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

NOVEMBER 2025



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CELEBRATING
MILESTONES

PAGE 2

INDIGENOUS
ARTS AND
CRAFTS FAIR

PAGE 5

HONORING
VETERANS

PAGE 8

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENJOYING THE REIMAGINED BRYANT PARK AT 1001 W. 85TH ST.



Community members celebrate the opening of the new Bryant Park, 1001 W. 85th St.

CELEBRATING PROJECT MILESTONES

Bloomington is making investments in its parks and facilities that will serve the community for years to come. Hundreds of people gathered at ribbon cuttings and a ground breaking in October to celebrate milestones in the following projects.

BRYANT AND TRETBAUGH PARKS

The new Bryant Park, 1001 W. 85th St., was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting event last month. The new park features Bloomington’s first fully inclusive playground, a new park shelter, a skate park, baseball field, hockey rink, cricket pitch, and new tennis and basketball courts.

Tretbaugh Park, 3701 W. 90th St., is the City’s first-ever bike skills park. The reimagined park features a paved all-wheel track and a gravel mountain bike course for riders of all ages and skill levels.

The Tretbaugh and Bryant park transformations are major milestones guided by the Park System Master Plan’s focus on mobility, equity and new park amenities.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER

The City broke ground on the new community health and wellness center in October. The new center will be a modern, inclusive facility providing recreation, fitness and health activities, and community programs for residents of all ages and backgrounds throughout the region. Demolition of Creekside began at the end of October. Construction of the new facility is scheduled to continue through 2026 with a goal of opening the new facility in 2027. Learn more at bloomingtonforward.org/chwc.

MAYOR’S MEMO

BLOOMINGTON WELCOMES NEW CITY MANAGER

By Mayor Tim Busse

Zach Walker, *at right*, began serving as Bloomington’s newest city manager on October 20.

Walker has nearly two decades of executive level local government experience, most recently serving as city manager of Independence, the fifth largest city in Missouri.

Independence shares a lot in common with Bloomington. Zach brings an impressive resume and a lot of accomplishments to the table. I’m excited for the community to get to know him.

In Independence, Walker oversaw a full-service city of more than 1,200 employees and a \$454 million budget. He led major initiatives focused on strategic planning, fiscal discipline, organizational modernization and inclusive community development.

Walker championed transformational projects including a \$1 billion industrial development, a \$36 million commercial redevelopment, and the first Comprehensive Development Plan update in 25 years. He led the creation of the City’s first Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and implemented its inaugural Tourism Master Plan. Other major accomplishments include completing more than \$70 million in capital improvements, launching a citywide housing study and expanding mental health and homelessness outreach services through innovative partnerships.

“I’m honored to join the City of Bloomington as its next city manager. This is a vibrant, forward-thinking community with a strong sense of civic pride and shared purpose,” Walker said. “I look forward to working alongside the City Council, dedicated City staff, and engaged residents to build on Bloomington’s many strengths, foster inclusive growth,

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and deliver high-quality services that support a thriving, welcoming city for all. I’m excited to get started and to become part of a community that clearly cares deeply about its future.”

Walker began his career in the Missouri House of Representatives and the Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission before completing the Cookingham-Noll Fellowship with the City of Kansas City, Missouri. He joined Independence in 2012, rising from internal auditor to assistant city manager before becoming city manager in 2016. He holds a master of public affairs from the University of Missouri, is an ICMA-Credentialed Manager, and served as president of the Missouri City/County Management Association.

BRIEFING

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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.



Community members enjoy a celebration event for the community health and wellness center design development this last year.

CITY SCORES WELL IN NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY™

Bloomington residents consider the overall quality of the city’s natural environment, preservation of natural areas, quality of open space, recycling services and yard waste pick-up services to be key assets according to the 2025 National Community Survey™. Resident sentiments are also on the rise for police, crime prevention and animal control with an increase of about 10 points from the 2024 survey.

Ratings for the availability of preventive health services and availability of affordable quality mental health care saw declines in 2024 that have rebounded sharply in 2025, both ultimately ranking higher than the national average.

Engagement and inclusivity continue to be strengths, with rising ratings for residents’ sense of community, opportunities to volunteer, the community making all residents feel welcome and taking care of vulnerable residents, and openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.

