CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS — The City Council meeting of April 13, 2020 included award of bid for the St. Peter Veterans Memorial Park Playground Improvements Project; award of the bid for the 2020 North 3rd Street Improvements (Skaro to Livermore) Project; execution of a lease of City owned agricultural land by Brett Annexstad; and approval of a Tree Worker license.

The next regular City Council meeting will be Monday, April 27th beginning at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will only be held electronically as authorized under Minnesota Statutes 13.021. For log-in information, please visit the City’s website. The log-in information will be at the bottom of the meeting agenda page which will be available under the “meetings and minutes” section of the homepage the Friday before the Council meeting.

MAKES ME WONDER (BY CITY ADMINISTRATOR TODD PRAFKE) — What the heck, I mean “What the heck!!!!!!!!!” I can’t believe it. Last week I checked the Census 2020 stats for cities in Nicollet County and North Mankato has a higher return rate than we do in Saint Peter. Yes, I said it and you heard it and I just can’t believe it. It doesn’t make any sense. After all we are talking Saint Peter vs. North Mankato here!

So we could issue some sort of challenge to the City Administrator in North Mankato; something like the City Administrator in the community with the lower Census 2020 participation percentage on May 1st has to shave his head, but frankly, both of us are a little folically challenged so that just wouldn’t be that much fun.

Maybe the loser would have to take a pie to the face? Or how about being forced to wash the other city’s squad cars by hand? Or maybe sitting in a dunk tank at one of the two city’s summer events?

All kidding aside here are the facts of the matter. With no great participation in the Census we all lose. We lose getting back some of that money you all pay in taxes. We lose representation in local, state and national governments and we lose out on what is really ours. We need to count everyone, so let’s all set aside the five minutes or so it takes to answer the short questions and participate online or by filling out and submitting our paper questionnaires. Participate in Census 2020 and imagine the fun we could have with North Mankato when Saint Peter comes out on top. Frankly, that’s not too difficult to imagine.

Will you fill out the Census? It makes me wonder……

(Here’s an update on the Census as of April 13th……North Mankato is pulling away with a 66.0% response rate to St. Peter’s 60.2%. We’re both still doing considerably better than the state average
(57.2%) and the national average (47.9%), but it's not good enough Saint Peter!)

**SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK** – Normally the Hot Sheet would contain lots of really scary photos of severe weather, but with the other emergency going on in our lives, we’re toning it down a bit this year. This week is Severe Weather Awareness Week in Minnesota (April 13-17th) and St. Peter residents have a special appreciation for that week. So does the State of Minnesota Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management which has a section of their website devoted to this special week and getting Minnesotans prepared for severe weather to come. Here are some of the highlights from their page:

Are you ready for severe weather? Each year, HSEM in collaboration with the National Weather Service sponsors Severe Weather Awareness Week in Minnesota. The week is designed to refresh, remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and how to avoid them. It’s also a great time to make and practice your emergency plan and build or refresh your emergency preparedness kit.

Statewide Tornado Drills - The most important events during Severe Weather Awareness Week are the two annual statewide tornado drills. In Minnesota, the 2020 statewide tornado drills are scheduled for Thursday, April 16. Outdoor warning sirens and NOAA Weather Radios will sound in a simulated tornado warning. The first drill is intended for institutions and businesses. The evening drill is intended for second shift workers and families.

How to Participate - If you are interested in some ideas on how you, your family, business, or your community can participate in Severe Weather Awareness Week, check out some ideas on this list.

Why Severe Weather Awareness Week? According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota experiences an average of 28 tornadoes per year. In 2018, 44 twisters touched down. A record was set in 2010 with 113 tornadoes touching down across the state.

Understanding this threat and knowing what to do when a tornado is approaching can save lives. Take advantage of Severe Weather Awareness Week to review your own and your family’s emergency procedures and prepare for weather-related hazards.

Each day of the week focuses on a different weather safety topic:

- **Monday:** Alerts and Warnings- weather-radio
- **Tuesday:** Severe Weather, Lightning and Hail
- **Wednesday:** Floods
- **Thursday:** Tornadoes (with statewide tornado drills)
- **Friday:** Extreme Heat

On Thursday, two siren tests will be conducted. One at 1:45 p.m. and another at 6:45 p.m. The second test is designed to give families and companies working evening hours a chance to practice their emergency drills.

