



# Community NEWS



Albert Lea • Alden • Clarks Grove • Conger • Emmons • Freeborn • Geneva • Glenville • Hollandale • Hartland • Hayward • Manchester • Maple Island • Myrtle • Oakland • Twin Lakes

Volume 5, Number 6

"City, County, and Watershed News Direct From the Source"

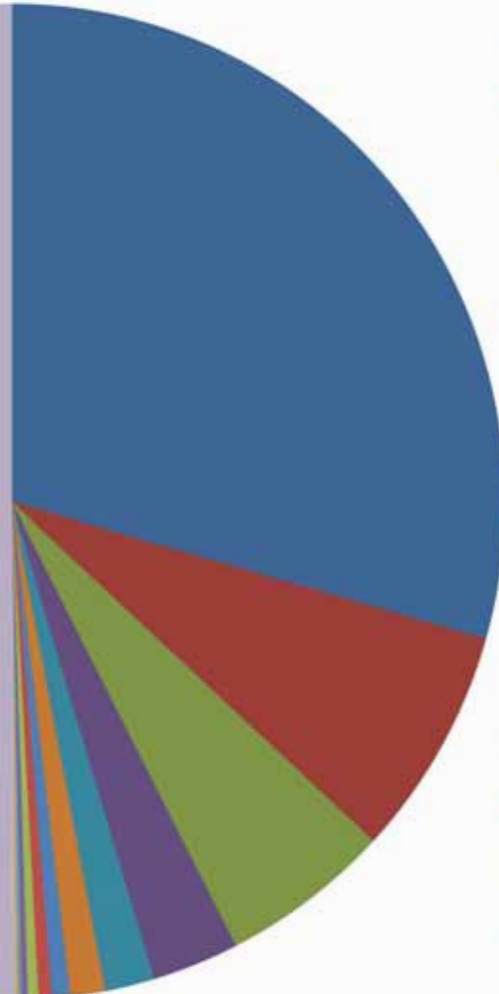
November/December 2011

## \$4,378,205 in Grant Money Leveraged with .05% Local Option Sales Tax

The money generated by the local option sales tax has allowed the Shell Rock River Watershed District to leverage those dollars by applying for grants. This chart illustrates the grant money the District has been awarded by having the matching funds available due to the local option sales tax.

These grants have enabled the District to complete many projects working towards the goal of clean water/water quality.

Some of the projects are listed below.



- \$2,577,000 - L-SOHC Land Acquisition Grant
- \$655,000 - L-SOHC Fish Barrier Grant
- \$490,000 - Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant
- \$250,000 - Dam Safety Grant
- \$141,508 - MPCA Surface Water Assessment Grant
- \$100,000 - Pheasants Forever Grant
- \$52,000 - TMDL Project Funding
- \$38,500 - MPCA TMDL Grant Funding
- \$30,084 - Clean Water Legacy Grant
- \$18,000 - DNR Fish Barrier Grant Assistance
- \$9,607 - Miscellaneous Funding
- \$8,000 - Educational Video Grant - ALMC
- \$6,006 - Lakescaping Grant - DNR,LRC,City A.L.
- \$2,500 - Pet Waste Stations Donations

| Projects                              | Budget | Expense   |                                  |                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 12 Pet Waste Stations                 |        | \$6,988   | Manchester Sewer System          | \$10,000           |
| 206 Army Corp Project                 |        | \$82,163  | Mud Lake Fish Barrier            | \$286,368          |
| Aerators                              |        | \$15,825  | Pickerel & Mud Lakes Reclamation | \$240,326          |
| Albert Lea Dam                        |        | \$206,461 | Pickerel Lake Vegetation Control | \$22,748           |
| Bathymetric & 2 ft contours           |        | \$34,137  | Precision Conservation Project   | \$14,121           |
| Canoe Trips                           |        | \$6,907   | Rain Barrels                     | \$9,028            |
| City Beach Project                    |        | \$11,431  | Rain Gardens                     | \$9,557            |
| City Storm Water Study                |        | \$226,830 | Rock Inlets Cost Share           | \$24,033           |
| Community New - Outreach              |        | \$11,879  | Shoreline Restoration Cost Share | \$3,500            |
| Dredging pursuits                     |        | \$202,779 | South Industrial Park            | \$1,101,798        |
| Educator                              |        | \$4,841   | Storm Water Mgmt Pursuits        | \$56,756           |
| Enviroscape/Student Education         |        | \$1,293   | SWAG Watershed Assessment        | \$164,524          |
| Erosion & Control                     |        | \$137,509 | TMDL Study                       | \$65,442           |
| Feedlot Project - Outreach            |        | \$22,483  | TMDL Accomplishment Plan         | \$85,153           |
| Fountain, White & Wedge Fish Barriers |        | \$828,419 | Video -Healthy Lakes             | \$14,500           |
| SRR Headwaters Land Purchase          |        | \$13,501  | Water Monitoring                 | \$295,098          |
| ISTS Cost Share                       |        | \$49,417  | Wedge Creek Restoration          | \$43,791           |
| Lakescaping Outreach                  |        | \$7,837   | White Lake Reclamation           | \$39,077           |
| Main Street Flood Project             |        | \$199,629 |                                  |                    |
|                                       |        |           | <b>Project Expense Total</b>     | <b>\$4,556,148</b> |

