Chills can’t stop the thrills at Fire & Ice, set for Feb. 1

Break the cabin fever this winter at the 31st annual Fire & Ice festival, set for 3-7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1 at Parkers Lake Park at County Road 6 and Niagara Lane.

The annual wintertime festival features activities such as recycle bin races, a youth ice fishing contest, hayrides, pony and dog-sled rides, miniature golf on the ice, snow tubing, box hockey, recreational skating, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, weather permitting.

To fight the cold, attendees can warm up at a bonfire with s’mores and hot chocolate, while supplies last, sponsored by Step by Step Montessori.

Fire & Ice returns to Parkers Lake on Feb. 1. The annual festival features a variety of wintertime activities, including kick-sled racing (pictured), a youth ice fishing contest, snow bowling, recycle bin races, miniature golf on the ice and more.

Plymouth Police Department strives for improved mental health interactions

In recent years, the Plymouth Police Department has increased efforts to recognize, assist with and create better outcomes for mental health issues within the community. A new component of Plymouth’s approach is the Case Assessment Management Program, or CAMP, which is a two-year pilot featuring a shared social worker position with the Minnetonka Police Department.

Improving Service
Since July, Senior Social Worker Jessica Angeles has split her time between the Plymouth and Minnetonka police departments, serving as an important resource that was previously unavailable on either department’s in-house staff. Angeles is a Hennepin County employee with the Suburban Police Social Work Team, and contracts with the two departments for this new program.

Having a social worker on staff increases the level of service residents with mental health issues are able to access through the police departments. As an embedded social worker, Angeles provides more efficient and relevant connections to mental health resources for those who need them.

Plymouth gets ready for the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census kicks off this spring, which gives residents a chance to be counted and to ensure that Plymouth is fully represented. The census is held nationally every 10 years and has far-reaching public policy effects, including funding, planning and political representation.

From March 12-20, households will receive a mailed invitation to participate in the census. The invitation will give details about three options to complete a census form – online, by phone or through the mail.

The census is 10 questions long and takes about 10 minutes to complete per household member.

Residents should note that, by law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents’ answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. Visit mn.gov/admin/2020-census for more information about the census in Minnesota.

Community Leaders
The city has formed a Complete Count Committee for those who have connections to groups who may be underrepresented or are at risk of going uncounted. Community members who have connections in school, church or community groups are encouraged to reach out to the city at administration@plymouthmn.gov to learn more about how to participate.

www.plymouthmn.gov
Commercial and residential development proposed for former Four Seasons site

After years of sitting vacant, the Four Seasons Mall may soon be the site of a unique redevelopment mixed with residential and commercial spaces. In November, the City Council approved the preliminary plans for a proposed redevelopment of the entire Four Seasons site.

A Mixed-Use Space

The residential portion of the proposal is from Plymouth-based apartment developer and manager Dominiun. The company plans to construct two buildings with a total of 163 affordable family units, ranging in size from one- to four-bedrooms. Each building would be three stories of living with a ground floor of enclosed parking space. The project also includes a senior residential building of 255 units in six levels above an enclosed parking level.

Site Challenges

The Four Seasons Mall site has posed redevelopment challenges for nearly a decade. The more-than 40-year-old strip mall has been vacant since it was purchased by Walmart to be developed into a retail store—a plan that never advanced. However, a traffic study in 2019 determined that the current proposed development would add approximately 5,300 trips per day, which is consistent with what the roadway was designed to handle—when full, the original Four Seasons Mall generated about 5,000 daily trips. In comparison, a large retail location such as a Walmart generates approximately 7,500 trips.

Plymouth Community Development Director Steve Juetten is optimistic about the current proposal because of the developer’s experience, plans to improve storm water treatment and wetland quality on the site, and available financing assistance through grants, bonding and city-provided tax increment financing.

Launch LLC would manage the commercial component of the project.

The Four Seasons Mall site has long stood vacant at Rockford Road and Highway 169. "We believe this is a developer that has the ability to acquire property to construct a three-story, 229-stall park and ride ramp for Plymouth Metrolink, the city’s transit service." The ramp, estimated to cost about $8 million, would also be available to the site’s commercial visitors and the general public during non-transit park and ride hours.

Next Steps

Next steps for the proposal include finalizing funding components and approval of the final plans, which is expected to take another year. If everything falls into place, construction could begin as soon as May 2020 and would be expected to last through 2022.

To stay abreast of City Council meeting agendas, sign up to receive emails detailing City Council agendas at plymouthmn.gov/enotify. Select categories for both Special and Regular City Council meeting agendas.

