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BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING

SEPTEMBER 2026

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HATCH
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LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO PICK UP A VIBRANT BOUQUET? ENJOY FLOWERS, LOCAL PRODUCE, FOOD TRUCKS, MUSIC AND MORE SATURDAY MORNINGS AT THE FARMERS MARKET. THE MARKET TAKES PLACE EVERY SATURDAY THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 8 A.M. – 1 P.M., AT CIVIC PLAZA, 1800 W. OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD. LEARN MORE AT BLM.MN/MARKET.



Rizwan Qazizada, owner of Afghan Darbar, stands at the front counter in his restaurant.

MAYOR'S MEMO: HATCH BLOOMINGTON LOVES LOCAL SUPPORTS SMALL BUSINESSES

There’s something special about a community where local businesses aren’t just places to visit. They’re places where we celebrate milestones and catch up with neighbors. Places where we enjoy a meal and spend time together. Local businesses provide convenient nearby shopping, great customer service and expertise, and the opportunity to build community connections. Those are a few reasons I’m especially excited to celebrate the five recipients of 2026 Hatch Bloomington Loves Local.

This year’s Hatch program looked a little different than years prior. Instead of awarding \$100,000 to one new entrepreneur, we recognized and supported already established businesses. The businesses that are receiving funding through Hatch have created jobs here and are already a part of the fabric of our community.

From collision repair and landscaping to international food, neighborhood gathering places and craft brewing, these five businesses reflect the diversity and character of our local economy. Congratulations to this year’s award recipients: Ado’s Auto Body Collision and Repair Center, Afghan Darbar, Zeke’s Place, Bloomington Garden Center and Landscape Co., and Nine Mile Brewing.

The quality of this year’s applicants speaks to the strength and diversity of Bloomington’s small-business community. Ten businesses advanced to the final pitch event, and the quality of their ideas and commitment to Bloomington impressed our judges so much that the Bloomington Port Authority added \$24,000 to the program, bringing the total awarded to \$124,000.

When we support local businesses, we’re supporting the people who make Bloomington a remarkable and enduring place where people want to be. Next time you’re looking for a place to eat, purchase items or receive a service, I encourage you to shop local. Your support helps our small businesses thrive. And when they thrive, Bloomington thrives, too.

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN LAUX

Former Bloomington Police Chief John Laux passed away on August 8, 2026. As was noted in his obituary, Chief Laux dedicated his life to faith, family and service.

Former Chief Laux served in the Unites States Army Reserve; he served 26 years with the Minneapolis Police Department, including six years as Chief of Police; and continued his service as Chief of Police with the Bloomington Police Department from 2003 – 2008. He was also a member of the City’s Merit Board until his passing. He also served on the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and numerous civic and nonprofit boards, including helping establish CornerHouse and serving Cornerstone, DeLaSalle High School and St. Bonaventure.

“Chief Laux was a great chief and a great person. He will be missed. Please join the City in keeping Chief Laux and his family in your thoughts,” Bloomington Police Chief Booker Hodges said.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT BROUGHT NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

More than 300 community members hosted National Night Out parties this year to connect with their neighbors this summer. National Night Out is an annual nationwide event that strengthens neighborhood connections and builds partnerships between residents and public safety. Bloomington Police, Fire, Mayor Tim Busse, City Council members and City staff were out and about visiting neighborhood block parties to connect with residents and share resources.

According to the Bloomington Police Department “National Night Out isn’t just an event, it’s a celebration of the community.” For more information on National Night Out, visit blm.mn/nno.

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BRIEFING

Volume 33, Number 09

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 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3071; PH 952-563-8819; MN Relay 711; Email: communications@BloomingtonMN.gov Website: BloomingtonMN.gov

BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL



Mayor
Tim Busse
952-563-8782 (w)
952-457-7506 (c)
tbusse@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member At Large
Jenna Carter
612-463-9014
jcarter@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member At Large
Danielle Robertson
612-834-5395
drobertson@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member District I
Dwayne Lowman
952-270-2377
dlowman@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member District II
Shawn Nelson
952-479-0471
snelson@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member District III
Lona Dallessandro
612-231-6824
ldallessandro@BloomingtonMN.gov



Council Member District IV
Victor Rivas
651-247-5199
vrivas@BloomingtonMN.gov

Elected officials presented for informational purposes.

