



Fall 2005

THE GRANT NEWS FROM YOUR CITY COUNCIL

Communication to / from Residents

Your City Council has struggled this summer with ways to get feedback from residents on the road issues.

A draft road survey was ready in July, but the full Council did not agree about sending it out. The survey was put on



hold while each council member decided how best to represent our citizens.

Getting information from residents will help us make decisions that are in line with those we've been elected to

represent. Other options?

You can call, write, phone, or email us.

Road & Special Assessment Policies Revised

Grant City Council has worked hard this year to build flexibility into our road policies. At last year's July 27, 2004 Public Hearing on Grant's road and assessment policies, citizens voiced concern over the significant increase in taxes due to the proposed changes in funding for our roads. Those changes allowed paving overlays and contributions to reconstructions of paved roads to be funded by all the taxpayers of Grant, not just the benefiting property owners, as in the previous longstanding road and assessment policies.

New council members wasted no time in addressing these issues, and meetings were held in February, May, and September to discuss the changes in the 2004 revised policies.

After receiving feedback from citizens, and much consideration, council voted to move paving overlays back into the Extraordinary Maintenance section of the policy, meaning paving overlays will be assessed

according to the Policy for Special Assessment for Road Improvements. Paving overlays occur periodically over the life of a road, approximately every 15-30 years.

To allow flexibility in assessing road projects to residents, Council added two words to the Assessment Policy's basic philosophy statement so that *"up to" 100% of the cost will be assessed to benefited properties.*



This flexibility allows Council to consider contributing factors such as volume of traffic, business, and through-road traffic, speed of roadway, recreational opportunities, etc. into the design and upgrading of such roads. All other maintenance to gravel and paved roads has been given separate line items in the General Levy, with gravel roads and paved roads receiving comparable per mile funding. Road costs continue to be monitored so that maintenance to gravel or improved roads is within the scope of benefit to all citizens.

Fall Road Updates

Paved Roads receive Potholing & Crack Filling

Spring pothole filling continued, as needed, through the summer on Grant's paved roads. Total spent to date on potholes: about \$21,000.

This fall a contract for crack filling about 8 ½ miles of paved roads was approved, for nearly \$42,000. These same roads will receive seal coating in summer 2006.

Winter Snowplowing

Grant's paved and gravel roads this winter will have snow and ice removal services provided by Washington County. Three single-axle trucks and operators have been assigned for three plowing routes. This scheduling will allow each operator/truck unit to plow their portion of Grant in one shift, so that all of Grant's roads will be plowed at least once within eight hours. Plows are generally dispatched when there is an accumulation of 3 inches of snow.

Inside this Issue

2006 Budget

View Grant's budget history and how your city taxes are spent.

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Focus on Youth

See how our area youth are contributing to the community.

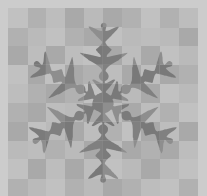
Page 3



Winter Reminders

Important tips for winter, energy conservation, and safety.

Pages 7 & 8



Mayor's Corner

by Mayor Tim Gangnon

Time of Transition

As fall draws to a close and colors fade to grey, I would like to greet the citizens of Grant in this time of transition. Like fall, your Council is working to transition into a cohesive unit. On Wednesday, September 21, 2005 the City Council undertook training by the League of Minnesota Cities. This training was designed to help the Council enhance their communication and better understand the legal issues affecting the Council. Three major issues were discussed during the Councils' meeting. These included Agendas, Minutes and Public Comments. It is hoped that this training will improve and strengthen the quality of our meetings and allow the Council membership to interact to the betterment of the City.

New City Personnel

As mayor I'd like to introduce you to our new City Clerk. Her name is Karen Christianson. She joined our staff on September 19. From her first day in the City Office she dug right in (literally). She comes to us with experience and a dedication to serving the public. Please join us in welcoming her!

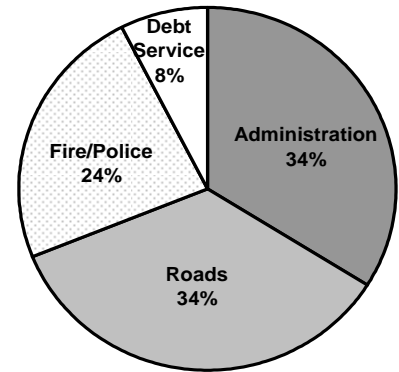
Other recent additions to our staff are two members of the Accounting Firm of HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd., Mark Gibbs, CPA and Nancy Martinson. Mark has jumped right in to oversee the completion of the budget process. Nancy will be working closely with the City Clerk to do the monthly financial reconciliation.



