



# Insights

FALL 2020

## Thank you, Mayor George Tourville, for 39 Years of Service to Our Community

By Joe Atkins, Dakota County Commissioner

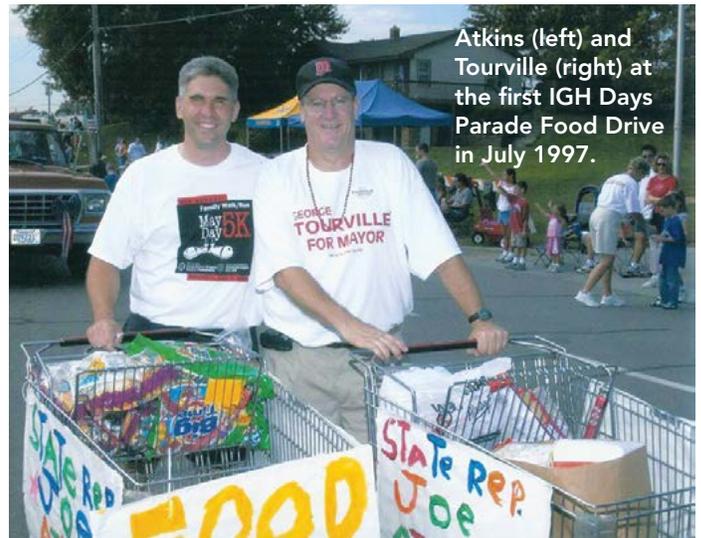
**Let's Take a Look...** "You want to do what?" These were the very first words George Tourville said to me when I suggested in 1993 that we try to build a community center in Inver Grove Heights with donations and user fees, not property tax dollars. I was 27, had just been elected mayor, and to be honest had no idea what I was doing. It was what then-Councilman George Tourville said next that started a productive partnership that has spanned four decades.

Instead of telling me it was a ludicrous idea and that no city our size had ever succeeded at constructing a community center without property tax dollars, George said, "It's worth a look. Let's take a look." A year and half later, with long-term user contracts and donations in hand, construction of the Veterans Memorial Community Center was underway, paid for with user fees and donations, not property tax dollars.

Next came construction of Inver Grove's award-winning Rich Valley Athletic Complex, improvements to Cahill, and Inver Glen Library, again all with support from donations and user fees, not city property tax dollars. None of these things would have happened had it not been for George. In fact, with respect to the library, I don't know if we would have a public library to this day had it not been for George's efforts. While I was making the public pitch to persuade the County, ISD 199 and Inver Hills to partner with the city to make the library possible, it was then-Councilman Tourville and Senator Jim Metzen who were quietly and effectively working behind the scenes to make it happen. It narrowly passed the Dakota County Board on a 4-3 vote in 1998.

### The IGH Days Parade Food Drive

One of my favorite moments with George took place in July 1997. I had just attended the South St. Paul Kaposia Days parade, watching from my cousin's front lawn on 5th Avenue.



Atkins (left) and Tourville (right) at the first IGH Days Parade Food Drive in July 1997.

As the politicians went by during the parade, some of my cousin's guests were grumbling, "What a waste of space. I can't stand politicians in parades." I couldn't argue with them; they had a point. The next week I happened to run into Harv Bartz, the Director of Neighbors Inc., our local food shelf. Harv told me the food shelf was hurting. Donations dropped off dramatically in the summer, at the same time the need increased. This prompted me to call George. "What if we as a City Council push grocery carts in the IGH Days Parade and collect donations for Neighbors?" I asked. George paused, probably recognizing that we might look ridiculous in the parade, especially if it did not work and nobody donated. In spite of the risk of embarrassing ourselves, George said, "It's worth a try. Let's take a look." By the way, whenever George said, "Let's take a look," I came to realize it meant he was ready to give it a try.

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Grand reopening of the Rock Island Swing Bridge in June 2012. Pictured left to right: then-State Representative (now Dakota County Commissioner) Joe Atkins, former Councilmember Chip Grannis, former Councilmember Dennis Madden, the late State Senator Jim Metzgen, Mayor George Tourville, the late Councilmember Bill Klein, Councilmember Rosemary Piekarski Krech, former Dakota County Commissioner Nancy Shouweiler.

Because of George, as well as scores of volunteers and countless generous parade-goers, the IGH Parade Food Drive has now taken place for the last 23 years, collecting more than 19 tons of food donations and school supplies for local families in need.

