

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

From  
**DAVE  
CIESLEWICZ**



**MAYOR OF MADISON**

**Making city government work better for you**

This fall has seen a number of City of Madison initiatives designed to improve the level of service you receive for your tax dollars.

The most visible change has been the new automated recycling program. This program saves money by reducing the amount of time it takes to collect recycling. Under the old program, a truck could collect 450 households a day. Under the new program, we can collect 600 households or more a day. As a result, instead of running up to 13 trucks a day, we only need to run 10 now. That saves city tax dollars, fuel for the vehicles and disruption to neighborhoods.

At the same time, the new program provides a higher level of service. Now, all recyclables can simply be thrown into the new recycling bins. There is no need to bundle newspapers, cardboard, etc. Better yet, the new system accepts more recyclables than ever, including junk mail. And early reports indicate that the volume of recycling is up, which saves even more money by reducing our waste disposal costs.

So ... a better recycling program that also saves taxpayers money, while doing a better job of protecting the environment. That's a win-win-win situation for everyone.

Another new initiative is the City's

"report a problem" website. This new City web portal is designed to help Madison residents easily report issues such as potholes, graffiti and snow removal. The new site, [www.cityofmadison.com/reportaproblem.html](http://www.cityofmadison.com/reportaproblem.html), provides a "one-stop" shop for reporting problems or making service requests from City agencies.

The new website is a major step forward in my efforts to make City government more responsive and more accessible to Madison residents and businesses. Madisonians expect a high level of service from their government, and this will help us better meet those expectations, without imposing new costs on taxpayers.

The new website allows citizens to report a variety of concerns, which are routed directly to the appropriate City agency for resolution.

The City has also added a new website for looking up information on outstanding parking tickets. That website is [www.cityofmadison.com/parkingticketsystem.html](http://www.cityofmadison.com/parkingticketsystem.html).

This announcement is the latest in a series of initiatives to enhance web-based access to City information. Earlier this year, we launched an "online city hall" website, where citizens can track city legislation, committee agendas and other information. That site is <http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/mattersearch/home.aspx>.

Madisonians expect a high level of service from the city for their tax dollar. They are right to do so. These new programs are just our latest efforts to improve the quality of city services.

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From  
**BRIAN  
BENFORD**



**DISTRICT 12 ALDERPERSON**

As always, thanks to the great folks who put this paper out. When I pause to write this column, I often feel like a pastor composing the Sunday sermon. I always ask myself what I want to tell you versus what I believe you want to know. Regrettably, the two seldom coincide.

One of my and every alder's biggest obstacles is disseminating information to all in the district. Many folks don't have access to the Internet to tap into community electronic listservs. I'm not able to go door to door or to set up phone banks to solicit all interested parties on every issue. With a \$500 budget for mailings, I can't even send a newsletter of my own throughout the district.

It is true that some of our neighbors don't have the ability or desire to weigh in on public policy because of unbearable daily life challenges like paying the rent and utilities, putting food on the table and providing the bare basics.

These are the folks who have become marginalized by our indifferent society, destined for apathy.

Thankfully, others of you have weighed in on crucial issues of late, such as the smoking ban and the lobbying legislation that recently passed.

When I entered the political arena, my main motivation was to bring others into the mix. By advocating for the underrepresented and providing a

voice for those without, along with all the rest of you, I have hoped to inspire others to get involved. I am proud to say it's working.

Despite how you feel about my political ideology, lifestyle or the way I wear my hair, I believe it is incumbent upon me to put my judgments aside to represent the majority of my constituents. I never did and never will care about political stock. I only bring this up because we are well into the budget discussions.

As I've said in the past, the old adage that the squeaky wheel gets the oil really applies to the budget process. With limited money and resources available to municipalities, it is getting harder and harder to deliver basic services and provide the quality of life programming that is desperately needed.

The lion's share of our tax money goes to personnel costs. Police and fire departments budgets are the biggest blow to your checkbook, but how many of you would be willing to cut these vital services? How many of you could live without garbage pickup or snow removal?

I get calls every week from neighbors who have complaints about city services or the lack of them. I love Madison for its wonderful people, natural and cultural resources, and its rich progressive history.

We are at a critical juncture where we need to reexamine our priorities as a community. Please tell me your views during the next two months as we wrestle with the budget.

*Ald. Benford can be reached at 332-3098 or [district12@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district12@cityofmadison.com)*

From  
**PAUL  
VAN ROOY**



**DISTRICT 18 ALDERPERSON**

As I write this article, we are in the midst of working on the City budget for 2006. The Mayor released his capital budget early in September, and the executive operating budget will be released by the time you are reading this article. The Mayor held three bud-

get workshops this year on the capital budget to allow citizens input to the process. One of the hearings was at Warner Park. In addition to Mayoral staff and five alders there were about fifteen citizens in attendance.

The object of the workshop was to give everyone the opportunity to attempt to balance the budget given that there is about a \$4 million shortfall. After observing the discussion, it appeared to me that those in attendance found out how difficult it can be to make those kinds of cuts while still preserving basic City services. There will be opportunities for citizen input

to the operating budget as well. Watch for announcements of public hearings during the month of October.

During the month of September, the City implemented the automated recycling pick up program. It appears that it is working quite well. As everyone is aware, the pick up for district 18 has been switched from Wednesday to Friday. The trash will continue to be collected every Friday, and recycling will be every other week. Please consult your copy of the recyclopedia for a listing of all of the additional items that can now be recycled. I find that recycling is now much simpler since

everything goes in one container. If you have misplaced your copy of the collection schedule or the recyclopedia that was delivered to you with your recycling cart, you can obtain another copy by contacting George Dreckmann at 267-2626 or Email him at [gdruckmann@cityofmadison.com](mailto:gdruckmann@cityofmadison.com). George can also answer any other questions you may have regarding trash collection and recycling.

The Northside Farmers Market has enjoyed a good first season, and will be drawing to a close on October 16th with a fall harvest celebration. I hope you have had an opportunity to take advantage of the new market this summer. If you have not yet visited the market, please consider doing so by October 16th when it will close for the season.

I would like to thank the Northside Community Cooperative Board members who worked hard to make the market the great success that it has been this first year. We look forward to an even bigger and better season next year.

We can now look forward to the next exciting new development for the Northside, the arrival of Pierce's Northside Market. Work is already getting underway to prepare the new quarters for Pierce's in the Northside Town Center (formerly Sherman Plaza). We anxiously await the grand opening in February 2006. Many thanks to the Northside Community Coop, the Northside Planning Council, Dave and Don Bruns and all of the Northside citizens for lending support to getting a grocery store back on the Northside.

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