

BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



NOVEMBER 2021

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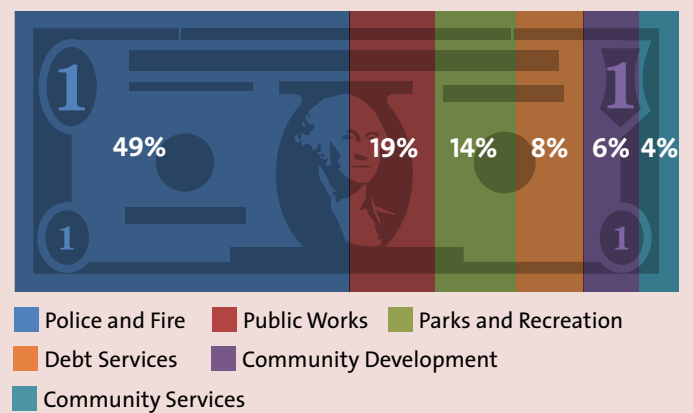


The sunset block party in September celebrated the completion of the WE Mural in South Loop at American Boulevard and 30th Avenue South. Read more about the event and the mural on page 7.

COUNCIL TO VOTE ON FINAL TAX LEVY IN DECEMBER

In September, the City Council approved a preliminary 2022 property tax levy increase of 2.75%. The preliminary tax levy can be reduced, but not increased, before final adoption in December. This levy would fund 68.8% of the City's 2022 general fund budget. The remainder of the proposed budget would be supported by lodging and admission taxes, license and permit fees, grants and program revenues. The average 2022 preliminary tax levy increase for 15 similar metro area cities is around 5%. At 2.75%, Bloomington's preliminary levy increase is the lowest among those 15 cities. The City Council will hold a truth-in-taxation public budget hearing Monday, December 6, 6 p.m., at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. For instructions on how to participate in person or virtually, visit blm.mn/cc-1206 or call 952-563-8790.

CITY PROPERTY TAX ALLOCATION



YOUR CITY PROPERTY TAX DOLLAR

Most property taxes support core services, including police, fire, public works, and parks and recreation, see graph. For every dollar of City taxes paid, 49 cents goes toward police and fire, 19 cents goes toward public works and 14 cents goes toward parks and recreation, while 8 cents of each City property tax dollar pays outstanding debt service. Debt is issued to fund street and infrastructure work and construction projects.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE CITY'S BUDGET

The pandemic created a larger economic downturn for the City in 2020 than 2008's Great Recession. Many industries came to a halt, including the hospitality and entertainment industries. For the City, that meant millions of dollars lost in lodging and admissions taxes, mostly paid by visitors, not residents. Lodging and admission tax revenues usually generate about 13% of the City's general fund revenues. Due to the pandemic, these revenues declined by more than \$6 million in 2020, less than half what was collected before COVID-19.

The City is still projecting a 2022 budget with revenues below where they were in 2019—pre-pandemic levels—especially for revenues from lodging and admissions taxes. These two revenue sources will provide about \$3 million less than in 2019.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The public has had many opportunities to participate in 2022 budget discussions this year. There were virtual and in-person information sessions in August, as well as a virtual event on Zoom and an in-person event at Civic Plaza in October. Both virtual sessions were recorded and are available for viewing online at blm.mn/budget. There have also been ongoing opportunities for engagement and feedback on the 2022 budget online at blm.mn/letstalk.

LEARN MORE

For detailed information, including presentation slides from information sessions and recaps of City Council budget discussions, visit blm.mn/budget.



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MAYOR’S MEMO

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS SAFELY

By Mayor Tim Busse

With falling leaves and falling temperatures, one thing on the rise in November is holiday spirit. This month marks the official start of the holiday season. Plans to celebrate with friends and family are taking shape. Last year, making those plans was much more complicated as we did not yet have a vaccine for COVID-19. Holiday traditions took on a new spin with video calls to family and friends, and outdoor activities replacing the usual celebrations.

With the arrival of vaccines last spring, there was what felt like a reprieve in the strictness of COVID-19 safety guidelines. The delta strain has made an impact in Minnesota. As a result, Bloomington saw a climb in case numbers this fall.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, attending gatherings to celebrate events and holidays increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. The CDC recently released updated 2021 guidelines for celebrating holidays safely. In general, the CDC recommends getting vaccinated and wearing a mask indoors in public. In areas of substantial or high transmission, consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings as well as if you are in close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.

If you have a health condition or take medications that weaken your immune system, you may not be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Continue to take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitting mask, until advised otherwise by your health care provider. If you are eligible for an additional dose, get it now, to be better protected.

The safest way to celebrate is still virtually, or to celebrating outdoors and be at least six feet apart from others. An activity, such as walking or hiking, can be an opportunity to get out and enjoy Bloomington parks while social distancing. If gathering indoors, consider opening windows and doors when weather conditions allow, to increase outdoor air flow. Even a slightly open window can bring in beneficial outdoor air. It also helps to turn your HVAC fan setting to the “on” position for a couple of hours before, during and then again after the event to bring in fresh air. The CDC also recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated. Everyone, even people who are fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when using public transportation. Read the full list of CDC guidelines at blm.mn/cdcholiday.

The availability of COVID-19 vaccines has really changed our COVID-19 response strategies and resulted in reduced risk for many people. As I write this, the Food and Drug Administration is reviewing Pfizer’s request to authorize its vaccine for children ages 5 - 11. We have reason to be hopeful that things will keep getting better. We will get through this—stay healthy, be well.

WELCOMING A NEW ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

Bloomington City Manager Jamie Verbrugge selected Michael Sable as the City’s next assistant city manager. Sable brings more than 20 years of local government management experience to Bloomington.

