

BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



NOVEMBER 2019

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2019 SILVER CIRCLE AWARD
PRINTED PUBLICATIONS



BLOOMINGTON ENGAGEMENT VEHICLE HITS THE STREETS

The Bloomington Engagement Vehicle (BEV) rolled out to its public debut at Heritage Days this September. BEV is a repurposed 2009 vehicle from the existing City fleet. With the phrase “Hi, Neighbor” printed on it in seven languages along with a colorful, welcoming design, the vehicle is meant to catch the eye and appeal to everyone.

BEV is one of many tools available that City staff can use to connect with community members in their neighborhoods

and around town. Staff will take BEV out to gather input on City projects, share information and find solutions on a variety of topics.

Follow #FindBEV on social media to track where BEV will show up next.

Contact Community Outreach and Engagement Division staff, *pictured above*, for more information at 952-563-8733 or visit blm.mn/findBEV.



WHAT COULD A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER BRING?

Plans are underway for a new community center designed to better serve all of Bloomington. The current Creekside Community Center at 9801 Penn Avenue South has outlived its useful life. The preferred site for a new facility is Valley View Park at 90th Street between Nicollet and Portland Avenues. A new facility on this site would provide even more opportunities for programming for all ages.

WE'RE LISTENING

The City is currently in the process of seeking resident input to decide what a new community center could look like and what amenities it could include. The City will also seek resident input on a master plan for the surrounding park.

This potential new amenity is in the beginning stages and nothing has been officially decided. The City has been gathering stakeholder input online, in person at community engagement sessions and by going out into the neighborhoods surrounding Valley View Park to have face-to-face conversations with residents.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Staff will report on initial findings and engagement, and be available to answer questions on Thursday, November 14, at 6:30 p.m., in the Schneider Theater at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. There will also be a public hearing at the City Council meeting on Monday, November 18, 7 p.m., in the Civic Plaza Council Chambers.

LEARN MORE

For more information or to sign up to receive emails about the project, visit blm.mn/communitycenter or call 952-563-8896.



BRIEFING

Volume 27, Number 11

The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to our residents and businesses. Direct comments and requests for Braille, larger print or computer file to Communications Administrator Janine Hill, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3071; PH 952-563-8819; MN Relay 711; FAX 952-563-8715; Email: jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov
Website: BloomingtonMN.gov

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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733. Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

MAYOR'S MEMO

ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE: THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES FOR BLOOMINGTON

By Mayor Gene Winstead

I've been fortunate to lead this great city for the past 20 years. I have often described Bloomington as the center of the universe. By that, I mean this community is central to the quality of many lives and livelihoods. We are among the best of cities, and I am proud of our people, schools and the range and variety of businesses that contribute to its vitality.

Looking back on my years as an elected official, I have found it has been a time to learn and a time to grow. Keeping a steady eye on the future was my focus when making decisions that were best for all of Bloomington.

These are exciting times for Bloomington. We are envisioning our future, improving our existing amenities and planning new ones. What does the future of Bloomington look like for you? How do you see your community in 5, 10 or 20 years? What will make things better for you and your neighbors in terms of livability or property values?

I hear from residents and businesses all the time that they love it here. And we have the data from many years of surveys to back that up. But it is interesting to look at that data from an overall image perspective. How do we look to those outside of Bloomington?

When focusing on our community image and vision, we want that image to be positive. This has to do with our priorities, showing we are headed down the right path, keeping our physical environment and facilities updated and renewed, providing high-quality amenities and services, being in great financial shape and taking care of our people. If we continue to do this right, we will continue to attract new residents, innovative development and dynamic businesses. Bloomington will prosper and thrive.

There is still work to do. Every resident can be involved in creating a better community and contributing to the vibrancy and image of our city. I encourage everyone to participate in City-sponsored events and meetings. Vote, volunteer, support the arts and local businesses and welcome all of your new neighbors. Collective input makes us a greater whole—a greater One Bloomington.

CITY PARTNERS WITH STANTEC ON GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROJECT

The City is making moves to transform the Lyndale Avenue corridor from an auto-oriented, aging thoroughfare into a series of walkable neighborhood centers. To do that, staff will partner with Stantec—a consulting company that specializes in neighborhood redevelopment—and the community to develop a strategic vision and development strategy that builds upon the assets already in the area.

