

# Discover

## News from North Chicago

Spring 2010

### Message from the Mayor

The City of North Chicago is facing difficult financial decisions due to the current national recession. In order to function with a balanced budget, it is imperative that the city consider every possible option available. Privatization of city departments is *one* of those options; however, privatizing or outsourcing does not mean selling or giving up control of city assets.

To address any concerns on privatization, I would like to assure you that the City of North Chicago did not consider, and is not considering or will ever consider, under my administration, the sale of our Water Plant. The North Chicago Water Plant belongs to the people, the taxpayers of the City of North Chicago, and I firmly believe that the water rates must be set locally by the City Council.

A recent study was performed at the Water Plant to determine if outsourcing would financially benefit the city; the result proved that our plant runs efficiently, effectively, and in a fiscally responsible manner. Similar studies are being conducted in other city departments such as janitorial services and telecommunicating. The results have not yet been determined, but as they unfold, I will provide open and truthful answers to city staff and the public.

Operating the city on a balanced budget is necessary for the success and continued growth of North Chicago. Decisions on reducing staff are not easy, and they will not be made lightly; however, it is my responsibility to see that the North Chicago taxpayer's money is maximized for the benefit of the city as a whole. *Please note the charts below for details on the \$2 million deficit that the city is currently facing.*

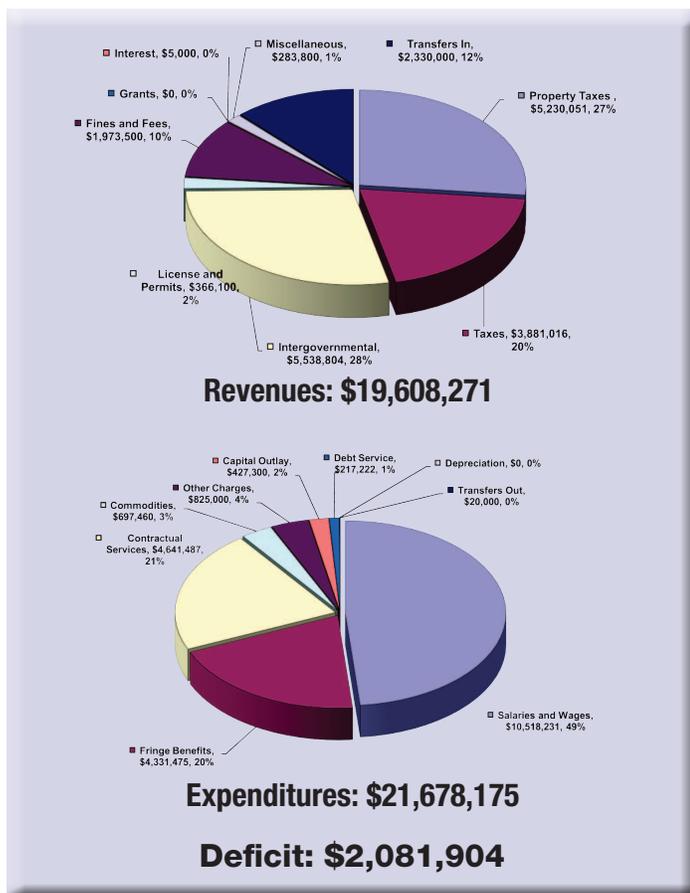
On a more positive note, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive rehabilitation project is already paying off; due to the installation of new water mains, we experienced fewer costly water main breaks this winter. As spring is now upon us, look out as construction begins in the southern lanes of MLK.

The 2010 Census is fast approaching. At this time, the City of North Chicago census population is projected to drop from 36,918 to approximately 28,000. If these projections are correct, the city faces to lose \$1 million per year over the next 10 years. This loss of revenue will affect the city's 2012 budget and beyond.

