

# LIFE IN THE PRAIRIE

## City Website Redesign Survey Your Feedback Needed!

The City's website is being redesigned and your feedback is an important part of the process.

Visit [edenprairie.org](http://edenprairie.org) to complete a short Website Redesign Survey and tell us how the new site can better fit your needs.



SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2011

## Council Member Profile



Brad Aho

**Brad Aho** was re-elected in the November 2008 election to serve his second four-year term on the Eden Prairie City Council.

Council Member Aho, who has lived in Eden Prairie for more than 17 years, has been politically active on the local, state and national level for many years. Therefore, when friends and colleagues asked him to consider running for City Council, he decided to become even more involved in City government.

"I felt that running for City Council would be a good way to serve," said Aho. "And I wanted to give back to the community that is such a blessing to our family."

Now, after serving on the Council for more than six years, Aho is proud of the work that has been done in the areas of budget and transportation. Currently serving as chairperson of the I-494 Corridor Commission, Aho represented Eden Prairie's interests as the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) began planning improvements to the I-494/Hwy. 169 interchange.

"We have been working to get MnDOT to improve that interchange for many years, and late last year it was finally approved to proceed," he said. "Many contributed to this multi-year effort, and I was thankful to be a part of that team."

Aho also sees budgeting as one of the most important functions of the City Council.

"Since joining the Council it has been important to me to keep our budget process transparent, and to keep it from growing out of pace with the economy," he said.

"I think it is important to keep our City affordable to all residents living here, and our excellent staff has been able to keep City services up to the high standards that have been established, even without a tax levy increase."

In the future, Aho looks forward to continued development in the Major Center Area, which will eventually become downtown Eden Prairie, as well as several other projects including the United Health Group campus and the Presbyterian Homes development.

"Keeping Eden Prairie a desired destination for families and individuals looking for a great place to live or work in the Twin Cities is critical to the long-term future for our City," said Aho.

And while he sees many economic development opportunities for metro-area cities in the next few years, Aho also anticipates some challenges.

"Maintaining quality services that people have come to expect despite tough economic times is a difficult challenge affecting cities, states and our nation," he said. "Part of that challenge is maintaining our aging infrastructure and housing stock, and striving to keep everything working well while our populations are becoming much more diverse."

Finally, Aho encourages members of the Eden Prairie community to take an active role in City government.

"I have found that being involved in local government is very rewarding and really helps you feel more connected to the community," he said. "There are so many talented and giving people living in Eden Prairie that are willing to share their skills to make our community the great place it is, and being a part of any one of our organizations, boards and commissions widens perspectives and creates lifelong bonds."

### Q and A with Council Member Brad Aho

#### Q. What is your favorite place in Eden Prairie?

**A.** Besides home, I really enjoy being on Bryant Lake boating and taking in the beautiful scenery. I also enjoy the many fantastic parks and conservation areas such as the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area with its breathtaking views of the river valley and the quiet solitude of the watershed district park in our neighborhood.

#### Q. Why do you think Eden Prairie is a great place to live, work and dream?

**A.** Eden Prairie is a great place to live, work and dream primarily because there are so many wonderful people that call Eden Prairie home or have a business here. We are blessed to have many individuals and companies that are willing to freely give of their time and talent to keep our City strong and a desired destination. We have a very strong school system of both public and private schools. We have about 2,200 businesses located here which provide employment and amenities that make our lives better, like the many fine stores and restaurants. We have good access to transportation with the highway systems, bus service, future light rail line and our own airport. Our park system and trails are superb and unmatched in any city and provide individuals and families many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in any season. Most of all it is the people that make Eden Prairie great.

#### Q. What is something interesting, unique or little-known about you?

**A.** I love to barefoot water ski.

## Breaking Records and Building Community

### Thousands Participate in Eden Prairie Night to Unite

Thousands of Eden Prairie residents gathered with friends and neighbors in early August to continue the summer tradition of celebrating **Eden Prairie Night to Unite**.

"This event continues to grow larger each year," said Eden Prairie Fire Chief **George Esbensen**. "And we see that as an extremely positive trend."

