



February 2020

3033 St. Croix Trail South
P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

2020 Presidential Nomination Primary

Washington County is offering five locations for absentee voting for the Presidential Nomination Primary. The locations will be open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday, Feb. 29, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Cottage Grove Service Center, 13000 Ravine Parkway in Cottage Grove
- Headwaters Service Center, 19955 Forest Road N., Forest Lake
- Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Ave. N., Oakdale
- Washington County Government Center, 14949 62nd St. N., Stillwater
- R.H. Stafford Library, Lower Level, 8595 Central Park Place, Woodbury

Those who wish to vote absentee via mail may apply online to have a ballot sent to them. The application is found on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website at www.mnvotes.org.

Information on what the Presidential Nominating Primary is can be found at: www.mnvotes.org.

The Presidential Nominating Primary is on March 3, 2020.

Afton's Polling Place for Elections on Election Day is:
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
East Entrance - Gymnasium
14107 Hudson Road S
Afton, MN 55001

Voting Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Public Input Process For East Metro Area Conceptual Drinking Water Supply Plan

The MPCA, DNR and cities in the east metro area are in the process of developing a draft Conceptual Drinking Water Supply Plan (CDWSP) to address PFC/PFAS contamination in the groundwater. This process is now nearing completion. A consultant has prepared and analyzed a number of conceptual scenarios that include alternatives such as individual whole house water filtration systems [Point Of Entry Treatment (POET) systems] for individual private wells, new treatment plants for existing municipal wells, new wells in optimal locations, and regional water supply systems. The City of Afton has, throughout the CDWSP development process, taken the position that the best solution for Afton's current and future individual private wells is individual whole-house water filtration (POET) systems.

When the draft CDWSP is released, there will be a number of public meetings to obtain feedback from the general public. In order to provide informed feedback, it is important that the public has access to background information regarding the PFAS contamination, the conceptual scenarios that were analyzed and the draft CDWSP, prior to the public meetings. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and MPCA each have websites with beneficial background information. The following are links to these websites: The 3M Settlement website is here — <https://3msettlement.state.mn.us/>.

If you click on the Projects menu at the top of the page, there is a link to a page about the CDWSP — <https://3msettlement.state.mn.us/DrinkingWaterSupply>.

The Minn. Department of Health has quite a bit of background information, maps, etc. here — <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfas.html>

The MPCA has a number of PFAS-related pages here — <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/perfluorochemicals-pfas>.

The City Office is Closed **Monday, February 17**

In observance of President's Day

CITY MEETINGS **February 3, 2020**

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

February 18, 2020

City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

February 19, 2020

Heritage Preservation Commission
5:00 P.M.

February 26, 2020

Parks Committee
6:00 P.M.

*All meetings are held at City Hall
unless otherwise noted.*

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569
Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007
Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982
Ward 3: Stan Ross 651-436-1346
Ward 4: Randy Nelson 651-436-2479

CITY HALL

Monday — Friday

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

651-436-5090

CITY WEBSITE

www.ci.afton.mn.us

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Animal Control 715-220-1332
Building Inspector 651-436-6469
Burning Permits 651-248-5103
Environmental Center 651-275-7475
Highland Sanitation 651-458-0043
Otter Lake Animal Care 651-426-8871
Fire Dept 651-436-7033
Sheriff's Dept 651-439-9381

EMERGENCY 911

Notes from the Mayor

At the end of 2019, the city pre-purchased road salt due to projected limited supplies and high costs. At the same time, we began to explore all options to reduce the amount of salt we are adding to the environment, while maintaining safe driving conditions. As we evaluate these techniques we invite your feedback. There is no silver bullet on how to maintain safe roads while limiting the environmental impact of road salt. But the damage this salt is causing has become clear. We are committed to exploring new techniques to help protect our surface and groundwater and to have safe roadways.

Maintaining this balance is important for two reasons. For the first time in memory we were actually in danger of running out of road salt last winter. Supplies in the region had been exhausted, which is why we pre-purchased a supply this year. But given the lack of options we faced when the supply was drying up, we knew we needed to look at our process from top to bottom. When you also consider our abundant natural resources, and the science showing the damage excessive salt can have, trying something new was necessary. Thank you to Ken Johnson, our public works director, and Ben Thurmes of Tri County, our plowing contractor, for leading this effort.

Tri County recently purchased an icebreaker roller for use in Afton. This tool breaks up snow pack and lets the plow blade get down to the road surface. We have many roads that do not get a lot of direct sunlight, and end up with snow pack. Salt and sand do not work well in these situations, especially at colder temperatures. This new equipment is showing great promise and was used for the first time the end of January. It worked great, and was able to completely clear several snow packed roads.

We have also begun pretreating the city's main roads with a brine mix. This has worked well to prevent the snow pack from forming. This brine mix is much better than excessive salt so it is a promising start. If our experience continues to be positive with these techniques I hope we will be able to do more of it.