COUNCIL MEMBERS
council@BloomingtonMN.gov

EXECUTIVE STAFF		
<i>City Manager's Office</i>		
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8780
<i>Zach Walker, City Manager</i>		
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8780
<i>Kathy Hedin, Deputy City Manager</i>		
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8780
<i>Elizabeth Tolzmann, Deputy City Manager</i>		
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8780
<i>Kim Berggren, Community Development</i>		
communitydevelopment@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8920
<i>Amy Cheney, Information Technology</i>		
it@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-4885
<i>Lori Economy-Scholler, Finance</i>		
finance@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8791
<i>Janine Hill, Communications and Engagement</i>		
communications@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8819
<i>Booker T. Hodges, Police</i>		
police@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-4900
<i>Parks and Recreation</i>		
parksrec@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8877
<i>Nick Kelley, Public Health</i>		
publichealth@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8900
<i>Melissa Manderschied, Legal</i>		
legal@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8753
<i>Ulie Seal, Fire</i>		
fire@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-4801
<i>Public Works</i>		
publicworks@BloomingtonMN.gov		952-563-8760
General phone number		952-563-8700

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.



VOTE EARLY, YOUR WAY

Planning ahead for Election Day? Absentee voting begins Friday, September 18, in the Greenburg Gallery at Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road. Enter through the Bloomington Center for the Arts doors.

Voting hours are Monday through Friday, September 18 through October 30, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Additional hours are Saturday, October 24, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Tuesday, October 27, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Saturday, October 31, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sunday, November 1, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; and Monday, November 2, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Minnesota's Early Voting period begins Friday, October 16. Ballots cast during this period are placed directly into the ballot counter instead of sealed envelopes.

Visit mnvotes.gov to view your ballot, check your voter registration, request a mailed absentee ballot or find your Election Day polling place.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATE FORUMS LISTEN IN AND LEARN AT LEAGUE CANDIDATE CONVERSATIONS

During election season, the League of Women Voters offers residents a chance to hear directly from the candidates. This fall, Bloomington residents are invited to attend Minnesota legislative district forums at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road:

- House Districts 50A, 50B, and 51B on September 10, 6:30 p.m.
- Senate District 51 on September 16, 6:30 p.m.
- Senate District 50 on September 16, 7:40 p.m.

Through its widely respected candidate forums, the League invites all candidates to share their views in a respectful, nonpartisan setting. Each participant answers the same questions, helping voters compare ideas, priorities and leadership styles before heading to the polls.

As a trusted nonpartisan organization, the League posts complete and unedited recordings of each forum so residents can hear exactly what candidates say.

For more information about all candidates, visit lwv-bloomington.com/candidate. To submit a question to the forum, email lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org.



The Bloomington Port Authority Commission, *above*, oversees economic development initiatives for the City of Bloomington.

YOUR VOICE BELONGS AT THE TABLE

Want to help shape Bloomington's future? Applications for boards and commissions open this month, giving residents an opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and perspectives while contributing to local government decisions.

No matter your background or area of interest, your voice can help strengthen Bloomington. Serving on a City board or commission is a meaningful way to get involved, learn more about how the City works, and help guide projects, programs and policies that affect the community.

"Be curious!" one commission member said. "No matter how small the question, the answer may surprise you and start a whole new conversation. You will be glad you did this."

Questions? Contact Communications and Engagement at 952-563-8733 or outreach@BloomingtonMN.gov. Ready to make a difference? Learn more about current openings, review requirements and submit an application at blm.mn/boards.



TAP INTO TECH WITH CONFIDENCE

Need a little help with your phone, tablet or computer? Senior Community Services offers free, one-on-one technology coaching for adults ages 50 and older at Logan Lodge, 9930 Logan Ave. S.

Whether you want to send photos to family, check medical information online, resolve a computer error or simply learn new skills, technology coaches are ready to provide patient, personalized assistance. Each participant receives a 45-minute appointment tailored to their questions and goals.