Bloomington’s economic results were on par with or higher than benchmark comparisons to other communities nationwide. Ratings for Bloomington as a place to work, employment options and shopping opportunities eclipsed those in comparison communities nationally.

- Other findings**
- When asked to rate sources of information regarding the City, residents identified the *Bloomington Briefing* as a top source, followed by the City’s website.
 - Snow removal continued to get high marks with a satisfaction rating of 85%, ranking higher than benchmark cities.
 - 92% of respondents ranked the City’s drinking water as excellent or good, which is much higher than benchmark cities.
- This was the 14th year that the National Community Survey™ was conducted in Bloomington. The poll was performed by Polco/National Research Center. For more information and survey results, visit the City’s website at blm.mn/survey.



Irene Zheng, co-founder of Midnight Toast, accepts a Council proclamation recognizing Small Business Saturday.

SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORS BY SHOPPING LOCAL

This holiday season, be mindful of where your shopping dollars go. When you choose to shop at small, local businesses, you’re not simply buying something, you’re investing in our community.

Small Business Saturday, November 29, is a great time to support the local business community. Unlike big-box stores and online retailers, an estimated 68 cents of every dollar spent at a small business stays right here.

This means your purchase helps support local jobs, contributes to city services and builds a stronger, more vibrant neighborhood. It’s a simple way to make a big impact.

So, as you check off your holiday gift list, remember to look for those unique finds right in your own backyard. Shop local, love local.

JOIN A BOARD OR COMMISSION YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Want to make a difference in Bloomington? Serving on a City board or commission is a great way to get involved in local government, share your perspective and help shape the projects and policies that impact our community.

- Applications are now open for the following commissions:
- Advisory Board of Health
 - Creative Placemaking
 - Human Rights
 - Merit Board
 - Parks, Arts, and Recreation
 - Sustainability

These groups bring residents together to guide decisions on health, parks, human rights, sustainability and more. Whether you’re passionate about the environment, the arts or equity, there’s a place for you at the table.

Learn more and apply at blm.mn/boards. Questions? Contact the Community Outreach and Engagement Division at 952-563-8733 or outreach@BloomingtonMN.gov.



Community Development’s Barb Wolff records video with Luro Boots owner Gilberto Diaz.

CELEBRATING AND SUPPORTING BLOOMINGTON BUSINESSES

Bloomington is a place where businesses of every size and developmental stage can thrive. The City works alongside entrepreneurs and employers to create opportunities for growth, innovation and connection. Recent highlights include:

CEO Summit: A gathering of our largest employers to shared insights and discussed strategies that drive economic growth and innovation.

Business Forum: Focused on “Why Bloomington? Why start, expand and stay here?” the forum featured a new video with four local businesses, a panel hosted by Mayor Tim Busse, plus networking and vendor tables that connect businesses directly with City leadership.

Hatch Bloomington: A pitch competition giving startups a place to shine. Congratulations to this year’s winner Twila Dang and her business concept BookMother. Twila also served on the speaker panel at the Business Forum.

Together, these efforts strengthen relationships, give businesses a louder voice and highlight Bloomington as business friendly, growth ready and committed to long-term success.

For more information on business assistance, visit blm.mn/business.



HOME ENERGY TAX CREDITS TO EXPIRE

Recent changes to federal policy are ending several popular home energy tax credits earlier than expected, most by December 31, 2025.

Whether you’re upgrading insulation, switching to electric appliances or installing a heat pump, these incentives can help make your home safer, healthier and more affordable.

So, act now and do the work before the new deadlines. Utility rebates will remain a funding source beyond 2025, as well as soon-to-launch federal and state energy rebates for low and moderate-income households.

For details about tax credits visit homes.rewiringamerica.org/save. For details about rebates visit, blm.mn/rebates.

CUT YOUR ENERGY COSTS

As energy costs increase, Bloomington residents should know that they may qualify for assistance through the Energy Assistance Program (EAP). Open to both renters and homeowners, EAP may help income-eligible households cover heating costs, electric costs and furnace repairs. To learn more, visit blm.mn/energyhelp or call Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County at 952-930-3541.

Already receiving EAP? You may also qualify for the Weatherization Assistance Program, which funds home upgrades that make your space safer, healthier, and more efficient. Weatherization can lower your monthly bills, improve air quality, reduce asthma triggers, prevent structural damage and even keep rodents out.

“These programs can save residents money, and improve the health and comfort in their home,” said Sustainability Specialist Jamila Boudlali.