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| The Community News is published bi-monthly by the City of Albert Lea, Freeborn County and the Shell Rock River Watershed District. Comments are welcome and should be directed to: |     |
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| <b>Freeborn County:</b><br>randy.tuchtenhagen@co.freeborn.mn.us  |     |
| <b>Shell Rock River Watershed:</b><br>brett.behnke@co.freeborn.mn.us   |     |

# Fountain Lake Fish Survey 2011

STANDARD LAKE SURVEY REPORT  
POPULATION ASSESSMENT DATED 08/01/2011 FOR DOW NUMBER 24-0018-00

## Status of the Fishery Summer '11

Fountain Lake continues to provide good fishing opportunity for several species in an urban environment. Walleye, Northern Pike, and Channel Catfish catch remains above average and should continue to provide good angling opportunities. The Channel Catfish population features a well-balanced size structure, providing excellent opportunity for this species. Northern Pike fishing should improve as the size and age structure increase. The MN DNR has a new management strategy for Fountain Lake where they stock smaller satellite lakes (Pickerel, White, and Goose) with Northern Pike fry, where they can grow with limited predation before eventually migrating downstream to Fountain Lake. Fish Barriers put into place by the Shell Rock River Watershed District only stop fish from migrating upstream, Northern Pike migrating downstream to Fountain Lake can do so uninhibited. Panfish are abundant with Bluegill and Black Crappie size structure favorable to anglers with a good number of fish exceeding 8 inches in length. In the future fish barriers should help to deter recruitment of rough fish species, namely Common Carp, which negatively affect the turbidity of Fountain Lake.



### Length Frequency Distribution For GN

#### Standard gill net sets

(Field work conducted between 08/02/2011 and 08/05/2011)

|               | BLB | BLC | BLG | CAP | CCF | GOF | LMB | NOP | WAE | WTS | YEB | YEP |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| < 3.00        | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 3.00 - 3.49   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 3.50 - 3.99   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 4.00 - 4.49   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 4.50 - 4.99   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 5.00 - 5.49   | -   | 3   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   |
| 5.50 - 5.99   | -   | 31  | -   | -   | 3   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 3   |
| 6.00 - 6.49   | -   | 32  | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 6.50 - 6.99   | 2   | 9   | 19  | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   |
| 7.00 - 7.49   | 2   | 4   | 13  | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   |
| 7.50 - 7.99   | 3   | 3   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 4   |
| 8.00 - 8.49   | 6   | 14  | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   |
| 8.50 - 8.99   | -   | 11  | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 3   | -   |
| 9.00 - 9.49   | -   | 12  | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 2   | -   |
| 9.50 - 9.99   | -   | 5   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   |
| 10.00 - 10.49 | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   |
| 10.50 - 10.99 | 1   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 11.00 - 11.49 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   |
| 11.50 - 11.99 | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 4   | -   | -   |
| 12.00 - 12.99 | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 7   | -   | -   |
| 13.00 - 13.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 8   | -   | -   |
| 14.00 - 14.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 16  | -   | -   |
| 15.00 - 15.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 3   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | 11  | -   | -   |
| 16.00 - 16.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | -   | -   | -   | 2   | 2   | -   | -   |
| 17.00 - 17.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 2   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | 6   | -   | -   |
| 18.00 - 18.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 5   | -   | -   | -   | 1   | 3   | -   | -   |
| 19.00 - 19.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | 3   | -   | -   | 4   | 2   | -   | -   | -   |
| 20.00 - 20.99 | -   | -   | -   | 1   | 1   | -   | -   | 8   | 1   | -   | -   | -   |
| 21.00 - 21.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 11  | 1   | -   | -   | -   |
| 22.00 - 22.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 6   | 3   | -   | -   | -   |
| 23.00 - 23.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 5   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 24.00 - 24.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 25.00 - 25.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 2   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 26.00 - 26.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 27.00 - 27.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | 2   | -   | -   | -   |
| 28.00 - 28.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 29.00 - 29.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 30.00 - 30.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 31.00 - 31.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 32.00 - 32.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 33.00 - 33.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 34.00 - 34.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| 35.00 - 35.99 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| = > 36.00     | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |

|                | BLB   | BLC   | BLG  | CAP   | CCF   | GOF   | LMB  | NOP   | WAE   | WTS   | YEB   | YEP  |
|----------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Total          | 14    | 126   | 35   | 4     | 20    | 1     | 2    | 36    | 14    | 58    | 7     | 11   |
| Min. Length    | 6.65  | 4.72  | 4.02 | 10.63 | 5.75  | 11.22 | 7.68 | 19.25 | 15.83 | 10.24 | 8.62  | 5.35 |
| Max. Length    | 10.83 | 10.31 | 7.32 | 20.67 | 20.91 | 11.22 | 8.03 | 25.71 | 27.17 | 18.90 | 11.02 | 8.39 |
| Mean Length    | 7.97  | 7.09  | 6.77 | 14.00 | 15.29 | 11.22 | 7.85 | 21.69 | 20.64 | 14.77 | 9.37  | 6.88 |
| # Measured     | 14    | 126   | 35   | 4     | 20    | 1     | 2    | 36    | 14    | 56    | 7     | 11   |
| No Lengths for | 0     | 26    | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0    | 0     | 0     | 2     | 0     | 0    |

Note: Unless all fish were measured in the catch, totals shown for some length frequency distributions may differ from the total number of fish in the catch, due to rounding of fractions used in the estimation of length frequency from a subsample of measured fish.

| Abbr | Species               |
|------|-----------------------|
| BLB  | Black Bullhead        |
| BLC  | Black Crappie         |
| BLG  | Bluegill              |
| CCF  | Channel Catfish       |
| CAP  | Common Carp           |
| GOF  | Green Sunfish         |
| HSF  | Hybrid Sunfish        |
| LMB  | Largemouth Bass       |
| NOP  | Northern Pike         |
| OSS  | Orangespotted Sunfish |
| WAE  | Walleye               |
| WTS  | White Sucker          |
| YEB  | Yellow Bullhead       |
| YEP  | Yellow Perch          |

# Recycling Information & Instructions

Place all your **CLEAN** recycling materials **LOOSE** into a labeled recycling container.  
**PLACE RECYCLING AT CURB OR ALLEY BY 7AM**

## PLASTIC

- Any plastic bottle or food container marked with this symbol and the number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 7. Except milk bags.
- Remove caps and covers.**
- Wash thoroughly.**
- Flatten milk jugs and other large plastic containers. (step on)**
- Labels do not have to be removed.  
Examples - milk, laundry and dish detergent, soft drinks, peanut butter, ketchup, shampoo, cooking oil and other containers with recyclable symbol.
- ANTIFREEZE CONTAINERS** must be rinsed clean and CAPS REMOVED.
- MOTOR OIL CONTAINERS ONLY (REPLACE CAP TIGHTLY)**
- NON-ACCEPTABLE PLASTIC:** Examples - styrofoam, dishes, meat trays, milk bags, chemical containers, plastic bags, toys, flower pots.
- OVERFLOW HINT:** Thread string through all handles and then tie to the recycling can.



## METAL

- ALUMINUM:** Pop cans, pie tins, aluminum trays and foil - **wash and rinse thoroughly.**
- TIN CANS** - crimped or flattened.  
Rinse Clean.  
Remove labels.
- COPPER:** Pipes and brass fittings.
- Metal pots & pans.
- Empty aerosol cans, cleaned paint cans.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE METALS:**  
Paint thinner cans, charcoal lighter cans, chemical containers, gas cans, wire, toys.