## The Rock Island Swing Bridge

Constructed in 1894-95, the 125-year-old Rock Island Swing Bridge is perhaps most famous—or should we say infamous—for serving as an escape route for gangster John Dillinger during a running gun battle with Dakota County deputies as he fled across the river to St. Paul Park.

The South St. Paul Beltline Railroad constructed the historic double-decker swing bridge, which carried trains and wagons (and vehicles later) the 1,661 feet across the Mississippi. When it was built, it was the longest of its kind on the Mississippi and among the longest in the world.

When the Rock Island Swing Bridge closed to traffic in 1999, after being deemed unsafe, it was the only remaining toll bridge in Minnesota. Eventually, on November 24, 2008, a 200-foot portion of eastern span collapsed into the river and the entirety of the bridge was scheduled for demolition, leading to it being named one of the state's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

On May 16, 2009, a mere three days before a wrecking ball was set to take down the western portion of the bridge, a last-minute legislative reprieve in the form of a moratorium was signed by Gov. Pawlenty. But the bridge needed an owner. At a gathering of federal, state, county and city officials, no one seemed willing to step into this role. Without an owner, the historic bridge was doomed. This is when Mayor Tourville stepped up and said, "Let's take a look."

After numerous fundraisers, help from state bonding funds, and other efforts, the Inver Grove side of the Rock Island Swing Bridge was turned into a recreational pier and the land around the bridge into a park, for roughly the same amount it would have cost to demolish and dispose of the bridge. The site, which is now owned by the city, offers great views of the Mississippi and is the most popular spot in town for wedding and prom photos, walkers, cyclists and history buffs.

## Retirement

When I talked to George several months ago about being up for re-election this year, I did not ask him if he was going to run again. At one point in our conversation, however, he said simply that he was "taking a look" at his options. This was the moment I knew George might actually retire. It will be the first time in my adult life that George Tourville will not be serving in the City Council, and I am definitely going to miss working with him. This being said, I want to wish George, and especially his wife, Barb, their children and grandchildren the very best as George retires as Mayor. Some folks do not appreciate the toll that holding elected office can take on spouses and kids, but I certainly do. Thank You to George for his four decades of community service and to George's family for sharing him with us for so many years.

"George Tourville is a good man and a great leader. He is great at getting things done quickly. We made a lot of progress as a city while he was mayor."

—DENNIS MADDEN, FORMER IGH COUNCILMEMBER




# Exciting News!

## ANNOUNCING OUR UPDATED CITY LOGO, WEBSITE AND NEW DOMAIN NAME

When you visit [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org) in Oct. 2020, you'll notice something different—a new website for residents named [www.ighmn.gov](http://www.ighmn.gov). You'll find many more user-friendly features to make it easier to find the info you need and make the most of opportunities like IGH events, meetings, parks, VMCC programs and more. You'll also spot an updated logo to go with the site.

**Not to worry!**  
The web address [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org) and city email addresses that end with [@invergroveheights.org](mailto:@invergroveheights.org) will continue to work temporarily, but Oct. is a good time to update your bookmarks and contacts to [ighmn.gov](http://ighmn.gov).

We hope you find a lot to like about our new look and shorter address, IGH!



[www.ighmn.gov](http://www.ighmn.gov)



## Fire Safety Corner Electric Portable Space Heater Safety

When the weather turns cold, it can bring a chill into our homes. Portable space heaters have become a popular way to supplement central heating or heat one room. Nearly half of all space heater fires involve electric space heaters.

If you plan to use portable electric space heaters, make sure to follow these tips and recommendations:

### HEATER CHECKLIST

- Purchase a heater with the seal of an independent testing laboratory.
- Keep the heater at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from anything that can burn, including people.
- Choose a heater with a thermostat and overheat protection.
- Place the heater on a solid, flat surface.
- Make sure your heater has an auto shut-off to turn the heater off if it tips over.
- Keep space heaters out of the way of foot traffic. Never block an exit.
- Keep children away from the space heater.
- Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet. Never use an extension cord.
- Space heaters should be turned off and unplugged when you leave the room or go to bed.

