In early May, Land O’Lakes Inc. celebrated the opening of its newly expanded corporate campus in Arden Hills. Employees in Roseville and Shoreview will be moving to the new facility throughout the summer. The new building will provide collaborative, efficient workspace for 2,000 employees.

The project included construction of a four-story, 155,000-square-foot office building at the corner of County Road F and Lexington Avenue.

President and CEO Chris Policinski thanked the construction, government and project partners who helped make the new building, and expanded campus, a reality. A Land O’Lakes spokesperson said the expansion is transforming how the 100-year-old company works.

The headquarters offer a unique environment for teams to collaborate and innovate and also have access to amenities that provide for a full range of work-life needs and support employee well-being. These include onsite childcare, wellness and fitness centers, a newly remodeled credit union, cafeteria and technology assistance center, as well as a coffee shop and mother’s suites.

“We’re proud to have the headquarters of this Fortune 500 company, which now ranks 216, in Arden Hills,” said Mayor Grant. “It’s clear that the employees are at the heart of this efficient design that transforms the work experience for so many people.”
City Hall News

It's garage sale season; make sure you have a permit

If you are planning a garage sale, you are required to get a permit from City Hall. You can apply for a permit through the City website or in person. Visit cityofardenhills.org/garagesalepermit to apply online.

Your sale cannot last longer than three days and you may not hold more than two sales per year. To advertise your sale, you should follow the guidelines for signs that are included with your permit details.

Construction projects in Arden Hills continue this summer

As many of you know, there are a number of construction projects happening now in the City. These include City projects:
- Old Snelling Trail and Watermain
- Street and Utility Improvement
- Johanna Marsh Playground

Other projects:
- Xcel Energy Pipeline Replacement
- County Rd F by Ramsey County

For updates, please visit cityofardenhills.org/Constructionprojects.

Arden Hills "Hot Dog with a Deputy" set for July 11

Join members of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department (RCSO) at the popular "Hot Dog with a Deputy" event on Wednesday, July 11, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Perry Park, Arden Hills. "Hot Dog with a Deputy" is a summer initiative to build connections with the communities served by the RCSO. Join members of law enforcement for hot dogs, chips, bottled water and fun. The event includes equipment demonstrations and conversations with deputies. Staff and equipment at the event could include Patrol Deputies, K-9, Water Patrol, SWAT, Mobile Field Force, Reserve Deputies, Mounted Unit and volunteers.

Celebrate end of summer program at Penny Carnival on July 27th

Gather up your pennies and come celebrate the end of the 2018 Summer Parks & Recreation program.

A Penny Carnival will be held Friday, July 27 at Perry Park.

Calling all dog lovers to Bark and Rec Day on July 28th

The City’s annual Bark and Rec Day event for dogs and dog lovers will be held Saturday, July 28, in the off-leash dog area at Perry Park.

This is a free event for all ages. Refreshments and snacks will be available.
April 9, 2018

Unless otherwise indicated, all items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

• Approved Conditional Use Permit and Master Plan amendment and variance approval agreement for Bethel University to update its campus Master Plan and for a variance to allow for a future addition to encroach into the Valentine Lake setback.

• Declared costs to be assessed, ordered preparation of proposed assessments, and called for a public hearing for proposed assessments for the 2018 street and utility improvement project for reconstruction: Indian Oaks Court, Indian Oaks Trail, West Floral Drive, James Circle, Gale Circle, Norma Circle, for reclamation: Wedgewood Drive, Brueberry Lane and Parkshore Lane. (4-1, Scott, opposed).

• Approved plans and specifications and ordered advertisement for bids for Johanna Marsh Park improvements project, including play structure, picnic shelter, and lookout, with final construction completion anticipated in mid-July.

April 23, 2018

Unless otherwise indicated, all items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

• Adopted proclamations in recognition of National Police Week (May 13-19, 2018) and Public Works Week (May 20-26, 2018) to honor these professionals who serve our community and the public good.

• Denied a preliminary plat, final plat and a variance for the decommissioned Lake Johanna Fire Station property located at 3246 New Brighton Road to subdivide property into four single-family residential lots with each lot to have a reduced width of 81.75 feet from the minimum lot width requirement of 85 feet. (4-1, McClung, opposed).

• Tabled a resolution authorizing the release of the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan update for required review by neighboring jurisdiction and affected governing bodies to allow for further City Council consideration of future land use designations. (3-2, Holmes, McClung opposed).

For a complete and detailed listing of recent City Council action, please review the meeting minutes on the City website at cityofardenhills.org and click on Agendas & Minutes.

Benchmarks: A review of recent City Council action

Since 2011, The City of Arden Hills has consistently ranked as one of the top three cities in Ramsey County in recyclables collected each year. In 2017, Arden Hills ranked third in the amount of recyclable materials collected per household.