But those aren’t the only tests done in Saint Peter. Sirens are tested year round on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. to make sure this emergency equipment is in good working condition when and if, it is needed for real.

For more information on Severe Weather Awareness Week, please check out the website at [https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/Pages/severe-weather-awareness-week-program.aspx](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/Pages/severe-weather-awareness-week-program.aspx).

And finally, because we couldn’t resist......

**COVID-19 UPDATED INFORMATION** – Each week the Hot Sheet will include updated information pertaining to the City’s response to the COVID-19 emergency. With few exceptions, this will be limited to new information only. If there is something we have previously published in this column that you need to access, please go to the City’s website at [www.saintpetermn.gov](http://www.saintpetermn.gov) and check out the Hot Sheet archives. Here is the latest information as of April 15, 2020:

- Governor Walz’s peacetime emergency declaration has been extended and additional 30 days. No word yet on whether the “stay at home” order will be extended. While there will always be people who flaunt the stay at home order and are out and about, most people are doing a good job staying home and our efforts appear to be working to help “flatten the curve”. As the virus continues to infect people across the country, stores that are open for business are taking additional steps to keep customers safe including marking floors to keep a 6’ social distance between customers, installing shields between cashiers and customers, and limiting the number of shoppers in the store at any one
time to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

- Are you a veteran who has been negatively impacted by COVID-19? If so, you may be eligible for a one-time payment of $1,000 and some other assistance. For details please contact Nicollet County Veteran Service Officer Nathan Tish at 934-7870.

- Do you have a story to tell about COVID-19 and social distancing, self-isolation, and/or self-quarantine? The Recreation and Leisure Services Department is sponsoring a writing contest. To enter submit a journal entry of 500 words or less for a chance to win Chamber Bucks. Your entry may be shared on social media and in marketing material. Your name will be omitted by request. Essays must relate to self-quarantining, self-isolation and/or social distancing; be an original work; be less than 500 words; and be non-fiction following the form of a diary, journal, blog, memoir, or essay. That is to say...we want real stories about real life...from you. Once entered, essays will become the property of the City of Saint Peter. Handwritten entries will be accepted. Deadline for acceptance is May 4th. Entries will be reviewed by Library and Recreation staff and should be submitted to gabrielar@saintpetermn.gov or may be placed in the book drop at the library.

- City Council meetings, workshops and all advisory board/commission meetings continue to be done on a virtual platform. Information to log-in to each of these meetings is included at the bottom of the meeting agendas which are posted on the City’s website at www.saintpetermn.gov under the “meetings and minutes” tab.

HOUSE NUMBERS - Do us a favor….stop reading this….seriously……please go out your front door, stand at the curb and turn around and look at your house. Do you see anything missing? Are your house numbers where they are supposed to be, near your front door and easily visible from the street with no shrubbery or decorations blocking their view? How about in the dark? Can others see the numbers after the lights are turned out and you’ve turned in?

City crews have started noticing a lot more homes lacking house numbers and that could put your entire family in jeopardy. The State Fire Code requires house numbers for some pretty simple reasons......so people, including emergency response crews can find your house in the event of an emergency. And oh yeah….it helps the pizza guy find your house also.

Specifications for house numbers according to the State Fire Code are as follows:

- Plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property
- Numbers shall be in contrasting colors to the background.
- Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters
- Minimum of 4” in height with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inches.
- Where accessed by means of a private road and the building cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other sign or means shall be used to identify the structure.
- Address numbers shall be maintained.

These regulations apply to all new and existing buildings (commercial, retail and industrial included).

If you have missing numbers, or there are no numbers at all, please take the time to get those installed. And remember....in Minnesota we don't allow house numbers to be painted on the curb where they would never be seen six months out of the year!

WIPES CLOG PIPES – Please....DON’T FLUSH WIPES! Even with toilet paper hard to find these days, please.....don’t flush wipes!

