

# City News

Autumn 2011

## City Council Adopts 2011 Mid-Year Budget Reductions & Commences 2012 Budget Process

### KEY DATES FOR 2012 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

8-16-11

City Council Work Session  
Dept. Budget Requests &  
Preliminary Levy  
Discussion

9-6-11

City Council Meeting  
Preliminary Levy Adoption

10-18-11

City Council Work Session  
Utilities Budget Discussion

11-15-11

City Council Work Session  
2012 Budget Finalized

12-6-11

Truth-in-Taxation Hearing  
Final Levy and 2012  
Budget Adoption

On July 20, the Minnesota Legislature passed a tax bill, which Governor Dayton signed into law which reduced the 2011 Certified Local Government Aid (LGA) and Market Value Homestead Credit (MVHC) to the City of Waseca by \$612,476. In response to these cuts, the City Council approved mid-year reductions at a Special Council Meeting on August 1, 2011 in the amount of \$632,096. The reductions attempt to minimize the impact on direct services and avoid major policy and operational changes. While there are a number of one-time reductions, a majority of the reductions are on-going. State aids to cities and counties have been cut significantly in recent years. However, those cuts were not permanent. The tax bill essentially locks in the cuts to aids to cities and counties at their 2010 levels.

In the past four years, through the unallotment process and legislative action, Waseca has seen an overall reduction in state aid and credits of \$1,729,539. While City staff has made every effort to maximize the use of the resources and minimize impact on services, the reductions have had a significant impact on our ability to provide City Services. In response, we have reduced the City workforce by fifteen percent; implemented a two-year wage freeze; deferred road and sewer infrastructure and maintenance requirements; deferred building maintenance; reduced funding of recreation, library and senior transportation services; postponed park improvements and necessary capital equipment purchases; reduced funding to the Historical

Society and the Senior Center; reduced the City's monthly newsletter to quarterly; and eliminated the Police Canine Unit and the annual community Spring Cleanup.

The 2012 Budget poses additional challenges. To help balance the state's budget, the Legislature repealed the market value homestead credit (MVHC), which the state would cut homeowner's property taxes, and then reimburse the cities and counties the amount of the cut. Beginning with taxes payable in 2012, in place of the MVHC program, homeowners will receive an exclusion of a portion of the market value of their house. For a home valued at less than \$76,000, the exclusion is equal to 40 percent of the home's market value. For homes valued between \$76,000 and \$413,800, the exclusion is \$30,400, minus 9 percent of the value over \$76,000. The new market value exclusion for homes will mean that beginning in 2012, each city's tax base will be reduced and the city's tax rate will rise to obtain the same property tax levy. Although the homestead credit exclusion is computed in a mathematically similar manner to the repealed MVHC, the new system will shift taxes among properties within each community, especially to commercial, industrial, apartment and other properties that will not receive the benefit of the homestead market value exclusion.

In these challenging times, resident involvement is more important than ever, please join us in the discussions. ■

# A Special Thank You to our Adopt-A-Park Volunteers

The City of Waseca Park Board commenced an Adopt-A-Park program in May of 2009.

The Adopt-A-Park program provides organizations, groups, families and individuals an opportunity to volunteer their services in assisting Park Department staff keep parks and trails clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing.



The minimum volunteer commitment is to clean their chosen site of litter, debris, and downed tree limbs once per month from April to October.

The City of Waseca Park Board extends their sincere appreciation to the Adopt-A-Park Volunteers.

- Elm Homes, Clear Lake Park
- Tim & Robin Terrell Family, Hwy. 14 Trail and Maplewood Park.
- Waseca Women of Today, Sportsman Park and Trail to Clear Lake Park
- Lori Pommerenke Family, Emerson Park and Herters Lot
- Don Zwach, Northeast Park
- Gary & Jill Tobin, NW Park Trail & Bike Trail to 22nd Ave NW
- Bruce Boyce & Sally Takala, Bike Trail from Boat House to Hwy 14

- Run Purcell, Boyd Fuller, and Jerry Kuhn, Loon Lake Park
- Tom & Bobbi Holtz Family, University Park
- Dave & Melissa Dunn, Bike Trail from 2nd Ave NW and Northwest Park
- Gyles & Carol Randall, 4th & 7th Ave. NW to Loon Lake Park
- Girl Scout Troop 25440, Trowbridge Park
- Bernie Swenson, Loon Lake Park to Loon Lake Treatment Pond/Boat Landing
- Gary Hanson, Oak Park
- Waseca Park Board, Veterans Park

These volunteers are to be commended for their community servitude. Your efforts are greatly appreciated! ■



The City of Waseca operates the local PEG (public, education, government) access channel, that can be viewed locally by all Mediacom and Hickory Tech cable subscribers on Channel 8. The channel is a community-based resource that can be used by individuals and organizations to display video programming and announcement slides. For more information on Waseca PEG Channel 8, contact 835-9700.

24<sup>th</sup>



Waseca

**Sponsored by:**  
Waseca Classic, Inc.  
**Supported by:**  
Waseca Band Boosters  
Waseca Public Schools  
Waseca County News  
City of Waseca  
Waseca Chamber of Commerce

The 24th Annual Waseca Marching Classic is just around the corner on Saturday, September 17, 2011! The Classic Parade will start at 12:30 p.m. featuring over 100 units and competitive bands. At 4:30 p.m. the Field Show will feature outstanding bands in competition. For more information, please visit [www.wasecamarchingclassic.com](http://www.wasecamarchingclassic.com)



**12:30...Classic Parade**  
featuring over 100 units and competitive bands  
**4:30...Field Show**  
outstanding HS bands in competition



Marching  
Classic



**Saturday,  
September 17, 2011**

# Waseca Utilities

Waseca Utility Billing Office is located at 508 S. State Street. The normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please contact 507-835-9718.



