

The Arlington Report

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Kreft -- Mayor
 Jim Pederson -- Council Member
 Bob Pichelmann -- Council Member
 Curt Reetz -- Council Member
 Jason Ruehling -- Council Member
 Galen Wills -- Council Member

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Matt Jaunich -- City Administrator
 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 -- EDA,
 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)
 Renville-Sibley Sanitation (866-
 800-6244)

19th ANNUAL HARVEST EVENT

The Arlington Area Ambulance Association invites you to attend their 19th Annual Harvest Event Fundraiser. The Event will take place on **Friday, September 16**, from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the Arlington Community Center. The Harvest Feast will consist of a hog roast dinner with all of the trimmings. Refreshments will also be available. Music will be furnished by the Larry Olsen Band for your dancing and/or listening enjoyment. Most residents should have received a family dinner ticket and two raffle chances in the mail. A \$15 donation is required if interested in attending. Please return your donation and raffle chances at either the Arlington State Bank, Y-Not Plumbing and Heating, or give it to any of the ambulance members. Tickets will also be available at the door. The money raised from this year's event will be used towards the purchase of medical equipment. The Arlington and Green Isle Lions Clubs will be sponsoring a free diabetes screening in conjunction with the Arlington Ambulance Harvest Event. Arlington Cub Scout Pack 140 will again help with the tables and will be selling desserts during the event. The Arlington Area Ambulance Association wants to thank you in advance and look forward to seeing you at the event on the 16th! Take-outs will be available.

HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR RS FIBER PLEDGE CARD?

Customers will find in this month's utility bills a flyer from the Renville-Sibley (RS) Fiber Joint Powers Board. The flyer is just a reminder to send in your Pledge Card if you have yet to do so. A Pledge Card can be downloaded at the RS Fiber website (www.rsfiber.com), from the flyer in your utility bills, or can be picked up at City Hall. You should also be aware of the fact that you will likely be receiving a second mailing in the coming weeks. Please look over the material and send in your Pledge Card if you think you may be interested in the project. RS Fiber is asking that if you have already sent in your Pledge Card, please ask your friends and neighbors to do the same.

AFTER HOURS PHONE NUMBER

The City wants to remind its residents to use the "After-Hours" phone number to contact city staff when City Offices are not open and a utility problem arises. After some recent outages/water issues, residents have been calling employees directly and/or the City's utility contractors which may

actually delay the response to the utility problem. The City has assigned specific personnel to assist its customers when there is a power outage and/or water or sewer problem during non-operating hours. Those individuals should be contacted on the "After-Hours" phone at **507-327-6601**. If there is a mass power outage or a very large water/sewer problem, the "After-Hours" phone may be busy due to the amount of phone calls coming in. Customers are encouraged to continue to call the "After-Hours" phone until you reach someone.

UPDATE ON WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Most of you may recall that back in January of this year, your sewer base rate was increased to help cover costs for the upgrade/expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. In late July, work began on the construction of the upgrade/expansion. Work on the project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2012. The nearly \$5 million dollar project is not expected to affect services and will help the city meet testing requirements.

WHAT KIND OF FUTURE DO YOU WANT FOR OUR CITIES?

Have you ever asked the above question? Through the "*Cities, Services & Funding: Broader Thinking, Better Solutions*" project, the League of MN Cities (LMC) is seeking to engage people throughout Minnesota on this question. About a year ago, the LMC asked some University of Minnesota researchers a question on what the future holds for Minnesota cities if we stay on our current path. They found that if cities continue to provide the same services, at the same levels with the same funding, cities of all kinds in all areas would be dealing with a deficit by the year 2015. Since cities cannot legally carry a deficit from year to year, they are facing tough choices in order to balance their budgets.

Changes will need to happen to the services cities provide, how they're delivered, and how they're paid for. So what does this have to do with you, an Arlington resident or business owner? The LMC is hoping that hearing the opinions, perspectives and ideas of people all across the state will help point the way toward the kinds of solutions Minnesotans think make sense; that broader thinking among more Minnesotans is going to lead to better solutions for our communities. The LMC is asking that you go to www.community-conversations.org to share your ideas and opinions. The LMC is hoping that your input will become the foundation for new, more sustainable policy solutions for Minnesota Communities.

City Offices will be closed on Monday, September 5 in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.