**Stay safe this fall, IGH.**

**Your safety during COVID-19 is our priority.**  
**We encourage you to avoid a trip to City Hall by paying your utility bill online:**



1. Visit [invergroveheights.org](http://invergroveheights.org)
2. Click the 'Pay Online' icon
3. Click 'Utility Billing'
4. Click the 'Quick Pay' icon





## City of IGH to Distribute COVID-19 Relief Funds Locally

2020 has been a very challenging year for our local economy. Restrictions and safety precautions due to COVID-19 have brought both revenue losses and additional costs to many businesses and nonprofit organizations. The CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act), passed by Congress, has made aid for businesses and nonprofits available on the federal, state and county levels, but aid has not reached everyone in need.

To help address this shortfall, IGH City Council and its Economic Development Authority (EDA) partnered with the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) to create and administer a program to distribute additional CARES Act funding within Inver Grove Heights to organizations that have yet to receive assistance, with \$140,000 allocated for aid to nonprofits and \$270,000 allocated for local small businesses. IGH City Council approved a plan for the city to accept applications for grants of \$20,000 (nonprofits) and \$10,000 (local small businesses) to be dispersed this fall.

Our local small businesses and nonprofits are the bedrock of our community. They create jobs and provide services that make IGH a better place to live. We hope that IGH COVID-19 Relief Grants provide some meaningful assistance and help bridge the gap to what will hopefully be a brighter 2021.

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN IGH

2020 has been a busy year so far for both residential and commercial projects in IGH. Despite the economic pitfalls of COVID-19, IGH continues to see steady growth and development. Here are some recent highlights:

- **UNITED PROPERTIES:** New 80,000 square-foot office and warehouse space is being constructed at Inver Pointe Business Park just south of Hwy 55.
- **MAUER CHEVROLET DEALERSHIP:** 22,600 square-foot addition and parking deck expansion at 1055 50th St.
- **CHRISTIAN BROTHER AUTO REPAIR AND SUPPLIES:** 5100 square-foot business is going in next to the new Casey's General Store on Diffley Rd. near the Eagan border.
- **CUB LIQUOR STORE:** Renovating and opening in the former MGM Warehouse space in Cahill Plaza shopping center near 80th Street and Cahill Ave.
- **ENCLAVE AT SETTLER'S RIDGE:** Lennar's newest community is now open in IGH. Enclave at Settler's Ridge is an extension of the current Settler's Ridge neighborhood and is located at 65th Street and Agate Trail. Enclave at Settler's Ridge will include up to 66 new single family homes when built out.



**Model Lennar home.**

**REMINDER TO OUR RESIDENTS AND CONTRACTORS:** You can save yourself a trip to City Hall and apply for most building permits using our CityView online portal. Go to [cv.invergroveheights.org/cityviewportal](https://cv.invergroveheights.org/cityviewportal) to get started!



# Inver Grove Heights Winter Parking Restrictions

The Inver Grove Heights Police Department would like to remind our community to do their part in promoting safety on our city streets by closely following a longstanding City Ordinance:

**#6-3-6 LIMITED PARKING DURING WINTER**

**MONTHS:** It shall be unlawful to park a vehicle on any street between the hours of 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. from Nov. 1 through Apr. 1.

**Please be aware that IGH PD will be taking the following steps:**

**Oct. 15 through Nov. 1, 2020:** *Warning Notices* will be issued to any vehicle found in violation.

**Nov. 1 through April 1, 2021:** *Citations* will be issued to any vehicle found in violation of the parking rules. If a vehicle found in violation has not moved and has received numerous citations for this violation, it may be towed and impounded.

### Frequently asked winter parking questions:

**Q: What if I have visitors from out of town and have no available parking on my property?**

**A:** If you have visitors who need to temporarily park on the street, the Police Department can provide a waiver for up to 14 days. To make a waiver request, property owners should call the police department at **651-450-2525**. The waiver allows for overnight street parking only. All other parking requirements remain in effect. Those with waivers are also expected to move vehicles to alternate locations if a significant snow event occurs.

**Q: I see cars parked overnight on my street, why haven't they been cited or towed?**

**A:** The ordinance restricts overnight parking from 3:00 to 6:00 a.m. Officers focus on overnight parking enforcement based on availability. Since the department's priority is the response to calls for police service, winter parking regulation enforcement is completed only when officers have available time. Residents can call the department at **651-450-2525** to report a persistent or chronic violation, which will be given priority status when officers are not engaged in call for service response.