“I am very excited to bring Mike on board our executive team,” City Manager Verbrugge said. “He is an excellent team player, a skilled facilitator, and a talented administrator. Mike understands the City Council’s strategic priorities, and his commitment to the work of racial equity will enhance our efforts.”

Before beginning work at the City of Bloomington, Sable was the assistant city manager for the city of Maplewood and served as its human resources director as well as managing its city clerk, and wellness and safety initiatives. He previously worked for Hennepin County and the cities of Brooklyn Park and Cedar Rapids, IA. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Augsburg University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas.

Sable is also a credentialed manager with International City/County Management Association. He is an adjunct faculty member at College of Charleston (formerly adjunct with the University of Virginia), where he teaches a professional development program about the principles of the High-Performance Organization to help develop leaders at all levels of local government to achieve higher performance in their communities. He previously served on the board of directors for the Alliance for Innovation promoting innovation in local government.

“Mike’s experience will bring to our organization new insights and new approaches as we continue to adapt and improve our services to the public,” Verbrugge said. “His embrace of innovative leadership models and organizational development skills will benefit our whole organization.”

Sable replaces Kris Wilson, who accepted a position as the city administrator for Inver Grove Heights. His first day with the City was September 27.

“I’m incredibly honored and humbled for the opportunity to serve the residents and staff in Bloomington,” Sable said. “The City is leading the way in the important work of strengthening communities and I’m excited to play a role in furthering that work.”



BRIEFING

Volume 29, Number 11

The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to residents and businesses. Direct your 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 does not discriminate against or deny the benefits of its services, programs, or activities to a qualified person because of a disability. The City will provide a reasonable accommodation or modify its policies and programs to allow people with disabilities to participate in all City services, programs, activities, and employment. The law does not require the City to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the City. To make a request for a reasonable accommodation, ask for more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Community Outreach and Engagement Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733, MN Relay 711.



CURBSIDE ORGANICS RECYCLING COMING SOON

Starting the week of March 7, residents will be able to conveniently recycle organics for composting at the curb. This month, watch for a mailer with information on how to sign up for your organics cart. You can also call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726 to sign up, or send an email to UtilityBilling@bloomingtonmn.gov. Sign up by December 1 to receive your new cart by the program start date. Residents who sign up after December 1 will receive their cart in mid-April at the latest, after the first rollout of carts has been completed. Those who sign up will also receive an organics welcome packet with more information and tips for collecting organics at home.

Residents who sign up for organics will receive a 30-gallon organics cart that will be collected weekly on their garbage day. Curbside organics service will be paid for by all residents in the City’s garbage and recycling program, like regular recycling. The final rate has not yet been approved and set by City Council, but the anticipated cost will be \$5.50 per month. Because one third of an average resident’s garbage is organic material that could be composted, residents participating in the organics program can save money by switching to a smaller garbage cart.

After organics are collected from the curb, they are taken to a commercial composting facility where they are recycled and turned into compost, a nutrient-rich addition to soil.

What should you do with your organics in the meantime?
Residents are encouraged to drop off organics at one of the City’s organics drop-off sites. The City will continue to operate the free organics drop-offs for residents in multifamily housing not serviced through the City’s garbage and recycling program. To start composting now, visit blm.mn/organics.

BLOOMINGTON. TOMORROW. TOGETHER. STRATEGIC PLAN GAINS STEAM

Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. is the City’s most collaborative strategic planning effort to date. The process provides opportunities for residents to partner with the City to help design a plan for Bloomington’s future. City representatives will work in partnership with members of the community at every stage of the process.

The initial stages of understanding who and what Bloomington is and what stakeholders’ goals are for the future began in October with a series of community café events. At these events, people were able to share what they value about the places they live, work and spend time.

The City has also received nearly 160 applications from residents who are interested in serving on the core planning, action and measurement teams that will help propel the strategic planning process.

“It is so great to see such a high level of interest from the public to get to work crafting the City’s next strategic plan and charting a course to make Bloomington even better for those who choose to spend their time here,” City Manager Jamie Verbrugge said.

The core planning team will be holding a retreat December 2 – 4 to work on a draft of the strategic plan. After that, the action and measurement teams will work out the details of the plan during the months of January and February 2022. For more information, visit blm.mn/btt.

NEW RESOURCE CENTER FOR SMALL-BUSINESS OWNERS

The Business Resource Center at the City of Bloomington is an online resource that offers a variety of programs and services for small-business owners seeking help in legal, technology, marketing, social media and more. This additional means of communication aligns with the overwhelmingly positive results of the City’s recent business survey.

“Our goal is to help our small businesses,” said Special Projects and Initiatives Manager Barb Wolff. “Though the City might not have funding to provide business services, we want our small-business owners to find the help they need through other resources.”

The BRC lists free programs and services offered by Hennepin County, regional entities, Minnesota and the federal government. It can be overwhelming for a small-business owner to navigate through the various programs, which change often over time. BRC maintains an up-to-date list of available help with clear descriptions of the programs and services.

“We want to help our small businesses thrive,” Wolff said. “If I know what they are looking for, then I am able to better direct them.”

OPEN TO BUSINESS

Open to Business is a free program which provides one-to-one confidential business consulting, technical assistance, and financing options to new and early-stage businesses. This program is offered in partnership by Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, Hennepin County and the City of Bloomington.

ELEVATE BUSINESS HC

A collaborative effort between Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, Elevate Business HC offers free advice and other resources to help small businesses in Hennepin County recover from the pandemic and build for future growth. Elevate Business HC works closely with about 24 advisors who specialize in various areas: accounting, legal, social media, marketing, IT and more. Small-business owners can receive up to 25 hours of free service per advisor, which totals up to approximately 600 hours of free business consulting. Some services are also available in other languages.

