



4646 Dakota St. SE
Prior Lake, MN 55372

June 27, 2007

A Message from the Mayor

The 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan is the City of Prior Lake's official road map to the future. The plan is a vision of what our community desires to be in 2030 and has 10 vision elements – or areas of strategic importance – that define what our community must do to get there. The Vision was updated early this year, and the most noteworthy change was the addition of a 10th Vision Element: Safe and Healthy Community.

Why add a new vision element? Because the Long-range planning committee – comprised of 120 Prior Lake residents and other stakeholders – recognized that each member of the community must feel safe and contribute to safety in order to be a Wonderful Place to Call Home. A safe and healthy community is perhaps the most significant legacy we can leave to future generations.

Safety is not accomplished alone; nor can it be accomplished for us by government or our public safety agencies. Rather it is something each of us must prepare for and create in partnership.

The community policing philosophy followed by the Prior Lake Police Department is grounded in the partnerships forged among residents, neighborhoods, businesses and local police. Our police officers are actively involved in neighborhood life, sharing knowledge and fostering cooperation and a spirit of responsibility for one another. Community policing resolves public safety concerns in a proactive fashion with programs like DARE, Safety Camp, Neighborhood Watch, National Night Out and Citizen's Academy. Research shows "small" problems like graffiti, littering and cracked windows are precursors to increased criminal activity and disregard for property rights. When this occurs, the feeling of safety soon vanishes.

This new vision element supports efforts to help one another by offering housing opportunities, protection, counseling and community education programs that inform the public about our citizen responsibilities for safe driving, boating, snowmobiling, fire prevention, drug and alcohol impacts and much more.

Citizens play a vital role in supporting and participating in these community safety and health initiatives. Forming a new neighborhood association, reporting crime, learning first-aid basics, taking part in National Night Out, or checking your CO and fire alarms are just a few ways each of us can make Prior Lake a safer and healthier community.

But to be effective, concerns about a safe and healthy community cannot end at our municipal boundary.

According to our Safe and Healthy Community Vision Element, we must encourage work with adjacent communities such as the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the Cities of Savage and Shakopee through the Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE), and state and federal governments.

Scott County governmental units are working together to dramatically improve emergency communication by implementing the 800 MHz radio system. Also, instantaneous data transmission will be achieved through a high-capacity fiber optic backbone for all county facilities, libraries and other public partners. Both initiatives will provide communication, promote information sharing across agency boundaries, reduce costs, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public safety agencies throughout Scott County and are part of the safe and healthy vision element.

Prior Lake is also part of a push to improve readiness for natural and man-made disasters. A large part of such preparation is education. While the possibility of a large disaster in Prior Lake is remote, residents should always know how to react effectively should a threat arise. The Prior Lake Police and Fire departments and emergency organizations like the Red Cross are helping to mobilize neighborhoods, and more will be done, but the community must also be engaged and supportive.

The CEO of the Twin Cities Chapter of the American Red Cross recently visited the Prior Lake City Council to discuss working together on the Red Cross "Get Ready" program. To get ready for an emergency or disaster, a public awareness campaign is underway to offer information, training, resources and events that challenge residents to get life-saving training, know what to do in an emergency and to become trained as a responder to help your neighbors during and after an emergency. Information on the program is available through a link on the City's website and in information provided at City Hall.

The City of Prior Lake also provides an Emergency Preparedness Web page with emergency phone numbers and resources, vital links and information on bird flu and other threats. Go to the City's website at www.cityofpriorlake.com, and look under "City Information."

In the end, there is simply not enough resources to ensure others will make us safe. Together we must take responsibility for ourselves, our neighbors and our community. Learn about basic first aid. Plan for the unthinkable. Talk with your family about what each of you can do to help each other through emergencies. And once informed, start working with your neighbors, neighborhood association or through other groups and associations. Become a volunteer and help others.

This is the meaning of this new vision element. Your City stands ready to work with you by providing training and education and offering crime prevention techniques. We would love to hear from you regarding a safer and healthier Prior Lake. Contact our Communications Coordinator Mike Peterson at mtpeterson@cityofpriorlake.com or call (952) 447-9804.

Mayor Jack Haugen