

# CITY OF SAINT PETER HOT SHEET



All the City news you need to know and a little bit more!

City Info Line 507-934-0675 TDD #711

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The following information is a publication of the City of Saint Peter, City Administrator's Office, 934-0663, 227 South Front Street. Please contact us at [barbaral@saintpetermn.gov](mailto:barbaral@saintpetermn.gov). [www.facebook.com/cityofsaintpeter](http://www.facebook.com/cityofsaintpeter)



4/02/2014

**CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS** – Action taken by the City Council at the regular meeting of March 24, 2014 included a public hearing and subsequent action to vacate abandoned right-of-way abutting South Washington Avenue, Highway 333 and Highway 295; approval for modification of the Fire Relief Association bylaws; modification to the City Code to include e-cigarettes under the definition of tobacco products; adoption of a resolution designating inside and within 10' of all City buildings as smoke/e-cigarette free; authorizing purchase of a utility truck; approving a 2014 rain barrel rebate program; authorizing receipt of bids for an electric project along Nicollet Avenue; adoption of Registered Land Survey #65 which creates two parcels from Lot 4, Block 2 Pine Pointe Subdivision #3; approval of a revolving loan request for Tanis Brothers LLC for rehabilitation of a commercial structure at 309 South Minnesota Avenue; approval for lease of the property at 430 Ritt Street to Quality Products LLC; approval for execution of a one year real estate listing agreement with Coldwell Banker Commercial-Fisher Group for sale of the 430 Ritt Street property; authorization to receive bids for \$345,000 in equipment certificates; approval of an updated language assistance program for the transit system; and a closed session to discuss real estate acquisition negotiations.

The next regular meeting of the City Council will be Monday, April 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the Governors' Room of the Community Center. For more information on City Council meetings, please contact the City Administrator's office at 934-0663. Copies of the Council packet are also available on the City's website at [www.saintpetermn.gov/city](http://www.saintpetermn.gov/city).

**MAKES ME WONDER (BY CITY ADMINISTRATOR TODD PRAFKE** - *My last view from 30,000 feet is a Plan for Changing Demographics...* This topic is so large and it comes to us in so many different

perspectives that at times it can be mind boggling. Often when we speak about demographics people envision a discussion about race or ethnicity, and while both of these two categories are important and changing within our community, we also see changing demographics related to age, related to mobility, related to socio-economic status, and many others.

I think the Council believes that it's important that we look forward to changes in demographics and how those changes will impact what we do and how we do it. If we are looking forward and trying to put ourselves in the best position to respond, that is pretty much the definition of a "plan". While we don't have what I would call a "master plan" for the changing demographics of our community, we have lots of smaller plans that relate to how we work together and policies within the community that impact us all.

An example might be that we now write some of the community notices that show up on Saint Peter Public Access in Spanish. We have made substantial efforts in improving our sidewalk systems and many buildings to allow for enhanced handicap accessibility. We have worked diligently to stimulate additional housing opportunities for our older population. We have worked hard to develop services that help support young families as they continue to come to Saint Peter for the high quality of life that is available here. We do this while focusing on how the cost of that effort is balanced against the benefits and efficiencies that we can gain for the community as a whole. The Council sees these smaller planning opportunities as a way to effectively move the greater community in a successful direction.



Sometimes one big plan is not the answer. I think a number of smaller plans that intersect many of these opportunities seem to work pretty well.

What do you think? It makes me wonder.....



**ROUNDAABOUT INSTRUCTIONS** – Roundabouts, those traffic engineering marvels (or nightmares depending on your point of view), are popping up all over southern Minnesota. Mankato is also

planning for the imminent development of a multi-lane roundabout. If the thought of driving through a roundabout causes you to drive blocks or even miles out of your way, you might take some comfort from watching this You Tube video developed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It provides information in a very easy to understand fashion that will help you navigate a multi-lane roundabout.....<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsFAs9gEYNQ>.

As mentioned in the video, the tricks are to slow down (no more than 20 mph), yield to traffic already in the roundabout, and look at the pavement markings and signs to provide direction.

