

Golden Valley 2004

CityNEWS

Envision's Connection Project Ready To Roll

Over the past year, *Envision Golden Valley* asked community members to share their thoughts about the future of Golden Valley. Their thousands of ideas, opinions, and statements were summarized in a 20-page Vision Guide distributed to the community in September (the entire report is available at www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us). Now, to foster continued involvement in making these visions reality, the Golden Valley Connection Project is looking for people who want to join with fellow citizens, neighbors, workers, or clubs or organizations to work cooperatively on ideas that inspire them.

To help establish the Connection Project, the City Council will appoint a 12-person executive board to build a structure that will:

- present the Vision Guide to the community and get feedback
- link people, groups, and resources that are inspired by particular visions
- encourage interaction between the Council, City staff, and citizens on ways to advance specific visions
- promote events or strategies to involve more people

Meetings will be at least monthly for one year. Once the Connection Project is established, it should provide a community framework to advance the collective vision for Golden Valley's future. For more information on the Connection Project, or to apply to the executive board (by December 21), contact Jeanne Andre at 763-593-8014.

Meanwhile, there are many ways Golden Valley residents can be involved in creating a vital community, including the Adopt-A-Hydrant program (see box at right), helping build Habitat homes (page 2), joining a board or commission (page 3), reducing waste and protecting water quality (pages 4-5), developing a healthy lifestyle (pages 8-9), being safe (pages 10-12), making home improvements (page 15), and supporting community programs (page 16). 



Adopt Your Neighborhood Fire Hydrant

Looking for a convenient way to be active in the well-being of your community? Consider grabbing a shovel.

The Golden Valley Fire Department is seeking help to keep the fire hydrants in your neighborhood clear of snow. A six-foot clear space around the circumference of the hydrant will help reduce the time it takes firefighters to hook up hoses if a fire occurs in your neighborhood. The best time to shovel out a hydrant is after the streets are plowed, before snow accumulates and freezes.

Golden Valley Community Pride, a local organization that works to beautify the city by mowing public rights-of-way and planting flowers there in the summer, has adopted fire hydrant shoveling as its winter project. If you want to help, call Don Brown, citizen volunteer, at 763-545-9518.



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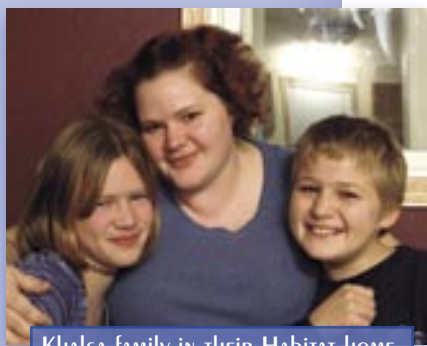
Habitat Helps GV Employee

Graphic designer Siri Khalsa has worked full time for both the City of Golden Valley and the City of Hopkins since 2001, and she is also a Habitat homeowner since August 2003. Khalsa had thought having her own home was out of reach until she heard about the Habitat for Humanity program. Though she has worked full time since she was 17, being a single parent of two didn't allow for much saving. "I basically live paycheck to paycheck," she says.

Khalsa has a lot to say about her experience with Habitat. "People think these homes are free, but they're not. To be a Habitat owner, you have to have tenacity, drive, and ambition because the house is not handed to you. You work for it and you pay for it, and then you represent the program. But Habitat is there for people trying to achieve higher goals in their lives."

Like other Habitat owners, Khalsa helped build her own home. She

says that experience alone taught her a lot about what it takes to build a house and how to take care of one. "Having this home has given us more of a family feeling," she says. "Without Habitat, I would never have been able to own a home."



Khalsa family in their Habitat home.

Golden Valley Gets More Habitat Housing

Seven duplexes (14 units) and two single-family homes are under construction in northwest Golden Valley in Golden Ridge, a private development on Naper Street and a new street named Gettysburg Court. Four of the duplexes (eight units) will be constructed by Habitat for Humanity and sold to lower-income families.

About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit organization working to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness. Using volunteer labor and donated money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates houses, then sells them to partner families at no profit, financing them with no-interest loans. Habitat is not a giveaway program. Along with a down payment and monthly mortgage payments (deposited in a Habitat fund used to build more houses), homeowners must invest hundreds of hours of their own labor during construction. Most Habitat owners are working people with an annual income less than 50 percent of the metropolitan area median income (\$38,160 for a family of four).



Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity was founded in 1985, and since then more than 500 families have purchased Habitat homes throughout the metro region. Because of their low-incomes, these families are unable to obtain traditional mortgages and unlikely to be able to own a home without assistance. Homeowners are selected based on their need, willingness to be program partners, and ability to repay the no-interest loan.

Contrary to rumors, Habitat houses do not reduce property values. Studies in North America show proximity to affordable housing has no adverse effect on neighborhood property values.

How To Get Involved

Donations to Habitat are always welcomed. Gifts can be designated to a specific affiliate, such as Twin Cities Habitat, or even a specific building project. Undesignated gifts are used where most needed.

Golden Valley City staff will be volunteering unpaid time over two days in January to help construct one of the Golden Valley homes. If you would like to join with City volunteers to work on a local Habitat home, please contact Assistant to the City Manager Jeanne Andre at 763-593-8014.

If you'd like more information on the Golden Valley Habitat project or are interested in a Habitat house, contact Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity at 612-331-4090 or go to www.tchabitat.org.

habitat NUMBERS

0 total number of Habitat homeowners who have gotten their houses for free

2% foreclosure rate on Twin Cities Habitat homes

50 number of states where Habitat for Humanity builds homes

70 estimated Habitat homes completed in the Twin Cities in fiscal year 2004-05

250 homes Twin Cities Habitat plans to construct between 2005 and 2008

300-500 hours of sweat equity homeowner must contribute before moving into a Habitat home

\$500 homeowners' down payment on Habitat house

\$500-650 average monthly payment for local Habitat home

1,100 average square feet of Habitat home in the US

1976 year Habitat was started by Alabama lawyer and businessman Millard Fuller

2,500 individuals now living in Twin Cities Habitat homes (approximate)

4,000 average number of volunteer hours to build or rehab a Twin Cities Habitat home

150,000+ homes built by Habitat worldwide

Mediation Offers Options To Parents

Mediation is a voluntary process that brings disputing parties together in a neutral setting to resolve issues. Trained mediators facilitate the discussion, ask questions, and write up any agreement the parties reach. North Hennepin Mediation Program, Inc, (NHMP) provides private, confidential mediation services to parents and grandparents who are raising children from separate households and are experiencing conflicts as they work through parenting decisions and arrangements.

Mediators are not judges and do not impose solutions. They help the parents create their own agreement by keeping the discussion focused and civil. Because mediated agreements reflect decisions made by the participants, they have high rates of compliance.

A wide variety of issues can be addressed in mediation, including vacation schedules, extracurricular activities and expenses, parenting time schedules, interactions with others, child care or school decisions, and child-rearing concerns.

NHMP does not mediate child support or custody decisions, nor does it mediate when the family has a history of domestic or child abuse. In some situations, mediation participants are not able to reach an agreement. If NHMP is authorized to serve as a parenting time expediter, then the mediators will provide a decision based on the most recent court order. A typical mediation lasts about two hours and can be scheduled days, evenings, or weekends. Mediations are held at NHMP's Brooklyn Center office or another more convenient, neutral office.

