Emergency parking ticket from \$26 to \$77. The additional revenue from the price increase would be used to bring in additional police officers to focus on enforcement efforts. Most of the respondents from the summer survey voted to keep our current Snow Emergency policy the same, but requested additional notification and suggested the increase in ticket price.

We urge residents, especially those who utilize street parking, to sign up for the Nixle system today. Signing up is secure, simple, and fast. Go to www.nixle.com and click "Sign Up Now". Sign up through Facebook or create an account. Enter an email address and phone number where you would like to receive messages. Choose whether or not you would like to receive voice messages. If at any time you would like to change your message preferences or sign up for other types of alerts, you can click the "Settings" tab while in your account. Choose from a variety of options in the left-hand menu to make changes. Please note that messages could arrive in the early morning hours.



What other types of City notifications would you like to receive through the Nixle system? Leave suggestions on our Facebook page (City of Hastings Government) or email Lee Stoffel, Communications Coordinator, at Istoffel@hastingsmn.gov.

Youth and Drug Use in Hastings

In the 2014 Community Survey, residents were asked what they thought was the most serious issue facing Hastings today. "Youth Crime" and "Drugs" ranked first and second respectively. I want to reassure you that we are committed to engaging youth and eradicating drugs in Hastings. In 2013, we had a nearly 30% reduction in juvenile offenses compared to 2012. Of the 69 cases reviewed by the Dakota County Attorney's Office, five were for drug offenses. The number of juvenile arrests in 2014 is nearly the same as last year.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that while teen use of cigarettes and alcohol have decreased dramatically over the past ten years, there has been nearly a 17% increase in Marijuana usage by teens over 2012. "While the perceived risk of marijuana continues to fall among middle and high school students, their use of marijuana is rising."

Continued...

We are committed to our CORE Values:

Communication • Optimal Service • Respect for Resources • Enthusiasm

Public Works for YOU!

Check Your Mailbox (not just for mail)

Your mailbox is likely not as strong as it was when it was first installed many years ago. The screws holding the box to the post can loosen or rust, and wooden posts can decay, making your mailbox susceptible to damage from wet heavy snow plowed to the side of the street. Snow plowing operations occasionally damage mailboxes, but in most cases, it is the snow thrown by the plow that causes the damage. While the City will repair or replace mailboxes struck by plows, mailboxes knocked down by snow are homeowners' responsibility to repair. If it looks like it's time to replace that old mailbox, install the new one flush with the back of the curb, 8 inches behind the edge of the street. This will allow snow plows to get as close as possible to the edge of the curb.

No Garbage Cans in the Street

Did you know a garbage truck's lifting arm can reach 6 to 8 feet? Please leave garbage containers back a few feet from the edge of your driveway during winter snows. Snow rolling off the edge of a plow can easily knock over garbage containers. Because of this, plow drivers will typically stay at least five feet away from garbage containers leaving additional snow behind and causing streets to narrow. The day after a snowfall, plow trucks must haul snow from the Downtown area, so it may take two or three days before a plow can return to widen your street.

Adopt-a-Hydrant

If you have a fire hydrant on your property, please remember to shovel a three foot clearance around it to keep access open in case of an emergency. Please consider helping a neighbor or family member who may be unable to clear the access near their home. You can make a difference!

Home Energy Squad

Save energy and money this winter with the Home Energy Squad. The concept is simple: schedule a visit and a truck pulls up in front of your house. Two energy experts hop out to help you identify opportunities where the addition of a few simple measures can add up to big savings. You choose which energy saving items you want installed and the expert does all the work. Two hours later, your home is more efficient.

It's called the Home Energy Squad. It's one-stop efficiency shopping for anyone wanting to save energy at home and get immediate results. Some of the recommendations include installing weather stripping on exterior doors, programmable thermostats, compact fluorescent lights, high-efficiency showerheads or faucet aerators. **The homeowner pays for the \$70 trip charge, and the rest – materials, installation and labor – is covered. A more than \$200 value – is free.**

"The goal is to help people achieve energy efficiency one home at a time with easy, tangible improvements," says Jean Hammer, Xcel Energy program manager. "Customers like getting expert advice specific to their home and making their own decisions about which measures to implement."

Since the program started in early 2010, the Squad has visited over 25,000 homes in the Twin Cities and outlying areas.

"Customers love the ease of having someone in the home who can consult and install, all in less than two hours," says Hammer.

