

CityNews



WINTER 2014-2015

A PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF APPLE VALLEY, MN

2015 CITY BUDGET ADDRESSES FUTURE STREET MAINTENANCE

The Apple Valley City Council has approved a preliminary property tax levy that continues the strategy to finance the ongoing street maintenance program and the City's upcoming street reconstruction needs. Street surfaces require significant maintenance investment over time to maintain their condition and prevent significant deterioration. Eventually, streets reach an age at which reconstruction is necessary. In 2013, the City Council considered a number of options to fund these upcoming street reconstruction projects. A common practice in many other Metro area communities is to levy special assessments on the abutting benefiting property owners, often resulting in charges exceeding \$5,000 to the property owner at the time of construction. The City Council chose a policy that would avoid special assessments for street maintenance by funding these annual street maintenance costs through an ongoing annual property tax levy, avoiding the need to levy additional special assessments for these costs. For 2015, 12.7% of the property tax levy is directed to the Street Maintenance Program.

BUDGET PRINCIPALS

Our budget process is built on five core fiscal principles that serve us well and continue to guide our work:

- 1) Focus on the provision of basic City services and fund their provision at adequate levels.
- 2) Estimate anticipated revenues at realistic levels.
- 3) Retain adequate reserves to protect against fiscal uncertainty.
- 4) Anticipate continued community growth and program capital improvements to serve our growing community.
- 5) Demonstrate strong stewardship of existing infrastructure and plan for its repair/replacement in a proactive manner.

STATE AIDS

Media reports frequently note that the State of Minnesota has increased 2015 payments to cities through a program known as Local Government Aid (LGA). Indeed, the State will distribute \$517 million in LGA to Minnesota cities in 2015, up \$9 million from the year before. Despite this change, the City of Apple Valley receives no LGA from the State. The LGA distribution formula penalizes suburban communities such as Apple Valley and our realized revenue from the LGA program remains zero.

PRSR STD
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TWIN CITIES, MN

ECRWSS
RESIDENTIAL
CUSTOMER

Mayor:

Mary Hamann-Roland

Council Members:

John Bergman
Thomas Goodwin
Ruth Grendahl
Clint Hooppaw

PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX LEVY

To support the proposed 2015 budget requires a total levy of \$23,134,000, an increase of \$407,000 or 1.79%. Within the levy, the annual street maintenance program funding increases by \$85,000 and the total levy for debt service increases \$115,496. Consistent with the prior year, the levy for the 2012 refunding park bond will be paid for from reserves in the Future Capital Projects Fund.

The City of Apple Valley will be conducting the City's Truth in Taxation hearing on December 11th, 2014 at 7 p.m.

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The table below shows a comparison of the property tax levy for the past two years. Note that the levy for the street maintenance program increases to \$2,940,000 in 2015. The street maintenance program represents 12.7% of the 2015 property tax levy. The tax impact of the annual street maintenance program levy is approximately \$100 for the median value home.

| Levy Component | 2014 | 2015 | Change (2014 to 2015) |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| General Fund | \$ 18,559,496 | \$ 18,766,000 | \$ 206,504 |
| Street Maintenance Program | 2,855,000 | 2,940,000 | 85,000 |
| Ice Arena Support | 121,000 | 121,000 | -0- |
| Debt Service | 1,191,504 | 1,307,000 | 115,496 |
| Total | \$ 22,727,000 | \$ 23,134,000 | \$ 407,000 |

TAX DOLLARS PAID IN CITY TAXES MAINTAINS REASONABLE GROWTH TREND

The median valued home of \$207,400 experiencing the median 7.74 percent increase in value would pay approximately \$26, or about 3%, more in 2015. The City taxes on this median value home are \$894 and are just 1.5% (an annual average of 0.25%) higher than in 2009. The estimated tax amount of \$894 includes \$100 in taxes to support the street maintenance program. Again, the objective in including the annual street maintenance program in the levy was to avoid the burden of special assessments for street improvements on the property owners. The trade-off for funding the program through the property tax levy and not using special assessments is that the City of Apple Valley's property tax rate will be higher than other communities.



HOW ARE THE CITY TAX DOLLARS USED?

