



BRAINERD CITY NEWS

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2013

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City of Brainerd Publishes First Newsletter

Earlier this year the City Council approved a Strategic Plan that will guide its decision making process. It includes a community mission statement and four (4) Strategic Focus Areas (See page 3 sidebar). One of the Focus areas is “achieving substantially improved communications and public relations with Brainerd citizens and businesses.” Redesigning the city website and creating a city newsletter are two (2) methods the City Council has decided to use to carry out this objective.

This is the 1st edition of the newsletter that will provide the basics of about what is happening in our city. It will include information useful and needed for our citizens such as this edition’s article entitled “Get Ready for the White Stuff”. The newsletter will be published quarterly and mailed to all residential and nonresidential properties in the City.

Please feel free to contact any City Council member if you have questions, comments or concerns about what is happening in our city. We hope you enjoy the Newsletter. ✨



The Brainerd HRA Scores Funding to Help Improve Properties in South East Brainerd

The Brainerd Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has successfully competed for a grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for \$715,000 to rehabilitate 5-6 commercial properties, and 25-30



owner-occupied homes within a 10 square block of southeast Brainerd. These fortunate buildings will be able to receive repair items such

as lead paint abatement, roofing, windows, doors, and many other helpful particulars. Local registered and licensed contractors will do the work.

Our HRA office works diligently and effectively to assist our residents who are particularly struggling with their housing needs in these financially difficult times. Considering the small staff and the volume of work to be completed, we are certainly proud of this partner in helping to improve the quality of life for all of us. ✨

What is LGA?

Although some refer to Local Government Aid as an addiction, without LGA, Brainerd's property taxes would be substantially higher. LGA was designed to help cities that have greater needs than what would be provided with property taxes alone. The vision of LGA is that no matter where you live in Minnesota, the quality of services would remain comparable. The amount a city receives in LGA is dependent on a formula. Factors taken into consideration with the formula are things such as the amount of pre-1940 housing, population, and household size.

The state legislature determines the amount of money available for LGA payments each year. \$507.6 million was appropriated for 2014 distribution with the City of Brainerd's share being \$4,019,899. Our own area legislators go to bat for us to procure the largest amount possible in attempt to keep our property taxes as low as possible.

Positions Available

Do you feel like you have some time and interest to share in helping to make Brainerd a better place to live and work? It just so happens we have volunteer opportunities available now.

Two committee positions now open are:

- The Personnel and Finance Committee.
- The Safety and Public Works Committee

Brainerd; Taking on a New Look!

The city hoped that the campaign to enforce City codes would help take us to the next level of community pride. Most agree to its success. This summer's cross-city enforcement, although somewhat frustrating and challenging to some, proved to be a very good initiative in polishing up our image. Here is one example of a home-owner making a valuable upgrade to the neighborhood, and a nice addition to the value of their home. Congratulations!



Brainerd Public Library Events:

Discover all the great new things going on at the Brainerd Public Library this fall. Minnesota author Lorna Landvik will be here on Tuesday, October 15 at 6pm, to talk about her writing, her latest book, "Mayor of the Universe," and growing up in Minneapolis.

Uncover clues to our state's history when author Jeff Falkingham presents "Sherlock Holmes—In Minnesota?" There may even be an appearance by Holmes and Watson in the flesh! The mystery begins at the library on Friday, November 15 at 4:30pm.

Bring your kids and grandkids to check out the amazing new early literacy environment, complete with giant dollhouse, magnetic wall, and more.

In addition to eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eBooks for kids, the library now has digital magazines available to download. See a librarian or visit www.krls.org for more information. ✨



Author Lorna Landvik

"Jaws" for Brainerd Fire Department

It's no secret that Brainerd has one of the best fire departments in the region. It's also no secret that the costs of operating a first class department with its sophisticated equipment are very high. Due to the economic downturn that we all have experienced, budgeting is tight here, also. For example, the department's "jaws of life" equipment is becoming quite outdated. Because automobiles are required to have sturdier, crash-proof frames, older cutting and prying equipment have significant difficulty in cutting through and into newer vehicles to extricate trapped passengers. In early August, the department was able to test out some of the newer equipment previewed by three different

manufacturers. The jury is still out, but hopefully very soon they will be able to purchase "jaws" and "can-openers" that will enable our firefighters to pull us out of the most difficult of situations in time. ✨



Our Region's Roots Run Deep

The City (and the Lakes Area) history is rich with legends, hearty indigenous people, and tales of intrepid pioneers all determined to build community on the banks of one of the world's greatest rivers.