Find out if your household qualifies by calling the Sustainable Resource Center at 612-870-4255 or visiting qualifytoweatherize.com.

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ON THE RIGHT TRACK: IMPROVING TRAFFIC FOR A BETTER CITY

Streets connect us to our community. The City’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program is designed to make local streets safer and more accessible.

The NTMP’s core purpose is to create a safe and livable city where everyone can get where they need to go, whether by car, foot, bike or public transit. This is achieved by managing traffic speeds, improving safety and increasing accessibility.

“Traffic calming is not just about engineering roads; it’s about empowering neighborhoods,” said Traffic Management Coordinator Paul Jarvis. “Small-scale projects can have a big impact, transforming neighborhoods and making streets safer and more welcoming. The biggest changes often come from the

smallest adjustments, asked for by the people who know their streets best.”

The program was shaped by community input, and its main goals reflect a commitment to public safety and quality of life:

- Improve safety for everyone on our roadways.
- Enhance mobility and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.
- Advance equity to ensure benefits are shared citywide.
- Develop a cost-effective and easy-to-understand program.

If you have a traffic concern, submit a Public Request form at blm.mn/NTMP or contact Jarvis at 952-563-4548 or pjarvis@BloomingtonMN.gov.

BIG SAVINGS FOR SMALL CARTS

GARBAGE RATE CHANGES COULD BE COMING IN 2026

Bloomington’s garbage rates may change in 2026. The pay-as-you-throw system will remain, but price gaps will widen so smaller carts cost less. A new, lower-priced every-other-week pickup will also be available for households with the smallest cart and minimal trash.

These updates, based on a rate study and resident feedback, aim to keep service affordable and reduce waste.

What you can do:

- Downsize carts if they’re rarely full.
- Choose every-other-week service if weekly pickup isn’t needed.
- Recycle and compost more to shrink trash.
- Sign up for organics recycling at no extra cost to keep food scraps and other compostable materials out of the garbage.

Preliminary rates were presented to the City Council on July 28. Final adoption is expected after the November 17 public hearing. Watch for more details this fall to select your cart size and service level if the proposed changes are adopted. Learn more at blm.mn/garbage or call 952-563-8726.

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- RECYCLE WEEK
- BETTER FUTURE’S BULKY ITEM PICKUP WEEKS
- HOLIDAY; PICKUP IS DELAYED BY ONE DAY

YARD WASTE SEASON*: APRIL 14-NOVEMBER 29, WEATHER PERMITTING
*SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE, EXTRA CHARGES APPLY

CITY-OBSERVED HOLIDAYS THAT ARE NOT ON THE CALENDAR DO NOT DELAY COLLECTION. FOR THE FULL 2025 GARBAGE AND RECYCLING CALENDAR, VISIT [BLM.MN/2025GARBAGE](https://blm.mn/2025GARBAGE).

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

HOLIDAY GARBAGE AND RECYCLING SCHEDULE

The Thanksgiving holiday falls on Thursday, November 27, and will delay garbage, recycling, yard waste and organics recycling collection by one day for the rest of the week. Residents whose regular pickup day is Thursday will be serviced on Friday and residents with Friday pickup will be serviced on Saturday. The holiday falls during a recycling week and is also the last week of the yard waste collection season. For more information, visit blm.mn/garbage or call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726. Look for the full 2026 schedule in next month’s *Briefing*.



Visitors enjoy the first-ever Indigenous Arts and Crafts Fair at Civic Plaza.

INDIGENOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR A SUCCESS

More than 1,700 people gathered at Bloomington Civic Plaza earlier this year to celebrate Minnesota’s American Indian Month at the Indigenous Arts and Crafts Fair. This free, family-friendly event showcased Indigenous artistry, music, dance, food and culture.

Educational and family activity tables gave attendees opportunities to learn about programs, explore initiatives and create their own art. The event uplifted Indigenous artists while fostering authentic community connections.

Presented in partnership with Bloomington schools’ American Indian Education Program, the fair featured more than 30 Indigenous artists and vendors from across the Midwest offering handcrafted jewelry, textiles, pottery, beadwork and more. Visitors also enjoyed traditional dishes from Indigenous food trucks and live performances celebrating Indigenous heritage.