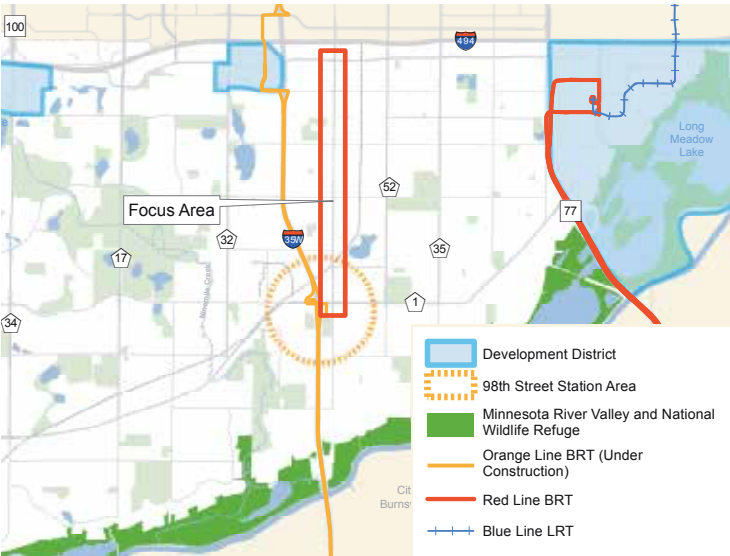
The contract between the City and Stantec was approved by the City Council in September. The kick-off began this fall with community engagement continuing throughout the winter and spring.

The purpose of this work is to attract public and private investment that will create a variety of housing and mobility options, appealing and inclusive public spaces, and vibrant retail environments using suburban retrofit strategy—a process that takes existing spaces and refashions them to create walkable areas that encourage community gathering.

Rooted in solid economic market analysis and demographic trends, the suburban retrofit strategy will provide clear and realistic implementation guidance over a 20-year period, ultimately creating economic, social and environmental value for Lyndale Avenue and the community.

"The redevelopment of Bloomington's aging neighborhood commercial centers increases the likelihood of more business owners and residents reinvesting in our community," Community Development Director Eric Johnson said.

For more information about the project and the Gateway Development District, visit blm.mn/gateway or call 952-563-8920.





FIRE STATION 3 CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Since the groundbreaking in April, the new Fire Station 3 has started to take shape. If you pass by the site at 2301 86th Street East, you'll see most of the exterior of the structure is now complete, including the walls, concrete floors and roof for the building. *The photo above was taken in August.*

The new station will provide adequate equipment, truck and tool storage, address health and safety issues for firefighters with a decontamination room, provide more room for training and be more energy efficient.

"We're aiming to have things buttoned up on the site before the winter weather hits so work can be done on the interior through the season," Deputy Fire Chief of Engineering and Operations Tim Barrett said.

The existing Station 3 is 53 years old and no longer meets the needs of the community or Bloomington Fire. The City is using South Loop funds to build the new Station 3. Firefighters who work out of Station 3 were involved in the design process from the beginning. Stations 2, 4, 5 and 6 also need to be replaced in the future. Construction on Station 3 is expected to wrap up in early summer 2020.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET: 2020 PRELIMINARY PROPERTY TAX LEVY

In September, the City Council approved a preliminary 2020 property tax levy of \$65,461,818. The preliminary tax levy can be reduced, but not increased, before final adoption in December.

This levy funds 69.4% of the City's General Fund budget. The remainder of the General Fund budget is supported by lodging and admission taxes, license and permit fees, grants and program revenues.

"The preliminary levy reflects a 6% increase over the 2019 levy," Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler said. "Of this, approximately 4.5% would go toward City operations and the remaining 1.5% is needed for payments on existing debt."

"The vast majority of the budget continues to fund core services, including police, fire, public works and parks and recreation. In addition, the City continues to adjust and expand its services to meet the changing needs of our community," City Manager Jamie Verbrugge said. "In recent years, the City has devoted increasing resources to sustainability efforts, racial equity and mental health crisis response. These investments are directly aligned with the City Council's strategic priorities."

The City's budget is challenged by rising health insurance costs, a tight labor market and fluctuating construction markets. External factors such as the State's motor vehicle licensing software, changes in federal franchise fee regulations and the relocation of the Hennepin County courts to downtown Minneapolis also pressure City resources.

HOW WILL THE CITY'S BUDGET AND LEVY AFFECT MY PROPERTY TAXES?

