

The official newsletter for City of Prior Lake



PL PAPER

priorlakemn.gov

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September 2024 Edition



First Edition

by Jason Wedel, City Manager

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the PL Paper, your monthly, hard copy, go-to source for the latest news, stories, and updates from our beloved City.

As many of you know, we recently faced the unfortunate closure of our long-standing newspaper, the Prior Lake American. In its absence, we recognize the urgent need to keep our residents informed, connected, and engaged. The PL Paper aims to help fill that void, ensuring you do not miss out on the important happenings in our City.

We are committed to delivering accurate, reliable, and engaging content to keep you informed while continuing to build upon the strong sense of community our former newspaper helped to foster. We want you to find value in this so if you have comments or suggestions, contact us at info@priorlakemn.gov or 952-447-9800. Enjoy!

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NEW SHIELD**

Q&A with Fire Chief Rick Steinhaus

What has surprised you the most about this past year?

The biggest surprise was how things changed literally overnight when we had 24/7 capabilities on-site with our firefighters available at a moment's notice. Our response times have greatly improved and we've also been able to do more than 100 public education events, something we couldn't do before.



Tell us more about response times...

Our average on-scene time is 6:42, which is a 44% improvement. (The time a call is made until firefighters arrive on-scene) It used to take our paid-on call department about 10 minutes to respond. We are also now the primary responder Prior Lake, Credit River, and Spring Lake Township medical calls, so we are answering hundreds more calls. Since all of our firefighters are EMT certified, it makes sense for us to be first on-scene.

What has been the response from the community?

We have received lots of "Thank You's" when we're out and about town! A lot more than we used to get, which is very nice. We appreciate it and can't thank the community enough for their support.

What's next?

The inspection program and the fire prevention side of things are what's coming up next. On the prevention side we're taking a closer look at businesses, their layouts, and compliance with fire codes. This helps our firefighters know what they're heading into on calls which greatly improves firefighting efforts and safety.

Coming Soon: Culver's



The butter burger building blocks are coming together nicely as the City's newest restaurant is being built between Kwik Trip and KinderCare off of Eagle Creek Ave., it's expected to open in November.

City Calendar

- **Chalk Fest Sept. 13 (3-8pm) & Sept. 14 (9am-4pm)**
Downtown
- **Music in the Park; Stone Daisy Band Sept. 27, 6pm**
Lakefront Park Bandshell
- **Candy Crawl Oct. 31, 10 am**
Downtown

2025 Preliminary Budget & Public Hearing on Sept. 24

At the September 24, 2024, meeting, the City Council is set to hold a public hearing and review the 2025 preliminary budget and tax levy. For 2025, the proposed city budget is \$48 million. The proposed tax levy is an increase of 6.98% from 2024. This does not mean property taxes will increase by that amount. Rather, for a median valued home in 2025 (\$433,600), the annual City portion of property taxes would increase by approximately \$30 or \$2.50 per month.

Public Safety represents about 40% of the total tax levy increase, including the addition of a new Fire Marshall and a Police Officer. The Police Officer was hired in 2024 and funded by a one-time state aid allocation. The remaining portion of the levy includes inflationary and contractual increases for wages, benefits and commodities; unfunded mandates; and funding for capital plans.

The funding for capital plans is an important part of the City's long-term financial planning and proactive approach to save money for expenses related to annual equipment replacement and facilities management. Over the past few years, the City has incrementally increased funding for equipment replacement and major facility repairs that support City services, including parks, snow plowing, and City buildings. Rather than issue debt for routine equipment purchases like pick-up trucks and tractors or for facility repairs such as HVAC replacements, the City is bolstering these accounts. This means the City can pay for these items as we purchase them, which reduces the overall costs. It prevents future tax increases related to debt issuance and interest payments being passed on to residents. It also stabilizes annual tax levy increases for more predictable annual City budgets which benefits residents.

The preliminary budget approval on September 24 establishes the maximum that the City can levy against properties in 2025. A public hearing is scheduled for this date and residents may attend and provide feedback at this time. The final budget and tax levy will be decided at the December 10, 2024, City Council meeting. If you have questions, please contact Finance Director Cathy Erickson at cerickson@priorlakemn.gov.

RESIDENTIAL IMPACTS

% EMV Value Range Inc/Dec	# of affected Properties	% of Total	Median \$433,600		\$600,000		\$1,000,000	
			Net	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net
			Inc/Dec 24 vs 25	Difference % Change	Inc/Dec 24 vs 25	Difference % Change	Inc/Dec 24 vs 25	Difference % Change
+15.01+%	158	2%	\$ 207	16.2%	\$ 369	20.2%	\$ 620	18.8%
+10.01-15.00%	111	1%	\$ 172	13.4%	\$ 313	17.2%	\$ 526	16.0%
+5.01-10.00%	2,518	26%	\$ 101	7.9%	\$ 201	11.0%	\$ 339	10.3%
+0.01-5.00%	5,654	58%	\$ 30	2.3%	\$ 89	4.9%	\$ 152	4.6%
No Change	157	2%	\$ (5)	-0.4%	\$ 33	1.8%	\$ 59	1.8%
-0.01-5.00%	1,106	11%	\$ (41)	-3.2%	\$ (23)	-1.3%	\$ (34)	-1.0%
-5.01 - 10.00%	2	0%	\$ (112)	-8.7%	\$ (136)	-7.4%	\$ (221)	-6.7%
-10.00 - 15.00%	0	0%	\$ (182)	-14.3%	\$ (248)	-13.6%	\$ (408)	-12.4%
-15.01% +	7	0%	\$ (218)	-17.0%	\$ (303)	-16.6%	\$ (502)	-15.2%
	9,713	100%						

Nick Monserud named interim Public Works Director

On September 9, 2024, Nick Monserud started as Interim Public Works Director. Monserud began his career with the City of Prior Lake as a project engineer in 2016. In 2017, he was promoted to Assistant City Engineer, and became the Assistant Public Works Director in 2023. Monserud earned his degree in civil engineering from Iowa State University. Prior to coming to the City, Monserud was a consultant engineer at Sunde Engineering.



Monserud replaces Andy Brotzler who had been Public Works Director since 2019. Brotzler plans to move up North to pursue his dream of living on the lake and to be closer to his passion for fishing and hunting.

Police Updates



The City updated its police vehicles. They are not brand-new squads but newly wrapped with logos and insignia to reflect a more modern look. The wraps are also designed so the vehicles can be easily spotted from a distance and reflect the statement, "People First, Mission Always."



The Police Department updated its shield to reflect the history of the City. The three stars represent the family farms that helped establish the City, and the old train and trestle bridge are a nod to the City's namesake, Charles Prior, of Milwaukee Railroad fame. City Hall and a sailboat round out the iconography for a full representation of our City.