

Woodbury City Update

March 2007 • Volume 8, No. 3

Ready to garden? Get new ideas at Landscape Workshop April 14

This summer, create a beautiful landscape and garden using environmentally friendly practices. Learn how at the ninth annual Environmental Landscape Workshop on Saturday, April 14, at Woodbury City Hall.

The event is free and open to the public. No reservations are necessary. This year's program will emphasize water conservation, with speakers on lawn care, perennials, tree selection and care, and growing herbs. It begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends around noon.

The workshop also will be broadcast live in South Washington County on cable television channel 16 and later replayed. The program also can be viewed on the Internet via Web streaming on the South Washington County Telecommunications Web site at www.swctc.org.

In the first presentation, David Paulson will discuss "Low Impact Lawn Care." The session will focus on soils, weed control, fertilizer, and low maintenance approaches, including correct watering practices, to lawn care. Paulson is a Washington County Master Gardener and Minnesota tree care adviser, with a degree in forestry.

Planting the right tree

At 9:30 a.m., learn about selecting "The Right Tree for Your Space" from Doreen Gow, Washington County Master Gardener who has advanced training in landscape design. Her



talk will focus on options in purchasing trees for the home landscape, plus proper planting and watering techniques.

If you're interested in getting ideas on perennials for your landscape, be sure to attend Marge Sagstetter's session on "Drought Tolerant Perennials" at 10:30 a.m. She is a Washington County Master Gardener whose presentation on prairie gardening received rave reviews at last year's workshop. Her talk, which includes many photos, will cover her own experience in "struggling with water and drought issues last year."

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Public invited to comment on storm water program

To address issues related to storm water runoff, a 1987 amendment to the federal Clean Water Act requires implementation of a two-phase national pollution prevention program. As part of this program, Woodbury, along with many other communities in Minnesota, was required to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The permit addresses many areas, specifically outlining controls and practices the city will implement in an effort to reduce or eliminate pollutants from storm water runoff.

The NPDES permit program requires regulated cities to hold a public meeting in conjunction with the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) annual report. This meeting allows citizens an opportunity to review the city's SWPPP and give written or oral input regarding the program.

The public meeting to review the SWPPP and 2006 accomplishments will be held at 7 p.m. on March 29 at Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road. A copy of the SWPPP is available in the Community Development Department at Woodbury City Hall for review by interested citizens.

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Council Perspective

by Mayor Bill Hargis

City tracks performance to monitor service trends

In March, the City Council will conduct strategic planning sessions to identify issues and initiatives that deserve more detailed study over the next two-year period. At these sessions, we make an effort to step back from the day-to-day business of running the city and focus on big picture issues that affect our quality of life in Woodbury.

Since 1997, the Council has engaged in this type of strategic planning every two years, typically selecting three to five issues and then developing work plans for each. The work plans define each issue, the desired outcomes for each, and the schedule for completing various steps associated with the initiative.

In selecting the strategic initiatives, the City Council looks at how well the community is doing in a number of areas deemed critical to the success of our city. Many of the measures used to track the city's performance are based on the opinions expressed by citizens in the biennial community survey (recently completed), and many come from data compiled each year for the Performance Measurement Program.

Measuring performance

Through this program, city staff tracks nearly 250 performance trends in city services. For example, we monitor the average amount of time it takes to completely plow city streets after a snow storm. By monitoring performance, the Council can determine if service is improving or declining, and whether we need to adjust resources in a particular area.

Our service goal is to complete snow plowing within eight hours. Heavy accumulations or high winds sometimes make that impossible, as with the recent winter storms. However, in 2005, city crews achieved that goal 90 percent of the time. (The 2006 performance measures are still being compiled and analyzed.)

Last fall, the Council reviewed the 2005 performance measurement report and associated statistics. Following are a few of the highlights.

- The total rounds played at Eagle Valley Golf Course were 30,161 (holding steady

from the previous year)

- The turnover rate for city staff was 7.9 percent (down from the previous year)
- Number of inspections made by each full-time building inspector: 3,007 (this number has been steadily rising since 2002)
- Average response time (paramedic) for emergency medical services: 3.7 minutes
- Police response time averages 3.8 minutes
- The number of participants in the city's recreation programs totaled 81,023
- Ninety-three percent of citizens rated the quality of life in Woodbury as "excellent" or "good"

These are a few of the "core" measures selected from various city departments. Core measures are ones that we deem most critical to city operations. Other measures are "secondary." They are still important aspects of city services, but not as critical as the core measures.

