4/7/2021

MAKES ME WONDER (BY CITY ADMINISTRATOR TODD PRAFKE) – (**THIS IS A REPEAT OF AN ARTICLE FROM 2020). Tis the season. Snow, rain, sunshine, rain, snow, freeze, potholes.

What is probably the number one enemy of streets? It’s that freeze, thaw, water, freeze cycle that helps develop potholes. During the last couple of weeks, potholes have sprung up like dandelions in my yard. One day nothing, the next day well…. Uhhgg!?!#$%?!

I would challenge you, as you are out and about in other communities to take a drive around and find a town whose streets are in better shape than Saint Peter. While we know we have a few problem areas, like frost boil heaves in two areas of South Front Street, we are in really pretty darn good shape.

Why? It has to do with the maintenance that is done in the summer. “Full depth patching” is the process you see our crews use in many areas. This process is where we take a pot hole or a bigger area of roadway that looks like alligator skin and dig it up, sometimes a few feet down, and put in new base material, pack it nice and hard, and then put new blacktop (bituminous) in its place and finally, smoothing it out nicely. The secret to this fix and keeping a pothole from reappearing is the new base material and packing it right. “Alligatoring” and pot holes are usually caused by problems under the blacktop and, of course, water and the thaw-freeze cycle.

The other important process we use is “seal coating”. Seal coating is the process where we put “oil” (emulsifier) on the street and then cover with those small rock chips. You drive on it for a week and the little rocks get mushed into the emulsifier and it all adheres to the road surface. This process is designed to do a few things, but one of the biggest things it does is help keep the roadway more watertight which prevents water from seeping through cracks and ultimately, avoids the creation of potholes. We usually do over a hundred blocks of seal coating each year and most streets are sealed about every seven years or so. That timeline can change based on the condition of the road, plans for more work under that road in the future and the level of traffic.

These two processes, full depth patching and seal coating, are not cheap in the short run, but are much, much cheaper in the long run. It is much less expensive in the short run to see a hole, throw some black top in it and smooth it out, but those are usually only temporary fixes and we have to go back and repeat the repairs time and again. The work we do to help prevent problems is the foundation fix that helps prevent reoccurrence. The right work in the summer helps our long term goals which are: keeping the road in good shape for users and reducing costs in the long term by fixing the problem right the first time. As my Grandpa would say, “An ounce of prevention is cheaper than…..” Well, you know the saying. Summer preparation is the difference.

Have you noticed what we do? It makes me wonder……

CITY HONORED WITH SAFETY AWARD – The City of Saint Peter has earned the American Public Power Association’s Safety (APPA) Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2020. The City’s electric utility earned first place in Group A, which consists of systems with less than 15,000 worker-hours of exposure. There were 28 utilities in this Group.

“Utilities that receive an APPA Safety Award have demonstrated
that they have made the health and safety of their employees a core value,” said Brandon Wyle, Chair of APPA’s Safety Committee and Director of Training & Safety at Electric Cities of Georgia. “Designing and maintaining a top-notch utility safety program takes a lot of hard work and commitment. These utilities and their communities should be very proud.”

Over three hundred utilities from across the country entered the annual Safety Award. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker-hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records during 2020. The incidence rate, used to judge entries, is based on the number of worker-related reportable injuries or illnesses and the number of worker-hours during 2020, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

“City of Saint Peter values employee safety above all else,” said Pete Moulton, Public Works Director. “We all recognize the importance of going home to our families each day; this is what drives our dedication to safety.”

The Safety Awards have been held annually for more than 65 years. APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide.

**BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION** – The City Council will sit as the Board of Appeal and Equalization for those wishing to appeal Nicollet County’s valuations on their properties. The meeting takes place at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27th. The meeting will be held virtually using GoToMeeting software. Log-in information for the meeting is provided to all property owners who make an appointment and will be part of the meeting agenda which will be posted on the City’s website ([www.saintpetermn.gov](http://www.saintpetermn.gov)) as the meeting date draws closer.

Property owners wishing to appeal their valuations should contact the Nicollet County Assessor’s office (934-7060) to make an appointment to appear before the Board.

**EMERALD ASH BORER FOUND IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY** - The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has put out the following notice…

“Emergency quarantine on wood movement put in place: The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has confirmed emerald ash borer (EAB) in Blue Earth County. There are now 27 counties in the state with EAB.