NHMP charges an administrative fee of \$150 for the initial mediation, but no one is turned away for inability to pay. For more information, call NHMP at 763-561-0033 or go to www.mediationprogram.com.

Help RECOGNIZE CARING YOUTH

Area youth who contribute to their communities by helping others will be honored March 8 at the tenth annual *Caring Youth Recognition*. The event, which will be held at the Minnetonka Community Center, is a collaborative effort between the Cities of Golden Valley, Hopkins, and Minnetonka, Hopkins School District 270, and Minnetonka School District 276.

Caring Youth recognizes youth in grades seven through 12 who show an ongoing awareness of others through volunteer or other activities. Nominees must meet at least one of the following criteria: live in Golden Valley, Hopkins, or Minnetonka; attend Hopkins or Minnetonka public schools; and do volunteer work (unpaid and not as a requirement for a class or co-curricular program) in Golden Valley, Hopkins, or Minnetonka. Students can only be nominated by the organization they are serving.

In early January 2005, the sponsors will begin soliciting *Caring Youth Recognition* nominations from schools, the faith community, civic and service organizations, and the community at large.

For more information on the program, or if you know a deserving youth and would like to nominate him or her for this recognition, please contact Golden Valley Communications Coordinator Cheryl Weiler (763-593-8004).



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Looking to be more involved in your community? Members of Advisory Boards and Commissions recommend policy to the City Council and advise the Council on a variety of diverse issues. You must be a Golden Valley resident to apply. For more information or an application, call Judy Nally at 763-593-3991 or go to www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us/citygovernment/boards.htm.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)—Hears requests for variances from the city code (zoning). Meets monthly.

Building Board of Review (BBR)—Advises, recommends, and assists on building codes and the issuance of building permits. Meets twice a month.

Civil Service Commission (CSC)—Controls and supervises employment, promotion, discharge, and suspension of police officers. Meets annually and on call.

Environmental Commission (EC)—Advises and recommends in matters relating to and affecting the environment in Golden Valley. Meets monthly.

Golden Valley Human Services Foundation (GVHSF)—Plans and holds fundraisers and events to meet identified human service needs in the community. Advises on fund allocation. Meets monthly.

Human Rights Commission (HRC)—Advises, recommends, and assists in matters of equal opportunity and elimination of discriminatory practices. Meets monthly.

Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council Advisory Commission (NHH-SCAC)—Serves as the planning and coordinating body for 15 northwest cities on human service delivery. Meets monthly.

Open Space and Recreation Commission (OS&RC)—Advises, recommends, and assists in policies and plans relating to open space needs, parks and recreation programs, trail systems, and Brookview Golf Course. Meets monthly.

Planning Commission (PC)—Advises, recommends, and assists Council in matters relating to planning and growth of the City (including the social, economic, and physical environment). Meets twice a month.



The Golden Valley Recycling Program is partially funded by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners.

Holiday Schedule

Holiday Week—Pick-Up Date

Thanksgiving—Sat, Nov 27
 Christmas—regular pick-up
 New Year's—regular pick-up
 Memorial Day—Sat, June 4
 Fourth of July—Sat, July 9
 Labor Day—Sat, Sept 10

Missed Pick-Ups

If your recycling is missed on Friday, call Waste Management at 952-890-1100 before noon on the following Monday.

If you have specific recycling questions, call 763-593-8030.

24-Hour Recycling Info-Line

Features recorded answers to your recycling questions 24 hours a day. Just call 763-593-8119 to reach the Golden Valley Recycling Information Line (directions for rotary phone users are on the message). For information on:

- curbside recycling, press 1
- apartment recycling, press 2
- yard waste disposal, press 3
- household hazardous waste disposal, press 4

763-593-8119

Give Environment And Yourself A Holiday Gift

If you're looking for holiday experiences that create a certain kind of magic and give the environment a little rest at the same time, consider going green. Many Americans assert they want their holidays to be less commercial and more personally fulfilling. At the same time, the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (MOEA) wants Minnesotans to reduce holiday consumption and its adverse effects on the environment. It seems these goals are symbiotic.

Instead of citing research estimating the mountains of additional trash produced during the holidays (one million extra tons a week in Minnesota from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day), here are some green suggestions intended to make your holidays more environmentally friendly.

Gifts

Think experiences instead of objects. A few suggestions: gift certificates for a restaurant, spa, golf course, or for music, language, or cooking lessons; passes to museums or area ski hills; tickets to the zoo, the theater, or sporting events; or memberships to health clubs or hobby groups, etc.

The gift of time is sure to be a hit. Present a loved one with a coupon for baby-sitting, a home-cooked meal, a thorough car or room cleaning, an auto or home repair, a grocery shopping trip, or anything you know that person would appreciate. Such gifts also offer a chance for you and the recipient to spend some time together.

If greening up the holidays appeals to you, consider gifts that are especially kind to the earth. Choose products with little or no packaging that are made from natural ingredients and produced with little or no pollution, such as state park stickers, a bus or light rail pass, refillable pens, plants or a tree, rechargeable batteries or compact fluorescent lights, a membership to an environmental organization or a charity, a food basket, a bird feeder, or reusable lunch or cloth shopping bags.

Homemade gifts, such as sweaters, scarves, blankets, cookies, cakes, ornaments, or any unique thing you have to share, are particularly germane to the spirit of the holidays. Giving of your time and talent can generate fond memories for years to come.

ENTERTAINING

Disposable dishes and utensils have become a standard time-saving tool in the harried host's bag of tricks and an unwelcome addition to landfills. Reduce refuse by setting the table with your best dishes and silverware. This may seem like more work, but the gesture shows guests how important they are to you, and a gang-style clean-up can add just the type of interaction that creates special memories.

When buying snacks and beverages, think bulk (less packaging). And don't forget to recycle whatever packaging possible, including the aluminum cans that somehow end up mixed with the regular garbage, paper, and cardboard (see *Holiday Schedule* at left).

Finally, don't forget to turn down the heat before guests arrive. All those festive bodies will generate more than enough to keep everyone warm.

For more environmentally-friendly holiday suggestions, check out the MOEA web site (www.moea.state.mn.us/reduce/nowaste.cfm).



Winter Waters Need Pollution Protection Too

Ah, winter in Minnesota—a respite from the hustle and bustle of the growing season. A snowy blanket is laid over the land, and a layer of ice coats area lakes, creeks, and ponds, protecting all the creatures that call those waters home. But hold your trip through white and drifting snow. While winter may lend a sense of suspended animation, water still needs pollution protection through Minnesota's longest season.

UNWANTED ICE

Throughout winter, people commonly use sodium chloride, aka rock salt, for ice-control. But just as doctors often advise patients to lighten up on salt, environmentalists advise homeowners to do the same. Rock salt can damage plants and trees, and once in the storm water system (see sidebar), it increases the salinity of waterways. Small waterways like Bassett Creek don't have the volume necessary to dilute the onslaught from both residential and roadway salting.

To be environmentally conscious, some people apply sand, kitty litter, or ash to ice problems, but these, too, have an environment impact. Such substances often absorb motor oil and other pollutants on the way to the storm water system, where they can clog drains and cause flooding. Once in the water, they can increase turbidity (make the water cloudy), clog the gills of fish, and disrupt aquatic nurseries.

