



COMMUNITY LINK

MARCH 2010

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Trout Classic—Saturday, April 17th
- City Wide Garage Sales—Saturday May 1st
- Western Days 2010 planning is in full force. Volunteers Needed!
- The musical, "Footloose" will be on stage in August. Watch for auditions!
- Chillfest 2011 needs volunteers!!

STATE BUDGET DEFICIT TO AFFECT CHATFIELD'S BUDGET

As is the custom in the State of Minnesota, the Governor recently released a proposed budget that could guide the legislature in their work this legislative session. As all are aware, the State has been in a fiscal crisis for quite awhile and is, today. To deal with that crisis, the Governor has advocated for reducing business-related taxes and for making cuts to many programs, including aids to local governments.

As pointed out in previous publications, Local Government Aid (LGA) has been a significant source of income to this city, as it has for most cities in Minnesota. Many people don't understand the reason that LGA payments get made to cities and, in fact, even people in our own community have suggested that the program shouldn't exist.

Maybe the LGA program shouldn't exist, this column

does not intend to address that point. It should be pointed out, however, that the only purpose of a state sales tax was to generate revenue that would be distributed to local governments throughout the state, to maintain a basic quality of life while keeping property taxes as low as possible. We are now at the point where the sales tax has increased by almost 300% since its inception and almost every dollar is kept by the State, with a mere pittance distributed through the LGA program.

The City of Chatfield was originally notified that it would receive \$806,165 in LGA in 2010. Based on information received last summer, though, Chatfield budgeted its 2010 LGA revenue at only \$667,000 and did not increase its levy to cover the lost revenue. Instead, employee wages were frozen and virtually all part-

time help was eliminated. Included in the budget released by the Governor is a formula that would cause Chatfield's 2010 LGA payment to be reduced by another \$153,325, to \$513,635. His formula went on to suggest that the City would lose yet another \$28,000 in 2011.

If the LGA program gets completely eliminated, and if the City wanted to maintain its current level of services, the City would have to increase the property tax levy by 62%.

If the City chose not to replace the lost LGA, it would have to figure out how to pay 2010 wages, fuel prices, insurance, etc., with the budget it had in 2002. The LGA program is critical.

Residents should talk with their Councilors and Mayor about what is important to them and their city.

WINTER FUN AND NEIGHBORLINESS...

To enjoy winter, we all need to enjoy the snow and ice as we will, including skating, tubing, jumping in the creek and, yes, even snowmobiling. Snowmobiles and city

residents don't always work well together. Please, when operating your sled, be considerate of your neighbor's property and their right to peace and quiet-at the same

time, please have tolerance with those who do operate their sleds reasonably.

Enjoy winter.

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:
Ambulance (Non Emergency) 507-867-4446
Police (Non Emergency) 507-867-3331
Chatfield Public Library 507-867-3480

THE POTTER PROJECT AND

THE BONDING BILL

Not everyone agrees on how the government should spend its money....how's that for a news flash, huh??? Most everyone is aware, though, that the Chatfield community is actively seeking funding from the State of Minnesota to create a center for the arts.

This Center would build on the 75 year history of Potter Auditorium and, when completed, the Auditorium would return to its place as being a special venue that attracts people to activities from throughout the region.

Regardless of what one might think about state funding for this project, this venue is unique. It is unique in terms of size, architectural style, functionality and so forth.

Because this is an historically significant structure, it's the public's responsibility to properly preserve and enjoy it and that public goes beyond Chatfield. Because the functionality of the buildings go beyond the scope of our small community, because the attraction to the events that are hosted by this facility goes well beyond this town and because the historical significance

goes beyond our borders, there are many legitimate ways to make the case that this project has state-wide significance. Certainly, if a bridge that is located in western Minnesota qualifies as such, if an airport in northern MN is of state-wide significance or if a light-rail bed that goes from Big Lake to St. Paul is of state-wide significance, then so, too, is Potter Auditorium equally significant.

Whether it is the economic development aspect of this project (89 construction jobs would be created right away), whether it is the preservation of buildings that are historically significant on a national scale or whether it is because this will complement a healthy arts community that generates a large amount of sales and income tax to the State, there are many ways to identify this as a project of great significance.

The only way that a project gets into a bonding bill is because it has merit, pure and simple.

To get into the bill, an application is submitted that outlines the economic impact of the project, among other things. If

selected, then about two dozen members of the House of Representatives and two dozen members of the Senate pay a visit to the property and ask for a full presentation of the project.

From there, hearings are held in both houses of the Legislature. In our case, the project went in front of five different committees, all of which found great merit in this project and then on to the House Floor and the Senate Floor for full debate.

On casual observation, the fact that the Senate had approved \$2.2 million while the House approved \$7.1 million didn't make a lot of sense. What was happening, though, was the Senate wanted to fund Phases I and II of the project while the House wanted to fund the entire project. The House realizes that this is the time when public projects should be completed, when construction costs are the lowest.

Governor Pawlenty may not see as much value in the project as the Legislature, we will see, but his office does understand that pottery is not involved.

COMMENTS FROM FOLK.....

Become a fan of Potter Center for the Arts on Facebook!!

In a letter from one 90 year old resident to the

Governor, "You say Minnesota cannot afford such things in a recession. I say we could afford it in the Great Depression. We

can afford it now....this will enrich the lives of Minnesotans long after many of us are gone."

Become a fan—Facebook!

**Fix a Leak Week**

March 15-21, 2010

Did you know that an American home can waste, on average, more than 10,000 gallons of water every year due to running toilets, dripping faucets, and other household leaks?

Nationwide, more than 1 trillion gallons of water leak from U.S. homes each year. That's why WaterSense is promoting Fix a Leak Week from March 15 to 21, 2010, to remind Americans to check their plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks. For more information visit http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/howto.html

MARCH 2010

- **Mon Mar 1st—**
Planning & Zoning 7:00 pm
- **Mon Mar 8th—**
City Council 7:00 pm
- **Mon Mar 15th—**
HPC 7:00 pm
- **Mon Mar 22nd—**
City Council 7:00 pm
- **Thu Mar 25th—**
EDA 5:30 pm

ELECTED OFFICIALS**MAYOR**

Les Knutson (507) 867-1500
mayorknutson@ci.chatfield.mn.us

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Paul Novotny (507) 867-3549
paulcti@qwestoffice.net

Ken Jacobson (507) 867-4759
chatfieldjake@yahoo.com

Ginny Engle (507) 867-4701
gineng2@aol.com

Josh Thompson (507) 867-4448
councilorthompson@ci.chatfield.mn.us

Dave Frank (507) 272-7016
councilorfrank@ci.chatfield.mn.us