For a complete listing of the most up-to-date business resources, visit blm.mn/brc. Small-business owners can send an email to commdev@bloomingtonmn.gov for specific concerns and questions.



JOIN A BOARD OR COMMISSION

Participate in your local government by serving on a City board or commission. The City is seeking applicants to serve on the following:

- Advisory Board of Health
- Creative Placemaking

Commission

- Human Rights Commission
- Parks, Arts and Recreation

Commission

- Sustainability Commission

Visit blm.mn/boards for more information or to apply. The deadline is Wednesday, December 22. Questions? Contact the Community Outreach and Engagement Division at 952-563-8733 or outreach@BloomingtonMN.gov.

BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

The Morris Leatherman Company conducted a randomized survey of Bloomington businesses over the summer. Responses were anonymous and aggregated for analysis and reporting. An exceptionally high 92% of those surveyed rated the business climate in Bloomington as excellent or good. The business owners and managers who responded gave an approval rating of “excellent or good” to the City’s attitude and responsiveness to local businesses.

Eighty-four percent of respondents felt the consideration of a public-private business incubator was a good idea. A business incubator would assist startups and existing businesses with resources for funding, workshops, one-on-one technical assistance and more. An overwhelming 99% of those surveyed said the City should focus on retaining and growing existing businesses, while 87% also said invest in redevelopment. For business information and survey results, visit the City’s business resource center at blm.mn/brc or call 952-563-4706.



GET RID OF BUCKTHORN

Buckthorn is an invasive species that prevents native plants from thriving. Fall is the best time to get rid of buckthorn, because it is easier to identify it. In late October, after native foliage has gone dormant, leaves on buckthorn typically stay green. Methods to get rid buckthorn include non-chemical and chemical options.

NON-CHEMICAL TREATMENT

Small buckthorn seedlings and trees can be pulled by hand or with tools such as a shovel or a weed wrench. A weed wrench is a manually operated tool that clamps onto a stem up to three inches in diameter and operates as a lever to uproot plants. Residents can rent a weed wrench from Public Works for free. Removing by hand is easier when the soil is moist. Large diameter buckthorn stems can be cut at the stump with a chainsaw, brush cutter or other hand tool. After cutting, cover the stump with a tin can or black plastic to prevent future sprouting.

Before digging out buckthorn roots, call 811, or visit gopherstateonecall.org a few days ahead to allow time for public utilities to be marked.

CHEMICAL TREATMENT

Chemicals should be considered only if pulling individual plants is impractical, such as with larger-diameter buckthorn stems. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recommends using herbicides containing glyphosate or triclopyr for buckthorn control. Check with your local garden center or hardware store for recommendations on effective weed killers for buckthorn. Always follow label directions when using herbicides, wear recommended protective clothing and avoid contact with other plants.

DISPOSING OF BUCKTHORN

The City’s yard waste program allows residents to dispose of buckthorn. Residents may also call a tree service company, or bring the buckthorn to a collection site. Learn more at blm.mn/buckthorn or watch a video about buckthorn removal at blm.mn/bustbuckthorn. For questions, call 952-563-8760.



From left to right: Public Works Assistant Maintenance Superintendent Dave Hanson, Bloomington Sustainability Commission member Paul Erdmann, John Crampton, volunteer and Green Committee member for Oak Grove Presbyterian Church.



EARTH ACTION HEROES: PARK MAINTENANCE CREW HELPS KEEP THE CITY GREEN

Did you know that Bloomington has been designated as a Tree City since 1987? The City earned that designation by making a commitment to maintaining its urban forestry. Every year, the Public Works park maintenance crew, with the help of volunteers, will plant more than 300 trees in City parks and other public spaces throughout the city.

A healthy tree canopy helps our community in many ways. Trees absorb the sounds of traffic, cool the urban heat island, and aid in the reduction of energy costs. Trees exhale oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that leads to climate change. Climate change stresses out trees, leading to slow growth, disease, or even death.

In the past few years, the park maintenance crew has planted trees to offset the loss of trees brought by the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Ash trees are replaced with a variety of trees, such as oaks, that are native to Minnesota. The park maintenance crew has also had success with London plane and redbud trees that are historically found in warmer growing zones.

“Tree diversity makes the urban forest more resilient to invasive species, climate change and disease,” Assistant Maintenance Superintendent Dave Hanson said. “We have 26 different tree species in our City-operated nursery, supplying trees to our parks and creating a resilient urban forest for generations to come.”

Park maintenance staff maintains a tree nursery that allows trees to be planted during optimal seasons and encourages extensive root growth that leads to successful establishment and long-term survival.

Early spring and fall are the best times to plant trees. Planting during the hotter summer months causes additional stress, and new trees may not survive. This fall, park maintenance crews and the Sustainability Commission hosted several tree planting events where they worked with volunteers to replace trees in a few City parks. Volunteers help get the trees in the ground during a short period of time.

At one of the events this fall, the group was able to plant 31 White Oaks in about two hours. “A mature oak will reduce approximately 500 tons of carbon over its 200-year life span,” Sustainability Commission Chair Tim Sandry said. “Therefore, the efforts of parks maintenance staff and volunteers that day have the potential of reducing up to 155 tons of carbon over the next 200 years. That’s a big impact in a short period of time!” Find more information about the City’s sustainable efforts at blm.mn/sustainability.

HOLIDAY GARBAGE AND RECYCLING SCHEDULE

This year, Thanksgiving is Thursday, November 25. 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 more information, visit blm.mn/garbage or call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726.

