



Cottage Grove Reports - Monthly

March, 2008 Vol. 2 No.3

Nominate a Volunteer of the Year

The City of Cottage Grove is seeking nominations for Volunteer of the Year, which recognizes long-term service to the community or exceptional service over the past year.

To nominate an individual, get a nomination form from our website at www.cottage-grove.org and return it by March 31st to: City of Cottage Grove 7516 80th St. S. Cottage Grove, MN 55016 attn: Neil Belscamper.

The Volunteer of the Year will be recognized at the Recognition Banquet on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 6 p.m. at River Oaks Golf Course off Highway 61 in Cottage Grove.

**Cottage Grove Resident Survey Results:
See Page 2**

Temporarily Away From Town?

Do you spend extended time away from Cottage Grove? Take the opportunity to have your utility bill temporary forwarded to you. Just contact us at 651.458.2831 with your forwarding address and or return date. You can also avoid late fees if you are away and miss your bill due date by registering for ACH Auto-pay. Your charges will be drafted from your bank account on the payment due date. To sign up call us at 651.458.2831 or go to www.cottage-grove.org and follow the link on the left side of the home page.

Arbor Day 2008

The City is sponsoring an Arbor Day Event to promote local parks, tree planting and environmental awareness. Attend the event on Saturday, April 26, 2008 from 9:00 - Noon at Highlands Park 6975 Idsen Ave. So. Professionals will sell trees and answer questions.



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Property Tax Open Meeting Set for April 10th

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Property owners who have questions or concerns regarding the market value or classification of their property can contact the property appraiser responsible for their area. In many cases an interior inspection of the property will be necessary. The County has found that a large number of property owner concerns can be resolved after speaking to an appraiser.

If your issue is unresolved after talking with your appraiser you may appear before the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization or attend the Open Book meeting in your community. The

Board provides property owners with an opportunity to review and challenge their estimated market value and/or classification. This year's meeting will be held on April 10th at the Cottage Grove City Hall located at 7516 80th St. South in the Council Chambers from 5 – 7 p.m.

If not satisfied, you may appear (in person, through a designated representative, or by sending a written request) before a second board, called the County Board of Appeal and Equalization. To be put on the agenda for the County Board of Appeal and Equalization contact the Assessor's Office at 651.430.6110.

Property Tax Refund - Eligibility Requirements

Be aware that your state property tax refund is based on your household income and the property taxes paid on your principal place of residence. You are eligible for a refund if:

As a renter, your total household income for 2007 must be less than \$50,430 (for tax year 2006, it must be less than \$49,160). The maximum refund is \$1,430.

As a homeowner, you may be eligible for one or both of the following refunds if you owned and lived in your home on January 2, 2008.

- Regular property tax refund. Your total household income for 2007 must be less than \$93,480 (for 2006, less than \$91,120). The maximum refund is \$1,750.

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Cottage Grove Police Department to Host Community Dialogue on Sexual Predators

Experts in the field of sexual violence prevention will address questions in a community forum. The forum, "Sexual 'Predators' Among Us: Who Are They?" is scheduled for Thursday, April 10 from 7-9 p.m. at Cottage Grove Junior High School.

Hear panelists from the Cottage Grove Police Department, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the Jacob Wetterling Foundation, and Human Services, Inc. Some of these professionals assess, supervise, monitor, and study sexual predators and work with victims and their families.

Around Town Update

- Norris Square Senior Housing: residency is expected to occur in March, 2008.
- To protect the City's water supply, all Cottage Grove water mains will be flushed this spring, beginning the week of April 14th.

Positive Results Found in Cottage Grove Residents Survey

A recent survey found that 95 percent of residents rated the quality of life in Cottage Grove as "excellent" or "good". This finding places Cottage Grove in the top 25 percent of metropolitan area communities for satisfaction with quality of life according to Bill Morris of Decision Resources, Ltd. which conducted the survey. In addition, 81 percent of those surveyed thought Cottage Grove was headed in the right direction, with only 16 percent reporting that the city was on the wrong track, with three percent unsure on this question.