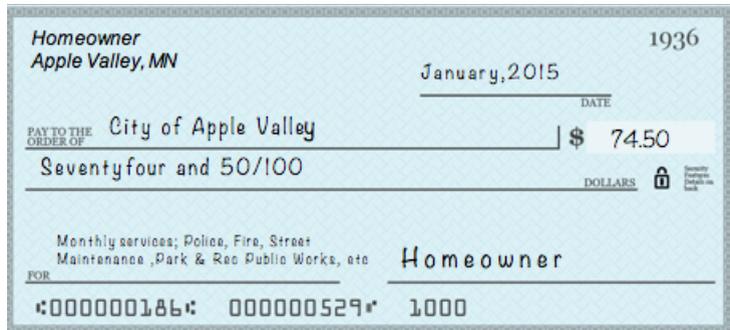
The median valued home has a total monthly city tax bill of \$74.50 for 2015. Of that total, \$62.51 (83.9 percent) is for general City operations, \$8.30 (11.2 percent) is for the support of the Annual Street Maintenance Program, and

\$3.69 (5.0 percent) is for the total debt service needs of the City. The checkbook image below shows the breakdown of the \$62.51 City operations portion by department function. Of the total, \$22.79 covers the operations of the police department, \$9.62 is for public works which includes snow plowing, road maintenance and vehicle/equipment maintenance, and \$12.09 supports parks and recreation. The remaining \$18.01 (24.2 percent) represents the remaining department budgets and other unallocated costs.

The services the City of Apple Valley provides are necessary, essential, and quite diverse. In Apple Valley, resources are leveraged, services are efficient and economical, and we stand accountable for the product we deliver at the low-cost prices we have come to expect, typically take for granted, and rely on daily.

MONTHLY APPLICATION OF TAX PAYMENT

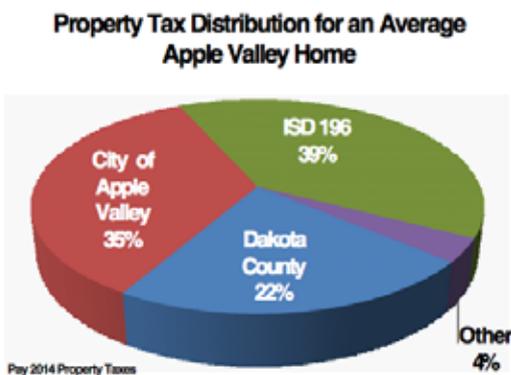
| Description | % of total | \$ of Levy |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Police | 30.7% | 22.79 |
| Park and Recreation | 15.8% | 12.09 |
| Public Works | 13.0% | 9.62 |
| Annual Street Maintenance Program | 11.2% | 8.30 |
| Fire | 7.5% | 5.54 |
| City Council, Administration & Human Resources | 5.8% | 4.30 |
| Debt Service | 5.0% | 3.69 |
| Community Development & Code Enforcement | 3.2% | 2.39 |
| Information Technology | 2.8% | 2.07 |
| Finance | 2.6% | 1.93 |
| Insurance/Contingency | 1.6% | 1.17 |
| Legal Services | 0.8% | 0.61 |
| Total per Month | 100.0% | \$74.50 |



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THE CITY OF APPLE VALLEY MAKES UP 35% OF YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL.

While the City of Apple Valley strives to lessen the impacts on property owners, the City has no control over levy decisions by other government entities serving Apple Valley. So while the City's portion of the taxes may go up slightly, Apple Valley officials cannot guarantee the same will be true for a property owner's overall tax bill.



Everyone is invited to attend the City's Truth in Taxation Hearing that will be held December 11, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the City of Apple Valley City Hall. For more information visit the City's website at ci.apple-valley.mn.us

TWIN CITIES VALUE "OPT-OUT" OPTION

Do you receive a distribution from the Star Tribune called "Twin Cities Values?" The material is a regular newspaper type distribution to residents. An opt-out option for this service is available for residents who wish not to receive this material. There are a number of ways to opt-out of this service. Email requests for opting out of this service to TCV@startribune.com; or call **(612) 673-7305**. Be prepared to provide pertinent information such as your name, property address and that you wish not to receive "Twin Cities Values" distribution.

If you have made an opt-out request and continue to receive this material please contact Ben Pierson in Code Enforcement by phone at **(952) 953-2571**; or by email at bpiereson@ci.apple-valley.mn.us to report illicit distribution.

A REMINDER ABOUT SNOW REMOVAL

Please remember to keep public sidewalks cleared of snow and ice this winter season. Snow should be removed from public sidewalks within 48 hours of a snowfall event. Not only is clearing public sidewalks required by ordinance, but it helps keep the community safe and active in the cold winter months. By keeping public sidewalks free of snow and ice accumulation, pedestrians are better able to utilize public right-of-way areas while staying out of the street. This also keeps children safely out of street while waiting at and accessing school bus stops. Routinely clearing public sidewalks following snow events also promotes active lifestyles for residents over the winter months. We also request that local business owners and managers keep all private sidewalks, which may be used by the general public as access points to their business, clear of snow and ice following snow events. These may be privately owned and managed, but they are quasi-public in nature and may pose a significant liability to the property owner if not cleared following a snow event. Snow removal and storage must take place entirely on private property. Pushing snow across public right-of-ways and depositing snow in right-of-way areas is prohibited. If you have any questions regarding snow and ice removal requirements in Apple Valley please contact Ben Pierson in Code Enforcement by phone at **(952) 953-2571**; or by email at bpiereson@ci.apple-valley.mn.us.



