

The Arlington Report

CITY WELCOMES 2 NEW RESIDENTIAL GARBAGE HAULERS

In late December, City Offices were notified by Waste Management that they had purchased Tidy Disposal and Evergreen Sanitation. Tidy and Evergreen, along with Waste Management made up the three allowed licensed residential waste haulers for the City. Following the action by Waste Management, the City received applications from TCW Disposal (Hamburg) and Renville-Sibley Sanitation (Gibbon) to fill the two open residential slots. The applications were accepted for a twelve month period by the City Council at their January 4th Council Meeting. As it stands now, Arlington residents continue to have three choices for residential garbage hauling and recycling: Waste Management (800-422-5785), TCW Disposal (877-685-3815), and Renville-Sibley Sanitation (866-800-6244). Commercial customers, or those interested in roll off/dumpster services have four options: Waste Management, TCW Disposal, Renville-Sibley Sanitation and Gaylord Sanitation (507-237-2274).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS STILL NEEDED

Interested in volunteering for your community? Want to be involved in the decision making process of city governance? The Mayor and City Council are still seeking interested individuals to fill open positions on the Police Committee. Interested candidates must be a resident of the City and need to fill out an "Application for an Appointment to Advisory Boards/Commissions/ Committees" form. Forms can be picked up at the City Office and are also available on the City's web site.

BUILDING PERMITS DOWN IN 2009

There were 143 building permits issued in 2009, down from 153 in 2008. Along with the number of permits decreasing in 2008, the value of the work being done also dropped. The 143 permits issued in 2009 were at a value of \$1,226,983.52, which was 12% lower than the value of permits issued in 2008. Most of the permits issued (49) in 2009 were for roofing, siding, and window projects.

UPDATE ON WIND TURBINE

"Why is that wind turbine not spinning?" is a common question these days. Its also a question the City is asking MMPA. MMPA has notified the City that there are two issues with the turbine not spinning. One appears to be a commissioning (testing of the turbine) error by the Contractor. Secondly, and the most glaring reason for the turbine not spinning, MMPA has stated that the tur-

bines will only operate when the ambient air temperature is greater than one degree Fahrenheit, which has caused some issues with the hydraulic fluid and lubricating oil in the turbines gear boxes. In cold weather, the fluid turns gel-like and doesn't flow, which can be problematic if the turbines are not spinning. The City has full confidence that MMPA will resolve the problems and expect the turbines to be spinning within the next month or two.

REMINDER ON SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL

Property owners should remember that city ordinances require that all ice and snow must be removed from all public sidewalks within 12 hours after such snow or ice has ceased to be deposited upon such sidewalk. Failure to remove the snow or ice within 24 hours may be a cause for the City to do so itself. If the City, or an agent assigned by the City, has to remove the snow, the City will bill the property owner accordingly. Unpaid bills for snow removal will be a cause for a special assessment against the property. Also, please remember to remove snow piles from the corner lots or intersections that may impose a site problem for drivers.

CITY ASKING FOR HELP WITH SNOW

The City of Arlington and the Arlington Fire Department wants to remind everyone that if there is a fire hydrant on or near your property, please take a few moments and shovel the snow away. Clearing the snow away from a hydrant increases its visibility and can save precious time when fire fighters need to hook up to the hydrant in a hurry. The City is also asking residents to help prevent street flooding and icing by clearing snow away from storm sewer catch basins. When the weather turns warmer and snow begins to melt it's important that the runoff water gets into the storm sewer. If the catch basin is covered by a build-up of snow and ice, street flooding can occur. Should the thermometer dip after melting takes place, a street can become an ice rink.

WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH METERS!

To help meter readers during this snow season, the City of Arlington is asking residents to assist the City by clearing a path to water and electric meters. Residents that have a fenced-in yard can also assist the city by making sure snow is removed from the gate to make access to the meters easier. This will help meter readers avoid walking on snow-covered landscaping and allow them to do their job more efficiently. If meter readers are unable to access meters, residents will be asked to read the meters themselves for the City.

City Offices will be closed on Monday, February 15 for the President's Day Holiday.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Kreft -- Mayor
Jim Pederson -- Council Member
Bob Pichelmann -- Council Member
Curt Reetz -- Council Member
Mike Vrklan -- Council Member
Galen Wills -- Council Member

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Matt Jaunich -- City Administrator
Dennis Schultz -- EDA Director
Lisa Tesch -- Deputy Clerk
Vicki Pomplun -- Admin. Ass't
Lana Woehler -- Community Center Coordinator
Dan Thomes -- Streets/Parks Supt.
Jeff Paine -- Maintenance Worker
Bruce Rovinsky -- Chief of Police
Scott Bennett -- Police Officer

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Ross Arneson -- City Attorney
Cynthia Smith-Strack -- Planning & Zoning Consultant
Darin Haslip -- Building Inspector
People Service -- Water/Wastewater
Joel Hawbaker (Bolton & Menk) -- City Engineer

PHONE NUMBERS

City Hall: 964-2378
Fax Line: 964-5973
After-Hours On-Call:
507-327-6601
Fire Garage: 964-2279
Police Dept: 964-5200
Library: 964-2490
Hospital: 964-2271
S.E. School: 964-2292
Post Office: 964-5503