A resident in the city of St. Clair was cutting down an ash tree and noticed insect galleries in the wood. The homeowner contacted a local Department of Natural Resources forester who notified the MDA. MDA staff were able to find live EAB larvae and collect samples for federal identification.

Emerald ash borer larvae kill ash trees by tunneling under the bark and feeding on the part of the tree that moves nutrients up and down the trunk. Often, the trees show several signs of infestation because of this. Woodpeckers like to feed on EAB larvae and woodpecker holes may indicate the presence of emerald ash borer. Also, the EAB tunneling can cause the bark to split open, revealing characteristic S-shaped galleries underneath.

Because this is the first time EAB has been identified in Blue Earth County, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is enacting an emergency quarantine to limit the movement of firewood and ash material out of the county. The MDA issues quarantines for all counties known to have EAB to reduce the risk of further spreading the tree-killing insect.

There is more EAB information on the MDA website at [www.mda.state.mn.us/eab](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/eab)."

With EAB as close as Blue Earth County, the Emerald Ash Borer program adopted by the City in 2018 is even more important to help minimize the spread of the pest in our area. In 2018 approximately 22% of the 4,800 trees on public property were ash trees so it’s important that the City be proactive in saving the trees we can.

Staff has described the plan as “best management practices based on the urban forest guidelines and established policies for removal, disposal and chemical treatment of affected ash trees.” That unfortunately means some very large ash trees, and some not so large ones, will be taken down by Public Works crews.

**RECREATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS** - Are you getting ready for a backyard recreational fire? To be safe, please follow the City’s standards and guidelines for having a recreational fire.
• Recreational fires must be at least 25 feet from all buildings or combustible materials. Combustible materials are things such as wood, paper, and plastics.
• Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.
• Recreational fires must be constantly attended until the fire burns out completely or is extinguished.
• A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with MSFC (07) Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, or garden hose shall be readily available at all times until the fire is extinguished. Examples of other approved fire extinguishing equipment would be a charged garden hose, dirt, or sand (and a means of applying it).
• The only materials permitted in a recreational fire are wood from trees, small branches, brush, or charcoal. Treated lumber materials, construction debris, garbage, plastic materials, or waste materials are not allowed to be burned in recreational fires.
• Recreational fires must be immediately extinguished if they pose a fire safety risk, if they are not in compliance with the above, or when directed to do so by a Police Officer, Firefighter, Fire Warden, or DNR Officer.
• The MSFC (07) does not contain any regulations for immediate extinguishment if the smoke from a recreational fire is a nuisance to an adjoining property.

Minnesota Statutes defines a campfire as: "Campfire" means a fire set for cooking, warming, or ceremonial purposes, which is not more than three feet in diameter by three feet high, and has had the ground five feet from the base of the fire cleared of all combustible material."

This article wouldn’t be complete without an additional word of warning. Before disposing of the ash left behind by your recreational fire, please make sure that not a single spark remains. Although the debris may look like there is no fire, embers could still be burning underneath and disposing of the materials before they are completely cold could ignite a fire when you least expect it.

**HYDRANT FLUSHING** – Spring hydrant flushing is underway and will continue through approximately April 16th. This work is done by the Water Utility crew during overnight hours (8:00 p.m. – 6 a.m.) to minimize disruption to utility customers.

Hydrant flushing could temporarily make water cloudy. Please check your water before doing laundry. If you have questions about this process, please contact the Public Works Department at 934-0670.

**SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK** - Minnesota’s “Severe Weather Awareness Week” is April 12-16, 2021 with siren testing scheduled for twice on Thursday, April 15th. The City of Saint Peter will participate in the April 15th testing at 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. Outdoor warning sirens will sound in a simulated tornado warning. Please note that according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, there will be no NOAA weather radio or broadcast TV/radio alerts this year during the 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. drill times to inform the public about why sirens are going off.

Families and businesses are encouraged to conduct their own mini preparedness drills and to talk about what you would do in the event of a real emergency. One of the things to discuss with your family and co-workers is the terms used when advisories are issued:

**Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm “WATCH”** - means that conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes or severe thunderstorms. When a watch is issued for Nicollet County, pay close attention to the weather and make sure everyone in your family knows the correct action to take if the weather gets worse.

**Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm “WARNING”** - means a tornado or severe thunderstorm has been reported or is indicated by weather radar. Warning information includes the tornado or storm’s location, direction and speed. If the warning is issued for our portion of Nicollet County, TAKE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY.

Warning sirens are tested year round on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. to assure that the sirens will work in the event of an actual emergency. If you hear the steady tone of a siren at any other time, it means that severe weather has been sighted in our area and you should take shelter immediately.
There is no all clear siren, so take a battery powered radio with you to the shelter so you can monitor when it is safe to emerge. More information on these topics is available on the Minnesota Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management website at https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/Pages/severe-weather-awareness-week-program.aspx.

Summertime is meant for enjoying outdoor activities, but if you hear thunder, that means lightning is close enough to put you in danger so remember the motto… “When it Roars, Go Indoors!” Lightning is one of the top storm-related killers in the United States and when thunderstorms are in the area and you hear thunder, it’s time to get indoors and stay there for 30 minutes after the last roar of thunder.

If you would like more information about severe storms preparedness please call the Saint Peter Police Department (931-1550) or Nicollet County Emergency Management (934-7874). Some of the severe weather information and the tornado and road safety graphic contained in today’s Hot Sheet are from the Minnesota Division of Homeland Security website.

YARD WASTE DROP-OFF SITE CHANGES – As the amount of materials being dumped at the yard waste drop-off site at the intersection of North Swift/West St. Julien Streets continue to increase, changes are being implemented to curb unlawful dumping which results in increased costs that are then paid by Saint Peter residents.

The April 1st utility bills for residential utility customers included a small orange sticker that will become that customer’s pass to utilize the yard waste site. The sticker is to be placed in the upper corner of the driver side window of vehicles when dropping materials off at the site. If you have more than one vehicle used to haul materials to the site, additional stickers can be purchased at the Public Works building (right across the street at 405 West St. Julien), or from the Finance Department at City Hall. The fee for a second and each subsequent sticker is $5.00.

Those who aren’t Saint Peter residents, or tree workers or lawn care companies that wish to drop-off materials at the site, will be required to purchase an annual permit to cover the City’s costs in maintaining the site. Purchase of those annual permits is available at the same locations as above.

The drop-off site is under video surveillance and part-time City staff will also be assigned to work at the site to ensure those who are dropping materials off are compliant with the regulations.

For more information on this policy, please contact the Public Works Department at 507-934-0670.

Please note that those using the recycling dumpsters at the drop-off site do not need a sticker.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – The City Council meeting of March 22, 2021 included corrections to the assessments for the North Third Street, Center and McLeod Streets From West St. Julien To 1,000 Feet North Project and award of sale of $720,000 in general obligation bonds to finance the project; award of sale of $2,120,000 in general obligation refunding bonds to save $118,000 (net present value) over the cost of the original issuance; award of the bid for construction of two concession/restroom buildings in Community Spirit Park (one owned by the School District #508); adoption of an updated AWAIR safety program; adoption of updated position descriptions for the positions of Building Official and Chief of Police; award of the bid for purchase of a used (2017) four-wheel drive telehandler; closed session to discuss and subsequent action to approve the 2021 union contracts for the Parks, Streets and Police Officers unions.

The next regular City Council meeting will be Monday, April 12, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will 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.

DOG LICENSES – Dog licenses are due on or before April 30th and if your dog is due for rabies vaccinations before it can be relicensed, make your Vet appointment now to beat the rush!

Dogs (and cats) old enough to receive a rabies vaccination are required to be licensed by the City and the cost is very affordable (see chart below).

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<th>Status</th>
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<td>Spayed/Neutered</td>
<td>$5</td>
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<td>Unaltered</td>
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| After April 30th Penalty| $5    (in addition to)
To apply for or renew a pet’s license, owners must provide a current rabies vaccination certificate signed by a licensed Veterinarian. Licenses are available from the Community Development Department at City Hall (227 South Front Street) during regular office hours.

