

# B L O O M I N G T O N BRIEFING



SEPTEMBER 2021

THE CITY CONTINUES TO MONITOR THE SITUATION WITH COVID-19 AS IT EVOLVES. CHECK [BLM.MN/COVID](https://blm.mn/covid) FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION FOR EVENTS PROMOTED IN THIS ISSUE.

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## RIVER RENDEZVOUS RETURNS

**B**uying tools from the local blacksmith. Tapping maple and birch trees for sugar. Foraging for berries and edible vegetation. Traveling by horse or covered wagon. Portaging canoes and trading furs. These activities and more made up the daily lives of Indigenous people and Euro-American settlers who made their homes in the river valley of Bloomington in the 1800s.

For about 25 years, Bloomington Parks and Recreation's living history festival River Rendezvous has offered a chance for area students and residents to take a peek into this way of daily life through storytelling and interactive, hands-on demonstrations at Pond Dakota Mission Park, 401 East 104th Street.

River Rendezvous takes place Saturday and Sunday, September 25 and 26, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Daily entry costs \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth age 4 – 17, and is free for children 3 and under. Discounted two-day passes are also available. For more information, visit [blm.mn/rendezvous](https://blm.mn/rendezvous) or call 952-563-8877.

# BLOOMINGTON. tomorrow. together.

## CITY BEGINS COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING

**T**he City is starting a strategic planning effort that will involve the community in planning Bloomington's future. The initiative "Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together." asks residents to volunteer to help design a strategic plan. City representatives will work in partnership with members of the community at every stage of the process, from the initial stages of understanding who and what Bloomington is, through creating a mission statement and strategic objectives, to planning the priorities for implementation and identifying the measurements for success.

"The difference between this and other strategic planning processes is that this is being done in partnership with the community," City Manager Jamie Verbrugge said. "We want the community's voice reflected in this strategic plan."

### STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEES

There are several opportunities for the community to get involved, including:

**Core Planning Team**—Members will provide input and recommendations on the development of a strategic plan and actively encourage implementation. (Meetings will occur December 2021/January 2022.)

**Action Planning Team**—Members will break down the strategic plan's objectives into specific, and measurable action steps after the Core Planning Team has completed its work. (Meetings will occur December 2021/January 2022.)

**Measurement Team**—Members will monitor the activity associated with the work plans, encourage implementation of actions and initiatives, and track key outcomes. (Meetings will occur December 2021/January 2022.)

All community members are welcome to apply. Applications will be accepted through September 30. For more information on each team, position descriptions or to submit an application, visit [blm.mn/BTT](https://blm.mn/BTT).

### COMMUNITY CAFES

The first phase of the strategic planning process includes an invitation for community members to provide significant and meaningful input to help develop a common understanding of Bloomington. This information will be gathered through a series of "community cafes" on October 16 that give people an opportunity to explore and share what it is they value about the places where they live, work or spend time. The cafes will help draw out the hopes and desires that people have for the future, provide constructive avenues for expressing concerns and fears, identify challenges and barriers to progress, and celebrate the strengths that make Bloomington great. Additional cafes will be offered throughout the community. Visit [blm.mn/BTT](https://blm.mn/BTT) for additional dates and times.

### COUNCIL ACTION

The city manager will make recommendations regarding the strategic plan to the City Council in early 2022. For more information about "Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together." and the strategic planning process, visit [blm.mn/BTT](https://blm.mn/BTT).



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# MAYOR’S MEMO

## THE 2022 BUDGET PROCESS IS UNDERWAY

By Mayor Tim Busse

Each year the City Council sets a preliminary property tax levy dollar amount and budget that must be submitted to Hennepin County at the end of September. The final property tax levy and budget must be approved by the end of December. The final tax levy can be lower than the preliminary tax levy that is submitted in September, but it cannot be higher.

