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Balancing Tradition and Innovation in the Fire Department



For more than six decades, the East Bethel Fire Department has been a cornerstone of our community's safety, evolving from a single volunteer station into a multi-station, multi-response team that now handles over 1,000 emergency calls per year. As the city grows and demands on our first responders increase, East Bethel is taking bold, strategic steps to ensure that we continue delivering high-quality, cost-effective public safety services.

Founded in 1959 by residents seeking faster emergency response, the department has grown significantly in scope and capability. While the equipment, technology, and infrastructure have kept pace with the times; now including three stations and 11 pieces of apparatus, the heart of the department remains our dedicated volunteer firefighters.

These volunteers are more than firefighters; they are multi-skilled responders, our community's "Swiss Army Knives," trained to handle fires, medical emergencies, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. Despite the volunteer model, they respond 24/7, 365 days a year, balancing service with their professional and personal lives.

In just four years, our call volume has increased by 47%, rising from 700 calls in 2020 to over 1,030 in 2024; most due to medical emergencies. With this surge, it's crucial we adjust our delivery model to protect the sustainability of our volunteer-based service and continue providing reliable response times.

To guide this effort, the City Council engaged Capstone LLC to assess the fire department's operations and recommend a sustainable path forward. Their insights focused on preserving the volunteer model while improving service, recruitment, and retention.

In April 2024, the City Council approved several key changes:

1. Daytime Duty Crews to Improve Response Times

Many of our volunteers work outside the city during the day, limiting local coverage. The new plan allows firefighters to select daytime shifts, ensuring a staffed presence at stations for faster and more reliable responses, particularly during weekday hours.

2. Reducing Responses to Non-Emergency Medical Calls

Overuse of 911 for non-urgent issues such as minor pain or transportation to the hospital places strain on our volunteers. Moving forward, the fire department will prioritize critical emergencies (e.g., cardiac events, trauma, difficulty breathing) and reduce response to lower-priority incidents, in coordination with Allina Ambulance and Anoka County Sheriff's Office.

3. Strengthening Leadership and Succession Planning

The Fire Inspector will be promoted to Assistant Chief, reflecting the scope of his responsibilities and preparing the department for long-term leadership stability. This move supports strategic growth and recognizes his dedicated service as both firefighter and paramedic.

These changes are designed not just to manage resources, but to protect the people who protect us. By aligning our fire service model with community needs and volunteer realities, we can continue offering top-tier public safety without doubling our budget through a full-time staffing shift.

As we plan for the future, one thing remains unchanged: East Bethel's commitment to community-driven public safety. If you see someone wearing an East Bethel Fire Department uniform, you're looking at a neighbor who volunteers their time, energy, and heart to keep our city safe.

We thank our firefighters; past, present, and future for their service, and we thank you, our residents, for supporting a model that values both excellence and efficiency.



City Contacts



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8:00 AM—4:00 PM



Planning & Zoning
.....763-367-7855
Building Inspections
.....763-367-7842



Emergency..... 911
Anoka County Sheriff's Office
.....763-427-1212
East Bethel Fire Department
.....763-367-7885



Public Works.....763-367-7876



City Assessor.....763-323-5400

New Security System at City Hall

The Security system world has changed significantly since the last security system was installed at East Bethel. The City Council approved the analysis of our current system and authorized the purchase of a replacement system that will serve the residents and community more effectively while preserving the assets of East Bethel.

Starting in March, crews began working on installing the new security system. State of the art surveillance and functionality allows the city to be completely secure with remote options for ease of use. Every city facility now is tied into the same system with high definition cameras and monitoring. Gone are the days of suffering losses from theft at city buildings and facilities. Unfortunately, remote buildings have been targets of loss in the past. Today we have the tools necessary to catch perpetrators and prosecute them to the full extent of the law.

Public awareness of this investment will help to deter those that may wish to make East Bethel a target.

Welcome and Congratulations to Fire Dept Staff!

