

# Discover

## News from North Chicago

Winter 2009

## A Message From Our Mayor

Friends,

Revitalization of our great City is on the horizon.

We have laid the foundation for prosperity by improving our infrastructure, securing incentives like the enterprise zone, acquiring property, demolishing blighted buildings, opening a railroad crossing, balancing the budget, leveraging technology, and expanding our borders. All this while still providing the usual and expected municipal services to our constituency.

We have worked long and hard hours on our journey, and we will continue to do so. We will do this, and still meet the pressures of the present with collaboration, responsibility, and accountability. We shall have our City revitalized in a manner that measures up to the standards of our time, and we will continue to renew our commitment to lasting prosperity for our citizens, friends, stakeholders, and business community.



By laying the foundation, we've been able to promote the City's true image – one that's positive and represents the hard-working men, women, and children who call North Chicago their home.

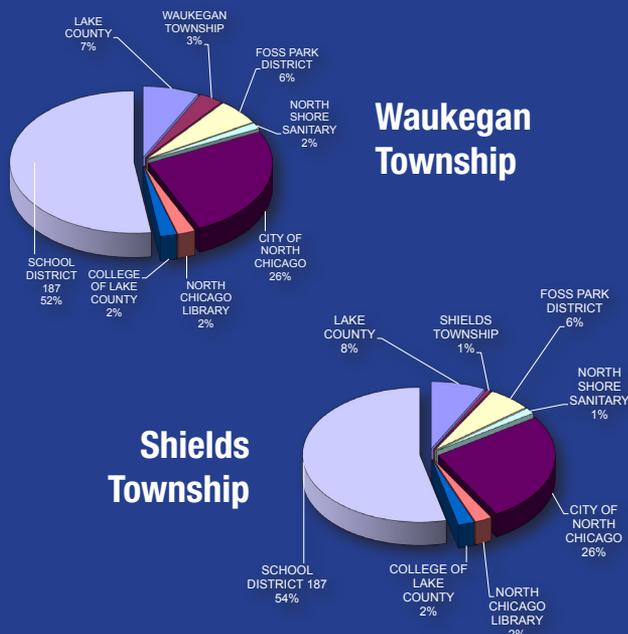
It is a privilege to be the Mayor of this diverse community. It's a community that demonstrates care and concern for our youth, our elderly, and each other. It is our community's care and determination that will ensure our success and make the City of North Chicago one of the gems of the North Shore. Therefore, it is essential that we continue to move forward together.

I want to underscore my appreciation to our citizens. Your continued support will have a substantive impact on the City and the region. Know that the City is always looking for ways to serve you better. Please be in touch, and visit our Web site at [www.NorthChicago.org](http://www.NorthChicago.org) to learn about the City, its people, and its vision.

Warm regards,

*Mayor Leon Rockingham Jr.*

### Where Do Your Tax Dollars Go?



## Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Project About to Begin

### MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DR

Starting in February 2009, the public will see the project get underway. Construction signage will be installed and preparations will be made to have utility work in full swing by March. The project consists of the complete rehabilitation of the roadway including new storm sewers, sanitary sewers, watermain, lighting, signage, and a new asphalt surface. The project will be completed by the end of September 2010. A public meeting will be held January 28th at City Hall from 6:00pm-7:00pm to allow the public to ask any questions they may have. Once the project is completed, the City will transfer maintenance responsibilities to Lake County Division of Transportation. Go to the engineering part of the City's website to track the progress on this important project.

## Notice a Street Light Out?

If the light is located on a wood pole, you can do one of two things. You can either contact ComEd at 1-800-EDISON1 (334-7661) and report a light out, OR contact the City Engineer at 847-596-8691 and that department will contact ComEd to report the outage.

If the light is mounted on a pole not made of wood, please contact the City Engineer at 847-596-8690 and the request will be handled by the City's lighting contractor.

## Resurfacing to Occur in 2009

Each year, the engineering department plans for the resurfacing of streets. This year the following streets will be resurfaced : Wadsworth (from 11th to 12th), Lincoln (from 17th to 18th), and 24th (from Wallace to Green Bay). Construction is anticipated between May and August.

## City Code Updates Affecting Parking, Stop Signs, and Truck Routes

In 2008, the engineering department inventoried the existing traffic signs on city-owned roadways. The city code was updated to ensure that the code was concurrent with the locations of all existing signage. Our new community service officer will now be able to accurately issue tickets for any violators of this amended code and existing signage. Safety is an important part of the reason behind updating this code. Also, note that fees have been increased at the Metra Stations and overnight parking will now be limited.