The 2021 property tax amount levied by the City was \$66,468,834. About \$57.5 million of that amount was levied to fund the City’s General Fund operations. The majority of General Fund expenses are comprised of services such as Police, Fire, and maintenance to roads, infrastructure, and parks throughout the City. Other General Fund expenses include Environmental Health, Planning, Building and Inspections, Assessing, Public Health, Community Outreach and Engagement, Parks and Recreation, Engineering, City Clerk, Human Resources, Legal, Finance and the City Manager’s Office. The General Fund is the largest fund in the City, but it is just one of 30 Funds with a budget approved by the Council by resolution each year. A majority of the other budgeted funds receive revenues other than property taxes such as user fees or grants.

In addition to revenue from property taxes, the General Fund also receives revenue from local lodging and admission taxes. The pandemic greatly reduced this revenue source. In 2019, local lodging and admission taxes received into the General Fund were \$10.4 million. In 2020, that amount was only \$3.2 million and was budgeted at only \$4.8 million in 2021. City staff are projecting it may take five years before lodging and admission taxes are back to pre-pandemic levels. This strain on City revenues brings challenges to the budget. Last year, the Council appointed a nine-person resident Community Budget Advisory Committee to address the multimillion dollar revenue loss and help prioritize budget reductions. At the end of December 2020, the 2021 budget was approved along with a forecast for a 2022 conceptual budget. The 2022 conceptual budget was presented with a 0% increase to the 2021 \$66.5 million tax levy. The conceptual 2022 budget allowed projected increases in expenses offset with forecasted increases in lodging and admission taxes as well as tax stabilization reserves transferred to the General Fund.

However, even if the overall tax levy for 2022 is not increased from 2021, residential properties may see an increase on their 2022 property tax statements. The City’s portion of annual residential property tax comprises about one third of the overall property tax bill. The other two thirds go mostly to the Bloomington School District and Hennepin County. An increase in the School District or County tax levy could increase overall property taxes, but the biggest impact to property tax statements will be the shift of tax burden from commercial to residential. The City’s total property tax amount is allocated among property owners based on the value and type of their property. The residential housing market has continued to skyrocket with the median value home increasing from \$286,400 to \$307,200 while commercial values have decreased by more than 9%. Even if the overall property tax amount levied by the City is not increased in 2022, more of the share of property taxes will be paid by residential properties due to this shift.

The City Council plans to set the 2022 preliminary tax levy and budget at the September 13 Council meeting. The truth-in-taxation public hearing is scheduled for December 6 before the final property tax levy and budget is approved.

To see additional information about the City’s budget along with information on public budget information and engagement sessions, visit [blm.mn/budget](http://blm.mn/budget).

## CITY COUNCIL PASSES JUST DEEDS RESOLUTION

In June, the Bloomington City Council passed a resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants and joined the Just Deeds Coalition. Discriminatory covenants were tools used by real estate developers and others to prevent Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) people from buying or occupying property in certain areas. These types of covenants were common throughout the United States from the early 1900s to the 1950s. This practice resulted in racially homogenized communities that excluded BIPOC individuals and families, building a hidden system of segregation.

The University of Minnesota founded Mapping Prejudice in 2016 to expose the racist practices that shaped the landscape of the metro area. Through Mapping Prejudice, researchers identified 24,131 discriminatory covenants in Hennepin County, including 374 in Bloomington that intersect with 500 Bloomington land parcels.

While discriminatory covenants are no longer enforceable, discharging such covenants makes an important statement to condemn this racist practice. Moving forward, the Planning Commission, Human Rights Commission and City staff will conduct outreach to impacted landowners and the community at large to build awareness and share the process of how to discharge discriminatory covenants from property deeds. For more information, to find out if your property has a discriminatory covenant or to request free assistance in discharging a discriminatory covenant visit [blm.mn/justdeeds](http://blm.mn/justdeeds).

# BRIEFING

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The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to 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](mailto:jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov)  
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*Elected officials presented for informational purposes.*

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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.*





# Bloomington’s Quality of Life, Drinking Water Earn Praise in Poll

Nine in ten residents rated the overall quality of life in Bloomington as excellent or good, according to The National Community Survey™ completed this summer. Ninety-one percent of respondents are pleased with the city as a place to live.

## Safety-Related Ratings are Strong

Virtually all respondents (96%) reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods; 88% feel safe in Bloomington’s shopping areas. A total of 88% of residents gave excellent or good scores to police services. Fire services received a score of 97%, up 5% from 2020.