On behalf of the City of Grant, I would like to wish you and your family the best this Holiday Season!



Where do your taxes go?

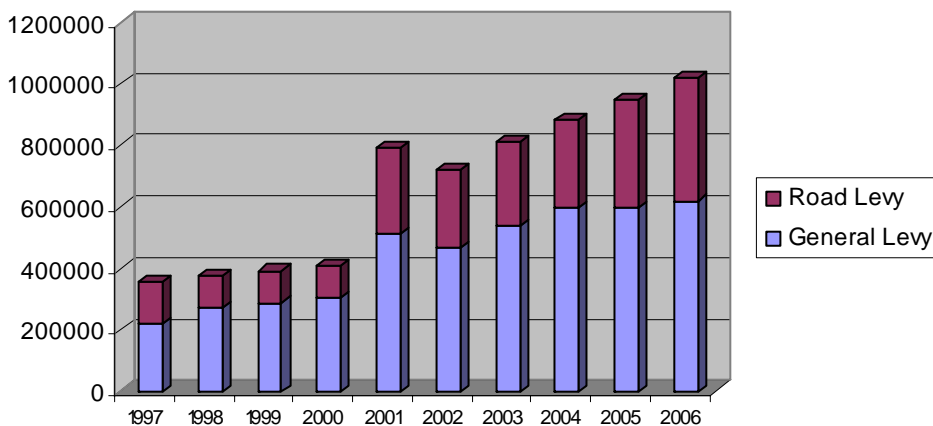


Preliminary 2006 Budget sent to County, Accounting Firm Hired

The City Council approved a Preliminary Levy for 2006 at its September 6th meeting, which was then sent to the County for inclusion on your recent statement of Proposed Property Tax for 2006. Budget workshops continue; the last to be held at 7:00pm, November 28 at the Town Hall on Kimbro Avenue.

City Treasurer Amy Ayd, who was hired in July, has been furnishing current financial figures for the budget process. However, this fall Amy resigned in order to pursue a unique opportunity with her husband's new business. The Council, though disappointed at her departure, chose to hire the Accounting firm of HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd, of White Bear Lake, to perform the duties of City Treasurer.

Grant Levy History



Complete Proposed 2006 Budget information is available on the City of Grant website

www.ci.grant.mn.us

If you have questions about your taxes, attend the

Truth in Taxation Meeting

December 6, 2005

6:00pm

**Grant Town Hall
8380 Kimbro Avenue**

Local Youth work to better our City & Community

4-H Club completing Community Service Project

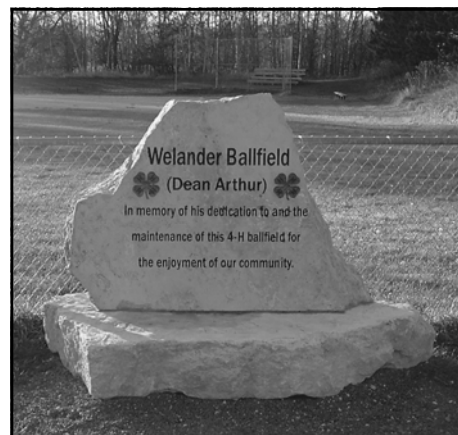
4-H and Boy Scout programs offer valuable teaching and learning opportunities for area youth and give back to our community.

The local Soil-Savers 4-H Club, which meets monthly at the Town Hall, is undertaking a Community Service Project that will benefit our city. Joyce Welander, as club leader, presented the project proposal to the City Council in July. Items from the proposal that were completed this summer included planting flowers at the Town Hall entrance and around the flagpole. Painting new boards on the rail fence was done by the Fernandez family under the direction of 4-H leaders, Kevin and Kari. Placing of the memorial stone for the ball field was also just completed.

Rick Regnier and Tim Warmka, 4-H leaders, with Art Welander assisting will be erecting a white rail fence at the top of a retaining wall yet this fall. A gate, being provided by the Cell Tower company, is to be compatible with the project and installed when provided.

Next spring a picnic area is to be added next to the ball field, with picnic tables to be built by the 4-H shop members under the leadership of Gene House and Rick Regnier. A perennial flower bed will also be planted, aided by Master Gardener and former 4-H Leader, Cynthia Hammel, with Liz and John David offering horticultural assistance. The wood chips currently on site will also be used for the flower bed.