Like the City's preliminary levy, the City's tax base also went up 6%. However, the distribution of the tax levy across the city will vary. Changes in value influences property tax, and for 2020 taxes residential values increased faster than commercial.

For property valuation information, call 952-563-8708 or email mgersemehl@BloomingtonMN.gov.

Debt service payments are funding needed reconstruction of the City's roadways and parks. The City's pavement management program has been in place since 1992 to repair and replace roadways systematically. However, road construction costs continue to increase at an average of 4% annually. More recently, the City has begun to issue debt for regular park improvements. This year's projects include renovation of the Dred Scott wheelhouse and improvements to the Bloomington Ice Garden.

"The City has aging infrastructure and amenities that require regular reinvestment in order to meet the needs of current and future residents," Verbrugge said.

The City strives to keep the tax levy affordable while also planning for the future by maintaining appropriate reserves. Ten- and 15-year budget models are used for long-term planning and to ensure that the City can meet future needs while avoiding large swings in the tax levy.

"In Bloomington, the value of City services is one of the best in Hennepin County. What residents pay in City taxes on a median-value home is lower than just about all of our neighboring communities," Verbrugge said.

The Council will hold a public hearing, Monday, December 2, 7 p.m., in the Council Chambers, prior to adopting a final 2020 levy and budget.

For more information, call 952-563-8791 or email leconomy@BloomingtonMN.gov.

HRA DONATES LAND TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS

A house will soon be built on an open lot on Penn Avenue providing a place for homeless veterans to live, thanks to a three-party partnership, including the Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

The HRA acquired the property because it had a substandard, foreclosed home on it. Once the house was removed, the HRA donated the property to the BATC Housing First Minnesota Foundation. The nonprofit will partner with Lennar to build a four-bedroom home for homeless veterans. The home will provide an affordable, temporary place for veterans to live for up to two years while receiving resources from the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. The home will serve four veterans at a time.

"Ending veteran homelessness is a top priority for the state and especially Governor Tim Walz, and we at the City certainly want to do our part," HRA Program Manager Bryan Hartman said. "The HRA is always interested in finding ways to provide additional affordable housing. This is an example of not only providing affordable housing, but helping veterans who served our country and are now experiencing homelessness."

The groundbreaking for the home was held in late October. It will be built in just 95 days.



IT DELIVERS SERVICES

Information Technology (IT) is wired into most City functions, helping to maintain high-quality service and add to overall quality of life.

At Mall of America, IT assisted with a system that gathers information to tell when parking ramps are full. IT also partnered with Traffic Engineering to provide improved signaling around South Loop and other locations to improve the user experience.

Through the work of IT and other City divisions, many interactive maps are now available on the City website. Find a list at blm.mn/maps, with interactive maps for zoning areas, road closures, traffic, crime and more.

You can also access a wide variety of City services online, including registration for Parks and Recreation programs. Complete permit applications and other building and inspection forms in a few clicks. Pay utility bills, make a data request, or even schedule passport processing appointments.



CITY COMMUNICATIONS NATIONALLY AWARDED

The City won two awards from the national City-County Communications and Marketing Associations (3CMA) Savvy Awards contest this year. The video "Pack your bags, pondweed!" took home a first-place Savvy award and the *Briefing*, this publication, received a second-place Silver Circle award.

Of the *Briefing*, judges said "the quality of the publication is indicative of why there would be a strong desire to increase the frequency of publication. After reading an issue, I feel like I've visited Bloomington."

The Savvy Awards salute skilled city, county, agency and district professionals who have creatively planned and carried out successful innovations in communications and marketing. This year, 3CMA received more than 700 entries from local governments across the country.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES NOW AT THE CITY

With a fleet of more than 600, the City added its first two electric vehicles in August, with plans to add more in 2020.

“With electric vehicles you have less maintenance over time, fuel savings and no oil changes. Not to mention the larger environmental benefits of lower fuel emissions in Bloomington,” Fleet Manager Mike Keim said.

CHARGE UP AT CIVIC PLAZA

The City also installed two electric vehicle chargers at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, for free public use. These chargers are at the north end of the parking lot near the arts center.

ENERGY ASSESSMENTS OFFER SAVINGS

If you own or operate a Bloomington business and are interested in finding ways to reduce energy waste and lower energy bills, you may be eligible for a limited-time offer. The City and Xcel Energy are collaborating to provide Bloomington businesses with an affordable way to identify energy- and cost-saving opportunities.