## Drinking Water Draws Acclaim

Respondents gushed with praise for Bloomington’s drinking water. This year’s approval rating of 93% was the highest ever since the survey began in 2012. The City’s drinking water ranked #2 among the nearly 300 cities and counties polled nationwide.

## Other Findings

- With an 85% approval rating, snow removal ranked in the top 5% nationwide.
- Eighty-eight percent of respondents rated the overall customer service provided by City employees as excellent or good, the highest rating ever in this category.
- About two-thirds of respondents gave positive scores to the sense of community in Bloomington.

This was the 10th year in a row that the National Community Survey™ was conducted Bloomington. A total of 732 residents answered the random sample poll, which was performed between April 20 and June 8, 2021, by the National Research Center of Boulder, Colorado.

For more information and complete survey results, visit [blm.mn/2021survey](https://blm.mn/2021survey).

## Ranked Choice Voting Will Be Used This Fall

Bloomington residents will use ranked choice voting for the first time in the municipal election on November 2, 2021. On the ballot this year, voters will elect one of the councilmember at large seats. Voters in Council District 3 and Council District 4 will also see their councilmember on the ballot.

Sometimes referred to as instant runoff voting or preferential voting, ranked choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference—first choice, second choice, and third choice. This is a voting system that removes the need for a primary election.

Ballots may be counted in one or more rounds. In the first round, only first-choice votes are tallied. If no candidate has won a majority of the votes (more than 50%), then the candidate with the least number of first-choice votes is eliminated. All the first-choice votes for the eliminated candidate are also eliminated. Voters who picked the eliminated candidate as their first-choice will have their second-choice vote counted instead. This process repeats until one candidate has won a majority or until only two candidates remain.

Ranked choice voting changes how residents vote for mayor and City councilmember. This will not change how residents vote in federal, state, county or school board elections. For more information, visit [blm.mn/vote](https://blm.mn/vote).

## PA NAM Corp. to Open North American Headquarters in Bloomington

PA NAM Corp., a manufacturer of high pressure cleaning accessories headquartered in Italy, announced in July that it will be opening its first U.S. location in Bloomington. This office will serve as PA NAM Corp.’s North American headquarters and a manufacturing and testing facility for devices such as spray guns, lances and valves for commercial uses.

PA NAM Corp. purchased and renovated an existing 65,000-square-foot industrial building, located at 1600 92nd Street West. The interior renovations mirror the style at its facilities in Rubiera, Italy. The Bloomington office space is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021 and will house 12 full-time employees in the first year.

The renovation has received accolades. The 2021 Minnesota Real Estate Journal named the manufacturer as a finalist in the Interior Design—Suburban Office/Headquarters Award category.

“The interior renovation and reuse of an existing underused industrial building aligns with Bloomington’s strategic priority of focused renewal to create and retain a diversity of jobs in Bloomington,” said Mayor Tim Busse. “The City of Bloomington welcomes PA NAM Corp. to the United States and Bloomington.”



## Vote Early or Absentee

Voting early or by absentee ballot will be allowed for any eligible voter in the city. In-person voting will be conducted at Bloomington Civic Plaza on the following days from September 17 – November 1:

- Monday – Friday  
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Extended hours:  
Saturday, October 30, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Monday, November 1, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Absentee voting is also available by mail through Hennepin County Elections at 612-348-5151 or at [blm.mn/henncovote](https://blm.mn/henncovote) with an online application. A postage-paid envelope is provided for the completed absentee ballot.



## Learn About Local Candidates

The League of Women Voters Bloomington (LWVB) encourages voters to educate themselves about the candidates and issues in elections. This year, LWVB will record a City Council candidate forum on Thursday, September 9, and a School Board candidate forum on Tuesday, September 14. Questions for candidates at both forums can be submitted in advance to [lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org](mailto:lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org) until 24 hours before the events.

The City will record these forums and candidate videos for on-demand viewing. They will be available after Labor Day and forum recordings will be available after the weekend of September 17 at [blm.mn/youtube](https://blm.mn/youtube), at [facebook.com/lwvb](https://facebook.com/lwvb) and on cable channels 14 and 859.