CITY CABLE TV HAS MOVED!!!

Apple Valley Government Access TV is now located on Ch. 180, Public Access in on Ch. 187, Dakota County is on Ch. 188, and ISD 196 is on Ch. 189.

CITY INFORMATION ON CABLE CHANNEL 180

Apple Valley Government Access Community Television features useful City information on the Channel 180 Bulletin Board as part of its regular program day. The Bulletin Board lists a variety of City Meeting Schedules and Agendas, Hotline Numbers and gateway information for City Services, special announcements and events, and daily program guides.

LIVE, GAVEL-TO-GAVEL, TELEVISED MEETING COVERAGE

Apple Valley Government Access Channel 180 telecasts all of the City Council and Planning Commission meetings live. Meeting coverage is also replayed on a variety of days and times to provide more opportunities for citizen involvement in their local government.

The City Council meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. In addition the meeting is replayed on Thursdays & Saturdays at 2:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., & 7:00 p.m.

The Planning Commission meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month. Replays are on Wednesdays at 2:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., & 7:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

APPLE VALLEY PROGRAMS ON CH. 180

"Valley Beat" and "Hook & Ladder" share information about, give a look inside, and highlight the excellent work and members of the Police and Fire Departments in Apple Valley.

VALLEY BEAT

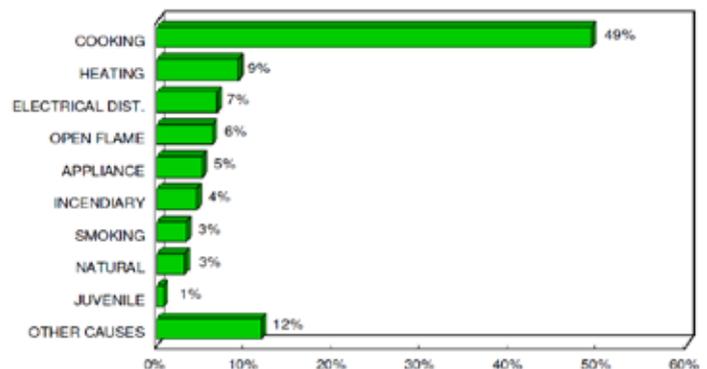
Sunday - 8:00 a.m. & 8:00 p.m.; Monday - 1:00 a.m.
Tuesday - 8:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday - 1:00 a.m.
Thursday - 8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.; Friday - 1:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; and Saturday - 8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

HOOK & LADDER

Sunday - 8:30 a.m. & 8:30 p.m.; Monday - 1:30 a.m.
Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Wednesday - 1:30 a.m.
Thursday - 8:30 a.m., & 6:30 p.m.; Friday - 1:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday - 8:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Programs and telecast times are also listed on the Channel 180 Bulletin Board Program Guide, and the City Web site at: cityofapplevalley.org.

GIVE YOUR FAMILY THEIR BEST CHANCE OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF A FIRE IN YOUR HOME.

Did you know that 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur in the home? Check out the chart to see which types of fire occur most frequently – you'll see that cooking fires are #1 and that many home fires are also caused by heating, candles, appliance malfunction, and smoking. All in the home. All requiring you have as much advance notice as possible to escape safely. Fire grows very fast, from a tiny flame to total destruction in as little as three minutes. Please read on for some great fire safety tips, information on the best fire detection practices for the home, and, for those of you planning to build a new home, an explanation of the benefits of installing a fire sprinkler system as part of the construction process.



WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

Minnesota requires that working smoke alarms are installed on every level of the home, outside sleeping areas, and inside bedrooms. Interconnection of smoke alarms is required for new homes and provides additional assurance that occupants will be alerted and will be able to respond quickly to a fire. Interconnection can be achieved by hard-wiring but can also be achieved with battery-powered alarms that have wireless interconnect capability.