According to a recent report, Arden Hills’ residents diverted a total of 1.9 million pounds of recyclable materials from the waste stream last year, with paper products—cardboard, newspaper and mixed paper—making up nearly 60 percent of the total weight of recyclables collected.

The City receives a grant from Ramsey County in support of its recycling program, and reports annually on the amount of recyclable materials collected.

Arden Hills ranks in top three in Ramsey County in amount of recyclables collected

The community should be proud of its efforts! Visit cityofardenhills.org/recycling or RamseyRecycles.com, for more information on what can be recycled in Arden Hills.

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Utility study complete; rate changes to be reflected on July billing statements

The City of Arden Hills recently hired Ehlers, the City’s municipal advisors, to conduct a utility rate study of the water, sewer, and stormwater funds. City policy is to pass on to ratepayers—through utility fees—the City’s actual operating costs and costs of infrastructure improvements for these utilities. The City annually reviews rates to ensure revenues are not overfunding or underfunding the utility budget. The goal is to break even.

Ehlers recommended minor changes to the utility fee structure for all three funds, including the following: combining the water stand-by charge with the meter charge; eliminating the first 15,000 gallons of usage from the base fee for sewer, so rate payers will only pay for what they actually use; and eliminating the fee for undeveloped property in the stormwater fund. The City Council approved the recommendations and adopted a new fee structure at its May 14 regular meeting. Residents and business owners will see new rates reflected on their July utility billing statements.

Residents deemed low users of water, those who use 8,000 gallons a quarter or less during winter months, can expect to see a decrease in the sewer portion of their quarterly billing statements. Residents deemed median users of water, those who use around 12,000 gallons per quarter, can expect an approximate $10 increase in their quarterly billing statements. The majority of Arden Hills’ residents are low or median users of water. Those who use high amounts of water can expect to see higher increases.

It’s important to note that utility rates are uniquely structured across cities, and city policies regarding fee usage differ. Some cities use their utility fees to help with their city’s general fund balance, while others, like Arden Hills, use the collected fees to repair aging sewer and water infrastructure.

Comparing rates across cities doesn’t tell the whole story. Changes in population, topography, age of existing infrastructure, source of water and water treatment processes, are variables that can impact utility billing rates.

If you have questions about your utility bill, please call City Hall during regular business hours at 651-792-7800.

Buckthorn pick-up and yard waste site hours

If you have buckthorn in your yard, the Public Works staff will pick it up from your curb through the end of October, or you can take it to the Ramsey County Yard Waste collection site off of New Brighton Road at 3530 Hudson Avenue. Buckthorn is an invasive species that negatively impacts local plant life diversity.

To schedule a pick up, please call City Hall at 651-792-7800, or visit cityofardenhills.org to fill out the online form for City staff to pick it up from your curb.

The Public Works Department will pick up buckthorn from residential homes on Fridays. Residents are required to place the buckthorn in neat, manageable piles along the street curb. Please note that only buckthorn will be accepted. Alternatively, you can bring the buckthorn piles to the Ramsey County Yard Waste Collection site, located off of New Brighton Road at 3530 Hudson Avenue.

The site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For more information, please contact Jeff Frid at 651-792-7852. For information on what buckthorn is and why it is a problem, please visit dnr.state.mn.us and search for buckthorn.

If you are doing additional spring yard cleanup, you can bring your yard waste to the Arden Hills yard waste collection and compost site, too. Ramsey County operates seven yard waste collection sites. All sites are free and open to all county residents. For locations, visit ramseycounty.us/yardwaste.

Stormdrains are for rainwater only; watch for pollutants

Did you know the stormdrain on your street or in your backyard is directly connected to a neighborhood lake, pond or wetland? Water and pollution entering the drain are not cleaned or otherwise treated.

Whatever goes down the drain, goes into nearby lakes and ponds. Whatever is left on the street, sidewalk or driveway, will be washed into the lake when it rains. Even seemingly harmless substances, such as grass clippings and soaps, can have a dramatic effect on water quality.

Help keep our local lakes, wetlands and ponds clean by sweeping all spilled substances or pollution off driveways, sidewalks and streets. Never pour anything down the stormdrain. “Only rain down the drain.”
Northeast Youth & Family Services offers counseling in our community

Northeast Youth & Family Services (NYFS) offers mental health and community service programs to 4,000 youth, adults and families with an annual operating budget of $3.1 million. Arden Hills is one of many municipal partners that contribute financially to the organization.

History of NYFS

The organization was formed more than 40 years ago when several communities decided there must be a better way to serve youth who were getting in trouble with the law, according to Jerry Hromatka, NYFS president and CEO. Years ago they would be arrested and go to jail. Today, many first-time offenders are instead served by the organization’s Diversion Program, which offers restitutionsal justice through a combination of community service, education and counseling.