This year, residents of Eden Prairie planned 114 neighborhood gatherings for the Night to Unite event, bringing nearly 4,000 adults and more than 2,000 children out to celebrate for the evening. Of those, more than 95 neighborhoods incorporated a collection of donations for **PROP** (People Reaching out to Other People) into the evening's festivities. In all, more than 6,700 pounds of donated items were collected.



The winning neighborhood, located in the 10000 block of Indigo Drive, collected a total of 816 pounds in donations and will be rewarded with an evening of ice cream and fun with McGruff, Sparky and Eden Prairie's public safety officials. Honorable mention also goes to the residents celebrating in the 17000 block of Valley Road for collecting 344 pounds in donations, and the Summit Place Senior Campus for collecting 202 pounds.

Eden Prairie Night to Unite 2011 was by all means a successful event, bringing friends and neighbors together to celebrate and strengthen their commitment to a safe community.

"The PROP drive has become an important tradition in conjunction with the event," said Esbensen. "This is a testament to the sense of community we have here in Eden Prairie."

Representatives from the Eden Prairie Police and Fire Departments, as well as several City officials, made stops at each of the local gatherings. And once again this year, the Police and Fire departments committed to hosting an ice cream social for the neighborhood with the largest volume of donations to PROP.



## City Appoints New Public Works Director

In June, City Manager **Rick Getschow** announced the appointment of **Robert Ellis** as Eden Prairie's new public works director. For the past four years, Ellis has been in Rapid City, S.D., first as city engineer and then as public works director. He officially began his tenure in Eden Prairie on July 18, 2011.

"I was extremely excited about the opportunity to work in Eden Prairie," said Ellis. "And after my first visit here, I was convinced this is also the place I want to raise my family."

Ellis decided on a career in public works while earning his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Wyoming.

"I chose to work in city government because I enjoy the diversity in challenges and opportunities we face at a local level, and the speed with which we are able to act on them," he said. "Every day is different, so you can never say you've seen it all."



Robert Ellis

After just a few weeks in his new position, Ellis has already noticed the sense of pride among those who live and work here. And when it comes to the future, he is most looking forward to the opportunities that light rail transit will bring to the City of Eden Prairie.

"I see the addition of light rail transit as one of the biggest assets our community will be presented with for decades to come," he said. "I look forward to seeing the project evolve from ideas on paper to steel and concrete structures."

Although Ellis anticipates the economy will continue to present a few challenges for metro area cities over the next few years, he is optimistic.

"We've entered a new era of governance and the rules are still being written," he said. "But I believe these challenges will invoke creative thinking that will allow us to solve problems in ways we never thought possible."

As he takes leadership of the City's Public Works Department, overseeing the Engineering, Fleet Services, Street Maintenance and Utilities Divisions, Ellis goes down in history as Eden Prairie's third public works director, succeeding **Gene Dietz**, who recently retired after leading the department for 30 years.

"I am honored to take over where Mr. Dietz left off," said Ellis. "And will continue the tradition of excellence which has become synonymous with the City of Eden Prairie."

## POLICE AND FIRE OPEN HOUSE



Saturday, Oct. 15  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
8080 Mitchell Road

Entertainment – Tours – Refreshments  
Demonstrations – Fun – Information



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# Live Well Eden Prairie!

## Autumn Adventures



The first day of autumn is Sept. 23 and before we know it, the long Minnesota winter will be here once again. So, the Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation Department is offering dozens of opportunities for adventures this season, to help you embrace the outdoors before the snowflakes fall!

### Top 10 Autumn Adventures in Eden Prairie:

1. Take a **Harvest Moon Hike** and learn about lunar history in the woods near the **Outdoor Center**.
2. Get creative in the **Community Woodshop** at the **Senior Center**.
3. Send your little one on an **Outdoor Center** adventure with **Curious George and his Animal Friends**.
4. Take some time to relax and rejuvenate with a **Women's Retreat at Staring Lake**.
5. Sign your young adults up for some **Afterschool Tennis Lessons**.
6. Bring the whole family together for an autumn **Star Watch** at the new **Staring Lake Observatory**.
7. Capture the colors of fall with **Beginning Watercolor** classes at the **Art Center**.
8. Get some friends together and join the **Adult Baggo League** for some bean bag fun under the lights at **Round Lake Park**.
9. Learn to play **Pickleball** at the **Community Center**.
10. Let your preschooler get in on the back-to-school fun with **Magic School Bus Art** at the **Art Center**.

