



City of Richfield State of the City



Dear Richfield residents:

Richfield had lots to celebrate in 2008. For starters, it marked the City's Centennial. The Celebrations Commission helped organize and participate in over 30 events. Most notably, a birthday event at Richfield High School on February 26, 100 years to the date of Richfield's first City Council meeting.

More than 500 people attended the Centennial event at the high school which featured many previous mayors and council members. There was an informative history presentation by former Richfield History Center Director Lisa Plank. Mayor Debbie Goettel read a proclamation presented to Richfield from Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty. One-hundred year-old resident Hilding Mortenson was presented an honorary citizen award. As part of the Centennial, the Celebrations Commission held the City's first-ever medallion hunt. During the summer, the Arts Commission painted a Centennial mural for the east wall of the Community Center at Nicollet Avenue and 70th Street. And, throughout the year, the City Council presented 'Centennial Baby' certificates to babies born in 2008.

On July 4th, the City celebrated the unveiling of the Honoring All Veterans Memorial at Richfield's Veterans Memorial Park. The memorial centerpiece is a bronze statue of longtime Richfield resident Charles Lindberg, a World War II hero who helped raise the first American flag at Iwo Jima.

The new Public Works Maintenance facility opened in June. The \$12.5 million facility, located at Cedar Avenue and 66th Street, has added storage, increased office space, and improved vehicle servicing areas. Plus, the building incorporated many 'green' features, such as pervious pavement, rain gardens, geothermal heating and skylights to reduce the need for artificial light in much of the building.

Richfield's second two-lane roundabout at Portland Avenue and 66th Street opened late in 2008. The intersection has improved safety and traffic flow as well as enhanced aesthetics with the removal of overhead utilities and added landscaping. Bus pullouts were also added.

Progress continued in 2008 to prepare for the construction of a new Police, Fire, and City Hall facility at the current site (6700 Portland Avenue). The Council approved financing of the \$22.3 million building. In addition, an architect was selected. The new facility will be larger and more efficient with much of the added space dedicated to secured covered parking for police vehicles and public meeting rooms.

In November, voters elected two new Council Members – Pat Elliott (Ward 1) and Tom Fitzhenry (Ward 3). Voters re-elected Fred Wroge in Ward 2. Elliott replaces Susan Rosenberg and Fitzhenry replaces Bill Kilian. The year ended with the State reducing Richfield's funding by over \$600,000. This will certainly provide challenges for our new Council in the year ahead.

- Richfield Mayor and City Council

Pictured above is the Honoring All Veterans Memorial at Veterans Memorial Park.

Looking Back at 2008

This report contains some of the City of Richfield's accomplishments and highlights over the past year. Many of the topics reflect goals the City Council established at the beginning of 2008.



To recognize Richfield's Centennial, the Arts Commission painted a mural on the east wall of the Richfield Community Center.



More than 500 people attended Richfield's Centennial celebration at Richfield High School on February 26th.

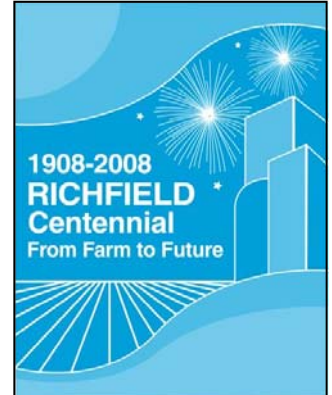


During the past year, the City presented 'Centennial Baby' certificates to babies born in 2008.

Executive & Administrative Services Departments

Richfield Centennial Celebration

Staff worked with the Celebrations Commission to coordinate over 30 events this year. Over 500 people gathered for the Centennial Birthday Reception, which spotlighted the medallion hunt winner, the first two centennial babies (babies born to residents), 100 year-old resident Hilding Mortensen, and Richfield's oldest business, Elsen's Garage. Centennial banners were displayed at major intersections, several cable TV segments were taped featuring Centennial events, over 500 people attended a naturalization ceremony sponsored by the Richfield League of Women Voters and the Celebrations Commission, and all 500 copies of the Richfield Centennial Cookbook were sold.



