

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- *Commissioner Attends Meeting*
- *Power Line Project*
- *City News Page 4*
- *Compost Sites are Waiting for Your Leaves.....*

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *October 16*
- *October 30*
- *November 13*
- *November 27*

Huffman Visits Gem Lake Council Meeting

Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman attended the Gem Lake City Council Meeting on September 10.

Residents were invited to attend and take advantage of the opportunity to meet Mr. Huffman, who was elected to the Commission in 2012. Traffic speed, especially on Goose Lake Road was one of the subjects discussed, as well as other county/city related matters.

Huffman outlined potential plans for the former arsenal site in Arden Hills, which is now slated for multi-use development, with housing, entertainment and retail possibilities. Other matters discussed included subjects such as the potential for a LaBore Road extension to White Bear Parkway and future growth of the nearby trail systems. Huffman invites your questions. You can email him at:

Blake.Huffman@Co.Ramsey.MN.US
(see related story on page 3)

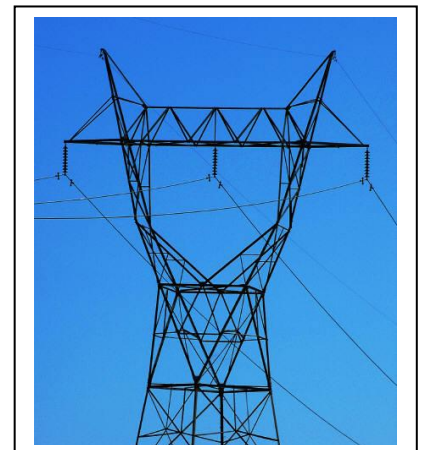


Huge Power Line Project Planned for Area

Public hearings were recently held to discuss the planned upgrade of a huge power transmission line between Kohlman Lake and Goose Lake. The hearing was held on September 13 and was conducted by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy to gather feedback from the public.

The project route is 2.8 miles long and involves upgrading from single circuit 115kV to double circuit 115/115kV power. New steel power poles would average 90 feet in height. The new power poles would have an average span of 300-500 feet. Existing structures are an average height of 75 feet and are often made of wood.

All of the equipment modifications at Kohlman Lake and Goose Lake substations would take place within existing fenced areas,
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Huge Power Line Project Planned for Area

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but the project sponsors are asking to increase the route width to 200 feet. The route of the project runs approximately parallel to US Highway 61, roughly speaking from south of Interstate 694 to north of White Bear Parkway, near the intersection of Otter Lake Road. The project falls within an existing railroad right-of-way, although some new right-of-way acquisition is anticipated.

The project is being done because studies have identified this area as being vulnerable to severe low voltages and thermal overloads, resulting in what Xcel and its partner Great River Energy call "unacceptable operating conditions."

Both utility companies say the project is needed to meet North American Reliability Corporation planning standards.

The double circuit 115/115kV line will provide a redundant source to ensure reliable power delivery to the northeastern metro area.

The regulatory permit process is expected begin in January of 2014. If all goes as planned, construction will begin in the summer, with a potential completion in the summer of 2015.

For more information, contact Sage Tauber at Xcel Energy, 612-330-2909.

Compost Sites Await Your Leaves and Branches

Leaf Disposal Do's and Don't

Do rake up your leaves.

Don't rake them into the street.

Why use a bunch of words when eleven will do?

Free Yard Waste Collection Sites

You can drop off your yard waste at several local sites free of charge. Tree, shrub, leaves, grass clippings and soft plant materials can be brought to:

- a. 3530 Hudson Avenue, Arden Hills
- b. 5900 Sherwood Road, White Bear Township

You have to be a Ramsey County resident to use these free sites. A photo ID is required as proof of residency because this program is paid for by Ramsey County taxpayers.

It is important to note that bags of yard waste must be emptied on site and taken with you. Also biodegradable bags are not accepted because their presence in the pile invites non-biodegradable bags. (huh?)