A municipal leader

Performance measurement is not a new program in Woodbury. In fact, former city administrator Barry Johnson was recognized as a leader in this area, initiating a performance indicator program more than a decade ago. Under current city administrator Clint Gridley, we have refined the program and also become a charter member of the Minnesota Performance Measurement Consortium formed in 2006 in cooperation with the International City/County Managers Association.

There are many benefits to this program. Measuring performance provides accountability, demonstrating the return to citizens for their tax dollars. It assists the Council in budgeting, allowing us to allocate the proper resources to appropriate areas to achieve our performance goals. Tracking performance helps us identify operational problems early and take corrective actions before they become bigger problems.

And, as we prepare for our strategic planning, the program helps us focus on a clear statement of goals regarding the manner in which we want to deliver services in Woodbury.

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In the final session of the morning, Lynne Markus will share her knowledge about "Growing Herbs in Minnesota." Herbs are a great way to practice chemical-free gardening. They are easy to grow for new gardeners, and can be used by more seasoned gardeners as distinctive landscape beds. Markus is a Washington County Master Gardener who teaches numerous adult education classes in landscaping and horticulture.

Ask the experts

All sessions will include a question and answer period. In addition to the presentations, there will be informational displays and handouts. Washington County Master Gardeners and city staff will be available to answer questions throughout the morning.

The Landscape Workshop is sponsored by the Woodbury Environmental Advisory Commission, a volunteer group that advises the City Council on matters relevant to sustainability including solid waste, air, water, land, energy, and other natural resources.

Woodbury City Hall is located at 8301 Valley Creek Road. Questions about the workshop can be directed to City Hall at (651) 714-3500.



Public invited... from page 1

For more information, contact the Community Development Department at (651) 714-3533. Additional information about Woodbury's storm water program can be found on the Woodbury Web site at www.ci.woodbury.mn.us. On the home page, click on "environment" in the navigation bar. Then select "water quality" on the environment page.

Home filter systems can reduce or remove PFBA in water

After the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced it had found trace levels of perfluorobutanoic acid (PFBA) in Woodbury's municipal drinking water, the city hosted a community meeting on Feb. 13 to provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the chemical and bring their questions to public health experts.

MDH has emphasized that the low level of PFBA detected in Woodbury water does not present an immediate health risk.

Nevertheless, many residents wanted to know how they could reduce their exposure to the chemical. MDH responded with the results of recent tests showing that water filters with activated carbon (or charcoal) can reduce or remove PFBA from water.

There are two types of activated carbon filters: point of use and point of entry. A point of use filter is installed in the water supply line just before the location where people use the water. One example is an under-sink unit. Water passes through the carbon filter and travels to a separate water tap next to the main faucet. Water from the separate tap is treated water and the recommended source for drinking and cooking; water from the main faucet (hot or cold) will be untreated.

Other examples of point of use filters are the water pitcher or faucet-mounted activated carbon filters commonly sold in stores, or filters that are a part of a refrigerator's ice-maker.

Do point of use filters remove PFBA?

Point of use filters can be a cost-effective way to reduce exposure, according to recent tests conducted by MDH staff.

Pitcher filters: Tap water containing low levels of PFBA was filtered using a simple pitcher containing activated carbon. The filter was partially effective at removing the chemical from the water. It allows more PFBA to pass through as additional water is filtered.

Faucet-mounted filters: This device containing activated carbon worked better, showing full removal of PFBA through half of its manufacturer-predicted filter lifetime, and good removal at up to 60-80 percent of its full predicted lifetime.

While MDH tested only one brand of each kind of filter, other brands appear to be comparable in size and design, and should work in a similar fashion. The filters can be found at many stores, are economical, and are easy



Example of a pitcher filter.



A faucet-mounted filter.

to install and operate. MDH may conduct additional tests to verify the results.

For any type of filter system, consistent maintenance and periodic filter replacement is essential to ensure effectiveness and prevent bacterial build-up. You should closely track water usage, and follow the manufacturer's directions for when to change the filter.

Point of entry filters

Also called whole-house filters, a point of entry filter is installed at a point on the home's water supply plumbing that will result in treatment of all water that travels to any faucet or fixture in the home. These filters, usually cylindrical in shape, are typically installed as a pair to ensure that any chemical that might get past the first filter is trapped by the second.