The LWVB is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWVB never endorses or supports a political candidate or party.





**PROTECT WATER**  
**ADOPT A STORM DRAIN**

**H**elp preserve and protect Bloomington’s water. Adopt a storm drain. Autumn is a great time to get started. As leaves fall, they can get into storm drains and flow directly to local watersheds. Anything other than rainwater going through storm drains can potentially degrade bodies of water. The algae that feeds on leaves can turn wetlands, ponds and lakes green.

You can help by participating in the adopt-a-storm-drain program. The program is free and only takes a commitment of a few minutes, a few times a year, to clean out a storm drain. The effort makes a difference in your community. To sign up or for more information, visit [adopt-a-drain.org](http://adopt-a-drain.org).

**KNOW YOUR YARD**  
**WASTE BAG LIMIT**

**E**arlier this year, a limit of 20 additional bags or bundles of yard waste was set for weekly yard waste service. Haulers will not pick up extra yard waste bags. If you have more than 20 bags, save the additional bags and have them collected the following week.

Yard waste season continues through Friday, November 26, weather permitting. If significant snowfall occurs before the end of November, yard waste collection may end at that time.

Accepted materials include garden waste, grass clippings, leaves, weeds, soft garden materials, shrub and tree waste, and pruning. Twigs and branches must be three feet or less in length and three inches or less in diameter. Bundles or bags cannot be heavier than 40 pounds.

Dirt, sod, rocks and wood chips are not accepted.

Residents with yard waste service can request one additional yard waste cart for a \$37.32 fee. It’s acceptable to set up to 20 bags of yard waste out in addition to your cart(s) per week. To sign up for yard waste subscription, contact Utility Billing at [utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov](mailto:utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov) or 952-563-8726.

Residents can pay per bag for on-call service by purchasing yard waste stickers for \$4.26 each. Call 952-563-8757 to request stickers to be mailed to you.

For more information, visit [blm.mn/yardwaste](http://blm.mn/yardwaste).



**EARTH ACTION HEROES: NATIVE**  
**PRAIRIE KEEPERS**

**H**ave you noticed patches and fields of prairies at City facilities? Native prairie plantings may look wild, but they’re actually planned landscapes designed not only to add natural beauty but to attract wildlife and pollinators, and conserve resources. Even then, keeping them in good shape takes some care. Park keepers Wade Yunker and Rick VanAnken, *pictured above*, maintain prairies at Civic Plaza, Public Works and other City parks and facilities.

With a diverse combination of native grasses and flowers, native prairie plantings don’t require as much maintenance as turf grass. No watering is needed and mowing is done just once a year. Some spot weeding is required, but the biggest task is controlling invasive plants. Prairies are occasionally managed with prescribed burns. These are done on a rotating basis to remove thatch and weed seeds, control invasive vegetation and strengthen growth for seasons to come.

“Compared to the cost of grass, prairie plantings are very cost-effective, look good and are good for the environment,” VanAnken said.

Over the years, VanAnken and Yunker got help from some rather unusual sources. At one time, the City used goats to maintain prairies. They love to eat buckthorn, garlic mustard and other weeds.

There’s a lot to like about working with native prairie plantings.

“Looking at the prairies and trails, being outside and walking through parks—it’s good to see all of the flowers,” VanAnken said. “I never thought I’d be someone who likes flowers, but it’s pretty awesome seeing what nature does.”



**HOW TO CONTROL BUCKTHORN**

**H**ave you noticed buckthorn around forested areas? This time of year, its shiny, egg-shaped leaves stand out from other vegetation. Buckthorn remains green after other vegetation has faded, even after a couple of frosts. Now through early winter is a good time to remove this nonnative invasive plant.

While it takes some effort and ongoing strategy to get rid of buckthorn, the benefits are worth the effort. Uncontrolled buckthorn takes over landscapes. Native plants have no light to grow. Wildlife habitat becomes impaired as more diverse native species disappear. It’s a cycle that can make buckthorn the dominant plant in wooded areas.

