



City Of Waseca Newsletter

Good News in a Down Economy - Waseca City Council Plans to Reduce Taxes and Lower Sewer Rates

In 2010, Waseca utility customers will be able to breathe a sigh of relief over recent City Council actions.

A number of factors will lead to a reduction of both 2010 City property taxes and sewer rates. Staff worked diligently on grant applications and was able to secure a low interest loan for the Wastewater improvement projects. There were numerous applicants and limited funds; however, due to the nature of our project and the work of staff, our project was listed as number one on the State Project Priority List. The Mayor and Councilmembers took steps to ensure our project was also a priority of our State and Federal Legislators; in fact Mayor Srp flew to Washington D. C. to discuss our project with our Representatives personally.

As a result of all of this diligent work, the City of Waseca received three grants for the project totaling \$6,505,050. These included:

- \$505,050 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) grant, from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority compared to the original estimate of \$736,225.

- \$2 million Clean Water Revolving Fund (Federal Stimulus) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) base grant; and

- \$4 million ARRA supplemental grant.

In addition to these grants, we locked into a low 2.67% interest rate for 20 years. The City's competitive bidding process resulted in bids of over \$1 million below the anticipated costs. As a result, the City of Waseca has experienced an overall \$7,422,421 reduction in our loan amount (from the original engineer's estimate). This equates to an annual savings of \$481,858 in the wastewater debt payment!

At the work session on August 18, 2009, Council was presented with options of splitting this reduction between the tax levy, sewer rates, and future capital improvement projects. Council's consensus was to give the reduction back to the residents and businesses in Waseca in the form of a tax and rate reduction. The debt service payment will likely be distributed with 30% paid by tax levy and 70% paid through the rate structure.

The original portion of the debt payment added to the 2009 tax levy was \$323,105.

This will be reduced by approximately 41.76% bringing the levy to \$188,185. This will reduce the City's overall tax levy 1.05%. Council will make a final decision at the August 25, 2009 City Council meeting. Once the preliminary levy is approved, it can be reduced at the Truth-in-Taxation hearing in December, but it cannot be increased.

Calculation of this reduction is based on last year's tax capacity rates. Staff has not received the new tax capacity information from the County. A change in the tax capacity will impact the tax decrease percentage as well as the impact on the residents and businesses. The County Assessor has indicated that the change will be minimal, if any. Residents should also be aware that the City of Waseca makes up a portion of the taxes. An increase or decrease in Waseca County and Waseca Public School District levies will affect the overall change in property taxes.

At the August 18, 2009 meeting, Council consensus was to reduce sewer rates. The original portion of the debt payment added to the Sewer rates was \$782,204. Council decided to reduce this by approximately 44.35% or \$346,937. As a result, customers should see a

15.33% reduction in their sewer rates. Council will meet to determine if capital or operational increases in the rates are needed. Any changes will have an impact on this reduction.

City Council will adopt the preliminary levy on Tuesday, August 25, 2009 at the 7:00 PM regular council meeting.

This will be sent to Waseca County to be included in the truth-in-taxation notices that the county mails in mid-November. The notices show the proposed tax levies for the City, county, and school district. Public hearing dates will be listed for all government jurisdictions.

In early December, the City will hold a public hearing and formally adopt the budget for 2010. Utility rates will also be approved at this time. This is in accordance with the timeline established by the State.

Staff joins the City Council in thanking the residents of Waseca for understanding the importance of the Wastewater improvements and for supporting us in our efforts to implement this project at the lowest possible cost.

Please contact Teresa Walters, Finance Director for any questions related to the levy and rate reductions, at (507) 835-9746.

Cold Weather Rule



Now is the time to plan for the winter months.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission set up the Cold Weather Rule. This rule states that from October 15th through April 15th, a residential utility customer can avoid disconnection for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect their primary heat source and if the customer enters into a mutually agreed upon payment schedule with the utility.

A copy of the Cold Weather

Rule and an application will be included in your October utility bill. There is no requirement to return the completed application; however residential customers wishing to be covered by Cold Weather Protection, should return the application with a proposed payment plan, to the Utility Billing office as soon as possible. Please be aware that submittal of a Cold Weather Protection

application does not automatically protect a customer from disconnection, but only initiates the process for review of program eligibility.