To deal with ice, Enviro-Cast Storm Center recommends shoveling snow often and early, and using a hoe to remove as much ice up as possible to minimize the amount of ice control chemicals needed. When chemicals are necessary, Enviro-Cast suggests two: calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), which contains no cyanide or chloride (as rock salt does), or calcium chloride, which contains chloride but no cyanide. Both products are more expensive than rock salt, but little is necessary if the shoveling and scraping recommendations are followed.

Enjoyable Ice

Snowmobiling and ice fishing are two popular winter activities, but each can have a negative impact on surface waters if not done conscientiously.

First, whether driving a car or truck or snowmobile, avoid dragging soil or mud from land to ice. Keep vehicles well-maintained so no fluids are leaked. Avoiding thin ice is a must for both your immediate physical safety and for the health of the water. When a vehicle falls through, it leaks fluids, from motor oil and steering fluid to antifreeze. Speaking of anti-freeze, some ice fishers have been known to use anti-freeze to keep their ice holes open. This is a definite no-no. Anti-freeze can seriously deplete the amount of oxygen in the water and ultimately kill the fish.

A more delicate issue is that of dealing with human (and pet) waste while spending hours out on the ice. The answer is to save it and dispose of it well away from the waterway. Human waste is a fertilizer which, like the kind used on lawns, pollutes the water, causing over-abundant plant growth and killing fish.

For more information on Golden Valley's Surface Water Management Plan, call Environmental Coordinator Al Lundstrom at 763-593-8046. 

WATERSHED FACTS

Think of the entire surface area of Golden Valley as the top of a funnel. All the water that falls on Golden Valley, through precipitation or intentionally through activities like lawn watering, enters the top of that funnel. Water running down the funnel moves over pavement, streets, roof tops, and through private and public lawns. The water may go through lakes, ponds, streams, underground pipes connected to storm drains, or seep through the soil and travel underground. On its way down the funnel, the water collects anything stuck to the sides of the funnel; chemicals, leaves, fertilizers, grass clippings, etc. Almost all water that enters the top of the funnel—the surface of Golden Valley—exits, with everything it has picked up, into Bassett Creek and ultimately, the Mississippi River (see sidebar).

Adopt-A-STORM DRAIN PROGRAM

The Adopt-A-Storm Drain program is an opportunity for volunteers to help monitor storm drains for illicit discharge and to notify the City of potential maintenance needs.

Storm drains, or storm sewer outlets, carry the bulk of the storm water from a rain event that runs off of impervious surfaces (such as streets, parking lots, and rooftops). Illicit discharges may include significant amounts of oils or gasses that were either accidentally spilled or intentionally poured into the storm sewer system. These pollutants eventually make it to your local water resource.

Volunteers can help protect the quality of local wetlands, lakes, and creeks by monitoring a storm drain in their neighborhood and keeping it free of debris. Volunteers supply their own garbage bags to remove the debris.

To learn more about the program or to become an Adopt-A-Storm Drain volunteer, contact Golden Valley Environmental Coordinator Al Lundstrom at 763-593-8046.



Photo by Barbara Anderson, Photo Contest 2004

PARKS & REC UPDATE

A complete list of Recreation offerings is available in the Fall Recreation Activities Brochure or on the City web site (www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us).

Magical Magnets (ages 3–5)—Fri, Dec 17, 9:30–11:30 am, \$14, Brookview

Holiday Youth Open Gym (ages 5–12)—Mon–Thurs, Dec 20–23 and Mon–Fri, Dec 27–31, Davis Community Center (\$1 per activity or \$5 per day)

Youth Basketball (boys and girls, grades 2–6)—Saturdays, Jan 29–March 19, Davis Community Center and Crystal Community Center, \$40

Drop in for these open activities at Davis Community Center (\$20 for 10-time punch pass or \$3 daily):

Parent/Tot Gym Time (ages 2–5 w/adult)—Mondays, 6–7:30 pm, or Saturdays, 1–3 pm, through Dec 20

Parent/Child Gym Time (ages 6–12 w/adult)—Sat, 1–3 pm and/or Fri, 6:30–8 pm, through Dec 17

Co-Rec Volleyball—Tue, 8–10 pm; Thurs, 8–10 pm (no Nov 25); Sun, 3–5 pm, through Dec 19

Adult Basketball—Wed, 8–10 pm and Sat, 8–10 am, through Dec 18

Over 40 Basketball—Mon, 8–10 pm, through Dec 20

Open Dodgeball—Wed, 6–8 pm; Fri, 8–10 pm; and Sun, 1–3 pm, through Dec 19 (\$22 for 10-time punch pass or \$3 daily drop-in)

Watch your mail the first week of December for the Winter Recreation Activities Brochure.

Register in person, by mail, by fax (763-512-2344), or online (www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us).

For more information, contact:
Parks & Recreation
Brookview Community Center
200 Brookview Parkway
Golden Valley, MN 55426
763-512-2345
Monday–Friday, 8 am–5 pm

Glide Through Winter On A GV Ice Rink

Winter can wear on the most enthusiastic snow lover, but taking a twirl on an area ice rink can help the season cruise by. It also gives a lift to the Golden Valley Park Maintenance crews who work year-around to keep the rinks in top shape.

Work on the rinks begins in the spring, when crews take down, repair, and store the hockey rink boards. The boards are painted by summer seasonal staff on rainy days. In early fall, crews evaluate problem areas in the skating rinks and level the surfaces. Crews start installing hockey rink boards in October. It takes a three-person crew an entire day to set up one hockey rink, says crew leader Bob Strandquist. Meanwhile, crews install hand railings and matting between shelters and rinks, put up fences on sliding hills, inspect skating lights, and prepare hockey and broomball nets.

Even in Minnesota, conditions are not always ideal for building and maintaining ice rinks. To start making ice, the crew needs temperatures to be around 0° to -10°F for a week or so and about four inches of frozen ground. The goal is to establish a six-inch ice base, which will help rinks survive most warm snaps. After that, crews build “finish ice,” with the goal of having rinks ready by mid-December and winter school breaks.

Depending on weather conditions, all rinks are cleaned and resurfaced Monday through Friday and cleaned Saturday mornings. Double bladed shovels may be checked out at shelter buildings. During extreme cold or warm weather, rinks and shelter buildings may be closed. Check by calling 763-512-2350 before dropping children off. “Closed” signs are also posted on park shelter doors.

If you have concerns or questions about ice conditions or rink maintenance, call Park Maintenance at 763-593-8045.

skating INFORMATION

Golden Valley's Park and Recreation Department (763-512-2345) maintains skating areas at the following parks:

Gearty	3101 Regent Ave N	H	GS	W
Hampshire	1601 Louisiana	H	GS	W
Lakeview	9300 Olympia		GS	W
Lions	7200 Harold Ave	H	GS	W
Medley	2355 Ensign Ave	H	GS	W
Scheid	1965 Toledo	H	GS	W
Wesley	8305 Wesley	H	GS	W
North Tyrol	4300 Sunset Ridge		S	
South Tyrol	Tyrol & Ortley Pass		S	
Yosemite	Woodstock & Yosemite		S	

H=Hockey rink W=Supervised warming shelter
GS=General skating rink S=Secondary skating area

Rink Schedule

Rinks open December 18 and close February 21 (weather permitting)

Monday - Friday: 4–9 pm
(noon–9 pm on school holidays, 10 am–9 pm on Martin Luther King Day and President's Day)

Saturday: 10 am–9 pm
Sunday: 1–9 pm

Holidays

Christmas Eve: noon–4 pm
Christmas Day: closed

New Year's Eve: noon–7 pm
New Year's Eve Skating Special

Scheid Park will remain open until 10 pm for families to enjoy winter fun activities. Hot chocolate will be provided.