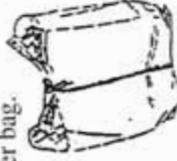
## NEWSPRINT

- Inserts may be left with newsprint.
- Stack neatly, flatten and place in a paper sack or tie securely with string.
- Set on top of or next to container.
- DO NOT DOUBLE FOLD PAPERS.**
- No plastic bags.
- If weather is unfavorable, please save your newsprint, magazines & catalogs and cardboard until your next scheduled pick up.**



## BOXBOARD - JUNK MAIL

- Keep all like items together in paper bag.
- Tie securely.
- All items must be clean.
- Catalogs bundled separately.



## GLASS

- CLEAR, GREEN, BROWN OR BLUE** glass that has contained food or beverage items is acceptable.
- Remove caps, covers and o-rings and discard in regular garbage - wash thoroughly - **DO NOT BREAK.**
- Labels do not have to be removed.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE GLASS:** Examples - dishes and drinking glasses, light bulbs, window glass, flower vases, casserole dishes, canning jars, ceramic.

## MAGAZINES & CATALOGS

- Bundle securely with heavy string or place in paper sack.
- Set on top of or next to container.
- No comic books.
- Do not mix with other paper products.
- No plastic bags



## CORRUGATED CARDBOARD

- Must be clean and flattened
- Maximum acceptable size 36" by 36" by 6" high.
- Tape or tie securely.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE CARDBOARD:**  
Refrigerated Packaging,  
Waxy Cardboard



## Examples

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| School Papers   | Advertisements      |
| Greeting Cards  | Adding Machine Tape |
| Note Paper  | Manila Folders      |
| Envelopes   | Letters             |
| (with labels and windows)   | Pop Cartons         |
| Pamphlets   | Computer Printouts  |
| Receipts  | Typing Paper        |
| Gift Wrap   | Phone Books         |
| Cereal Boxes (remove inserts)   | Cracker Boxes       |
| Laundry Boxes   | Cookie Boxes        |
| Junk Mail   | Shoe Boxes          |
| Tissue Boxes  |                     |
| <b>*NON-ACCEPTABLE PAPER PRODUCTS*</b>  |                     |
| Waxy Boxes, Butter Boxes, Frozen Food Boxes, Pizza Boxes, Carbon Paper, Plastic Bags, Bacon Boxes |                     |

**Waste Management Recycling Center**

2 MI NO. (Bridge Ave) ALBERT LEA (755 Ave.)

PHONE: 826-3610 or 1-800-222-6214

377-5785

## Freeborn County Environmental Services

### Gypsy Moths

In a previous community news, you may recall a little tidbit about Gypsy Moths. These pesky little pests can feed on over 300 types of trees and shrubs when they're in their caterpillar stage, eventually killing the plant. They were originally brought to the east coast in the late 1800s when an artist attempted to make a stronger silk worm, but after a few escaped they started heading west. Just in the last few years they began reaching the



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar

Minnesota border. The Environmental Services office placed 25 gypsy moth traps throughout Freeborn County. They were at many of the parks, town halls, residents' homes, and at the fairgrounds. The traps went out in June and were collected in September. After collecting all the traps, we got the results we were hoping for: no traps had any of these horrible moths. **Freeborn County remains gypsy moth free!**

This trapping program is with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. A total of 20,000 traps went out within the state and tentative results are slowly coming in. In the south eastern part of the state around 200 moths were caught. In the north eastern areas, traps are still being collected, but so far, they have found around 4,500 gypsy moths. This shows just what a problem these moths could eventually be for us here. This year, chemical application treatments took place in the areas of Grant, Coon Rapids, and Minnetonka. Freeborn County will continue participating in this program next year, in hopes that we once again do not find any of



Gypsy Moth Male & Female

these horrible moths.

The Environmental Services office thanks all residents and townships who allowed us to place a trap on their property. If you're interested in helping with the trapping program next year, please let our office know!

For more information, visit:

<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pest-management/gmunit.aspx>

### Recycling Services

The recycling bins are filling up, and more often. That is the good news for our county recycling program. But hidden in the good news are the problems we face dealing with the volume of materials each year. The recycling bins I am referring to are the rural drop boxes, sixteen of them throughout the county, that were placed in strategic locations for use by rural residents who do not receive curbside recycling services. Some of them are located outside of town in rural areas and some of them are located within an incorporated city, but convenient for rural users.