At the May 28, 2025 City Council meeting, Interim Fire Chief Jerry Streich introduced and handed the reins over by swearing in East Bethel's new Fire Chief, Jeff Cielocha.

Jeff comes to us after serving in the City of Delano, and has 24 years of experience in fire service.

Welcome, Chief Cielocha!



As one of his first duties, Chief Cielocha then announced the promotion of Ben Uden, and swore in Ben as our Deputy Fire Chief!

Ben is an East Bethel resident, and has served on our Fire Department as the Fire Inspector for the last four years.

Congratulations, Deputy Chief Uden!



Newsletter: Opt Out of Printed Copies!

Cut down on bulk mail, and view the City newsletter online instead! Use the QR code below to remove your postal address from our mailing list.

You can choose the type of email and/or text message updates you receive, including calendar events, job postings, or an e-copy of the East Bethel Bulletin, as soon as they are published online.

Visit the East Bethel city website to sign up for Notify Me® email/text notifications at www.ci.east-bethel.mn.us/list.aspx



Summer Public Works Update

By Nate Ayshford, Public Works Manager

2025 Road Construction and Maintenance Projects

The following road construction and maintenance activities will take place during the 2025 construction season:

- Bituminous overlays in all additions of Hidden Haven and Hidden Haven Country Club Estates.
- Restriping 200,000 linear feet of road markings.
- Gravel road maintenance consisting of reshaping and resurfacing the road with new class 5 will take place on Skylark Dr, Allen Dr, Monroe St, Van Buren St, and Palisade St.



2025 Park Projects

Proposed park projects for 2025 include completion of the walking trails along Bataan St and tree planting throughout various parks.

Storm water Protection

When mowing grass and fertilizing lawns, please keep in mind that any material left on hard surfaces (roads, driveways, sidewalks) can end up contaminating local waters and eventually accumulating and concentrating in the St. Croix and Rum Rivers. The high phosphorus levels can cause excessive algal blooms and other problems to the quality of our waters.

Some tips to keep in mind:

1. Refrain from blowing grass clippings into the roadway while mowing grass.
2. Use phosphorus free fertilizer.
3. Clean excess fertilizer off of hard surfaces after application to prevent runoff into the storm water system.
4. Keep grass clippings, leaves and other organic material away from wetlands and shoreline areas.

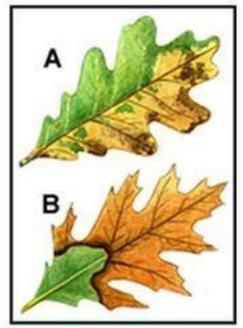


Storm water Maintenance

The City of East Bethel is responsible for inspecting and maintaining the municipal storm water system as part of the MN Pollution Control Agency's MS4 permit requirements. The inspection and maintenance activities occur throughout the calendar year and include checking and cleaning drain swales and catch basins, cleaning storm water pipes and pipe outlets, grading and digging storm water ponds and ditches and the removal of woody brush and trees growing in storm water ponds and ditches. The work crews will remain within the drainage and utility easements, some of which may be on or adjacent to your property. Please contact the Public Works Department with any questions.

Oak Wilt

Oak wilt is a common fungus in East Bethel that kills hundreds of mature oak trees annually. New infection sites occur when oaks are damaged, cut, or pruned during the months of April, May, June and July. Once a new infection site is established, the fungus will spread to neighboring trees through their root systems. It is important to remember not to cut or prune any oak trees during these months and limit activities around these trees that could result in damage to the tree. Trees that are infected with oak wilt should be removed the following winter and chipped, burned, or sealed with plastic to limit the number of fungal spores available during the spring months. Infected wood should not be moved offsite which could potentially create new infection centers.