Despite often being labeled “flushable,” disposable wipes that are flushed down toilets don’t break down in the sewer system. These wipes are often used in private homes, medical facilities and nursing homes. Flushed wipes cause expensive problems for the City which has to clean them out of screens and pumps, and remove wipe-based clogs. And as with most expensive problems, the cost is then passed on to customers.

Many homeowners have experienced plumbing problems because of wipes, so you may have expensive maintenance issues at home if you flush them. Wipes may be labeled "flushable," but they don't degrade in the system. Flushing them is like flushing a handkerchief or other item made of cloth as shown in this video created by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency…https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQEAITUzlOc

Our sewer systems and treatment plants were not designed to handle wipes. They gum up the system, clog pipes and pumps, and cost taxpayers and residents lots of money in additional maintenance
costs. So if you must use wipes, please put them in the trash, not the toilet!

And here’s one more MPCA video that helps get the message out there...
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz0FFHL9wrw.

If you have questions about this topic, please contact the City’s Public Works Department at 934-0670 for more information.

ARE YOU RAKING INTO THE STREET? – Before the weekend’s snow storm, many residents were already busy raking yards to try and encourage that first hint of green grass to pop up. Good for you! But if you are raking those materials into the street it’s not so good for a couple of reasons.

Materials that end up in the gutter (on the street), wash into the City’s stormwater collection system. Unless they are removed, the material could end up in the Minnesota River and contribute to water pollution of our protected waterways.

The other problem is any materials that are raked or shoveled into a roadway become a traffic hazard. Kids on bikes, pedestrians, garbage trucks and even everyday traffic must find a way to navigate around the materials which could lead to accidents and injuries. With the snow now on top of the materials, it becomes even more of an issue as drivers may not see the piles until it’s too late.

So if you are one of the folks who raked these materials into the street, please undo what you have done and dispose of the materials properly. Your neighbors and the Minnesota River thank you.

SPRING YARD WASTE COLLECTION - The City will be collecting branches, brush, and tree trimmings at curbside beginning at 7:00 A.M. Monday, May 4th. Leaves and grass clippings will not be collected, but can be taken to the yard waste drop-off site at 1128 North Swift Street.

To facilitate and speed up the collection process residents are asked to follow these guidelines:

1. Place materials on your yard, parallel and adjacent to the curb (within six-feet (6’) of the curb line).
2. Do NOT put brush on the street. (See notice in previous column about the hazards this creates.)
3. Brush and tree trimmings should be cut to lengths no longer than six feet.
4. Do not place the materials by curbies, light poles, trees, posts, mailboxes, utility boxes/ pedestals, etc.
5. Refrain from parking within 50’ or in front of the yard waste until pick-up is complete.

It takes more than one day to pick up materials from the entire community, but crews will only go through an area once; therefore, if your yard waste is not out by 7:00 A.M. Monday, May 4th, it will not be picked up.

Should you miss the collection, brush can be taken to the City’s yard waste drop-off site.

YARD WASTE DROP OFF SITE - The brush and soft yard waste drop-off site located at 1128 North Swift Street, (southwest intersection of St. Julien and Swift Streets) with access off North Swift Street, is open year around for residents to drop off brush and soft yard waste. Brush and tree trimmings must be cut to lengths less than 6 feet and a separate bunker has been provided for dropping off fill such as rocks and dirt.

At the site, woodchips and compost are available to St. Peter residents at no cost when available. While the material is free, residents will need to supply shovels and bags or other containers.

This service is provided and funded by the Environmental Service Fee on City utility customer bills. Please call the Department of Public Works at 934-0670 for more information.

2019 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT – Federal EPA Consumer Confidence Rule requires public water suppliers to provide publically available information about the system’s water quality. Saint Peter does this annually by issuance of a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR summarizes information regarding water sources used (i.e., rivers, or aquifers) and of any detected contaminates, along compliance and educational materials.

No access to the internet? Paper copies are available upon request. Contact the Public Works Department at 507-934-0670.