Planning is underway for the second annual Indigenous Arts & Crafts Fair, returning to Civic Plaza on Sunday, May 17. For more information, contact Recreation Supervisor Mark Morrison at mmorrison@BloomingtonMN.gov.

CALL FOR ARTISTS: HELP CREATE A LASTING TRIBUTE AT POND-DAKOTA MISSION PARK

Do you have a passion for creating art that tells a story? The City of Bloomington is seeking an artist or artistic team to create a new public sculpture at Pond-Dakota Mission Park. The project selected will honor Dakota history and culture.

The project budget is \$80,000 and is open to experienced public artists. Qualified applicants should demonstrate an understanding of Dakota heritage and a commitment to community engagement. The selected artwork is scheduled for installation in the summer of 2026.

Artists interested in applying must submit their materials by December 5. More details and application information are available at blm.mn/PDM.



TURNING UTILITY BOXES INTO CANVASES IN SOUTH LOOP

This summer, South Loop streets came alive with more color thanks to the City’s ARTBOXES project. Xcel Energy utility boxes were selected as part of a pilot project in collaboration with the energy company. Instead of blending into the background, several utility boxes were transformed into vibrant works of public art.

By painting and wrapping these everyday structures, the City supported local artists while turning ordinary street corners into creative landmarks. Public art like ARTBOXES sparks curiosity, strengthens community identity and makes public spaces more welcoming.

These artists created eye-catching designs at the following locations:

- **Old Shakopee Road and Killebrew Drive** by Jennifer Davis.
- **30th Street and Lindau Lane** by Erik Sletten.
- **Fenley Apartments, 8051 33rd Ave. S.** by Kao Lee Thao.
- **Lindau Lane and Winstead Way Roundabout** by Deneena Hughes

Keep an eye out as you travel through South Loop. You may discover your new favorite art.



LIGHT UP THE DARKEST NIGHTS WITH THE WINTER LIGHTS TOUR

Did you know at winter solstice, Minnesota gets less than nine hours of sunlight a day? That’s some deep darkness. To help spread cheer during the long nights, Bloomington Parks and Recreation coordinates a Winter Lights Tour. There are two ways to participate.

LIGHT UP YOUR HOME

String up some exterior illumination (lights and decorations) and register to have your house included on the tour by November 18.

TAKE THE TOUR

Once the City releases the Winter Lights Tour locations and route on December 2, tour the lights of Bloomington and pick your favorites.

Find details and the tour map at blm.mn/winter-lights.



SHOP LOCAL AT THE WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Find fresh produce, baked goods and handcrafted items at Bloomington’s Winter Farmers Market. The market will be held indoors at Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., on Saturdays November 8, December 13, February 14 and March 14. Enjoy seasonal goods and unique gifts while supporting local vendors all in the warmth of an indoor setting.

For more information visit blm.mn/market or call 952-563-8586.



LACE UP FOR OPEN SKATE AT BIG

The Bloomington Ice Garden welcomes skaters of all ages to glide across the ice during open skate now through June 3. Sessions are held Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Bloomington Public Schools release days from 9-10:30 a.m., and Sundays from 5:30-6:45 p.m. Open skate is \$5 per person. Coupon books are \$25 for six coupons. Skates can be rented for \$5 and sharpened for \$10. There will be no open skate December 24, January 1, February 8, April 5, May 24 and May 25. Dates are subject to change.

For schedule updates, visit blm.mn/ice-schedule.



SKATE SCHOOL OFFERS NEW ADULT CLASSES

Adult skaters have more opportunities to hit the ice at Skate School. Adult classes are now available on Tuesday mornings from 11:30 a.m. to noon and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 6:45 p.m., giving adults the full rink to themselves for practice and lesson time. Saturday morning adult classes continue as usual from 9:30-10 a.m.

Skaters of all levels are welcome, and those looking for extra practice are encouraged to sign up for multiple days. Advanced skaters also have the opportunity to prepare competition routines or explore testing opportunities through U.S. Figure Skating.

Winter Session registration starts November 24, with classes running from December 2 through January 31 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. For more information or to register, visit blm.mn/big. BLOOMINGTONMN.GOV

BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS
FALL 2025-WINTER 2026 PERFORMANCE SERIES

The Bloomington Center for the Arts Performance Series includes awe-inspiring live theater, dance, choral and instrumental concerts. Performances are held in the Schneider or Black Box theaters, located in the Bloomington Center for the Arts at the corner of 98th Street and West Old Shakopee Road. Free parking is available on-site. Purchase tickets at the box office or online at blm.mn/bcatix.