The environmental reasons to use less road salt are many. It impacts vegetation along roadways and is detrimental to soil health. It also creates dead zones in the deeper parts of waterways due to oxygen depletion, and it can help release toxic metals from sediment, among many other problems. There are no natural processes that reduce or remove this chloride. Once it is in the water the concentration levels can only be impacted by diluting it with fresh salt-free water.

Suffice to say we are trying to use less, but we also are focused on safety and will continue to work on this issue over the next months and years. I am optimistic we will be successful.

In other news, at January's council meeting we updated committee assignments and former mayor Richard Bend has agreed to continue to represent Afton on the Fire Department Board. His experience is invaluable, and we are well represented on that important board by Richard and Councilman Randy Nelson. Thank you Richard and Randy!

There are openings on the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee and the Park Committee. Please sign up if you can and support the important work they do.

-Bill

COMING SOON: GUIDED TOUR OF AFTON'S WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee invites you to a guided tour on April 30th of the new wastewater treatment facility that treats wastewater generated by Afton's Old Village.

The design engineer and the site operator will be onsite to give you an inside look at the site operations. You'll see the path wastewater takes through the facility to its eventual return to groundwater. You'll learn how the wastewater is treated by treatment tanks, a gravel filter, and other components before its dispersal to the soil. You will have a firsthand glimpse of how the water is treated to reduce wastewater constituents, in particular nitrogen, to drinking water standards. The complex engineering and site landscape make this an especially interesting and fun tour; please join us:

Thursday, April 30
5:30-6:30 PM
2318 St. Croix Trail S., Afton

NOW ACCEPTING ALL BATTERIES!

Batteries can start fires in the trash if not recycled properly. With so many different kinds of batteries, it can be confusing to know which batteries can be recycled. Washington County is making it simple by accepting **all batteries** for recycling.

Safely store and transport batteries by placing a small piece of clear packing tape over the positive and negative ends of each battery. Using clear tape allows Environmental Center staff to identify the battery for proper sorting and recycling.

Before you make the trip, don't forget to check your home and garage for other hazardous items such as paint, fluorescent light bulbs, used oil, and aerosol cans.

Environmental Center
4039 Cottage Grove Drive
Woodbury, MN 55129
651-275-7475

January Meeting Highlights

January 6, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a variance at 15904 Afton Blvd.
- Held a public hearing on the draft Preservation and Land Conservation Development (PLCD) Ordinance Amendment.
- Reviewed the draft Short Term Rentals Ordinance.

January 18, 2020 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Viewed a presentation on the St. Croix Utility Box Mural Project.
- Approved the Preservation and Land Conservation Development (PLCD) Ordinance Amendment.
- Reviewed the Draft Short Term Rentals Ordinance.
- Approved the 2020 Meeting schedule.
- Approved Annual Committee Appointments for City Council members.
- Designated the official depository, newspaper, signatories, city engineer and city attorney.
- Appointed election judges for 2020 elections.
- Approved replacement of City Hall fluorescent lights with LED lights.
- Approved meeting video storage proposal from Afton Historical Museum.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.ci.afton.mn.us

Public Feedback Requested Regarding a Short Term Home Rental Ordinance

The City Council and Planning Commission would like to obtain feedback from the general public regarding a short term home rental ordinance, and have scheduled a public hearing for that purpose to be held by the Planning Commission on Monday March 2 at 7:00 p.m.

The short term rental of homes, such as through Airbnb and VRBO, is becoming more popular and more prevalent. Afton currently has a small number of properties being used for short term rentals, and has not received complaints related to the rentals. Short term rentals, if not properly managed, can have negative impacts on neighboring residential properties, as well as health and safety impacts on those who stay at the rental properties.

The Afton City Council and Planning Commission have reviewed options regarding possible regulation of short term home rentals, and are in the process of developing a short term home rental ordinance. The current draft ordinance would require any property owner who has short term rentals for more than two weeks per year to obtain a license from the City. The licensing process would require fire and safety inspections, well testing and a review of septic system capacity and compliance. The ordinance also establishes performance standards and penalties for noncompliance. An updated ordinance will be available for public review on February 10 on the City's website: www.ci.afton.mn.us

Test Your Home For Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless gas that comes from the soil. Radon gas is common throughout Minnesota, and can enter a home anywhere there is an opening between the home and the soil. Long term exposure to radon can lead to lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause in smokers.

Test for radon

A radon test is the only way to find out how much radon is in your home. [Short term radon test kits are available to Washington County residents at no cost.](#)

Radon test kits can be picked up from the following locations during operating hours:

[Cottage Grove](#) - Service Center, Public Health & Environment

[Forest Lake](#) - Service Center, Public Health & Environment

[Stillwater](#) - Government Center, Room 4600

[Environmental Center](#)

[Northern Yard Waste Site](#)

For more information about radon testing and mitigation, see the Minnesota Department of Health's Radon page: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/air/radon/index.html>

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 8, 2020

Annual Open House 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Jessie Eckroad from Carpenter Nature Center will bring a live red-tailed hawk and hognose snake. Katie Burns, Minnesota Audubon Outreach Coordinator, will bring a larger-than-life owl pellet. This free, family-friendly event includes night hikes, guided star observing with Minnesota Astronomical Society members, and a campfire with s'mores.

