



COMMUNITY LINK

FEBRUARY 2011

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Chillfest 2012 needs volunteers!!

Western Days 2011 planning is in full force. Volunteers Needed!

Watch for the announcement of the Western Days Production!

Be an EMT—Join the Chatfield Ambulance Crew!!

THE CHATFIELD CENTER FOR THE ARTS A PROGRESS REPORT...

In the eleven months since the City's Economic Development Authority (EDA) accepted possession of the former elementary school buildings, many steps have been taken to transform those buildings into an arts center which will also accommodate community activity. In that time, over 7,200 people have been in Potter Auditorium, either in the seats as an audience or as part of a cast. During that same time period, over 1,500 people have participated in events in The American Legion Room of the 1916 building.

The anchor activity of the Auditorium, of course, was the Wit's End production of Footloose while other major presentations included The Madrigal Dinner, Just for Kix, the Memorial Day program, two Country Western concerts and the Community Christmas concert. Yoga classes were held there, too.

The American Legion Room of the 1916 building played host to the concession area for the musical and was also the site for the Rochester

Post-Bulletin coffee-talk and a few political events. Other events included a private family Christmas party, the Commercial Club Christmas party, an EDA appreciation event and a cast party.

The American Legion Room is available for private events



and, already scheduled for this year, is a high school graduation reception, a family Christmas party and a Lion's Club zone meeting. As for the Auditorium, the St. Olaf Norsemen, the concert band of St. Olaf College, will present a first rate performance in March, one not to be missed!

In terms of physical improvements, probably the most noticeable is the renovation of the former kindergarten room into the American Legion Room. With the installation of period lights, ceiling fans and paint, along with the refinishing of the 95 year old hardwood floor, that room is very useful.

It seems that the local American Legion Club donation of \$5,000 just set the stage for better things. Since then, two private foundations made grants that will result in making these rooms even better. The \$17,500 from the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, along with the \$7,500 from the Arlin C. Falck Foundation, will be used to purchase tables, chairs coffee pots and other similar items, along with the creation of a small kitchen.

In terms of beginnings, 2010 at the Chatfield Center for the Arts was a good one.

CHILLFEST & COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS



Recently, the community celebrated Chillfest with the annual Polar Plunge, Snowmobile Races and lots of games and food.

Many thanks go to the Lion's Club for taking the lead on hosting this celebration. As evidenced by the many plungers and people who participated in this celebration, it is hard to think of a year without Chillfest in Chatfield. Thank you, volunteers, and Thank you, Lion's Club!! To join, ask any Lion.

CITY OF CHATFIELD

www.ci.chatfield.mn.us

21 Second Street SE Chatfield, MN 55923

Phone: 507-867-3810

Fax: 507-867-9093

In Case of Emergency:

9-1-1

Ambulance (Non Emergency)

507-867-4446

Police (Non Emergency)

507-867-3331

Chatfield Public Library

507-867-3480

CHATFIELD CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND PUBLIC FUNDING

In the depths of The Great Depression, the Federal Government stepped up and paid roughly half of the \$80,000 needed to get Potter Auditorium constructed. In order to get those federal funds, residents of the local school district also stepped up to pay their share.....not everyone thought that was a good idea at the time.

So here we are, 75 years later and similar proposals are being made.....and not everyone thinks that is a good idea either.

So, why is it that some sincerely believe that Potter Auditorium and the 1916 school are so important to this community and why would these buildings be worthy of funding from the State and/or federal government?

Without a doubt, the Auditorium building was constructed so well that it will stand for centuries and its huge proscenium stage, along with its 900 seats, is a

venue unlike any other in southeast Minnesota. Once the 1916 gymnasium is transformed and, if the general assembly space is recreated in the second floor of the school,



there will be three significant spaces for performances, galleries, dances or community events.

Consider what happens when 1,700 people show up to see Footloose or when 180 people show up at The Madrigal Dinner.....these examples represent approximately \$25,000 in ticket sales

and, immediately, that money starts to spread throughout the community. That \$25,000 is spent on catering services, t-shirts, advertising, printing, set construction and on and on. Those ticket sales represent a portion of many jobs in this community and beyond. The economic impact goes well beyond ticket sales, too, of course, as people stop at gas stations, restaurants and other places along the way.

These buildings were constructed to serve the community for a very long time...the proper maintenance and programming is the local community's cost and the real return to the public lies in the economic and cultural contributions throughout the region.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AID (LGA) & SANITARY SEWER RATES



For the past several years, the City has steadily increased its sanitary sewer rates but that is not the plan in 2011.

When the new wastewater treatment plant was constructed, it was understood that user rates would have to increase substantially to handle the debt service and, ultimately, it was decided to increase rates steadily over time instead of doubling or tripling rates in one year, back in 2005. Certainly, no one

has enjoyed seeing these rates increase.

In an effort to bring those user rates under control, the City Council has refinanced the wastewater debt and has pledged to use some of the LGA money that we get from the State to help make the debt payments. By refinancing the debt, the City was able to get lower interest rates and spread the payments over a longer term—by doing so, the debt payments will be more consistent than in the past.

As for the LGA, the Council decided to use \$90,000 of

LGA money to support the sewer fund and that is \$90,000 that does not have to come from user fees, which is a relief.

We do expect the State to cut LGA payments but that has been factored in to some degree. If our LGA payment is cut by \$100,000 or less, this plan to provide relief to sewer rate-payers will work well. If the State takes more, though, we will have to come up with Plan B. The State needs to make good on its promises.



Become part of this "Caring Team". The Chatfield Ambulance Service invites you to join the Service. The next session will begin with a CPR prerequisite class on Tuesday, February 15th.

EMT classes will begin on Thursday, February 15th and continue from 6–10 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays through May 31st.

If you have ever considered being a volunteer now is the time. There is no charge for class with a volunteer commitment; Call 867-4446 for more details.

This is an exciting way to serve your community.

FEBRUARY 2011

- **Mon Feb 7th—**
Planning & Zoning 7:00 pm
- **Mon Feb 14th—**
City Council 7:00 pm
- **Thu Feb 24th—**
EDA 5:30 pm
- **Mon Feb 28th—**
City Council 7:00 pm

ELECTED OFFICIALS

MAYOR

Don Hainlen
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Paul Novotny (507) 867-3549

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