It is critical that every citizen is counted so the city can receive its fair share of federal funding. The 2010 Census forms are being mailed in mid-March and are due by April 1, 2010. If the forms are not returned in the mail, a US Census representative will come to your home sometime in April to get an accurate count. Please fill out your census form; it is only 10 questions and takes only 10 minutes to complete.

As always, I want to thank the citizens of North Chicago for being active members of our community by voicing concerns and asking questions. Your input is respected and appreciated.

*Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr.*



## Road improvements: 2010

### Local resurfacing projects

The city council has approved the use of Motor Fuel Tax funds for the rehabilitation of the 1700 block of Park Avenue, Morrow Avenue (from Lewis to Ray), and Lakeside Avenue (from Foss Park Avenue to the south end of the train station property). These improvements are scheduled for construction during late spring and into summer.

The City of North Chicago asks for your cooperation during construction, as we work to improve roadways for train commuters, school attendees, and residents on the south side of the city.

### MLK Update: Phase III and beyond

The Phase III construction focuses on the southern two lanes of the project, consisting of any leftover storm sewer, curb work, streetlight and traffic light foundation and conduit work as well as asphalt binder installation.

Phase IV begins this summer. Work will consist of asphalt surface installation and striping, street light completion, traffic signal completion, sidewalk installation, and miscellaneous landscaping.

In September of this year, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive will have new lanes, curbs, driveways, streetlights, traffic signals, a new improved water system, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer.



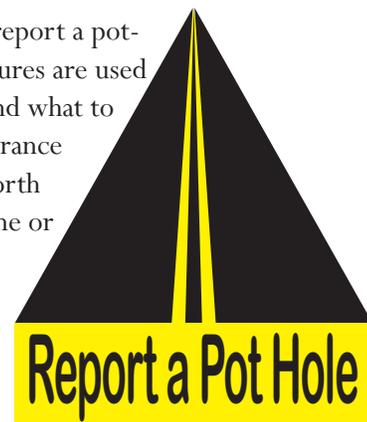
Current View of MLK Project, Phase III

### Streetlights

The City of North Chicago continues to work with ComEd and our local electrical contractor to ensure proper maintenance of our city streetlights. This year, lights are receiving wattage upgrades on 20th Street west of Lewis Avenue. Contact the Dispatch Department at 847-596-8774 to report any dim or broken streetlights.

### Pothole Policy

For information on how to report a pothole, including what procedures are used when repairing a pothole, and what to do if you are seeking an insurance claim, review the City of North Chicago Pothole Policy online or at city hall. You can also call the Pothole Hotline 847-596-8870, Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.



### E-cycling is E-Z in North Chicago

Electronics recycling is important, as it keeps valuable material out of landfills and conserves natural resources. This February, the City of North Chicago hosted its most successful e-cycling event to date. Residents turned in their old computers, monitors, printers, and small household appliances for shredding and recycling. The collection prevented an entire semi-trailer truck worth of electronics from being dumped into our landfills. The city will host another e-cycling collection this fall. Additional information is available at [www.SWALCO.org](http://www.SWALCO.org) or [www.northchicago.org](http://www.northchicago.org).



Javier Torres collects electronics for recycling



## Stormwater Tip #2

**Direct downspouts and sump pumps away from paved areas. Consider a rain garden to capture water runoff.**



### Basement flooding and backflow prevention

A number of issues can cause basement flooding, such as tree roots, collapsed services, groundwater infiltration, or illegal connections. The backup may be stormwater related or sanitary related. Backups also occur by placing the wrong liquids and items into sinks and toilets. Stop throwing your money down the drain; contact the city Engineer and pick up a *Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Guide* today. As always, the City of North Chicago Water Department and the city Engineer are available for assistance on any backup or flooding incidents.

The City of North Chicago offers the *Backflow Prevention Cost Reimbursement Program*, which assists residents with the cost of installing a backflow prevention device up to a maximum of \$750. This device corrects many flooding issues, but may not always be the best solution for your problem. Contact the Community Development Department for more info.