Bassett Creek Benefits From Management Plan

Bassett Creek meanders through a large portion of Golden Valley, drawing both wildlife and human life. While it's easy to think of the Creek as a local amenity, it's actually much more. First, it is part of the Bassett Creek Watershed, which covers more than 40 square miles and empties into the Mississippi River. Second, it is listed as an impaired water body by the 2004 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Clean Water Act (Section 303(d)).

Since 1969, the Bassett Creek Water Management Commission (BCWMC) has addressed issues regarding Bassett Creek, starting with flood control but, since the advent of the Clean Water Act, moving to water quality.

INITIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Over the years, the BCWMC has implemented several changes intended to accomplish its evolving mission. Between 1982 and 1996, it worked with the St Paul District Corps of Engineers and member municipalities (Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St Louis Park) to implement its First Generation Watershed Management Plan. Highlights included:

- a new \$28 million tunnel to carry Bassett Creek through Minneapolis to the Mississippi River
- construction of 10 channel crossing improvements, five control structures and storage basins, and removal of a bridge along Bassett Creek
- replacing the Medicine Lake dam and constructing the Plymouth Creek fish barrier in Plymouth to improve the quality of Medicine Lake
- completing the Hwy 55 control structure in Minneapolis, preventing millions of dollars in flood damages from the 1987 "super storm"
- floodproofing several homes using state-of-the-art techniques that became a model throughout the country
- construction of the Wisconsin Ave and Golden Valley Country Club flood control structures in Golden Valley
- the Bassett Creek Park flood control and water quality project in Crystal



Photo by Jayne Minor Frank, Photo Contest 2003

THE NEXT WAVE

Much has been accomplished in regard to water quality improvement, but there is still much to do.

To address this the BCWMC, upon approval by the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), adopted its final Second Generation Watershed Management Plan in September 2004.

The new plan includes significant changes from previous BCWMC activities, including several new and revised policies, a 10-year capital improvement plan to improve water quality in Bassett Creek and watershed lakes, the proposed use of an ad valorem tax to fund water quality improvement projects, a new funding mechanism for stream bank restoration, and the addition of a public education component called the Public Information Plan.

The plan can be viewed at www.bassettcreekwmo.org or at libraries and city halls in the member municipalities. For more information about the BCWMC, contact Pat Schutrop at 952-832-2652, or go to www.bassettcreekwmo.org.

SENIOR STUFF

Register in advance for the following events, seminars, classes, and trips.

Wellness & You—Dec 2: "Holiday Treats," Jan 6: "Chair Exercises," 1:30 pm, Dover Hill

Defensive Driving—Four-hour refresher, Dec 9 and Jan 13, 9 am–1 pm, Brookview

Holiday Supper—Dec 13, 6 pm, Brookview

Health Insurance Help—Dec 14 and Jan 11, 9–11 am, Brookview

Blood Pressure Screenings—Dec 15 and Jan 26, 11 am, Brookview

Armchair Travelers—Jan 14: "Russia," 2 pm, Country Villa

Free Financial Talks—Jan 20: "What To Do When Someone Dies," 10 am, Brookview

Member Social and Travel Day—Jan 21, 1:30 pm, Brookview

Continental Breakfast—Jan 26: "Quilt Tells Life Story of Orphan Train Rider," 9:30 am, Brookview

Upcoming Trips (register early)—Dec 2: A Sisters USO Christmas; Dec 8–9: Wausau Holiday Tour; Jan 20: Coffee Concert at Orchestra Hall

Senior Classes—Oil Painting, Bridge, Wake-Up Workout, Crafts, Yoga, Line Dancing, and much more.

Senior Special Interest Groups—Mondays, 1 pm: Dominoes; 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 1 pm: Cribbage Group; Tuesdays, 12:30 pm: Bowling Group, Texa-Tonka Lanes; Fridays, 9 am: Open Bridge, Brookview;

Golden Tones Senior Chorus Practice—Thursdays, 10:30 am, Calvary Church

Five Cities Transportation Program offers rides to seniors for shopping, social activities, and senior program events. For a schedule or to reserve a ride, call the Five Cities office at 763-531-1259 between 8 am and 3 pm Monday through Friday.

For more information, to receive the Senior Newsletter, or to register for a program or trip, contact:

Golden Valley Seniors Program
Brookview Community Center
200 Brookview Parkway
Golden Valley, MN 55426
763-512-2339

8 am - 5 pm, Monday - Friday

PARKS AND RECREATION: A FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH IN FITNESS AND FUN

Flooded by a deluge of information about the latest diet and fitness fads or others telling you how to be happy? Don't stress. Many experts agree that activity and fun are two relatively simple, effective paths to health and happiness. And you don't have to go far. Golden Valley's Parks and Recreation programs provide just the ticket.

Unlike market-targeted health clubs and spas, Parks and Recreation offers a wide array of programs to engage the largest portion of the community possible. From adult athletic leagues to youth programs and activities for seniors, there's something to get any age body moving and having fun. Activities are also close to home, more recreational rather than competitive, and affordable.

Ever since the Parks and Recreation Department began offering programs nearly 50 years ago, the heart of its mission has been to provide quality, value-based recreation, social, and cultural activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and celebrate the community's diversity. (Its mission also includes planning, constructing, and maintaining parks, open space, and trails.) Judging by results of the recent *Envision Golden Valley* process (see article on page 1), this heart is still beating well. Residents envision a future in which "Golden Valley nurtures places, events, and associations that maintain recreation as a focal point of family and community life."



Keeping such a mission and vision vital can be challenging in a fast-paced society. While Recreation Supervisors Sue Cook and Brian Erickson both assert that youth and senior programming are popular, adults need time for fun and fitness in their lives, too. Here's a look at how Golden Valley's Parks and Recreation programming promotes healthy lifestyles and, ultimately, a healthy community.

During any given season (Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter), Golden Valley's Parks and Recreation Department offers numerous programs to promote activity. Experts agree that 30 minutes of relatively vigorous movement daily can help:

- lower the risk of coronary and colon disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, or having a stroke
- control weight
- keep joints, muscles, and bones healthy
- reduce stress, anxiety, depression, bad (LDL) cholesterol, and arthritis pain
- increase energy levels

Yeehaw! Right? Half-an-hour, no problem. Wrong. According to the Center for Chronic Disease Control and Health Promotion (CDC), more than 50% of US adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits.

It's never too late to begin. Think of activities you used to enjoy or are simply interested in. Walking, yoga, volleyball, swimming, basketball, dancing, skating, biking, tennis, and softball are all recommended by the CDC as good places to start. These are the tried and true activities, but Cook points out that exercise programs tend to change with the times. "Aerobics was big for quite a while, and then it faded. Now yoga is the hot program, and we didn't even offer it three years ago. Who knows what will be next."