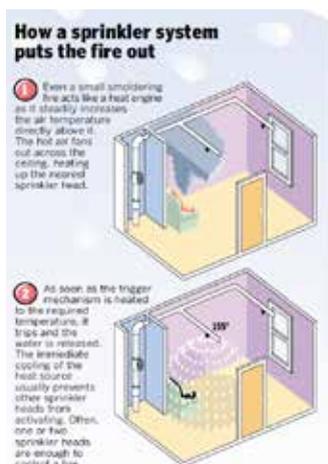
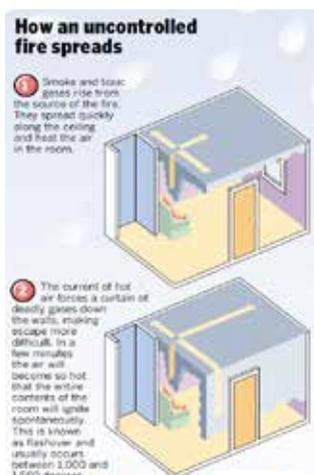
Install smoke alarms with 10-year batteries where possible. If you don't have enough 10-year (long life) smoke alarms to install throughout your home, the priority is at least one long-life battery smoke alarm per floor including the basement. Second priority would be outside every separate sleeping area. For those smoke alarms that are not powered by a 10-year battery, make sure you replace the battery at least once a year and whenever the

battery gives a low battery signal. The Apple Valley Fire Department recommends that smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detectors have their batteries replaced at Daylight Savings Time every year.

FIRE SPRINKLERS SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY

Fire Sprinklers can suppress and often extinguish a fire before the fire department arrives, giving you and your family their best chance of escaping. Building a new home? Including fire sprinklers in your new home construction is a great idea that can save your lives and protect your property. The Minnesota State Fire Marshal reports that dollar loss in residential properties in 2013 increased 11% from 2012. The information at <http://www.homefiresprinkler.org> will provide additional information and true life stories about the impact that fire sprinklers have had in residential fires.

Not sure how fire sprinklers work?



Have questions about fire safety in your home? Contact the Apple Valley Fire Marshal at **952-953-2679** during regular business hours or email him at roy.kingsley@applevalleyfire.org. Don't forget that **Hook and Ladder**, the cable television

show created by the Apple Valley Fire Department for our residents and visitors, is always a great resource for fire safety. Check out the schedule on the City of Apple Valley Website; cityofapplevalley.org.

Thank you for helping us help you keep your family safe.

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Mortgage Foreclosure Counseling Program provides free counseling assistance to help homeowners who are in or nearing foreclosure with referrals to additional resources and, in some cases, financial assistance. Homeowners work one-on-one with the CDA homeownership specialists to assess the situation and determine possible solutions.

Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) Mortgage Foreclosure Counseling Program

*Worried about your next house payment?
Already missed one payment?
Questions about postponing the sale?
Thinking about walking away from your home and want to know what to expect?*



If you've asked yourself any of the above questions recently, the Dakota County CDA's Mortgage Foreclosure Counseling Program may be just what you've been looking for.

The CDA's Mortgage Foreclosure Counseling Program provides **FREE** assistance to Dakota County homeowners who may be facing foreclosure or who are already in foreclosure.

Homeowners work one-on-one with the CDA's trained Homeownership Specialists to assess their situation and determine possible solutions. Regardless of what foreclosure stage you find yourself in, the CDA is here to help you through the process.

Applicants must be a resident of Dakota County and be committed to solving their financial problems with long-term solutions.

Call 651-675-4555 today for your **FREE** consultation with a homeownership counselor!



HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- 1) Homeowners contact the CDA at **651-675-4555** to discuss their situation.
- 2) FEDA homeownership specialists provide information about the foreclosure process, evaluate the situation and suggest an action plan with recommendations.
- 3) If appropriate, homeowners submit budget and mortgage documentation to the CDA. Homeowners work with the CDA's homeownership specialists to implement the action plan. This includes an in-depth look at the homeowner's finances to develop a budget for the future.

RECYCLING PAPER READ ALL ABOUT IT!

When kids learn about recycling in school, they may memorize these four categories: Paper, plastic, metal, glass. With more and more products on the market, it can be hard to keep track of what fits in each of those categories. Below is information on recycling one common material—paper.



REDUCE PAPER WASTE FIRST

Before talking about recycling, here's how to reduce the amount of paper you use:

- Consider alternate ways to wrap gifts (visit dakotavalleyrecycling.org/green-holidays for ideas)
- Reduce your junk mail by opting out online (visit reduce.org for links)
- Always choose 2-sided or “duplex” option when printing documents
- Teach your kids to write or draw on both sides of the paper

WHAT PAPER PRODUCTS ARE RECYCLABLE?

Paper is recycled when manufacturers shred it down, turning it into a fiber-y pulp, and then reprocess it into new paper products. Technology over the years has allowed more types of paper to become recyclable.

- Paper: office and school paper, all mail, envelopes, newspapers, magazines and catalogs
- Boxes from: cereal, crackers, pasta and other dry foods; toothpaste, medications and other toiletries; refrigerated food and beverages (such as beer and pop cases)
- Cardboard boxes (flatten first)

WHAT PAPER IS NOT RECYCLABLE?