OTHER SERVICES

Water/Sewer/Electric Services
City of Arlington (964-2378)
Gas Service
CenterPoint Energy (800-245-2377)
Cable Service
Mediacom (800-332-0245)
Internet/Phone Service
Frontier (800-435-1504)
Garbage Services
Waste Management (800-422-5785)
TCW (877-685-3815)
Renville-Sibley Sanitation (866-800-6244)

City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:
204 Shamrock Drive
Arlington, MN 55307

Phone: 507-964-2378
Fax: 507-964-5973
E-mail: cityhall@arlingtonmn.com



A Beautiful City Growing in Unity



COURT RULING ON STATE BUDGET MAY AFFECT CITIES

Ramsey County District Court Judge Kathleen Gearin issued a restraining order on December 30 that will prevent the State from unallotting funding for the Minnesota Supplemental Aid Special Diet Program. The Judge's ruling has set the stage for the legality of the Governor's unallotment procedure of \$2.7 billion last year. In her ruling, the Judge stated that the unallotment statute itself "is constitutional" and that it is only "the specific manner in which the governor exercised his unallotment authority". The Governor's allotment resulted in Local Government Aid payments across the state being cut, including Arlington's State Aid being reduced by \$108,701 in 2010.

The temporary restraining order was requested by the plaintiffs last fall in the original challenge to Governor Pawlenty's use of unallotment to reduce the nutrition program and the renter's refund program. Although the decision only directly impacts the Special Diet program, the rationale expressed by Judge Gearin suggests that the entirety of Pawlenty's 2009 and 2010 unallotments could be overturned.

Judge Gearin's decision makes it possible that an additional legal challenge might restore the City's \$108,701 in 2010 unallotments and could possibly even restore the City's State Aid cut of \$46,156 in 2009. However, given the broader state budget problems, a restoration might only increase the uncertainty for city budgets in 2010 and could leave cities susceptible to even greater cuts.

In early December, the State released a budget forecast which projected an additional state budget deficit of \$1.2 billion for the current 2010-2011 biennium. The restoration of any portion of the previous unallotments would add to the state's deficit. If the entire \$2.7 billion unallotment were overturned and added to the recent \$1.2 billion forecasted deficit, the governor and Legislature would have to address a \$3.9 billion problem.

Last session ended in a budget stalemate between the governor and the Legislature over the best strategy to balance the budget. The final component of the Legislature's budget included a tax bill that would have raised roughly \$1 billion in additional taxes over the biennium. Governor Pawlenty opposed the tax increase and vetoed that bill. At this time, there is no indication that either party has changed its position on balancing the state's budget and with a deficit that could potentially reach \$3.9 billion, it seems almost

certain that every sector of the state budget would be subject to appropriation reductions, including Local Government Aid payments to cities.

Whether you agree or disagree with the Judge's decision, the impact of her decision could have a major, lasting affect on the 2010 budget and beyond of the City. If the judge's decision stands and future suits are filed to invalidate the State Aid cuts in 2009, the City could be faced with a more massive cut in 2010 as the Legislature and Governor try to balance the budget with less time and fewer alternatives. (*Source: Cities Bulletin Online*)

WINTER ENERGY SAVING TIPS

With the cold weather attacking us, here are some tips for keeping those utility bills down.

Heating

- Heating can account for up to 41% of your annual energy bills, so efficiency is essential.
- Caulk and weather-strip cracks around door and window frames and at door bottoms to stop drafts.
- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable when home. Lower the setting on your thermostat at night and dress warmly. For every degree you lower your heat, you'll save up to 5% on heating costs. Close off unused rooms.
- Check the insulation in your attic, ceilings, exterior and basement walls, floors, and crawl spaces to see if it meets the levels recommended for the area.
- Check furnace filters monthly and replace or clean when dirty. Have your furnace checked yearly for safe and efficient operation.
- Repair broken windows immediately. Close windows tightly and lock to stop cold air from coming in. Cover all windows with plastic.
- Cover or remove window air conditioning units during the heating season.
- Open window shades during sunny winter days to let the sunlight in and close shades at night.

Water Heating

- Keep the water temperature between 115° and 120° F (normal) and wrap water heater with an insulation blanket.
- Insulate the first six feet of the hot and cold water pipes connected to the water heater.
- Limit your time spent in the shower to cut down on hot water usage.
- Promptly repair leaking water faucets, especially hot water faucets.
- Wash clothes in warm water, rinse in cold water.
- Add flow restrictions to faucets and shower heads to reduce water use.

Refrigerators, Freezers, and Other

- Check refrigerator and freezer door seals and gaskets for tight seal.
- Defrost regularly. Frost over 1/8 inch thick will increase compressor wear and your electric bill.
- Vacuum refrigerator and freezer coils every six months to improve efficiency.
- Make sure to turn off the lights when you are not in a room.
- Consider replacing old appliances with an Energy Star appliance.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient fluorescent lights. Over its lifetime, a fluorescent bulb will save \$30-\$50.