Airport Update

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) began implementation of the sound mitigation program agreed to under the terms of the settlement reached with the cities of Richfield, Minneapolis and Eagan in October 2007. Approximately 1,247 Richfield homes qualify for varying forms of noise relief. The sound mitigation program, including the reimbursement program for homes in the 2005 60-64 DNL noise contours, must be completed by September 2014.

New Police/Fire/City Hall Facility

The Richfield City Council gave its approval to construct a new Police/Fire/City Hall facility on the site of the current building. The \$22.3 million project is expected to go to bid in Fall 2009. Wold Architects and Engineers were selected to design the facility, working in conjunction with city staff, the City Council and a citizens' taskforce. Orfield Laboratories, Inc. was hired to develop building performance standards. A construction management firm will be on board in early 2009.

Voter Services

In 2008, Richfield residents had the opportunity to vote in the September Primary and November General election. The November election was especially significant for Richfield at a local level. As mentioned earlier, voters elected two new Council Members – Pat Elliott (Ward 1) and Tom Fitzhenry (Ward 3) while re-electing Fred Wroge in Ward 2. Over 18,700 people cast votes in the November election, representing a turnout rate of 77.8%. City Clerk, Nancy Gibbs, led Richfield's portion of the recount in the highly-publicized U.S. Senate recount.

Budget and Tax Levy

Council Approves Budget - In December, the City Council approved the 2009 Budget and tax levy. The City will operate in 2009 with a balanced General Fund budget of \$19,805,480. The 2009 gross tax levy represents an increase over the 2008 tax levy of 10.03%. The increase is comprised of three components; a General Fund and Equipment Levy increase of 1.28%, Debt Service Tax Levy that includes bonds for the new Police/Fire/City Hall facility, which represents 6.96%, and a tax levy for the Cedar Point Tax Abatement District that makes up the balance of the gross levy at 1.79%.

Issuance of New Debt - During 2008, the City successfully issued two series of debt related to capital projects within the City. The first issue, Series 2008A, totaled \$9,480,000 and will be used to help fund the construction of the new Police/Fire/City Hall Facility. The second issue, Series 2008B, totaled \$515,000 and was used to fund the purchase of rolling stock and computer equipment. In addition, in January 2009, the City will issue Series 2009A bonds in the amount of \$4,550,000. These bonds will also be used to fund the construction of the Police/Fire/City Hall Facility.

Local Government Aid Reduction - In response to the State's deficit, Governor Tim Pawlenty announced cuts in Local Government Aid (LGA) to municipalities. In Richfield, LGA cuts totaled \$619,000 with greater cuts anticipated in 2009.

Public Works Department

MAINTENANCE FACILITY

The City's new maintenance facility at Highway 77 and 66th Street opened in June. Street Maintenance, Park Maintenance, Forestry, Sewer, Water, Storm Sewer, Utility Billing, Building Maintenance and the Motor Pool staff are now housed in the new facility. Besides the addition of much-needed space, the building has many 'green' features, including pervious pavement, rain gardens, geothermal heating and skylights.

STREET MAINTENANCE AND ROAD PROJECTS

66th Street and Portland Avenue Roundabout - The intersection reconstruction project reached substantial completion this fall. It has been operating as a two-lane roundabout since December. Landscaping and bus shelters will be completed in 2009.

Lyndale Avenue Bridge over I-494 - The Lyndale bridge over 494 closed in October so it can be rebuilt to increase capacity and to accommodate 494 expansion. Scheduled to re-open in 2009, the new bridge will resemble the Penn Avenue bridge.

75th Street-76th Street Metro Interceptor Sewer - The Metropolitan Council completed the design for the new interceptor and streetscape. The project will include a regional bike trail along the portions of 75th and 76th Streets. Construction will begin on both the east and west sides of the project the spring of 2009. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

76th Street Bridge over 35W - Mn/DOT, in cooperation with the City of Richfield, completed the 76th Street Bridge over I-35W in November. The City obtained a federal grant to add a separate pedestrian/bike path as part of the new bridge. The pedestrian/bike path forms the first segment of a new four-mile regional trail across Richfield that will be built over the next two years.