There are certain paper products that manufacturers can't recycle into new paper. Paper that is wet, has grease or food on it, or has plastic or wax coating is “contaminated” and should go in the trash. Other types of paper products, such as napkins and tissue paper, are too flimsy to be recycled and break down in the pulping process.

- NO gift wrap or tissue paper
- NO paper cups, paper plates or paper/boxes soiled with food/grease
- NO paper towels, napkins or facial tissues

- NO loose paper shedding (place in a paper bag, staple shut, and write “SHRED”, then place in recycling bin).

WHAT ABOUT CARTONS?

Items like milk cartons, ½ gallon juice cartons, kid's juice boxes and soup cartons can be recycled too! Rinse them out, remove straws and caps, and place them in your recycling bin with all your other beverage containers, paper and cardboard.

Call the Apple Valley Recycling Dept at **952-895-4511** or visit dakotavalleyrecycling.org for all the latest information on recycling and garbage. To see what paper products you should recycle, go to dakotavalleyrecycling.org/curbside and click on your garbage company's logo.



LEBANON CEMETERY OF APPLE VALLEY

Lebanon Cemetery is located on the southeast corner of County Road 42 and Pilot Knob Road. It is a non-denominational cemetery open to the public from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, 365 days a year. The City of Apple Valley owns and operates Lebanon Cemetery. Current residents of Apple Valley may purchase burial sites at a lower cost.

Traditional lawn burials and a variety of cremation interment options are available in Lebanon Cemetery. For more information or to schedule an individual appointment to meet with a cemetery representative, please contact Public Works at **952-953-2400** or pubworks@ci.apple-valley.mn.us, or visit the web site cityofapplevalley.org.

PREVENT WATER PIPE FREEZE-UP

Each winter a number of residents experience frozen water pipes inside their homes. Some result in pipes bursting and damage to residences. Following are suggestions to help prevent freeze-ups.

- Turn your water supply off to outside hose bibs.
- Check heat tapes to ensure they are plugged in and working properly.
- Check the cold air intake for your furnace to ensure the cold air does not come into direct contact with the concrete floor, water meter, or pipes.
- When leaving on vacation, avoid turning your thermostat down as far as it will go. The temperature could fall too low in some areas of the home.
- Turn off the water supply line and water heater when going on extended vacations. You may also want to consider temporarily discontinuing your water service.
- If you have or are in the process of remodeling your home, make sure water pipes and the water meter are accessible and not isolated behind walls where they may be susceptible to freeze-up.

If you are aware of a vacant or foreclosed property in your neighborhood, please contact Public Works at **952-953-2400** so we can investigate and determine if the water should be shut off to prevent water damage if the pipes freeze.

WATER SERVICE QUESTIONS...

SHOULD I HAVE THE CITY TURN OFF MY WATER WHEN I GO OUT OF TOWN?

That depends on your preference. There is always a chance of a hose or pipe leaking in the house while you are gone. During winter months, pipes could freeze if water is not turned off.

IS THERE A CHARGE TO HAVE THE CITY TURN THE WATER OFF?

There is no charge to turn your water off. However, there is a charge to have water service restored. The fee will appear on the first utility bill received following your return. Please note that you will continue to be billed for base services while your water is off.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN HAVING THE WATER SERVICE TURNED OFF BY THE CITY?

The City will turn your water on or off Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Property owners

are required to sign a form relieving the City of any responsibility if a line was left open in the house or the service does not get turned off. The form can be picked up or mailed to you from Utility Billing or can be printed from the City website, cityofapplevalley.org. To schedule a turn on/off, please contact Utility Billing at **(952) 953-2522**, 24-hours in advance.

HOW WILL I GET MY WATER BILL WHEN I AM GONE?

The City will send your water bill to the address currently set up on your utility account, or to a temporary address you provide. If a forwarding address is given to the post office, the water bill should automatically be sent to that address. The City also offers automatic deduction from your bank account on the due date. Please call Utility Billing at **(952) 953-2522** to request an enrollment form or to change your mailing address. This form is also available on the City website at cityofapplevalley.org. Online services are another option for residents. Residents can make payments, receive an e-bill by email, and have access to their account online. Simply go to the City website and navigate to City Services/Utility Billing to get started.

WHY DO I RECEIVE LETTERS ABOUT A PROBLEM WITH MY METER EVERY YEAR WHILE I AM GONE?

Public Works tracks water meters showing unusual usage patterns and sends letters when it appears the meter could be malfunctioning. No use of water is an unusual pattern. If you have your water turned off by the City, we know the reason for no usage. If you do not have the City turn off your water when you are gone for an extended time and want to avoid receiving a letter, please notify Public Works at **(952) 953-2400**.