Fire & Ice ... from page 1

Food trucks will also be on site. The day wraps up with a unique winter fireworks display, sponsored by the Plymouth Civic League, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Medallion Hunt

The 10th-annual medallion hunt begins Thursday, Jan. 9 with a clue on plymouthmn.gov and the city’s social media platforms. More clues will be published Thursdays, Jan. 16, 23 and 30, or until someone finds the medallion. News was shared on the city’s social media platforms in November as the Rockford Road bridge over I-494 was reaching completion.

Residents who trim their own boulevard trees should contact Forestry Forester Paul Bock at 763-509-5944 or pbcock@plymouthmn.gov so they can be noted in the tree inventory.

Pruning of private trees is the responsibility of property owners. Pruning is recommended during dormancy (typically November through March) to avoid potential pest and disease problems.

Tree services with certified arborists on staff and adequate insurance are recommended.

Removal of private trees is the responsibility of property owners.

More Information

Aside from food trucks, Fire & Ice is free. Shuttle service will be available 3-7 p.m. at no cost.

A schedule of Fire & Ice events will be posted on the city’s website in early January.

For weather concerns, check plymouthmn.gov or call the weather line at 763-509-5205.

For more information, visit the city’s website at plymouthmn.gov.
Plymouth READS highlights the latest from international bestseller Leif Enger

Plymouth READS has announced "Virgil Wander" by international bestselling author Leif Enger as its 2020 book selection. Plymouth READS has selected "Virgil Wander" by Leif Enger as its 2020 book selection. Residents are invited to read the novel and participate in book-related events through March and April.

Author of "100 Miles to Nowhere" will sign books, speak and sing. Registration is required.

Classic Movie Matinee – 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 4 at the Plymouth Creek Center, 14000 34th Ave. N. A showing of the classic film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" will be held. Registration is required.

Book Discussion – 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, April 7 at the Plymouth Library. Join community members for a moderated discussion of "Virgil Wander."

Plymouth READS Main Event – 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 16 at the Plymouth Creek Center. Meet "Virgil Wander" author Leif Enger at the Primavera Literary Night. Enger will hold a book talk, answer questions and sign copies of the book.

Plymouth READS is cosponsored by the Friends of the Plymouth Library, the Plymouth Library, the City of Plymouth and the Plymouth Arts Council.

To learn more, visit plymouthreads.org or follow Plymouth READS on Facebook.

Throughout the past five years, Plymouth has offered Crisis Intervention Team training to its officers. There are currently 24 CIT-trained officers within Plymouth’s staff of 80 sworn officers. The department plans to train five more officers in CIT each year.

Additionally, all Plymouth police officers are required to go through de-escalation training, which can benefit mental health interactions and produce more positive outcomes.

Five of Plymouth’s CIT-trained officers also make up a Mental Health Evaluation Team, where officers conduct follow-ups and check-ins with residents who have known mental health issues. Additionally, Plymouth police sergeants are being trained to look through reports and calls to identify potential mental health issues that may have been missed initially.

Continuing to Improve

As CAMP is rolled out and mental health resources become more commonplace in how the department interacts with the community, Goldstein sees a continuation of increasingly positive outcomes in mental health crisis calls.

“This framework will become the accepted standard going forward as other police departments and social service agencies collaborate to best serve their communities,” he said. “As a result of our efforts, we have experienced a number of positive outcomes from those who have benefited from this new approach.”

Angelas agreed that an increased partnership with social and police services will help people get the assistance they need more quickly.

“The numbers speak for themselves – the community needs this type of help,” Angeles said. “I think residents appreciate that there are people in Plymouth who understand what they’re going through. They may or may not always be interested in services, but we can start on the right foot and are sometimes able to offer them an introduction to a new life.”

Increased Training

In addition to CAMP, the Plymouth Police Department continues to focus on mental health as a key component to providing quality public safety services to the community.

Tentative timeline emerges for Plymouth Creek Center

A tentative timeline has been set for the Plymouth Creek Center project. After a lengthy public feedback process and years of research, the project is in the design and construction documents phase. In coming months, city staff will work with the project architect and construction manager to finalize construction documents and cost details, which will be presented to City Council. If approved, the project will proceed to bidding.

While subject to change, proposed milestones include:

- January – Design documents complete
- June – Council consideration of construction documents
- June/July – Bonding notification from the state
- June-August – Bid process, including council consideration of bids
- August/September – Construction begins
- September 2022 – Project completion

More information about the project can be found at plymouthmn.gov/pcp.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Volunteer!