One of the more frequent comments our office receives each month is about the rural drop boxes that have filled to capacity and "can we send a truck out immediately" to dump recycling. The answer is yes, but at a cost to our program. We have a five year contract that spells out the type of service and frequency of services provided. Included in the contract is the curbside collection of recyclables from incorporated cities and the drop boxes in rural areas for farmers and rural residents who do not qualify for curb service. People who live in the country do not receive curbside collection for recycling and these drop boxes are provided for them.

When we compare tonnage and recycling reports each month the county wide recycling has not increased significantly, and some

months have even shown a slight decrease. If the rural drop boxes are filling up at a faster rate, where is the extra material coming from and who is using those rural drop boxes? When we examine the contents of the boxes we have on occasion found commercial recycling. Commercial businesses do not pay into the solid waste fee system and are not eligible to use the rural drop boxes. We do however have a small business recycling program that has been very popular. I do not like to tell a business they cannot use the rural collection system, but when they fill up so quickly rural people coming to town with a load of recycling are turned away when the bins are overflowing. To leave materials on the ground invites problems of blowing, scavenging and unsightly collection points. Something has to change.

Another thing we discovered was that even though some residents receive curbside recycling services at their home, they bring materials to the rural drop boxes instead of placing them on the curb on recycling day. Again, this fills the rural drop boxes prematurely, taking service away from rural residents who come to town only to find the box overflowing and the collection truck days away from the normal pickup.

While it may sound easy for us to pick up the

phone and have a truck dispatched to deal with the filled rural drop boxes, there is a cost for that "extra" service and the value of the entire container does not offset the costs for "extra" service. New, larger containers sound like a good idea but they are expensive and also in demand for other services recycling companies offer. With increased cost of fuel and wages, it can be an expensive "extra" trip.

While we encourage people to recycle everything possible, and work closely with businesses to recycle, we also want to convey the message to use the services in place that are designed to allow everyone to recycle. It's not fair to rural residents that their recycling bin is overflowing prematurely and they are not able to empty their recycling bin when they come to town. While we are trying to perfect the recycling capabilities for everyone throughout the county, we must also be mindful of the cost to continue our current level of service at a reasonable price. Future costs and contracts to operate this program may depend upon the demand for "extra" and unnecessary services we provide today.





## College Hockey Comes to the Albert Lea City Arena!

Three years ago when the then VP of operations of Waldorf College told Steve Smith that there would soon be a hockey program at the college, Smith just laughed - but today, Waldorf College Hockey is a reality.

Waldorf President Joe Mangione asked Smith to set up meetings with rink facilities in Albert Lea and Mason City. "Albert Lea was far superior as far as facilities and ice time availability and price," said Smith, "the staff at the arena couldn't have been more helpful."



**Waldorf Warrior Hockey at the Albert Lea City Arena**

When the program began, Coach Doug Ross from Alabama was hired to get it started and begin the recruiting process. Ross resigned this past summer citing health reasons. Coach Brett Shelanski was then hired to take his place. Shelanski is from Burnsville and most recently coached the Edina Lakers, a Minnesota Junior Hockey League team. He was also an Assistant Coach at the University of Minnesota Crookston, a Head Coach with the Minnesota Flying Aces, a Tier III Junior A Hockey Program and a camp instructor at the International Hockey Schools in Detroit Lakes, Minn. He was also a scout for the Fargo-Moorhead Jets and the Bismarck Bobcats.

The team is part of the American Collegiate Hockey Association and will be playing eight

home games at the City Arena in Albert Lea this season with 18 games being played total. Coach Shelanski hopes to double the number of games played next year. Since they are a new program, it will take two to three years to establish themselves and then they can apply to other collegiate conferences.

There are currently 12 players on the team with two more that will be picked up after football season is over. Roughly half the team is from Minnesota, with one from Iowa and one from Colorado and two from Great Falls Montana. One local tie is Andrew Wangen - Wangen's hometown is listed as Albert Lea, although he went to school in Austin.

The team is excited to be practicing in Albert Lea and hopes that the community will come out to their home games and cheer them on. "We couldn't be happier with the set up in Albert Lea," said Coach Shelanski, "from the facilities to the staff - Albert Lea has been really good to us."

