Retiring Police Chief Made a Difference for 32 Years

Dave Nelson Rose Through Ranks from Patrol Officer to Chief

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

Edina Police Chief Dave Nelson still wears his police uniform to work every day. He takes time to personally answer emails from residents. Even on the most difficult days, Nelson has a smile.

After more than 32 years in law enforcement, with the last 7 as Edina’s Police Chief, Nelson will hang up his uniform for good June 4. He had planned to retire earlier, but put that on hold for the coronavirus pandemic and civil unrest of the last year.

“There was no way I was going to walk out on people in the middle of that,” Nelson said.

That’s classic Nelson. “He truly cares to do right by the patrol officers, the community and the City staff,” said Deputy Police Chief Jeff Elasky.

Nelson’s caring and calm demeanor have been the hallmarks of his career. While he started as an Anoka County Sheriff’s Deputy, he found a home in the supportive Edina Police Department and community when he started as a Patrol Officer in 1991.

“Six months into the job, I knew this is where I would be retiring from,” Nelson said.

He was Edina’s first School Resource Officer, specialized in fraud and forgery cases as a detective, and rose through the ranks as Sergeant, Lieutenant, Deputy Police Chief and then succeeding Jeff Long as Police Chief.

“Dave has so many qualities that I consider similar or better than I have,” said Long, who is now Lakeville’s Police Chief. “He also has the right demeanor. Contentious things come up in policing, and it’s easy to allow your stress level to show. Dave does a good job keeping calm, and he sets the tone for everyone else.”

“He is somebody who takes that public service role personally,” said City Manager Scott Neal, who noted Nelson’s leadership has been “invaluable.”

Over his career, Nelson has changed his share of residents’ flat tires or settled disputes, but he got into policing to do more than just help people. He wanted to make an impact on their lives. He can still tick off the names of teens he helped decades ago. There was the defiant, persistent runaway who one day broke down in tears because Nelson was the only person in her life who told her he cared about her. Or the man just out of prison who made one of his first stops a visit to the Edina Police Department to thank Nelson for the countless talks they had when he was a teen and how he wished he’d heeded the advice and guidance. Or even a few weeks ago, when a young officer came in to thank him for his leadership and investing in him.

“That’s what really drives me in my career, and has driven me for 32-plus years. It’s so rewarding,” Nelson said.

Those relationships, and making that daily impact, is what he’ll miss most, along with the community support he’s felt since those early days in patrol.

“I’ve enjoyed my job the whole time I’ve been here,” Nelson said.

Those who know him say he’ll still be making an impact on people, even as he spends more time at his cabin and builds much of his own new home. He’ll be the first guy to show up when someone needs help with a home improvement project (“he’s very good with a saw and hammer,” Elasky said). He’ll be a friendly ear on fishing trips or the golf course. And he’ll have more time for family since he won’t be working on a laptop or answering phone calls every weekend from the cabin.

“We’re going to miss him,” Elasky said. “The whole community will miss him.”

A search is underway to fill the position. Elasky will serve as Interim Police Chief.
City Announces New Centennial Lakes Park General Manager

A Familiar Face Will Lead Operations Starting June 14

Tiffany Bushland will step into her new role as Centennial Lakes Park’s General Manager June 14. She has been working for the City of Edina as a Recreation Supervisor since 2017. (Photo by Dan Reisig)

BY KAITLIN GAULT

A new General Manager has been selected to oversee operations of the scenic community oasis Centennial Lakes Park, 7499 France Ave S. Tiffany Bushland will be in charge of the 24-acre park with popular amenities like paddle boats, fishing, putting courses and 10 acres of ice skating in the winter. Her first day on the job will be Monday, June 14.

Bushland will fill big shoes, replacing longtime General Manager Tom Shirley, who retired in April. As General Manager, Bushland will be responsible for the entire park, including operations, maintenance, concessions, customer service, sales, special events, staffing and marketing.