Systematic monitoring and maintenance are essential in ensuring that the activated carbon filter functions properly and is changed before its ability to attract the chemical is used up. Water conditioning systems generally are installed by a licensed, bonded plumbing or water conditioning contractor, although homeowners can install equipment in homes they own and occupy.

It is recommended that water treatment systems be tested and certified to national standards by a reputable testing laboratory, such as NSF. Beware of "fly by night" water treatment vendors; be sure to work with a reputable supplier and check references.

If you have questions or need more information, visit the MDH Web site at www.health.state.mn.us, or contact Tannie Eshenaur at (651) 201-4897.

Informational hand-outs from the Feb. 13 meeting have been posted on the Woodbury Web site at www.ci.woodbury.mn.us. Links to the MDH and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency also are provided.

Department of Health advises pregnant, nursing women

Are the levels of PFBA in the Woodbury wells safe for expectant and nursing mothers, infants and young children?

The Minnesota Department of Health believes that water containing 1 part per billion (ppb) of PFBA is safe for the general public, including expectant and nursing mothers, infants and young children. At this time, no special precautions are recommended for people served by the Woodbury municipal water system.

People who are still concerned about PFBA at the low levels (0.2 to 0.5 ppb) found in the Woodbury municipal wells can take steps to reduce their exposure. To reduce or remove your exposure to the chemical, you can substitute bottled water for drinking and cooking uses, or use a filter that contains activated carbon. Taking these simple steps eliminates this issue as a source of concern.

Many people get their drinking water from private wells that have not yet been evaluated.

Until there is more information about the levels of PFBA in private drinking water wells, residents can also take these same steps (above) to reduce or remove their exposure to PFBA.

MDH cautions that the advice for using water from private and public wells may change as more information about toxicity, contamination, and treatment becomes available.

Happy birthday, Lookout Ridge!

Lookout Ridge indoor playground is celebrating its fourth birthday on Sunday, March 25, and you can get \$1 off admission for attending the party.

To receive the discount, simply clip the coupon (at right) and present it during regular business hours (1 to 5 p.m.) on March 25. Each coupon is valid for two admissions.

The play area, located on the lower level of Central Park, is a popular recreation destination for children of all ages. At Lookout Ridge, they can climb inside cliffs imitating the St. Croix River Valley, then zoom down a mountain spiral slide emerging from a cave. Children also venture to the top of the tree house, cross over to the gigantic fallen tree, and race down a 30-foot super-slide. In addition, the play area boasts a themed, lifelike design with sound effects.

The playground is open Monday through Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Daily admission is \$5.33 (includes tax).

You can take a virtual tour of Lookout Ridge on the Woodbury Web site at www.ci.woodbury.mn.us. Under "Parks and Recreation," click on "Central Park."

Youth Expo on April 12 a preview of summertime fun

Looking for activities to keep your kids busy this summer? Then plan to attend the Summer Youth Expo on Thursday, April 12, when several youth program providers will be on hand to share information and/or register participants for summer programs and events.

The expo will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. at Central Park, 8595 Central Park Place. Several organizations will be represented at the event including:

- City of Woodbury Parks and Recreation
- LifeTime Fitness
- Mississippi Dunes Golf Course
- South Washington County Community Education
- StarPlayers Musical Theatre Camp
- Southeast Area YMCA
- Washington County Library



This event is free and is co-sponsored by Woodbury Parks and Recreation and School District 833 Community Education. For more information, call Parks and Recreation at (651) 714-3583.

Woodbury's Indoor Playground Fun

www.woodburylookoutridge.com

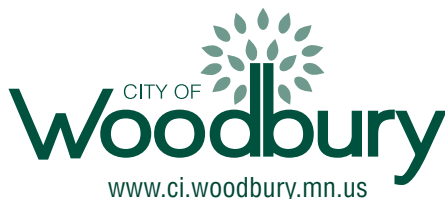


Climb the cliffs of the St. Croix Valley, slide down a spiral mountain pass, and venture to the top of the Lookout Tower!

**\$1 off the Daily Admission rate
on Sunday, March 25, 2007.**

Coupon valid for two admissions • 8595 Central Park Place • (651)735-7645

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The Woodbury Newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Comments are welcomed. Send to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-3330. Phone: (651) 714-3500. email: jlehr@ci.woodbury.mn.us

Mayor: William Hargis. Council Members: Julie Ohs, Paul Rebolz, Amy Scoggins, Mary Giuliani Stephens. City Administrator: Clinton Gridley. Communications Coordinator: Julie Lehr.

The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Julie Lehr, 714-3500; TDD: 714-3568.

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