

Council Member Lisa Goodman, City of Minneapolis

WARD 7 E-NEWS

Lean 2010 budget stays focused on economic growth and public safety



2010

Lunch With Lisa

- January 27th
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Earlier this month, the Mayor and Council Members approved a City budget for 2010. This budget maintains the City's commitment to economic recovery and public safety, while reducing spending by over \$100 million and providing property-tax relief.

Minneapolis has faced significant cuts from the state of Minnesota, which forced cuts from next year's budget. Despite these, the 2010 budget maintains

funding for key initiatives that help develop and grow small businesses and local jobs. The budget also maintains the City's commitment to public safety, with minimal layoffs in police, fire and emergency preparedness. The City is aggressively pursuing flexibility in the use of federal stimulus dollars to maintain staffing levels in the Minneapolis Police Department.

The Mayor and City Council were also able to use a recent court victory in a pension lawsuit to provide \$10 million in property

tax relief, which reduces the average tax increase for a Minneapolis homeowner from 6.6 percent to 2.1 percent.

Minneapolis 2010 Budget will be posted on the City's Web site in January 2010. When it is posted you can find it at the Finance Department Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/finance.

Minneapolis tap water among the nation's best

A Washington, D.C.-based environmental advocacy organization has rated Minneapolis tap water among the best in the nation for quality and safety.

According to a study by the Environmental Working Group, Minneapolis tap water ranked 10th among U.S. drinking water systems in cities with populations of 250,000 and higher. The study examined millions of tap water quality tests done in 100

different cities throughout the country since 2004.

Minneapolis delivers safe, clean tap water that meets or exceeds federal and state guidelines for drinking water safety. On average, 500 tests a day are performed on our tap water to maintain this high level of quality. The City's Water Works division softens and treats an average of 57 millions gallons of water a day before sending it to customers. Along with Minneapolis residents, our

tap water goes to seven suburbs and the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.

For more information on Minneapolis tap water, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/water.



Your Ward 7 Offices

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Use Facebook to tell friends when a Snow Emergency is declared

When a Snow Emergency is declared, you need to park out of the way of the plows so they can clear street of snow and ice. Most drivers are good at following the Snow Emergency parking rules, but there are still some out there who need to get informed.

This Snow Emergency season, the City of Minneapolis is asking folks on Facebook to change their profile picture whenever a Snow Emergency is declared so their friends can find out about it and park out of the way of the plows.

We're looking for creative profile pictures, reflecting the unique Snow Emergency personalities out there. For instance, a know-it-all Snow Emergency person who understands where to park better than anyone could create a profile picture featuring Albert Einstein, or possibly a brain. Someone who parks out of the way the plows at the very start of a Snow Emergency could create an image with an early bird getting the worm. More information, the Snow Emergency logo and some ready-made profile pictures can be found at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/snow-type.asp.

Once a Snow Emergency is declared, people should swap out their Facebook profile pictures to their special Snow Emergency profile pictures to let their friends know a Snow Emergency is in effect.

Snow Emergencies are declared whenever there's enough snowfall to warrant a complete plowing of our 1,500 miles of streets, parkways and alleys. There are many ways to find out when a Snow Emergency is declared:

- Call 348-SNOW. The hotline includes information in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.
- Check out the City's Web site to find out whether a Snow Emergency has been declared, and for a wealth of information on Snow Emergencies in many languages. Also, check out the street lookup, which lets you put in an address or a neighborhood to see what streets you can park on during a Snow Emergency.
- Sign up for phone alerts. Minneapolis uses a phone alert system to notify residents when Snow Emergencies are declared. It is an automated notification system that can place thousands of calls per hour.
- Sign up for e-mail alerts. You can

sign up to get Snow Emergency alerts automatically e-mailed to you. Go to for more details.

- Tune in to the local news. News releases are sent to the media so TV and radio stations can inform their viewers and listeners that a Snow Emergency is in effect.
- Tune in to City cable channels 14 and 79. These channels will have information in several languages when a Snow Emergency is declared.
- Become a fan of Snow Emergency on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com/MinneapolisSnowEmergency. Follow Snow Emergency on Twitter: twitter.com/minneapolisnow.



