



# FROM THE MAYOR

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## City addressing most pressing public safety needs



By Mayor  
Jack Haugen

As elected leaders, it is up to us to ensure that the services you expect to receive from the city are delivered and delivered well. Trust me when I say that as a council, we don't take this responsibility lightly.

In the last four-plus years, that commitment to excellence has produced some truly wonderful results for the citizens of Prior Lake. Our downtown and other business districts have been revitalized, we have enhanced our water supply with new wells, we have improved roads around the city, and we have taken steps to ensure that our growth moving forward is systematic and effective.

But having said all that, I'm probably proudest of the steps we have taken in the area of public safety. It is one of the most fundamental and basic services that we provide for you. In the event of an emergency, you need to know that the members of our police and fire departments will be there.

In Prior Lake, our outstanding police and fire departments consist of many dedicated, talented individuals, and as elected leaders, it is our responsibility to provide the tools and infrastructure they need to do their jobs in these changing times for Prior Lake.

First, let's consider the police department. You may not be aware of this, but up until a couple years ago, there were times during the early morning hours when we had only one officer on duty, patrolling our city of more than 18 geographic miles.

Recognizing the potential public safety risk, the previous council addressed that issue, providing the manpower needed to enable the police department, for the first time in city history, to have two officers on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week in 2005.

Did it have an impact? We believe that it did, and statistics released in recent days by our police department seem to support that. In 2005, we had a 7-percent reduction in all crime activity and a 15-percent reduction in the more serious Part I crimes. That is truly tremendous news.

Our investment in the police department's future is also apparent at the intersection of Arcadia Avenue and Dakota Street, where the new 28,000 square foot police station is quickly taking shape. Construction is going well, and on Monday night, we were informed by our owner's representative, Bill Wolters of Constructive Ideas, that turnover of the building to our police department could occur by as early as Sept. 1 of this year, with the city hall to follow before year's end. The new police station will improve the efficiency of the department, and give officers access to the same tools and infrastructure that other metro communities have had for years.

As a council, we are also keenly aware of the challenges facing the members of our fire department. I have said since taking office that the service provided by our paid, on-call fire department is the best bargain in Prior Lake.

Each year, the department's calls for service rise – this year, the call load was up 21 percent. And with our community continuing to grow, particularly to the west and in our orderly annexation area, it is absolutely essential that we build a satellite fire station in the northern part of the community to keep the department's response times among the best in the metro area as our community develops.

As a council, we are working toward the goal of starting construction on the satellite fire station this year, consistent with our 2006-10 Capital Improvement Program, and have formed a new committee consisting of firefighters, members of the city staff, Councilman Steve Millar and myself to steer this important project to completion.

In the additional manpower we provided and the steps we have taken to date to build a new police station and satellite fire station, we are making key investments in our future and moving Prior Lake closer to becoming the community depicted in our 2030 Vision.