

LIFE IN THE PRAIRIE

Celebrating the new Eden Prairie Liquor store on Prairie Center Drive.



Photo credit: Robert Lawton

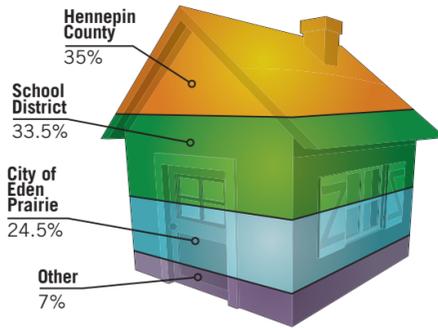
APRIL 2010

The Property Valuation Process

By the end of March, residential property owners in Eden Prairie will have received two notices related to property taxes. One is a **Hennepin County 2010 Property Tax Statement**, which is based on the Jan. 2, 2009, assessment and must be paid this year. The other is a **2010 Notice of Valuation and Classification** from the City, which is used to calculate property taxes to be paid in 2011.

2010 Homeowner Property Taxes

City taxes account for about one-fourth (24.5 percent) of property taxes, the remainder is comprised of taxes for the school district (33.5 percent), the county (35 percent) and other jurisdictions (7 percent).



Market Value Assessments

The City Assessing Division maintains records for every property in Eden Prairie. Adjustments are made to the market values of most properties based on actual real estate sales on comparable properties from the past year. Approximately one-fifth of the properties are also physically inspected each year and market value adjustments are made based on the results of the inspection. Additional market value adjustments are made for building additions, remodeling and other improvements to property.

In early March, official market value notices are mailed to homeowners; the four value amounts which may appear on the notice include:

Estimated Market Value

This is the City Assessor's estimate of the total market value of the property, or what the property would likely sell for on the open market as of the date of assessment which by statute is Jan. 2, 2010.

Veterans Exclusion

Qualifying disabled veterans may be eligible for a valuation exclusion on their homestead property, which would reduce the amount subject to taxation.

Qualifying Improvement Value

This figure shows the portion of the value of improvements made to an older home under the former "This Old House" law. This program expired with the 2003 assessment; however, property may still be receiving the value exclusion under this program.

Taxable Market Value

This is the value that 2011 property taxes will be based on, after all reductions, exemptions and deferrals are taken.

Property tax assessment in Minnesota is a complicated process strictly governed by state law. Although the City of Eden Prairie administers the assessment, the City's work is overseen by Hennepin County and the State Department of Revenue. The state-mandated schedule requires that property values, as reflected in the **2010 Notice of Valuation and Classification**, are based upon an analysis of real estate market trends in the year 2009. The values cannot reflect changes in market conditions since the end of last year, and any changes taking place in 2010 will be reflected in next year's assessments.

A Note About Declining Home Values

The real estate market has experienced a significant decline in a number of locations in the metro area and across the nation. From the 2009 to 2010 assessment the average value reduction for residential properties in the City of Eden Prairie is approximately 6.7 percent. It is important to remember that individual properties may vary greatly and that residential property values and trends remain highly localized, and sales trends in our neighborhoods and cities can be quite different than national statistical trends.

Market Value Appeals Process

Estimated market values are subject to appeal. Appeals may be made directly to the State Tax Court; however, most appeals are first handled through the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization and then by the Hennepin County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

The Eden Prairie City Council appoints local real estate professionals to the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization and gives this special board full authority to raise or lower estimated market values. The Board's actions are final and can only be appealed to the Hennepin County Board of Appeal and Equalization. The appointed Board members must be residents of Eden Prairie.

To make an appeal to the local board, a homeowner should first discuss the property's value with Eden Prairie's Assessing Division staff. Based on that discussion, an appeal can be made to the local board by asking that the property be listed for appeal.

Market Value Appeals Timeline

MARCH 2010

City assessing staff issue and mail market value notices beginning the first week of **March 2010**.

APRIL 2010

The deadline for making an application to the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization is **April 2, 2010**. The first meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2010.

JUNE 2010

The Hennepin County Board of Appeal and Equalization hearings take place in **June 2010**.

APRIL 2011

Appeals must be filed with the State Tax Court by **April 30, 2011**.

Homeowners with questions or concerns about a property's market value, or the assessment and appeals processes, should call the Eden Prairie **Assessing Division** at **952-949-8511**. City appraisers are available to discuss home values, as well as schedule an appraisal inspection if necessary.