Residents can be part of programming too. The Parks and Recreation Department is always open to suggestions for new activities. "If a few people are interested in an activity, we'll do all we can to find an instructor and offer it," Erickson says. "And we're always interested in people who want to teach an activity or coach."

A very popular activity in Golden Valley is open gym at the Davis Community Center. One or two nights a week, especially when the weather is not so nice, residents make their way in for basketball, volleyball, dodgeball, parent-child time, and youth sports night.

Fun is as important as fitness in the quest for healthy living. Not only does fun help relieve the stress felt by half of all adults, but adults who play appear to live longer than those who don't (Psychology Today, July 1999). Golden Valley's Parks and Recreation programs offer many opportunities for fun and stress reduction.

What constitutes fun is a personal thing, but with activities ranging from dance and crafts to music lessons and day spas, there's fun to be had right here in the community, along with a chance to meet other residents. "Recreation classes are less intense than places that specialize in certain activities," Cook says. "Participants really get to know people in their class. It almost feels like family."

National research shows that strong parks and recreation programs are essential for a thriving community, and that personal health, community health, and the local economy and environment all benefit.

Get involved. The Winter Parks and Recreation brochure will be arriving at your home any day. If you can't wait, call 763-512-2345 or go to www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us, where GV RecConnect offers online registration for many classes.



CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Fourth Degree DWI—Charged for first-time offenders if no aggravating factors are present and if they take the requested breath, blood, or urine tests. Misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail, a \$1,000 fine, and license suspension for 90 days.

Third Degree DWI*—Charged if one aggravating factor is present. Gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail, a \$3,000 fine, and license suspension for six months.

Second Degree DWI*—Charged if two aggravating factors are present. Gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail, a \$3,000 fine, and license suspension for six months.

First Degree DWI*—Charged if three aggravating factors are present. Felony punishable by up to five years in jail, a \$10,000 fine, and license suspension for six months.

*First, second, and third degree DWIs each require jail time until the first court appearance if any aggravating factors exist. In addition, the State can impound offenders' license plates and take their vehicles without any compensation to the owners.

Trouble Doubles When Drinking And Driving Mix

No matter how many times it's repeated, some people just don't get it. Drinking plus driving equals death. Yet every 30 minutes, an American dies in an alcohol-related crash. In Minnesota alone, alcohol is a factor in nearly 40 percent of traffic fatalities. Last year, 255 people died in alcohol-related crashes (up 4.3 percent from the previous year) and 32,193 people were charged with DWI. Of those arrested, 41 percent were repeat offenders. And each year people involved in drinking and driving incidents pay dearly in time and hard-earned cash.

DWI CHARGES

In Minnesota, driving while intoxicated (DWI) is driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .10 or higher. Violators can be charged with one or more counts of the four degrees of DWI (see "Crime and Punishment" at left), depending on the number and severity of the following aggravating factors:

- a prior impaired-driving incident within 10 years
- a BAC of .20 and above
- driving impaired with a passenger under the age of 16

Any DWI offender refusing to take a requested breath, blood, or urine test can also be charged with a gross misdemeanor or even a felony equivalent to second or first degree DWI. Further, authorities can immediately seize the offender's driver's license and suspend it for one year.

DWIs also come with civil penalties, including license revocations or suspensions for 30 to 90 days for a first offense with a BAC less than .20, and for six months if the driver is under age 21.

DWI CONSEQUENCES

Getting driving privileges reinstated isn't easy or inexpensive.

The minimum a DWI violator can expect to pay is about \$700 (along with completing an application and passing a written test). Add towing and impoundment fees, fines, car insurance hikes, and an alcohol assessment, and first-time offenders (if their BAC is under .20) can expect to shell out nearly \$20,000 when all is said and done.

Physical or financial death is just not worth it. The concept is simple. If you drink, don't drive. If you drive, don't drink. Need more info? Visit the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety's web site at www.dps.state.mn.us.

MINNESOTA WILL BE .08 IN 2005
Starting August 1, 2005, Minnesota's legal limit for DWI will decrease to a BAC of .08. The new law allows first-time DWI offenses (with a BAC level of between .08 and .10) to be purged after 10 years if no additional offenses occur. The law will also require the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to collect certain alcohol-related traffic stop and test results by every law enforcement agency, as well as prepare a summary report to the Legislature.



dwi

PREVENTION Tips

After a single drink, people can begin to lose their ability to perform the tasks necessary to drive a car, such as braking, steering, changing lanes, and using judgment to adjust to changing road conditions. Avoid DWI consequences with these tips:

- Set a drink limit and stick to it.
- Drink slowly and eat before and while drinking to slow alcohol absorption.
- Stop drinking hours before driving.
- Know your drink: some mixed drinks contain more than one ounce of alcohol.
- Be honest about your driving ability.
- Choose a designated driver who agrees not to drink, and doesn't.
- Insist guests leave their keys at the door, and have them stay overnight or take a cab home if they've been drinking at your house. Courts can hold hosts responsible for their guest's safety after they leave.

Holiday Trimmings Need Special Attention

While decorations may make the holiday season special, they also require extra attention. Research by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission shows that 12,500 people show up in emergency rooms every holiday season for injuries caused by lights and decorations. Christmas trees alone cause about 300 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries, and an average of more than \$10 million in property damage. Common sense rules, but here are some tips for holiday safety.

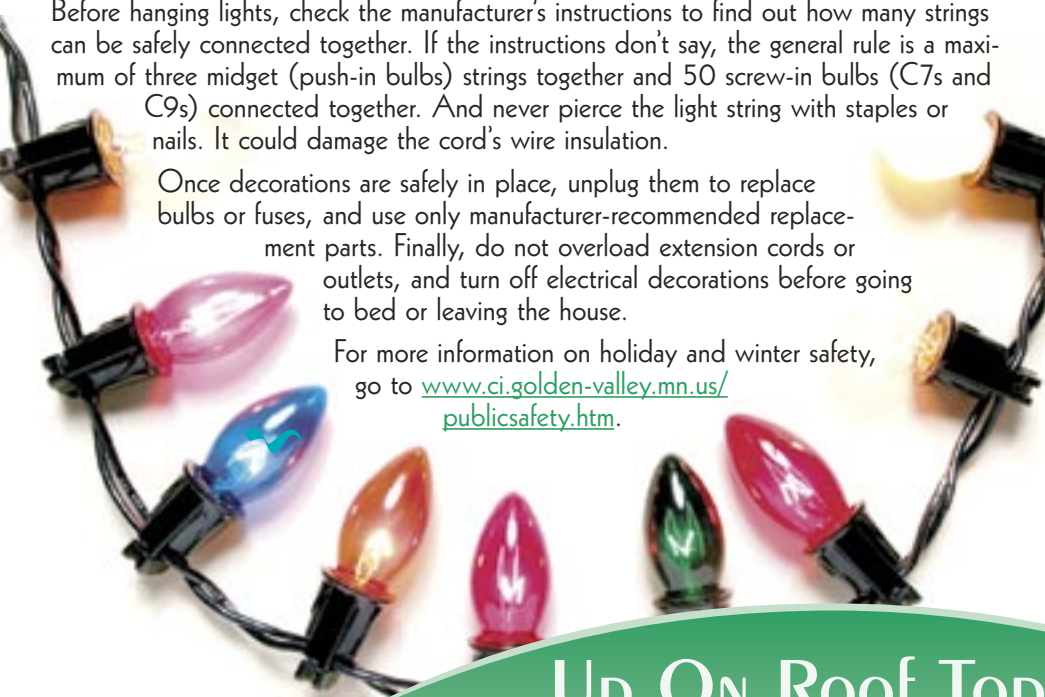
Live trees and other greens need to be fresh. Needles that are brown or break easily present a greater fire risk. Find a fresh tree, take it home, put it in a solid, non-tipping stand, and keep it watered at all times. Artificial trees should be labeled "fire resistant." Electrical decorations, including lights, should not be used on trees with metallic needles, branch coverings, or leaves. Both fresh and artificial trees need to be at least three feet from heat sources and should not block doorways or other exits.