 RECYCLE WEEK  HOLIDAY; PICKUP IS DELAYED BY ONE DAY

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

HOW TO REDUCE WASTE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day, the volume of garbage we generate rises dramatically. The average family throws away 25% more trash during the holidays, according to statistics from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. However, there are ways to protect the environment and keep the holiday cheer. You can make holiday gatherings more sustainable by using real dishware and silverware, wrapping gifts with reusable cloth or gift bags and planning meals to reduce food waste.

REUSE AND RECYCLE

- Before throwing away something, ask yourself: could this trash be reused or recycled?
- Recyclable items include: gift boxes, tissue paper, greeting cards/envelopes, cartons, tins, and most cleaned aluminum foil trays.
- Do not place recyclable materials in plastic bags before recycling them. Such materials will not be processed at the recycling facility. You can use a paper bag to collect recycling, but its best to place everything in your cart loose.
- Do not recycle wrapping paper. It is no longer accepted, even the paper that isn’t reflective or glittery. Do not recycle food and beverage containers that contain food or liquid.
- To recycle holiday lights, bring them to the Hennepin County Drop-Off Facility, 1400 West 96th Street.

TIPS FOR EXTRA RECYCLING

Extra recycling accumulates quickly during the holidays. After you fill your recycling cart with recyclable materials, you can place any leftover recyclable materials next to the cart. Place smaller recyclable items in paper bags before putting next to the recycling cart. Cardboard should be flattened and stacked into a pile no larger than three feet wide and one foot tall. Bundle the stacked cardboard with string or twine and place next to your cart. If you regularly have extra recycling, you can request a second recycling cart at no cost. For more information, visit blm.mn/recycling.

COMPOST WITH ORGANICS RECYCLING

You can also reduce waste by composting food and paper waste generated from holiday meals and gatherings. Take your food, prep scraps, leftovers and paper towels to an organics drop-off location listed at blm.mn/organics. For more information about how to properly dispose of items, visit blm.mn/recycling or call 952-563-8760.

Bloomington Yesterday: The First Fire Station

Nearly 90 years after Bloomington became a township in 1858, the town council voted to create the Bloomington Fire Department. In April 1947, the town council accepted an offer to purchase the land at 95th Street and Syndicate Avenue for one dollar to build its first fire station. Construction of the station was completed in August 1947. A cistern capable of storing 7,000 gallons of water was installed. The siren bell was moved from the Bloomington School to the fire station for sounding a fire call. The total cost of the new fire station and equipment was \$24,000.

The new fire department welcomed its first 26 charter members. They were paid one dollar per fire call, and per training drill. The wife of one of the firefighters dispatched fire calls. She would call the constable, then wives of the other firefighters, who would call all of the firefighters to respond to the fire scene or the fire station.

The first fire open house was held October 4, 1947 with dancing and refreshments.

Today, the original fire station, remembered as Station 1, has been replaced and relocated at 10 West 95th Street. In 2022, the BFD will celebrate its 75th anniversary. Learn more about the BFD’s history and achievements in upcoming *Briefings*.



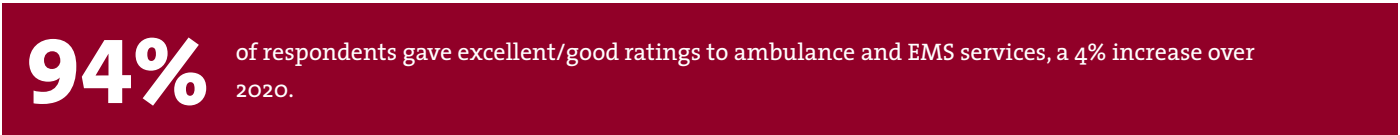
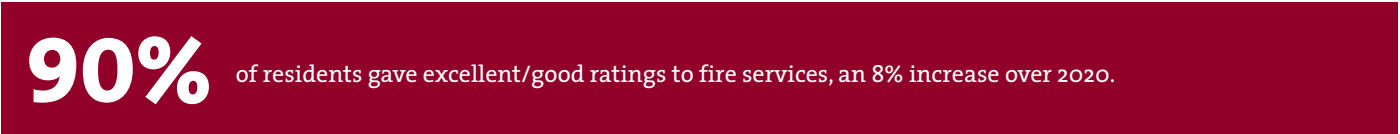
Residents’ Opinions About Fire Safety Remain Strong

The City’s annual National Community Survey results showed favorable reviews for the Bloomington Fire Department. Bloomington residents gave positive scores to fire services, fire prevention and education, and emergency preparedness. *See two survey results below.*

The department aims to respond to 90% of any incidents within 7 minutes, 30 seconds with at least three firefighters. BFD achieved this goal for 62% of the incidents.

“I want to be transparent about our actual performance,” said Fire Chief Ulie Seal. “Right now, we are not achieving our response time goals. The Fire Service enjoys a relatively good reputation nationwide. Bloomington Fire is always looking for ways to improve our delivery of service to provide excellent fire safety and emergency medical services to anyone who needs us.”

In 2020, firefighters responded to 3,195 emergencies. Firefighters don’t just respond to structure, wildland and vehicle fires, and vehicle extrications. They also respond to medical emergencies, water rescues, hazardous materials incidents, vehicle accidents, carbon monoxide alarms and other service calls.