SEWER AND WATER EMERGENCIES

In the event of a sewer or water emergency, please use the following contact numbers.

952-953-2400 (Public Works)

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

952-322-2323 (Dakota Communication Center)

After hours, weekends and holidays.

SNOW & ICE CONTROL

PLOWING WEBSITE

The City's website, cityofapplevalley.org, is your source for news on snow and ice control. At your convenience, you can access current operations, plowing procedures, and related topics. Updates on snow plowing operations are posted under Timely Topics on the home page. To sign up to receive email and text messages when an update is posted, go to Email Updates on the home page.

PLOWING FACTS

To ensure safe passage on public streets during winter snow events, Public Works crews strive to clear all 173 miles of City streets and 330 cul-de-sacs within 8 to 10 hours after the snow stops falling. Plowing or anti-icing operations begin when driving becomes difficult. First priority is given to primary streets such as Galaxie Avenue, Johnny Cake Ridge Road, 140th Street West, Garden View Drive, 147th Street West, Hayes Road, Pennock Avenue, and Whitney Drive. Residential streets and cul-de-sacs are cleared next. County roads are maintained by the Dakota County highway department.

SOD DAMAGE

The City will repair/replace sod damaged by City snowplows. Damage from the current plowing season must be reported to the Public Works Department by May 1. The City will not repair/replace sod damaged due to the application of sand, salt, or other deicing chemicals.

Residents can place markers directly behind the curb line to define the edge of the street. The City provides lathe markers which may be picked up beginning October 1 at the Central Maintenance Facility located at 6442 140th Street West.

MAILBOX DAMAGE

The City makes repairs to mailboxes damaged by direct contact with City snowplows. Please see additional information in the **Winterize Your Mailbox** article on page 9.

OTHER DAMAGE

All other damage within the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner. This includes, but is not limited to, trees, shrubs, bushes, landscaping materials, decorative rock, and lawn/landscaping irrigation systems.

TIPS FOR A SAFE PLOWING SEASON

Removing snow and ice is a time-consuming and intense job. Residents can help minimize plowing-related problems and ensure city crews do the most effective job possible. Here are some tips for the winter plowing season:

- Do not park your vehicle on the street between the hours of 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., or after a 2-inch snowfall.
- Keep garbage and recycling containers clear of the plow's path by placing them at least 3 feet behind the curb. This distance can still be reached by the automated arm of garbage trucks.
- Pushing or placing snow back into or across the street is prohibited by state and local laws. Doing so creates hazards for drivers and could lead to a citation.
- Clear snow from the mailbox area after each plow event. This prevents compaction by postal vehicles and ensures subsequent plowing is effective. Postal carriers can refuse to deliver mail if the mailbox is not easily accessible.
- Don't allow children to play in the snow banks near the curb or snow piles in the middle of the cul-de-sacs. This can create a dangerous situation when additional snow removal operations are required.
- Help clear snow from fire hydrants and keep them accessible in case of an emergency. Quick access to the hydrant could save a home in your neighborhood.
- To reduce the amount of snow deposited in your driveway from the plow, clear the boulevard area to the right of the drive (viewed from the street) to create a "pocket". Keep this pocket cleared all winter to avoid having a snow pile at the end of your driveway after the plow goes through.

For more information, please call Public Works at **952-953-2400**.

STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE

If the street light in your neighborhood is burned out, flickering or has a broken globe, please contact Dakota Electric at **651-463-6287**. The pole identification number or a nearby address will help Dakota Electric locate the street light to make repairs.