(Continued on page 4)



Ball field Dedication & Memorial Stone

A memorial stone in honor of Joyce and Art Welander's son, Dean Arthur, was placed this fall for his initial promotion, work and upkeep of the 4-H ball field, for the enjoyment of our community. It is dedicated by City resolution under the Board chairmanship of Blaine Erickson, a former 4-H leader and resident of Grant.

Eagle Scout Adds Value to Gateway Trail

Article Submitted by Tyler Linner

As a regular user of the Gateway Trail I had noticed for some time that there was a trash problem along the trail, particularly by the benches close to my house. As a concerned trail user and a Boy Scout with Troop 89, I wanted to help control the litter problem. My first task was to gain approval by DNR representatives.

For my Eagle Scout project, I supervised the assembly and installation of four trash/recycling 'arrays' along the Gateway Trail. Each array was comprised of three trash cans: for aluminum, plastic, and trash. Located near benches, the arrays were strategically placed and convenient to use.

The trail is now noticeably cleaner, the amount of trash blowing onto adjacent property has been reduced, and hopefully more people are aware of the environment.



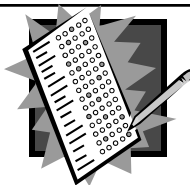
Recently the DNR has been the victim of drastic budget cuts, making it virtually impossible to fund trail projects. By doing my Eagle Project, I have made at least one trail project possible with no financial dent in the DNR's wallet. The DNR empties the trash cans on a regular basis as part of their regular trail maintenance.

The following organizations and businesses generously donated materials and/or money towards my project: Wildwood Lions Club, Fleet Farm, and the Gateway Trail Association. Without their support I would not have been able to complete my project, and for this I thank them again.

(Continued on page 4)

Survey Says...

Spring Newsletter Survey Results Are In



We received 179 out of 1500 newsletter surveys from the Spring 2005 *Grant News*. For those of you who are math-minded, that's about a 12% return rate.

On the surface, that doesn't sound like much, but for those of you who took the time to complete the survey and send it in, and for those of us who eagerly read your comments and persevered in tallying the varied responses, we feel this survey was a great success in getting in touch with how residents of Grant currently get their news and how they would like to see that changed and enhanced.

As a special note to those who marked that they "didn't think their opinion mattered," let me say this: I believe even the tiniest bit of feedback that Council members get from citizens, at any time, on any topic, is always useful in the decision-making process. So don't be shy, folks. Call us, email us, drive over to our house, chat over the fence, attend meetings, whatever you need to do to get your voice heard on topics important to you, is important to us. Believe it, because we have no other way to represent you.

Here is an overview of the findings. (Surveys can be viewed at the City Office per the City's Data Practices Act.)

- Most respondents find it most comfortable contacting a Council person by telephone, with email being the second most preferred method.
- Most attend City Council and Planning Commission meetings only when topics of interest to them are being discussed.
- Most respondents get their news about Grant issues through articles and letters in the area newspapers. Reading other newsletters and talking to neighbors was a close second.
- *Grant News* remains the most popular newsletter that residents enjoy reading, with Washington County's *Staying In Touch* a favorite second.
- An overwhelming majority said that they would like to continue seeing the Grant Newsletter published. While many were in favor of getting an email notice to access the newsletter on the Grant website, most would like to continue getting a paper copy mailed to their home.
- Many, many of you had specific requests for "Future Topics" to be included in *Grant News*. The four highest and closely ranked topics included: Schedules of Events/Meetings; Summaries of Council Meetings; City Budget & Finances; and Seasonal Topics.
- Most respondents indicated accessing the Grant website a few times or never. However, a fair number do check it every month or on a quarterly basis.
- Almost twice as many respondents indicated that the Grant website could be better organized, with information easier to find.
- Lastly, the vast majority answered "Yes" to taking future surveys, indicating that it was kind of fun and they liked that someone asked their opinion.

(Continued on page 5)

(Youth...from page 3)

Donations of time, money, and materials have been solicited from area businesses, including Axdahl's Gardens and Costa Farms for plant materials, Hegberg's for the retaining wall, and Buberl's for black dirt. Labor is provided by the 4-H youth, parents, and other interested volunteers.

The City Council voted to contribute \$2000 out of the Park Upkeep fund to this worthy project. The 4-H Club voted to match some of the City funding for the project.



If you know of other local youth improving our community, or wishing to conduct such an initiative, contact KimLinner@aol.com so we can celebrate their accomplishments or steer them towards other needed community projects.

