Earlier this year, Washington County planned to close the Rosalie E. Wahl Library in 2012. This County library is closing on December 31, 2011.

In response, the City of Lake Elmo has taken back its statutory authority for a library and appointed a Library Board. The City intends to reclaim and enhance a community-based library while continuing to provide residents with access to an inter-library loan program. The City Council decided that continued participation in the Washington County Library system does not provide Lake Elmo residents with sufficient value for the taxes they pay. With this change, your taxes for library services will not increase. This action is “tax neutral”, in that the $260,000 tax levy collected from Lake Elmo residents and businesses will simply now be directed to and controlled by the City rather than the County.

The City Council and Library Board understand that providing residents with continued access to other libraries and use of their resources and services is critically important.

Residents will continue to be able to use the Washington County Library system. After January 1, 2012, every household will have the opportunity to be reimbursed $60 by Lake Elmo after you purchase a library card at a Washington County library. Possession of a Washington County Library card or using the number on it will be sufficient for all household members to have library access.

When the new Lake Elmo Library gains “affiliation” status, a Lake Elmo library card will ensure this access and not require purchase of a Washington County library card.

Last spring, with no reassurance that Washington County would keep the Rosalie E. Wahl library open, the Lake Elmo City Council began to explore, for the second time, withdrawing from the County library system. In an effort to preserve the library, the Council first considered withdrawing from the system in 2010 but did not pursue the matter further when the County changed course and did not close any library branches in 2010. When the possible closure of the Rosalie E. Wahl library reemerged this past spring, the City Council resumed its exploration of withdrawing from the County system. In July 2011 the City Council passed a resolution establishing a city public library, authorizing a library levy, and establishing a public Library Board for the City of Lake Elmo. The City Council made this decision with the belief that staying with the County library system simply would not provide Lake Elmo residents and businesses with sufficient value for taxes paid. The library levy collected from Lake Elmo is a significant amount: $260,000.

On November 9, members of the Lake Elmo Library Board were sworn in and conducted their first meeting. Washington County is closing the Rosalie E. Wahl branch library by December 31, 2011. The Board has been working diligently, meeting weekly in an effort to provide the community with an enhanced community-based library as soon as possible. It has also spent considerable time and effort exploring intergovernmental opportunities for uninterrupted access to library services throughout the state for all Lake Elmo residents, for now and the future. The City Council and Library Board understand that providing residents with continued access to inter-library services is critically important.
THE NEW LAKE ELMO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Progress on the New Library

Lake Elmo residents and other communities have responded overwhelmingly to the request for donations of books. "Operation Bookstrap" has been a huge success. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 books have been donated to date, more books than in the existing library collection. Most of the donated books are of high quality and excellent condition. Some unique donations include a large dictionary with a stand, a complete collection of Zane Grey books, a wonderful garden book collection, and 18 new audio books on CD, courtesy of the publisher. Donations are still being accepted with a particular need for newspapers and magazine subscriptions.

In an effort to provide Lake Elmo residents with a high quality library, the Library Board has spent considerable time goal-setting and identifying priorities. It has also discussed the hiring of a library consultant; evaluating potential library locations; selecting library management software; and developing short- and long-range plans, policies, and procedures.

How is the new Lake Elmo Library funded?

Your taxes will not increase as result of this change. This action is "tax neutral" in that the $260,000 tax levy collected from Lake Elmo residents and businesses will simply now be assessed and controlled by the City rather than the County. The library levy, which is included in property taxes, is by law prohibited from being used for anything other than the library. Because the City will now control the levy, residents will see a decrease in their County taxes equal to an increase in their City property tax. The Lake Elmo City Council "holds the purse strings" for the library and sets the library levy, while the Council-appointed five-member library board is responsible establishing and implementing a library budget.

Where will the new library be located and when will it open?

The Washington County Rosalie E. Wahl Library branch on Lake Elmo Avenue North will close by December 31, 2011. The Library Board is hopeful that the new library will be open in early spring. The board is currently in the midst of evaluating available locations for the new Lake Elmo Public Library, including the space where the existing library is located. The Board hopes to make a decision on a location for the new library soon.

What's next and how can you help?

With an anticipated opening early in the New Year, there is much work to be done and volunteer help is needed. Help will be needed to transport, catalogue, and shelve books prior to opening and an abundance of volunteer opportunities will be available once the library is open. Volunteer opportunities will soon be posted on the City's website. Members of the community are also welcome at Library Board meetings and encouraged to share their concerns, hopes and dreams for their Lake Elmo Public Library! Meeting dates and board member contact information are available on the City’s website, www.lakeelmo.org.

Continued from page 1
Proposed Gateway Corridor Transit Stations Mean More Conveniences and Opportunities for Lake Elmo Businesses and Residents

After a year of working with various local, state and federal agencies, as well as community advocacy groups and area businesses, the Gateway (I-94) Corridor transit way study is nearly 75 percent complete. Emphasis is now shifting toward answering the questions, “Where will it stop and how many people are going to ride it?”