To be eligible for the program, the resident must be an Xcel Energy electricity customer and an Xcel Energy or CenterPoint Energy natural gas customer. The Neighborhood Energy Connection and Center for Energy and Environment perform the customer visits, in partnership with the utilities.

Please visit www.homeenergysquad.net for more information.

For those Hastings residents who are customers of Dakota Electric, you can go to www.dakotaelectric.com for energy efficiency ideas and tips. Go to "Safety & Education" and click "Energy Efficiency".

Recycle Beyond the Curb with the Green Guide

Just because it can't be recycled at the curb doesn't mean it belongs in the trash. If you need to get rid of your stuff, do it responsibly with help from Dakota County's online Green Guide. The Green Guide provides information on how to recycle or safely dispose of hundreds of household items, from paint to electronics to clothes. It provides options for reusing or donating, information on what can be recycled and how to recycle it, and lets you know about items that need to be kept out of the trash because of their effect on our health and our environment.

Find out the many household items you can recycle at local places, from plastic bags to bed mattresses, fluorescent bulbs to microwave ovens, and water softeners to televisions. Visit www.dakotacounty.us and search *Green Guide* or call 952-891-7000.

Partially funded by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Dakota County Board of Commissioners.

Civic Arena News

Hockey season is getting into full swing, and the Hastings Civic Arena is once again a popular place. Come over and check out Hastings' local talent in youth leagues and at the high school level!

Open Skating hours are listing on our website by going to the Parks and Recreation main page and clicking Hastings Civic Arena in the left navigation menu.



...Drug Use Continued

For Hastings in 2013, there were 95 narcotics related offenses and 97 so far in 2014. This includes BOTH adult and juvenile incidents.

While we enjoy significant reductions in youth crime, we must work harder on the threat of drugs. This can be accomplished through open communication with our kids, connecting kids with trusting adults, mentoring, and keeping kids engaged in healthy activities. Furthermore, cooperative efforts by community serving organizations, schools, and police must continue to grow.



See Something? Say Something!

Leave an anonymous tip at 480-2300 or by texting **Hastings** and your tip to TIP411 (847411).

Communication

It doesn't stop there – we need to strike a balance between proactive initiatives and enforcement. To that end, we have taken a “zero” tolerance approach to drug trafficking in Hastings by aggressively focusing on those who are dealing. Last year, Hastings Police Department and the Dakota County Drug Task Force served eight narcotics warrants in Hastings netting drugs with an estimated street value of over \$17,000.00. Year to date, there have been 12 warrants executed resulting in the recovery of drugs with street values of more than \$24,000.00.

This measure of enforcement cannot be done by law enforcement alone. Calling police when you notice suspicious activity is important. The public is encouraged to leave an anonymous tip with the Hastings Police Department at any time of day. Remember, when you “See Something, Say Something.”

Chief Bryan Schafer
bschafer@hastingsmn.gov

Winter Trail Maintenance

Many residents have inquired about our snow removal efforts along the 30 miles of trails within the Hastings trail system. Our Parks and Recreation department is responsible for these efforts and initiate plowing when two inches of snow has accumulated, or as time permits. Parks and Rec is also responsible for select sidewalks in the Downtown area, as well as a number of facility parking lots. This is a large load for our crew, so please be patient as we work our way through the routes. When an excess of snow accumulates, as it did last year, we can run out of room on the trails to push snow with our plows. When this occurs, our snow blowers are put to task. Unfortunately, the snow blowers are slower moving units so it takes quite a bit of extra time to make the rounds. We will get to everything, but please understand it will take us a bit of time to accomplish this task. If you have questions or concerns, please direct them to the Parks & Rec office at 651-480-6175

Adult Athletics

Adult 6 v 6 Co-rec Volleyball League

Where: Hastings Middle School

When: Sundays at 6, 7, and 8 p.m.

Team Registration Fee: \$290

Register by December 30 at the Parks and Recreation Building (920 West 10th Street) or online at www.hastingsmn.gov. Play starts January 11, 2015.

Adult Basketball Open Gym

Where: Hastings Middle School

When: Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m.

Dates: November 25, December 2, 9, 16, January 6, 13, 20, 27.

Fees: \$2 per person per session,

*Must be 18 or older to participate.

Outdoor Skating and Hockey Rinks

Enjoy the great outdoors at our three skating and hockey rink locations, all with warming houses to take the chill off. Outdoor rinks are dependent on Mother Nature. Rink condition updates are available on Facebook, or by calling our hotline at 651-480-2392.