“Tiffany stood out in a very competitive pool of applicants for the position,” said Tracy Petersen, Assistant Director – Recreation & Facilities. “Her past career of working with facilities and her current role within the City brings not only experience, but a commitment to new ideas, a high drive to succeed and a passion to continue to improve our facilities in Edina.”

A New Ulm, Minnesota, native, Bushland grew up with a very active family, playing hockey, softball and volleyball. She initially thought she would become a teacher, but quickly realized her love for staying active and helping others do the same.

Bushland earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Kinesiology from the University of Minnesota. She got her start in the recreation field in 2010 as a University of Minnesota Intramural Sports Program Assistant, overseeing more than 13,000 student participants. After graduating, she continued working for the University in various roles supervising events, programs and operations. In 2017, Bushland made the transition to local government as a Recreation Supervisor for the City of Edina, where she has been working since.

Bushland is looking forward to the variety of the job and continuing to exceed the community’s expectations of the park.

“Centennial Lakes Park is one of the coolest places in the Twin Cities, if not in Minnesota,” she said. “To be able to be a part of everything we have going on there and the variety of responsibilities of a General Manager is really exciting. Who wouldn’t want to go to work every day at Centennial Lakes Park? And now, I get to!”

For more information about the position or to connect with Bushland, email tbushland@EdinaMN.gov.

BY THE NUMBERS

Centennial Lakes Park Amenities

Visitors flock to the 24 acres of Centennial Lakes Park each summer for fun and relaxation along its water, colorful gardens and scenic paths.

Visit CentennialLakesPark.com for more information.

6 Pieces of public art
30 Farmers Market vendors
92 Summer movies and concerts in the park planned for 2021
1,662 feet Length of putting course
1,870 Fish stocked in Centennial Lake since 2011

– COMPILED BY KAITLIN GAULT
UPCOMING EVENTS

June is Pride Month

Tuesday, June 1, 7 p.m.
City Council meeting, Virtual

Wednesday, June 9, 7 p.m.
Planning Commission meeting, Virtual

Thursday, June 10, 7:30 a.m.
Housing & Redevelopment Authority meeting, Virtual

Sunday, June 13, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Parade of Boats, Centennial Lakes Park

The Edina Model Yacht Club will show off radio-controlled boats of all types and sizes during this annual event. Club members will be on hand to display and run boats and answer visitors’ questions.

Tuesday, June 15, 7 p.m.
City Council meeting, Virtual

Saturday, June 19
Juneteenth

Wednesday, June 23, 7 p.m.
Planning Commission meeting, Virtual

Thursday, June 24, 7:30 a.m.
Housing & Redevelopment Authority meeting, Virtual

For a complete listing of meetings and events, visit EdinaMN.gov.

Watch City Council, Housing & Redevelopment Authority and Planning Commission meetings live:

Edina TV (Comcast Channels 813 or 16)

Facebook.com/EdinaMN

“Watch a Meeting” web page at EdinaMN.gov/LiveMeetings

Watch other meetings live at youtube.com/EdinaTV.

Couple Receives Heritage Award for Preserving Mid-Century Modern Home

Holly Ziemer and Steven Suckow recently received the 2021 Edina Heritage Award for preservation of their home at 5900 Olinger Blvd. (Photo by Glenn Gray)

Holly Ziemer and Steven Suckow have been recognized for preserving their Mid-Century Modern home at 5900 Olinger Blvd.

Ziemer and Suckow were presented the 2021 Heritage Award at the May 18 meeting of the Edina City Council. The Heritage Award is given for a commitment to preserving, rehabilitating or restoring a historical place in Edina. The Heritage Preservation Commission selects a recipient each year who has “strengthened the historic fabric of the community through protection, improvement or use of place within Edina that represents a piece of the community’s heritage.”

The home was built in 1966 by the Lundgren Company. The architecture and details of the home follow classic California Modern designs. Previous owners restored interior elements of the home, including post and beam construction, board ceilings and slab flooring.

