

# Watts News

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES, PO BOX 373, BRAINERD, MN 56401

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## LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX FOR BRAINERD BEING CONSIDERED

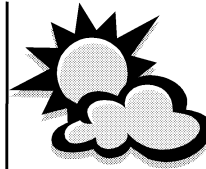
Recently, the Brainerd City Council voted unanimously to request the Minnesota State Legislature to authorize the collection of a Local Option Sales Tax of .5% to be added to the current sales tax. The approval of the Legislature is required as well as the approval of the voters of the City. The intent of the Council is to place this item on the ballot of the general election to be held on November 7, 2006. The funds collected from the sales tax will be used primarily for the expansion and upgrading of the current Wastewater Treatment Facility that serves Brainerd and Baxter. If the sales tax is not approved, substantial increases will be necessary in sewer charges in order to make the required improvements to the Treatment Plant. Further information will be provided in the upcoming months in this publication to give the readers a better understanding of the project and the need to approve the sales tax in order to keep utility rates reasonable.

## SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION FEE INCREASE

Effective on April 1, the sanitary sewer collection fee on your utility bill will increase from \$.62 per 1,000 gallons of water used to \$1 per 1,000 gallons. For the average residential user that consumes 6,000 gallons of water per month, this will increase the sanitary sewer collection portion of your monthly utility bill by \$2.28. This is the first increase in this fee in 14 years. Funds collected from this fee are used to operate, maintain and improve the sanitary sewer collection system of the City which in some cases is about 100 years old.

## SAC AND WAC FEES TO INCREASE MARCH 1

Late in 2005, the City Council increased the fees for **new and expanded connections** to the water and sewer systems effective March 1. The fees are known as SAC (Sewer Availability Charge) and WAC (Water Availability Charge). These fees **do not** affect current utility users that are connected to the municipal water and sewer systems. The SAC fee will increase from \$700 per residential equivalent connection (ERC) to \$1,400 on March 1 and to \$1,900 per ERC on January 1, 2007. The WAC fee will increase from \$700 per ERC to \$1,100 on March 1 and to \$1,400 per ERC on January 1, 2007. These fees are used for capital improvements to the sewer and water systems.



## Watt's Weather

### Total Precipitation

February 2006 7.31"  
February 2005 9.95"

### Average Temperatures

February 2006 Hi 22 Lo -1  
February 2005 Hi 30 Lo 7

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Great minds discuss ideas;  
Average minds discuss events;  
Small minds discuss people.

## WATT'S HANDY

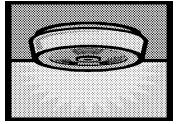
Bathrooms need to be cleaned daily. Dirty bathrooms are unsanitary. They are also the most difficult to clean if left dirty. Here are a few tips:

- Dishwashing liquid is fine for cleaning baths, showers and sinks. Wipe around immediately after use to keep these areas clean.
- Bathroom sink drains: Clean with a bottle brush, and pour a little bleach down them once a week.
- Enamel and porcelain: Clean with a nonabrasive cleaner—harsh abrasives will dull the bath surface. Rinse with hot water and dishwashing liquid.
- Fiberglass: Use dishwashing liquid—avoid abrasives, metal polish, and harsh cleaners.

# TAKING STEPS TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY FIRE-SAFE



Nestled in our homes during these cold winter days with family close at hand, it's hard to think about how small human errors can cause major tragedy. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the most deadly months for house fires in recent years are generally, December, January and February. Easy steps to take are as follows:



## **House Numbers:**

Your house numbers should be printed in numbers that are **NO LESS THAN 4" TALL** and in contrasting color from your house color. Your house numbers should be visible up to 150 feet and can be seen at night so that the Fire Department can find you easily in case of an emergency.

## **Smoke Alarms:**

Smoke alarms are an easy and cost-effective way to keep your family safe, even while everyone is asleep. A smoke alarm is useful only if installed properly and maintained. A working smoke alarm can detect a small fire and provide crucial minutes necessary to prevent a tragedy from occurring in your home. Approximately 90% of all homes have at least one smoke alarm. However, surveys show that 20% do not work because the battery is either dead or missing. Alarms should be placed on each floor of the home, especially near where family members are sleeping and in the basement. Ensure that smoke detectors are working properly on a monthly basis and batteries are replaced at least twice a year. Encourage children to help test the detectors monthly, and familiarize them with the sounds of the alarm.

## **Carbon-Monoxide Detectors (CO):**

CO is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, highly toxic gas that is undetectable to the human senses. It is a by-product of combustion, present whenever fuel is burned from: kerosene, wood, coal, oil, charcoal, gasoline, propane, methane, diesel fuel, natural or liquefied petroleum (LP) gas and tobacco smoke. Because the gas is odorless, victims may become disoriented before realizing any danger, unable to call for help or exit the premises. Detectors should be installed on every level of the home. It is estimated that 300 deaths occur each year from CO poisoning and 10,000 people seek medical attention due to CO inhalation.