New, improved Downtown bus service arrives



Weekday express buses are now running on the new transit lanes on

Marquette and 2nd avenues, now that those two streets have been completely reconstructed.

The all-new Marquette and 2nd avenues feature new double transit lanes, which make it possible for buses to pass other buses that have stopped to take on and drop off passengers. The double transit lanes will dramatically increase the number of buses that will be able to use Marquette and 2nd avenues, and will significantly decrease the time it takes buses to get through Downtown. Along with the double transit lanes,

Marquette and 2nd also have wider sidewalks and an improved streetscape. The new streetscape features nearly 200 new trees, bus shelters, and other amenities for pedestrians and bus riders, including signs with real-time transit information.

Early next year, more bus routes will be moved off Nicollet Mall and onto the Marquette and 2nd avenues. Information on this new bus commuting process is available at www.metrotransit.org/marq2.

Minneapolis makes history with Ranked Choice Voting

The City Council has now certified the results of the city's 2009 municipal election. Minneapolis is now the largest jurisdiction in the United States ever to implement Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) using a hand count. In a Ranked Choice election, the Primary and General Election are combined into one event, and voters can rank up to three candidates for each office.

By making the final results official, Minneapolis is capping off more than three years of work to make this new voting system a reality for the city's voters. In November 2006, Minneapolis voters approved a measure that called for the City of Minneapolis to use Ranked Choice Voting for candidates for City offices. Since that time, elections staff and others have been busy creating processes and protocols for holding a Ranked Choice election.

Although two larger jurisdictions have used Ranked Choice Voting in the

U.S., the 2009 Minneapolis election was the biggest ever conducted using a hand count. A hand count was necessary because Minnesota law requires voting equipment to be certified, and there is currently no federally- or state-certified voting equipment capable of counting a Ranked Choice election.

Minneapolis Elections officials, working closely with the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office, created a Ranked Choice Voting Issues Group to consider standards for Ranked Choice elections in Minnesota. When it became clear that no federally- or state-certified equipment would be available to count the election, Minneapolis Elections officials developed and refined a new process for hand counting the election. This led to the creation of the "Minneapolis Method" for hand-counting both single and multiple seat offices in a Ranked Choice election. Elections staff held test elections to receive feedback on ballot design and put the counting

method to the test several times as they continued to improve the counting process.

Although the hand count was estimated to take several weeks, 240 ballot sorters and counters working at the Minneapolis Elections Warehouse completed the count in 15 days. This allowed the City Council to canvass the results several weeks earlier than expected.

In this election, Minneapolis voters were able to rank their choices for Mayor, City Council, Board of Estimate and Taxation, and Park and Recreation Board. Elections results can be found on the City's Elections Web page at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/elections.



Have you stopped using phone books? Opt out and save on resources

With phone numbers just a click away, people are using bulky phone books less and less. If you never use a phone book, there's a way you can tell the phone companies to stop sending phone books to you.

To opt out of phone book delivery, go to www.yellowpagesoptout.com. The Web site is the only online opt-out service recognized by publishers. Enter your ZIP code to find phone book publishers in your area that are making it possible for you to opt out of receiving phone books, then inform each of the

publishers that you'd like delivery stopped.

About 5,000 tons of phone books are delivered in Minnesota every year. About 20 percent of those phone books get recycled. However, opting out is even better than recycling because it prevents unneeded phone books from being printed in the first place.

The opt-out takes 60 days to process. You may miss the deadline for a few of the phone books this year, but opting

out today will ensure you won't receive them next year.

You can also call these companies to opt out:

Dex (Qwest) – 1-866-606-9339.

Idearc Inc. (Verizon) – 1-800-888-8448, then select option 2.

Yellow Books USA Inc. – 1-800-929-3556, then select option 2.

Rebates available for energy-efficient improvements

More and more people are making their homes more energy efficient to save money on their energy bills, use less resources and create less pollution. If you've had energy efficiency upgrades done on your home using the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's fix-up loan, you may be eligible for energy saver rebates of 35 percent of that loan, up to a \$10,000 rebate.