Bob Furland, Albert Lea City Arena Facilities Manager who helped set up the contract with Waldorf said, "we're really excited that they will be playing their home games at the City Arena and are looking forward to a long relationship with them."

Come out to the City Arena and cheer on your newest team - the Waldorf Warriors!

### Waldorf Hockey Home Games at Albert Lea City Arena

- October**  
 14 7:30PM vs. Dordt College  
 15 7:00PM vs. Dordt College  
 28 7:30PM vs. Augustana College  
 29 2:30PM vs. Augustana College
- November**  
 4 7:30PM vs. Minnesota State-Mankato  
 5 7:00PM vs. Minnesota State-Mankato
- February**  
 11 7:30PM vs. Iowa State University "B"  
 12 7:00PM vs. Iowa State University "B"

### Transfer Station Hours:



**October 1 - November 30**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday  
 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Friday  
 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Saturday  
 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**December 1 - March 31**

Tuesday & Friday  
 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Saturday  
 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## YOU'RE INVITED TO A LEGO PARTY

Kids and families are invited to a Lego Party at the Albert Lea Public Library!



Join us Mon., Nov. 7 from 3:45 to 5 p.m.

Visit [www.alplonline.org](http://www.alplonline.org) or call 377-4356 to learn more.



## Letters To Santa

Open to all children



Kids here's your chance to write Santa a letter and have him write you back! Make sure to tell him how good you've been and what you'd like to ask for Christmas.

Parks and Recreation is going to be collecting all the letters and sending them on to Santa so he may reply to you as quick as he can.

Please drop off Santa mail at the City Arena in our special "Santa Mail-Box" (remember to include your return address) or send it to:

Santa Claus  
c/o Albert Lea Parks & Recreation  
221 E. Clark Street  
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Letters will be accepted anytime from November 1-December 6th so Santa has a chance to reply to everyone!

## Winter Warming Houses-Open to Everyone!

Looking for something to do during Winter Break? Look no further than your own neighborhood Warming House. Bring your skates and practice your triple toe loop or play hockey with your friends. Take a break inside the warming house where you can play ping pong, foosball or even box hockey! Stop by and get to know your Warming House Attendants.



|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Winter Break Hours</b> | <b>Regular Hours</b> |
| Mon.-Fri. 1-9 pm          | Mon.-Fri. 4-9 pm     |
| Sat. & Sun. 1-8 pm        | Sat. & Sun. 1-8 pm   |

**Where:** Academy, Hawthorne, Hayek and Lakeview  
**Fee:** FREE!!!

\*Warming houses subject to close due to inclement weather

\*\*Open winter break if weather permits

**You can now register ONLINE!**  
Check us out @  
[www.cityofalbertlea.org](http://www.cityofalbertlea.org)



## Disney on Ice: Disneyland Adventure

Open to all families; children 6 and under must be accompanied by an adult

**Fee:** \$18 (food items may be purchased at the concession stand so bring extra money)  
**When:** Sun. December 11th  
**Time:** Bus leaves City Arena at 10:30 am and returns approx. 5:30 pm  
**Where:** Xcel Energy Center-St. Paul, MN  
*Children must wear a Park and Rec trip shirt*  
Register by November 29th

## Candy Cane Hunt

Open to all children

Santa and his elves have hidden hundreds of candy canes! Come out and see how many you can find. They come in all shapes and sizes and if you find a special colored candy cane you get a prize! Stick around afterward for some yummy hot cocoa, special treats, games and a craft! Santa will also make a special appearance!



**Fee:** \$1 per child  
**When:** Sun. December 18th  
**Time:** 1:00 pm (hunt will start on time, make sure you arrive early)  
**Where:** Fairlane Building-Freeborn County Fairgrounds  
Make sure your child dresses warm!  
No Pre-Registration required.

## Get your Game On!

Grades K-5th

Come out to the Theater for some board game and active game fun, eat pizza and watch a mystery movie! There will be a variety of board games to play so you can challenge your friends. We will also take a tour of the theater and learn some of the history and secrets! Pizza and beverages will be provided.