CITY TO RECEIVE NEARLY \$200,000 IN “SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL” GRANT MONEY

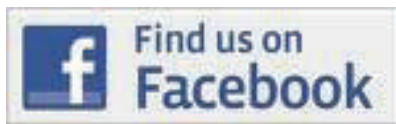
City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:
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Arlington, MN 55307

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Fax: 507-964-5973
E-mail: cityhall@arlingtonmn.com
Website: www.arlingtonmn.com



A Beautiful City Growing in Unity



The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) announced in late August the recipients of about \$3.8 million in federal grants for 16 projects to improve the conditions and quality of bicycling and walking to schools throughout the State of Minnesota. Of the \$3.8 million, Arlington was awarded \$199,980. The grants come from the federally funded Safe Routes to School program. “These projects will help make walking and biking to school easier for children and more acceptable to their parents,” said MN/DOT Commissioner Tom Sorel. “The grants will mean safety improvements in routes to school so students will be more inclined to walk to school. And walking to school is another way to increase exercise for healthier kids.” MN/DOT announced the availability of grants in May and received 82 applications representing \$83 million in projects. Of the 16 projects awarded, 12 are in Greater Minnesota and the rest are in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. All of the grants will be used to improve or build trails and sidewalks for walking and biking. Arlington’s grant application was submitted in June on behalf of the City by Planning & Zoning Coordinator/EDA Director Cynthia Smith-Strack. The grant application included work/input from various City and County officials; school officials from Sibley East and St. Paul’s Lutheran School; and the City Engineer. The proposed project will consist of the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, and the replacement of non-ADA compliant sections of sidewalks along and within city easements and boulevards along several city streets. The streets/sidewalks to be involved with the grant funded project include 2nd Avenue NW, 2nd Avenue NE, West Elgin Street, West Adams Street, 1st Avenue N, East Chandler Street, East Douglas Street, and 6th Avenue NW. The main purpose of the project will be to improve the sidewalk to and from Sibley East and St. Paul’s Lutheran School. The project will also benefit those using Sibley East athletic facilities and will also serve as an access to and from the county-wide Prairie Line trail system that will be going through Arlington. Construction of the “Safe Routes to School” project and the first-phase of the Prairie Line Trail System will likely take place in either 2012 or 2013. The “Safe Routes to School” project is one of the phases of a city-wide

strategy to encourage walking/bicycling to school at an early age, promoting healthy and active lifestyles. For a complete copy of the “Safe Routes to School” application and/or a copy of the City’s proposed trail system, contact City Hall.

MARKET VALUE HOMESTEAD CREDIT (MVHC) PROGRAM CHANGES

As part of the omnibus tax bill (First 2011 Special Session Chapter 7), the Legislature repealed the market value homestead credit (MVHC) program and created a new market value exclusion for qualifying homes. These changes are effective for taxes payable in 2012. In place of the MVHC program, homeowners will now receive an exclusion of a portion of the market value of their house from property taxes. The exclusion is computed in a manner similar to the market value homestead credit. However, the impact of the change will vary from community to community, depending on a number of factors, including tax base of the community and the local tax rate. If you have yet to hear about these changes, that will likely change in the months to come. In an effort to better educate the public, a brief summary of the project changes is addressed below.

Expiring Law: The Homestead Residential Market Value Credit. Under the expiring law, homesteads received a credit on their tax statements reducing their gross property tax. The credit equaled 0.4% of the first \$76,000 in market value and was reduced by .09% of the market value over \$76,000 until it hit \$0 at \$413,800 of market value. Under the expiring law, the state would reimburse local governments for the sum of the market value credits granted to individual taxpayers on tax statements. As a result, some of Arlington’s levy came from the State as credit reimbursement payments and some from property tax payments. When the state cut its reimbursement payments, local governments had to budget for a gap between their levy and what they received. Local governments may have levied more, cut some spending or both.

New Law: The Homestead Market Value Exclusion. Under the

new law, a portion of the homestead market value will be excluded from taxation. The exclusion equals 40% of the first \$76,000 in market value and is reduced by 9% of the market value over \$76,000 until it hits \$0 at \$413,800 of market value. Under the new law, the State will no longer pay a share of the tax on homesteads, but homesteads will have less value subject to taxation. The removal of the state spending on credits means property taxpayers, as a whole, will pay more if levies remain the same or are obviously increased. The new law also means a reduction in the tax base for homesteads, which means non-homesteads will pay a higher share of the City’s tax levy and a large share of homesteads could pay more given that exclusion amounts and other factors may vary. The new law also means that local governments will receive the full amount that they levy from their taxpayers. **Why the Change.** The main reason for the replacement of the credit with the exclusion was the State budget situation. The credit costs the State approximately \$260 million per year. Eliminating the credit also makes local government budgeting less awkward since the local government will know how much revenue it will receive from property taxes each year. Another argument for eliminating the credit is that it is a property tax relief program that is not well targeted, directing a great deal of money to homes, especially homes with low market values, without regard to need. Other property tax relief programs (local government aid, county program aid, and the property tax refund) attempt to distribute money based on some measure of jurisdictional or individual need. (Source: LMC, Department of Revenue & Minnesota House of Representatives)