In 2019, Ziemer and Suckow restored and refined the home’s courtyard, a distinguishing feature of Mid-Century Modern homes that connects the interior with the outdoors. The plantings, while primarily native to Minnesota, emphasize a Japanese-inspired design with dense plantings and a variety of shapes, textures and colors over all seasons. Blue stone paving complements the natural setting.

“We are thrilled to present this award to an outstanding example of Mid-Century Modern architecture – specifically the architecture both inside and out,” said Annie Schilling, Chair of the Heritage Preservation Commission, during the presentation of the award. “The current owners took the restoration and attention to detail to the next level when they turned their attention to the distinguishing courtyard feature.”

In other business last month, the Council:

- Conducted a sketch plan review for 4911 77th St. W., and gave the developer non-binding feedback on the concept. Though a hotel had previously been planned for the site within Pentagon Village, the developer, Solomon Real Estate and Rise Development, is now interested in building a six-story, 200-unit apartment building. Ten percent of the units would be for affordable housing.
- Received a report on progress the City has made on its Racial Equity Implementation Plan. To date, about 80 percent of the work plan items or tasks have been completed. Many of the initiatives were recommended by the Race & Equity Task Force in 2018.
- Approved revisions to the City’s Bias Event Response Plan, last updated in 2017. The latest version differentiates between bias, bias offense, bias crime and bias incident. The plan also outlines how the City will respond to each.
- Purchased three electric vehicle charging stations to support the City’s growing fleet of plug-in hybrid vehicles.
- Appointed Mary Brindle to represent Edina on the Metropolitan Airports Commission’s Noise Oversight Committee to address issues related to aviation noise. Brindle’s two-year term starts June 26.

The City Council will next meet 7 p.m. Tuesdays June 1 and 15. For more information, visit EdinaMN.gov.

- COMPILED BY JENNIFER BENNEROTTE
City Hall Renovations Enhance Security and Customer Service at Reception Desk

Spring Project Moves Reception Desk Closer to Front Doors

Receptionist Lynette Biunno welcomes visitors to Edina City Hall at the new front desk, completed in early 2021. (Photo by Dan Reisig)

BY DAN REISIG

Receptionist Lynette Biunno’s smiling face and cheerful disposition will still greet residents when Edina City Hall reopens June 21. Other than that, the space she works in will look quite a bit different.

Early in 2021, the City completed a remodeling and renovation project of the reception area that improves not only the customer service Biunno and others provide, but also enhances the security and safety of the employees who work at City Hall each day.

“The construction recently completed in our City Hall lobby is not only pleasing to the eye, but will also be pleasing to our residents and customers for better customer service,” Biunno said. “The original reception area made it difficult for staff and residents to interact and conduct business. The new design allows for all this and a more secure environment for all.”

Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th St., opened to tremendous fanfare in 2004, with a ribbon-cutting and open house on July 4. When it was designed, the goal was to create an open, expansive facility for all those who live and do business with the City. The two-story lobby and unabated access to City departments reflected that mindset.

Over the years, the way in which customer service is provided has changed greatly. Fewer people visit City Hall because more services are provided online. Security concerns also came to the forefront in recent years.

“It’s an unfortunate reality, but it was important for the City to take steps to prepare for the possibility of an active shooter or workplace violence situation at City Hall,” said Police Lt. Brian Tholen, referencing such acts at local government buildings across the country, including in nearby New Hope. “I saw a need for the City to look at its security infrastructure and where we could put in some obstacles to stop a potential threat and allow more time for law enforcement to respond.”

Unlike the original design in which each department had service counters, we created a space for members of each department to meet the public and provide them service in this reception area,” Facility Manager Derik Otten explained.

The original architect for City Hall’s construction, BKV Group, returned to complete the design and select the materials to maintain the building’s architectural style. Otten noted that in addition to the security and administrative upgrades, the renovation provided the opportunity to address some needed accessibility improvements by adding touch-free automatic door openers to the building’s restrooms and new secure entrances.

