

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Power Line Project Update
- Parade of Homes Comes to Gem Lake
- City News Page 4
- Welcome New Residents

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- April 1
- April 15
- April 29

Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.

Keeping the Power On in Gem Lake

Anyone living or driving along Gem Lake's eastern border is aware that Xcel Energy is installing new power lines. The new transmission lines will carry 115,000 volts in a double circuit from the Kohlman Lake Substation in Maplewood to the Goose Lake Substation along Otter Lake Road, just north of Gem Lake.

Greater power reliability is the intended result, as the Goose Lake station has seen a significant rise in electrical demands over the past two decades. Housing, particularly in White Bear Township along White Bear Parkway, has increased dramatically since the early 1990s. Likewise, industrial expansion such as the new Water Gremlins plant along Otter Lake Road, has added even more demands on Xcel's transmission lines. The result has been numerous power outages, **(Continued on page 2)**



Gem Lake Residence Featured in Parade of Homes

The 2014 Parade of Homes featured a wonderful new residence in Gem Lake! This annual rite of Spring ran from February 28 to March 29. Hundreds of homes located all over the Twin Cities were featured, including #102, which is located at 17 Hillary Farm Lane in our city.

This two level executive home is packed full of wonderful features, such as an open floor plan, a beautifully appointed kitchen, arched doorways, interesting ceilings and all the hallmarks of great design. The home was built by Divine Custom Homes of Hudson, Wisconsin, and was custom designed for a family with children.

Homes were open Thursdays through Sundays from Noon to 6 p.m. Entrance was free, except for the three "dream homes," which had a \$5 entrance fee.



Keeping the Power On in Gem Lake

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primarily during the summer storm season, but random outages have occurred throughout the year. Wintertime power outages can be particularly dangerous.

If furnaces cannot maintain interior temperatures water pipes could freeze, and cause significant damage.

The process began about three years ago with a series of public hearings and open houses to inform residents about the project. This legal portion of the project actually took more time than the actual construction, which has been progressing for the past few months.

According to Joe Samuel, transmission project manager for Xcel Energy, the greatest challenges for the work crews, besides the bitter cold temperatures, has been navigating the steep slopes along the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad track corridor between the two substations, and crossing two major highways, Interstate 694 and US Highway 61.

Once in the rail corridor, the progress is relatively easy, but all materials and equipment must first be brought into position.

The steel poles have a rust-color appearance, and this is by design. Xcel's Samuel stated that the use of "weathering steel" keeps the poles maintenance free and stable for years to come. In the past, Xcel used painted steel poles which eventually led to maintenance challenges.

Xcel's approximate three mile long project is expected to be completed by this June. While improved transmission performance is something people cannot see, in this case, it is the kind of transparency Xcel is looking for.



People generally do not think about electricity until it is not working, and keeping the lights on year-round is one of Xcel Energy's primary corporate goals.

The photos here show the installation crew with their crane set up in the Heritage Hall parking lot, and one of the installed poles along with wood framing near Scheuneman Road.

This story was written by Council Member Jim Lindner.

Water Feasibility Study Completed for Gem Lake Business District

Supplying municipal water to the Gem Lake business district is not only feasible, it is necessary to the area's long-term growth and public safety, according to recent feasibility study completed by Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) for the City of Gem Lake. The study was authorized by the city council on November 18 of last year and was meant to be a first step in the process of deciding if and how a municipal water project would get off the ground.

Most municipalities contemplating an expansion of municipal services, such as water, begin the process with a feasibility study. SEH began by looking at Gem Lake's previous Water Study, which was done in 2006. This earlier study identified three options for where water would be piped in from the City of White Bear. These three options included:

- a. County Road "E" at the Railroad Crossing
- b. Cedar Avenue and Hoffman Road at the Railroad Crossing
- c. Buerkle Road Crossing

The County Road E option was the recommended option in the 2006 study due to its proximity to the initial anticipated service area, Hoffman's Corner and the city's desire to use White Bear's city water, due to its chemistry and make up.

The current feasibility study also favors this as the most desirable option, due additionally to the fact that most business districts in cities have higher fire flow needs in the event of emergencies than residential areas have. This particular connection point on County Road E is close to the business district, therefore reducing the distance the water would need to travel to reach it.

Another recommendation in the current feasibility study is to create an additional emergency connection to the Gem Lake water system. This is due to the fact that the initial system would be a dead end main, supplying a limited area, rather than a more conventional "looped" system.

