Market value notices set to hit mailboxes in March

Property value notices are expected to be mailed by Washington County to property owners during the last week of March. Like in previous years, the valuation notices will be mailed with property tax statements for taxes payable in 2022.

The “2022 Notice of Valuation and Classification for Taxes Payable in 2023” will indicate the market value established this year on Jan. 2. This market value is the approximate amount for which a property could sell and is the basis for your 2023 taxes.

Determining Market Value

Each year, the county assessor’s office reviews the assessed market value of all property to determine whether changes in the local real estate market require a change in assessed values. Real estate sales are verified and studied based on the location, age, and style of home and quality of construction to determine these market adjustments.

If property owners question their 2022 estimated market value or classification listed on their “Notice of Valuation” form, they should:

1. Contact the assessor’s office. Property owners who have questions or concerns regarding the market value set for their property are encouraged to contact the property appraiser assigned to their area by calling 651-430-6175. The appraiser will review the property data and sales information with you and, if necessary, schedule an interior review of the property. A large majority of concerns can be resolved through this administrative review without the need for a formal appeal.

OR you may attend any of the four regional Open Book meetings scheduled by the county (see 2022 schedule on page 2). Your appeal can be made in person, through a letter, or through a representative authorized by you. The Open Book process offers an informal setting for property owners as well as several scheduling options.

2. Appear before the County Board of Appeal and Equalization. Property owners who are not satisfied by speaking with the assessor’s office or with the action taken at the Open Book meeting may appear before the County Board of Appeal, consisting of elected county commissioners, the county auditor, and/or appointed officials. You must contact the assessor’s office at 651-430-6175 by Wednesday, May 4, to be placed on the agenda.

continued on page 2

New name for sports center: M Health Fairview Sports Center

HealthEast Sports Center will have a new name beginning this spring: M Health Fairview Sports Center. The name change is necessary following Fairview’s 2017 merger with HealthEast and 2019 partnership with the University of Minnesota and M Physicians.

“We take pride in working through partnerships to achieve the goals of the community and look forward to working with M Health Fairview to ensure a smooth transition for our other partners, visitors and customers,” said Woodbury Mayor Anne Burt. “We have a shared mission of promoting healthy lifestyles and the sports center is a premier showcase for healthy, active living.”

The name change will be reflected on the sports center’s web page, mhealthfairview.com, and social media accounts beginning in March, with on-site signage changes primarily occurring in April.

Partnership

In April 2017, the Woodbury City Council approved a sponsorship agreement with HealthEast (now Fairview) for naming rights to the sports center. At the end of the 14-year term, Fairview has the option of extending the partnership. No changes to the fairview name or initiatives that promote healthy, active lifestyles at the sports center or in other areas of the community.

Where does naming rights money go?

All of the naming rights funds the city has collected to this point through its agreement with Fairview have been placed in reserves for future projects or initiatives that promote healthy, active lifestyles at the sports center or in other areas of the community.

About the sports center

Located at 4125 Radio Drive in Woodbury, the sports center is one of the largest multiuse sports centers in Minnesota, serving the community and region with high-quality indoor and outdoor amenities. The facility, operated by the City of Woodbury, includes a 90,000-square-foot indoor field house, two indoor ice rinks, one seasonal outdoor ice rink, 36 athletic fields, the Woodbury Rotary Miracle Field, a splash pad feature, and the inclusive Madison’s Place playground. It is home to three local high school hockey teams and is used by other high school athletic teams and multiple youth athletic groups. Summit Orthopedics also offers orthopedic and wellness services from its space attached to the sports center field house.
Housing goals accommodate all

Did you know Woodbury recently celebrated 55 years since its residents voted to incorporate as a village in 1967? As our community continues to grow and age, it is important that we think about new ways to accomplish our goals. We are doing that with our housing planning and I would like to tell you more about it.

2022 housing priorities

The city has long been committed to a strategic approach to addressing the housing needs of the community since its first comprehensive planning efforts in the late 1970s. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan continues that tradition by encouraging the development of a diversity of housing to accommodate people of all ages, income levels and family status. Through these planning efforts, the city identifies areas for residential growth in a range of types, styles and affordability while maintaining high quality building standards and amenities.

The 2021 Housing Action Plan is the main housing implementation step of Woodbury’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Having evaluated and provided guidance to staff while creating the 2021 Housing Action Plan over the course of four separate City Council workshops and meetings, I can assure you that this plan is well thought out and will help address housing affordability and neighborhood character in the years to come. I encourage you to learn more by reading our 2021 Housing Action Plan at woodburymn.gov/HousingActionPlan.

