

Saint Paul Ward 5 Update

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In the News

[Robotic conveyor belt will speed up replacement of Maryland Ave I-35E overpass](#), PiPress

[City council rejects permit for north end halfway house](#), PiPress

[Council upholds condemnation of squalid apartment complex](#), PiPress

[A Hmong 'family reunion'](#), Star Tribune

[Duluth zoo's polar bear and seals, flooded out, will come to St. Paul's Como Zoo](#), PiPress

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Neighborhood Festivals and Events in Ward 5

ComoFest: July 19-22

ComoFest is a great, affordable way to have a blast without leaving the neighborhood. In its third year, ComoFest (formerly known as Staycation) is fun for the whole family and features a growing list of events. Thursday features the Lyngblomsten Mid-Summer Festival with games, entertainment and activities for all. Friday boasts a Wine and Cheese Social, talent show, family activities and an outdoor movie at various venues. Saturday enjoy a flea market, Como Part Art Festival, a garden tour or kite making, and the weekend rounds out on Sunday with a kickball tournament and live music! Sounds like fun? Get more information and sign up materials at www.district10comopark.org/2012comofest.html

Rice Street Festival: July 25-29

Rice Street Festival, the second oldest fest in Saint Paul, celebrates its 102nd year. Last year's organizers are getting a boost from energetic Cindy Shanley who comes to the festival leadership with great ideas to add a new dimension this fabulous, long-standing event. This year highlights includes (deep breath..) Old-Timers Softball, One Mile Race, Rice Street Parade, Movie in the Park, Pub Crawl, Kickball Tourney, Kiddie Parade, Antique Car Show, High Heel Race, Talent Show, Street Dance all topped off with the Rice Street Royalty Coronations. There will be something for everyone, so do join us at the Fest! For information, time and dates on all activities visit www.RiceStreetFestival.com

National Night Out: August 7

It is time to gather your neighbors and plan a block party! Hold a block event like a cookout, potluck party or game-fest, and support this nationwide celebration. National Night Out is a fight against crime and drugs in our neighborhoods. The hope is to build partnerships and trust between police and community, and to work together to build stronger, healthier, neighborhoods with the quality of life that everyone desires and deserves. For more information on National Night Out, and to download the forms needed to register and plan your 2012 event, visit: www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=4552

Maryland Bridge at I-35E Construction Begins

Friday, July 13--the Maryland Ave. bridge over I-35E is now closed for re-construction. The bridge will re-open in September. The new bridge will include wider and safer sidewalks, updated lighting and guardrails and green elements. Over the weekend, I-35E will be reduced to one lane. Detours are posted. Construction of the new bridge precedes a makeover of I-35E (2013-2015) which will be widened to reduce traffic congestion and create a new interchange at Cayuga Ave. For more information visit www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/35estpaul/.

Westminster Court Apartments Condemned

After decades of deterioration and mismanagement, the City Council voted on July 3 to condemn the Westminster Court Apartments ([view video](#)). By the time the city boarded up the buildings on July 9, only a few families (of the 60 that lived there in January) remained uncertain of where they would find permanent housing. The ordeal that the good tenants of Westminster Court have endured is heartbreaking and I remain open to assisting these constituents however I can.

Sorting through the Westminster Court issue has been a challenging experience, but I am hopeful for the future of the apartments at Westminster and Maryland and the neighborhood as a whole. The city will not allow the buildings to be inhabited until they are fully up to code. The location, minutes away from downtown, is hard to beat. Ward 5 residents deserve to live in safe and dignified housing and I will continue to work to ensure the next chapter at Westminster reflects this vision.

Volunteers of America and Jackson/Arlington Industrial Development

Another controversial issue based in Ward 5 came before City Council on July 3 ([video](#)). The Volunteers of America (VOA), a highly respected area nonprofit, hoped to purchase a building in the Jackson-Arlington industrial area. The building would serve as a residential facility for federal prisoners in a re-entry program at the end of their prison sentences. Currently, this is an allowed use in industrial-zoned areas with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The VOA requested a CUP and a variance of 58 beds over the 16 bed limit for Department of Corrections licensed facilities. Ultimately, my colleagues and I voted to deny the CUP requested by VOA. For decades, neighbors have identified this area in plans approved by the Mayor and Council for industrial/commercial development and jobs for our residents. Because the use requested by the VOA is not in compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, the Council decided to deny their request.

Job creation is a top priority for my office and the Jackson-Arlington area is one of the few remaining areas in Saint Paul poised for this type of development. I will work with business leaders, the Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Saint Paul Port Authority to help realize the neighborhood's goal of quality job opportunities.

Vote for ESNDIC in the Connect for Health Challenge

The East Side Community of Choice Initiative is one of three finalists in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation's Connect for Health Challenge. View their video on [YouTube!](#) The finalist with the most votes will receive a grant of up to \$100,000 to build social connections for a healthier community. Vote for the East Side Community of Choice Initiative by texting 'Choice' to 83224 or online at www.InCommons.org/ConnectforHealth. You can also vote by calling (612) 547-6145 or emailing ConnectforHealth@bluecrossmn.com.

Community Office Hours

I am holding office hours in the community on a weekly basis for constituents to conveniently drop-in to discuss neighborhood and city-wide issues. Thanks to those who have already taken the time to visit with me. To discuss your issue, please stop by and visit me the below times and locations. If you require a meeting lasting longer than 10-15 minutes, please contact my office to schedule an appointment.

- **Rice Street Public Library**--First Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **McDonough Recreation Center**--Second Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **North Dale Recreation Center**--Third Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **Wilder Recreation Center/City Academy**--Fourth Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.

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