Wallin Park: General Sieben & Northridge Drive

Lions Park: 5th Street & State Street

Pioneer Park: 16th Street W. & Pine Street

WARMING HOUSE SCHEDULES

December 8, 2014 - February 16, 2015,
Weather Permitting

REGULAR HOURS:

Monday-Friday: 4-9 p.m.

Saturday: 12-9 p.m.

Sunday: 12-6 p.m.

WALIN & PIONEER HOLIDAY HOURS:

December 24: 12-4 p.m.

December 25: CLOSED

December 26, 29, 30, 31, January 1, 2:
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

January 19 & 23: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

February 16: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

LIONS HOLIDAY HOURS:

December 24: 12-4 p.m.

December 25: CLOSED

December 26, 29, 30, 31, January 1, 2:
12 - 9 p.m.

January 19 & 23: 12 - 9 p.m.

February 16: 12 - 9 p.m.

***The recreational rinks at Wilson Park and Isabel Park will be flooded, but the warming houses will not be open.**

2015 Budget Highlights

The City Council will approve the 2015 budget in December and has reaffirmed its commitment to our CORE values by supporting and investing in the operations and services that our community has come to expect. There is significant investment in infrastructure, operations, and services.

Infrastructure—changes will continue along the river as Phase I and Phase II of the Riverfront Renaissance take place in 2015. The improvements will take shape throughout the year and will transform the feel of this unique space. From improvements to parking, to amenities like a labyrinth and a pavilion (with a significant donation from the Hastings Rotary), to water features, public art, and a new Veterans Memorial, our space along the mighty Mississippi will be a destination worth experiencing.

Services—we continue to find innovative and responsive ways to maintain our infrastructure, including a new street mill and overlay program to help preserve our aging streets, and additional commitment to trail sealcoating and parks maintenance. We continue to invest in equipment to be able to provide cost effective new technology in our services.

Operations—the City remains committed to providing outstanding services. A study of our Fire & EMS operations yielded a number of recommendations that are included in our community investment—we are completing the hiring for additional paid, on-call Firefighters/EMTs and will also increase our full-time staffing levels to maintain a high level of service. Operational changes will also enhance our department in a fiscally responsible manner.

A recent study indicates that residents feel that there is a high level of satisfaction with the direction the City is going; the City Council recognizes that and is continually striving to enhance the quality of life in Hastings. We are committed to moving forward responsibly through the 2015 budget priorities. Current budget information is always available for review on our website.



PRSR-STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Hastings, MN
Permit No. 166

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Council Corner: Communication is Key



When I first ran for the city council in 2008, one of my campaign promises was to get our city government and city staff better connected to the community. Comments from voters about the city council and the city staff were favorable, but there was a genuine interest in making the everyday business of the city more transparent. Six years later we have great avenues for showing the taxpayers that they're getting their money's worth. In addition to broadcasting council and commission meetings we now have Facebook, Twitter and email entries that are timely and immediate.

Notices on anything from job openings, agendas, fire and police reports, park and recreation schedules, bridge updates, snow emergencies, hiring of new staff, retirements...you name it and we are getting the word out to everyone. And the public loves it. We're getting great and positive press coverage throughout the metropolitan area. And all this is not by chance. This is all due to our commitment to get the word out to the public. I'm even doing my part with my email messages to my Ward 2 constituents. If you'd like to get my updates just send me an email and I'll add you to the list.

My campaign promise in 2008 to open up city government to the people was fulfilled ten-fold. Hastings is a uniquely hospitable city. We have that small town feel with more than a dash of metropolitan flare. I'm convinced that we are what we are because of our ability to keep in touch with each other. Your city government believes that and is there to show the voters with pride that this city works better when we all keep the lines of communication open.

Joe Balsanek, Councilmember, Ward 2

Connect To the City of Hastings

The City has multiple sources for you to stay informed or to reach out to us for information. Stay connected on the platform that works for you!

Official Facebook page: City of Hastings Government

Twitter: @CityHastingsMN

Service Requests: Inform us when you see an issue that needs attention or if you need to update your Utilities. On the website in the "Residents" tab, choose Service Requests.

Instant City Text/Email/Phone Notices: www.nixle.com

Current News and Events Calendar:

www.hastingsmn.gov

Anonymous Tipline:

Text keyword **Hastings** and your tip to **TIP411** (847411)

E-Notifications: Sign up for email updates on topics that interest you. Click the E-Notification button on our homepage at www.hastingsmn.gov.

Questions? Contact Us



651-480-2350
www.hastingsmn.gov
cityhall@hastingsmn.gov