When asked what residents liked best about Cottage

Grove, the most common response was the small town feel of the community. On the question of the most serious issue facing the City, residents cited the rate of growth, high taxes, and the lack of restaurants and shopping opportunities. When asked if they supported development of a shopping center on the Cottage Grove Drive-In Theater site, 64 percent were in favor of such a development with 35 percent stating opposition.

Residents rated Cottage Grove government highly. A majority of those surveyed approved of the performance of the Mayor and City Council which places Cottage Grove in the top 15 percent of suburban cities surveyed by Decision Resources, Ltd.

The complete results of the survey are available on the Cottage Grove website. The survey was conducted in December and January and included a sample of 400 residents. The margin of error is plus or minus five percent.

5th Annual Business Showcase and Newport Home Improvement Fair in March

Prizes, Fun, Food, For the Whole Family And it's All Free!

Come to the 5th Annual Business Showcase and Newport Home Improvement fair presented by the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Newport.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 27th from 4:30-7:30 at the National Guard Armory in Cottage Grove; 8180 Belden Boulevard, Cottage Grove.

The event will feature products and services of local businesses and organizations, including home improvement, real estate, finance and banking, health and wellness, home and office products, cuisine, professional services, civic organizations and much more. Please come and see what our local businesses have to offer and why it pays to "shop locally."

For more information call the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce at 651.458.8334 or visit the website at www.cottagegrovechamber.org under Calendar of Events.

Property Tax Refund continued from page 1

Special property tax refund. Your net property tax on your homestead must have increased by more than 12% from 2007 to 2008, and the increase must be at least \$100. There is no income limit for the special property tax refund. The maximum refund is \$1,000.

You must have been either a full or part-year resident of Minnesota during the year. You cannot be a dependent. As a homeowner or mobile home owner, your property must be classified as your homestead.

As a renter, you must have lived in a building in which property taxes were assessed or payment was made in lieu of property taxes. If you are not sure if property taxes are assessed on your building, contact your landlord. Relative homesteads do not qualify. If you qualify for a property tax refund, complete Minnesota tax Form M1PR.

Street Sweeping - The City will begin street sweeping the week of April 7th when temperatures are above freezing. Sweeping will begin with major streets including 80th St., Ja-

maica and Hinton. Residents should sweep sand from their boulevards onto the street before crews clean the streets. All vehicles should be parked in their driveway so sweeping can be completed curb to curb without missing any areas. Any questions please call Public Works at 651.458.2808.

City of Cottage Grove 6th Annual Photo Contest Winners!

The winners of the 6th Annual Photo Contest are:

Landmarks Hank Drabczak - 1st Place

Kathy Houston - 2nd Place

Nature Christopher Lethgo - 1st Place

Lori Larson - 2nd Place

People Lori Larson - 1st and 2nd place.

The winning entries can be viewed on our website at www.cottage-grove.org.



Dialogue on Sexual Predators continued from page 1

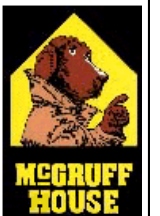
This FREE community forum is your opportunity to learn about characteristics of sexual predators and also to learn how to recognize signs of sexual abuse. For more information about the forum, go to www.cottage-grove.org, or call Officer Gwen Martin at 651.458.2850.

National Night Out 25th Anniversary!

This year the celebration will be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2008. The focus will be neighborhood parties.

The Cottage Grove Police Department and the Cottage Grove Crime Board encourage citizens to plan their own block party for that evening. Highlights for the parties include free bike registration, free helium balloons, free cotton candy, "Fill the Backpack" campaign, visits from McGruff, Blitz our K9 Officer, the Police and Fire Departments, the Mayor and City Council members and much more!

For more information contact: Gail Griffith, Community Affairs Officer 651.458.6025 or Diane McCabe, Community Watch Coordinator 651.458.6053.



River Oaks Golf Course "Driving Range Membership"

Get unlimited range balls for the entire season:

*(5) rounds of golf to use at your leisure (\$150 value)

*Half priced range balls for accompanied guests

Total Cost \$299.00

Golf rounds Wednesday - Sunday after 3 p.m., Monday and Tuesday anytime.