CENSUS 2020 – Due to COVID-19, the U.S. Census Bureau has decided to suspend field operations. That doesn’t mean the Census isn’t happening at all, after all it is mandated in the constitution, it just means a Census worker won’t come knocking on your door anytime soon.

For the first time in the history of the Census, workers will not be coming to doors until it is safe for them to do so. But officials at the Census Bureau are really hoping everyone will complete their survey before that decision is made and they have worked hard to make it easy to do so.
This year, for the first time ever, Americans have the ability to complete their forms online. Depending on the size of your household, it takes just minutes to complete online. Or you can fill out the paper survey that was mailed out to residents who haven’t yet responded.

No computer, or didn’t get a paper Census invitation with a participation code? Don’t worry, the Census Bureau has you covered. Just call any of these numbers to complete the survey:

- **ENGLISH**: 844-330-2020
- **SPANISH**: 844-468-2020
- **CHINESE (Mandarin)**: 844-391-2020
- **CHINESE (Cantonese)**: 844-398-2020
- **VIETNAMESE**: 844-461-2020
- **KOREAN**: 844-392-2020
- **RUSSIAN**: 844-417-2020
- **ARABIC**: 844-416-2020
- **TAGALOG**: 844-478-2020
- **POLISH**: 844-479-2020
- **FRENCH**: 844-494-2020
- **Haitian Creole**: 844-477-2020
- **PORTUGUESE**: 844-474-2020
- **JAPANESE**: 844-460-2020
- **ENGLISH (for Puerto Rico Residents)**: 844-418-2020
- **SPANISH (for Puerto Rico Residents)**: 844-426-2020
- **TDD (Telephone Display Device)**: 844-467-2020

With all those choices you really have no excuse for not participating right? And it’s super important that you do to ensure Minnesota is allocated its fair share of federal funding as well as representation in Congress.

So please participate as soon as you possible to ensure We Count Minnesota!

**BATTLE OF THE BADGES BLOOD DRIVE** – COVID-19 might have suspended all elective surgeries, but it hasn’t stopped emergencies and emergencies mean patients needing blood. The nation’s blood inventory is as low as the supply of masks and ventilators and blood donations are urgently needed.

Please do your part by participating in the St. Peter Police Department “Battle of the Badges” blood drive on May 11, 2020 from 12:30 – 5:30 p.m. at the Senior Center in the Community Center. (If the building remains closed to the public at the time of the drive, special access will be available through Door “B”.)

According to the American Red Cross, “Thanks to the many who gave blood and scheduled upcoming appointments over the past couple of weeks, the American Red Cross has been able to meet immediate patient needs. During this uncertain time, we encourage individuals to keep scheduled blood, platelet or AB Elite plasma donation appointments and to make new donation appointments for the weeks ahead to ensure a stable supply throughout this pandemic.”

“No known end date in this fight against coronavirus and the Red Cross needs the help of blood and platelet donors and blood drive hosts to maintain a sufficient blood supply for weeks to come. In times of crisis, the Red Cross is fortunate to witness the best of humanity as people roll up a sleeve to help those in need. We greatly appreciate the generosity of the public to keep hospital shelves stocked during this uncertain time.”

Please call 1-800 RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter “St. Peter BotB” to schedule your appointment now!

**TREE CARE 101** – The City has received a few calls from property owners wanting to know if they could cut down a tree in front of their homes. Many people don’t understand the concept of “boulevard trees” versus “private property” trees. Trees located in the City owned boulevard are trimmed, maintained and if necessary, removed by the City. These trees may not be removed by the public and as the City works to expand our urban forest, unless the tree is diseased or somehow presents another danger, they will not be removed by the City.