Appointments are available on Tuesdays: October 6, November 3 and December 1, between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. Bring your device and your questions, and leave with greater confidence using the technology that helps you stay connected, informed and independent.

Registration is required. Reserve your appointment and learn more at blm.mn/adultprograms.



EXPLORE THE NEW FRONTIER OF AI

Artificial intelligence is changing the way we live, work and communicate. Now is your chance to learn what all the buzz is about.

Join Parks and Recreation for an Artificial Intelligence education series designed for adults ages 50 and older. Each presentation explores a different aspect of AI in a welcoming, easy-to-understand format. Learn how artificial intelligence works, where it is already part of everyday life, how to recognize AI generated content, and the role it plays in the spread of misinformation.

Upcoming presentations are held from 10 – 11:30 a.m. in the Black Box Theater at Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, and include:

- **All Around AI:** Monday, September 14.
- **Is That AI?:** Monday, October 12.
- **AI and Disinformation:** Monday, November 9.

The series is free. Registration is required. Space is limited to 100 participants. Register through WebTrac or visit blm.mn/adultprograms for more.



THREE WAYS FOR NONPROFITS AND BUSINESSES TO SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY

Whether you own a business, manage a nonprofit or operate a commercial property, Bloomington offers energy programs that can lower costs and improve efficiency.

Nonprofits may receive a 20% rebate for qualified energy efficiency projects, up to \$2,500, through the EnerChange program. Projects must be completed by November 30. Learn more at enerchange.org.

Commercial and industrial property owners can receive up to \$500 off of a comprehensive energy review, with some buildings qualifying for a free audit. The offer is available through December 31 or until funding is exhausted. Contact Ben Lehman at 763-222-5033 or blehman@frontierenergy.com to learn more.

Small and medium businesses are eligible for free energy assessments through the Center for Energy and Environment. Qualifying lighting, HVAC and refrigeration projects may be eligible for utility rebates. Learn more and schedule a free energy assessment at mncee.org/commercial.

CLEAR STORM DRAINS

In the fall, leaves are everywhere, and they can clog storm drains. Leaves and other debris that make their way into storm drains don't go to the wastewater treatment plant. They flow directly to local watersheds.

Anything other than rainwater going through storm drains can potentially degrade waterbodies. The algae that feeds on leaves can turn lakes, ponds and wetlands green.

You can help by adopting a storm drain. It's easy to sign up for the free program. It only takes a commitment of a few minutes, a few times a year, to clean out a storm drain and the effort makes a difference in your community. Visit adopt-a-drain.org to sign up or for more information.



CLEAR THE CLUTTER AND RECYCLE WITH CONFIDENCE AT RECYCLING DROP-OFF EVENT

Give unwanted items a new purpose at Bloomington's annual Recycling Drop-Off event on Saturday, September 26, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m., at 10500 Hampshire Ave. S., the Public Works Western Maintenance Facility. This event helps residents recycle materials that are not accepted in curbside recycling and keeps reusable resources out of landfills.

A variety of items will be accepted. Some materials are free to recycle and others require a small fee. Only cash and check are accepted as payment. Please note: Fees for some items have changed from previous years, including paper shredding. The first standard-size bag or box of paper is free, and each additional bag or box is \$5. Review the fees below before attending.

Planning ahead will help make your visit quick and efficient. Before loading your vehicle, review the complete list of accepted materials, fees and other event details at blm.mn/drop-off.

WHAT IS ACCEPTED	
Appliances – \$10 each - Dehumidifiers - Microwaves - Stoves - Refrigerators - Washers and dryers - Water heaters - Air conditioners Mattresses and box springs – \$25 each Crib mattresses – \$10 each Tires – \$5 each Electronics – Fees vary - CRT/tube TVs and monitors – \$20 - Flat-panel TVs, computer monitors, laptops – \$10 Scrap metal – free Bicycles – free	Other electronics – free, including: - Computer accessories such as keyboards, mice and speakers - Cords - Cell phones - Printers - Stereos - VCR/DVD players New this year: Paper for on-site shredding – first bag or box free; \$5 for each additional bag or box - A standard bag is approximately the size of a paper grocery bag. - A standard box is approximately the size of a banker's box. - Oversized bags, boxes or other containers will be counted as multiple units based on size. - Staples are OK. Please remove all binders.

WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTED	
- Building materials - Carpet - Concrete - Exercise equipment - Furniture	- Household hazardous waste - Light bulbs - Paint - Trash



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF NORMANDALE’S JAPANESE GARDEN

Celebrate a Bloomington treasure at the Normandale Community College Japanese Garden 50th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, September 19, 12 – 4 p.m., at the college, 9700 France Ave. S. This free festival invites visitors of all ages to experience the beauty and traditions of Japanese culture.

Enjoy traditional performances, hands-on activities, authentic Japanese cuisine and a peaceful stroll through one of Bloomington's most treasured landmarks.

Created between 1972 and 1976 by the Bloomington Affiliated Garden Clubs with guidance from Tokyo garden architect Takao Watanabe, the two-acre garden features koi ponds, handcrafted bridges, lanterns, a waterfall and more than 300 Minnesota hardy plants.

Presented by TORO with support from the City of Bloomington and several community partners, this special celebration honors five decades of friendship, culture, and community.

For more information, contact Equity and Inclusion Program Manager, Amanda Crombie at acrombie@BloomingtonMN.gov or 952-563-8736.

CONNECT, COLLABORATE AND GROW AT THE BLOOMINGTON BUSINESS FORUM

Bloomington business leaders, entrepreneurs and community partners are invited to the second annual Bloomington Business Forum on Wednesday, October 7, 8 – 10 a.m. in the City Council Chambers at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

The free event is designed to support business growth, strengthen connections and help shape Bloomington’s economic future. Attendees will hear insights on the regional economy, learn how to do business with government and private organizations, and connect with City leaders, elected officials and fellow business professionals.

Whether you are growing an established business or exploring new opportunities, this forum provides valuable information and connections.

Participants will also have an opportunity to provide input and help define Bloomington’s economic vision for the next 20 years.

Space is limited. Registration closes Friday, September 25. Learn more and find the registration link at blm.mn/businessforum. Questions? Contact the business assistance team at business@BloomingtonMN.gov.

A CALL TO BLOOMINGTON’S EMPLOYERS: HELP TOMORROW'S TALENT BLOOM TODAY

Help shape Bloomington's future workforce and connect with the next generation of local, motivated youth by becoming a 2027 Bloom in Bloomington internship employer.

The program matches interns with local employers for meaningful, hands-on work experiences that build professional skills, strengthen local workforce connections and create opportunities for future careers.

“I would strongly recommend the Bloom in Bloomington internship to other employers. The internship program itself is organized and supportive, and our intern was an incredible addition to our team,” an employer partner said.

Businesses, nonprofit organizations and public agencies are encouraged to apply now. Employer applications open this fall and early registration ends in January 2027. Though applications will continue to be accepted until March, early registration gives employers the best opportunity to attract top local talent to specific internships when student recruitment begins in January.

To learn more about investing in Bloomington's future workforce and making a lasting impact on a young professional's career., visit blm.mn/bloom or contact Workforce Development Program Coordinator Warsan Artan at bloom@BloomingtonMN.gov or 612-546-2190.



CELEBRATE NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH WITH ART

During National Hispanic Heritage Month, discover the vibrant public art that adds color, culture and creativity to Bloomington. Created by Hispanic and Latino artists, these works celebrate identity, nature, and the diverse stories that make our community unique.

Look for the WE Mural featuring art by Peruvian-born artist Andrés Guzmán at American Boulevard and 30th Avenue South; Evening Primrose mural by Argentinian artist Mariela Ajas; and Kalopsia, a mosaic bench by Argentinian artist Daniela Bianchini inspired by Long Meadow Lake, both at 8061 33rd Ave. S. Bloomington resident and Mexican artist José Manuel Rebollo Arredondo designed Elements of Minnesota, Huichol Style, an Artbox that blends Minnesota wildlife with traditional Huichol art.

Visitors can also enjoy a community mural created by Pablo Kalaka and Daniela Bianchini at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd. S.

Take time this month to explore these inspiring works and celebrate the artists whose creativity helps tell Bloomington's story.