**Fee:** \$10

**When:** Wed. December 28th (winter break-no school)

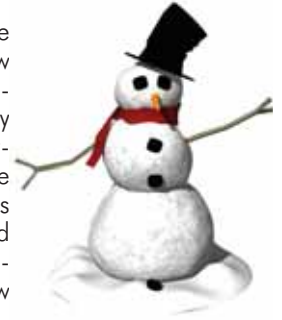
**Time:** 10:30 am-3:00 pm

**Where:** Marion Ross Performing Arts Center Register by December 23rd

## Snow Masterpiece Contest

Temperatures are dropping and snow is on its way! Celebrate the season by building a snowman, snow sculpture or snow fort! This is how it works: Send in or e-mail a picture of your "snow masterpiece".

Please make sure to include the date and any details or information you would like us to know. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers.



**Date:** From first snowfall until Fri., Feb. 24th  
**E-Mail:** [jdavis@city.albertlea.org](mailto:jdavis@city.albertlea.org) or send to: Albert Lea Parks and Recreation Snow Masterpiece Contest 221 E. Clark Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007  
**FREE!** City of Albert Lea residents only

## Albert Lea Senior Citizen Center

**Membership Dues:** Annual membership fee is \$30.00 per year, our year runs from January 1 thru December 31.

**Hours:** Monday- 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon, Tuesday - Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more info call **373-0704**.

As a member of the Albert Lea Senior Center you will receive a monthly newsletter to keep you up to date on Center events.

**Participate in:** Aerobics, Yoga, Walking Club, Red Hat Society, Crafts and Card Recycling, Monthly Birthday Party, Play Ph-effer, 500 or Bridge, Blood Pressure Checks, Innovision Eye Care, Coping with Grief, Stress Management Class, Class on Macular Degeneration, AARP Driver Safety Class, Ping Pong and Special Events.

There's a Pool Room with 5 pool tables and the Lounge is open to use the computers, watch TV or put in a movie, work on puzzles or visit with friends.

Take a day trip to exciting destinations around Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.



## In 2012, The Blue Zones Returns!

In 2010, it was time for committed community volunteers and the City of Albert Lea to continue with the Blue Zones/Vitality Project on our own. Dan Buettner and his team finished their 9-month Vitality Project and it was time for them to start their work with other communities. Albert Lea discovered a new vision for the future, one that could proudly be left for future generations. As a community, we chose to continue our Blue Zones journey. Together, we have partnered, collaborated and leveraged our time, talents and monies to achieve the best possible results for our community. Each project undertaken by the Vitality Team has been directed towards the policy, systems and environmental changes that are necessary to give our community the opportunity to make the choices that allow us to live long and healthy lives.

Today there is a palpable, positive force, combined with a "we're all in this together" attitude urging residents on. In addition, the city is doing its best to build an environment that reinforces some of those changes. New community and children's gardens have been tilled to allow people to grow their own vegetables and garden for exercise, our schools have walking school buses, healthy snack carts, Farm to School initiatives and policy changes related to school nutrition. With the help of the Chamber of Commerce and their Worksite Wellness Committee, there are now eighteen worksites with Tobacco Free Grounds and many more with established Wellness Programs.

With support of the City Council, a five-mile sidewalk was installed around Fountain Lake

for enjoyable walking; two miles of bike lanes were constructed this summer that connect to the Blazing Star Trail; and a "Complete Streets Policy" insures that before building or reconstructing roads, thought is given to bike-ability and walkability. "Share the Road" sig-



**Blue Zones "Moai" Walking Group**

nage and community kiosks have been ordered, bike racks installed, a boathouse with on the water activities and a newly created disc golf course are all part of the active living changes that have occurred in just the last two years. Fun community events add to our growing awareness that good health is not just a personal choice, it's a community commitment - and Albert Lea has made that commitment.

In 2012, the time is right to again partner with Dan Buettner and his Blue Zones team.

We are ready to take our Vitality efforts to yet another level. As Dan and his team turn their eyes to Iowa, they will be looking for ten special communities. Communities that have demonstrated the will and readiness to make the commitments necessary to be a true Blue Zones City. The kind of commitment that Albert Lea made to building a "Culture of Wellness" across all sectors of our community. We will be working with the Blue Zones team to both further our own Vitality efforts and share our experiences with others. We are proud to be called the nation's first Blue Zones Certified City and are looking forward to welcoming others to the growing Blue Zones community. We will be lending our support and leadership to those who will continue this journey beside us. The possibilities for our community and others like it are endless and sustainability is realistic. Albert Lea has shown the world that a small town can come together toward a single purpose and that making the "healthy choice the easy choice" should be part of the everyday fabric of every life. So take the Blue Zones challenge and make "vitality" part of your daily life. In 2012, say yes to your passion. Join a Moai, advocate for school nutrition, help with a neighborhood picnic, use the trails, participate in your worksite wellness, and find your purpose. Together we can make a difference, and together we can make the small everyday changes that will change our community and our world.