If you’d like to remove a tree on your own property, however, there are a couple of things you should be mindful of. The first is the need to call Gopher State One-Call (811) before you dig. This is a State regulation that provides for marking of utility lines before digging anywhere in the state. This is required even if you think you know where the lines on your property are located.
If you are going to hire someone to do the work for you, keep in mind the need to hire a licensed tree worker. Just because you have a saw doesn’t make you a tree worker and City Code regulations require these individuals to be licensed by the City. When an application is received, the Police Department will conduct a background investigation and staff will require the applicant to provide proof of insurance; both of which helps protect property owners from disreputable companies. A list of all currently licensed tree workers is available on the City’s website at https://www.saintpetermn.gov/BusinessDirectoryII.aspx?lngBusinessCategoryID=22

HELP WANTED – The City is now accepting applications for the following positions:

- **POLICE COMMUNICATION TECHNICIAN** - The Saint Peter Civil Service Commission is currently accepting applications for the positions of a full-time and part-time Police Communications Technician. Responsibilities involve assisting the public in person and by phone, dispatching emergencies, record processing, computer entry and other related assignments. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: High school degree or equivalent; Possession or eligible to receive a Class D Minnesota Driver’s license; Skill and ability to receive State Certification on NCIC file operation; Excellent verbal and written communication skills; Ability to receive First Responder Certification. DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS: Knowledge and experience in data entry, use of office equipment and office procedures; Experience working with the public; Knowledge of law enforcement procedures; Experience in the operation of radio equipment; Experience in working in law enforcement or working with difficult individuals; Experience as a Dispatcher, Jailer or other law enforcement position. Hours of work are 12-hour shifts, which include nights, weekends and holidays. The starting salary has been set at $22.44 per hour. Applicants must successfully complete recruitment procedures as required by the Saint Peter Police Civil Service Commission. Applications may be obtained by phone (507) 931-1550, or in person, and must be submitted along with a resume and cover letter, to the Saint Peter Police Department, 207 South Front Street, Minnesota 56082 by no later than April 17, 2020. Faxed, emailed and/or late applications will not be accepted. AA/EOE

- **RECREATION SEASONAL POSITIONS** – Recruitment for two of the Recreation and Leisure Services positions has been reopened. Applications for Recreation Coordinator ($11.25/hour) and Recreation Leader ($10.00/hour) will be accepted by the City Administrator’s Office until 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2020. Applications are available online at www.saintpetermn.gov or from the City Administrator’s office by calling 507-934-0663. Faxed and/or late applications will not be accepted. More detailed information on each of these positions is available on the City’s website at www.saintpetermn.gov.

- **LINeworker Assistant – Seasonal Intern (May-August)** - The City of Saint Peter Public Works is seeking a future student, current student, or recent graduate of a Powerline/Electrical Lineworker program for seasonal employment. The Lineworker Assistant will gain valuable on-the-job experience and knowledge of a working electrical distribution system. A safe working environment and all required personal protective equipment will be provided. The Lineworker Assistant will assist the Journeymen Linemen with the operation, maintenance, and construction of our 13.8kV underground electric distribution system. Experience may be gained in the operation of an aerial lifting device, digger-derrick, trencher, skid steer, and various other equipment used to install underground electrical cable. The City of Saint Peter also owns a 12MW generation facility and operates as needed. Additional summer projects include AMI meter installation and GIS data collection of the City’s electrical system. Qualifications for this position include future student, current student, or recent graduate of a Powerline/Electrical Lineworker program or closely related field; Ability to work outdoors for up to 10 hours per day; valid Minnesota Driver’s License; Minimum of 18 years old. $14.00 per hour. For this position City applications are not required. Resumes and school transcripts will be accepted until position is filled or May 30, 2020. Interested students must submit a resume and school transcripts, to barbaral@saintpetermn.gov or by mail to City Administrator’s Office, 227 South Front Street, Saint Peter MN 56082. Applicants
will be subject to background investigation and drug/alcohol testing prior to employment.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>5:30 p.m. City Council Workshop</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
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<td>7:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>12:30 p.m. Hospital Commission</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>12:00 noon Economic Development Authority</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Board of Zoning Appeal</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. Tourism and Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>7:00 p.m. City Council Meeting</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Heritage Preservation Commission</td>
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<td>3:30 p.m. Housing and Redevelopment Authority</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. City Council Workshop</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
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<td>7:00 p.m. City Council Meeting</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Library Board</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. City Council Workshop</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
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<td>7:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board</td>
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<td>6:00 p.m. City Board of Appeal and Equalization</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>8:00 a.m. Tourism and Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>7:00 p.m. MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY – All City offices Closed</td>
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