CHECK OUT THIS AMAZING LINEUP OF SHOWS



**MEDALIST CONCERT BAND:
BRITISH BAND CLASSICS**

A salute to the music of the British Isles — folk melodies, ceremonial marches, and landmark works by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Grainger, and more.

NOVEMBER 9, 4 P.M.
TICKETS \$20.73 ADULT, \$18.65 SENIOR (60+)/STUDENT (ALL FEES INCLUDED). FOUR-CONCERT DISCOUNT SEASON TICKETS AVAILABLE.



**BLOOMINGTON SYMPHONY:
ART FINDS A WAY**

Vaughan Williams’ Oboe Concerto, Dvořák’s Symphony No. 8 and Florence Price’s Concert Overture No. 1 show us how music finds a way to bring forth joy!

NOVEMBER 23, 2 P.M.
ADVANCE TICKETS \$26.43 PREMIUM, \$20.21 ADULT, \$17.10 SENIOR (62+)
AT-THE-DOOR TICKETS \$22.28 ADULT, \$19.17 SENIOR (62+) ALL STUDENTS FREE (ALL FEES INCLUDED)



**CONCERTO DANCE:
TRADITIONS**

Join us for an evening of jazz and modern dance! Featuring the full premiere of *Traditions* set to the *Fiddler on the Roof* score and more. Social swing dance follows the Nov. 20 evening performance.

NOVEMBER 20-21, 7 P.M.
NOVEMBER 21, 12:30 P.M.
TICKETS \$31.61 ADULT, \$26.43 STUDENT/SENIOR (60+), \$16.06 YOUTH (12 AND UNDER)



**ARTISTRY:
PLAID TIDINGS**

Francis, Jinx, Smudge and Sparky aren’t sure why they’ve returned to Earth for another post-humorous performance, but a call from the heavenly Rosemary Clooney lets them know that they’re needed during the holiday season.

DECEMBER 4-28, SHOW TIMES VARY
TICKETS \$35-\$50 (ALL FEES INCLUDED)



**ARTISTRY:
GIFTS IN THE GALLERY**

Artistry’s annual holiday boutique shopping event features a stunning array of items from over 50 local artists. Pick up gifts for everyone on your list in the Inez Greenberg Gallery at Bloomington Center for the Arts.

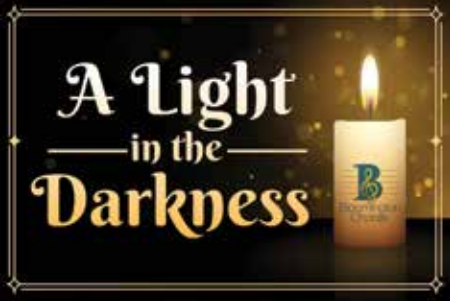
DECEMBER 4-23
PRICES VARY



**CONTINENTAL BALLET COMPANY:
THE NUTCRACKER**

Come enjoy this holiday classic with Continental Ballet Company this festive season! The ballet is to feature CBC’s professional company members.

DECEMBER 6, 13, 7:30 P.M.
DECEMBER 7, 13, 14, 3 P.M.,
DECEMBER 12, 10 A.M.
TICKETS \$31.61 ADULT, \$26.43 STUDENT/SENIOR (60+), \$16.06 AGES 13 AND UNDER (ALL FEES INCLUDED)



**BLOOMINGTON CHORALE:
A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS**

Join the Bloomington Chorale in an illuminating celebration of the season with songs such as “Ding Dong Merrily” on “High,” “Mozart’s Fa La La,” “Winter Wind,” and “Umoja Tunaimba.”

DECEMBER 19, 7:30 P.M.
DECEMBER 20, 4 P.M.
TICKETS \$26.43 ADULT, \$21.24 STUDENT/SENIOR (60+) (ALL FEES INCLUDED)



**MEDALIST CONCERT BAND:
SOUNDS OF THE SEASON**

Sleigh rides, candlelit evenings, and the wonder of the season come to life in a festive program that celebrates tradition and imagination for listeners of all ages.