If you have any questions regarding your utility bill, please call the Waseca Utility Billing office at 835-9718 Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Utility Deposits

The City of Waseca requires a deposit for the purpose of guaranteeing payment in case of delinquency or an outstanding balance at the time of account closure. Our policy is to apply the deposit, plus accrued interest to your utility account as a payment after a satisfactory

establishment of credit, or 12 consecutive on-time payments. Deposits will be refunded directly to the customer only upon closing the account. If you have questions about your deposit, please contact the Utility Billing office at 507-835-9718 between the hours of 8:00 am

and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

On time utility payments are very important to establishing credit.

Salvation Army's HeatShare Program



Can you help someone else stay warm this winter?

HeatShare is a voluntary program administered by the Salvation Army that helps those in need in our community by providing funds for heating bills and heating-related repairs.

If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution to

this program, simply enclose a check made payable to HeatShare, along with your utility payment and Waseca Utilities will forward the contribution to the Salvation Army. For more information, you can visit www.thesalarmy.com or call

800-842-7279.

Waseca's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program

The City of Waseca has been designated as a MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. As a result of this designation, the City is required by both State and Federal laws to operate the storm sewer system with respect to a NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit and an accompanying SWPP (Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program). This program identi-

fies and outlines numerous activities and programs that help the City and its citizens minimize storm water pollution and its effects on the environment. For example, the City's Public Works Department implements an aggressive street sweeping schedule which helps to minimize the amount of sediment that enters local lakes, streams, and wetlands.

Additional information and educational handouts regarding the City's storm water

programs are available at City Hall and on the City website at www.ci.waseca.mn.us.

Questions and concerns regarding storm water can be directed to the Storm Water Complaint Hotline at 1-507-835-9730.



Leaf Burning

The Burning of dried leaves is permitted between October 15 and November 15 from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Burning is limited to areas of the City zoned residential purposes only. All burning should be conducted a minimum of 25' from all buildings, structures, flammable materials, tall grasses and weeds. Do not start a fire on

another person's land without permission of the owner or the agent.

Please note the burning of brush or shrub is not allowed within the City limit.

Recreational Fires— The City of Waseca does allow recreational fires.

Fire pits need to be 18" deep and not exceed 3' in diameter.

Fire has to be a minimum of 25' from buildings and other combustible materials.

Extinguishing equipment needs to be near the recreational fire such as a hose or water filled bucket.



Adopt a Park

If you are a community group, organization, church group, school, family or an individual and are interested in volunteering to assist in beautifying, cleaning our local area parks, trails and open spaces, please contact Mark Bartelt, Parks Director at 507-835-9727 to learn more

about the Adopt a Park Program.

The City provides trash bags for cleanup, coordinates pickup for trash, debris & limbs.

An Adopt a Park agreement form will need to be filled out at City Hall.

A litter free community is aesthetically pleasing to visitors and prospective new citizens and businesses, portraying an image of a concerned, caring community.



Volunteer to keep our parks, trails and green spaces clean!

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Waseca, MN 56093
Phone: 507-835-9700
Fax: 507-835-8871
E-mail: lesleem@ci.waseca.mn.us

We're on the Web!
www.ci.waseca.mn.us

Discover Waseca



22nd Annual Waseca Marching Classic



September 19, 2009
Parade: 12:30 p.m.,
downtown Waseca
Field Competition: 4:00
p.m. Waseca High School
Athletic Field admission for
field competition by
wristband only: Advance
sales—\$4.00, sold in most
Waseca Businesses, day of

event - \$7.00

See our own Waseca Marching Jays perform in exhibition. If you've never been to a marching band field competition, you're in for a real treat.

Join the Waseca Marching Band for a day of family entertainment.

8th Annual U of M Open House



8th Annual U of M Open House will be held on Thursday, September 10, 2009 at the Southern Research & Outreach Center from 4 to 8 pm rain or shine. A picnic supper will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This event is co-sponsored by the UM SROC, Extension, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), MN Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES), and several industry Sponsors. The theme this year is "Agriculture for the 21st

Century: Growing a Strong Bioeconomy". The intent is to illustrate through activities, exhibits and displays how working together with others to build stronger communities and a healthier bi-based economy. The hope is to cultivate greater understanding on how various aspects of our daily lives are rooted in agriculture.

There's entertainment and activities for the whole family: a corn maze, wagon and trolley rides, farm animals, games for kids, food samples and wine tasting, a

sanctioned kids; Power Pedal Pull and more.

For more information on the September 10th U of M Open House, contact the SROC at 507-835-3620 or visit the web:

<http://sroc.cfans.umn.edu>