The city is seeking volunteers who are:

- Enthusiastic about winter sports. Take tickets at high school hockey games through February.
- Friendly and love to provide good service. Assist during the Waffle Breakfast to support senior programs Sunday, Jan. 26. Help with a variety of fun outdoor activities during the Fire & Ice festival Saturday, Feb. 1.
- Save the following dates. Primavera (April 15-19), Discover Plymouth (Saturday, April 18), and Flower and Fall Day (Saturday, May 16) and Bark in the Park (Saturday, May 30).

To find out more about these and other opportunities, visit plymouth.gov/volunteer or call 763-509-5210.

Take a Closer Look

Sylvia Grismer

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer

As a volunteer, my job is to provide critical support to firefighters, police officers and paramedics at emergency scenes and disaster sites.

In order to do that, I attend monthly trainings on topics, including radio communications, traffic control, trauma incidents, drone deployment, missing persons, electrical hazards, active shooter, hostage events and first aid. The more I know, the more I am able to help people when I am needed.

My favorite thing about being a city volunteer is being able to give back to the community that I work in and call home and building relationships with other like-minded people from the community.

Because Sylvia volunteers, the city’s public safety professionals have trained individuals working alongside them to provide necessary resources and staffing during crisis situations.

The CERT program is seeking volunteers.

To apply, go to plymouthmn.gov/CERT and download an application – due Friday, Jan. 31 – or contact volunteer services at 763-509-5210.

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IN BRIEF AND HAPPENINGS

City Council Adopts 2020 Budget – The Plymouth City Council has adopted the 2020 budget, which includes an overall tax levy increase of 7.36% from 2019. Due to new growth, the impact on the property tax bill of owners of average value homes will be minimized. For owners of a $350,000-$500,000 home, the increase will be about $23-$30 a year for the city portion of their property tax bill.

Residents’ total property tax bill is divided among the city, the school district, Hennepin County and other taxing jurisdictions. The city receives 21 cents of each property tax dollar, which pays for police and fire service, snowplowing, street maintenance, trail and park upkeep, recreation programs, community planning, housing programs and other local services.

Detailed information about the budget, as well as the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, is available at plymouthmn.gov/financereport.

City Hall Battery Recycling Discontinued – Household batteries will no longer be accepted at Plymouth City Hall through Hennepin County’s battery recycling program. The City Hall site is being discontinued due to potential fire hazards. Batteries are still accepted from residents at Hennepin County drop-off facilities:

- Hennepin County Recycling Center
- South Hennepin Recycling and Transfer Station
- 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 25 for Drop-Off Day activities. For details, visit plymouthmn.gov/dropoff.

Recycling Drop-Off Site – Open daily. The site is located next to the Maintenance Facility and is available to Plymouth residents and small businesses located in Plymouth. The site will be closed all day Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25 for Drop-Off Day activities.

Plymouth News is published bimonthly by the City of Plymouth to update residents and businesses on city government news.

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Contact the City
Phone: 763-509-5000
MN Relay (Hearing/Speech Impaired) 7-1-1
Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday (Community Development only)

View Meetings
Live on Channel 16, 7 p.m.
On-demand video link at city website
City Council: Jan. 14, 28 and Feb. 11, 25
Planning Commission: Jan. 15 and Feb. 5, 19

Connect with Plymouth
facebook.com/plymouthmn
instagram.com/plymouthmn

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A look back at my first year yields observations, but few surprises

By Mayor Jeff Wosje

In January, I mark my first year as mayor. Transitioning from council member to mayor has been gratifying, interesting and a bit of a balancing act. While I haven’t had any real surprises, I do have a few observations based on my first year.

Highly scheduled. Working a full-time job and serving as mayor in my “spare” time keeps me busy. I lead as many as four City Council meetings a month, have numerous meetings with city staff, residents, developers, businesses, students and other jurisdictions – and I also represent Plymouth at an array of events.

Visible. I am now more recognizable, probably due to the many public events. I am still getting accustomed to residents greeting me when I’m out in the community doing errands. These informal contacts are gratifying.

Fun. Plymouth residents are proud of our community and quality of life – and I’m honored to represent a leading city in the state. I also get to celebrate the many good things happening here. Not many people get to break ground for new projects and wield an oversized scissors to cut ribbons at openings of businesses, bridges, parks, new developments and more.

Meeting management. My perspective of council meetings has changed. As a council member, I viewed myself as a participant, listening to others and sharing my thoughts. Now my primary focus is leading orderly meetings that stay on topic and are respectful of all – even when not all agree. Well-run meetings that follow procedure give the public confidence that the council is doing its best to make good decisions on their behalf.

Feedback. I hear from many residents. Keeping up with email and voicemail is challenging, but a high priority. As I mark this one-year milestone, thank you for the opportunity to serve and lead in Plymouth.