DECEMBER 21, 4 P.M.
TICKETS \$22.80 ADULT, \$20.73 STUDENT/SENIOR (60+) (ALL FEES INCLUDED)



**ARTISTRY:
KISS ME, KATE**

Passions run high as leading lady Lilli Vanessi and her ex-husband, actor/director Fred Graham, battle onstage and off in a production of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*. *Kiss Me, Kate* includes a dazzling score by Cole Porter.

JANUARY 22-FEBRUARY 15
SHOW TIMES VARY
TICKETS \$33-64 (ALL FEES INCLUDED)

COME TO THE BLOOMINGTON ICE GARDEN GRAND OPENING

The newly renovated Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 W. 98th St., will be unveiled Saturday, November 8, 12-5 p.m., with a grand opening celebration for the community. Activities include a free open skate from 12-1:30 p.m. followed by two free high school games featuring Jefferson Girls vs. Armstrong with junior varsity at 1 p.m. and varsity at 2:30 p.m. Mayor Tim Busse, City Manager Zach Walker and Bloomington Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Jenna Mitchler will make remarks before the junior varsity game. Minnesota artist Adam Turman, who created the new mural in the vestibule, will be at BIG from 12-2 p.m. to interact with the public and talk about the artwork. The mural celebrates winter in Bloomington and the spirit of community that BIG nurtures. For more details, visit blm.mn/big.



Bloomington Police Officer Chris Wegner pictured in the video BPD used to enter the Air Traffic Solutions contest.

BLOOMINGTON POLICE CRUISE TO A BIG WIN IN NATIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY CONTEST

Bloomington Police Department cruised into first place in All Traffic Solutions’ annual sign contest in September. Agencies from across the country submitted videos showing how they use radar message signs to slow drivers, share alerts and collect traffic data. Winners were chosen by public vote and, thanks to strong community support, Bloomington came out on top.

BPD’s video featured Police Officer Chris Wegner sitting

in a lawn chair by a squad car with coffee in hand, keeping an eye on drivers’ speeds as they go by. The humor clearly hit the mark, helping Bloomington secure a new SpeedAlert 18 radar message sign and a yearlong TrafficCloud® subscription to boost local traffic safety.

In the spirit of this win, BPD would like to remind everyone to drive the speed limit for the safety of all who are on the road. Watch the winning video at blm.mn/bpd-video.



CITY RECEIVES STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Bloomington received nine awards from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators 2025 Northern Lights Awards. Three of the awards were first-place honors.

In the statewide contest, the City won Northern Lights Awards (first place) for *Embracing trends in City social media*, *Bloomington Today* and the *Notable Neighbor* video series; and Silver Awards (second place) for the *Moving Bloomington Forward Annual Report*, the *Bloomington Briefing* newsletter,



and the *Nine Mile Creek Corridor Renewal: Communications and Engagement*. The City also received Bronze Awards (third place) for the *Discover Bloomington* and *State of the City 2024*.

In the national 3CMA Savvy Awards contest, the City received a first-place award for *Nine Mile Creek Corridor: Community Engagement* and a third-place award for the *Notable Neighbor* video series.

MEET FIREFIGHTER AARON SOUR: SERVING BLOOMINGTON ON THE GROUND AND FROM THE SKY

For nine years, Firefighter and EMT Aaron Sour has served the Bloomington Fire Department, first as a paid on-call firefighter and now part-time. He was one of the original drone pilots when the program launched in 2019 and now, leads the program, helping the department use technology to enhance safety and response.

Aaron admits he never planned on becoming a firefighter. “Someone talked me into signing up. I have no regrets!” He holds advanced degrees in psychology and aviation, a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and experience in tech, business and training. He credits his positive outlook, steady presence, and the support of his wife Erin and family for his success.

Off duty, Aaron enjoys biking, hiking, kayaking, exploring new places, board games and the Minnesota Vikings, though his wife says: “GO PACK GO!”

AARON’S FIRE SAFETY ADVICE:

Treat lithium-ion batteries with care. Charge and store them properly and never modify them.



NAME:
AARON SOUR
STATION:
FIRE STATION 6



Left to right: Edina Mayor James Hovland, Richfield Mayor Mary Supple and Bloomington Mayor Tim Busse at the Mental Health Summit.

TRI-CITY MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT: A CALL TO ACTION

On September 30 at Civic Plaza the cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield hosted the “Tri-City Mental Health Summit: A Mayoral Call to Action for Mental Health & Community Well-Being.” This summit was an opportunity to bring together visionary leaders, community advocates, public health champions, and policymakers in the mental health and well-being space.