Energy assessments will be 50% off for the first 15 qualifying businesses that sign up before November 30.

Recently, some Bloomington businesses received walk-throughs of their buildings. Certified energy auditors identified top energy-efficiency recommendations and outlined next steps to move improvement projects forward—all at no cost to the business. Some needed more support identifying and implementing energy saving projects and qualified for a City-subsidized full energy assessment delivered through Xcel Energy’s Turn Key service program.

If you are interested, respond now so you don’t miss this savings offer.

To learn more and apply for Xcel Energy’s half-off Turn Key services, visit blm.mn/EnergyAudit.



EARTH ACTION HERO: MONARCH MAKERS

Butterflies needed help, and an enterprising Bloomington business saw that they got it. A monarch-friendly ecosystem thrived at the All Seasons Wild Bird Store (ASWBS) at 816 West 98th Street. From June to mid-September, four habitats were tended by ASWBS Manager Steven Endres and his staff. To keep things going, customers brought milkweed cuttings donned with monarch eggs.

The monarchs were treated with a royal touch. At ASWBS, monarchs—known as the king of butterflies—are considered priceless and worthy of protection.

“In the last 20 years, they’ve declined 80%, mostly due to cutting milkweed,” Endres said.

In the wild, hatching (baby) monarchs have a 5% survival rate. With the comforts of a butterfly hotel, including screened walls and daily room cleaning service, the ASWBS incubated monarchs had a near 100% survival rate.

The monarchs were given everything they needed to grow within four special see-through cages. The monarchs transformed from egg to caterpillar to adult, at which time wings emerged and the butterflies took flight.

Once mature, the monarchs were taken to places with an abundance of milkweed and released. Many were in Bloomington, including ASWBS employee Lisa Stanford’s garden, where she looked after three more habitats. She also provided much of the care in the store.

This year, more than 200 monarchs were released—proof that kind hearts can go far even in the insect world. For information, visit blm.mn/eco or call 952-563-8760.



HOW TO HELP MONARCHS

- Refrain from using pesticides on your lawn and garden. Opt for pesticide-free alternatives. Use water from a garden house to spray off aphids or Japanese beetles. Pull weeds; don’t spray them. Layer old newspapers anchored by rocks or bricks to eliminate large patches of weeds.
- Consider adding more native plants to your landscape. For starters, plant milkweed. Monarchs dine on a steady diet of live milkweed, the common variety being their nom of choice. Blazing star also attracts monarchs.
- Don’t touch, handle or disturb monarchs in the wild.
- Keep informed about monarch habitat and related environmental issues.
- Donate to conservation organizations.

GO GREEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Want to lessen your environmental impact? Try these green holiday tips. Even if you only pick one, you can make a difference.

1. Focus on what makes the holidays special rather than what you might do out of habit or in response to advertisements.
2. Decorate with your favorite things and reuse them. Need new ornaments? Buy used or create something new from repurposed items. Save energy with LED lights and a timer. Get a live tree and replant after the holidays.
3. Bring reusable bags and avoid impulse buying. Opt for lightly packaged gifts or make gifts from used items. Consider gift cards, gift certificates or charitable contributions.
4. Use recycled, paper-based holiday cards or make your own. For gift wrapping, opt for recyclable paper or decorate plain paper. Reuse ribbons or bows.
5. Buy and waste less by planning menus. Serve favorite foods from local and organic sources. Avoid canned and prepackaged items. Compost food scraps. Have reusable containers on hand to send leftovers home with your guests.
6. Use cloth napkins, real dishes, take-home containers and other reusable items. If you need disposable items, go compostable, biodegradable or recyclable.

HOLIDAY GARBAGE AND RECYCLING CHANGES

With the start of the holiday season approaching, take note of changes to the garbage and recycling schedule. For 2019, Thanksgiving is Thursday, November 28, and the holiday does not occur during a recycling week. Garbage services normally scheduled for Thursday will move to Friday, and those normally scheduled for Friday will move to Saturday.

For Christmas, the holiday falls on Wednesday, December 25, which is not a recycling week. Garbage services normally scheduled for Wednesday will move to Thursday, those normally scheduled for Thursday will move to Friday, and regular Friday service will switch to Saturday.

For more information, visit blm.mn/garbage or call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726.