HELP WANTED – The City of Saint Peter is currently accepting applications for the following positions

- **CHIEF OF POLICE** - for the City of Saint Peter.
  **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Bachelor’s degree (BA or BS) in law enforcement or related field from an accredited college or university; Possession of a Peace Officers License issued by the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training or ability to transfer from another State; Five or more years’ experience as a Police Officer, at least three of which were in a supervisory capacity; Demonstrated knowledge of all applicable State Statutes, investigative procedures and techniques, court decisions and other legal guidelines and current law enforcement practices and techniques; Possession of, or eligible for a valid State of Minnesota Class D Drivers’ license.  
  **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Master’s degree in Law Enforcement, Public Administration or a related field from an accredited college or university; Ten (10) years’ experience as an administrator or supervisor in a Police Department with ten or more personnel; Demonstrated experience in working with a State Hospital or Correctional Facility and/or a postsecondary education institution; Emergency Management Certification from an accredited training program; Demonstrated experience in the field of Police Administration and community outreach programming; Ability to speak conversational Spanish or Somali. The successful candidate must list within a six (6) minute response time.  
  Salary $101,500 to $109,500 per year.  

- **BUILDING OFFICIAL** - for the City of Saint Peter.
  **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** High school diploma or GED; Possession of a State of Minnesota Class II Building Official Certification; Two (2) years’ experience in any of the skilled construction trades; Ability to perform plan review for residential, commercial, and industrial building construction and alterations; Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class C Drivers’ License; Two (2) years’ experience as a Building Inspector; Demonstrated knowledge of building codes inspection and enforcement principles; Plumbing/mechanical inspection and enforcement principles; demonstrated knowledge of principles and procedures of rental code enforcement; demonstrated knowledge of OSHA regulations.  
  **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Associates degree in construction trades from an accredited post-secondary educational institution; Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in Construction Management or related field; More than two (2) years of experience as a Building Inspector; More than two (2) years’ experience in performing plan review for commercial and industrial building construction and alterations; Currently possess State of Minnesota full-delegation agreement approval; Demonstrated knowledge of Minnesota State Building Code, current Uniform Building Code, current Minnesota Plumbing Code, current Uniform Housing Code, and the Minnesota Uniform Fire Code, and other laws regulating building construction; Demonstrated knowledge of the principles and practices of plumbing and heating code enforcement; Demonstrated knowledge of the principles and procedures of rental code enforcement; Demonstrated ability to read and interpret building and plumbing plans and specifications. Salary $75,500 to $80,500 per year. 

Applicants are required to complete a City application form available on line at https://www.saintpetermn.gov/365/Employment or from the City Administrator’s office at 227 South Front Street or by calling (507)934-0663. Completed applications must be received by the City Administrator’s office by 5:00 p.m. April 30, 2021. A two-day interview process will take place May 26-27, 2021. Faxed and/or late applications will not be accepted. AA/EEO
Agendas are all posted on the City’s website at www.saintpetermn.gov.

Monday April 12  3:30 p.m.  Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Monday April 12  7:00 p.m.  City Council Meetings
Tuesday April 13  5:30 p.m.  Library Board
Monday April 19  5:30 p.m.  City Council Workshop
Monday April 19  7:00 p.m.  Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Thursday April 22  12:00 noon  Economic Development Authority
Friday April 23  8:00 a.m.  Tourism and Visitor’s Bureau
Monday April 26  7:00 p.m.  City Council Meeting
Tuesday April 27  5:30 p.m.  Heritage Preservation Commission
Tuesday April 27  6:00 p.m.  City Board of Appeal and Equalization
Wednesday April 28  12:30 p.m.  Hospital Commission
Monday May 3  5:30 p.m.  City Council Workshop
Thursday May 6  5:30 p.m.  Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday May 10  3:30 p.m.  Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Monday May 10  7:00 p.m.  City Council Meeting
Tuesday May 11  2:30 p.m.  Minnesota River Valley Transit Board
Tuesday May 11  5:30 p.m.  Library Board
Monday May 17  5:30 p.m.  City Council Workshop
Monday May 17  7:00 p.m.  Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Monday May 24  7:00 p.m.  City Council Meeting
Tuesday May 25  5:30 p.m.  Heritage Preservation Commission
Wednesday May 26  12:30 p.m.  Hospital Commission
Thursday May 27  12:00 noon  Economic Development Authority
Friday May 28  8:00 a.m.  Tourism and Visitors Bureau
Monday May 31  MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY – City offices closed