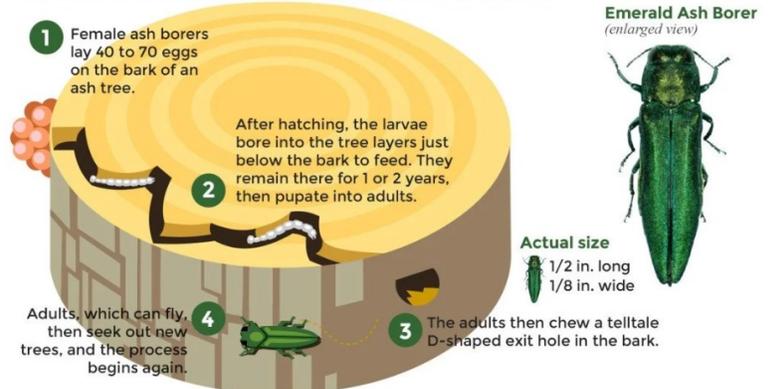


Symptoms of oak wilt in
A. white oak and
B. red oak.

Emerald Ash Borer in East Bethel

Emerald Ash Borer has been found throughout East Bethel with numerous large pockets of infected and dead trees. EAB is responsible for killing millions of ash trees in the United States and has been spreading westward over the past 20 years. Left unchecked, the insect will kill almost every infected ash tree. Current control measures included chemically treating high value landscape trees or tree removal and replacement with diverse tree species. Anoka County is under a quarantine for the movement of ash firewood, live ash trees, or any ash material out of the county.

LIFE CYCLE OF THE EMERALD ASH BORER



The links below provide lots of useful information about the insect, how it spreads, and ways to protect your ash trees:

www.mda.state.mn.us/eab

www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialanimals/eab/index.html

If you have any issues or need to report a public works related problem, please call Nate Ayshford at 763-367-7876.

We depend on and encourage your assistance in reporting any safety or maintenance matters and will respond to any of your comments or concerns in a timely manner. Thanks for all your help.

Now Accepting Applications for the 2025-2026 program year!

By Anoka County ACCAP

The Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early Head Start program is accepting applications for the 2025-2026 program year. Programs are free for eligible families with children from birth to age five and pregnant women. Our Head Start center-based pre-school option offers students a 6.5-hour day, 4 days per week.

Anoka/Washington County's Head Start-Early Head Start program provides education, nutrition, mental health, school readiness and parent engagement services to children and families from income eligible households. Our approach is to provide high-quality educational curriculum while connecting families with growth and learning opportunities. To learn more or apply, visit our website at <http://www.accap.org/head-start/enrollment-4/> or call our enrollment hotline at 763-783-4314.



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Community Baby Shower & Resource Fair

Hosted by ACCAP Head Start

FOR EXPECTING PARENTS, NEW PARENTS, AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

APPLY FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS (PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN BIRTH TO FIVE)

FREE BABY ITEMS
REFRESHMENTS
LOCAL RESOURCES & MORE

Prize Raffle & Resource Bag for each Family (while supplies last)

AUGUST 13, 2025 | 11AM-2PM

HEAD START FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER
9574 FOLEY BLVD
COON RAPIDS, MN 55433

QUESTIONS? CALL 763-783-4314

PLEASE ENTER AT DOOR 1 (OFF OF 96TH AVE)



National

Check the Chip Day

August 15

MICROCHIP YOUR PET



Microchips don't replace a tag and collar, but they can make all the difference when it comes to getting your pet back.

Did You Know?



1 in 3 family pets will get lost



Microchipped dogs are more than twice as likely to be returned to their owners.



But only about **6 out of 10** microchips are registered



Microchipped cats are more than 20 times as likely to be returned to their owners.

Successful Reunions



Gidget, a dog from Pittsburgh, PA, was found more than **2500 miles** away in Portland, OR



George, a cat in California was reunited with his family after **13 years**

When a microchipped pet isn't returned home, it's usually due to incorrect or missing owner information in the microchip registry.

Jan. 1, 2026: Dog Licenses No Longer Required!