As we transition from the planning phase to implementing the plan, the City Council recently picked two main areas of focus for 2022:

1. Create a new single-family and townhome rental licensure program

As the city ages, it becomes increasingly important to evaluate the role of code enforcement as a strategic housing tool to ensure that property maintenance improvements occur in a similar pattern on both individual rental properties and owner-occupied units. The city is working on rolling out a single-family and townhome rental licensure program that requires an annual registration and self-certification by the owner of rental properties that all major systems of the residential dwelling in question are fully functional. Staff is in the final process of drafting ordinance amendments and adjusting software systems in advance of host community engagement opportunities with you – our residents – in the second quarter of 2022.

Cities don’t often have a lot of tools when it comes to housing affordability, but our 2021 Housing Action Plan identifies a number of strategies and tactics that will guide our housing operations in the years to come. This will ensure that Woodbury continues to be a welcoming and inclusive community with a wide range of housing options for its residents.

2. Increase use of the Woodbury Housing and Redevelopment Authority’s (HRA) existing Neighborhood Reinvestment Fund and Woodbury First-Time Homeownership programs through new marketing and communications strategies

The HRA’s loan programs have been in operation since 2009 and the HRA has issued 277 loans in a total amount of about $6.65 million to income-qualified borrowers.

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Fund is an example of the increasing collaboration between the city’s code enforcement and housing staff. The loan program provides residents with access to low-interest loans to repair the homes, reinvest in them, increase energy efficiency and more.

The First-Time Homeownership Program offers deferred financing to first-time buyers looking to purchase a home here in Woodbury. New in 2021, the program also included a 0% interest rate for first-generation homebuyers providing a powerful housing affordability tool to households who have not otherwise benefited from the intergenerational transfer of wealth that homeownership can provide.

For more information about the HRA loan programs, visit woodburyloans.com.

I am pleased with the work we completed in updating our Housing Action Plan and the priority programs identified above. They encourage the development of a variety of housing options and create opportunities for residents to reinvest in our housing stock and neighborhoods, ensuring our wonderful community will continue to age with grace for many years to come.
Consider emerald ash borer treatment options

The emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive beetle that attacks and destroys ash trees by feeding under the bark. This feeding disrupts the tree’s ability to transport water and nutrients. EAB spreads very quickly and has become one of the most destructive urban forest pests in history. Once EAB has visibly infested a tree, it has an almost zero chance of survival.

When EAB was first confirmed in Woodbury in August 2017, about 13% of trees in Woodbury parks were ash (only includes mowed areas). The Woodbury Forestry Division began implementing various EAB management practices since the pest was first detected in Minnesota in 2009. This included inspecting hundreds of ash trees on public land, proactively removing low quality ash trees in parks and in boulevard areas, and planting replacement trees on public land ahead of the removals where appropriate.

**EAB treatment options**

Early detection and preventive treatments with approved insecticides can prolong the life of an ash tree. Tree contractors with pesticide applicator licenses should be consulted to discuss treatment options. Before deciding to treat your tree, educate yourself about the pros and cons of these chemicals. The city recommends the trunk injection application method; the soil drench application method has a higher risk for unwanted environmental effects. Keep in mind that there is no “cure” for EAB infestation and insecticide treatments will be needed every one to three years, depending on the chemical used. Hire a certified arborist with a pesticide applicator’s license to perform these treatments.

Since 2019, the city has partnered with Rainbow Treecare to implement a citywide bulk discount ash tree treatment program for residents and businesses. The program has allowed for the treatment of 2,675 public and private trees in Woodbury. In 2021, Rainbow Treecare treated 13 public and 1,013 private ash trees. Information is available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/EAB.

**What can homeowners do?**

If you have an ash tree, you have a choice to protect or remove your tree(s). The city recommends protecting large, well-placed, healthy private ash trees as part of an EAB program. Here are some tips:

- Learn how to identify the presence of EAB. Look for:
  - Thinning canopy or dead sections of a tree
  - Woodpecker activity
  - D-shaped exit holes appear on the bark where newly hatched adults emerge

- Contact the city before removing or treating ash trees in the public right-of-way near the street (boulevard trees), as these may be managed by the city or your homeowners association (HOA) in some areas. Call the Public Works Department at 651-714-3720 with questions.

For the sixth consecutive year, the City of Woodbury is aiming to reduce summer water use by offering a discounted smart irrigation program to residents.

Woodbury homeowners can join the waiting list to purchase a WaterSense-certified smart irrigation controller through the city at a discounted rate of $35 (retail value is $230).

“Water efficiency – particularly with lawn watering – will be critical in ensuring we can deliver water to customers during the high peak summer season,” explained Assistant Public Works Director Jim Westerman. “As of mid-February, eight of our 19 water production wells have been removed from service since 2017 due to per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination and related health advisories issued by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).”

Westerman added that four of the eight wells removed from service were placed back into operation in June 2020 with treatment at the temporary water treatment plant, and a fifth well is expected to return to service following the expansion effort at the temporary water treatment plant.