Catch the Fish Fry at River Oaks Golf Course - Ends March 21st

Join us every Friday night from 4 - 8 p.m., starting February 1, 2008 running through March 21, 2008 for all you can eat fish fry. Early Bird Special from 4pm-5pm (must be seated before 5pm) and receive \$1 discount. Dinner will include: all you care to eat fried or baked cod fish; choice of potato, choice of soup or salad and dessert; Adults \$10.95, Children (ages 4-12) \$7.95.



River Oaks Announces "Play Golf Minnesota Week" April 28-May 4th

"Golf Skills Day!" Begins on Monday, April 28th. multiple winners for closest to hole, longest drive and longest putt, all winners receive free rounds of golf.

"Play Golf Cottage Grove!" On Tuesday, April 29th all residents of Cottage Grove are entitled to play 9 or 18 holes for \$10 per person must show valid ID.

"Senior Day!" On Wednesday, April 30th shoot your age with your handicap and receive a free twilight round of golf. Driving range balls are free all day to seniors (62 or older).

"Ladies Day" On Thursday May 1st ladies pay half-price on golf and carts all day.

"Driving Range Day!" On Friday May 2nd driving range buckets are half-price all day.

"Weekend Family Pack!" Saturday, May 3rd and Sunday, May 4th after 5pm kids play free (4-17) and range balls are free. Adults pay only \$10 for golf, cart, range balls but must be accompanied by a junior.

Arbor Day continued from page 1

The City will have booths set up promoting buckthorn removal and upcoming park improvements. The first 100 Cottage Grove residents will receive a free maple tree; limit one per household.

If there are any tree nurseries, landscaping companies or environmental organizations that would like to set up a booth at this event to sell your products or promote your organization, please give Brian Voelker a call at 651.458.2808.

Cottage Grove Ice Arena Public Sessions

Public Skating – Come skate with your family, friends and community in a safe and entertaining environment. Everyone is welcomed:

Sundays Noon – 1:30 p.m. (through April 13, no session on Easter).

Wednesdays 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. (through April 9)

Tue. & Thurs. 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

\$4.00 per skater for all sessions

Figure Skaters Practice – Similar to public skating but is limited to figure skaters:

Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Thursdays 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

\$4.00 per skater for all sessions

Adult Open Hockey – Must be 18 years of age or older

Mondays - 8:45 p.m. - 10 p.m.

March 10th - April 14th \$5 per skater, goalies play for free

Spring Skating Lessons – Attend the Cottage Grove Skating School's Ice Show in May at the Cottage Grove Ice Arena. This will be the 29th Annual Ice Show and is titled "On Our Way". All are invited to watch our skaters, as they show off the skills and talents they've learned. They will perform choreographically to music and themes. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for students/seniors and free for children 5 years and under. Show dates:

Saturday, May 3rd, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 4th, 2:00 p.m.

Ice Arena Construction Capital Campaign Still Underway

The City of Cottage Grove is seeking to expand the existing facility. Fundraising dollars will help to keep our ice activities affordable for all users. In return for contributions, the ice arena is offering a variety of advertising, sponsorship and donation programs.

The Facility Sponsorship Package is the largest form of commitment to this community project.

Facility Sponsorship Options:

Main Rink.....\$250,000 or \$25,000 per year

Expanded Rink.. \$250,000 or \$25,000 per year

Studio Rink. \$100,000 or \$10,000 per year

By donating a puck, you can contribute to the success of the ice arena during construction and well into the future. The Puck Donation program is a limited time offer. Puck Donation Options:

Bronze.....\$100.00

Silver.....\$200.00

Gold\$300.00

Table Donation.....\$1,200.00

E-Mail: zdockter@cottage-grove.org or 651.458.3400 for information on the Facility Sponsorship and how to donate.



The Cottage Grove Recreation Department ~ March 2008

8020 80th St. So., Cottage Grove, MN 55016 ~ 651-458-3400 ~ www.cottage-grove.org

Spring Break '08

Spend your Spring Break at Highlands Park; there will be plenty of activities, indoor and outdoor games, arts and crafts projects, and foosball. On Tuesday, pizza and pop will be provided for lunch and on Thursday we'll take a trip to the Woodbury Movie Theater to watch a movie. The movie will be selected 1 week prior. Be sure to bring clothes to play outside if it is nice out, your lunch, and a small snack.