Qualifying improvements include windows, doors, insulation, water heaters, heating and cooling. However, those improvements must meet certain energy efficiency criteria to be eligible for the rebate.

The rebates are made possible by an

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security.

Rebates are available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information on the energy saver rebate, the fix-up fund loan and other home improvement loans, contact the Center for Energy and Environment at www.mncee.org.

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Census jobs available in Minnesota

Next year is a Census year, and the U.S. Census Bureau is looking to hire thousands of people between now and next spring to work in the Twin Cities metro area.

The positions are good paying, temporary jobs that range from \$11.50 to \$20 per hour plus mileage for the field positions of recruiting assistants, crew leaders, crew leader assistants and census takers. The pay for census clerks ranges from \$7.50 to \$12.75 per hour depending on location. There may be some opportunities for advancement.

Positions are available in many communities throughout the metro area. The Minneapolis Census office is looking to hire people in all neighborhoods throughout the city who have diverse backgrounds and/or the ability to speak multiple languages. Anyone interested in applying should

call 1-866-861-2010.

Applicants must pass a 30-minute test that focuses on critical reading, math and clerical skills. Census leaders are encouraging people to sign up early to take the practice exam and to take it more than once.

Free test prep classes will be held in two locations. No registration is required.

One class will be held:
1 to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010
Eastside Neighborhood Services
1700 Second St. NE

There will also be classes **every Saturday**:

10 a.m. to noon
Redeemer Missionary Baptist
116 E. 32nd St.
For more information, call (612) 823-1081

For those who can't attend a test prep class, practice tests are available on the U.S. Census Web site at http://2010.census.gov/2010censusjobs/documents/Practice_Test.pdf.



Emergency communications phone line celebrates 30th year

Dec. 4, 1979 was the first time a Minneapolis resident could dial one phone number to summon help from the Police or Fire Department. That was the day the Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center, often known today as the 911 center, started taking calls. Over the next 30 years, operators and dispatchers have helped respond to millions of emergencies.

Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center staff have also received national recognition for their work. In 2008, Minneapolis won the "911 Outstanding Call Center Award," a national award presented by the E911 Institute in Washington, D.C. Minneapolis 911 was honored for its work during the Aug. 1, 2007 collapse of the I-35W Bridge.

Before the service began in 1979, if you had a police emergency, you dialed the Police Department's seven digit number and, if you needed help from the Fire Department, you dialed a different seven digit number.

Prior to 1979, when a police

emergency call came in, the person answering the phone would write down the caller's problem and location on a card. That card was then placed on a conveyor belt that traveled to dispatching desks for each of the police precincts. When the card got to the right desk, the dispatcher radioed the information to a squad car and help was on the way.

In 1979, the police and fire emergency communications merged. With that change, callers could call a single number where Emergency Communications employees were entering information on computers and using upgraded radio equipment. The simple use of the number 911, was introduced to Minneapolis in December of 1982.

In 1979, Minneapolis had 61 full-time employees who answered 425,000 emergency phone calls and dispatched help to 244,774 events. Today, the Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center has 84 full time employees who handle an average of 1,000 calls per day. Last year, they answered 590,936 calls and

dispatched help to 337,248 police emergencies and 34,339 fire emergencies.

These days, between six and eight 911 operators and six and eight public safety dispatchers are on duty to take calls that can range from loud party complaints to homicides. As calls come in, staff assesses the situation and enters crucial information into computers so that dispatchers can prioritize calls, send help and monitor the progress of emergency response.



"Lunch with Lisa" dates 2010

JANUARY 27TH

MAY—NO LUNCH

SEPTEMBER 22ND

FEBRUARY 24TH

JUNE—NO LUNCH

OCTOBER 27TH

MARCH 24TH

JULY 28TH

NOVEMBER—NO LUNCH

APRIL 28TH

AUGUST 25TH

DECEMBER —NO LUNCH

All lunches will begin at 12:00 at St. Thomas Opus Hall 202— that is all lunches Except for August which will be held in Terrence Murphy Hall #252.