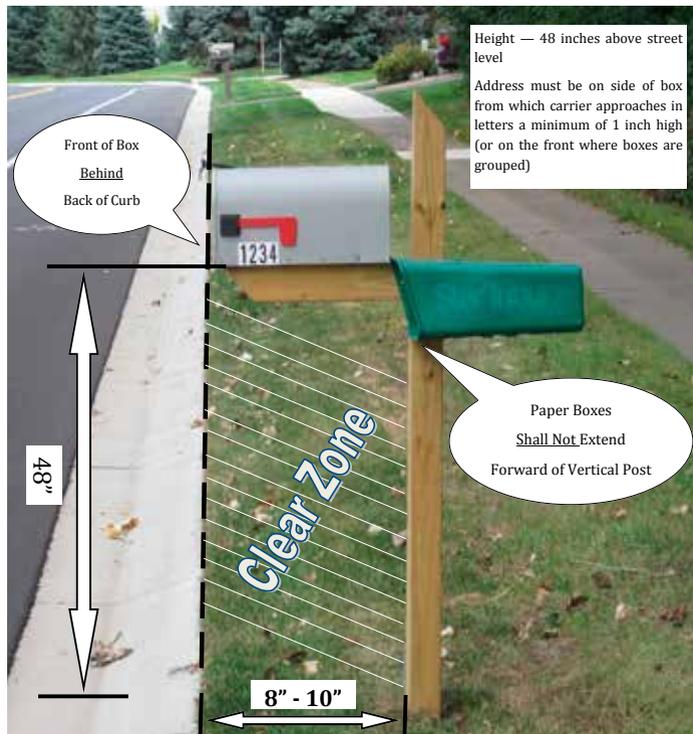
WINTERIZE YOUR MAILBOX

The Public Works Department encourages each resident to inspect their mailbox and make necessary repairs to ensure the mailbox can withstand the winter plowing season. The post and box need to be sturdy enough to withstand heavy snow coming off the plow as snow is cleared from the street and onto the boulevards.

The Apple Valley mailbox repair policy permits the City to repair or replace a mailbox only if it is hit by direct contact with the plow. However, the City will not repair or replace any additional items that may be attached to the mailbox post. These include, but are not limited to, newspaper boxes, planters, flags, or decorative items. The City will not be responsible for repairs if the mailbox or attachments are damaged due to snow discharge or snow storage. Mailbox damage should be reported as soon as the damage is discovered. Damage from the current plowing season must be reported to the Public Works Department by May 1.

Residents should also check for the proper installation height and placement of their mailbox. (See *below*.)

Details regarding the policy and mailbox installation standards are available on the City's website at cityofapplevalley.org.



WINTER TREE WORK

Late October through March is the preferred time for tree pruning, because insects and diseases are dormant. Tree pruning is especially important during a tree's early years to establish good structure for the future. Please refer to the following points when pruning:

- Prune trees to maintain one central dominant leader.
- Shorten upright growing branches that are competing with the central leader.
- Shorten the lowest branches to keep their diameter small; they can be removed later as needed for clearance (small diameter means a small pruning wound).
- Remove all dead, broken, and rubbing branches.
- Branches should be spaced evenly along the central leader.
- Young trees require pruning every two to three years. As trees get older, live branches should be removed only when necessary.
- Pruning mature trees should be more of a maintenance pruning - focus on removal of dead and damaged branches.
- Make pruning cuts next to a branch collar or bud. Don't leave branch stubs.
- Pruning paint is only necessary on oak, elm, honeylocust, and fruit trees during the growing season to seal out disease. Paints and sealants do not help tree wounds heal.
- Wrap trunks of newly planted and thin-barked tree species in late fall and remove wrap in the spring. Light colored tree wrap is recommended. Wrap trunks up to the first branch or five to six feet above the ground.

The City Code of Ordinances requires tree workers to be licensed for all tree work performed in the City of Apple Valley (§152.43). A list of currently licensed tree contractors is available on the City's website at cityofapplevalley.org, or by calling Natural Resources at **(952) 953-2400**. Tree related questions are welcome.

CAUTION! THIN ICE ON LOCAL LAKES

Lake aeration systems will be operated this winter in Alimagnet and Farquar Lakes to prevent winter fish kill. The ice near the aeration systems can be thin and unsafe. Warning signs are posted and maintained around the perimeter of the aerated area to alert lake users of open water.

Public Works staff will monitor dissolved oxygen in each lake starting in December when the ice is safe to walk on. Aerators begin operation when dissolved oxygen levels decline to 4-5 mg/l, the point when game fish begin to be stressed. Preventing winter fish kill helps maintain a balanced predator and prey fish population, which has a positive effect on water quality.

Aeration systems operate on the concept of moving warm water from the bottom of the lake (around 39 degrees) to the surface. This creates an open water area for oxygen exchange with the atmosphere. Lake aeration systems are regulated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and require public notice and an annual permit.

FREE GARDENING WORKSHOPS



If you are looking for environmentally (and wallet) friendly solutions to some of your landscape problems, we have the workshop for you. In *An Introduction to Planting for Clean Water*, you will learn about gardening projects that beautify your yard and help local waterbodies.

The workshop is free to Dakota County residents. Evening classes the spring of 2015 are in Apple Valley on February 19 and April 7. Check cityofapplevalley.org or dakotaswcd.org for locations and times.

Attendees will be invited to workshops where they will learn more about available grants, design their gardens, and receive technical assistance. To register, call the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) at **651-480-7777**.

Blue Thumb™ is a public/private partnership that strives to improve water quality by making it easy for residents to plan, purchase, and plant beautiful native gardens, raingardens and shorelines. Learn more by visiting bluethumb.org.

EVER WONDERED WHAT A RAINGARDEN IS?