Attendees heard from panels of experts in the field and came together to brainstorm innovative and transformative solutions to the growing mental health crisis.

The summit opened with remarks from the three city mayors, a call for bold change by physician and State Sen. Alice Mann, and an inspiring message shared on behalf of U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar by one of her staff. Commissioner Brooke Cunningham of the Minnesota Department of Health closed the day with a powerful keynote on the themes of opportunity and hope.

All attendees committed to taking at least one action to improve community mental health. This was an opportunity to make real changewithin our communities. Stay informed and involved with the City’s efforts to improve mental health and well-being work by visiting the *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* strategic planning dashboard at blm.mn/btt.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 2026 BUDGET

Each year the City Council approves a budget to fund City services such as Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks and Recreation and more. Share your thoughts on what the City Council should consider when setting the 2026 property tax levy and budget in the following ways.

Share your thoughts in person about the property tax levy and budget on November 24, 6:30 p.m., or December 8, 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers at Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

Contribute your feedback online at blm.mn/budgetfeedback.

Visit the City’s budget website at blm.mn/budget.



Duane Brinkman poses for a photo at Bloomington Civic Plaza.

VETERAN SPOTLIGHT:
DUANE BRINKMAN

For Air Force veteran and longtime Bloomington resident Duane Brinkman, service has always meant dedication to country, family and community.

Raised on a farm in Austin, Minnesota, Brinkman enlisted in the Air Force in 1967, drawn to the “big planes.” He served in San Antonio, Denver, and Vietnam before returning home in 1969. Soon after, he met his wife Glenda, and they built their life in Bloomington, raising two children, Kimberly and Travis.

Decades later, service called again. In 2016, Bloomington became a Commemorative Partner of the United States’ 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, pledging to honor veterans and their families. One message from local Vietnam veterans stood out: they wanted a memorial to recognize all who served, including POWs and families who sacrifice alongside them.

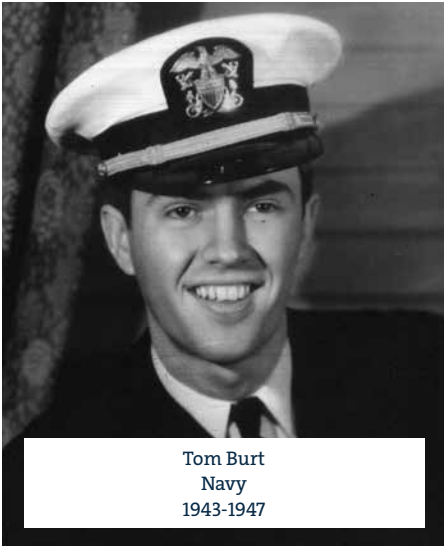
Inspired, Duane stepped forward as treasurer of the nonprofit Bloomington Remembers Veterans, helping raise funds for what will become the Veterans Memorial at Harrison Park. That vision will be realized on Veterans Day 2026, exactly a decade after Bloomington’s pledge.

For the Brinkman family, service continues. Their son, Travis, recently celebrated his promotion to Navy captain after 24 years. This Veterans Day, Bloomington honors Duane, his family, and all who have served—past, present and future.

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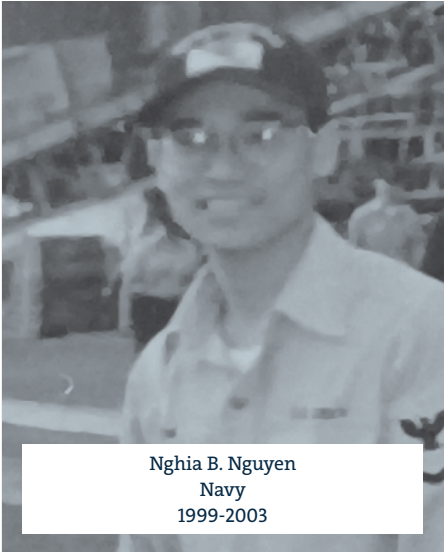
Beth Hendrycks
Army
2005-2025