This second connection would be done for emergency purposes until additional connections to the system come on-line in the future. Until then, SEH recommends the emergency back-up connection be made to Vadnais Height via a 12 inch main south of Hoffman Road along the east side of Highway 61, once the water main connection to the White Bear Lake is in place.



The connection of water on County Road E presents challenges in engineering, due primarily to the railroad bed that would have to be crossed. The cost of the connection would be approximately \$274,000. (This is much less than originally estimated.) The drop in price happened because of the railroad has agreed to consider a less expensive way for the work to be done. This would involve temporarily suspending rail traffic while the tracks are taken up, the pipe is laid and the tracks put back in place. The previously suggested method involved complicated boring of piping underneath active rail traffic.

The estimated cost of the emergency loop would be about \$160,000, bringing the total project cost to about \$434,000.

The next steps would be to begin to set up public hearings on the subject of municipal water connections, and for SEH to begin to prepare plans and specifications for the project. Stay tuned to the newsletter and the city web-site for more information on this proposed project. Notice of any public hearings will also appear in the White Bear Press.

City News Page

Two Ways You Can Be A Good Neighbor

Mayor Bob Uzpen has two suggestions for ways that you can be a good neighbor this Spring.

First, be sure your house numbers are easily visible from the street. This could be a life-saving decision. Make it easier for fire, police and ambulance personnel to locate you quickly, in the event of an emergency.

Next, when you do your own yard clean up this year, you will no doubt encounter the usual trash and refuse that emerges as the snow melts. Consider expanding your clean up area up and down the street a bit. Keep Gem Lake beautiful!!

Bonds to be Re-financed

With interest rates at historic lows, the Gem Lake City Council has voted to begin the process of refinancing the 2007 General Obligation CIP Bonds that were used to finance the building of Heritage Hall. The public finance firm of Ehlers assisted the city to analyze options and implications of refinancing the bonds. Their analysis showed that Gem Lake could save approximately \$57,000 over the life of the 20 year bond.

White Bear Lake Grand Opening Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Ramsey County Library cordially invites you to the Grand Opening of the library in White Bear Lake on Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Come and enjoy a fun-filled day of music, activities and refreshments.

The day will start with a ribbon cutting ceremony and a few words from Library Board Chair Kim Vanderwall, County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt and Mayor Jo Emerson. The Roe Family Singers will provide music entertainment in the morning and Reception Jazz will play in the afternoon.

The star of the day will be the improved and expanded building. Come and see the light-filled children's area featuring pre-literacy interactive installations. The re-designed study and lounge spaces are sure to be crowd-pleasers, as well as the new stone fireplace that is the focus of a comfy reading area. Other building highlights include expanded public computing, small group study rooms, and a spacious teen area. We've also added \$70,000-worth of shiny new materials. Don't forget to check them out too.



Welcome New Residents: Kerri and Paul Luecke

Kerri and Paul Luecke grew up in the White Bear area, graduating from Mariner High School in 1976. Both are graduates of the University of St. Thomas, Kerri has a B.A. in Geology and Paul has a B.A. in Biology and an MBA. Paul works for QUIKRETE Companies while Kerri volunteers for many charitable organizations.

Many years ago, Kerri and Paul remember the beauty of the Hillary Farm Estate and talking about how it would be a lovely place to live and raise a family. Although, Kerri never met the Bemis family, she remembers the property as a horse farm with beautiful trees and wide-open meadows.

As fate would have it, they now live in the place of their dreams. And it's developed into a remarkable place to live, with great neighbors and wonderful views.



Several years ago, they decided to build a house there and selected a nicely sized lot for their future dream home. "We really like the neighborhood feel of the place, the sense of being up north with open space and beautiful sunsets."

When they got serious about building, they interviewed a variety of homebuilders and selected Divine Custom Homes, in Hudson, Wisconsin.

Their home is built with graciously sized rooms and plenty of space for their three children. Kerri and Paul have two sons and one

daughter, one is an adult with special needs, one is a senior at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls and one is just entering college. The home is designed to fit their lifestyle, and the layout allows the three children plenty of space to accommodate their own needs for fun and recreation.



Kerri has successfully channeled her interior design and vision into their new home and is now focused on the landscaping design.

Kerri and Paul have enjoyed meeting and getting to know their neighbors during the building process and look forward to moving into their new home very soon.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: April, 2015

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

April 7, 2015

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

April 13, 2015

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

April 21, 2015

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

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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.

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