While the water continues to meet all state and federal guidelines for PFAS, the city is asking residents with irrigation systems to be responsible water stewards by participating in the smart irrigation controller program.

“It also will save you money on your water bill,” Westerman explained.

Smart irrigation controllers can reduce water usage by at least 26% and up to 45% without changing a lawn’s appearance by watering only when it has not rained enough. The controllers connect to the home’s WiFi signal to reduce the amount of water used. Landscapers can be programmed with smart-home technology like Amazon Alexa or Google Home.

In the last six years, more than 3,000 Woodbury residents purchased smart controllers through this program. Visit woodburymn.gov/SmartIrrigation, to get on the waiting list for the 2022 program. Residents on the list will be notified when the program opens April 1.

For more information about EAB, visit woodburymn.gov/EAB. If you are interested in having your tree evaluated, as part of the partnership with the City of Woodbury, Rainbow Treecare offers free consultations and city-wide treatment discounts. Find more information at rainbowtreecare.com/woodbury.

**Save with water efficiency incentive program**

Residents of an HOA community should learn how many ash trees are a part of their community. Encourage your HOA board to get an ash tree inventory and develop a plan to remove or protect the appropriate trees. Working with a certified arborist, communities can create a proactive, budget-friendly EAB management plan that saves money and protects trees.

Research by the University of Minnesota has concluded that a smart controller can reduce a home’s water use by 30,000 gallons of water each year. These controllers can be operated through a smartphone or computer, and can be programmed with smart-home technology like Amazon Alexa or Google Home.

In the last six years, more than 3,000 Woodbury residents purchased smart controllers through this program. Visit woodburymn.gov/SmartIrrigation, to get on the waiting list for the 2022 program. Residents on the list will be notified when the program opens April 1.

Questions about the irrigation efficiency program should be directed to the Engineering Department at water@woodburymn.gov or by calling 651-714-3593.

Much more information about EAB is also available on the MDA website at mda.state.mn.us/EAB.
Summer recreation program registration begins March 16

Summer is on its way! Discover a wide-variety of programs, classes, camps and community events designed to boost creativity, explore new interests, build new friendships and, most importantly, have fun!

From classic events such as the Coin Carnival to new activities such as the Truck 'N' Muck Camp, there are plenty of ways to enjoy the summer.

More details will be available in the city's summer recreation programs brochure, which will be mailed the week of March 7. Online registration for summer recreation programs begins March 16.

Visit the city’s booth at Community EXPO April 2

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 2, and plan to attend the Woodbury Community EXPO. The event, sponsored by the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce, will be held at East Ridge High School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The expo is free and family-friendly.

More than 100 local businesses and non-profit groups will participate. There also will be entertainment and demonstrations throughout the day. Be sure to stop by the city’s booth to:

- Learn about city facilities, services, seasonal employment, recreation programs, development projects, water efficiency opportunities and child passenger safety;
- Pick up a free parks and trails map;
- Enjoy a fun, interactive activity for kids; and

Meet “Otis,” the community support dog with Woodbury Public Safety (between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.)

Also, be sure to meet Mayor Anne Burt or a member of the City Council, who will be greeting visitors near the entrance.

Outside, the whole family can check out some of the city's big trucks (weather permitting).

For more information about the expo, call the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce at 651-578-0722 or visit woodburychamber.org.

Smoke detector battery replacement program for seniors kicks off this spring

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in almost half (46%) of fires in which smoke alarms were present but did not operate, the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries.

“Batteries should be replaced in smoke detectors annually,” says Woodbury firefighter Tony Morri. “A good time of year to do this is when Daylight Savings Time begins in March or ends in November.”

For senior residents, replacing batteries in smoke detectors can be a daunting task. Beginning April 1, the fire department will replace and install new 9-volt batteries in home smoke detectors for senior residents. Visit woodburymn.gov/SmokeDetectors to sign up or call 651-714-3600.

Visit the city’s booth at Community EXPO April 2

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 2, and plan to attend the Woodbury Community EXPO. The event, sponsored by the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce, will be held at East Ridge High School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The expo is free and family-friendly.

More than 100 local businesses and non-profit groups will participate. There also will be entertainment and demonstrations throughout the day. Be sure to stop by the city’s booth to:

- Learn about city facilities, services, seasonal employment, recreation programs, development projects, water efficiency opportunities and child passenger safety;
- Pick up a free parks and trails map;
- Enjoy a fun, interactive activity for kids; and

Meet “Otis,” the community support dog with Woodbury Public Safety (between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.)

Also, be sure to meet Mayor Anne Burt or a member of the City Council, who will be greeting visitors near the entrance.

Outside, the whole family can check out some of the city's big trucks (weather permitting).

For more information about the expo, call the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce at 651-578-0722 or visit woodburychamber.org.