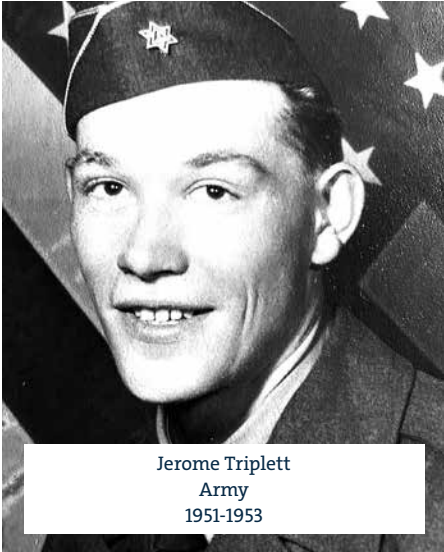
Tom Burt
Navy
1943-1947



Raymond F. Dutrieuille
Marines
1988-1992



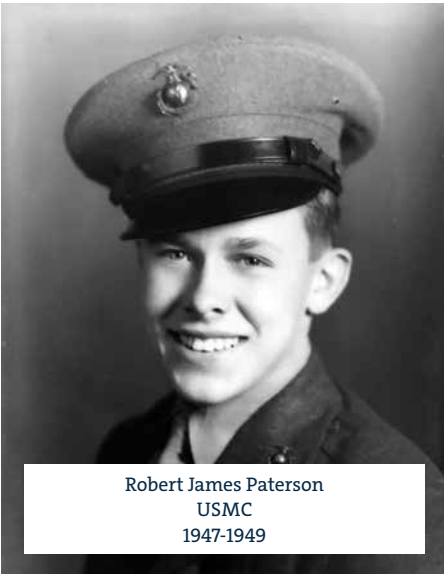
Nghia B. Nguyen
Navy
1999-2003



Jerome Triplett
Army
1951-1953



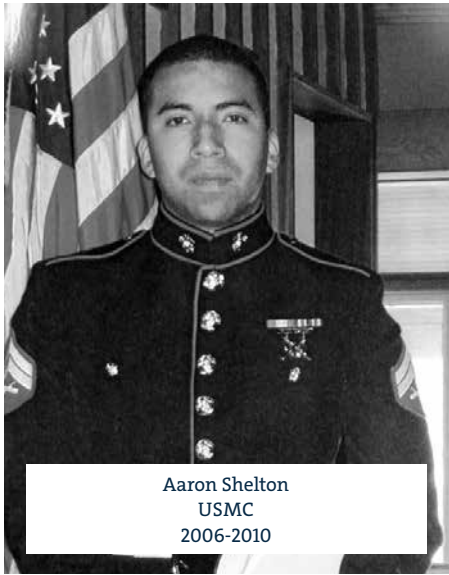
Kimberly Wood
Army
1979-1985



Robert James Paterson
USMC
1947-1949



Patsy Lee Dillon
Navy
1976-2017



Aaron Shelton
USMC
2006-2010

HONORING ALL WHO SERVE, PAST AND PRESENT

The City of Bloomington is deeply grateful to all veterans, active service members and the families who stand beside them. This fall, we came together as a community to honor their service and sacrifice with a Veterans Day Proclamation issued October 27 at the City Council meeting; a veterans’ photo wall displayed at Civic Plaza and currently online at blm.mn/vets-photos; as well as a veterans appreciation event November 6 at Civic Plaza.

A POW/MIA Flag Display remains on display through November 12 at Civic Plaza and Public Works. Each gathering, display and proclamation is a heartfelt reminder of the courage, resilience and dedication of those who served, and continue to serve. Questions? Contact Amanda Crombie at acrombie@BloomingtonMN.gov.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS MAKE A
STRONGER BLOOMINGTON

The City holds the belief that strong relationships are the foundation of a thriving community. We’re deeply grateful for the many partners who make this work possible. Local veterans’ groups, schools, nonprofits, neighborhood organizations, and many others remind us that community is never built alone.

A special thank you to: American Legion Post #550, Appreciative Inquiry Group, Bloomington Early Learning Advisory Committee, Bloomington Leadership Program Alums, Bloomington Pride Minnesota, Bloomington Remembers Veterans, Early Learning Services, faith communities, Food Co-Lab, La Red, League of Women Voters Bloomington, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Normandale Community College, Oasis for Youth, Office of Educational Equity, Southgate Apartments, Tod Pod and VEAP.

City staff are always looking to build new connections. If you’re interested in getting to know us as much as we’re interested in getting to know you, reach out to Amanda Crombie at acrombie@BloomingtonMN.gov.



Community members gather at an appreciative inquiry event.