There are also several other Ramsey County sites that you can find at www.co.ramsey.mn.us (search the site for yard waste collection sites)

The 2013 hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday--11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Saturday--9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sunday--11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The hours run through November 30. (weather permitting)

For more information call 651-633-3279.

Mayor Uzpen's Goals for the Year Ahead

Growth, thoughtful development and responsible fiscal management are on Gem Lake Mayor Bob Uzpen's priority list for 2014.

"As the real estate market continues to recover, areas of Gem Lake may be redeveloped and it will be important to maintain our vision about where we want our city to go with this," said Uzpen. "We have done a lot of pre-planning so that, as much as possible, development is done in a thoughtful way, that preserves the character of Gem Lake."

Bob feels that one way of accomplishing this may be to start creating a list of acceptable re-development options for each area in the city where it is possible. Another key idea is to be very proactive about working with property owners who are seeking guidance on development.

Infrastructure issues are on the priority list for the year ahead. For instance, a major goal is to accomplish the re-lining of sewer pipes in the Hoffman's Corner area. Another project will be to work with the City of White Bear to see if Gem Lake can bring city water to the Hoffman's Corner business district.

Fiscal responsibility will be the cornerstone of Gem Lake operations in 2014. Uzpen plans to monitor expenses closely throughout the year to seek out additional ways to meet and beat the budget.



Vadnais Sports Center Has Several Bidders

One of the subjects discussed by Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman during his recent visit to Gem Lake was the county's bid for the Vadnais Heights Sports Center. The center is located on County Road E, near the intersection of Highway 61 and was built several years ago for a price tag of \$26 Million.

Due to various financial challenges, the center is up for sale. The asking price is \$13 Million. The center is loaded with features such as several ice rinks, athletic facilities and potential meeting space.

Huffman visited Gem Lake on September 10 and discussed Ramsey County's recent offer for the facility, which he said was based on a careful analysis of the revenue and operating expenses associated with the first few years of the center's actual operation.

The county placed a bid of \$10.5M, which is the lowest of three bids, but the only one that is cash, without the need for financing and the delays that could involve.

The other two bidders are Gem Lake Lodge, which is an organization affiliated with the White Bear Lake Hockey Association, and an organization named Northern Educate, which already leases some space at the Vadnais Sports Center.

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Ramsey County Traffic Initiatives Net Results

Ramsey County sponsored two high visibility traffic safety initiatives in September, resulting in numerous driving citations.

Both traffic safety initiatives concentrated on freeways in the county, such as 35E, 35W and 694. The first event was held Friday, September 27 and resulted in 184 traffic stops. Of these stops, there were 12 people arrested and brought to jail, 11 DWI arrests, 17 drivers cited for Driving after Revocation or Suspension, and 9 vehicles towed.

The following night, September 28, there was a second traffic event, which resulted in 73 stops. Of these stops, 6 people were arrested and brought to jail, 6 DWI arrests were made, 11 drivers were cited for Driving after Revocation or Suspension and 4 vehicles were towed.

Black Sea Restaurant: Gem Lakes Newest Gem!

Stop in at our newest Gem Lake business! The Black Sea Restaurant is now open on County Road E near Enterprise Rental Car. The popular Turkish restaurant named the Black Sea recently open its second branch in our city.

The restaurant has been a fixture for many years at 737 N. Snelling Avenue in St. Paul. That site opened in the year 2000 as a family run business.

The restaurant serves authentic Turkish food such as falafel, kebabs, hummus and other Mediterranean fare. The Gem Lake restaurant is located at 1581 E. County Road E, next to Vera Auto Sales.

Crime in Gem Lake

A home under construction at Hillary Farm was burglarized on or around September 11. Copper tubing was taken, although there were no signs of forced entry.

Property damage was reported on September 12 in the 1300 block of Goose Lake Road.