November						
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December						
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ENJOY A WELCOME MEAL

The next Welcome Meal will be held at the newly opened Action Care Community Clinic and Dental. Discover first-hand how the facility will be a resource for patients of all ages, offering a sliding fee scale for individuals with low income. Welcome Meals are created to bring community together and connect people in a safe and supportive way through shared meals, conversation and culture.

“This medical and dental clinic was established to meet the growing needs of diverse communities in our city,” Action for East African People (AFEAP) Executive Director Ayan Abukar said.

Everyone is welcome to participate in a Welcome Meal hosted by AFEAP, at the new clinic in the Valley West Shopping Mall, Friday, November 22, 5:30 – 7 p.m., at 10584 France Avenue South. Funding for this program is supported by a Bloomington Crime Prevention Association grant. For more information, visit blm.mn/welcomemeal or call Community Outreach and Engagement at 952-563-8733 or TTY: MN Relay 711.

NATURALIZATION CEREMONY WELCOMES NEW CITIZENS

In honor of the International Day of Peace, 150 people from 40 different countries took the Oath of Allegiance and became U.S. citizens at Civic Plaza on September 23. Each year, the Human Rights Commission hosts a naturalization ceremony to celebrate vibrant immigrant and refugee communities and to demonstrate that Bloomington is a welcoming city.



VISIT VETERANS PHOTO WALL

More than 300 photos of veterans from the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force make up the veteran’s photo wall. Their proud faces are a reminder of their dedicated service and sacrifice.

Take part in this long-running tradition honoring veterans from our community. See this year’s display, November 7 – 30, at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road or Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South.

Would you like to provide a photo for the 2019 display? To submit a photo online, visit blm.mn/vet-photos or email a photo to Creekside@BloomingtonMN.gov. Be sure to include the name, military branch and years of service for the individual pictured. To submit a photo in person, visit Creekside. Your original photo will be scanned and immediately returned to you.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

At the City of Bloomington, your voice matters. A new online opinion box makes it easier than ever to let us know how we are doing. Take a moment to tell us about your experience regarding a City event, program or service and how your experience helped you, your family or your neighborhood. There’s even an option to share photos. For information, visit blm.mn/voice or call 952-563-4947.



YOU COUNT! RESPOND TO CENSUS 2020

The U.S. Census is about you! Every 10 years the government counts each person to decide how much money to give communities for services and resources, including funding for schools, transportation and programs. It is important for the future of our community to have everyone fairly represented and accurately counted.

The City of Bloomington is making efforts to ensure all residents respond to the Census online, by phone or by mail. Worried about privacy? The Census Bureau is required to keep your answers confidential.

Want to do more to participate? Join the City’s Complete Count Committee to spread the word and increase response rates. For more information, visit blm.mn/census2020 or call 952-563-8733.



HEAR WCCO RADIO’S GOOD OLD DAYS

Thanks to WCCO Radio, the good old days are making a comeback at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South. Back by popular demand, WCCO News Director Curtis Beckmann will share more exploits of his news operation and how it thrived at home and abroad. Don’t miss this popular event, Monday, December 2, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

Register by Wednesday, November 27. Cost is \$5 with a light breakfast included. For more information or to register, call 952-563-4944.



SPARKLE YOUR SEASON WITH GLASS CLASSES

Make your gift list sparkle with flamework beads, fused-glass holiday ornaments or small fused-glass plates. Handcraft your own gorgeous glass gifts during a class offered by Artistry.

Flamework Glass Beads: Learn the basics of bead making. Discover how to work with torches, fuels and glass-making materials. Create and decorate basic bead shapes, Thursday, November 7, 6 – 9 p.m.

Fused Glass Holiday Ornaments: Design and produce five of your own glass ornaments as you explore the basics of glass cutting. Select from one of two class times, Saturday, November 9, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., or Tuesday, November 19, 6 – 9 p.m.

Fused Glass Small Plates: Make a pair of five-inch plates in this fun workshop, Tuesday, November 12, 6 – 9 p.m. Start with a pre-cut blank and embellish as you learn safety, design and cutting techniques.

For pricing details and booking information, visit blm.mn/artclasses or call 952-563-8575. To find out more about Artistry, go to blm.mn/artistry.



GET CREATIVE AT FAMILY ARTS DAY

Come to the Bloomington Center for the Arts studios and lobby, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road where families can make take-home art projects, participate in interactive arts activities and see demos by local artists. Join in the fun during Family Arts Day, Saturday, December 7, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. For more information, visit blm.mn/artistry or call 952-563-8575.