Another way to make drivers feel more comfortable with roundabouts it to visit one and watch how the traffic easily navigates through. Like most things in life, it can be scary to attempt something new, but once you get the hang of it, it will be as easy as riding a bike!



**E-CIGARETTES** – Electronic cigarettes, which are battery powered devices used to provide a vapor mixture containing nicotine and/or flavorings, have become big news lately due in part to possible action by the Minnesota Legislature to restrict sales and use of the items.

The City Council has recently taken action related to e-cigarettes and that action will impact the residents of and visitors to Saint Peter.

The first action by the Council was to include the definition of e-cigarettes with other tobacco products. That action triggered a requirement for those who sell e-cigarette products to be licensed by the City and for those products to be kept behind the counter at stores just like other tobacco products. The Council action does not prevent smoking the e-cigarettes in private businesses as that decision is currently left up to the owners of those private businesses. This change takes effect on Thursday, April 3, 2014.

The second Council action extends the ban on smoking in City buildings and within 10' of the doors of those buildings to e-cigarettes. Smoking has been banned in City buildings for more than ten years and now e-cigarettes are also banned. This ban includes the outdoor swimming pool. This action took effect upon passage by the City Council which occurred on March 24, 2014.

**SCAM PREVENTION REMINDER** - During spring and summer, many individuals are swindled and defrauded by transient/traveling criminal groups performing what are sometimes known as “bunco” or “gypsy” scams. In most cases, the perpetrator approaches a homeowner and offers to provide low-cost home improvements.

One of the most common types of scams involves asphalt paving. The perpetrator tells the homeowner they have asphalt left over from another job in their neighborhood and offers to resurface their driveway or sidewalk at a reduced cost. When the homeowner agrees, the con artists proceed to either apply a thin layer of asphalt that breaks away in a few days, or use a substance other than asphalt. The perpetrators then collect their money and leave before the homeowner is aware of the substandard work.

This scam can also involve the perpetrator partially completing a job, requesting payment and then never returning to finish the work.

Some traveling criminals have also been known to perform exterior home improvements without the permission of the homeowner. This has occurred in cases where the perpetrator made contact with the homeowner, but the homeowner simply took the perpetrator’s business card without requesting their services. The following day the perpetrator performs part of the work, and demands payment for the entire job.

These types of crimes are known to increase during the spring and summer months. In these types of cases the elderly are often an easy target. Victims often feel foolish about being taken advantage of and these crimes often go unreported.

A scam that is often seen in Saint Peter is the door to door magazine selling scam. Young people will show up at the door saying that he/she is “collecting points” by people donating book or magazine subscriptions to achieve a college scholarship. This is typical of scamming agencies and the magazines never appear.

If someone appears at your door to sell you anything, ask the solicitor for their contact information **and** City of Saint Peter permit to conduct door to door sales. (All those doing sales in

residential areas, who don't have a permanent fixed office in Saint Peter, are required to have a permit from the City.) If the solicitor won't provide contact info, or doesn't have a City permit, or is hesitant to leave, this is a good sign they are not a legitimate company. Close the door and call the Saint Peter Police immediately at 931-1550. Be ready to provide as much information as you can about the solicitor including description, clothing, vehicle license, make and model, and direction they were going.



**DON'T THUMB IT UP BEHIND THE WHEEL** - The Saint Peter Police Department will conduct extra enforcement on April 18th in an effort to reduce distracted driving. Officers are highlighting the issue

during the prom and graduation seasons — in the last three years distracted teen drivers were involved in crashes that resulted in 25 deaths and 4,505 injuries.

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety, driver distraction is a leading crash factor in Minnesota, accounting for around 20% of all crashes annually and resulting in at least 70 deaths and 350 injuries,

In Minnesota, it is illegal for drivers to read, compose or send texts/emails, and access the Web on a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic, such as at a stoplight or stuck in traffic. It is also illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone at any time.