### Stormwater flooding and pollution prevention

The City of North Chicago continues to follow the EPA mandated Pollution Prevention Program by inspecting detention basins and stormwater outlets. By properly maintaining stormwater detention basins, property owners can reduce flooding of neighboring areas as well as ensure that clean stormwater drains to our streams and Lake Michigan. This year, the Engineering Department and the Building Department are working together to ensure that the required corrections are made based on the 2009 inspection recommendations to property owners.

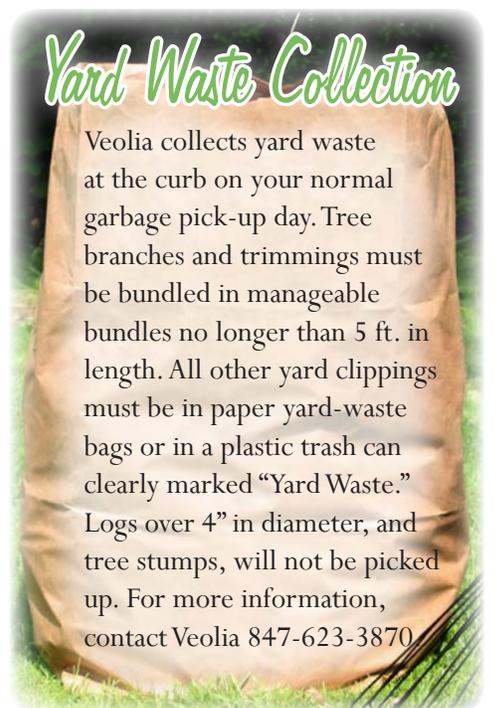
Reminder, sump pump and downspouts are prohibited from emptying into public sidewalks, alleys, or streets; property owners are required to find a better way to release stormwater. Removing these drainages to public areas creates a safer environment by reducing icing and ponding hazards. Contact the city Engineer for advice on how to redirect stormwater away from public areas.

An illicit discharge is any illegal pouring or dumping of a substance into the city's sewers, ditches, or streams. If you notice any illicit discharges, please call the Illicit Discharge Hotline 847-596-8690.



### Yard Waste Collection

Veolia collects yard waste at the curb on your normal garbage pick-up day. Tree branches and trimmings must be bundled in manageable bundles no longer than 5 ft. in length. All other yard clippings must be in paper yard-waste bags or in a plastic trash can clearly marked "Yard Waste." Logs over 4" in diameter, and tree stumps, will not be picked up. For more information, contact Veolia 847-623-3870.



## Building Department

The Building Department is responsible for building permits and inspections, enforcing building related portions of the City Ordinances and enforcing property maintenance codes. The department is headed by the city Building Commissioner who supervises two Code Enforcer/Building Inspectors, a part-time electrical inspector, a part-time plumbing inspector, and one data technician who provides office and clerical support.

### Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

The Building Department looks at all properties for compliance with the 2006 International Property Maintenance Code and City Ordinances. Examples include missing siding, deteriorated soffit/fascia, missing garage doors, dilapidated structures, etc. Code Enforcement is necessary to protect the general health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of North Chicago, as well as improve the city's image.

If a violation is noted, the property owner will be notified in writing describing the violation, and will be given a reasonable deadline by which the violation must be corrected. After the deadline, the property will be inspected to ensure compliance. A property owner who fails to correct violations in a timely manner may be summoned to the city's Administrative Court where penalties and fines may be imposed as provided in the City Ordinances. Questions regarding the city's code enforcement may be directed to the Building Department.

### Plumbing Options

CPVC piping can be used as an alternative to copper plumbing only in Single Family Homes. Using CPVC piping as an alternative can reduce plumbing costs and reduces the risk of property damage if there is a break-in by someone looking to steal copper.



### Are you planning a remodeling project, not sure where to start?

Any of the Building Department Staff can assist in answering questions to help you get started with your project. Stop in with your idea and we will explain the steps that you must take to get your project going.