Fall program registration is in full swing, so visit [edenprairie.org/parksbrochure](http://edenprairie.org/parksbrochure) for more information about these and other Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation programs and register today!

# Around Eden Prairie

A Page from the Blog of City Manager Rick Getschow

## GreenStep Cities

June 21, 2011

The City of Eden Prairie has been striving to be an energy efficient community for several years now. An excellent example is the **20-40-15 program**. It began in 2006 as an initiative to improve energy efficiency in our City facilities by 20 percent, increase the fuel efficiency of our vehicle fleet by 40 percent, and accomplish these goals by the year 2015. The initiative is still on track and is going very well.

However, there have been several individuals at the state and local level who have felt a statewide sustainable cities program is needed. For the past few years they have been looking for a specific program that would challenge, assist and recognize cities that were "green stars." The result in June 2010 was the creation of a new program called **Minnesota GreenStep Cities**.

It intends to help cities achieve their sustainability goals through the implementation of 28 best practices. The best practices cover a wide variety of areas (land use, transportation and economic development) and are tailored to all Minnesota

cities. They focus on innovation, cost savings and energy use reduction. Take a look at [mngreenstep.org](http://mngreenstep.org).

Our **Conservation Commission** has been discussing and studying GreenStep Cities since its inception. They provided an overview of the program to the City Council at their last meeting on June 14. Following the recommendation of the Commission, the Council passed a resolution at that meeting to participate in the program. We are now one of 27 Minnesota cities (and the list is growing) that are striving to be GreenStep communities.

So now do we need to achieve all of these 28 best practices? The answer is no. The size of our city requires us to meet 16 of the 28 best practices. And based on our work in recent years (remember 20-40-15), we are more than halfway there. In fact, GreenStep Cities will not replace initiatives like 20-40-15, it will recognize them and encourage similar initiatives in other important areas.

See more of Rick Getschow's blog entries, by visiting [edenprairieweblogs.org](http://edenprairieweblogs.org).



Halloween is an exciting opportunity for children of all ages to dress up in costumes, go trick-or-treating, attend parties and eat yummy treats! Before the festivities begin this October, take a moment to review the following safety tips from the **American Academy of Pediatrics**.

### Costumes

- Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Make sure shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.
- Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes for greater visibility.
- Because masks can limit or block eyesight, consider non-toxic makeup and decorative hats as safer alternatives. Hats should fit properly to prevent them from sliding over eyes.
- When shopping for costumes, wigs and accessories look for those with a label clearly indicating they are flame resistant.



### Trick-or-Treating

- A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds and carry a cell phone for emergencies.
- All children and their escorts should carry a flashlight with fresh batteries.
- Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk.
- Only go to homes with a porch light on and never enter a home or car for a treat.
- If older children are going out alone, plan and review the route that is acceptable and agree on a specific time when they should return home.
- Notify law enforcement authorities of any suspicious or unlawful activity immediately.

## Our Environment

Pharmaceutical Waste – Do Not Flush!

Expired or unwanted prescription or over-the-counter medications from households have traditionally been disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or a drain. Although this method of disposal prevents immediate accidental ingestion, it can cause pollution in wastewater, which has been demonstrated to cause adverse effects to fish and other aquatic wildlife. When the water is eventually reused, it can also cause unintentional human exposure to chemicals in medications.



So, the **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** reminds you: **Do Not Flush!**

Instead, follow these tips to safely dispose of your unwanted medications at home:

- **Keep the medication in its original container** — The labels may contain safety information and the caps are typically childproof, so leave the content information clearly visible and cover the patient's name with permanent marker.
- **Modify the contents to discourage consumption**
  - ▶ **Solid medications:** add a small amount of vinegar to pills or capsules to at least partially dissolve them.
  - ▶ **Liquid medications:** add enough table salt, flour or nontoxic powdered spice, such as mustard, to make a pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
  - ▶ **Blister packs:** wrap packages containing pills in opaque tape like duct tape.
- **Seal and conceal** — Tape the medication container lid shut with packing or duct tape and put it inside a non-transparent bag or container such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub to ensure that the contents cannot be seen, but do not conceal medicines in food products because they could be inadvertently consumed by wildlife scavengers.
- **Discard the container in your garbage can.**

Visit the [pca.state.mn.us](http://pca.state.mn.us) and click on "Living Green" for more information about these and other types of household hazardous waste disposal.