## **Smother cooking fires:**

Fires caused by cooking remain the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Cooking fires are dangerous because people may try to put them out the wrong way. Cooking fires should be smothered by covering the pan with a lid, leaving the lid on until the pan is completely cool to keep it from contacting oxygen and reigniting. If there is an oven fire, turn off the oven and leave the oven door closed. A fire extinguisher should be kept in the kitchen. It's also a good idea to keep a fire extinguisher near the furnace, garage and anywhere else a fire may begin. Make sure everyone in your home knows how to use the extinguisher.

## **Flammables:**

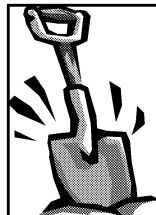
Keep matches, lighters and candles out of reach and out of sight of children. These items can be very tempting as playthings because kids may find fire fascinating.

## **Plan an escape:**

After installing fire alarms and fire extinguishers, ensure your family is up to speed on what to do in case a fire does break out. Make a fire action plan so everyone knows what to do and where to go for safety. Draw a map of an escape route for the whole family. Teach your younger children especially not to hide from fire or smoke, and to go to firefighters who are there to protect them. Practice your escape plan periodically, at least twice each year. Make sure children know their street address and last name. Practice the plan using different scenarios so your family will be ready for anything.

*LET'S HAVE A PLAN TO KEEP OUR FAMILIES SAFE.*

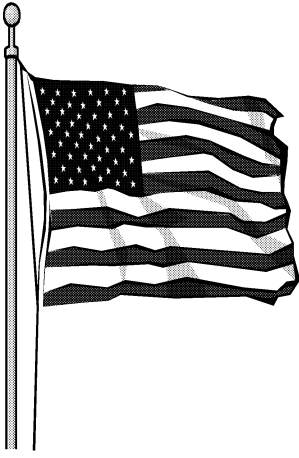
**NOTICE:** All electrical work performed in the City of Brainerd requires a "Request for Electrical Inspection" form to be completed, filed, and work inspected by our inspector. If you need the form or have any questions, please contact Brainerd Public Utilities at 825-3210 or 829-2193.



**BEFORE DIGGING,** call Gopher State One Call at 1-800-252-1166 for water and electric locations. All requests for locations must be made by calling the above toll free number at least 48 hours before digging begins.

**Business Office Hours 7:00 - 3:30, 829-8726**  
**Repair/Service Operations Office Hours 7:00 - 3:30, 829-2193**  
**Emergency 24 hour service 365 days a year, 829-2193**  
**EMAIL@BPU.ORG OR WWW.BPU.ORG**

# CARE PACKAGE DRIVE FOR OUR LOCAL NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS SERVING IN IRAQ



The City of Brainerd employees are working with the Brainerd Family Readiness Group to collect items and send *care packages to our local National Guard soldiers serving in Iraq*. The following list of items are much needed and greatly appreciated by our men and women serving overseas.

Donations of items can be dropped off at Brainerd Public Utilities, the Brainerd Parks and Recreation office at Lum Park, as well as City Hall, and the Fire Department. If you are interested in helping to defray postage costs, checks made payable to "Brainerd Family Readiness Group" are also greatly appreciated!

## Beverages (don't forget a jug to mix these in!)

pre-sweetened Kool-aid/lemonade/Crystal Lite  
powdered hot chocolate  
instant coffee (flavored/regular/decaffeinated)  
tea bags

## Personal Items

baby wipes (travel packs work great and don't take up much room)  
Chapstick or Carmex  
sunscreen  
hand and body lotion  
body wash/bar soap  
mouthwash  
toothpaste (regular paste will melt in the summer-try gel)  
deodorant  
Clorox/Lysol wipes  
throat lozenges  
liquid hand sanitizer  
baby powder  
dental floss  
flea collars (for sand fleas-can be put around the legs of cots)

## Microwave Foods

microwave popcorn  
Easy Mac  
small microwave meals in cups (much lighter weight than cans)

## Practical Items

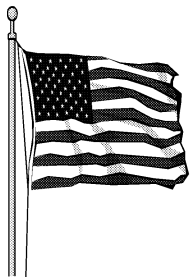
AA batteries  
envelopes and writing paper  
pencils (mechanical or lead), pens, and sharpeners

## "Nice to Have" Extras

air freshener/stick-ups/Febreze/dryer sheets sealed in a Ziploc bag  
DVDs/CDs  
playing cards/board games  
paperback books/magazines/newspapers  
Frisbee/hackie sack/Nerf football  
notes/cards/letters

## Items can be dropped off at:

1. Brainerd Public Utilities between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
2. Brainerd Parks and Recreation Office at Lum Park between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
3. Brainerd City Hall between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
4. Brainerd Fire Department between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



# LET'S SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

