



City of Prior Lake  
4646 Dakota St. SE  
Prior Lake, MN 55372

Aug. 15, 2007

## A Message from the Mayor

---

### Our Quality Of Life Is Not Automatic

You and I do it everyday. We go about our lives habitually making assumptions that the water will go on when we turn the tap, the lights will light, the car will start and the roadway will be reasonably safe for our use.

The collapse of a piece of essential infrastructure, as well as the associated collapse in confidence for own well being, comes as an enormous shock because we all have a tendency to assume that the services, goods or resources we enjoy in this country are automatic, that they will always be there when we need them, for our convenience, or for our safety.

English writer Aldous Huxley said, "Most human beings have an infinite capacity for taking things for granted," and he is right. Everyday conveniences like clean water or working transportation systems are never missed until they are gone.

Of course, we'd go crazy if we didn't take a lot in life for granted; each day would be a hand-clenching encounter with fear if we worried about whether our loved ones were going to make it back home at the end of the day or whether the water we were drinking contained harmful pollutants. But that doesn't mean we should assume safety and security is automatic, nor should we fail to appreciate the quality of life our democratic form of government provides.

Local, state and federal government agencies are part of the fabric of our society. Every day, this partnership provides an array of services and everyday conveniences on all levels like getting us from point A to point B, keeping our environment clean, or providing us with warnings of impending danger. Life would be very different without all the things we take for granted that are provided to us in this society.

To continue to enjoy the wonderful quality of life we have in this great country and in our wonderful community, now and in the future, we must attend to it. We must invest something of our time, money and attention to it. And beyond not merely taking these things for granted, we must work hard and invest to keep and improve it.

This is why our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan is designed to enhance the quality of life for current and future citizens with goals and objectives for reliable services and a safe, secure community. Its 10 Vision Elements outline goals and objectives for quality community growth and the infrastructure needed to go along with that growth: all essential to our quality of life for the next 30 years and beyond.

Too many citizens are not concerned about what it will take to maintain and preserve what we have. The United States is very unusual among nations, and communities like ours are as rare as a four-leaf clover if compared around the world.

The I35 bridge collapse is tragic for the people who lost their lives, the families of those who lost their lives, and the hundreds of thousands of people who work and recreate in the downtown area. But it is also a valuable lesson. The life we enjoy is easy to take for granted. It is easy to think that the roads, bridges and services we have today will be there tomorrow. But our safety, even our survival, is not automatic.

**Mayor Jack Haugen**