**Q: What is the requirement in the event of a snowfall?**

**A:** The ordinance was intended to standardize parking regulations by prohibiting overnight parking from Nov. 1 to Apr. 1. During snow events of 2 inches or more, we ask that vehicles be parked off-street to allow City plowing crews to clear snow from curb-to-curb effectively.

**Q: Is Inver Grove Heights the only city with this type of date-specific winter parking restriction?**

**A:** Cities have a variety of different ordinances governing winter parking. Some cities have a year-round overnight parking restriction. Inver Grove Heights winter parking requirements are date- and time-specific to minimize questions and confusion about parking during snow events.

Thank you for doing your part. If you have questions, contact the Inver Grove Heights Police Department from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mon. through Fri. at **651-450-2525**.



## IGH Bow Hunter Registration is Online This Fall

Due to COVID-19, we have made some changes to the 2020 deer bow hunting season, which runs from Sept. 19 through Dec. 31 in Minnesota. This year only, all IGH bow hunter registration will be online at [invergroveheights.org/377/Bow-Hunting-Regulations](https://invergroveheights.org/377/Bow-Hunting-Regulations).

Required hunter registration forms have been converted to fillable PDFs on our website. We ask that you please complete the forms and email them to [bowhunter@invergroveheights.org](mailto:bowhunter@invergroveheights.org). Also attach electronic copies of your proof of proficiency document and a copy of your 2020 hunting license to your email. Please call IGH PD at **651-450-2525** with questions.



The City of IGH has officially received the Step 4 award in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program! Inver Grove Heights is one of 140 participating cities and tribal nations in the 10-year-old challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities and tribal nations achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals.

The city accomplished Step 4 of 5 by measuring and reporting annual operations and development metrics related to city buildings and lighting, city fleets, parks and natural areas, stormwater, renewable energy, jobs and more. The primary purpose and benefit of Step 4 is for cities to gather

data against which a city can compare itself over time. Step 5 is achieved when a city makes progress in select metrics.

“The city’s continued progress in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program shows community members and other cities in Minnesota that the City of Inver Grove Heights and its residents are committed to promoting sustainability within our city operations and community-wide,” said Ally Sutherland, Environmental Specialist and GreenStep program lead with Inver Grove Heights.

To build on the city’s GreenStep Cities progress, in February 2020 the city applied and was selected to join Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy initiative to help the city achieve its energy goals and assist local residents and businesses in reducing their energy bills and carbon footprints. City staff are now working with Partners in Energy facilitators and community stakeholders to develop the city’s energy goals, put them into action and provide the community with an energy efficient future.

The City of Inver Grove Heights has participated in the GreenStep Cities program since 2016. You can learn more about Inver Grove Heights’ program progress at <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/city-detail/12144>.

## Curious About the Local Oil Refinery?

The Community Advisory Council to the Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery is here for you.

Did you know that there is a Community Advisory Council to the local oil refinery? We are the longest running community advisory council of its kind in the nation.

The Community Advisory Council to the Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery consists of area resident volunteers who are interested in the operations of the refinery. The refinery is located in Inver Grove Heights and Rosemount. Anyone can attend these council meetings as a guest and, as a local resident, you can apply to be on the council. Represent your community and have your voice heard! Applications are accepted year-round.

The Community Advisory Council to the Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery meets with refinery leaders to discuss issues concerning the refinery’s operations, including its



environmental, health and safety performance. During the pandemic, meetings are held virtually. Visit the website below to learn more and to sign up for emails to gain access to virtual meeting information. You can also call or email for more information: **612-886-1411** or [admin@flintheillscac.org](mailto:admin@flintheillscac.org).

### Visit [flintheillscac.org](http://flintheillscac.org) for:

- Meeting information
- Signing up for email updates
- Applying for Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery Community Advisory Council membership

# Help and Expert Advice for IGH Small Business Entrepreneurs

COVID-19 has presented unique challenges to small business owners and entrepreneurs in IGH. Open to Business provides free resources to get new businesses off the ground and make existing ones more successful. Open to Business is an organization created through a partnership between Dakota County, the City of Inver Grove Heights, and the Twin Cities nonprofit organization Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD). Natalie Mouilso with Open to Business is the business advisor for Dakota County and serves IGH. She provides free, one-on-one consulting to local entrepreneurs looking to grow or start their businesses, with an emphasis these



days on navigating the challenges posed by COVID-19.