Electrical decorations, including lights, need a UL label to prove they have been tested for safety. Purchase lights with a green UL label for indoor use and lights with a red UL label for both indoor and outdoor use (see sidebar), and follow the manufacturers instructions carefully. Whether decorations are new or used, check for bare, frayed, or loose wires, cracked sockets, and loose connections, which can cause serious electrical shocks or fire.

Before hanging lights, check the manufacturer's instructions to find out how many strings can be safely connected together. If the instructions don't say, the general rule is a maximum of three midget (push-in bulbs) strings together and 50 screw-in bulbs (C7s and C9s) connected together. And never pierce the light string with staples or nails. It could damage the cord's wire insulation.

Once decorations are safely in place, unplug them to replace bulbs or fuses, and use only manufacturer-recommended replacement parts. Finally, do not overload extension cords or outlets, and turn off electrical decorations before going to bed or leaving the house.

For more information on holiday and winter safety, go to www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us/publicsafety.htm.



SAFETY ALERTS

Cooking, Kids, AND ELECTRONICS

Throughout the year, it's vital that you keep kids away from stoves and ovens yet stay close yourself. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the United States. Never leave food cooking on a stove top while you run out to get that special ingredient or even leave the room. And be careful that loose clothing doesn't come close to the burner.

Along with the cooking hazards, keep kids and pets away from electrical decorations (or any heat source, including candles). Be sure electrical gifts for young people have the UL label. Electric toys and water should never become acquainted.

Non-electric toys have hazards too, though they may not be fire related. No matter how advanced you know your child is, make sure toys are age appropriate. Small parts can cause choking. Read warning labels and the use and care booklet if there is one, and inspect the toy for sharp edges or damage. With all types of toys, show children the proper way to play to avoid injury, and dispose of plastic packaging and wrapping paper immediately after the gift is opened. Later, watch for product recalls. If you filled out the product warranty and registration forms, the manufacturer will contact you directly if the product is recalled.

Up On Roof Top?

Americans enjoy illuminating the great outdoors during the holidays. The following tips will help you safely display your lighted holiday decorations.

- Purchase extra bulbs specifically designed for outdoor light strings.
- Have a plan before heading out into the yard, and locate outlets to make sure extensions cords can reach.
- Use only outdoor-rated light strings and extension cords.
- Follow the manufacturer's suggestions regarding the maximum number of light strings that can be connected together.
- Wrap connected plugs with waterproof tape.
- When a bulb goes out, replace it immediately. Burned-out bulbs drain electricity and dim other bulbs.
- Use only insulated staples or nails to hold lights in place, and never pierce the light string.
- Make sure ladders are sturdy and on stable ground and that your shoes and the steps are not slippery. Have another person provide support and hand up items.
- When it's time to take the decorations down, wrap light strings in a figure-eight pattern with each row of bulbs facing in a different direction. Try not to dislodge any bulbs, and replace missing or burned out ones. Store lights in a cool, dry place.

KNOW YOUR WINTER ORDINANCES

PARKING ON PUBLIC STREETS

Parking is not allowed on public streets after a snowfall of at least two inches until snow has been plowed to the curb line.

After a snowfall of at least two inches, supervisors from the Public Works and Police Departments confer and determine when enforcement will commence. Vehicles in violation are cited by patrolling police, and those still in violation after 24 hours may be towed. This winter, stay informed of the weather forecasts and move your vehicle from the streets when necessary.

SNOW REMOVAL FROM PRIVATE PROPERTY

Removal of snow and ice from private property to a roadway, across a roadway, or onto a sidewalk or adjacent property is prohibited by City ordinance. Infractions are misdemeanors, subject to fines and prosecution. Snow removed from your driveway or parking lot (whether you do it or hire someone to do it) must be kept off roadways, sidewalks, and adjacent property. If you or your plowing contractor have questions regarding this issue, contact Tom Klatt, Public Works Maintenance Manager, at 763-593-3981.

Plow DAMAGE

The City is not liable for damages to obstacles in the road right-of-way (irrigation heads, landscaping, etc). These obstacles should either be removed from the right-of-way or marked clearly so plow drivers can avoid them. Mailboxes are repaired or replaced only if the plow makes direct contact. Sod damage can be reported to Public Works at 763-593-8030. Damages to sod are repaired each spring with black dirt and seed or sod.

Winter's Moods Precipitate Preparation

Although the National Weather Service is claiming that this Minnesota winter will be warmer and drier than usual, Golden Valley's Public Works Department is gearing up as usual for whatever the season may bring.

Work began around mid-September, with the three-person Vehicle Maintenance crew changing filters, checking operations, and adding snow removal accessories to 14 different pieces of City equipment, transforming them for winter duty.

Once the equipment is ready, the Vehicle Maintenance crew remains poised to assist the Golden Valley's 14-person Street Maintenance crew, which covers 120 miles of city streets and about 31 miles of sidewalk every time it snows. Plowing starts after snow accumulates to two inches or more and stops falling. To keep traffic moving when snowfall continues for long periods, crews focus on main arterial routes and "through" streets that connect neighborhoods to state and county roads. Plowing stops if strong winds and drifting cause unsafe conditions and resumes when conditions improve. Public Works always has a mechanic on duty whenever crews are plowing snow.

SNOW PLOW SAFETY

To help snow plow operators, residents should:

- reduce speed and keep a minimum distance of 50 feet from trucks plowing and spreading sand (frequent backing is necessary, and rear visibility is very limited)
- never drive into a snow cloud or pass vehicles while they're plowing
- stay away from the end of a driveway when a snowplow is approaching
- keep sleds and toys away from the street when they're not being used
- don't build snow forts in the snow piles on the boulevard
- keep garbage cans and recycle bins in the driveway if it snows on collection days

If you have questions about snow plowing or winter safety, call Public Works Street Maintenance Supervisor Lyle Johnson at 763-593-8081, or go to www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us/streets/winterstreets/htm.

Metro SNOW STATS

(Source: National Weather Service)

Season	Inches of Snow
2003-04	66.3
2002-03	35
2001-02	66
2000-01	75.8
1999-00	40.7

Average date of first inch of snow: November 1

Average date of last inch of snow: April 2

ICE CONTROL

Depending on the existing weather conditions, sanding crews use a variation of salt/sand-salt mixture on icy areas. Priority areas are sanded first, and all other areas are done when time permits. Priority areas include:

- intersections of City streets and County and State roads, school and pedestrian crossings, bridge decks, and all arterial street stop sign intersections
- street intersections having higher than average traffic volumes, and streets with hills and curves
- all other stop signs, and areas deemed hazardous by City crews or Public Safety officials


Hwy 55/Boone Ave Project Is On Schedule

Work on the Hwy 55 and General Mills Blvd/Boone Ave intersection and flood proofing project is proceeding according to schedule. On Hwy 55, the new westbound lanes have been paved, and work is under way on the eastbound lanes. The first layer of pavement is in place on the new Hwy 55 south frontage road, and final landscaping and pavement will be completed next year.

