



4646 Dakota St. SE  
Prior Lake, MN 55372

Nov. 26, 2007

## A Message from the Mayor

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### Moderation in 2008 Budgeting

The business of government often involves weighing competing interests and priorities. At no time has that been clearer to your City Council than in the preparation of our 2008 General Fund budget. On one hand, we are charged with the achievement of the goals and objectives articulated by hundreds of Prior Lake stakeholders in the February 2007 update of our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan. At the same time, we are mindful of our current economy and the financial concerns it has created for our Prior Lake families.

This is where the balancing comes in. One option open to the council is to retrench and risk the prospect of losing the critical momentum we have created in accomplishing important community work. The other option is to continue to proceed cautiously. This is the approach we have chosen.

As a result, the proposed 2008 budget, which will be the subject of a Truth in Taxation hearing on Monday, Dec. 3, 2007, at 6 p.m., contemplates increasing City taxes on an averaged value home of \$315,000 by \$37 a year or 3.95%.

But, as important as they are, these are just numbers. The litmus test for the budget is what it allows us to provide in city services. Some examples include:

- Continued focus on our financial performance as we strive to do better each year.
- Purchase of Federally mandated 800 MHz radios for Police, Fire and Public Works for better emergency communication.
- Fuel and natural gas costs so that we can get the work of government done - especially emergency services.
- Opening a new senior center facility so that at long last, person 55 years of age and older have a place to call their own.
- Support for SCALE's regional Police, Fire and Public Works Training Facility to maximize the development of our personnel.
- Creation of a fiber optic plan to reduce the cost of data transfer and set the stage for retail residential services in the future.
- Increasing energy cost savings and conservation to minimize municipal building and fleet costs.

Of course, we continue to refine fundamental programs like snow and ice control for the safety of our citizens. Less reliance on salt and greater reliance on pretreatment are ecologically and vehicle friendly while resulting in safer streets. And, an unprecedented Community Safety Task Force will begin its work in 2008 intent on making Prior Lake the safest community in the metro area.

Council members were unanimous this year in their scrutiny of proposed expenditures. We conducted two work sessions and cut \$200,000 from the budget. This translates to nearly 3% less in city property taxes that you and I pay.

All of us in Prior Lake are blessed in many ways. Every member of the City Council is acutely aware of this fact. On behalf of the City Council, please accept our best wishes to you and your loved ones during this holiday season.

Sincerely,  
**Mayor Jack Haugen**