When the second-floor Community Room reopens for public use, the doors at the top of the stairs will be unlocked for meetings that occur after business hours.

“The building is still welcoming but also secure, not only for employees but for residents and all other visitors to City Hall,” Tholen said. “We are responding to a society that is ever-changing and we need to understand that government can be a target. However, we know our purpose is to safely serve the residents and those who do business with the City.”

City of Edina Goals

The City of Edina has four budget goals. Look for the goal icons throughout this publication to read stories about how the City is working to meet these goals.

🌟 Strong Foundation: Maintain physical assets and infrastructure.

⭕ Reliable Service: Maintain service levels that best meet the needs of the community.

🌳 Livable City: Plan for connected and sustainable development.

👭 Better Together: Foster an inclusive and engaged community.
RECREATION ACTIVITIES

It’s not too late to sign up for summer programs, workshops and camps!

Visit Edinamn.maxgalaxy.net and log in or create an account to sign up for the following programs and activities.

SUMMER PARKS & RECREATION ACTIVITIES

ART PROGRAMS

Summer Camps
Ages 6-12
Summer is a great time for kids to get excited about Edina Art programs! With our fun and engaging weeklong camps, kids can experience a variety of art mediums and concepts with innovative instructors.

- Creative Cartooning
- Arty Animals – Drawing and Watercolor
- STEAM Week – Art and Science
- Explore, Design, Create – Making Art from Nature
- The Art of Stories – Create with a Professional Puppeteer
- Minnesota Waters – Acrylic Painting
- Explore and Make Dinosaurs and Fossils
- Creating Cloth – Fiber Arts for Kids
- Art Around the Globe – Japan

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
Edina Art Center
$220 ($5 discount for Edina residents)

Workshops
Teens and adults can try something new or improve their skills with Edina Art summer workshops. All levels are welcome in these small-group sessions!

- Outdoors in Minnesota – Explore outdoor landscape painting (Plein Air) over three Tuesday afternoon sessions in June or August. Edina’s beautiful Arneson Acres Park offers the perfect setting with instruction by acclaimed instructor and painter Louise Gillis. $40
- Never tried Printmaking? Be amazed with your art piece and the fun involved in creating it! The workshop is offered at the Edina Senior Center Tuesday afternoons in June with a master printmaking instructor Michael Bedard. $35
- Summer creativity! Make art with a friend or family member through our “Make Together” series on Wednesday evenings in the Arneson Acres Terrace Room. Sessions are Sketch Your Partner and State Fair Art. $35

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Music Together
Ages 8 months-5 years
Music Together is an award-winning program for infants, toddlers and preschoolers and the grownups who love them! Each class is designed to be an active, engaging music immersion experience. The rich music environment in class, full of opportunities for experimentation and play, will help your child grow into a confident, life-long music maker. Space is limited and registration required.

- 10:30-11:15 a.m. Tuesdays June 22-Aug. 10
- 10:30-11:15 a.m. Wednesdays June 23-Aug. 11
- 9:30-10:15 a.m. Thursdays June 24-Aug. 12
- 10:30-11:15 a.m. Thursdays June 24-Aug. 12
Wooddale Park
$159/session/child (additional children are $83 each)

Fab 4 & 5 Preschool Playground Program
Ages 4-5
This is the essential pre-playground program for 4- and 5-year-olds! Each week features a new adventure of themed crafts, games and other age-appropriate activities. Sign up per week. Space is limited and registration required.

- 9-11:30 a.m.
- $15/week
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS JUNE 7-AUG. 4
Countryside Park: PR4001
TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS JUNE 8-AUG. 5
Arden Park: PR6041
Countryside Park: PR4003

Playground Program
Ages 6-10
The Playground Program is supervised outdoor activities aimed at keeping kids physically active and creative. There are weekly visits from the Craft & Activity Specialist. To be eligible, children must have completed kindergarten. Sign up per week. Space is limited and registration required.