Much of the work won't be visible when construction is complete. Some new water mains were constructed on Betty Crocker Dr, General Mills Blvd, 7th Ave, and the south end of Boone to replace defective mains and provide better fire protection. Once they are tested, they will be put into service. A new utility conduit corridor will house Xcel Energy, Qwest, KMC Communications, and other communications facilities.

A more visible aspect of the project has been the use of shredded tires as lightweight fill in deep excavations. One of the project's goals was to raise Boone Ave to minimize the flooding that occurs in that area and causes road closure. The poor soils north of the Hwy 55/Boone Ave intersection go about 40 feet deep, limiting options for correction. Adding more gravel to raise the road would accelerate settlement of that section of roadway. Removing all of the poor soils would have required a 130-foot-wide trench in some areas to properly support the new roadway. A trench of this magnitude would have impacted the nearby service station and been cost prohibitive.

Another option was to replace some of the soil with a lightweight alternative that would compensate for the weight of the extra soil to be placed on top. Various items were included in the bids to get the most cost-effective alternative. The least costly was shredded tires (approximately one-third the weight of gravel). Using the shredded tires, along with associated drainage and ponding improvements, should result in the City's ability to minimize the flooding and road closures that inconvenience the public using Boone Ave.

The project is scheduled for completion in summer 2005. For more information about the project, contact Golden Valley Public Works at 763-593-8030. 

REGIONAL TRAIL Update

For years, the City of Golden Valley and the Three Rivers Park District have worked together to complete the final segment of the Park District's 40-mile-long North Hennepin Regional Trail.

The three-mile segment is proposed to run primarily along the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way in Golden Valley. It would link regional parks and park reserves in the northwest suburbs, the Luce Line State Trail, and City of Minneapolis trails.

Currently, the Park District and the City are identifying costs, alignment, schedules, and citizen participation for the trail segment in Golden Valley. Funding for the construction, operation, and maintenance of this trail segment will be secured through Three Rivers Park District.

Watch the City web site and future editions of CityNews for ongoing trail updates.

2005 PMP PROPOSED FOR NORTHEAST GV

Golden Valley's proposed 2005 Pavement Management Program (PMP) includes streets primarily in the northeast corner of the city in the vicinity of Stockman Park, including the portion of Noble Ave between Culver Rd and the north city limits (see list at right). Preliminary work (surveying, soil borings, and the neighborhood participation process) was completed in mid-November. The City Council is scheduled to consider the proposed project at its January 4, 2005 meeting.

The PMP targets streets that are typically in very poor condition and are high priority for reconstruction because of the extent of past maintenance required. The Northeast Area PMP project would upgrade utilities, reconstruct streets to current City standards (including installation of concrete curb and gutter), and restore lawns and landscaping disturbed by construction. Residents in the PMP project area would receive biweekly newsletters from the City updating them on construction schedules and progress.

If approved, construction would start in March 2005. For more information about the proposed 2005 PMP, contact the Public Works Department at 763-593-8030.

2005

PMP STREETS

- Adell Ave N (Noble Ave N to Kyle Ave N)
- Brunswick Ave N (Glenwood Ave to cul-de-sac)
- Brunswick Ave S (Glenwood to Dakota Ave S)
- Dakota Ave S (Glenwood to Brunswick Ave S)
- Emdale Rd (Noble Ave N to Kyle Ave N)
- Hampshire Ave S (Laurel Ave to I-394 N Frontage Rd)
- Indiana Ave N (Golden Valley Rd to cul-de-sac)
- Kyle Ave N (Culver Rd to 34th Ave N)
- Kyle Place (Golden Valley Rd to cul-de-sac)
- Lee Ave N (Culver Rd to 34th Ave N)
- Major Ave N (Culver Rd to 34th Ave N)
- Noble Ave N (Culver Rd to 34th Ave N)*
- 33rd Ave N (Major Ave N to Lee Ave N)
- Valleywood Circle (Olson Memorial Hwy S Frontage Rd to cul-de-sac)
- Wasatch Lane (Mary Hills Dr to cul-de-sac)

*State Aid Street

PARKING LAWS PROMOTE SAFETY

In large cities like Washington, DC, virtually any 10- by 20-foot spot is often used for parking a vehicle (including front lawns and sometimes sidewalks). While Golden Valley's illegal parking woes aren't as blatant, violations occur quite often, especially during peak times near schools, churches, parks, and entertainment centers. Sometimes motorists don't realize they are illegally parked until they get a ticket.

State laws prohibit parking in certain areas on all streets and highways to foster safety. For example, for obvious reasons it's illegal to park on a sidewalk or within an intersection. Less obvious are some of the following locations:

- within 10 feet of a fire hydrant (to provide firefighters quick access to the hydrant)
- within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection (to provide a line of sight between pedestrians and motorists)
- within 30 feet on the approach to any flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic signal located on that side of the street (to assure approaching motorists have unobstructed views of the device)
- within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing
- in front of a public or private driveway
- on a bridge or in a tunnel
- within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station
- wherever official signs prohibit parking

In Golden Valley, "no parking" signs on many arterial and collector streets (eg, Duluth St, Winnetka Ave, Rhode Island Ave) ensure that the entire roadway is available for vehicle movements. In other locations, parking is selectively prohibited (eg, "No parking here to corner") to improve safety sight distance at corners, or to eliminate potential conflicts which could lead to accidents.

Bottom line: Illegally parked vehicles can contribute to serious accidents. While the impact of parking tickets may be relatively small and affordable to some, the safety impacts can be rather dramatic.

Emergency Vehicles Always Get Green Light

Did you ever notice that when a fire truck, ambulance, or police car approaches a traffic signal with lights flashing and siren wailing, it always seems to get a green light? It's not coincidence and it's not luck. It's because of traffic signal preemption equipment, and Golden Valley's system is citywide.

If you have watched a Golden Valley fire truck responding to an emergency, you may have seen a rapidly flashing bright white light among the many other flashing lights on the vehicle. This "emitter" is part of the preemption package. It flashes at a precise rapid rate and has a specific light composition, unlike the other lights.

Almost all traffic signals in Golden Valley feature "preemption detectors" facing each street approach. The detectors can sense the emitter light rate and composition from as far away as a quarter-mile.

The emitter light triggers a special traffic signal sequence. Within certain guidelines, green lights showing for cross traffic are terminated with a yellow clearance light and then red. The traffic signal controller then shows a green light to the approaching emergency vehicle as soon as possible. While green light lengths may be shortened, no vehicle or pedestrian clearance period ever is. The light will stay green for the emergency vehicle as long as the detector senses the emitter light and for a brief period after.

When two emergency vehicles converge on an intersection from different directions, it's first come, first served. To alert emergency vehicle drivers to this possibility, a white floodlight is mounted on each traffic signal for each approach. When the emitter light is sensed coming from one direction, the floodlight for that direction is lit and remains steady. Floodlights for all other approaches will begin flashing.