Ages.... 5 and older
 Dates... March 31- April 4, 2008
 Time.... 8:00-4:30 p.m.
 Place ... Highlands Park
 Cost..... \$80

Mulan's Magical World

"Lets Get Down to Business!" Mulan's Magical World includes themed games from the movie! Princess Mulan (Costumed Kim) will 'reflect' on the movie with a character sorting game including Khan, Shang, & Little Brother! We'll 'round out this party' with an Asian Fan dance and a 'Mushu' dragon craft! Parents - don't forget your cameras for a photo session at the end of the party!

Ages.... 3-6 years old
 Date March 25, 2008
 Time.... 1:00-2:00 p.m.
 Place ... Peter Thompson Park
 Cost..... \$10

Rec. Works

This program is a must for anyone interested in volunteering during Summer Playground Programs. Youth will learn how to work with children, program events and projects, become knowledgeable of the summer programs, participate in cooperative games with summer playground leaders and take part in sexual harassment training. Cost of the program includes supplies t-shirt and lunch.

Ages.... 12-15 years old
 Date May 24, 2008
 Time..... 8:00-2:00 p.m.
 Place..... CG City Hall
 Cost..... \$20

Tot Time

This is a great program for youth ages 3-5 years old, for six weeks, to build relationships with others their age and make friends. We guarantee that your child will learn silly songs, create plenty of crafts to cover the refrigerator, come home tired from playing games, listen to kid-friendly stories, and enjoy a snack brought from home with their friends. This is a great way to start parent/child separation and get your child ready for Kindergarten. Classes held rain or shine at Woodridge Park and will not be cancelled due to hot weather; we will however adapt all activities.

Ages...3-5 year olds
 Dates...June 9-12, 16-19, 23-26,
 July 7-10, 21-24, & 28-31,
 Place.. Woodridge Park
 Cost.... \$115
 Session 1
 Time....10:15-12:15 p.m.
 Session 2
 Time....1:15-3:15 p.m.

Tiny Tot Time

Tiny Tot Time is a great way to introduce your child to others their age and still have the security of having mom, dad or a caregiver there. Each week will include a small craft project, singing songs, story time, and free time on the playground. This is a great chance for parents to connect with other adults as well.

Ages ... 1-3 year olds & their parents
 Time ... 8:30-9:45 a.m.
 Place... Woodridge Park
 Cost \$40

Session 1 - Mondays
 June 16, 23, July 7, 21, & 28, 2008
 Session 2 - Tuesdays
 June 17, 24, July 8, 22, & 29, 2008
 Session 3 - Wednesdays
 June 18, 25, July 9, 23, & 30, 2008
 Session 4 - Thursdays
 June 19, 26, July 10, 24, & 31, 2008

Supervised Playgrounds

Be sure to schedule your summer plans soon so that you don't miss out on the fun. Each day will include hanging out and playing with others their age while playing games, making arts and crafts, and being involved in other special events. Special events include, but are not limited to, an annual carnival, creating a play or skit, trip to the outdoor pool, and other activities that revolve around the Recreation Department's weekly themes. Each park site has 2 staff that are responsible for scheduling the daily activities; although participants are strongly encouraged to participate, they don't have to.

Youth must bring their own lunch and snacks each day. Each park building does have a refrigerator and microwave to be used for lunches. Please avoid sending any snacks or lunches that contain peanuts or peanut butter due to allergies. We also strongly encourage each child to bring their own water bottle each day.

Summer Playground Staff have received several hours of training which include basic first aid, emergency procedures, insight on planning events for youth, and passed a Criminal History Background Check.

Participants may register for the program at any time - however registration is limited to 25 participants per site. This program may qualify as a dependent care expense if it is used as daycare, see IRS publication 503 or contact your tax advisor. Call for more information.

Ages 5 and older
 Dates June 9-August 15, 2008
 Days Monday-Friday
 Time 8:00-4:30 p.m.
 Place..... Hamlet, Peter Thompson
 Highlands & Hearthside
 Cost/Week. \$60
 Cost/Day ... \$15

Additional 2008 Summer Programs:

Tennis Lessons	Roller Hockey
Lacrosse	Fish Camp
Skateboarding	Adventure Camp
Cheerleading	Safety Camp