## New Sanitary Sewer Cost Reimbursement Program in Effect



City Council approved a new ordinance allowing any property owner whose building was constructed before November 2008 to apply for financial assistance when desiring to install a backflow prevention device on the sanitary sewer service on private property. The City currently maintains the existing sewer mains by routinely cleaning the sewers. If a property owner wants an added level of protection from potential sewer backups, they can come into City Hall to the Community Development Dept. and apply for the program. The city will provide 50% of the cost up to a maximum of \$750. Applicants will be assisted on a first-come, first-serve basis until the budget for that item has been met for the year. Any questions about the device or the program can also be directed to the City Engineer at 847-596-8691.

## Safety at Our Intersections

The Engineering Department is surveying the performance of the city's Emergency Pre-emption Devices (EVPs) and Detector Loops and expects to make repairs during the spring. An EVP is the small unit placed at the top of a traffic signal light mast arm that shows a bright light when emergency vehicles are about to pass through. Detector Loops are wiring that exists underground at intersections that alerts the traffic signals that a vehicle is present so that the signal will know to change from red to green, or green to red or to use the appropriate turn arrow. When loops do not work, it causes an inconvenience that requires a vehicle to wait through the entire cycle of the traffic light and can cause impatient driving. We ask that drivers exhibit patience and safety when driving, as we fix as many of these areas so that we can improve safety and alleviate any frustrations.

## Train Horn Sounding Again at Sheridan and MLK Jr Drive



Union Pacific Railroad has updated their safety standards and determined that the new crossing installed in 2007 meets the needs to have passing trains sound their horns. If you wondered why you were hearing more train horns, it is all for safety.

## Traffic Signage Updating

Traffic signage (items such as stop signs, parking signs, street signs) will continue to be updated as possible. All signage has been inventoried and Street Department employees have been replacing signs throughout the winter. There is a limit to the amount of signs that can be replaced, but the maximum amount of signs will continue to be replaced each year so that we have safe roadways and aesthetically pleasing signage. If you notice any unreadable signage or leaning/damaged sign posts, please bring it to the attention of the street department at 847-596-8870.

## Limited Winter Parking Underway



Section 10-5 of the City Code designates a number of roadways as "Limited Winter Parking" roads. No person shall park on these roads after a snowfall of 2 inches or greater until snow removal operations are complete. Vehicles may be towed at the owner's expense. Please review the code online at the city's website or contact the Engineering Department to see if your street is designated with this limitation that assists the Street Department to create cleaner roadways for all to use.

### City Engineer's contact information

The engineering portion of the city's website continues to grow with new information to assist residents. Keep a watch for new items. If you have any concerns about engineering-related items, feel free to contact the City Engineer Monday thru Friday from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM at 847-596-8691.

## Watch For & Obey Posted Winter Restrictions

One of the surest signs of winter in North Chicago is the return of our annual snow-related parking restrictions. Parking enforcement began on Monday, December 1st and marked the seasonal reactivation of the Winter Overnight Parking Ban for a number of North Chicago's most critical arterial streets. In other words, if you go to sleep on Sunday evening the ban will be in effect by the time you wake up on Monday morning. Motorists should also pay attention to the 2-inch snow restrictions that are in effect during the winter months.

The City has limited winter parking restrictions in effect during snow falls. City Ordinance 10-5-2-A states:

A. No person shall park any vehicle on the following named streets at any time after snow begins to fall and said snow exceeds two inches (2") in depth until snow removal operations are completed. The Department of Streets shall cause appropriate signs to be posted during snow removal operations.

Signs for this seasonal restriction are permanently posted. Ignoring them can cost the violator a \$150 towing fee (minimum), a \$50 ticket and a daily storage fee of \$25 that will increase over time. If you regularly park on one of these designated streets during non-winter months, it's a good idea to secure a safe and legal parking spot until the restrictions expire on April 1st.

Please, also, do not place your garbage containers in the street during the winter months. This causes a problem for the street department and can result in damage to your garbage can that will be your responsibility to pay.

## Working Without Permits

With the winter months upon us, many will want to do interior renovations to their homes. Remember that a permit is needed for most any interior work. Some like to run the risk of doing work without a permit; however, if the permanent file held by the building department does not contain the permit information, the homeowner can be forced to take out what was built and face a fine of either \$500 minimum or twice the amount of the permit cost, whichever is greater.

## Codes Change with the New Year

As a reminder the following codes, as adopted by reference by City Council, will go into effect January 1, 2009:

- 2006 International Building Code
- 2006 International Residential Code
- 2006 International Property Maintenance Code
- 2006 International Fire Code
- 2006 International Mechanical Code
- 2006 International Fuel Gas Code

The 2005 National Electrical Code and current State of Illinois Plumbing Code will remain in effect.

## Abandoned Buildings

City Ordinance 12-12-2.B.2 requires that property owners post a sign on their vacant/boarded-up buildings that indicates the owner's name, address and telephone number and the owner's authorized agent for the purpose of service of process.

Boarded-up properties without this information will be considered abandoned and will be processed through the court systems for demolition. Privately-owned properties as well as bank-owned properties are subject to this requirement.