### Building Permits and Contractor Licensing

The Building Department wants to remind residents that permits are required for the following types of home construction projects:

- Additions
- Driveways
- Fireplaces
- Home construction
- Porches
- Siding
- Step replacement
- Concrete work
- Basement finishes
- Electrical upgrades
- Garages
- Major remodeling
- Re-roofing
- Signs
- Swimming pools
- Furnace replacement
- Decks
- Fences
- Gazebos
- Patios
- Sheds
- Sprinkler systems
- Sewer line repair
- Major plumbing work

All commercial and industrial projects require a building permit as well. Contractors performing work must be licensed to do work in the City of North Chicago. Residents should check with the city to be sure a contractor is licensed before signing any contracts for work. Contractors should contact the Building Department for licensing information.

A permit must be obtained before work can begin for any of the above-mentioned categories. The cost of a building permit varies according to the project. For more information, or to schedule an inspection, please contact the Building Department at 847-596-8650.

## Basement and attic living spaces

Apartments or bedrooms in attics and basements are illegal; more importantly, they are unsafe due to increasing the chances of trapping someone in the case of fire. The Building Department has specific code requirements regarding using attics or basements for bedrooms. They include, but are not limited to, minimum ceiling height requirements, minimum square footage requirements, and emergency escapes.

If a property owner wants to expand into these spaces, contact the Building Department to see if a project is feasible. There are zoning requirements regarding the addition of space; and, in no case, can a single family home be converted to a 2-unit. As always, we will work with anyone who has a plan or idea that they want to develop. Those who think that they don't need to seek approval for permits run the risk of a summons to court or even worse, the loss of a loved one. Be smart – do it right!

## Landlord requirements

Landlords are reminded that a landlord license is required for every rental unit that is occupied. The license application requires that you provide an accurate address and phone number. P. O. Box addresses will not be accepted.

Landlords are also required to have a designated agent or property manager identified on the application if the landlord resides outside of Lake County. It is essential that the address and telephone number be provided for the agent or property manager. The agent or property manager must live in Lake County, Illinois.

## Blight Busting Program, still going strong

The city's Blight Busting Program continues by aggressively identifying properties abandoned by the owner and the banks. Presently, the City of North Chicago holds 11 court orders for the demolition of properties, both residential and commercial. At the time of this publication, the city is waiting for contractor bids for the demolition of the first five properties.

The positive effect of the Blight Busting Program is that approximately 50% of the properties identified for demolition are either totally rehabbed by the present owner or sold and rehabbed by a new owner.

## Home businesses requirements

Home businesses are required to have a City of North Chicago Business License. If you or your family are conducting a business out of your home, there are certain zoning requirements that must be followed. When licenses are applied for, an inspection of the business is scheduled. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure that the business is being operated safely, and meets applicable Building and Zoning Ordinances of North Chicago.

## Attention North Chicago businesses:

Many of the businesses here in the city have been diligently working with the Building Department to improve the "curbside appeal" of their properties. To them we want to give a big, "Thank You!"

The City of North Chicago wants all businesses to be thriving. We want the city to be attractive to more development; however, a lot of our success citywide depends on our residents and business owners. Look around you; if your property does not give a positive impression to someone passing by, then expectations for a thriving business are probably not very high. As we continue to improve the image of our city, we need everyone to get involved. The Property Maintenance Codes that are enforced by the Building Department are not meant just for residential properties, but for all properties.



**Get them fixed;  
get them occupied;  
or take them down!**

### Parking reminder

North Chicago residents are reminded that parking in residential areas is limited to improved surfaces (concrete or asphalt) designated for parking. There is a minimum requirement of two parking spaces per residential unit. Parking or "storage" of vehicles on grass or any unimproved surface on a property is prohibited. Property owners will receive notification from either the Building Department or Police Department to move illegally parked or inoperable vehicles. Non-compliance could result in a court summons and /or a ticket and/or having the vehicle removed by the City of North Chicago at the owner's expense.

