



MAYOR'S COLUMN

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Celebrating our past while 'Sailing into Future'



By Mayor
Jack Haugen

As your mayor, it brings me great pride each year to welcome you, our residents and guests from outside the community, to the six best days of summer in Prior Lake known as Lakefront Days!

Appropriately enough, the theme selected for this year's celebration is, "Sailing into the Future." In the last few years, it seems like we've been doing just that – briskly navigating through the current toward the community that is described in our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan.

Lakefront Days embodies all that we love about Prior Lake and the small-town values we hold so dear. For six days, starting this year on Tuesday, Aug. 2 and ending Sunday, Aug. 7, we will come together as neighbors, friends and family – and we will do so in our revitalized downtown and one of the best outdoor venues in the area, Lakefront Park.

Lakefront Days gets bigger and better every year. Credit the Prior Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, city staff and the positive relationship that exists with the many wonderful sponsors and volunteers for that. Not that long ago, Lakefront Days was a one-day affair. Today, it spans six fun-filled days. Whether it's the classic car and motorcycle cruises, the ice cream social, the parade, the water ski show, or the new Laker Idol competition, there is something on the slate for everyone this year at Lakefront Days.

The "Sailing into the Future" theme is also symbolic of the city as we make the turn into August. We, too, are looking to the future, and the facilities and infrastructure that we will need to serve the Prior Lake community for decades to come.

Earlier this week, the first phase of the relocation of city services out of the existing city hall was completed. Administration, Finance and Recreation have now settled into the Fire Station. Police will be moving into a mobile trailer adjacent to the police annex on Aug. 3, followed by the relocation of Building Inspections, Planning and Engineering to the Maintenance Center by Aug. 22.

The relocation of these departments will set the stage for the construction of a new police station and city hall over the next 18 months, culminating in the fourth quarter of 2006.

With the momentum that Prior Lake is now experiencing, it's easy to get excited about the future of our community. It is imperative, however, that we not lose sight of the past. In fact, we must effectively tie our past to our future.

At our July 18 meeting, my colleagues and I on the City Council provided some clear direction to city staff relative to the existing city hall site – as well as the former Kop Farm property. In both cases, we're committed to preserving the heritage of these important links to our past.

On Monday, Aug. 1, we will take a significant first step toward that goal when we commemorate the history of the existing city hall building at Dakota and Arcadia, which was served as a school building from 1941-64 before becoming city hall in 1965.

I urge all city residents – and particularly those who spent time in the building – to join us for a wonderful celebration of our heritage, featuring the opening of the 1941 time capsule, reminiscing with teachers, students and staff members who used the building, and a light lunch and refreshments courtesy of the city.

Please join us at noon on Monday, Aug. 1!

It figures to be a wonderful event – and a perfect reminder at the start of our "Sailing into the Future" week of Lakefront Days festivities of our community's rich history and the role it played in shaping the Prior Lake of today.