Bloomington Police Holiday Season Toy Drive

In the spirit of giving, the Bloomington Police Department is organizing a toy drive this holiday season. The drive will begin on Friday, November 26 (the day after Thanksgiving Day). Suggested donations include new unused toys, electronics and gift cards. Donations can be dropped off at the front counter of the Police Department, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

Detective Chad Clauson began the toy drive in 2002. Early on in his career as a patrol officer, when he responded to incidents in the City during the holiday season, Detective Clauson noticed there were instances where he did not see a Christmas tree in the house or apartment. Or, if there was a Christmas tree, there were no gifts underneath it.

“It wasn’t the fact the parents did not want to get gifts for their kids. It was the fact they could not afford them,” Detective Clauson said. “To me, that is all I needed to start up the toy drive.”

The toy drive will continue into the middle of December. For more information about the toy drive, visit blm.mn/toydrive or call 952-563-4900.



Bloomington Police Officer Spencer Saari delivering donated toys.



Flu Shot Clinic

Attend an upcoming flu shot clinic offered by Public Health. Anyone can come to the flu shot clinic. Due to COVID-19 precautions, immunizations will be available by appointment only. Bring your insurance card or inform the nurse if you do not have one. A parent or guardian must accompany children under 18. The flu shot clinic is scheduled Thursday, November 4, 9 – 11 a.m., at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South.

Make an appointment online at blm.mn/clinics. If you need help with scheduling an appointment, call 952-563-8900 and select the option for help with flu vaccinations.

Prepare Foods Safely

When preparing your meals this holiday season, remember these food safety rules. The CDC estimates that each year roughly one in six Americans get sick from foodborne illness. With a little preparation, you can lower your chance of becoming ill from something you eat.

Rule 1: Clean.

Wash your hands before handling foods, after handling raw meats, fish or eggs, after using the restroom, after greeting guests and throughout food preparation as needed. Make sure the food contact surfaces you are using are clean. Finally, do not rinse raw meat.

Rule 2: Separate.

Whether it is the day of the meal or during preparation, keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.

Rule 3: Cook.

Temperature is everything. Be sure the turkey is cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

Rule 4: Chill.

Refrigerate leftovers and keep cold foods cold. Foods should be refrigerated within two hours after serving. Remember, when in doubt, throw it out.



HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY GAMES AT BIG

When high school hockey is in full swing, family and friends can cheer for their favorite high school hockey team on game nights at the Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 West 98th Street.

Hockey games for all three high school programs (Kennedy Boys, Jefferson Boys and Jefferson Girls) typically occur on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Junior varsity games begin at 5 p.m. and varsity games at 7 p.m. on weeknights. Some Saturday afternoon games will take place at 1 p.m. for junior varsity games and at 3 p.m. for varsity games.

The Jefferson Girls have the first game of the year on November 11. The Jefferson Boys hockey games will begin on November 26.

The schedules are not easily listed in any one spot. Schedules for each team can be found on the Minnesota State High School League webpage blm.mn/hockey.

Admission tickets are required and sold at the door for \$7 per adult, and \$5 per student and adults over age 65. Concessions such as popcorn, hot dogs, pretzels, nachos with cheese, and beverages will be sold during games.

Guests should follow the City’s COVID-19 guidelines when attending events at BIG. For more information, contact BIG at 952-563-8841.

WAVES OF FUN AT BFAC

It was a nonstop, splashing fun summer at Bloomington Family Aquatic Center. After a one-year hiatus and unseasonably hot weather, BFAC was a favorite destination all summer. To kick off the season, BFAC welcomed 1,600 guests during its record-setting opening weekend.

Residents and visitors were able to cool off poolside thanks to a waterslide and some interactive play features. Except for the closed concession stand, operations mostly returned to normal at BFAC this year.

Seasonal pool passes were sold online for the first time this year. “In uncertain times, we had to make some adjustments,” Recreation Supervisor David Benson said. “Selling passes online is one of the adjustments we’ll keep.”

The season closed out with 3,273 season pass holders. For more information about BFAC, visit blm.mn/bfac.



COUNCIL ADOPTS PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

As adopted, the Park System Master Plan provides a clear action plan and guidance for improvements to Bloomington’s parks, trails, facilities, recreational programs and green spaces.

“We want to ensure that generations to come will benefit from the continued enjoyment of Bloomington’s beautiful parks and amenities,” Stephanie Tungseth, Chair of the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission said. “The thoughtful and methodical framework of the plan will enable the City of Bloomington to have the flexibility needed to continually meet the needs of its dynamic and ever-changing community and the community’s needs.”

The purpose of the Park System Master Plan was to establish a clear, 20-year vision for the Bloomington park system, which includes parks, trails, recreation, and open space. It will serve as a blueprint for planning and completing park improvements, program planning, and budgeting to serve the needs of the community.

The development of the plan took nearly two years. “This plan is what it is today due to the staff’s desire and attempts at soliciting our community’s engagement, their prioritization to meaningfully integrate the community feedback into the plan, and their extensive data-driven research,” PARC Member Laura Perreault said.

The extensive community engagement process that occurred between November 2019 and June 2021 included a statistically valid survey, stakeholder interviews, listening sessions, conversations with residents and staff, and online interactive engagement via project bloom! and the City’s Let’s Talk Bloomington site.

Based on the extensive engagement and participation of the public, staff, PARC and City Council in the planning process, four “Priority Park Elements” were established:

- Natural resources
- Park system need—level of service
- Trails and mobility
- Equity

“The Park System Master Plan is committing to ensure the vibrancy of the single greatest asset in this community, our parks and green spaces, for decades to come,” Councilmember Patrick Martin said. “I love that as we’re working with neighborhoods and prioritizing these older parks, neighborhoods will be able to weigh in on this again, really take pride and ownership in those park improvements, because they’ll see themselves reflected in it.”