## Overcrowded Houses

As a reminder, it is unlawful to exceed the occupancy load of any dwelling. The 2006 Property Maintenance Code is very clear on the square footage requirements for calculating the number of occupants. A bedroom must have a minimum of 70 square feet of usable space for 1 person. For 2 people or more there must be no less than 50 square feet of usable space for each person. Attics cannot be used for sleeping rooms. Basements, if they qualify with ceiling height and emergency egress windows may be approved with an inspection, for use.

## Occupancy Inspections

Occupancy inspections are required whenever there is a change in occupancy or use for a dwelling or property. Landlords are responsible for making sure this is accomplished prior to anyone moving in. Failure to have an inspection accomplished and approved for occupancy may be cause for the landlord to appear in Administrative Court.

Beginning in January 2009, photographic documentation of all sale and occupancy inspections will be conducted and placed in the permanent file of the address for future reference, if necessary.

## Building Appeals Board

In January a Building Appeals Board will be appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. The purpose of the Appeals Board is to hear cases where property owners feel that the codes cited on Field Correction Notices they receive may not be interpreted correctly. However, the Board does not have the authority to change the codes.

Field Correction Notices issued beginning in January will have the Appeals process printed on the form instead of the information regarding consequences of not correcting the violation.

Property owners will have 5 days from the date of the Notice to submit their appeal in writing to the Building Commissioner. A date for the Appeals Board to convene will be scheduled and the property owner will be notified. There is a \$50 fee.

## Sheridan Crossing Clean Up

Clean-up of contaminated soils on the Sheridan Crossing property is progressing. Grand Slam Enterprises removed contaminated soil on the frontage properties and removed contaminated sediment from two existing detention ponds on the Lavin property in December. The USEPA is continuing with their clean-up of the Fansteel property and expects to complete their work in January of 2009. The clean up of these properties is necessary so the City can proceed with the development of Sheridan Crossing Towne Center.

## Grant Place Development

Despite the current economic climate, leasing activity at Grant Place remains steady. The City has entered into a lease agreement with Second Chance of Lake County for 600 square feet of second floor office space. In addition, Tax Less Accounting Services will be expanding their existing business. With the build-out of these spaces and the Boys and Girls Clubs office space, the second floor office area will be 100% occupied. The City and its broker are actively marketing the first floor retail spaces and hope to see activity in the first part of 2009.

## Shopping Opportunities



Were you frustrated this past holiday season because you had to drive to Waukegan, Gurnee or Vernon Hills to pick-up certain holiday gifts? Wouldn't it have been nice to be able to shop locally here in North Chicago? Shopping locally not only is convenient, but can help lower your property tax bill. How? In Illinois, cities receive 1% of every dollar spent in their community for retail sales. More money spent in North Chicago means more revenue to cover city services and less reliance on property taxes. One of the key functions of the Community Development and Planning Department is to attract new businesses and to do this we would like your help. What are some stores you would like to see in North Chicago? What about restaurants? Let us know by contacting the department at (847) 596-8670. We'll use this information in our efforts to market the City.



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## Fire Department Community Emergency Response Team

The North Chicago Fire Department will begin searching for volunteers to join our emergency response team, anyone who has a desire to assist when a disaster strikes is encouraged to join.

The need for well-trained civilians is essential for a community in the time of disaster. The ability to mitigate a disaster and return to a safe and viable community can be achieved with your help.

The main focus of CERT is to train citizens to become better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Training in several disciplines are recommended such as, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Fire Suppression, Disaster Medical Operations, Light

Search And Rescue Operations, Disaster Psychology And Team Organization and Course Review And Disaster Simulation.

Training for the CERT team will begin in March 2009. If interested in joining, please contact the Fire Department at 847 596 8780 or if you want to learn more about CERT. [www.citizen corps.gov](http://www.citizen corps.gov).



## *City of North Chicago*

**Leon Rockingham, Jr.** / Mayor

**Lori Collins** / City Clerk

**Kenneth Robinson** / Treasurer

**Ernest Fisher** / 1st Ward Alderman

**Hornsby Kneeland** / 2nd Ward Alderman

**Valerie DeVost** / 3rd Ward Alderman

**Bobby Allen** / 4th Ward Alderman

**Torrance D. Abrams, Sr.** / 5th Ward Alderman

**Bob Runnels** / 6th Ward Alderman

**Thelma Mayers** / 7th Ward Alderman

## Contact Information

Emergency .....	911
General .....	847-596-8600
Clerk .....	847-596-8682
Police Dept. ....	847-596-8700
Payment Center ..	847-596-8635
Building .....	847-596-8650
Human Resources ..	847-596-8645
Engineer .....	847-596-8690
Mayor's Office .....	847-596-8610
Treasurer .....	847-596-8628
Fire Dept. ....	847-596-8780
Water Billing .....	847-596-8626
Community Development .....	847-596-8670
Street Dept. ....	847-596-8870
Water .....	847-596-8880