Ellen Kehr  
Freeborn County SHIP Coordinator

# Christmas Tree Safety

## PICKING THE TREE

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

## PLACING THE TREE

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1-2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

## LIGHTING THE TREE

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.



## FACTS

- ! **One-third** of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Each year, fire departments respond to roughly **260** structure fires that begin with Christmas trees.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes **one in every five** of the fires.

# Community News

c/o The City of Albert Lea  
221 E. Clark St.  
Albert Lea, MN 56007

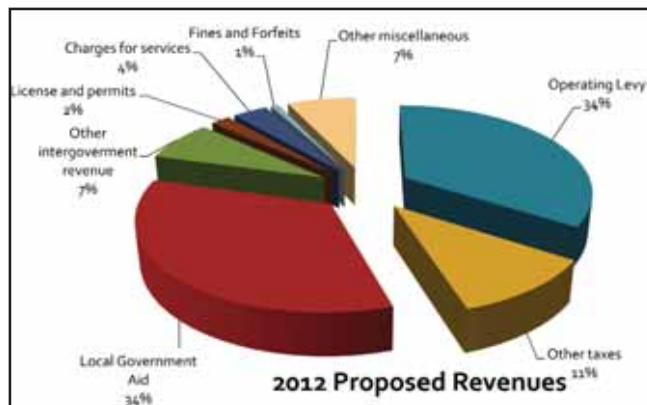
## Market Value Tax Credits and the City of Albert Lea Budget

The City Council approved a proposed tax levy of \$5,331,593 and proposed budget for 2012 at their September 12th Council meeting. While the Council approved a 2% tax levy increase for the budget, they have expressed a desire to reduce the levy to 0% by the end of December when the final budget will be established. The 2% represents about \$100,000 in an approximately \$13.8 million General Fund budget. The City was already faced with a nearly \$600,000 revenue cut in Local Government Aid for 2012, which has been primarily addressed in the 2012 budget proposal through various department spending reductions.

In addition, the State has modified the Market Value Credit ("Credit") program to a Market Value Exclusion ("Exclusion") program that essentially results in a tax shift and tax increase to higher valued properties in the community. The effect of the MVC change was one primary factor in the Council's decision to limit the increase in the tax levy for 2012. According to analysis conducted by City officials, Freeborn County officials, and the House Research Department, the taxes on a \$70,000 homestead property for example would actually decrease slightly with the change from a Credit to an Exclusion program. This in-

cludes the tax levy increases proposed by both Freeborn County and the City of Albert Lea. However, a residential homestead property valued at \$200,000 may increase by about 7% and a commercial property valued at \$300,000 may increase by about 8%. The

Credit program, the State was responsible for reimbursing the City for a portion of the City's levied taxes. In Albert Lea, that amount was set at \$360,000 for 2011 and will not be distributed to the City this year as part of the State's Budget Bill adopted in July.



Despite all the impact from revenue cuts and shifts, the proposed 2012 budget does not include any plans for employee layoffs, furloughs or significant service cuts. The City Arena will close its second sheet of ice in summer 2012, primarily due to maintenance needs, and will result in a one-year budget savings. It is desired to keep the sheet of ice open for summer 2013. The City will also discontinue acquiring holiday lights and decorative banners as a small cost-savings, but will continue to use staff labor to install the lights and banners.

analysis assumes no other changes in market values or other variables affecting taxes.

While the City does not have any direct control on the tax shift to higher valued properties such as residential homestead, non-homestead, and commercial/industrial, the change in the law will provide cities with more assurance that they will receive their levied taxes, which was not occurring under the former Credit program. Under the former

The 2012 Proposed Budget is available on the City's website at [www.cityofalbertlea.org](http://www.cityofalbertlea.org) under the Finance tab. Additional information on the Market Value Exclusion program change to the Market Value Credit program is also available on the website. To provide comment on the proposed budget and tax levy, please attend the public input session at the City Council's regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, December 12th in the City Council Chambers.