Spotlight on City Staff

Whether you're an avid program attendee, an occasional visitor of local parks or if you just enjoy the beautiful scenery of Eden Prairie, the City's Parks and Recreation Department is part of your life. With 128 miles of trails, nearly 10,000 acres of parkland and open spaces, numerous facilities and a plethora of recreation programs, it is no secret that a lot happens behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly. No one works harder at this than Brenda Uting, the department's administrative assistant.

Brenda's work makes it possible for the Parks and Recreation staff to serve to the best of their potential, and she lends her talents to any area she can help. The new 'voice of Eden Prairie,' Brenda is also the narrator of the new Eden Prairie Video TourBook, now available online at edenprairie.org.

Meet the City's Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant!

Name: Brenda Uting
Year you joined the City: 1992
Current position & department: Administrative Assistant, Parks and Recreation Department

Brief description of what you do: I provide administration support and work to ensure the Parks and Recreation staff has everything they need to effectively meet the recreation needs of Eden Prairie residents.

What is your work/educational background? Before coming to the City, I was working at Xcel Energy (previously Northern States Power) in Minneapolis. Although I enjoyed the job, the long commute was difficult and I wanted something closer to home. I started my employment with the City working part-time at the Senior Center. When my youngest started school, I took the full-time job at my current position.

What do you like best about working for the City? I love the variety! In one day, I can be discussing playground equipment, cemetery reports, defensive driving courses and the differences between men's and women's softballs. Plus, I work with a super staff that 'keep me in the loop' on all sorts of topics. By having a little background on everything, I am able to better answer questions and provide the best service possible to anyone wanting to know more about Parks and Recreation in Eden Prairie.

What is your favorite place in Eden Prairie, and why? I love our trail system. I use it to ride my bike to work, go for a scenic walk or send my son to the store for a loaf of bread. I like that the trails provide a safe transportation route for kids to get to a playground.

What is something interesting, unique or little-known about you? We are a family of Eden Prairie employees. Husband, Rod, recently retired after 23 years as a firefighter with Eden Prairie; daughter, Nicole, has worked as a camp counselor, childcare aide and building attendant; and son, Michael has been a tennis instructor and warming house attendant. Our youngest, Travis hopes to have a job someday too working for the City.

Why do you think Eden Prairie is a great place to live, work and dream? Back in 1985, when my husband suggested we look at building a house in Eden Prairie, my thoughts were 'Way out there?' Since then we have only moved once, to a new home one mile south of that first home - still in Eden Prairie. We have raised our family with the great schools and teachers, our church home and supportive neighbors. We utilize the Community Center for swimming lessons, watching the Ice Show and working out. We shop at Eden Prairie Center and local grocery stores. Date night for us is at local restaurants - or sometimes just a bike ride through the park. We spend 95 percent of our time right here in Eden Prairie, because we rarely have a need to leave its borders. I am very proud to call Eden Prairie home.



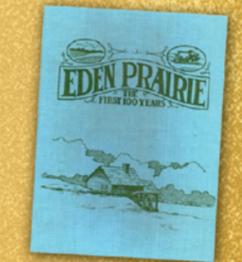
Brenda Uting

Eden Prairie The First 100 Years

What was Eden Prairie like in its beginning and how did it become a bustling city of more than 60,000 residents?

Learn about the history of your city with the purchase of *The First 100 Years*.

Written by the late Helen Holden Anderson, the 137-page book was originally published in 1979. Now, thanks to the Heritage Preservation Commission and Eden Prairie Historical Society, 500 additional copies are available.



Stop by City Center (8080 Mitchell Road) and get your copy today! \$20 (including tax)



All proceeds benefit the City's historic preservation efforts.

Photos courtesy of the Eden Prairie Historical Society.



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Live Well Eden Prairie!

Enjoy City Parks and Facilities This Summer

The City of Eden Prairie boasts more than 30 neighborhood, community and regional parks, as well as several fabulous recreation facilities, which provide a setting for countless leisure activities each year. Plan ahead for your summer activities and reserve a City facility to help you Live Well in Eden Prairie this summer!