Small plants can be pulled by hand, while larger ones, up to two inches, can be pulled using tools called weed wrenches. Bloomington Public Works has a variety of these tools available for residents to check out. Reserve them by calling 952-563-4920. Always replant areas cleared of buckthorn. Use a mix of native flowers, grasses, shrubs or trees appropriate for the conditions of the site. Remember, buckthorn seeds can sprout and grow for three years. Removal is a multiyear commitment to pull, cut, treat and replace.

To see how to identify and remove buckthorn, watch the video at [blm.mn/seebuckthorn](http://blm.mn/seebuckthorn). For other information, visit [blm.mn/buckthorn](http://blm.mn/buckthorn) or call 952-563-8730.





## WHERE THE MARTAGON LILIES GROW

**Y**ears of labor and love transformed a shady suburban lawn into a floral landscape with an impressive collection of martagon lillies. At first glance, it's hard to take in what's growing in the garden beds which stretch all the way down to a hidden pond. Cascades of different flowers create a pattern of living color, but it's the inverted teacup-shaped lilies that stand out while they bloom in late spring to early summer. Picture a French impressionist painting adorned with martagon lilies. Dozens of named and unnamed varieties almost blind the eye with their radiant hues. Martagon lilies are profuse bloomers producing anywhere from 10 to 20 blooms on stems which grow up to six feet tall. The bedazzling flower show has garnered attention from gardeners across the globe.

Through a method of horticultural reproduction called "hybridizing," new lilies emerge, including Fallen Angel and Sassy Sandy, which were registered with the Royal Historical Society and accepted as new martagon varieties. With martagon lilies taking an average of seven years to mature, growing them takes patience. From April through October, it's a big job, weeding, watering, trimming, staking and fencing. The latter chore is one of the most challenging—to keep out flower-eating rabbits and deer. Other more welcome visitors come to the gardens and pond, including hummingbirds, bald eagles, foxes, minks, otters, beavers, kingfishers and wood ducks. The flower beds make a heavenly haven for wildlife.

The man behind all of this lily pageantry is as modest as his flowers are showy. To Frans Officer and his wife, Sandy, it's just a hobby that grew and grew. They want the flowers to be the story. And what a beautiful tale their martagon lilies tell.

## IN MEMORIAM: LARRY GRANGER

**W**ith strong roots in Bloomington, Larry Granger was one of the cofounders of the Bloomington Historical Society in 1964. He served as the society's first president, then as a consultant. Granger then served as president again from 2014 until his retirement in 2019. He passed away in June.

Granger's contributions to the community go beyond the Bloomington Historical Society. He was employed at the City of Bloomington in the 1960s. He participated in many City committees through the decades including the Bloomington Amenities Group; City visioning sessions; Bloomington Remembers Veterans Committee and more. He provided input for the Old Cedar Avenue bridge restoration planning. He was also involved in helping the bridge, Bloomington Cemetery and the Gideon Pond House be added to the National Register of Historic Places.

"Larry leaves a powerful legacy with us," Bloomington Historical Society retired president and executive director Vonda Kelly said. "It's a reminder to carry on the work he so strongly believed in—the preservation of our history and the Minnesota River valley, contributing to local and state governments and making your voice heard."



## ATTEND THE RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE SHOWCASE

**I**n August, the City postponed the Racial Equity Strategic Planning Committee (RESPC) Community Showcase at Creekside Community Center that was scheduled for August 10 because of an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission.

"We were looking forward to sharing the draft vision and prototypes, but we did not want to risk anyone's health and wellness given that Hennepin County had hit a level of substantial community transmission of COVID-19," Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson said. "We are hopeful that the transmission rates will decrease in a matter of weeks."

The City will continue to provide updates through its social media sites and website. You can find the most current information regarding the RESPC at [blm.mn/racialequity](https://blm.mn/racialequity).



Photo courtesy of Roz Johnson.