While you are at Artistry, do some holiday shopping at the Gifts in the Gallery sale in the Inez Greenberg Gallery, December 4 – 18. Take part in the sale’s reception, Wednesday, December 4, 6 – 8 p.m. Browse and enjoy holiday music, light refreshments, cash bar and door prizes.



MOTOR VEHICLE: HOW THINGS WORK

Do you like to buy local? When you use the Motor Vehicle/Deputy Registrar Office, 9930 Logan Avenue South, filing fees remain in Bloomington and support the City’s ability to offer services at the local level.

Motor Vehicle provides a full range of services that few cities offer, including processing ID applications, license tab renewals and driver’s license renewals along with changes, duplicates and special plates—plus registration and transfer of ownership for cars, trucks, motorcycles, trailers, mopeds, boats, snowmobiles, ATVs and off-road vehicles. A notary public is also available.

“We get comments from our customers such as, ‘I really like having this in Bloomington. This is so much quicker and easier than I thought it would be,’” Motor Vehicle Supervisor Kim Griffith said.

A team of nine takes pride in providing courteous and helpful service.

Want to trim a possible wait? Peak times at Motor Vehicle are early mornings, along with Mondays and Fridays.

To find out more about Motor Vehicle, visit blm.mn/license, call 952-563-8719 or email motorvehicle@BloomingtonMN.gov. For more information about Real ID, visit blm.mn/license.

REAL ID REMINDER

Did you know that you will need a Real ID for domestic airline travel starting, October 1, 2020? The deadline for Real ID is getting closer, and the City of Bloomington’s Motor Vehicle Department is available to help.

First, check if you have a Real ID. There will be a gold star in the upper right hand corner if it is a Real ID.

If you still have a standard ID and would like to switch to Real ID, you can do so any time rather than waiting for renewal. To start your Real ID application, go online to blm.mn/realid. You will be taken through the requirements, step-by-step. Completing the online pre-application at home first will save you time when you come to the Motor Vehicle/Deputy Registrar Office, 9930 Logan Avenue South.

For more information, visit blm.mn/license, call 952-563-8719 or email motorvehicle@BloomingtonMN.gov.

SHOP LOCAL FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS AT CREEKSIDE

Enjoy the ease of shopping in a friendly, small town atmosphere at Creekside Community Center. You’ll find a tempting assortment of handmade gifts at Creekside Boutique. The winter selection includes mittens, scarves, hats, slippers, jackets and more.

Need a gift for a holiday cook? Find fun and festive aprons for chefs of all ages. Greeting cards are available for every occasion. Proceeds from their sale goes to VEAP, Loaves and Fishes, and other local charities.

Most items are made by Bloomington residents, and many have a story. Crocheted baby booties were lovingly crafted by a Creekside craftsperson well into her 80s. When she passed, her family continued to make her handmade booties available to the boutique. Who could resist a practical keepsake that pulls heartstrings?

Shop weekdays, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., and Tuesday evenings, 5 – 7 p.m., at Creekside, 9801 Penn Avenue South. In December, the boutique is open Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Visit the boutique at the Indoor Farmer’s Market at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road on Saturdays, November 9 and December 14.

For more information, visit blm.mn/boutique or call 952-563-4944.



ENJOY A HOLIDAY SHOW: THE NUTCRACKER BALLET

Continental Ballet Company presents The Nutcracker Ballet, a timeless holiday tradition. Performances are scheduled on Saturdays, November 30 and December 7, 7:30 p.m., and Sundays, December 1 and 8, 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$19 for seniors and students, and \$13 for children under 13. Order tickets at 952-563-8562 or online at blm.mn/bcatix.



AT YOUR SERVICE: PARK-KEEPER CRAIG HAVLICEK

Craig Havlicek has an attentive eye and keeps things tidy around the city. In a blink, he multitasks taking care of several pieces of litter, a fallen branch, a misplaced sprinkler head and a parched basket of flowers. To say his day involves many things in many places would be an understatement, but Havlicek loves the variety and takes pride in keeping things looking good and running well.

“There isn’t a park I don’t know in Bloomington,” Havlicek said.

During the warmer months, he regularly inspects dozens of playgrounds to make sure they are in safe condition. Come winter, he does plowing and maintains skating rinks. In late spring, it’s time to get the hanging baskets up and growing outside of the entrances of Civic Plaza.