### Vehicle Sticker Information

Vehicle stickers are required for recreational vehicles, mobile homes, taxi vehicles, and trucks with a state classification above a Class B; such vehicles must have a sticker affixed to the lower right passenger side of the windshield on or before May 31, 2010.

Renewal applications have been mailed to the owner or operator of each vehicle that requires a sticker. Please update the application form and return it using the enclosed envelope with a check for the amount due. If you did not receive an application, but are the owner of a vehicle that requires a sticker, please call or visit the Comptroller's Office.

Courtesy stickers for passenger cars and Class B truck plates are available at no cost to those residents/businesses that would like an identification sticker displayed when traveling and parking in other communities. Pick up your courtesy sticker at city hall by providing proof of address and proof of vehicle ownership, such as showing a copy of the vehicle registration. For more information, please contact the Comptroller's Office.

### Animal license tags

The City of North Chicago requires a license for all cats and dogs in the city. Animal license tags must be renewed every year by May 31, and are easy to obtain. General fees are \$3.00; however pit bull application and licenses require further charges. Contact the Comptroller's Office for more details 847-596-8624.

### Waste and recyclables collection rates

The agreement between the City of North Chicago and Veolia Environmental Services provides that on each anniversary date the rates be adjusted using the annual increase of the Consumer Price Index – Chicago-Kenosha-Gary (CPI). The new rates, effective March 1, 2010, are as follows:

	Current Rates	CPI Adjustment		New Rates
		%	Increase	
Single Units	18.20	2.20%	0.40	18.60
Single Units (Seniors)	16.37	2.20%	0.36	16.73
Double Units	34.48	2.20%	0.76	35.24
Triple Units	50.79	2.20%	1.12	51.91

### Neighborhood Garden Program

The Community Development Department is excited to announce the North Chicago Neighborhood Garden Program. This program gives North Chicago residents the opportunity to grow fresh vegetables on their own 10' x 10' plot of land. Plan, plant, water and watch your bounty grow! Chat with fellow gardeners, share delicious recipes, and enjoy the fruits of your labor!

The city will provide all participants with a 10' x 10' plot of land, tilled and ready for planting. To get you started, you will receive a selection of vegetable plants and seeds, but you can grow whatever vegetables you prefer. Water, hose, a storage shed, garden tools, and a compost bin will be provided at each site. Periodically, we will provide gardening tips and ideas to help your garden succeed. All you do is make a commitment to maintaining your plot.



Garden locations are being finalized as of the printing of this newsletter. For more information on this program and an application, please contact the Community Development Department at 847-596-8670.

## Reminders from the North Chicago Public Safety Departments

### Fire Safety: Dryer fire prevention

As many as 15,000 fires start in the laundry room every year when lint from clothes dryers builds up and catch fire. Those fires result in up to 19 deaths per year. Follow these tips to prevent dryer fires:

- Clean the filter screen after each load to prevent lint buildup, which can cause fires.
- Do not leave your home unattended when the dryer is in use.
- Clean the vents to outside twice a year to clean out any accumulated dust and lint.
- Vacuum the motor area. The dust and lint in the vent area can ignite if it gets hot. You may need to remove a panel in order to get to the motor area.
- Keep the surrounding area clean. The dryer's heat may ignite anything left too close to the dryer.

### Fire Safety: House and business address numbers

When you need the Fire Department's assistance, you want them to arrive quickly. Emergency response is about speed, every second counts. Follow these tips to assist emergency workers in finding your location rapidly:

- On houses, the numbers should be a minimum of 3" high.
- Use a contrasting color to make your address more visible.
- Choose reflective numbers.
- Place numbers at the end of long driveways to identify your address.
- Business address numbers should be sized so that they can be easily visible from the Fire Department access road.

### Railroad Crossing Safety

There are many simple and life-saving practices to help you avoid a confrontation with a train at a railroad crossing.