## Did You Know?

Did you know that the Eden Prairie **City Council** facilitates a program designed to give students first-hand experience participating in City government?

This program has become a valuable opportunity for local students to participate on City commissions, and the Council has appointed the following students to serve on commissions during the 2011-2012 school year:

### Arts and Culture Commission

Jamie Bernard  
Nafisa Mahamud  
Roseann Awad

### Heritage Preservation Commission

Ian English  
Metadel Lee

### Budget Advisory Commission

Charles Adams

### Human Rights and Diversity

Ramla Mahamud  
Camrie Vlasek

### Conservation Commission

McKenna Campbell-Potter  
Rebecca Ebert  
Kelly Hallowell  
Yasmin Atef-Vahid

### Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission

Katie Ostendorf  
Liz Powell  
Joseph Schmit

### Flying Cloud Airport Advisory Commission

Kevin Gadel  
John Bowman

# Mark Your Calendar

### City Council Meetings\*

Tuesdays, Sept. 6, 20;  
Oct. 4, 18

\*Meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the City Center.

### Sunbonnet Day

Saturday, Sept. 10  
11 a.m.–2 p.m.  
Riley-Jacques Farmstead

An opportunity for the whole family to enjoy an afternoon of live entertainment, pony rides, horse-drawn wagon excursions, old-time tales from the farm, games, concessions and more.

### A Collection of One Acts

Sept. 16–17, 23–24, 30;  
Oct. 1  
7:30 p.m.  
Oct. 2  
2 p.m.  
Riley-Jacques Barn

Enjoy appetizers 30 minutes prior to the show and desserts at intermission, while enjoying live theater as the Eden Prairie Players present *A Collection of One Acts*. Tickets: \$20 at the door, \$13.50 in advance, visit [edenprairieplayers.com](http://edenprairieplayers.com).

### Eden Prairie Art Crawl

Saturday, Sept. 24  
10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Sunday, Sept. 25  
Noon–5 p.m.

Enjoy the art of Eden Prairie residents in their personal home studios or at the Art Center; art, jewelry and other items available for sale.

### Fall Festival Luncheon

Wednesday, Oct. 5  
11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.  
Senior Center

Gather with friends and enjoy a delightful fall meal. Cost is \$10 per person and registration is required.

### Apple Cider-ing

Sunday, Oct. 9  
1–3 p.m.  
Outdoor Center

Take a lesson in old-fashioned apple cider making, learn about the history of apples and enjoy a sweet sample of cider. Cost is \$6 per family. Registration is requested.

### Police and Fire Department Open House

Saturday, Oct. 15  
11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Explore the Police and Fire with demonstrations, tours, refreshments and fun!

### Staring Lake Observatory One-Year Anniversary Party

Friday, Oct. 21  
7:30 p.m.

Explore distant galaxies, learn from astronomers and enjoy a night of fun and education with a bonfire and children's activities.

### The Great Pumpkin Event

Friday, Oct. 28  
7–9 p.m.  
Outdoor Center

Learn the history and origins of Halloween, pick a pumpkin from the patch to carve and take home. Top the night off with a stroll on the nature trail. Cost is \$9 per child, parents and guardians admitted free. Registration required.

### Spooky Saturday

Saturday, Oct. 29  
3–5 p.m.  
Community Center

Trick-or-treating, arts and crafts, music, games and more! Cost is \$4 per child (ages 1 and older) with advance registration, or \$5 at the door. Admission is free for parents and guardians.

### Halloween on the Mall

Monday, Oct. 31  
5–7 p.m.  
Eden Prairie Center

Bring the kids for an evening of trick-or-treating, entertainment and fun in the warmth and safety of Eden Prairie Center.