"Your focus behind the wheel is far more important than the text message you are sending or reading behind the wheel," says Officer Jay Link. "Drivers need to make a serious effort to recognize and limit dangerous and unnecessary distractions, and passengers need speak up to stop and prevent drivers from texting."

Distractions cause drivers to react more slowly to traffic conditions or events, such as a vehicle stopping or pulling out in traffic. A University of Utah study reports that using a cell phone while driving, whether hands-free or hand-held, delays a driver's reactions as much as having an alcohol-concentration level of 0.08 percent. And when texting, drivers take their eyes off the road for up to 4.6 out of every 6 seconds — equivalent to traveling the length of a football field at 55 mph hours without looking up.

The Saint Peter Police Department underscores driver distractions include reaching for items, fiddling with radio/music/vehicle controls, eating/drinking, dealing with rowdy passengers, grooming and more.

Here are some tips to help minimize distractions:

- Hang up and drive:
  - Turn off your cell phone, or place it out of reach.
  - If on a phone conversation with someone and either one of you are driving, ask them to call you back.
  - Texting, emailing and Web use while driving is illegal in Minnesota - including when stopped in traffic.
  - Drivers under age 18 are prohibited from any cell phone use.
- Passengers:
  - Speak up to stop drivers from engaging in distracted behaviors.
  - Assist with phone, directions and radio/music controls.
- More tips:
  - Map out and study directions before your trip.
  - Teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle.

Distracted driving education is a component Minnesota's core traffic safety initiative, [Toward Zero Deaths \(TZD\)](#). A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response



**CAT LICENSES DUE** - The City of Saint Peter requires all cats within the City limits to be licensed.

Cat licenses are due on or before April 30, 2014. Cost is \$5 (*spayed/neutered*) or \$25 for unaltered pets. The license is valid for 2 years (4/30/14 – 4/30/15).

When purchasing the license, owners must furnish an updated rabies vaccination certificate signed by a licensed Veterinarian.

Cat licenses are available from the Community Development Department at City Hall (227 South Front Street). The office is open weekdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Residents can also purchase a renewal license through the mail by submitting the rabies certificate and the appropriate fee to the Community Development office. (Sorry, but initial licenses are not able to be purchased through the mail. Owners must come in person to complete the initial license application.) If you have questions about pet licensing, please call 934-0661.

(And remember.....if you own a dog they are also required to be licensed!)

**RAIN BARREL REBATES –** The City is pleased to once again offer a rain barrel rebate program. Rain water is great for gardens, houseplants, car washing, window washing, and other household chores. It also provides a good source of water during droughts and saves utility customers money by lowering the monthly water bill. Use of rainwater for these tasks also reduces stress on the City's storm drain and sewer systems.



Here's how the rebate program works.....beginning May 15th through July 15th, City utility customers may purchase a 45-48 gallon rain barrel or rain barrel diverter and parts kit from one of four local vendors.....Arrow Ace Hardware, Mary's Flowers, St. Peter Greenhouse and Floral, or Traverse des Sioux Garden Center. At the time of purchase, a rebate form will be filled out at the store and the form will be provided to the City for processing. Purchase of one of the qualifying barrels entitles the utility customer to either a \$25 rebate on their utility bill or a \$10 rebate on the utility bill for purchase of a rain barrel diverter and parts kit.

And a couple of things to note.....some property owners might have to hire someone to attach the rain barrel to their downspout. The vendors should be able to put you in touch with someone who provides this service. (City employees are not allowed to recommend someone to perform this service.) Also, property owners who are part of a homeowners association will want to check to make sure the association bylaws allow rain barrels.

Rebates will be available to the first 50 qualified purchasers and there is a limit of two rebates per household.

**UPCOMING LIBRARY EVENTS –** The public is invited to the following events at the Public Library:

- **“How-To” Festival at the Library** - Join us on Saturday, April 12th between 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. for our first **“How-To Festival”**. Every half hour you can learn something new from “How to arrange store bought flowers” (Mary's Flowers) to “How to choose the right vehicle for you” (Lager's) to “How to make healthy meals for under

\$10” (Family Fresh). Library staff will be sharing how to use the story time bags and how to use your nook. For more information please contact the Library at 934-7420 or visit the City website at [www.saintpetermn.gov/library](http://www.saintpetermn.gov/library).