“There is no doubt that the plan will enable significant changes in our park system,” Councilmember Nathan Coulter said. “This is something that will serve the community really well, because so much of it came directly from the community.”

For more information about the plan, visit blm.mn/park-master-plan.



LINUS THE ROBOT

One of the most popular new members of the Bloomington parks and recreation staff is a robot, and its name is Linus. In late 2020, using CARES Act grant funds, the department purchased this piece of automated technology to help paint lines efficiently and accurately on sports fields throughout the City. The robot was hard at work all summer long, but it was missing one key element—a name. To remedy that, parks and recreation launched a name-the-robot contest in August. More than 120 names were submitted, and after 880 public votes were cast, the winning name was Linus. You can watch the robot in action and learn all about its many features and benefits at blm.mn/linus.



CELEBRATING BLOOMINGTON’S NEWEST MURAL

South Loop’s newest and longest mural is complete and many from the community gathered in September to celebrate it. WE is a tapestry of murals commissioned by the City and Artistry and curated and produced by Ua Si Creative. The artists who created the WE Mural are Marlena Myles, Reggie LeFlore, Xee Reiter + Andres Guzman, Martzia Thometz, City Mischief Murals, featuring Thomasina Topbear and Tom Jay, and Ua Si Creative. Check out the mural at American Boulevard and 30th Avenue South.

“I am so grateful to all of the artists, partners, staff and volunteers who dedicated themselves to the implementation and success of the WE Mural and Sunset Block Party,” Creative Placemaking Director Alejandra Pelinka said. “Many individuals came together to make this possible, and it is inspiring to see what a positive impact the mural and event has had on the community.”

The celebration provided an opportunity to view the completed mural, enjoy performances from Kalpulli Yaocenoxlti, above, and the Somali Museum Dance Troupe, grab dinner from a food truck, see work from artist Christopher Lutter-Gardella, preview prototypes developed by the City’s Racial Equity Strategic Planning committee and more. Check out a video recap of the event at blm.mn/sunsetblockparty.

CITY RECEIVES NATIONAL AND STATE COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

Bloomington received four national communications awards from the City-County Communications and Marketing Association this year. 3CMA received a record 807 entries from cities and counties across the country hoping to place in this competitive contest that recognizes the best in government communications. The City received a first-place Savvy Award for the *2021 State of the City: A Year Like No Other*; a second-place Silver Circle Award for the *2020 Corporate Report to the Community* and the *Mask up, Bloomington!* social media campaign; and a third-place Award of Excellence for the *Briefing*.

The City also received recognition for its communications at the state level with five awards from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators annual Northern Lights Awards. Topping the list for Bloomington was the video *Buckthorn Bust: How To*, which received a first-place Northern Lights Award and a Best in Show nomination, one of only five entries nominated for this honor. The *Briefing*, recipient of the Northern Lights award a number of times over the years, was awarded second place in the publications category this year. Third place honors went to *Council Minute with Mayor Busse* video series, *Mask up, Bloomington!* social media campaign that featured Bloomington landmarks “wearing” masks and a *Visual Translations Art Exhibit* video.



ARTISTRY’S 45TH ANNUAL MEMBERS’ JURIED ART EXHIBITION

Artistry’s 45th annual members’ juried art exhibition is on display now through November 19 at the Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. Each year this exciting competition and exhibition brings together Artistry’s talented members. It is always a varied and eclectic collection showcasing many different mediums, styles and techniques. In this year’s competition, 120 artists applied and a total of 224 artworks were submitted. Each artist is allowed to submit one to two pieces of artwork for consideration.

“My experience working on this exhibition has been really enjoyable,” said Tricia Heuring, this year’s juror. “I thought the submissions were excellent and overall it was a difficult task to jury, especially online. I do truly see time, value, and merit in every work that was submitted.”

Heuring completed the selection process in late August. She chose 78 artists to feature at the exhibition, including nine Bloomington artists.

“There was so much diversity in subject matter and perspective,” Heuring said. “In terms of choosing, I looked for works that had unique and interesting subject matter, technical skill, and mastery of medium. I was also definitely looking for works that seemed to experiment or take risks.”

Visitors will explore a diverse selection of works. The exhibit includes a wide variety of media and techniques: watercolor, oil, acrylic, prints, photography, collage, sculpture, ceramics and graphite, both two- and three-dimensional pieces.

“To feel moved or drawn in by an artwork; I think those things can be achieved when artists demonstrate thoughtful perspective or dedication to practice,” Heuring said.

Tricia Heuring is cofounder of Public Functionary, a Northeast Minneapolis-based multidisciplinary arts platform. The Heuring, a curator, arts organizer, educator and member of the Thai-American community, supports emerging artists of color to develop resources, studio practice, and exhibitions. Each year, Artistry invites a prominent member of the local arts community to jury the submitted artwork and select the award winners.

“We are honored to have Ms. Heuring as this year’s juror and excited to share her selection of artwork with the community,” Artistry’s Director of Visual Arts Rachel Daly said.

Eleven awards were presented at the opening reception October 1. Find more information about the artists, artworks and winners at artistrmn.org/current-exhibitions.



CALL FOR ART!

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Twin Cities Pride, the City of Bloomington Human Rights Commission and Artistry, along with community partners, will be hosting a Pride Art Exhibition in June of 2022 in the Greenberg Gallery. The show will celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. Artwork celebrating the contributions of the LGBTQ+ community and fitting the theme “Come as you are!” will be accepted starting December 1. Minnesota artists age 18 years or older are welcome to submit one or two pieces of artwork for consideration and selection by a curatorial review panel. The Call for Art closes January 20, 2022. A link to the Call for Art will be posted on this page on December 1.