Crosstown Reconstruction - The massive Crosstown reconstruction project is midway through a four-year construction period. The City is hopeful that many of the closed ramps will be reopened in 2009 providing residents with congestion relief. For more information contact Crosstown Project Hotline 1-866-743-6590.

Mill and Overlay - The Public Works Department utilized approximately \$700,000 in franchise fee revenue to resurface 3.9 miles of streets. In preparation, manholes and catch basins were rebuilt, as were failing curbs.

WATER, SEWER, STORMWATER

Richfield Lake Quality Improvement Project - In response to the Crosstown project, a new stormwater pond was constructed to protect Richfield Lake. Additionally, the walking path around the lake was raised about 1.5 feet to separate the pond from the lake. The park area re-opened in June.

6300 Block of Lyndale - Workers reconstructed this stretch of road after installing a new sewer that takes stormwater from the highway to stormwater ponds at Richfield Lake.

Meter Change-Out Program - The Public Works Department completed the vast majority of this project in 2008. This program, which began in 2007, consisted of upgrading all 10,755 city water meters. The new meters can be read remotely.

73rd & 1st Ave / Augsburg Pond Lift Station - A new storm line was put in from 70th/1st Avenue to the south end of Augsburg Pond. This larger line will accommodate more runoff and relieve the area of any prior flooding issues. A stormwater lift station was installed on the north section of the pond.

North Reactor Renovation - The water plant completed a major renovation of the north reactor. Staff installed a new mixing motor, replaced the decking, and installed a new ladder and railings.

FORESTRY

Dutch Elm Disease experienced its worst year in 24 years. Forestry staff marked 490 private and public trees. Staff has been unable to keep up with removals and 139 trees still need to be removed which will carry into next year's budget.



The Maintenance Facility opened in June. One of its many 'green' features are rain gardens which collect water runoff.



The City resurfaced 3.9 miles of streets in 2008 as part of its street maintenance program.



Crosstown reconstruction is midway through a four-year project.



The 76th Street bridge over I-35W re-opened in November after it was rebuilt. The new bridge deck is higher and more biker and pedestrian friendly.

Public Safety Department

POLICE DIVISION

- Police seized 29 vehicles in drug and DWI related crimes in 2008.
- Two officers were hired and six promoted due to retirement vacancies.
- An officer was placed on the Metro Gang Strike Force.
- A Police Cadet was hired with funding from the Joint Community Police Partnership.
- The first Teen Academy was conducted and funded by the Joint Community Police Partnership.
- Thirty three Department officers, including the SWAT team as a unit, assisted St. Paul Police during the Republican National Convention.
- Barry Fritz was promoted from Police Captain to Public Safety Director following the retirement of Dan Scott.

INSPECTIONS AND PERMITS DIVISION

- Staff issued more than 4,440 permits and performed over 5,670 inspections for construction related work.
- Staff performed Point-of-Sale Inspections on over 592 homes.
- Rental licenses were issued for 221 apartment buildings, 110 duplexes and 325 single family homes.
- Revenue from permit and rental license fees totaled over \$800,000.

SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

- From April to November, 2,523 properties received advance notice letters and were inspected under the City's Neighborhood Inspection Program. Of that number, 237 properties were found to have a total of 340 violations.
- The City, along with the Richfield Advisory Board of Health, underwent a Community Assessment in 2008 as required by State law. This assessment looks at health priorities and develops an action plan to address the identified priorities and needs. Advisory Board of Health members approved the assessment. It is pending City Council approval as of December.

Fire Department

2008 NUMBERS

- Firefighters answered over 3,500 fire and medical emergency calls in 2008. About 80% of these responses were for medical emergencies.
- There were approximately 25 structure fires in 2008. These resulted in approximately \$1 million of property loss. However, the Department prevented nearly \$10 million of additional property from being destroyed.
- The Department's average response time to emergencies was 3 minutes. This rapid response increases survival rates and reduces loss from fires.

FIRE PREVENTION

- The fire inspection program of commercial and apartment buildings was revamped to place a greater emphasis on hazardous buildings.
- Firefighters made presentations to several schools and senior groups. The Fire Prevention Open House attracted several hundred visitors in October.