CLOCK TOWER TO COME DOWN THIS FALL

For decades, the Bloomington clock tower at the intersection of Lyndale Avenue and 98th Street has been a familiar landmark. Over time, the structure has deteriorated and now presents ongoing maintenance and safety concerns.

A comprehensive assessment by the City’s facilities team and an external consultant reviewed the tower’s structural integrity, mechanical systems, safety compliance and long-term maintenance needs.

The evaluation found advanced structural wear from age and weather exposure, outdated clock components requiring full replacement and reconstruction needs that go far beyond routine repair. Costs to restore the tower would be substantial and out of proportion to its remaining useful life.

Based on these findings, the City plans to remove the clock tower this month. The City is exploring options with the property owner for what’s next for the site.

To honor the history of the clock tower, Public Works crews will preserve and store the clock face. The history plaques on the tower will be preserved at the Bloomington Historical Society. Stay up to date at blm.mn/clock-tower.



VISIT THE BLOOMINGTON STREET ARTS FESTIVAL

Celebrate art, music and community at the Bloomington Street Arts Festival Saturday, September 19, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., at Nine Mile Brewing, 9555 James Ave. S.

This free, family-friendly event features local artists, live music, interactive booths and more than 25 vendors. Enjoy hands-on activities like painting, creature creation and more.

The popular sidewalk chalk art contest returns and is open to all ages. Entry is free, and space is limited. Learn more at blm.mn/streetarts.



Photo courtesy Drew Arrieta.

YOU’RE INVITED TO NATURE FEST

Enjoy a day of music, art, and food at the Nature Fest: Cultivando Comunidad on Saturday, September 12, 1– 5 p.m., at the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd. E. Everyone is invited to attend this free event. See cultural dances, try something new at the food trucks, discover wildlife, and more.

This event is presented by Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends, the City of Bloomington, Huellas Latinas, Indigenous Roots and Minnesota Zoo. Learn more at blm.mn/naturefest.

PARKS AND RECREATION IS GETTING A TECH UPGRADE

In January, Bloomington Parks and Recreation will start using new software called Rec to offer a simpler, more convenient way to register for activities, reserve facilities and discover programs. More information will be included in upcoming Briefings about the launch and how to use the new system. For the latest updates, visit blm.mn/parksrec.



PLAY, EXPLORE AND STAY ACTIVE ALL SEASON WITH OPEN GYM TIME

Looking for fun ways to stay active this fall and winter? Bloomington offers indoor recreation for all ages at 6900 W. 115th St. Registration is not required.

Little ones up to age five with a parent, guardian, or caregiver can enjoy Toddler Open Gym on Wednesdays, November 4 through March 31, 9 – 11:30 a.m. The gym is filled with balls, blocks, mats and games for children. The cost is \$2 per child over the age of one, payable at the door or online.

For all ages, Open Gym is offered Saturdays, October 3 through May 15, 2027, 3 – 6 p.m. Enjoy casual play, practice skills, or simply stay active. Admission is \$5 per person, with a \$20 family maximum. A signed liability waiver is required for entry.

Open Volleyball will also be offered Saturday, October 3, 6 – 8 p.m. giving adult 18+ a chance to enjoy casual games and sharpen their skills in a welcoming environment. The fee is \$5 per person, per visit. A signed liability waiver is required for entry.

Open pickleball play runs October 12 through March 26, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. and Wednesdays 12-2:30 p.m. Season pass: \$225; monthly pass: \$50; or daily entry: \$7.

Learn more at blm.mn/parksrec.



MAKE THE MOST OF THE COMING SEASONS WITH BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION

The leaves will soon be changing, the air will be getting a little crisper, and yes ... winter isn't too far behind. But before you start hibernating, discover everything Bloomington Parks and Recreation has to offer this fall and winter.

Whether you're lacing up your skates for the first time, joining an adult sports league, signing the kids up for a new program, exploring nature on an autumn afternoon, or finding a new activity to brighten a snowy day, there's something for every age and interest

You'll also find adaptive recreation opportunities, programs for adults 50 and older, seasonal events, the Winter Market, and outstanding performances at the Bloomington Center for the Arts.

Minnesota winters may be long, but they don't have to be spent indoors. Make this fall and winter a season to stay active, try something new, and create lasting memories with family and friends.