Beginning on January 1, 2026, the City of East Bethel no longer requires a City dog license. If an owner has more than three dogs, you must apply for a residential kennel license.

Although dog licenses are no longer required for under three dogs, pet owners must still:

- Have proof of rabies vaccination for all dogs over the age of six months old.
- Provide dogs with some type of identification. Allowed identification includes microchips, tags or collars with contact information and phone number(s) inscribed on it.
- Apply for a Residential Kennel license if they have more than three dogs.
- Adhere to all City Code requirements relating to animal control.



The City of East Bethel contracts with the Animal Humane Society for animal control. They can answer questions and help you with issues such as stray dogs, stray cats, spay and neuter programs, vaccinations, licenses, pet adoption, bite reports, lost pets, and to report neglected or abused animals.

Hours of operation and impound fees are listed on the Animal Humane Society website (www.animalhumanesociety.org).

The Animal Humane Society can be reached at 763-862-4030 or 763-862-4030.

Please Maintain Your Property

Please maintain your property by cutting any tall grass, removing any junk vehicles, commercial vehicles, used tires, trash or debris. If the exterior of your home or accessory building needs repair, please maintain it.



Contact Nick Schmitz at 763-367-7860 if you have any questions. Let's keep the City of East Bethel a wonderful place to live.

Pet Waste Pollutes!

Did you know that pet waste can pollute our waters? When pet waste is left on sidewalks or yards, rain or melting snow can wash into storm drains or ditches which lead directly to our lakes, rivers, and other waters. Animal waste contains a high concentration of nutrients that promote algal growth, as well as bacteria and disease-causing microorganisms that can harm human health along with the environment.



Source: Salt Lake County Stormwater Coalition

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Pick up after your pet, both when you're on a walk or in your yard. Dispose of the waste properly either by throwing a closed plastic bag in the trash or by flushing it down the toilet.

The City Code, Sec. 10-23., requires that whenever you take your pet off your property, you're prepared to clean up after them. Make sure you grab a plastic bag before your next walk.

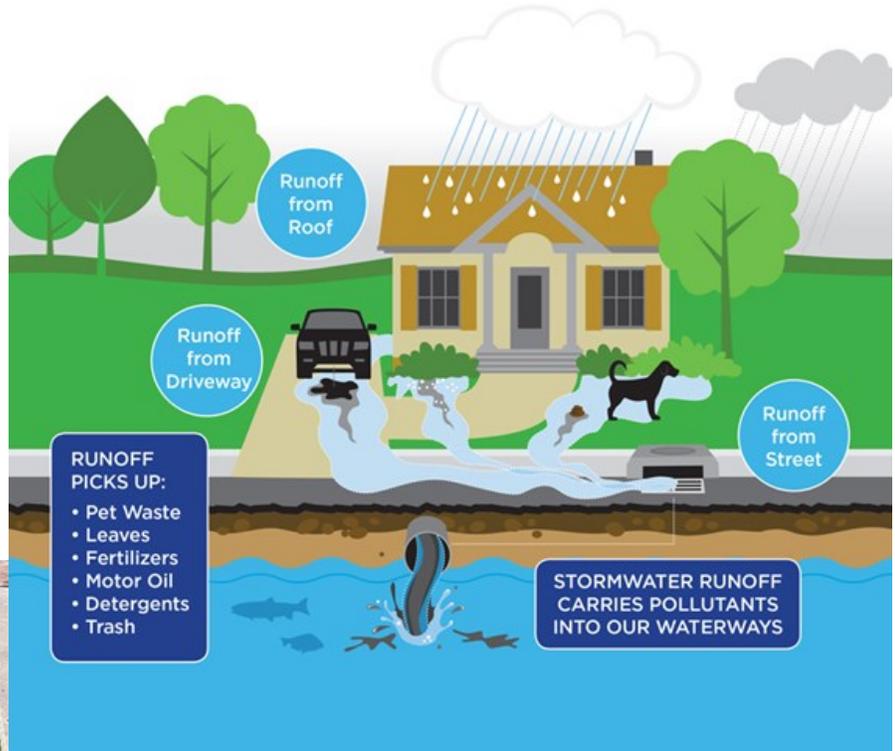
Storm Water Pollution: Illicit Discharge

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is precipitation from rain or snow that does not get absorbed into the ground. It flows across our yards, driveways, and roads, and picks up contaminants on its way into storm drains and ditches. These drains and ditches lead directly into our waterways. The contaminants in stormwater are known as illicit discharge.