- 8:30-11:30 a.m.
- $10/week
MORNING SESSIONS
Mondays and Wednesdays June 7-Aug. 4
Weber Park: PR4012
Tuesdays and Thursdays June 8-Aug. 5
Pamela Park: PR4015

AFTERNOON SESSIONS
1-4 p.m.
$10/week
Mondays and Wednesdays June 7-Aug. 4
Countryside Park: PR4016
Normandale Park: PR4017
Pamela Park: PR4019
Walnut Ridge Park: PR4018
Weber Park: PR4045
Tuesdays and Thursdays June 8-Aug. 5
Cornelia School Park: PR4020
Normandale Park: PR4022
Todd Park: PR4021
Weber Park: PR4024

Intro to Ultimate Frisbee with the Wind Chill
Ages 8-13
Introduce your kids to the sport of Ultimate Frisbee with these day camps hosted by Wind Chill, Minnesota’s men’s professional team. Great for young boys and girls, these sessions will include simple and fun disc games and skill development to help them get comfortable and interested in disc sports! Participants will receive a free disc.

- 9 a.m.-noon Monday, July 26- Friday, July 30
Pamela Park
$150

Esports Gaming
Ages 7+
The Blaze Fire Gaming and Esports Club is a fun, safe way for gamers to play with other age-verified competitors. Joining the club gives players access to organized community play where players can choose to participate in structured leagues, tournaments or social ladder activities. Prizes will be awarded!

- Ages 7-12: PR7000.105
- Ages 13-17: PR7000.108
- Ages 18+: PR7000.111

July 1-Aug. 31
Online
$75

Friday Night Dance Party
All Ages
Register as a couple for an evening of dancing fun! Bring your own partner, as we will not rotate partners or pair people up. We will offer a 20-minute dance instruction and then time for music and fun. Try and learn something new with a friend!

- June: Polka Party
- July: Swing and Two-Step Party
- August: Salsa Dance Party

7-8 p.m. Fridays June 25, July 30, Aug. 27
Centennial Lakes Park
Free
Centennial Lakes Park, 7499 France Ave. S., offers free summer concerts and movies in the park. Concerts and movies are held in the Maetzold Amphitheater. Patrons are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn chairs.

**Sunday Night Concerts**
7 p.m., unless otherwise noted

- **June 6**  The Percolators
- **June 13**  Parade of Boats (11 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- **June 20**  Mayhill Blues Band
- **June 27**  Hopkins Westwind Concert Band
- **July 11**  Bavarian Musik Meisters
- **July 18**  Fife and Drums march from Promenade to Amphitheater (6 p.m.)
- **July 25**  Minneapolis Police Band
- **Aug. 1**  Prior Lake WindJammers
- **Aug. 8**  Torchlight Concert and Lighthouse Night (event starts at 6 p.m. and runs through sunset)
- **Aug. 15**  Medicine Show Music Company
- **Aug. 22**  Celebration Brass
- **Aug. 29**  Inver Hills Community Band

**Monday Night Concerts**
7 p.m.

- **June 7**  TBD
- **June 14**  Southside Big Band
- **June 21**  Bend in the River Big Band
- **June 28**  Eden Prairie Community Band
- **July 5**  Swing Beat Big Band
- **July 12**  Capri Big Band
- **July 19**  Dirty Shorts Brass Band
- **July 26**  Execs Big Band
- **Aug. 2**  Minnesota Mandolin Orchestra
- **Aug. 9**  Brio Brass
- **Aug. 16**  Brooklyn Community Band
- **Aug. 23**  River City Jazz Orchestra
- **Aug. 30**  Wondercure

**Tuesday Night Concerts**
7 p.m.

The Sidewalk Café Duo or Jim Shannon and his Vintage Piano perform each Tuesday outside of Hughes Pavilion.