The Top 10 Eden Prairie Facility Rentals:

- Homeward Hills Barn** (12000 Silverwood Drive)
Heated two-level building with comfy seating and a kitchenette upstairs, along with chairs and tables.
- Park Buildings** (Miller Park, Nesbitt Preserve, Crestwood, Edenvale, Forest Hills, Prairie View)
These park buildings are conveniently located near several park amenities.
- Riley-Jacques Barn** (9100 Riley Lake Road)
Historic barn perfect for gatherings of all kinds.
- Senior Center** (8950 Eden Prairie Road)
A great venue for indoor gatherings with kitchen facilities available.
- Purgatory Creek Park Lambert Pavilion** (13001 Technology Drive)
Located in an urban park surrounded by gardens, wetlands and a fountain.
- Riley Lake Pavilion** (9180 Riley Lake Road)
Large park pavilion with picnic tables, located near several park amenities.
- Round Lake Park Building and Pavilion** (16691 Valley View Road)
A perfect location for picnics and gatherings, rain or shine.
- Staring Lake Park Building** (14800 Pioneer Trail)
Heated building with wood-burning fireplace, tables and chairs, plus outdoor picnic seating on the plaza.
- Community Center** (16700 Valley View Road)
The Community Center offers dozens of rental opportunities including meeting rooms, pool rental, gym rental and more.
- Staring Lake Park Amphitheatre** (14800 Pioneer Trail)
On the shores of Staring Lake, a wondrous setting for weddings, free concerts, church services and more.

For more information about this and other Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation programs and facilities, visit edenprairie.org/parksbrochure.

Our Environment

Think Green for Spring Cleaning!

Most conventional cleaning products are petroleum-based and have dubious health and environmental implications. Instead of opting for cleaning products that annihilate everything in their path, go green and utilize natural products and methods that keep a house clean and fresh-smelling without the toxic side effects.

Here are a few tips for green spring cleaning:

Employ green cleaning products

As the health and environmental impacts of conventional cleaning products become more thoroughly understood, more and more brands of healthy, green and effective cleaning products have started hitting the market and competing for that coveted place of honor under your sink. Many of these products are non-toxic, biodegradable and made from renewable resources (not petroleum). But if designer labels aren't for you, home-mixed cleaners can get the job done and then some. Vinegar and baking soda can be used to clean almost anything. Mix in a little warm water with either of these and you have an all-purpose cleaner.

Avoid poor indoor air quality

It is not uncommon for the air inside a home or office to be more toxic than the air outside. This is because of the presence of toxic materials and substances, and the fact that homes and buildings are better insulated than ever before. Keeping windows open as often as possible allows fresh air in and will keep toxins flowing out. This is especially important when cleaning your home.

Be careful with antibacterial cleaners

The antibacterial and antimicrobial "cleaners" that many people think are necessary, especially during cold season, don't clean hands better than soap and water, and also add to the risk of breeding "super germs," bacteria that survive the chemical onslaught and have resistant offspring.

Clean your indoor air naturally

Skip the store-bought air fresheners and instead try boiling cinnamon, cloves or any other herbs you have a fondness for. Fresh chocolate chip cookies also have been known to create a friendly aroma. Also, plants may not make your house smell different but are good for filtering interior air – pretty much any broad-leaf green plant will do. Peace Lilies are a favorite choice.

Toss toxic cleaners carefully

When replacing your cleaning products, don't just throw the old ones in the trash. If they're too toxic for your home, they won't be good for the drain or the landfill either. Throwing chemicals in the trash or down the drain means they might end up back in your water supply. Visit hennepin.us/dropoffs for a list of Hennepin County drop-off facilities for household hazardous waste and recycling.

For more information about these and other tips for going green, visit planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green.

Around Eden Prairie

A Page from the Blog of City Manager Scott Neal

It's 6:25 pm. We just finished a special meeting of the City Council. The purpose of our special meeting was to consider the final approval of a development agreement for Walmart. Walmart has been working on a plan for a major upgrade of their Eden Prairie retail store. Tonight, they got their final approval on a vote of 4-0. With any luck, they'll start their project soon and be completed before the start of the holiday shopping season later this year.

The construction of a new Walmart store on the edge of a small town can set off a firestorm in City Hall. It can be a very divisive event. But that's not what happened to us. Walmart has been here for almost twenty years. Their store, according to them, looks a bit "tired." They have a good plan to shape it up, expand it and improve its curb appeal. Who's against improving the look and function of a major retail store in our community? Not me.

What has been taking awhile to work out has been a discussion about the future of the area around Walmart. The City wanted Walmart to commit to pay for the capital cost and maintenance costs of future streetscape improvements, things like trees, paver sidewalks, special street lighting, trash baskets, benches, etc. Walmart said they'd be willing to talk about their fair share of such things when a plan was actually in place to install them. At the moment, there isn't a firm plan. So, we compromised. Walmart agreed to contribute a fixed amount of money into a cash escrow account for future streetscape improvements and the City committed to dialogue with Walmart more in the future before installing such improvements and to discuss the maintenance of the improvements with them more in the future.