These floodlights also assist all motorists.

When you see the flashing white light on the signal, watch for emergency vehicles coming from another direction. When you see a steady white light, check your rear view mirror and prepare to get out of the way.

Think it would be nice to have one of those emitters on your vehicle? Forget it. The law limits the use to official emergency vehicles responding to an emergency. Even emergency vehicles cannot use them except in response, meaning they will sit in traffic next to you on their return trip.

Statistics show the traffic signal preemption system has not only reduced accidents but also response time by providing green lights to responding emergency vehicles. Just one more way technology has made life safer for Golden Valley residents.

Questions? Contact Public Safety Director Bob Herz at 763-593-8059. 

Vehicle Licensing GENERAL INFO

The City of Golden Valley has a full-service Motor Vehicle Deputy Registrar Department right in City Hall that can handle your licensing needs.

- Vehicle Licensing and Registration
- Title Transfers
- Fishing and Hunting Licenses
- Notary Service

LOCATION AND HOURS

Located in Golden Valley City Hall, 7800 Golden Valley Rd (one block north of the Highway 55/Winnetka Ave intersection and east on Golden Valley Road).

Open each weekday from 8 am to 5 pm and Tuesdays until 6 pm.

763-593-8101



Bring Your Basement Into The Light

Once dark and dank, and often referred to as a dungeon or cellar, the subterranean room now called a basement has become a homeowner's dream, at least in regard to extra space it can provide for entertaining, corralling the kids, working out, hobbies, etc. Still, some basements have their issues—small windows, low ceilings, columns and beams, and moisture problems, to name a few. It is important to address these issues while planning for basement remodeling or finishing, and to begin the plan with a trip or a call to City Hall for information and to obtain the necessary permits.

Permits ensure that your project meets nationally recognized standards for safety. Most home improvement projects require permits, and lower level improvements are no exception.

To obtain a permit, submit a building permit application, along with two copies of the plans showing layout and materials, to the City's Inspections Department.

Building Plan Requirements

Plans must be to one-fourth inch scale and show:

- location of existing and proposed interior and exterior walls and their construction material; location and size of windows and doors; and location of existing and proposed plumbing fixtures, furnace, water heater, stairway, fireplaces, and smoke detectors
- name of each existing and proposed room
- a cross section plan with proposed finished ceiling height; wall, floor, and ceiling materials; and existing and proposed insulation and vapor barrier

Separate permits are required for all plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work.


Building Code Requirements

The list of requirements for lower level finishing is too extensive for this article, but here are a few highlights to get you thinking.

For fire safety reasons, windows are a huge issue in lower level spaces. Basements with habitable space (such as family rooms), and every bedroom, must have at least one egress window or exterior door (see sidebar for more details).

Ceilings in habitable rooms and bedrooms must be at least seven feet high, and beams and headers must be properly sized to provide structural support. Walls have their own set of requirements. The bottom plate of proposed walls must be of approved, treated wood. Foam plastic insulation needs to be protected inside by at least a one-half inch gypsum board. Walls with exposed fiberglass insulation that are uncovered must be protected by a four-millimeter flame-retardant vapor barrier.

Moisture is another major issue, so a moisture barrier is required against masonry/concrete foundations from floor to grade. A four-millimeter vapor barrier is also required between the gypsum board and the studs.

To receive a handout with complete building code requirements for lower level finishing, or to speak to an inspector, call the Golden Valley Inspections Department at 763-593-8090. 

HOME REMODELING FAIR

Golden Valley's annual Home Remodeling Fair is a great place to start your project. Browse home improvement displays, sit in on a few free seminars, talk to contractors and architects, and get your questions answered by City inspectors. Mark your calendar for Sunday, February 13, 2005, then watch the January/February *CityNews* for more details, or go to www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us/community/RemodelingFair.htm.

PROJECTS MUST BE INSPECTED

Inspections ensure that completed work meets national safety standards. Inspection requirements for several common projects are listed below.

Plumbing—before covering any newly installed drain, waste, or venting pipe. Final inspection after all plumbing work is completed.

Mechanical—after bath fan venting and all mechanical supplies and returns are completed

Electrical—before covering any wiring and before scheduling a framing inspection. Final inspection when all electrical work is completed, but before final building inspection.

Framing—when framing and all above listed inspections are completed (framing, plumbing, and mechanical rough-in inspections can be combined on small projects)

Insulation—after insulation and vapor barriers are installed

A final building inspection is done after all work is completed.

Emergency Escape Windows

State building code requires that all basement dwelling units have an emergency egress window in every sleeping room. Egress windows must have:

- a minimum clear openable width of 20 inches and height of 24 inches with a minimum clear openable area of 5.7 square feet
- a finished sill height not more than 44 inches above the finished floor
- a window well outside of the building if the window opening is below grade

The window well must:

- be a minimum of 36 inches wide and give access to an area that is a minimum of nine square feet with window fully open
- have a minimum six-inch drop from the window sill to the ground
- include a ladder if the well is more than 44 inches deep



Join the Golden Valley Police Department (GVPD) in a unique approach to the Toys for Tots donation effort. For the tenth consecutive year, the GVPD will lead regional law enforcement agencies in a toy drive that culminates in a loud, colorful parade. On the last collection day, police from as many as 20 departments load their police cruisers with toys and meet at the GVPD. Then, lights blazing, they caravan over to the KARE 11 Toys for Tots drop-off site. In past years the effort has garnered thousands of toys.

Between November 29 and December 20 (at 3 pm), bring new, unwrapped toys to the GVPD at 7800 Golden Valley Road (open 24 hours a day). Don't forget gifts for older kids and teens. For more information, contact Sergeant Steve Johnson at 763-593-2505.

www.ci.golden-valley.mn.us

Local Crime Fund Needs Your Support

Safety and security are crucial factors in healthy communities. Community partnerships are a vital component in our police department's success in keeping crime low in Golden Valley. The Golden Valley Crime Prevention Fund provides essential financial support for a variety of crime prevention and safety programs. Run by volunteers, this private, nonprofit organization is supported by Golden Valley businesses and residents dedicated to creating and maintaining strong community involvement.

TRUTH IN TAXATION

In November, property owners received individually mailed Truth in Taxation notices showing dates and times of public meetings that will be held to discuss proposed tax levies. The City of Golden Valley's Truth in Taxation public hearing is set for 7 pm Monday, December 6.

Several of Golden Valley's crime prevention programs are youth oriented, including Safety Camp (a two-day safety education program for second, third, and fourth graders), Junior Safety Camp (day-long safety education for four-, five-, and six-year-olds), CounterACT (a drug and violence prevention program for fifth graders), Law, Crime, and Safety (a safety and citizenship curriculum for fifth graders), and Kids & Cops (an after-school program for at-risk middle school students). Other crime prevention programs include the Senior Safety Fair, National Night Out, Neighborhood Watch, and the I-394 Virtual Block Club. The Crime Fund also provides rewards for information in serious criminal cases.

Contributions are the Crime Fund's only source of revenue. Please consider a tax-deductible contribution. For more information, contact the Crime Fund at 763-593-8054 or cpfund@ci.golden-valley.mn.us.

*Nancy Azzam, President,
Golden Valley Crime
Prevention Fund*

City of
Golden Valley

763-593-8000

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7800 Golden Valley Road
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