“Today is anything but business as usual,” says Natalie. “A lot of businesses are in recalibration mode and for some, the calculus has changed so much that they are reimagining their business plans entirely. Every business owner faces their own unique challenges and opportunities. We really encourage business owners to not go through this period alone. Open to Business can be a partner to work

through their unique situation and provide sound advice in a free and confidential manner.”

COVID-19-specific services that Open to Business is providing now include:

- Strategic planning to reopen and reestablish businesses in the new landscape
- Cashflow analysis and cashflow management
- Communication strategies with a focus on Ecommerce

To learn more visit [mccdmn.org/open-to-business](http://mccdmn.org/open-to-business), or Natalie can be reached directly at [nmouilso@mccdmn.org](mailto:nmouilso@mccdmn.org) or **952-451-6390**.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP IGH WATER CLEANER

Every time someone uses a storm drain or ditch to dispose of used motor oil, carpet cleaning fluids, old paint, lawn chemicals—you name it—they’re causing an impact downstream. That’s because storm sewers and ditches don’t go to wastewater treatment plants. The law calls these “illicit discharges,” and they are prohibited. A major illicit discharge event occurred recently in our city, and we need your help to prevent the next one.

In Dakota County, any hazardous waste should be taken to the Dakota County Recycling Zone at 3365 South Highway 149. If you see anyone dumping anything into a storm drain, or if you see any strange colors or suds, or smell any strange odors in a pond or lake, please call the IGH Engineering Division at **651-450-2570**. If there is a vehicle nearby, please write down the license number and description, or snap a picture with your phone. In addition, the City of Inver Grove Heights has launched YourGOV by Cartegraph, which allows you to easily report issues via the web or directly from your smart phone. Learn more at <https://yourgov.cartegraph.com>.

## GIS CORNER

### WEB MAPS

The City of Inver Grove Heights is in the process of revamping and redesigning its website! This is an exciting opportunity for the GIS Team to showcase some of the work that it has done for different departments throughout the city. From the Maps Tile on the website’s new homepage, visitors will be able to click on and view an array of maps; including:

- **Elections Map:** Shows where to vote in your precinct, turn-by-turn directions for how to get there, and a link to a sample ballot.
- **Parks/Facilities Map:** Provides information on what is available at each city park.
- **Street Construction Map:** Shows current MNDot, county, and city construction projects.
- **Zoning/Landuse Map:** Makes the information dynamically available for developers and citizens.
- **IGH Tour Map:** Created by former IGH Mayor Joe Atkins, this map tour highlights 55 interesting historical areas in the city.

These maps will provide new ways for residents to learn about upcoming events, access plans for their neighborhood, and to explore their city. The GIS Team will continue to work hand-in-hand with city departments to provide interesting content and share the work they do with the residents of IGH!

# Insights

This newsletter is published quarterly and is mailed, one copy per residence, to all residential and postal customers in the City of Inver Grove Heights.

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you have any comments, give us a call at 651-450-2500.

### CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

George Tourville, Mayor	651-450-2507
Tom Bartholomew	651-450-2505
Rosemary Piekarski Krech	651-450-2504
Kara Perry	651-450-2506
Brenda Dietrich	651-450-2503

### CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Joe Lynch	651-450-2511
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### ON THE WEB

[www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org)

### EMAIL

[cityhall@invergroveheights.org](mailto:cityhall@invergroveheights.org)



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## Absentee Ballots Available!

### Absentee Voting for the November 3, 2020 State General Election Is Open!

An application must be filled out to receive your ballot to vote.

#### APPLICATIONS FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE:



##### From Home:

- Apply online at [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org) — a ballot will be mailed to you, or
- Call to request a paper application to be mailed to you **651-450-2463** or email the request to [elections@invergroveheights.org](mailto:elections@invergroveheights.org)



##### In-Person:

- Complete the application and vote at City Hall, 8150 Barbara Avenue, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

If you mail or email a completed application, you will receive an absentee ballot via the mail. Completed ballots must be returned by mail or dropped off at City Hall by 3 p.m. on Election Day.

If you are unsure if your application has been received, you may check your status at [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org).

## VMCC Membership Special!

- ★ \$10 ENROLLMENT FEE  
October 1-31
- ★ \$11 ENROLLMENT FEE  
November 1-30
- ★ \$12 ENROLLMENT FEE  
December 1-30

**ENROLL NOW!**  
**651-450-2480**

No minimum monthly membership commitment required.

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