**Wednesday Night Concerts**
7 p.m.

- **June 2**  Lee Engele and Friends
- **June 9**  Pan-handlers Steel Drum Band
- **June 16**  Minnesota Symphonic Winds
- **June 23**  St. Louis Park Community Band
- **June 30**  Medalist Concert Band
- **July 7**  Sawyer's Dream
- **July 14**  Terzetto String Trio
- **July 21**  Continental Ballet
- **July 28**  University of Minnesota Alumni Band
- **Aug. 4**  Hunker'd Down Blues Band
- **Aug. 11**  Encore Wind Ensemble
- **Aug. 18**  Homeward Bound
- **Aug. 25**  Armenian Dance Ensemble

**Movies in the Park**
Sunset Thursdays

- **June 17**  “Playing with Fire”
- **June 24**  “Trolls World Tour”
- **July 1**  “The Secret Garden”
- **July 8**  “Tom and Jerry”
- **July 15**  “Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar”
- **July 22**  “Lion King” (2019)
- **July 29**  “The Goonies”
- **Aug. 5**  DisneyNature Movie “Penguins”
- **Aug. 12**  “DoLittle”

**Tuesday and Thursday Children’s Concerts**
11 a.m.

- **June 1**  Teddy Bear Band
- **June 3**  The Bazillions
- **June 8**  Will Hale and The Tadpole Parade
- **June 10**  Bob the Beachcomber
- **June 15**  The Big, Fun Show
- **June 17**  Steve and Friends Puppet Show
- **June 22**  Magic with Brian Richards
- **June 24**  Pledge Party Team
- **June 29**  Kid Power with Rachael
- **July 1**  Bob the Beachcomber
- **July 6**  Storytelling with Carol McCormick
- **July 8**  Teddy Bear Band
- **July 13**  Mary Hall Storytelling
- **July 15**  Will Hale and The Tadpole Parade
- **July 20**  Wiggles, Jiggle Jam
- **July 22**  Pledge Party Team
- **July 27**  Kid Power with Rachael
- **July 29**  The Bazillions
- **Aug. 3**  Steve and Friends Puppet Show
- **Aug. 5**  Teddy Bear Band
- **Aug. 10**  Wiggles, Jiggle Jam
- **Aug. 12**  Storytelling with Carol McCormick
- **Aug. 17**  The Big, Fun Show
- **Aug. 19**  Magic with Brian Richards
- **Aug. 24**  Will Hale and The Tadpole Parade
- **Aug. 26**  AlphaBits
- **Aug. 31**  Bob the Beachcomber

Check CentennialLakesPark.com for updates. Get text updates by texting CENTENNIAL to 57838. Reach the Concert/Weather Hotline at 952-833-9587.
Explore Art Indoors or Outside This Summer
Classes or Camps Available for All Ages

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

Whether you’re 6, 16 or 60, get creative this summer with art classes indoors or out in nature.

Themed art camps for ages 6-12 offer fun and learning with experienced instructors. Painting, sculpting, drawing, fiber arts, arts from other cultures and even puppeteering are available. Sign a child up for one camp or several to keep them busy and enjoying art all summer long.

“The best things about youth art camps are the opportunities to explore a variety of art forms with excellent art instructors and the availability of Rosland Park for an extended classroom experience!” said Edina Art Center General Manager Susan Tarnowski. “I love the excitement of sharing art-making in small groups and learning new concepts and techniques.”

Weeklong youth art camps meet 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Friday and Youth Tech camps meet as morning and afternoon sessions Monday-Thursday at the Edina Art Center.

Teens and adults can take advantage of small-group summer art workshops. Explore outdoor landscape painting with Louise Gillis or printmaking with Michael Bedard. All skill levels welcome, even if your skill level is absolute beginner.

Reconnect with a friend or family member in one or more “Make Together” Wednesdays. Together, you will explore acrylic pour or sketching each other. Love crop/seed art at the Minnesota State Fair? Or Spin a Painting? Try out the Edina Art Center’s versions in the Make Together workshop and get ready to enter the fair competitions.