Havlicek enjoys working outdoors and the people he meets. After 25 years with the City and as a Bloomington resident for most of his life, he seems to know everyone. When Havlicek’s around, expect a smile and a friendly “Hello.”

HIDDEN GEMS: NORTHCREST PARK

Slipped away in a residential neighborhood, Northcrest Park is a hidden gem. At just over 12 acres, it’s easy to miss the 3500 West 81st Street location. Maybe you’ve noticed a park bench on the hill near Southtown Drive and Xerxes Avenue South? That bench marks the north edge of the park and is just one of the many amenities available.

Northcrest Park offers picnicking, off-street parking, seasonal restrooms and tennis courts dual-striped for pickleball, along with a playground, basketball court and softball field. Stop by and prepare to relax in a small but scenic park with an abundance of trees. For more information, visit blm.mn/Northcrest or call 952-563-8877.

What would you would like to see in Bloomington parks? Tell us! Park system master plan community input opportunities begin soon. Stay informed at blm.mn/park-master-plan.



HOLE-IN-ONE ON THE SEVENTH HOLE

The seventh hole proved the lucky number for Riley Praska, *above left*. A golfer’s dream became a reality when the 17-year-old player hit a hole-in-one during the Bloomington Athletic Association (BAA) tournament held at Hyland Greens Golf and Learning Center in August.

After six seasons of BAA golf instruction, Riley aced a 132-yard drive from the back tees during a tournament round where trophies were awarded. When the pressure was on, Praska was not one to let a big pond get in the way of a little golf hole.

Few golfers ever master the tricky seventh hole, the shortest and possibly most nerve-wracking at Hyland Greens. A can-do attitude, respectful demeanor and sport-focused lifestyle formed the foundation for Riley’s success. Golf is just one of many activities he enjoys. Adaptive softball, swimming, basketball, hockey and bowling for the Special Olympics are others, but golf is a favorite.

And what does Riley like best about golf? He said, “Getting a hole-in-one.”

For more information, visit blm.mn/BAA or call 612-799-5455.



INDOOR FARMERS MARKETS BEGIN

Miss the fun, food and community of the Farmers Market? The weather might be cold, but the Bloomington Farmers Market is just warming up. The indoor Farmers Market will be held Saturdays, November 9, December 14, February 8 and March 14, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. Find fresh apples, root vegetables, cheeses, baked goods, canned goods, hand-crafted apparel and jewelry, holiday greens, gifts and more. For more information, visit blm.mn/market or call 952-563-8877.

STAYING SAFE WHILE OFF LEASH

Bloomington’s Off-Leash Dog Park at 111th Street and Nesbitt Avenue will soon be safer for our four-legged friends. The pond on the north edge of the park has always been accessible, but it is partially privately owned, holds storm water runoff that could contain contaminants and has served as an escape route for dogs to swim across in summer and run across in winter. To remedy this, Park Maintenance will install additional fencing so that the pond is no longer accessible, improving safety while maintaining most of the scenic woodland along its shoreline. For more information, call Park Maintenance at 952-563-8760.

LET’S DANCE!

Get ready to boogie at Parks and Recreation’s Dance Your Socks Off event. The dance is for adults with disabilities ages 18 and up. It will take place on Friday, November 22, 7 – 9 p.m., at Creekside, 9801 Penn Avenue. The theme is holiday so come dressed in your best holiday sweaters, accessories and more. ‘Tis the season!

You may purchase tickets at the door or register and pay in advance online at blm.mn/arle. The cost to attend is \$6 per participant (includes a free beverage). Support staff will be admitted free and can purchase beverages for \$1 each. Door prizes will be given near the end of the evening; must be present to win.

For more information, call 952-563-8877 or visit blm.mn/arle.



SNOW PLOWING
SEASON COMING

Bloomington’s first snowfall usually occurs in November. Be prepared when City snowplows traverse more than 300 center-lane miles of roads. You can help to make plowing faster and more efficient. When it’s snowing, don’t park your car on the street. This helps staff plow the full width of streets and keep them wider. A City ordinance requires cars to be clear of rights-of-way where deemed to be a nuisance that interferes with snow removal.