STAFF, TRAINING, & MISC.

- A Lieutenant was promoted to Captain and a Firefighter was promoted to Lieutenant. A new Firefighter was also hired.
- Fire personnel taught classes on the National Incident Management System. This training is federally required for City employees who have a role in the City's emergency response plan.
- The Department conducted a table-top tornado response exercise. It included employees from Police, Inspections, and Public Works.
- A new rescue vehicle was delivered and placed into service. It has expanded capabilities to support large incidents that an older unit did not have.
- The Department received two grants totaling approximately \$20,000 which provided vehicle accident rescue equipment and defensive driving classes to all RFD personnel.



33 department officers assisted St. Paul Police during the Republican National Convention.



Richfield Police held a Teen Academy funded by the Joint Community Police Partnership.



Staff issued more than 4,440 permits and performed over 5,670 inspections in 2008.

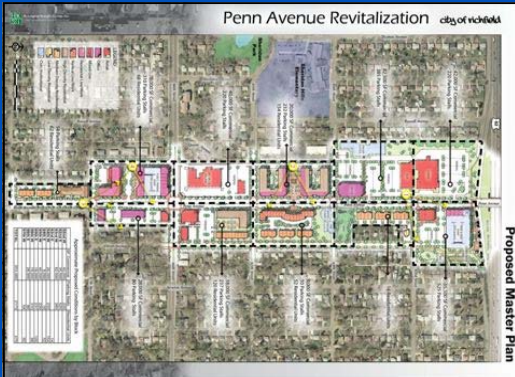


An eight-year-old Richfield resident was recognized with a 911 Hero Award for his actions securing emergency medical help saving his mother's life.

Community Development



The Housing and Redevelopment Authority has several housing programs to help Richfield residents. The HRA provided \$380,000 in housing grants and loans in 2008.



The City developed a master plan and design guidelines for redeveloping the 'Penn Corridor.'



A new sign was installed at the Cedar Store where sales have increased significantly.



Richfield Liquor Stores began offering reusable bags to customers in 2008.

PENN CORRIDOR – The City, planning firm HkGi, and a resident advisory group, created a master plan and design guidelines for the Penn Corridor (area along Penn Avenue between the Crosstown Highway and 68th Street). This was achieved through a detailed and inclusive public process to ensure a cohesive, inviting, and pedestrian-friendly development of the Corridor as reinvestment, revitalization, and redevelopment occur.

CEDAR CORRIDOR - The Cedar Corridor is in the low frequency noise impact area from the airport and has been identified by policymakers as a high priority for redevelopment. Two development proposals were received in 2008.

- LaNel has proposed a senior housing development in the area of 65th Street and 17th Avenue. The development would consist of approximately 224 units of market-rate and assisted living senior housing.
- The TOLD Development Company is proposing to redevelop the area between 66th and 69th Streets along Cedar Avenue. Highlights include over 600,000 square feet of office space, a 140-room hotel and 45,000 square feet for retail, small office, or medical offices.

REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING – The Center for Neighborhoods assisted the City in planning the redevelopment of the former City garage site, 75th and Lyndale and vacant land at 72nd and Penn as part of their "Corridor Housing Initiative." The process was designed to both educate residents on development constraints and get the maximum resident input into redevelopment planning.

COMP PLAN – The Comprehensive Plan helps to guide future land use decisions in the City. This plan is required to be updated every 10 years. Over the past 18 months, several open houses and a public hearing have been held in order to allow the community to comment on various drafts of this plan. City staff worked to finalize the plan for submittal to the Metropolitan Council. Final adoption of the plan by the City Council is expected in the spring of 2009.

ZONING ORDINANCE – After nearly two years of work, the City Council adopted a revised zoning ordinance that went into effect in December of 2007. These changes updated out-of-date language and made the code more user-friendly. The changes proved largely successful and the City will continue to review the code for necessary updates. In 2008, further revisions were made to require two-car garages for most newly constructed homes and to refine rules regarding dynamic or electronic message signs.

STAFF CHANGES - John Stark was promoted from Redevelopment Manager / Assistant Community Development Director to Community Development Director following the retirement of Bruce Palmberg.