(Scout...from page 3)

In other service, my Boy Scout Troop 89 coordinates with Washington County to do roadside cleanup twice a year along Jamaca Avenue between County Road 12 and Highway 96. We were excited this year to find items ranging from truck tailgates to dead animals.

We go rain or shine, but always have a sunny attitude, especially with the promise of lunch-time pizza at a local restaurant.



(Survey...from page 4)

While most remarked that the survey didn't take too long and wasn't too painful, at least one respondent crossed out the "wasn't too painful" part, to which we apologize. We in no way wanted to *stress anyone out*, and we are extremely grateful that you stuck with it and sent it anyway!

Interpreting the Results

Because the "future topics" requested most often, above, are of a time sensitive nature, and understanding that the Grant Newsletter comes out on a quarterly basis (at most), these topics are best handled on the City of Grant website.

Many of you listed topics of interest you would like to see written about in *Grant News*. If you know of a contact person with expertise in a particular subject, please contact me and I will coordinate getting an article written for a future newsletter. However, consider this an **open invitation** to anyone who would like to write an article for *Grant News*.

New City of Grant website to come online

We took to heart the comments that only a few residents had ever accessed the City of Grant website, and that the majority of those thought it could be better organized. Many of you are anxious to have a website that is easier to navigate and offers timely information and historical city data for all residents to access. We concur and are happy to announce that the organization of city files that are on the current website has been completed. An updated framework for a new City of Grant website has been designed with an anticipated New Year's launch date. We will keep you posted. We are excited for all the possibilities that this new website will offer residents.



Along with the routine information you've been able to access on the website all along, such as, agendas and minutes of meetings, schedules of events, city ordinances, permit and application information, as well as links to other useful sites, we will also offer the Grant Newsletter online, so that as residents get accustomed to regularly accessing the website, we will be able to cut our postage costs for mailing the newsletter, reduce that line item on the city tax levy, and save trees.

We expect to continually enhance the interactive nature of the website into the future, with features such as: Site Searches, online Surveys of important topics, Lost & Found postings, online permit applications & even registrations for the ball field. The possibilities are endless and we are excited to explore them!

Thank you to all who responded to this survey; whether you considered it part of your civic duty or a whim, it is helpful to us to hear from you! I encourage you, the citizens, to give us even more feedback in the future! We were elected to represent you! Make us accountable! **We love hearing from you!**

Fyi: Respondent's additional written comments can be viewed online.

Go to: www.ci.grant.mn.us

Click on: 2005 Spring Survey Comments

Choose to Reuse

"Over the last 35 years, the amount of waste each American generates has almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.4 pounds per day."

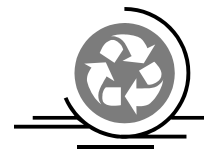
GREENfocused,

The following tips were taken from:

Green Lifestyle, The 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reusing plastic, glass and paper reduces waste disposal costs, conserves resources and reduces pollution. Here are some ideas to reduce waste (*and save money, too!*):

- *Use the public library.* Instead of buying new books.
- *Donate reusable items.* Goodwill, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity use, resell, or train workers to repair products.
- *Buy used items.* Thrift stores and consignment shops offer almost-new clothing, furniture and appliances at reduced costs.
- *Use rechargeable batteries.*
- *Wrap gifts in reusable cloth gift bags.* Use the Sunday comics or decorate paper grocery bags to create unique gift wrap.
- *Use washable cups instead of disposables.* Avoid Styrofoam—it destroys the ozone layer!
- *Use washable napkins.* It reduces waste and saves trees.
- *Use washable cotton diapers.* If you use Velcro diaper wraps, reusable diapers are just as convenient and often cheaper than disposables.
- *Use canvas or cloth bags when shopping.* It saves the environment from plastic waste.