STAY IN THE KNOW: E-SUBSCRIBE UPDATES

Bloomington has a variety of free e-newsletters to keep residents, business owners, and community members updated on messages and events.

DID YOU KNOW...?

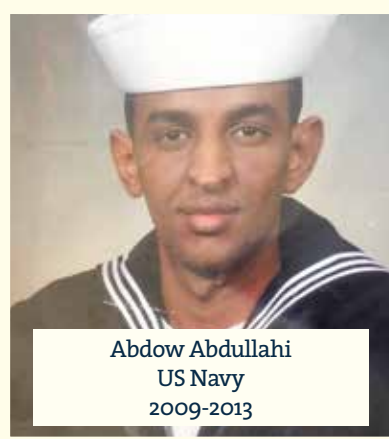
- There are 81 topics to choose from for updates.
- Currently, there are more than 30,000 subscribers.
- In 2020, almost 2.5 million bulletins were delivered.
- Since its launch in 2005, more than 10.6 million bulletins have been delivered.

The top five topics, in number of subscribers, are: snow emergency alerts, farmer’s market, Curbside Cleanup, Bloomington Briefing and seasonal Parks and Recreation jobs.

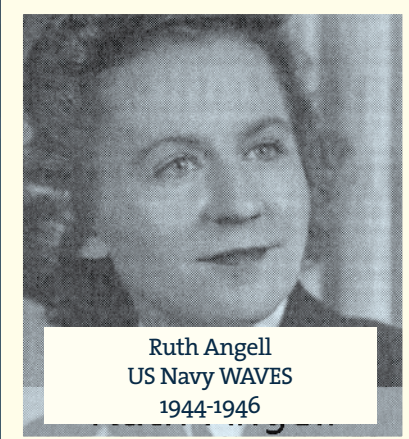
To sign up, visit blm.mn/ esubscribe. Many pages on the City website include an E-Subscribe box when there’s a topic related to the information on the page.

RECOGNIZING VETERANS

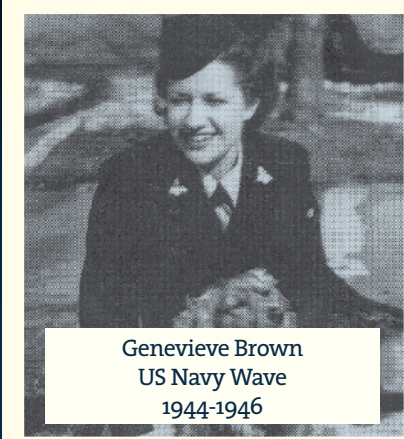
More than 300 photos of veterans from the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Air Force make up the veterans' photo wall. Their proud faces are a reminder of their dedicated service and sacrifice. Below are just some of the people we honor today and every day. Take part in this long-running tradition honoring veterans from our community virtually by viewing the digital photo album at blm.mn/veterans. You can check out the veterans' photo wall in person this year until November 30 in the Civic Plaza lobby, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. The City is always accepting veteran photo submissions. Visit blm.mn/veterans to submit a photo.



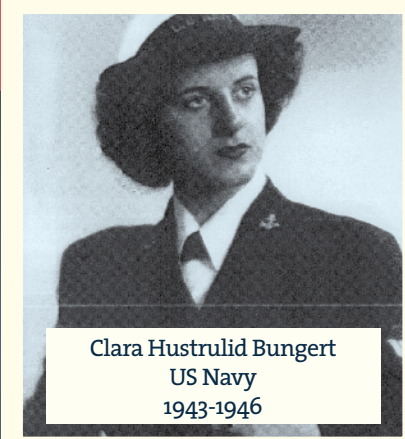
Abdow Abdullahi
US Navy
2009-2013



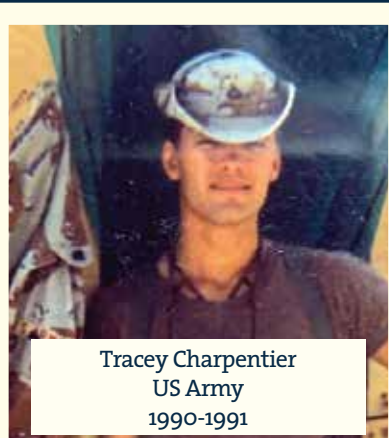
Ruth Angell
US Navy WAVES
1944-1946



Genevieve Brown
US Navy Wave
1944-1946



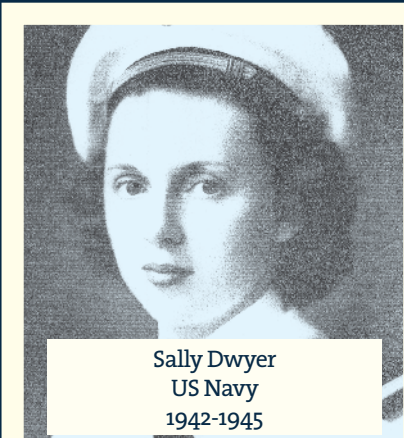
Clara Hustrulid Bungert
US Navy
1943-1946