## MADE IN THE SHADE: FROG RESTS

**I**t's not easy being green unless you're a gray tree frog living in a cup plant. This gray tree frog has changed color to blend with its surroundings. It's just one of many wildlife visitors Roz Johnson sees around her Bloomington home. As copresident of Wild Ones Twin Cities, Johnson advocates for the use of native plant communities. Wildlife is attracted to the native vegetation, which provides food and shelter. Johnson has created a prairie oasis teeming with life. Look closely and you're bound to see something unexpected and beautiful — maybe even a tree frog.



## OLD CEDAR AVENUE BRIDGE: A WEEK OF CELEBRATION

**W**ith free activities, performances, an augmented reality tour and opportunities to check out the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge natural play area, there's something for everyone in the weeklong celebration of the renovation of the Old Cedar bridge and recent trailhead area improvements.

This celebration will take place from September 27 – October 2 at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Old Cedar Avenue bridge and trailhead, at 9898 Old Cedar Avenue South. Registration will be required for some of the activities.

For more information, visit [blm.mn/bridgecelebration](https://blm.mn/bridgecelebration). This celebration is presented by the City of Bloomington in partnership with the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends.





### REMODELING THE BLACK BOX THEATER

With appropriate renovation and enhancements, the Black Box Theater at Bloomington Center for the Arts aims to increase its value.

Updates include a lighter-toned, durable and natural-looking vinyl wood floor; lighter painted walls that match the current color scheme of other updates in the BCA and Civic Plaza buildings; new curtains, comfortable and stackable seating; and updated sound, lighting, audiovisual and technical equipment.

These enhancements will make the Black Box Theater a more functional and flexible multipurpose space for arts, cultural performances and activities. The renovation is to be completed by the end of 2021. For more information, contact Bloomington Center for the Arts Manager Leah Hughes at [lhughes@bloomingtonmn.gov](mailto:lhughes@bloomingtonmn.gov).



### FIND UNIQUE ITEMS AT CREEKSIDE BOUTIQUE

As a return to normalcy, the Creekside Boutique, a well-maintained treasure nestled in the Creekside Community Center, has reopened. It offers a great opportunity to support more than 50 local senior crafters. Shoppers will find a wide variety of handcrafted, one-of-a-kind items. The boutique is always stocked with unique items such as greeting cards, jewelry, baby blankets, doll clothes, wood items, handmade quilts, and crocheted and knitted items like scarves and towels.

The Creekside Boutique is open Mondays – Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., and Fridays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., at 9801 Penn Avenue South. For more information, contact Creekside staff at [creekside@BloomingtonMN.gov](mailto:creekside@BloomingtonMN.gov) or 952-563-4944.



### PLENTY OF OPTIONS FOR ICE TIME AT BIG

Open for the 2021 – 2022 season, there are plenty of ways to get on the ice at the Bloomington Ice Garden (BIG). Whether you want to try something new or sharpen your skills, from recreation to sport, the rink offers skating lessons, youth and adult hockey, figure skating, and public skating.

Skaters of all levels are encouraged to skate during the open ice skating time, which is scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9 – 10:30 a.m., and Fridays, 6:45 – 8:15 p.m.

Hockey players who want extra practice time are welcome to attend the open hockey time on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 – 7 a.m. To sign up for skating lessons, visit [blm.mn/big](http://blm.mn/big) or call 952-563-8841. Schedules are subject to change. Visit [blm.mn/ice](http://blm.mn/ice) to view current schedule.

### BIG WINS BIG AWARD

The Bloomington Ice Garden was awarded the 2020-2021 Minnesota Ice Arena Managers Association James F. Padgett Award. The award is presented annually to one ice arena that has distinguished itself as a leader, innovator and contributor to the ice arena industry. It is named in honor of the late James F. Padgett, an industry leader who was the parks and recreation director for the city of Virginia, MN. For more information, contact Bloomington Ice Garden Manager Lenny Klevan Schmitz at [lschmitz@bloomingtonmn.gov](mailto:lschmitz@bloomingtonmn.gov).



### CURTAIN RISING AT SCHNEIDER THEATER

The Schneider Theater at Bloomington Center for the Arts reopens this month with Artistry kicking off its 2021 – 22 season. Arts aficionados and attendees are welcome to experience the shared thrill of live performances again. This season will be filled with new songs and songs you’ve come to know and love. It includes four musicals and one special event with current stories and tales of the past. The Schneider Theater, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, invites you to come back to embark on a musical theater journey. Watch for more information on the new season at [artistrymn.org](http://artistrymn.org) or call 952-563-8575.