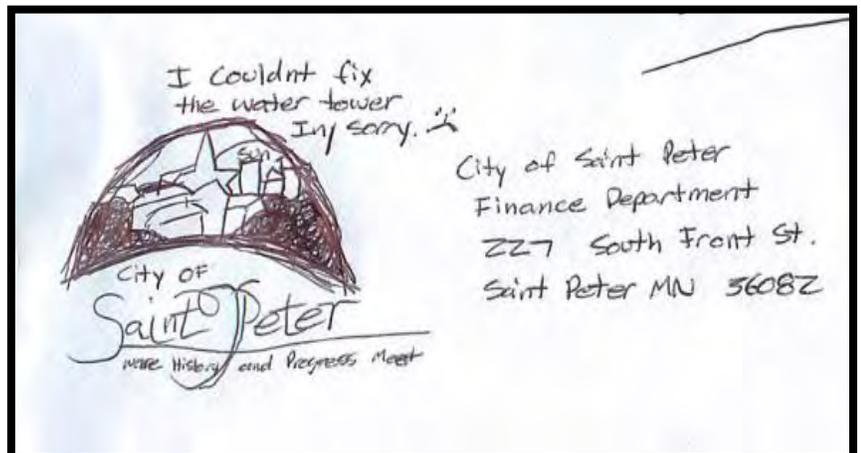
- **Minnesota Byways: A Special Evening with Photographer Doug Ohman.** Monday, April 7th at 6:30 p.m. in the Saint Peter Public Library. Doug will share his own story of how he took his passion for history and his love of photography and combined them to become one of the most successful and acclaimed photographers in the upper Midwest. Don't miss this!

**LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER -** The new summer 2014 programs guide will be in your mailbox soon! Delivery of the joint brochure of summer activities, classes, and programs from the City's Recreation and Leisure Services and the School District's Community and Family Education departments is due out Friday, April 11th. Check out the outdoor pool schedule, art center classes, Create-a-Camp, cooking classes, youth tennis lessons, t-ball/squirts baseball, and so much more!

**MAPLE TREE TAPPING –** Did you know it is illegal to “tap” maple trees for syrup? Well it is if you are doing so to City owned trees located on City owned property like the boulevards, right-of-way's, and/or parks! These trees are City property and the public is not allowed to damage, drill into, cut, trim, post notices on, nail into, or otherwise damage the trees. Questions about this restriction? Please contact the City Administrator's Office at 934-0663.

**AND FINALLY.....**Last month many folks noticed the absence of a return envelope in their utility bills (printer error). Many, many people commented on it, but only one customer was creative enough to provide their own envelope complete with their own artistic rendering!

Thank you to this customer for providing some laughter in our day at City Hall!



## **CITY MEETING CALENDAR**

This calendar is subject to change. Should you have a question on a meeting date/time, please contact the City Administrator's Office at 934-0663 or visit the City's website at [www.saintpetermn.gov](http://www.saintpetermn.gov).

Monday	April 7	3:30 p.m.	Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Monday	April 7	5:30 p.m.	City Council Workshop
Tuesday	April 8	5:30 p.m.	Library Board Meeting
Monday	April 14	5:00 p.m.	Human Rights Commission
Monday	April 14	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
Tuesday	April 15	6:00 p.m.	Board of Appeals and Equalization
Monday	April 21	5:30 p.m.	City Council Workshop
Monday	April 21	7:00 p.m.	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Thursday	April 24	12:00 noon	Economic Development Authority
Friday	April 25	8:00 a.m.	Tourism and Visitors Bureau
Monday	April 28	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
Tuesday	April 29	5:30 p.m.	Heritage Preservation Commission
Wednesday	April 30	12:00 noon	Hospital Commission