If you have stories to tell, memories or images to share, or know of someone who does, The Brainerd History Group encourages you to join us in documenting our past for the benefit of our future.

Contact Carl Faust at (218) 829-0137 to learn more. ✨

Department Spotlight Each issue of this new newsletter will highlight one of our departments who keep the city running smoothly under the direction of the City Council. First up—*Brainerd Planning Dept.*

Sometimes caught between a rock and a hard place, the job of a city planner can be a difficult staff position. Mark Ostgarden has been Brainerd's city planner for almost 8 years and is committed to building Brainerd's positive position in the region—and the state.

Brainerd, like most cities, has a comprehensive plan. Adopted in 2001 the plan is nearly 10 years old and will be going through a thorough review and update. Within this plan are the city's visions for building and maintaining an orderly, aesthetically pleasing, and safe community. Without zoning ordinances and property management guidelines, a city would soon fall into chaos. The comprehensive plan is also an important economic development tool.

Mark's job is helping the Planning Commission and the City Council establish these guidelines, and make the determinations that are required to help Brainerd grow, yet maintain our "sense of place."

There is much enthusiasm about the city's new focused energies on visioning for our future, and establishing a new comprehensive plan to move us forward. We are always looking for the balance between keeping our taxes as low as possible, while building a more progressive attitude and city.

An exciting arena that the Planning Department has been helping with is that of a Mississippi River-front Walkway. Most people in our region under-

stand the beauty and importance of this important river that flows right through Brainerd. However, it does get taken for granted, and visitors to our area either don't know it's there, or have no idea how to connect with the river. This has been a hoped-for dream of the city, most businesses, and most of the residents for quite some time now. With our renewed vigor in putting Brainerd "back on the map," we will now make a beautiful River-walk destination for all.

Continuing our revitalization of downtown is also high on the list. It could be said that a city's downtown is a reflection of the character of the entire city. Since the highway 371 bypass and the establishment of the "Big Boxes" nearby, our downtown has struggled in redefining itself for new shopping patterns and opportunities. This is now changing. There is a renewed enthusiasm by current business owners, landlords, and newcomers, to bring a "cool factor" back into our historical downtown.

Still on the city's list is making Brainerd a more walkable and bikeable city. This includes concepts such as "complete streets" that are designed for all users, completion of The Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, additional City trails, and generally making Brainerd a very Bike and Walking-Friendly City. ✨

Our Mission: "Brainerd will provide high quality, cost effective public services and leadership in creating a sustainable city."

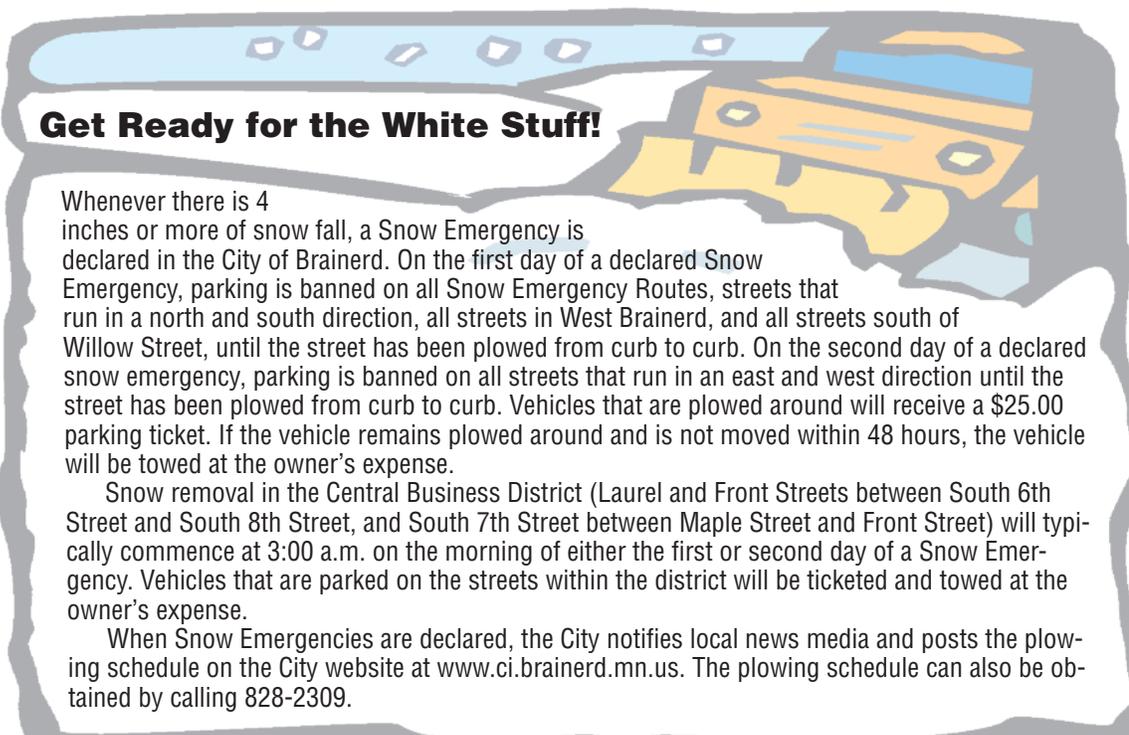
The Brainerd city council, with input from the public, has recently adopted this mission statement and a Strategic Plan that will act as our guide in moving the city forward. Identified as strategic focus areas are:

- INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS; Improve pride of ownership and livability of neighborhoods.
- STABLE FINANCIAL PLANNING; Manage current and future spending for the public good through long range planning techniques and disciplines.
- REDESIGN WEBSITE AND CREATE A CITY NEWSLETTER; Achieve substantial improved communications and public relations with Brainerd's citizens and businesses.
- DESIGN/BUILD A MISSISSIPPI RIVERWALK; To connect downtown to the rest of the trails winding through the City. To create a clear recognizable identity of the City.

There is much more to this planning effort, so please visit our website for additional info. www.ci.brainerd.mn.us

Residents are most attached to their communities when they have fun places to gather, there's a welcoming atmosphere and there are beautiful and green spaces to enjoy, according to the "Soul of the Community" survey. The Gallup and Knight Foundation study looked at 26 communities and surveyed a random sample of more than 10,000 people earlier this year.

Read more about the study at SoulOfTheCommunity.org.



Get Ready for the White Stuff!

Whenever there is 4 inches or more of snow fall, a Snow Emergency is declared in the City of Brainerd. On the first day of a declared Snow Emergency, parking is banned on all Snow Emergency Routes, streets that run in a north and south direction, all streets in West Brainerd, and all streets south of Willow Street, until the street has been plowed from curb to curb. On the second day of a declared snow emergency, parking is banned on all streets that run in an east and west direction until the street has been plowed from curb to curb. Vehicles that are plowed around will receive a \$25.00 parking ticket. If the vehicle remains plowed around and is not moved within 48 hours, the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense.

Snow removal in the Central Business District (Laurel and Front Streets between South 6th Street and South 8th Street, and South 7th Street between Maple Street and Front Street) will typically commence at 3:00 a.m. on the morning of either the first or second day of a Snow Emergency. Vehicles that are parked on the streets within the district will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense.

When Snow Emergencies are declared, the City notifies local news media and posts the plowing schedule on the City website at www.ci.brainerd.mn.us. The plowing schedule can also be obtained by calling 828-2309.



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We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas about making this newsletter even better. And, again, we invite you to apply for a position on one of many boards and committees that become available over the year.

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Brainerd Community Action (in a Nutshell)

Who Is Community Action? Community Action Council of Crow Wing County, Inc. (C.A.), incorporated January 25, 1973 is an Independent nonprofit corporation. Similar to the senior Center, it is separate from the City of Brainerd and gets its direction and control from its Board of Directors.

What is C.A.'s mission and vision statement? The purpose of C.A. is to establish unity within and personal involvement by the greatest number of the community's people. C.A. works to enrich the lives of the entire citizenry by defining problems, assessing resources and working out programs that may offer solutions to those problems. C.A.'s vision is to help groups and organizations problem-solve, and to support non-profits that benefit our community as a whole.

How is C.A. funded? Through a referendum voted on by the people, private donations from area businesses and residents, and fees charged to individuals for various events (Arts in the park booth fees, food vendor fees, etc.) a copy of the 990 financial statement is available at www.guidestar.com. For example, a look at the do-

nation list for the 4th of July shows many individuals and businesses, and other governmental donations like the city of Baxter who help make C.A.'s projects possible. Nearly all of the groups and organizations that C.A. helps from outside the Brainerd city limits also benefit the citizens of the Brainerd Area; Ski Gull, Community Homecoming, American Legion and VFW, etc.

What are some examples of projects that C.A. has been involved with in the past year?

St Patrick's Day Parade
Community Homecoming
Ski Gull
Triad annual meeting
American Legion and VFW
Brainerd Lakes Veterans Center
Miracle Field
Dog Park
Gold Medal Arena
The Senior Center
Ride With Jim
Ski Gull Ski Patrol
ShadowFest
Zombie Crawl

Many thanks to **all** who join in to make C.A. a great asset of the City! ✨