Serving the whole family

“NYFS works with the whole family, not just the child, because these issues impact the whole family unit,” said Miriam Ward, who serves as the City’s volunteer board representative.

Ward knows first-hand the issues facing young people and their families. One of her sons struggled with mental health concerns and substance abuse. He eventually spiraled out of control and went into the juvenile justice system. “He may have been one of the kids who was saved,” she said, had she known about NYFS at the time.

“Aren’t there more in our community who could benefit, but who don’t know about this service?” She asks. This is a question that is always in the back of her mind.

A chance to help others

In 2012, Ward saw a notice in the Arden Hills Notes newsletter seeking volunteers for the NYFS Board of Directors. She had recently retired and thought NYFS would be a good organization in which to give her time and talents.

“It touched my heart that I was chosen to serve on the board,” said Ward, who brings previous board service to her role, as well as years of professional experience in human resources. She currently serves as chair of the organization’s human resources committee, and puts in anywhere from six to 45 hours per month, depending on the needs of the organization.

Ward is in her final term of service, having served six years already. Her current term runs through June 2020. In addition to her human resources role, Ward supports the organization’s fundraising efforts, including the annual luncheon, Mayor’s Challenge Golf Tournament, the annual Taste of NYFS event in the fall, and other initiatives.

Although she is not directly involved with the families who receive services, Ward said she is grateful knowing she is making a contribution to help the children and families who come to NYFS.

Hromatka agrees. “Miriam is a gem,” he said. “We are so grateful to have her on board. We can’t overstate the value she has added to our organization.”

Volunteer opportunities

“Anyone who wants to volunteer or donate, should call NYFS,” Miriam said. “They do so much for the communities they serve, and you can see how early intervention in the lives of young people can do so much to help them.”

NYFS works with local school districts and staff to support youth at school and at home. The day treatment programs serve youth in grades 5-12, who receive academic instruction at NYFS in conjunction with mental health support and counseling during the day.

The organization also offers community service and youth development programs, like the Senior Chore Program, that help seniors live in their homes for as long as possible.

For more information, visit nyfs.org, or call 651-486-3808.

Upcoming event

Mayor’s Challenge Golf Tournament
Monday, June 11
Call Sandra Bahr at 651-379-3422.
From the Mayor

While walking into the Council chambers a few weeks ago, I noticed the 2001 proclamation of the city’s 50th anniversary. It gave me a bit of pause as I considered some of the implications of the proclamation.

First, in about three years the City of Arden Hills will turn 70 years old. Second, I was on the council in 2001 and signed the proclamation. Those two items started me thinking about everything that has been needed over those years. If someone were to ask, “What challenges are there in running Arden Hills?” How would I respond?

Age and design impact our costs
We have many distinct neighborhoods separated from each other. The geographic dispersion and rolling hills cause us to have more infrastructure per residence than some cities, and that increases our cost structure.

Arden Hills has about 30 miles of city streets, with a good number of them put in during the 1980s that are now coming due for maintenance. We have over 48 miles of sewer lines and 43.5 miles of water lines that need ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

We have a number of areas in the city that have clay pipe for sewer lines, which was typical in the 1940s and 1950s. These older lines need to be relined with plastic before they are beyond repair. The maintenance costs for sewer, water and roads are considerable.

General maintenance costs continue
Other large infrastructure maintenance needs like parks and trail maintenance, painting of water towers, replacement of playground equipment and replacement of specialized equipment to perform general maintenance continue to add to our overall costs.

Project planning and administration
Most of our larger infrastructure efforts such as street reconstruction, sewer and water improvements, painting of a water tower and lift station upgrades are contracted out.

These large projects involve careful capital planning and priority setting by the council. These projects require design and specifications to be developed in order to put the project out for bid. Once bids are received, the Council can award the project, while City staff oversee the project. In some cases it can take several years to tee up and complete a major project. Our short term capital planning horizon is five years; other capital plans are much longer.

Project costs
As homeowners, you know that you do not need to replace your roof or driveway very often. However, when needed, the costs can be sizeable. The same is true for large city projects. A large road project can run several million dollars. It can easily cost $700,000 to repaint an average-sized water tower. One of our water towers will be repainted this year. As one might expect, these costs continue to increase.

Annual maintenance
Perhaps the easiest maintenance tasks to understand are our annual tasks. The list of what needs to be done annually seems endless at times.

Perhaps the most obvious examples are mowing, street sweeping, street patching and snow plowing, because they are the most visible. Much of the annual maintenance needs specialized equipment (street sweepers, vactor truck, plows, mowers, front end loaders, trailers, paver, etc.), all of which age and eventually need replacement.

Your Council works to cost effectively maintain our City in good repair, while maintaining a strong financial rating. Due to the City’s increasing age and design, our infrastructure costs are increasing and it poses financial, project planning and administrative challenges. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they are ongoing.

Have a great summer.

David Grant
Mayor