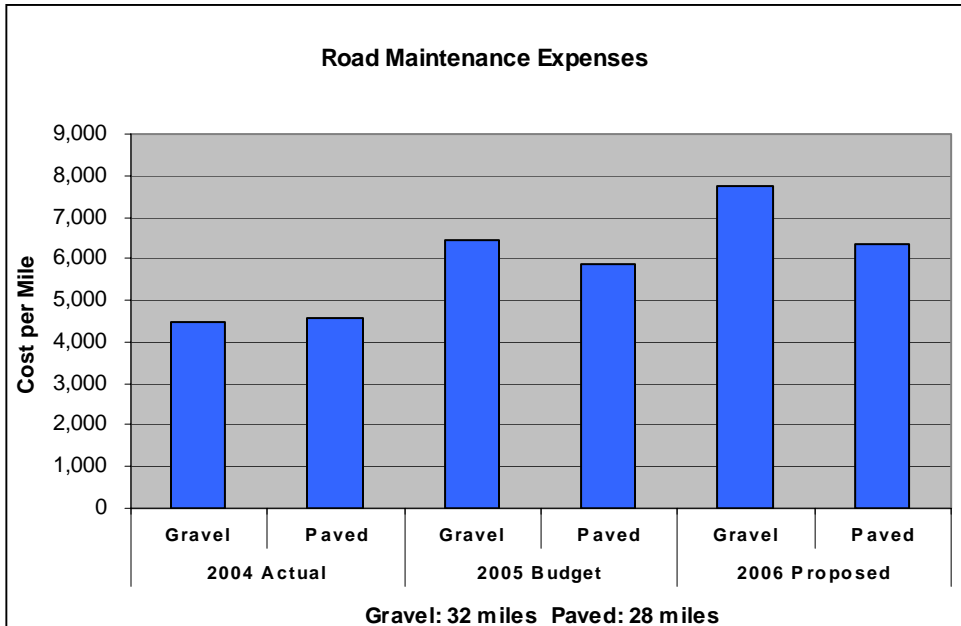


Learn more at:
www.greenfocused.com

Road Costs: Gravel vs Paved

A breakdown of road costs for gravel and paved roads taken from Grant's budget figures shows nearly equal expenditures for 2004 (actual), 2005 (budgeted), and 2006 (proposed).

Budget figures prior to 2004 did not break down road maintenance costs according to type of road, so accurate numbers have not been tallied.



Teach Your Children Well

There has been much talk in recent months about the "safety of our roads." While properly maintained roads play a part in that safety, there is no amount of beautifully paved, reconstructed, or newly graded roadway that will keep one safe if the driver does not ***drive to the conditions of the road.***

Experienced drivers know that as conditions deteriorate due to rain, sleet, snow, dark, etc. any road can become less than safe when considering such things as traffic volume, curves, blind driveways, rushed schedules, unexpected wildlife, and inexperienced drivers. Please consider your driving habits this holiday season and take the time to talk with your new drivers about properly yielding or stopping at marked intersections, being aware of surroundings and driving defensively. We want everyone safe on our roads.

We live in beautiful country; ***slow down and enjoy it!***

Dust Control Policy – Revisited?

After one of the wettest springs in recent years, summer 2005 proved to be one of the driest on record. That was not news to residents along gravel roads. City Council chose to renew a Resolution for Dust Control for 2005 and voted to fund 100% for one application of magnesium chloride (MgCl) treatment to roads with traffic over 400 cars per day. Funds remaining after treatment of those high traffic roads were available on a first come first served basis accordingly: 50% on roads from 300 to 400 cars per day and 25% on roads from 100-299 per day. Application to any other roads or a second application was funded entirely by residents. Neighborhoods collected the required balance prior to being placed



on the MgCl road treatment list.

Cost per mile for 2005 was approximately \$1,950. The city contributed almost \$12,000, while residents paid nearly \$5000 to have their roads treated.

There were a few "snafus": Two roads receiving treatment were not eligible for the city contribution; and, residents along one road that received 100% city contribution contacted Road Supervisor, Nancy Levitz, indicating they wished not to have the treatment applied!

Council expects to revisit the resolution in 2006 so that residents affected by high traffic roads approve the treatment prior to application. Look for the dust control procedure in the Spring 2006 Newsletter.

Recycling Fee Reminder

To date a total of 1,011 out of 1541 recycling fees have been returned, for a 66% or 2/3 compliance- *which is fantastic!*



This leaves approximately 530 outstanding payments. The City Clerk informs us they continue to trickle in daily.

This is just a reminder that if you haven't mailed or dropped off your payment by November 30 the \$35.00 fee plus an additional \$20 administrative charge will be added to your Washington County tax statement.

***The City of Grant
encourages you to
reduce, reuse, and recycle.***

Fall Maintenance saves Tax Dollars

Overhanging Tree Limbs cause Vehicle Problems

The City's contracted mowing and brush cutting personnel, this year, has continued clearing along roadways and intersections, increasing visibility at curves and intersections and reducing "vehicle scratching" nuisances. However, in talking with Washington County's Road Maintenance Supervisor, Nick Young, higher tree limbs under the weight of heavy snowfalls, will overhang the road at a height to interfere with and cause damage to their snowplow trucks. Property owners should survey the trees along their roadway this fall and, if possible, trim overhanging limbs off trees, so that snow removal equipment has smooth sailing this winter.