Gem Lake Designated as Impaired in Recent Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Report

A recently completed report done by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency focused on the need to reduce pollution in five area lakes and one creek. The report was a necessary step in obtaining government assistance at some point with the clean-up efforts. The draft of the report is now out for public comment.

It highlights the need to reduce phosphorus levels in East Goose Lake, West Goose Lake, Wilkinson Lake, Gilfillan Lake and Gem Lake. Each of these lakes is on the state list of impaired lakes, due to the overly high readings of phosphorus, which range from a high of 91% over the limit at East Goose Lake and a low of 24 % over the limit at Gem Lake. In addition, the report points out the level of E.coli in Lambert Creek needs to be reduced as much 61% to meet federal standards.

Various strategies are suggested as possibilities for reducing pollution levels, from more street sweeping to shoreline buffers that will filter storm water run-off before it hits these impaired water bodies and makes things worse.

The possibility of leaking septic systems are listed as a potential contributor to phosphorus levels in Gem Lake. (Please note: Gem Lake conducts semi-annual inspections of septic systems to prevent these problems from happening.)

Once the public comment period is over, the report will be edited and submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their approval. Then an plan gets put together for dealing with the problem. Budgets for doing the work, who will do it and how it will get paid for will be figured out later.

Take Out Your Frustrations on a Patch of Buckthorn

Looking for a good workout or a healthy way to release pent-up frustrations? Try taking a bite out of buckthorn, that insidious shrub that invades our local woods, choking out native flowers and seedlings and damaging habitat and water quality. Chances are you have at least one buckthorn plant growing in your yard right now (get it quick!) and undoubtedly you've seen it or been gouged by its thorns while hiking in local parks. What you may not realize is that killing buckthorn can be incredibly satisfying and downright fun! Here are some tips for removing buckthorn from your yard:

- **Use a weed wrench to pull buckthorn from the ground**, roots and all, to prevent re-growth. Weed wrenches can be rented from various places. (Gem Lake also has one available for loan.)
- **Apply herbicide in a small band on the lower trunk of buckthorn during the winter** to control large patches of the weed. Garlon-4, diluted to 10% by volume or Roundup is effective and can be found at most nurseries and garden centers.
- **Late fall and early spring are the easiest times to identify and remove buckthorn**, as it's pretty much the only plant with green leaves at this time of year.
- **Visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/woody/buckthorn** for pictures and information about buckthorn.

Angie Hong is an educator with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program. She can be reached at (651) 275-1136 x. 35
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Application for Conditional Use Permit Reviewed

Chuck Whitaker has entered into a purchase agreement with Don and Shiela Waldoch to buy the former Waldoch showroom and the existing strip mall. The Gem Lake Planning Commission held a public hearing on October 1. At the hearing public comment was considered on two Conditional Use Permits for the property.

The first is for site improvements and outdoor display and sales, the other is to relocate an existing pole barn and the improve the building exterior to like new.

Because it exceeds 1000 square feet a conditional use permit is required by ordinance.

If approved by the City Council, the plans call for renovation of the former Waldoch showroom and eventual demolition of the strip mall. Once tenants are secured a new strip mall could be constructed. Further redevelopment may stem from this initial proposal. The City Council will take up the matter at its October meeting.

The City of Gem Lake

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: October and November 2013

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall for the next few months:

October 1, 2013

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

October 15, 2013

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

November 5, 2013

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

November 12, 2013

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

November 19, 2013

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Bob Uzpen-Mayor

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City Council Members:

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Phone: 651-260-9742

Rick Bosak

651-426-9695

Faith Kuny

Phone: 612-718-4316

Jim Lindner

Phone: 651-429-7597

For more information on meetings, city ordinances, recent events, permit procedures, etc. please consult the Gem Lake web-site. The address is www.gemlakemn.org

Each Gem Lake Newsletter is also posted on the web-site under the

news section.

Please email your ideas, comments and suggestions. See box at left for detailed contact information.

CITY OF GEM LAKE
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