# NATIONAL NIGHT OUT A SUCCESS

More than 300 people registered to host a National Night Out party in August this year for Bloomington Police’s 37th annual National Night Out event. Each year, residents gather and enjoy a summer evening with neighbors, good food and information about keeping their communities safe. Bloomington Police and Fire visited nearly every registered gathering this year.

“National Night Out has always been one of our favorite events of the year. We had a great time visiting with residents and sharing some crime prevention tips,” Crime Prevention Coordinator Katie Zerull said. “We would like to thank everybody who participated in this fun community building event and working together to keep our city safe!”

Many residents also entered the annual chalk drawing contest. *See photo above.* Winners will be announced for the most creative piece, best overall and most representative of National Night Out. For more information, visit [blm.mn/nno](http://blm.mn/nno) or call Zerull at 952-563-8808.

## DON’T CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUTO THEFT

Car prowl is stealing contents or parts from a car. A car prowl is often a crime of opportunity and can happen in a few minutes. An offender will often break into a car based on the perception that the items visible are valuable. It can happen at any time of day and in a variety of settings such as street parking, parking lots and garages. According to Bloomington Police, offenders are watching out for people who hide their valuables at the last minute.

“Think and plan ahead. If you know that you are going to leave valuables, make sure they have been hidden before you get to your parking spot,” Sergeant Erik Norling said. “If they don’t see you hide things or don’t see exposed things, they won’t waste their time going through your car.”

Here are some tips from the Bloomington Police to prevent auto theft:

- When parking, close all windows, including the sunroof, and lock doors before leaving your car.
- Remove electronics, purses, wallets, money and other valuables. If possible, keep these items in your trunk or out of sight.
- Do not keep credit cards or sensitive information in your car.
- Do not leave garage door openers or keys in the car unattended.
- Park in a well-lit area, garage, or secured parking.
- Be observant when you exit or enter your car, and check for suspicious behavior.
- Consider installing a visible or audible alert device in your car.
- If you see any suspicious activity, call 911 immediately.



## COVID-19 VACCINE MYTH BUSTERS

In this new series, Bloomington Public Health will review some common myths about the COVID-19 vaccine and clear up confusion with reliable information.

**Myth:** Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

**Fact:** There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause female or male fertility problems—problems getting pregnant. If trying to get pregnant now or in the future, would-be parents can receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Center for Disease Control does not recommend routine pregnancy testing before COVID-19 vaccination. If you are trying to become pregnant, you do not need to avoid pregnancy after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

It is important to know that pregnant people are at a higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19 and that there are known benefits of vaccination. Hear from Dr. Katia Castillo, OB-GYN, about why she recommends the COVID-19 vaccine to her patients at [blm.mn/castillo](http://blm.mn/castillo). Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy from the Minnesota Department of Health at [blm.mn/mdhpregnancy](http://blm.mn/mdhpregnancy).

For more COVID-19 vaccine myths and facts, visit [blm.mn/mythbusters](http://blm.mn/mythbusters).



## SAVE THE DATE: FIRE STATION OPEN HOUSES

Get to know your neighborhood firefighters at the annual fire station open houses. Each year during National Fire Prevention Week, the Bloomington Fire Department celebrates by opening all its stations to the public for fun, food, and fire prevention education. This year’s fire station open houses will take place Saturday, October 9, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Station events include fire equipment demonstrations and plow trucks. There will also be an opportunity to engage with staff and learn more about the new proposed Fire Station 4 project from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at Station 4, 4201 West 84th Street.



## HOMEOWNER PERMIT FAQ

Are you a homeowner in Bloomington with a question about installing a fence? Maybe you want to ask about a residential building permit? Find this and more on the new frequently asked questions webpage at [blm.mn/homepermitfaq](http://blm.mn/homepermitfaq).