Liquor Operations

SALES – Gross sales were up \$561,438 or 5.89% compared to the same period in 2007. Road construction projects slowed sales at some of the Department's four locations. However, increased sales from the 6600 Cedar Avenue location assisted in the overall chain sales increase.

PROJECTS – Several improvements in infrastructure included:

- Curb and sidewalk rebuilt at 6444 Lyndale due to deterioration.
- Mill and overlay of parking area at 6600 Cedar.
- Pedestal sign replacement at 6600 Cedar due to age.
- HVAC system replacement due to system failure at 6600 Cedar.

MARKETING PROJECTS – Richfield Liquor Stores began offering reusable bags as part of a sales promotion in 2008. The Department also participated at the "Pennfest" event during the summer.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS – The Department transferred \$450,000 towards various park and recreation improvements within Richfield.

Recreation Department

Master Park Plan - A revised Master Park Plan was completed and is in final review. The plan contains an evaluation of the current parks system and a collection of recommendations for park improvements over the next five to ten years.

Richfield Lake Park Improvements - New play equipment and a new basketball court were installed at Richfield Lake Park, which was coordinated with storm water improvements.

Lincoln Athletic Complex - A planning team was assembled and a consultant selected to complete concept drawings and construction cost estimates to renovate Lincoln Athletic Complex.

New Wood Lake Prairie - Five acres of rolling prairie and a new wetland pond were installed at the south end of Wood Lake. The area includes a new trail, an overlook and benches. The project was funded with a donation from the Cornerstone Group and offers new opportunities for hikers, skiers, and wildlife.

Wood Lake Gateway Gardens - A new gate, sign and railings were installed this year, giving a significant facelift to the entrance of Wood Lake Nature Center. The project was funded by donations and a sign was donated in memory of Garnett Kirchner.

Urban Wildland Half Marathon and 5k Race - The sixth-annual Urban Wildland race featured more runners than ever before (1,550), a new race route, a new logo, and many changes made in keeping with the no-waste theme: reusable runner bags, organic food, and information about sustainable practices.

Adventure Gardens Mini Golf Analysis - Staff performed an internal critical analysis to assess the operation and the physical condition of the course, resulting in a restructuring of staff and the elimination of one full-time position. Staff will continue to study the feasibility of moving mini-golf to a more viable location.

Geo-Thermal Heating/Cooling - Staff initiated an analysis to determine the feasibility of geo-thermal and other energy efficiency measures to eventually reduce energy costs of both the ice arena and the pool.

Fourth of July Celebration - The Richfield Fourth of July Celebration was well attended and successful. This year's celebration included Centennial Celebration components, new family activities, and an expanded fireworks display.



The Honoring All Veterans Memorial was unveiled, appropriately, on July 4th. The centerpiece is a bronze statue of W.W. II veteran and longtime resident, Charles Lindberg, who helped raise the first American flag at Iwo Jima. The engraving tablets will be unveiled on Memorial Day, 2009. Over 360 have been sold to date.

City Council Meetings

Held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall (6700 Portland Avenue)

Government Access Channel 16

Council Meetings are broadcast LIVE and rebroadcast on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, Saturdays at 3:00 pm, and Sundays at 5:00 pm

Out and About in Richfield is a 20 minute program produced by City staff. It is broadcast daily at 10 am, Noon, 6, 9, and 11 pm

Programs may be viewed at
www.cityofrichfield.org
(click on the Ch. 16 link)

CITY OF RICHFIELD

Richfield City Council

Mayor: Debbie Goettel

Council: Sue Sandahl, Pat Elliott, Fred Wroge, Tom Fitzhenry

email: citycouncil@cityofrichfield.org

City Manager: Steve Devich sdevich@cityofrichfield.org

City Hall

6700 Portland Avenue Richfield, MN 55423

Phone 612-861-9700

www.cityofrichfield.org

Hours

Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Licensing/Passports Office is open Mondays until 6:00 pm and

Tuesdays through Fridays until 5:00 pm

This report is available on the City's web site.

Printed January 2009 by City of Richfield Communications Staff

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