Culvert Cleaning is Resident Responsibility

Hopefully for those of us who ski and snowmobile, we will be blessed with snow this winter, but before long spring will be here, and along with that will come water, hopefully flowing through the ditches. Please take the time this fall to inspect your driveway culvert. It is each resident's responsibility to maintain the culverts on their property, even though they are within city road easements. Removing leaves, dirt, critters, sticks, children's toys, and other debris will allow the spring runoff to flow freely and prevent flooding or costly problems to the adjacent road base. With your help we'll be able to reduce unnecessary and costly city maintenance.

Manning Avenue Expansion Proposal

The Washington County Engineer will present a proposal for the Manning Avenue expansion project at the **December 6 City Council Meeting**. The County's proposal is to expand Manning Avenue to four lanes between Highways 36 and 96.



The current plan limits access to Grant properties along Manning Avenue due to a proposed center median. Under the plan, those property owners would be limited to right-turns-only out of their driveway (going south) and right-turns-only into their driveway (from the north).

Additional restrictions and costs will be imposed on Grant should any access for future building sites be needed in the area of Manning Avenue & County Road 12.

Interested persons should attend the meeting to voice their concerns.

Fire Safety

This summer Grant's boundaries for fire service from Mahtomedi and Stillwater Fire Departments were changed. The goal of the change was to place as many residences as possible within a 5 mile response distance from our contracted fire services. Some insurance companies use this distance to give better rates. Residents affected by the change received a postcard informing them of their new fire service.

To ensure emergency services can find your home, it is required that your address and name be an appropriate height, have contrasting or reflective background, be located to indicate driveway access to your home, and be clearly visible day and night. This will reduce response time for emergency units should your family be in need of such services.

Also, in preparing for the winter ahead, please keep in mind the following tips from the Consumer Product Safety Commission to help prevent fires, deaths, and injuries:

- Install and maintain smoke alarms (change batteries once per year around October 31-when we change the clocks back).
- Maintain and properly use gas and electrical appliances.
- Never leave food cooking unattended; turn off the burner if leaving.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan.

For more information on fire and other home safety items, access the CPSC web site at: www.cpsc.gov

Mail Theft



Reports of mail theft continue in Grant. Thieves want your checks, credit card applications, and your bank account statements. Follow these tips from the U.S. Postal Service to minimize your chances of becoming a victim of mail theft:

- Use the letter slots at your post office to mail letters.
- Pick up your mail promptly after delivery. Don't leave it in your mailbox overnight.
- Don't leave cash or checks in your mailbox for pick-up.
- Ask your bank for "secure" checks that can't be altered.
- Have the post office hold your mail when you are out of town.

Access more information about mail theft online at www.usps.com.

Report mail theft to Wash Co Sheriff

Energy Conservation Tips

Follow these energy savings tips from www.greenfocused.com. You could save between 10 - 50% on your energy usage. Visit their website for more tips.

- **Insulation:** Save up to 30% on your heating bill by installing proper wall, attic, window and door insulation.
- **Thermostat:** Save up to 10% on heating each year by turning your thermostat back 10 - 15% before going to bed!
- **Air Conditioner:** Smaller, properly sized air conditioners that run continuously are more energy-efficient than larger units!
- **Water Heating:** About 14% of your energy bill goes toward heating your water. Turn down



- the thermostat on your water heater and/or buy a more efficient one. Use low flow aerating showerheads and faucets.
- **Washing Machines:** 80 - 86% of the energy used in washing clothes comes from using hot water in the wash. Switch to warm water to cut energy usage by 1/2!
- **Lighting:** Compact fluorescent bulbs last up to ten times longer than incandescent. Turn lights off when you don't need them.
- **Appliances:** Buy appliances with the *Energy Star* logo. It's the US Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s endorsement of superior energy efficiency.

Washington County website

www.co.washington.mn.us/

Has info about:

- Recycling
- Environmental Update
- Groundwater
- Residential Disposal Guide
- Septic
- Watershed District
- And much much more

Check it out!



Visit us on the web!

Mayor: Tim Gangnon
Council Members: Candice Kraemer, Nancy Levitz, Kim Linner, Sharon Schwarze
City Clerk: Karen Christianson

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