You can reduce the amount of snow that gets pushed across your driveway by clearing the area to the right of your driveway and placing excess snow to the left (when looking at your house from the street.) This gives plow drivers a place to push the next round of snow and avoid a pileup at the end of your driveway. Keep garbage cans in your driveway and away from the street. For residents, the City requires garbage cans left for pickup to be located in their driveways.

For information, visit blm.mn/snow or call 952-563-8760. The Snow Emergency Hotline is 952-563-8768.

BPD LAUNCHES
C.O.V.E.R.

The Bloomington Police Department recently launched its C.O.V.E.R. (Crisis or Violent Extremist Reporting) Program, an anonymous help line designed to serve two purposes: crisis intervention and reporting violent extremist behavior. BPD has taken several steps in past years to address the growing number of crisis calls officers respond to, including training officers in crisis intervention and partnering with Hennepin County to embed a licensed social worker within the department. “C.O.V.E.R. is designed to keep mental health cases out of the criminal justice system and connect people with services so they can get the help they need,” BPD/Hennepin County Social Worker Tenzin Gongma-Dhakpo said. To use the tip line, call 952-563-4673. For more information, visit blm.mn/cover.

MEET A BLOOMINGTON
FIREFIGHTER

Manda Johnson has been a Bloomington firefighter for three months. She serves out of Station 3. Q: What made you want to become a firefighter? A: I wanted to become a firefighter to get involved in my community. The Fire Department offered a sense of community, public service and a way to stay active and engaged. It really fit all my criteria. Q: What was the recruitment process like for you? A: It took about six months from the initial recruitment to being officially hired. That really shows how the City and BFD are invested in you and it proves your commitment to them that you stick around to the end. You have to do background checks, physical agility tests and meet all sorts of other requirements. Q: What is your day job? A: I’m a cardiovascular intensive care unit pharmacist. Our unit happens to do heart and lung transplants, heart pumps and more. I’m really in my dream job. It’s very hands-on and very active. That’s a lot of what I like about firefighting, too. Q: What do you like to do when you aren’t working or volunteering? A: I like to spend time with my fiance and my dog, Riley, exploring what Bloomington has to offer. We’ve only been here for three years so we still have a lot to get involved in and discover.



BLOOMINGTON
YESTERDAY:
FIRE TRUCK TAMES THE
FLAMES

A ladder truck with a shiny red finish has timeless appeal. This truck likely turned heads and drew crowds in its day. The vehicle known as Ladder 13 responded out of Fire Station 3, at East 86th Street and 22nd Avenue. The Peter Pirsch-built, 100-foot, tractor-tiller, aerial ladder truck was part of the Bloomington Fire Department fleet and provided more than 30 years of service to the City before it was retired in 1993.



MULTIUNIT HOUSING GOING SMOKE-FREE
LOCAL DATA MAKING THE CASE FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS TO GO SMOKE-FREE

Most of us are aware of the health problems associated with secondhand smoke, but when exposed in our own living space in close quarters with those who smoke, we may have little ability to do anything about it. Public Health has been focusing its efforts on smoke-free, multi-unit policies in Bloomington for the past seven years. Of the Bloomington properties surveyed by the division, more than 50% of children in nonsmoking families reported exposure to secondhand smoke. Public Health Specialist Deb Miller working with support from the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), has been tracking multiunit properties from the project’s inception. “When this work began, there was no official list of which properties were smoke-free,” Miller said. “Our work focused on collecting individual property data through resident surveys and other outreach. Our findings provided the support and momentum property managers needed to go smoke-free with 80% of residents in smoking-allowed apartments supporting a no-smoking building.” Public Health helped Sharon Kendhammer conduct her

first resident survey when she was the property manager at Tarnhill Apartments, one of several properties Steven Scott Management has in Bloomington. Survey results showed a majority of residents at Tarnhill supported a smoke-free policy. Implementing the policy had a positive effect by eliminating smoking complaints, helping residents who smoked to quit and adding to Tarnhill’s appeal as a healthy place to live. Since then, Kendhammer has worked with Public Health to conduct surveys in six additional Bloomington properties, all of which will be implementing smoke-free policies January 2020. SHIP’s work has assisted 30 Bloomington properties in going smoke-free, impacting more than 2,000 units. Two property management companies, Girard Management Inc. and Premier Properties, have turned their entire portfolios smoke-free, affecting 4,000 units collectively. These companies have units across the metro area, making their impact even greater. For more information, contact Public Health Specialist Deb Miller at 952-563-8928.