Information:

Free and open to everyone.

Belwin Conservancy Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton
651-436-5189, www.belwin.org

Saturday, February 15, 2020

Education Center Third Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Explore the Belwin Education Center and its miles of rolling, wooded trails. Lynette Anderson, Belwin's Interpretive Naturalist, will be in the Education Center building to greet you, answer your questions, and suggest hikes. Bring your own snowshoes or cross-country skis. Hot cocoa and tea provided.

Information:

Free and open to everyone.

Belwin Conservancy Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton
651-436-5189, www.belwin.org

Belwin Conservancy
1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189
www.belwin.org

New Animal Control and Animal Impound Providers

Due to the retirement of the City's long-time animal control services provider, the City hired Companion Animal Control as its new animal control services provider. Also, due to costly and impractical requirements for transporting animals to Wisconsin, the City has changed its animal impound provider to Otter Lake Animal Care Center (OLACC). OLACC is located at 6848 Otter Lake Rd, Hugo, MN 55038. The contact information for these providers is on page one of this Newsletter.



CITY OF AFTON
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO
P.O. BOX 219
AFTON, MN 55001



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library February 2020

Closed on Monday, Feb. 17 for President's Day.

Featured Events

STEM Saturday: Volcanoes Erupt

Saturday, Feb. 1 from 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Discover more about one of Earth's most incredible land forms: volcanoes! We'll learn what they are, why they erupt, and even watch a volcano erupt from space. Participants will create their own volcano and we'll take turns blasting them off.

Recommended for ages 6-12. Please register online at WashCoLib.org/Events, at Valley Library, or by calling 651-436-5882.

Shadow Puppetry Stepping Stone Theater

Tuesday, Feb. 4 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Design and construct puppets with Stepping Stone Theater at Valley Library! Bring them to life through manipulation and character creation exercises. For ages 8-12. Please register online at WashCoLib.org/Events, at Valley Library, or by calling 651-436-5882.

Letter Writing Party!

Thursday, Feb. 6 from 5 to 6:00 p.m.

In honor of 'National Send a Card to a Friend Day,' join us at Valley Library to practice our letter writing and making skills. For ages 6-12. Please register online at WashCoLib.org/Events, at Valley Library, or by calling 651-436-5882.

Valley Talks: Rosalie Wahl, Girl from Birch Creek

Wednesday, Feb. 19 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

In this Valley Talk, we will be celebrating the life and legacy of Washington County resident Rosalie Wahl, who was the first woman to be named onto the Minnesota Supreme Court. We will be joined by Justice Esther Tomljanovich to discuss her time working with Justice Wahl, and filmmaker, John Kaul, for a showing of the documentary on Rosalie Wahl's life, *Girl from Birch Creek*. No registration is required.

Unplugged: Family Game Night

Wednesday, Feb. 26 from 6 to 8:00 p.m.

Come to Valley Library after hours to play cards and board games. The library has a collection of games such as Apple to Apples, Clue, Scrabble, Cranium, Sorry, or you can always bring your own to share. No registration is required.

Get Ready to Leap!

Thursday, Feb. 27 from 4 to 5:00 p.m.

Leapin' lizards, it's Leap Day! We will celebrate this day that comes only once every four years in silly style with songs, some silly games and singing "Happy Leap Day to You!" Getting an extra day in the year is something to leap (and shout) about! This program is for all ages. No registration is required.

www.washcolib.org

Valley Branch Library, 384 St. Croix Trail South, Lakeland, MN 55043

**PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter

IN COLOR
on the city website.



*Please recycle this
newsletter after use.*

Consider Serving as an Election Judge in 2020

Afton is always seeking citizens to serve as election judges. Election judges are temporary, paid employees of local election officials trained to handle all aspects of voting at the polling place. Serving as an election judge is a chance to learn about elections, and is a great service to our community. Judges will be paid an hourly wage of \$10.00 per hour in 2020, which will include your training time as well.

Training: You will complete an on-line training module, approximately two hours in length. A link to the on-line training module will be emailed to interested judges.

Election Days: You have an opportunity to work one or all of the 2020 elections: Presidential Nomination Primary March 3, Primary Election August 11, General Election November 3. Afton Elections are held at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 14107 Hudson Road South.

Workday Schedule: A typical schedule on Election Day is from 6:00 a.m. to around 10:00 p.m. In most cases, you will be asked to work a 8-hour shift or half-day. Food is provided for each shift.

Time Off from Work to Serve: Your employer is required to give you time off from work to be an election judge without a reduction in pay. To qualify, you must notify your employer in writing at least 20 days in advance of Election Day.

Eligibility: You must be eligible to vote in Minnesota; be at least 18 years old on Election Day; able to read, write, and speak English. You cannot be a spouse, parent, child, step, or sibling of any Election Judge serving in the same precinct. You cannot be a candidate or the spouse, parent, child, step or sibling of any candidate on the ballot in that precinct.

Contact: Call City Hall: 651-436-5090 or email: jyoho@ci.afton.mn.us