## You Can Help!

HeatShare is a voluntary program administered by the Salvation Army that helps those in need in our community by providing funds for heating bills and heating-related repairs.

You will receive a brochure explaining the program in your December utility bill. If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution to this program, simply enclose a check, made payable to HeatShare, along with your utility payment and Waseca Utilities will forward the contribution to the Salvation Army. For more information, you can visit [www.thesalvationarmy.com](http://www.thesalvationarmy.com) or call 800-842-7279.

## MN Cold Weather Rule

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission set up the Cold Weather Rule. This rule states that from October 15th through April 15th, a residential utility customer can avoid disconnection for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect their primary heat source, and if the customer enters into a mutually agreed upon payment schedule with the utility.

A copy of the Cold Weather Rule and an application will be included in your October utility bill. There is no requirement to return the completed application; however residential customers wishing to be covered by Cold Weather Protection should return the application, with a proposed payment plan, to the Utility Billing office as soon as possible after

October 1. Please be aware that submittal of a cold weather protection application does not automatically protect a customer from disconnection, but only initiates the process for review of program eligibility.

If you have any questions regarding your utility bill, or need to obtain an application, please call Utility Billing, at 835-9718. ■

## Utility Payment Plans

If you are having difficulty paying your utility bill, we urge you to contact the Utility Billing office and discuss the option of setting up a payment plan. Utility Billing staff will look at your account balance and consumption history and work out a payment plan that fits your payroll dates. We encourage you to be proactive with your account; don't wait until you are facing the possibility of disconnection of your utilities. Contact Utility Billing, at 835-9718.

If you need help paying your gas or electric utility bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance.

Please contact any of the agencies included here for more information.

### Minnesota Valley Action Council

507-835-8240

### Neighborhood Service Center

507-833-4119

### Waseca County Social Services

507-835-0560

### Salvation Army/ Heat Share

800-842-7279

### United Way 211

211 or 800-543-7709

# Bulletin Board



## The Southern Research & Outreach Center Open House

September 15 from 4-8 p.m.  
A free event for the entire family, fun events, including:

- Picnic supper
- Observe llama agility
- Play 4-H games & make fun projects
- Find answers to the "Science Whys"
- Examine wind-power related activities
- Explore with aqua robotics
- Win a ribbon at the "Kids' Power Pedal Pull"
- Maneuver the corn maze
- Attend a mini course on tree & shrub pruning
- Ask a Master Gardener about your landscape and gardening questions
- Bring a sample of your well water and test for nitrates
- Learn about forest invasive species
- Get up close to the U's research animals & insects: calves, pigs, turkeys, & bees
- Experience hands-on goat milking
- Discover exciting U of M agricultural research
- Dine at the "Chemo-preventive Cafe"
- Sample MN-grown foods & wine
- Ride the horse-drawn trolley
- Shop at the U of M "Country Store"
- Get healthy! - Learn about good food choices
- The Masonic Cancer Center will display a hands-on exhibit that educates visitors about cancer and showcases some of the current research being done at the U of M
- Shake hands with Goldy gopher

## Waseca Fire Department Fire Prevention Open House & Chili Feed

During National Fire Prevention Week, October 9 - 15, 2011 attention is focused on promoting fire safety and prevention. During Fire Prevention Week, the Waseca Fire Department will be conducting fire drills at all Waseca Schools and the Safe House will be at Hartley Elementary (October 10 & 11) and Sacred Heart (October 13).

You are invited to attend the Waseca Fire Department Fire Prevention Open House & Chili Feed on October 9, 2011 from 4-7 p.m. at the Fire Station, located at 117 2nd Ave SE. Tickets can be purchased in advance, or at the door.

Thank you for supporting your local firefighters!

## Leaf Burning

Burning of dried leaves is permitted between from October 15 to November 15 from 2 to 8 p.m.

Burning is limited to areas of the City zoned residential purposes only. All burning should be conducted a minimum of 25 feet from all buildings, structures, flammable materials, tall grasses and weeds (please note the burning of brush or shrub is not allowed within the City limits).

## Recreational Fires

The City of Waseca does allow recreational fires. Fire pits need to be 18 inches deep and not exceed 3 feet in diameter. Fire has to be a minimum of 25 feet from buildings and other combustible materials. Extinguishing equipment needs to be near the recreational fire such as a hose or water filled bucket.

## Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program

The City of Waseca has been designated as a MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. As a result of this designation, the City is required by State and Federal laws to operate the storm sewer system with respect to a NDPEs (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit and an accompanying (SWPP Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program). This document identifies and outlines numerous programs and activities that help the City and its citizens minimize stormwater pollution and its effects on the environment.

Additional information is available at City Hall and on the City's website at [www.ci.waseca.mn.us](http://www.ci.waseca.mn.us).

**STORMWATER  
HOTLINE  
507-835-9730**

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

The City of Waseca Utility Billing Department wishes to extend a thank you to the Senior Citizen's Center. This important group of volunteers assists the City by preparing the utility bills and inserts for mailing each month.