Most teen/adult summer art classes are held at Arneson Acres Park or the Edina Senior Center, 5280 Grandview Square.

Weeklong summer camps cost $220, with a $5 discount for Edina residents. Teen and Adult class costs vary. Visit bit.ly/EdinaArtClasses to learn more about all available summer camps and classes and to register.

For more information, call the Edina Art Center front desk at 952-903-5780.

Edinborough Park Provides Year-Round Fun for Children
Indoor Park Offers Unique Play Areas and Birthday Parties

Too hot or wet to play outside? Come to Edinborough Park, where it’s sunny and 70 degrees all year long!

Edinborough Park, 7700 York Ave. S., features a PlayPark with three play areas for children ages 1-12. Adventure Peak, Little Peak and the Great Hall. Adventure Peak is a Northwoods adventure for climbing, crawling and sliding. Little Peak includes more activities for toddlers. The Great Hall is a multipurpose area for riding scooters, bouncing in a moonwalk and playing with hula hoops, balls and other equipment.

Edinborough Park is also a great place for a child’s birthday party. Access to Adventure Peak, Little Peak and the Great Hall are included with birthday party reservations. Two-hour packages are available.

Visit EdinboroughPark.com for more information. To book a birthday party, call the Birthday Party Coordinator at 952-833-9544.

CENTENNIAL LAKES PARK FARMERS MARKET TO OPEN JUNE 10

After moving the Farmers Market to Rosland Park in 2020 to allow for better social distancing, the market will return to the scenic backdrop of Centennial Lakes Park, 7499 France Ave. S., this year. Visitors will be able to pick out farm-fresh fruits and vegetables and other local goods 3 to 7 p.m. Thursdays from June 10 to Sept. 30.

(File Photo)
Splash into Summer at the Edina Aquatic Center June 4

Visitors Can Expect a Near-Normal 2021 Season

BY KAITLIN GAULT

After a dried-up season to help slow the spread of COVID-19, the Edina Aquatic Center, 4300 W. 66th St., will welcome back swimmers and surfers for the 2021 season.

The water park will open Friday, June 4 with hours from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The Li’l Lagoon water playground will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

Edina Aquatic Center General Manager Patty McGrath said visitors can anticipate a familiar experience with a few minor changes at the beginning of the season.

“This season should look very close to past years,” she said. “Our two biggest challenges were capacity and social distancing and as of May 28, those regulations are no longer in effect.”

Bathrooms, showers and locker rooms will be open, as well as many fan-favorite attractions, including the Olympic-sized lap pool, diving boards, body and tube slides, and The Lost Wave surf simulator. The Lil’ Lagoon zero-depth water playground for families with children ages 8 and younger and the Oakwood Forest dry area will also operate as normal.

The concessions stand will offer summertime treats and cool-down snacks, but may begin the season with a limited menu.

Swimmers may also notice some improvements made to the water park.

“While we were closed, we were still hard at work,” McGrath said. “The dry play area received new netting and other general aesthetic updates. The slide tower received a structural inspection, a fresh coat of paint and the stair treads were resurfaced to make the climb more comfortable on patrons’ feet.”

The 10-foot-high zip line is currently being repaired and may not be ready for action by June 4.

“If it is not available right away on opening day, it should be soon after,” said McGrath. “It’s a race against the clock.”

McGrath is thrilled to open the gates this summer and welcome back a sea of smiling faces.

“\text{I am most excited about reopening the facility and bringing back kids and families for safe, fun outdoor family time and I’m really excited about the young people coming back to work for us,}” she said. “They missed out on job opportunities last summer and the returning staff I’ve talked to are super excited to be coming back.”

For more information, visit EdinaAquaticCenter.com, follow the Edina Aquatic Center on Facebook or sign up for text notifications by texting EAC to 57838. Season passes can be purchased online at Edinamn.maxgalaxy.net.