Explore upcoming programs and activities at blm.mn/webtrac.

MEET THE FIREFIGHTER: ERIC PETERSON, A HOMETOWN HERO

When emergency calls come into Bloomington Fire Station 3, firefighter and EMT Eric Peterson is ready to help. In 2025, his dedication and teamwork earned him Bloomington Fire Department’s Firefighter of the Year award.

Peterson joined the department in 2021 as a paid-on-call firefighter before becoming a full-time firefighter and EMT in 2023. He serves on the department’s Technical Rescue Team and has earned certifications in firefighting, hazardous materials response and specialized rescue operations.

Before joining the fire service, Peterson worked as a carpenter for 15 years and later supervised aircraft refueling crews at MSP Airport. Today, he says helping neighbors is what makes the job meaningful.

“As a firefighter I get the opportunity to help people solve their problems on a daily basis,” Peterson said. “Serving the city where I live, I have the opportunity to help my neighbors.”

Peterson credits his teammates, department leadership and family for supporting him in a demanding career. Outside of work, he enjoys fishing, bike rides and spending time with his wife Becky and their son.



NAME:
ERIC PETERSON
STATION:
FIRE STATION 3

Eric’s fire safety advice: Plan and practice fire drills at home so everyone knows how to get out safely during an emergency and where to meet once you are out.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH GET READY TODAY, SO YOU ARE SAFER TOMORROW

September is National Preparedness Month, a reminder that taking a few simple steps now can help protect your family, home and community during an emergency.

Whether it is severe weather, a power outage or another unexpected event, preparedness starts with three steps: build a kit, make a plan and stay informed. Create a family emergency plan, gather essentials such as water, food, medications, flashlights and important documents, and consider keeping emergency kits both at home and in your vehicle.

“Every family is unique, and your emergency kit should reflect that,” said Public Health Emergency Preparedness Specialist Victoria Deitschman. “Don’t forget supplies for pets, children, older adults, and anything else that keeps your household safe and comfortable on a day-to-day basis.”

Preparedness does not have to happen all at once. Small actions taken today can make a big difference when every minute counts. Start by adding two or three items to your kit or create an emergency contact list to store in several places.

Find free, tailored planning tools and checklists to create an emergency plan and build an emergency kit at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov). These tools and guidance can help you build a plan that fits your household’s unique needs and ensures you’re ready for whatever tomorrow may bring. And stay in the know by signing up for the City’s emergency alert system at blm.mn/alerts.



BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and is preventable.

“While anyone can be at risk for suicide, people with mental health issues experience a much higher risk of suicide,” said Public Health Well-being Specialist Jada McDonald. “That’s why fostering protective factors like connection and community support is essential for prevention.”

Building connected communities can look like reaching out and checking in on friends, family and neighbors, inviting and including people in community gatherings, and promoting the use of community spaces such as parks.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, help is available:

Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988.

Cope Mobile Crisis:
612-596-1223.

Fastrackermn.org.
To learn more about suicide prevention, visit:

[Save.org](https://www.save.org).
[Take5toSaveLives.org](https://www.Take5toSaveLives.org).
[NAMIMN.org](https://www.NAMIMN.org).



SAVE THE DATE: FIRE STATION OPEN HOUSE

Join the fun at the annual Bloomington Fire Department Open House on Saturday, October 10, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., at any of the City’s six fire stations. Visit blm.mn/fire to find the fire station nearest you.

Visitors of all ages can enjoy live demonstrations, chat with firefighters, and even spray a fire hose.

Additional kid-friendly activities include coloring sheets, taking pictures for the photo wall and meeting Sparky the Fire Dog. Kids will receive a free T-shirt, bag and other giveaways.

RIISING THROUGH THE RANKS AND INTO A NEW CHAPTER IN PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP

Police Chief Booker Hodges recently promoted Damon Bitney to assistant chief of police to help guide daily operations, promote the department’s core value of respect and advance its vision.

“It is vital that we keep up with the public safety needs of our community,” said Chief Booker Hodges. “The professional leadership of Assistant Police Chief Bitney will advance this effort to the next level.”