Problem solved. Agreement approved. Look for construction action at the Eden Prairie Walmart soon.

See more of **Scott Neal's** blog entries by visiting edenprairie.org.



Staying Safe in Eden Prairie

Outdoor Exercise Safety



As temperatures warm and the snow melts away, many Minnesotans will be anxious to venture outside for some much needed fresh air and exercise. The **Eden Prairie Police Department** recommends the following safety tips for outdoor walkers, runners and bicyclists this spring:

- Whenever possible, use sidewalks and trails to separate yourself as much as possible from motor vehicle traffic.
- Always run or walk in the opposite direction as the traffic flow and never run or walk more than two-abreast along a street or roadway.
- Always bike in the same direction as the traffic flow, follow the rules of the road and ride single-file along a street or roadway.
- Wear reflective clothing and shoes, wear bright colors and always wear a helmet when biking.
- Be attentive to lighting conditions — it's harder for drivers to see you at dusk or dawn, and solar glare can also limit a driver's vision.
- There is safety in numbers — whenever possible, walk, bike or run with others or on high-traffic paths.
- Keep a cell phone with you and program an *In Case of Emergency* (ICE) number in your cell phone contact list that could be used by emergency personnel if needed.

It is also important to review safety tips with children each year as they venture outdoors in the spring. For additional child safety tips visit mcgruff.org.

Did You Know?

Did you know that April is Autism Awareness Month?

To learn more about Autism, make plans to attend these upcoming events!

Watch a screening of *Autistic License*

A docudrama which offers a glimpse of the rewards and struggles of raising a child with autism, this play is funny, tragic and authentically surreal.

Make plans to see the screening at either **4 or 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13** at the Eden Prairie High School Auditorium. R.S.V.P. at epcommunityed.org or call 952-975-6910 for more information. There is no cost to attend the screening, but a goodwill donation is requested. A panel discussion will be held on **Friday, April 16** from **7-8:30 p.m.** at City Center (8080 Mitchell Road).

Learn about Adaptive Recreation Learning Exchange

AR&LE coordinates Adaptive Programs and serves individuals of all ages with disabilities in the communities of Eden Prairie, Edina, Richfield and Bloomington. Join us from **7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20** for a chance to meet the staff and discover more about the AR&LE partnership. The meeting will be held at the Richfield Community Center (7000 Nicollet Ave. S.; Richfield).

Contact **Nicole White**, therapeutic recreation coordinator, at 952-949-8457 or nwhite@edenprairie.org for more information about either of these events.

Mark Your Calendar

Art on City Walls

Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
City Center

Take a stroll through the lower level of the City Center and enjoy the April *Art on City Walls* exhibit featuring local artists.

City Council Meetings*

Tuesday, March 23 and April 20

*All meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the City Center.

Animal Open House

Saturday, April 10
1-4 p.m.
Outdoor Center

The Outdoor Center will be overflowing with rabbits, snakes, chinchilla and more! Bring the whole family for this FREE day of fun.

Park Clean-Up Day

Saturday, April 17
8:30-11 a.m.

Grab your work gloves, bring your trash bags and help keep Eden Prairie's park and trail systems clean. A great opportunity for service organizations, youth organizations and neighborhood groups! Please call **Jeff Cordes** at **952-949-8463** by April 7 for park assignments.

Eden Prairie Reads Events

Eat Local Eden Prairie Fair

Sunday, April 18
1-4 p.m.
Community Center

Book Discussion

Monday, April 19
6:30 p.m.
St. Andrew Lutheran Church

Both events are free and open to the public, visit epreads.org for more information.



Open Mic Poetry Night

Monday, April 19
7 p.m.
Eden Prairie Library

Recite original works or favorite poems at this annual event hosted by local poet Polly Carden. The event is free and open to the public. Pre-register to read a poem by calling **952-847-5375**.

Spring Wine Tasting

Thursday, April 29
7-9 p.m.
City Center Garden Room

Eden Prairie Liquor hosts an evening of wine and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets are \$20 per person and available at all three Eden Prairie Liquor locations.

For more information about City of Eden Prairie events and meetings visit edenprairie.org or call the City Center at 952-949-8300.