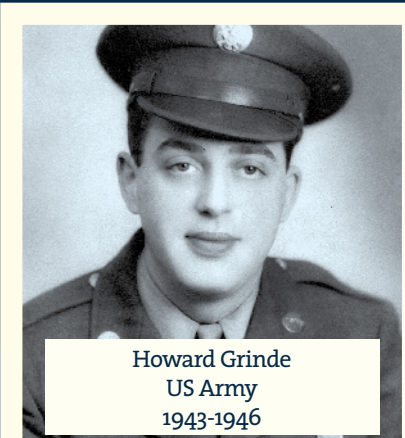
Tracey Charpentier
US Army
1990-1991



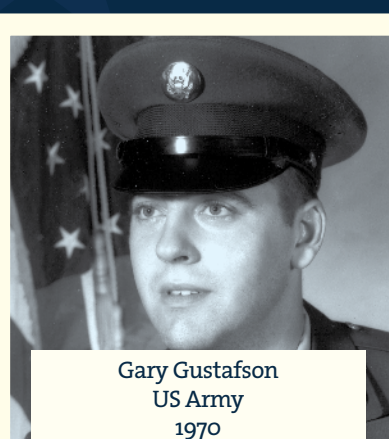
Lt. Avis L. Dagit
US Army
1942



Sally Dwyer
US Navy
1942-1945



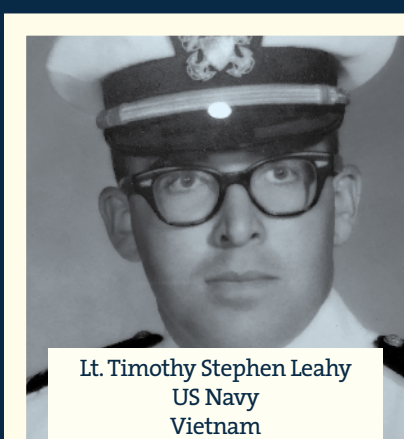
Howard Grinde
US Army
1943-1946



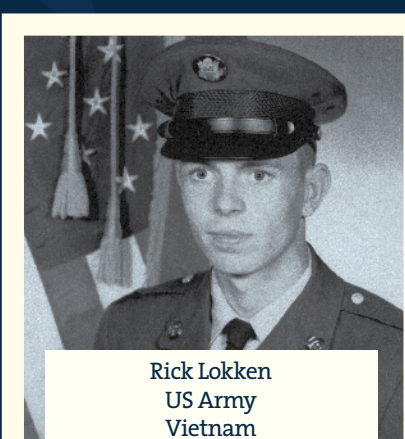
Gary Gustafson
US Army
1970



Barbara Knight
US Air Force
1952-1956



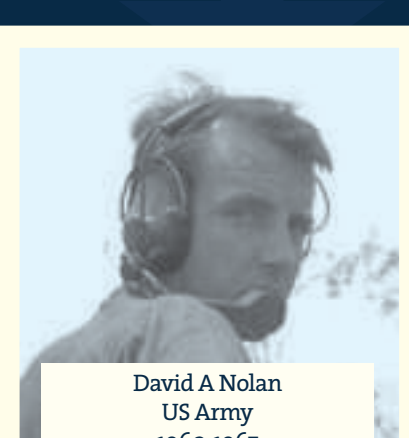
Lt. Timothy Stephen Leahy
US Navy
Vietnam



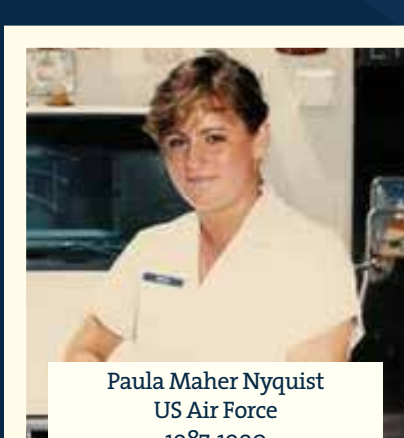
Rick Lokken
US Army
Vietnam



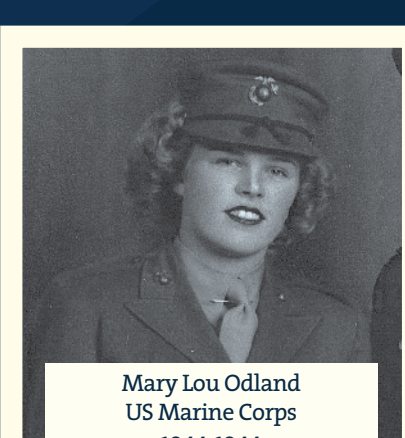
David Merrill
US Army
1953-1977



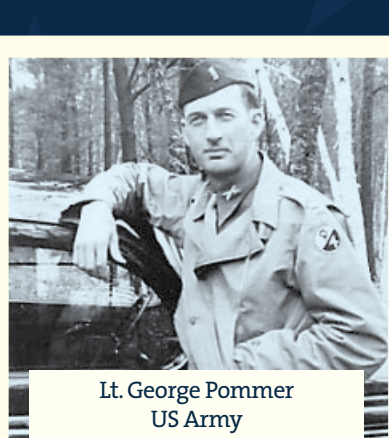
David A Nolan
US Army
1960-1967



Paula Maher Nyquist
US Air Force
1987-1990



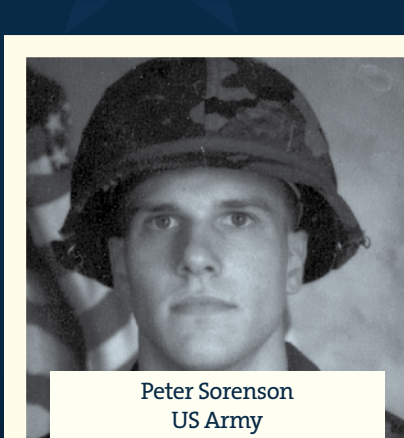
Mary Lou Odland
US Marine Corps
1944-1944



Lt. George Pommer
US Army
1942-1946



Aaron J Shelton
US Marine Corps
2006-2010



Peter Sorenson
US Army
1985-1991



Jack Thatcher
US Army
Active Duty