The updated webpage is easy to navigate with a larger font size and a dropdown accordion view. The FAQ are organized into sections such as decks, garages, roofing and driveways. Each section has specialized questions, which makes it easier to find answers.

Some answers include links to other pages or external documents that might be helpful to solve your issue. With more than 100 questions, the FAQ webpage aims to serve Bloomington residents as a dependable and trusted source for homeowner permit needs.





**SONGBIRD FINDS HOME IN SOUTH LOOP**

Inspired by the more than 250 migratory birds that pass through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the South Loop songbird sculpture by Donald Lipski will be installed at the south east corner of the intersection of Killebrew Drive and Old Shakopee Road.

“This sculpture creates a distinctive sense of place and identity that reflects the South Loop while providing an opportunity to surprise and delight those who visit, work, and live in the area,” Creative Placemaking Director Alejandra Pelinka said.

During the research and planning of this project, community members were invited to vote on which local songbird should be represented in the sculpture. The American Goldfinch, pictured above, was the clear winner.



**CELEBRATE NEW MURAL AT SUNSET BLOCK PARTY**

Join the curators of Ua Si, artists and volunteers to celebrate the completion of Minnesota’s longest mural, located at American Boulevard and 30th Avenue South. The 9000-square-foot mural, titled *WE*, reimagines the South Loop of Bloomington—past, present and future—and the many things it houses, including intersections, creativity, diversity and growth.

The *WE* mural celebration will be held on Saturday, September 18, 5 – 10 p.m. and will include opening remarks and gratitude, meet and greet with the artists, food, music and activities.

**BLOOMINGTON YESTERDAY: THOMAS BURNETT A HOMETOWN HERO**

Bravery and valor are not restricted to the battlefield. September 11, 2001, lives on as a day of modern infamy. It was a time when ordinary people took charge to make a difference and prevent even deeper disaster. As a shocked nation looked on the seemingly unbelievable news that unfolded minute-by-minute live on TV not knowing what to do, one Bloomington resident stepped up to the moment.

Thomas Burnett experienced the terrorist attacks firsthand and is credited as leading the charge to transform the tragedy into an opportunity to do right. While no one knows exactly what happened on United Airlines Flight 93, phone records show Burnett acted fast to help prevent even more disaster. He was a leader who attempted to take back the airplane from hijackers and stop them from using the airplane as a terrorist weapon against the U.S. Capitol. When the terrorists in the cockpit learned their plot was doomed to fail, they crashed the plane in a farm field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. All lives were lost.

Burnett received numerous posthumous awards and recognitions, including letters from President Bush and other elected officials. As one memorial poignantly states, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends—in loving memory of Thomas Burnett, Jr.”



**ENJOY ART IN SHE PRESENTS AND TOWARDS VERACITY**

Experience She Presents and Towards Veracity in the Bloomington Center for the Arts, Inez Greenberg Gallery, Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. In She Presents, artist Yeonhee Cheong studies the portraiture of women, including herself, in different mediums and contexts to explore personal and societal biases of women

through fashion, outfits, poses, decorative elements and the medium itself. In contrast, Towards Veracity focuses on the environments that may shape and form individual perceptions. Through ceramics, artist Erin Paradis recollects and reinterprets spatial encounters as abstracted forms with an emphasis on line, texture and color.

The two exhibits run through September 17. For more information, visit [artistrymn.org](http://artistrymn.org) or call 952-563-8575.



**SEE EXHIBIT BEYOND FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Challenge your perceptions: see the art exhibit Beyond First Impressions. During this time of political, social and class divide, artist Robin Blochinger takes a bold step to connect with strangers in a Saint Paul park. The resulting portrait series captures the essence of people and the humanity of their stories.

“You have no idea who that stranger is if you judge him or her by your fears, stereotypes or prejudices,” Blochinger said. “If you take the time and approach an experience with an open mind and heart, you will see the good around you, beyond those first impressions.”

The exhibit takes place, September 16 – October 31, in the Bloomington Center for the Arts Atrium Gallery at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. An opening reception will be held on September 16, 6 – 8 p.m. For more information, visit [artistrymn.org](http://artistrymn.org) or call 952-563-8575.