Working alongside Hodges, Bitney oversees department operations and strategic planning, while serving as acting chief as needed.

“I am truly humbled to serve as the first assistant chief of police for the department,” Bitney said. “This role represents an opportunity to continue serving alongside the dedicated members of this department while helping shape its future.”

Since joining the Bloomington Police Department in 2000, Bitney has been promoted through the ranks and served several professional roles.



UP TO CODE: KEEPING BLOOMINGTON AT ITS BEST

Residents play an important role in maintaining property values and the appearance of Bloomington neighborhoods. The City code describes standards for property maintenance and relies on residents to take care of their properties. Here are some common standards set forth in the City code regulating your house and neighborhood.



PARKING

Vehicles must be parked in the garage or on an approved driveway. Unlicensed or inoperable vehicles must be stored in the garage. This includes vehicles with expired tabs. No more than four vehicles may be parked outside of a garage, excluding visitors. Trailers that exceed 12 feet in height or have a bed length of more than 25 feet cannot be stored outside of the garage. One trailer under this size may be stored outside, no closer than five feet to side yard property lines. A utility trailer may also be parked in the driveway if it is at least 30 feet back from the street. Nonresidential vehicles taller than 12 feet or longer than 22 feet cannot park in residential areas.



RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

All recreational vehicles parked or stored near a dwelling must be owned or leased by an occupant of that dwelling. Guests may park recreational vehicles on a driveway for a period not exceeding seven days in any consecutive six-month period, provided all other standards are met. Any recreational vehicle less than 40 feet in length may be temporarily parked in the driveway for the sole purpose of loading or unloading and routine maintenance for a period not exceeding 72 hours within seven consecutive days. If the recreational vehicle extends more than eight feet in front of the dwelling it must meet the following additional standards:

- Must be set back at least five feet from any property line, at least ten feet from any sidewalk, and at least 20 feet from the back side of any street curb or edge of pavement.
- Must not exceed 11 feet in height at any point.
- Must not exceed 25 feet in length, including trailers.
- Must be parked or stored no more than 30 feet closer to the street than the principal building on the same site.
- Must be parked or stored on a conforming or legally nonconforming driveway or off-drive parking area.

Recreational vehicles parked at homes that are on corner lots have additional requirements. Some recreational vehicles also have seasonal requirements depending on the type. A permit is not required to store recreational vehicles in compliance with the City code. Many properties are unique. If you are unsure about a requirement, please call 952-563-8920 or email City staff at planning@BloomingtonMN.gov for clarification.



HOME MAINTENANCE AND OUTDOOR STORAGE

Store materials, machinery and equipment in a building or fully screened area so they are not visible from adjoining or adjacent lands. Home exteriors must be maintained free from peeling, chipping and other deterioration. This includes siding, windows, trim, roof, doors, driveways, sheds and fences. The size and location of firewood stacks are also regulated by City code.



REFUSE, LITTER AND WEEDS

When tall grass inspections begin, grass must be cut before it reaches eight inches in height and before it goes to seed. All noxious weeds must be removed. All twigs, tree and shrub branches that fall in the yard must be removed immediately or stored in an enclosed container. Brush piles are not allowed on residential properties. Garbage must be stored within a building or an enclosed container. All refuse, recycling, compost, twigs and brush should be placed at the assigned collection location no more than 12 hours before collection day. Waste containers must be removed no more than 12 hours after collection day. Garbage and recycling containers for single-family, detached homes must be set back 30 feet from any four-season living area other than the owner's. Garbage and recycling containers cannot be stored more than five feet in front of the principal building along any public right of way.



HOME BUSINESSES

Certain businesses are prohibited in residential zones, including manufacturing, vehicle repair and retail where customers come to the house. Home businesses are separated into two types: Type 1 businesses include beauty shops, tutoring and piano instruction, but these have limits on the number of daily customers allowed. Type 2 businesses require Council approval.

OTHER CITY CODES

This is not a complete list of City codes. To read all City codes, visit blm.mn/code.

NOTICE AN ISSUE?

Let us know if a neighborhood property is becoming an issue. To report a nuisance or ordinance violation, call Environmental Health at 952-563-8934 or email envhealth@BloomingtonMN.gov.