- Remember that any time is train time.
- Slow down when approaching a railroad crossing and look both ways—TWICE!
- Never race a train to cross the tracks.
- Never pass another vehicle within 100 feet of a railroad crossing.
- Watch out for vehicles that MUST stop at railroad crossings, like school buses or trucks carrying hazardous materials.
- When approaching a crossing, roll down your windows, turn off the radio or air conditioner, and listen for whistles or bells.
- Always yield to flashing lights, whistles, closing gates, crossbucks or stop signs.
- Never shift gears on the railroad crossing, downshift before you reach it.
- If you must stop, keep a distance of 15 to 50 feet from the tracks. Since the tracks are four feet eight and a half inches wide, and the train hangs three feet past the rails on each side, be sure to leave enough space between your vehicle and the tracks.
- Teach children that the railroad is never a place to play, walk, run, bike ride, or use as a short cut. Don't fish from railroad bridges either.
- Always cross the tracks at the designated railroad crossing or pedestrian crossing.
- Only use the crossing if you can be sure your vehicle is high enough to completely clear the railroad crossing without stopping.
- Don't be fooled by the optical illusion presented by the train. It is always moving faster and is much closer than you think.

## Fire Department Is Awarded Grant for New Fire Engine

For the second consecutive year, the North Chicago Fire Department was awarded Assistance to Firefighters Grant for Vehicle Acquisition. This year's grant in the amount \$275,000 will enable the Fire Department to purchase a new Fire Engine that will replace a 1986 dilapidated apparatus. Delivery is expected the beginning of next year.

# Discover

*News from North Chicago*

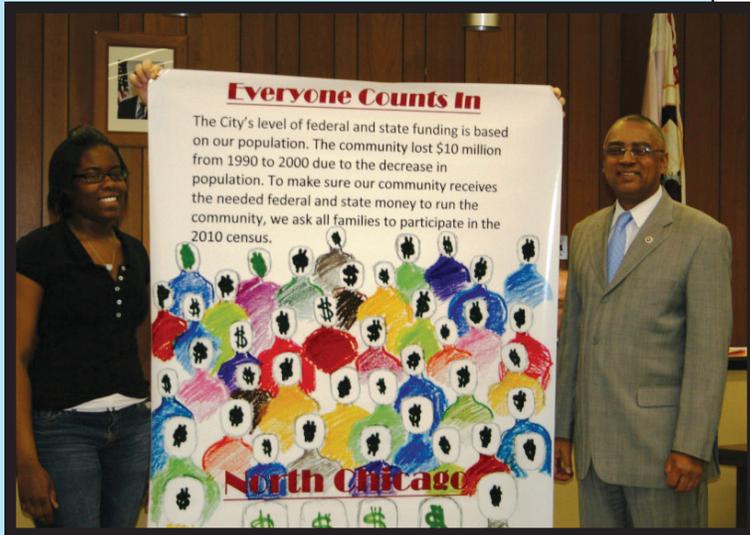
Spring 2010



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## 2010 Census posters designed by local students

On Monday, March 15, 2010, Mayor Rockingham and the North Chicago City Council announced Deja Handy of Neal Junior High School, and Stephanie Packard, of North Chicago High School as winners of the North Chicago Census Complete Count Committee Banner Contest. In addition to the banners, the winning designs were made into posters and flyers that will be distributed throughout the community.

## No Fooling! Census Day is April 1, 2010

### Census 2010:

**10** simple questions, many benefits. North Chicago's share of federal and state funding is based on the census. Let's make sure everyone is counted so we don't lose out.

United States®  
**Census  
2010**



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

### Censo del 2010:

10 en sencillez                      10 en beneficios  
10 en confidencialidad            10 en importancia

**10** simples preguntas, mucho beneficios. Llenar el cuestionario del Censo es facil y toma poco tiempo.

**Everyone counts, everyone wins!**

*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**

**Vacant / 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 .....	847-596-8691
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 Dept. ....	847-596-8880