What is illicit discharge?

An illicit discharge is any contaminant that enters the city's storm sewer system. Illicit discharge includes things like pet waste, fertilizer, yard waste, salt from winter de-icing, sewage, pesticides and herbicides, sediment from construction sites, gasoline or oil, commercial car wash wastewater, sewage, and chlorinated pool water.



Source: <https://soundrivers.org/watershed-issues/stormwater-runoff/>



Source: <https://fmr.org/updates/water-legislative/how-heat-waves-fuel-toxic-algae-blooms-minnesota-waters>

Is illicit discharge harmful?

Unlike water from our homes, stormwater is not treated before it enters our lakes, rivers, and streams. Illicit discharge negatively impacts aquatic life and diminishes both the health and beauty of our waterways. Fertilizers and yard waste contain phosphorus, which is a key contributor to potentially toxic algal blooms. Pet waste contributes to harmful bacteria, and chlorinated pool water can be lethal to some aquatic species.

Can I help prevent illicit discharge?

There are many small actions you can take to help keep contaminants out of our waterways. Clean up after your pet, compost your yard waste, minimize your use of fertilizers or switch to a phosphorus-free fertilizer, maintain your septic tank, check your car for leaks, and throw away litter.

How can I recognize illicit discharge?

There are several possible indicators of illicit discharge: unusual water color or cloudiness, strong pungent or musty odor, scum or foam on the water surface, oil sheen, floating debris, or dead fish.

What should I do if I see illicit discharge?

Please call the City of East Bethel at 763-367-7840 and describe what, where, and when you saw the illicit discharge.



Source: <https://www.cityoftonkabay.net/?SEC=A904EFF5-5C5E-4B62-AFB8-E2ABEEB87DE1>

Events



PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #4190
TWIN CITIES, MN

AUGUST:

- 1 • **Senior Dance**, East Bethel Senior Center
1—4 pm
- 5 • **Night to Unite**, Activities May Vary by
Neighborhood
- 14 • **Chamber of Commerce Mtg**,
Minnesota Fresh Farm 8 am
- 30 • **Drop-Off Saturday**, East Bethel
Recycling Center 9 am—Noon

City Meeting Schedule

- City Council**, Second & Fourth Monday each month, **7:00 pm** at East Bethel City Hall
- EDA**, Third Monday each month, **7:00 pm** at East Bethel City Hall
- Park Commission**, Second Tuesday each month, **6:30 pm** at East Bethel City Hall
- Planning Commission**, Fourth Tuesday each month, **7:00 pm** at East Bethel City Hall

To confirm meeting details, call City Hall at 763-367-7840 or visit the City website: www.ci.east-bethel.mn.us

A sneak peek at upcoming events...

LINWOOD Fun Fest
Friday & Saturday, Sept. 5-6

Sheriff's Dept OPEN HOUSE
Sept: Date to be determined

HAM LAKE Farmer's & Artisan Market
Every Wednesday, 3-7 PM

Fire Dept OPEN HOUSE
Oct: Date to be determined

SFAS School Board ELECTION
Tuesday, Nov. 4

Fall TOWN HALL Meeting
Nov: Date to be determined



CITY OF EAST BETHEL

 2241 221st Avenue NE • East Bethel, MN 55011

 763-367-7840 •  763-434-9578 •  www.ci.east-bethel.mn.us

NEWSLETTER COMMENTS & INFORMATION:

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