The transit study is looking at express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT) and commuter rail options that will provide service from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Eau Claire. In the Lake Elmo area, the express bus, BRT and LRT options include a combination of proposed transit stations at The Oaks Business Park in Oakdale, Radio Drive, Woodbury Drive and Manning Avenue. The commuter rail option includes stations at Ideal and Manning Avenues in Lake Elmo.

The study team has worked closely with the City of Lake Elmo and community groups to locate proposed transit options that meet the needs of residents and businesses. Local businesses and community leaders have highlighted that this corridor is not just about getting Lake Elmo residents to work in the downtowns; it is also about connecting the community to employment, shopping and entertainment hubs along the entire corridor. The proposed transit stations could also spark redevelopment along I-94 in Lake Elmo.

Over the next few months, the study team will begin to dig deeper into ridership, cost and environmental impacts of all the alternatives. The analysis will be completed in early 2012 and will be used to compare the eight alternatives in order to determine the preferred transit option for the corridor. The results of the analysis will be presented at open houses in the spring of 2012. For more information, please visit www.thegatewaycorridor.com

A Minnesota State Department of Health study has found that the amount of perfluoroochemicals (PFCs) in the bodies of some Washington County residents has dropped between 13 and 26 percent. In 2008 the department’s bio-monitoring program measured the amount of PFCs in 164 people residing in Oakdale, Lake Elmo and Cottage Grove, then checked the same individuals last year. Bio-monitoring program coordinator Dr. Jessica Nelson calls the results “good news”.

3M manufactured PFCs for use in household products and dumped PFC waste in area landfills until 1970’s. Drinking water in the three east metro communities contains traces of PFCs. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is in the final stages of a remediation project at the Washington County Landfill, one of the sources of PFCs of the contaminated water. The project involved constructing a triple liner at the existing location and moving waste onto the new liner.

The latest news and information on PFCs and drinking water is available at lakeelmo.org/environmental.

Fireside Chat

Q&A Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions

“How is the Lake Elmo Fire Department staffed”?

Lake Elmo FD is considered a “combination” dept., meaning that we have full-time, part time and “Paid on Call” personnel. Your Fire Chief is full time while your Firefighter/Administrative Assistant is part-time. These two positions handle the majority of the administrative responsibilities associated with managing a fire department, including personnel, vehicles, training, reporting, etc. These two daytime positions also guarantee at least a minimal daytime response to emergencies.

Paid on Call personnel make up the rest of the department. Previously called Volunteers, they are now compensated and considered city employees, hence the name change. Our Paid on Call staff consists of two District Chiefs (1 for each station), four Captains (2 at each station), two Safety Officers (1 at each station) and fifteen firefighters. These individuals provide an invaluable service to the community 24/7/365. In addition to working their “regular” jobs and meeting the demands of family life, they also maintain firefighter skills through training and drills as required by the department.

2011 July - October Emergency Call Summary

117 Calls for service
47 Medical type responses
50 Confirmed fires or fire related incidents
20 Rescue type incidents

FIRE Help Needed

Become a proud member of the Lake Elmo Fire Department and firefighter profession. We offer a second income, sharp uniforms, free training, retirement and you get to drive big red fire trucks. Call the Station at 651-770-5006.

Please Help

Keep hydrants clear of snow.
Winter Reminder
SNOWPLOWING / WINTER PARKING REGULATIONS
Residents are reminded that following a 3” snowfall, no parking is allowed on city streets until they have been plowed. In addition, clearing snow from driveways and sidewalks onto or across City streets is prohibited. Your cooperation assists crews in removing snow from streets efficiently and safely. Vehicles in violation will be ticketed and/or towed. The City’s snow plowing policy and winter parking regulations are available on the web at www.lakeelmo.org.

Happy Holidays!
The Lake Elmo City Council and staff wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Retirement Congratulations
Best wishes and many thanks to long time employees Tom Bouthilet and Sharon Lumby!

Welcome
Welcome Interim City Administrator Craig Dawson

CITY CONTACTS & MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL
Mayor
Dean Johnston
Council Members
Brett Emmons
Nicole Park
Mike Pearson
Anne Smith

MEETINGS
Unless rescheduled, the usual meeting times are as follows:
City Council Meetings
7:00 p.m.,
1st and 3rd Tuesdays
City Council Workshops
6:30 p.m.,
2nd Tuesday
Planning Commission
7:00 p.m.,
2nd Monday
Parks Commission
7:00 p.m.,
3rd Monday
MEETING REPLAYS
10 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Saturdays Noon and 7 p.m.

PHONE NUMBERS
Administration 777-5510
Building Department 233-5409
Fire Station - Old Village 770-5006
Fire Station - Station 2 779-8882
Public Works 233-5414
Sheriff’s Office 439-9381
Washington County 430-6000
Lake Elmo Park Reserve 430-8368

Best wishes and many thanks to long time employees Tom Bouthilet and Sharon Lumby!