A raingarden is a specialized garden that helps reduce and treat stormwater runoff. How does it work? The garden is planted in a shallow 3 to 6-inch depression. Rainwater runoff from rooftops, driveways, or yards is directed to the raingarden where it puddles and soaks into the ground over the course of the day. The water that soaks into the ground is filtered by the soil and plants and becomes clean groundwater. By reducing the amount of runoff that makes it to the storm drain in the street, you reduce the amount of unwanted gunk that makes it to the nearest pond via that storm drain.

Raingardens can be small or large depending on the space. Although some care must be taken to ensure that the plants at the bottom of the depression can take occasional ponding, plant and design choices are abundant. One thing you won't have to worry about - mosquitoes. The garden is dry most of the time and mosquito larva need at least five continuous days of standing water to emerge as an adult.

Help is there for those who are considering adding a raingarden to their property. The Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offers a series of workshops in the spring on raingarden design (visit www.dakotaswcd.org for a schedule), the City of Apple Valley and the SWCD both offer grants for installation, and www.bluethumb.org has many helpful tools (plant selector, nurseries, design professionals) on the site. You can also call Apple Valley Natural Resources at **952-953-2462** with questions about raingardens and supporting programs.

HAPPY PLANTING!



SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL AT HOME

Winter is upon us, and living in a state where winter can last up to six months means that we can't stop everything because of a little (or big) snowstorm. Winter snow and ice removal is not an insignificant task and can have a definite impact on your wallet, your back, and the environment. Accomplishing the task correctly will save you time in the long run.

The best way you can help yourself is by removing snow promptly. The longer you wait, the more likely ice will form. Promptly removing snow is not always possible. In that case, it takes a little more thought about how you deal with the ice.

Many people use either salt or sand once ice has formed. Salt and sand are effective under different conditions. Salt works by lowering the freezing point of water, which is why ice melts once the salt is applied. Standard salt stops working at temperatures below 15°F. When it gets colder, sand is a better choice. Sand does not melt ice, but it can provide some traction. Adding sand at warmer temperatures will not solve your ice problem and can damage floors if enough gets tracked into your house. Always remove as much snow as you can before applying sand or salt to ensure it is effective. Once the salt starts to melt the ice, remove the slush to reduce the chances of ice reforming.

The true key to reducing your impact on the environment is to use the minimum amount needed to get the job done. If you apply too much or spill some, sweep it up to reuse at a later date. Please remember, if you apply it to your sidewalk or driveway, it can run off into the storm drain in the street, and from there it will end up in the nearest lake, pond, or wetland.

You can learn more about salt's impact on the environment by visiting lakesuperiorstreams.org/understanding/impact_salt.html. For more information on Apple Valley's water resources, call **952-953-2462**.



CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY

This spring, the Apple Valley Police Department will again host a Citizen's Police Academy. The Academy will meet one evening a week starting on Tuesday, March 31 and running through Tuesday, May 26, 2015. There are no fees associated with the Academy. Limited registration is open to anyone over the age of 18 who either lives or works in Apple Valley and has not attended an Apple Valley Citizens Academy within the last 5 years. Criminal background checks will be conducted on all applicants.

The Academy provides an inside look at the operation and services provided by the Apple Valley Police Department. Topics for the nine-week course will include DUI enforcement, routine traffic stops, use of force, the judicial process, police investigations, K-9, the Dakota County Drug Task Force, and also includes a look at the Dakota Communications Center plus much more. Interactive sessions allow for some hands-on experience in the area of Law Enforcement

For more information on the Citizen's Academy, please contact the Apple Valley Police Department at **952-953-2706** or pwalter@cityofapplevalley.org. To register visit the City's website at: cityofapplevalley.org/police.

TEEN POLICE ACADEMY

The Apple Valley Police Department will be offering its 11th annual Teen Police Academy starting Tuesday, February 3, 2015. The Academy will meet each Tuesday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. until March 17, 2015. There are no fees associated with the Academy. Limited registration is open to anyone attending high school in Apple Valley or anyone of high school age who lives in Apple Valley. Criminal background checks will be conducted on all applicants.

The Academy provides an inside look at the operation and services provided by the Apple Valley Police Department. Topics for the 7-week course will include DWI enforcement, Use of Force, Dakota County MAAG Team (SWAT), property and evidence processing, crime scene investigation, Dakota County Drug Task Force, and many more. This is a perfect class for those with an interest in a law enforcement career or those who are just interested in how the Apple Valley Police Department works.

For more information on the Teen Police Academy please contact Pam Walter with the Apple Valley Police Department at **952-953-2706**. Registration will open January 2, 2015 and will only be accepted online. To register, visit the City's website at: cityofapplevalley.org.