

SUN CURRENT

EDINA

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(PHOTO COURTESY ANYA MAGNUSON)

Amina Osman, who runs Post Plus in the Lake Street corridor in Minneapolis, welcomes visitors to her store during an open house event of eight businesses that were supported as part of a partnership between the Lake Street Council and Rotary District 5950.

Rotary Club of Edina aids Lake Street business damaged during civil unrest

Post Plus, Inc. had damaged mail boxes, windows and stolen items

By **CAITLIN ANDERSON**
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Amina Osman can vividly recall the night her

business was broken into during the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd last summer.

“It was really horrendous,” Osman, a 2009 Edina High School alum, told the Sun Current. “I thought I woke up from a nightmare, but it was actually, truly happening.”

Osman found her business, Post Plus, Inc., with

mail boxes torn open and windows shattered. And her company, located within the Lake Street corridor, wasn't the only one. Many businesses in the area really

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City meetings to be held in person

Meetings of the Edina City Council and its advisory boards and commissions will be held in person beginning in July.

For the next few months, all meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers or Community Room of Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th St. Since groups last met at Edina City Hall in March 2020, some upgrades have been made in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance to combat COVID-19. Among other things, total building air changes have increased by 20% and high-touch surface areas are sanitized more frequently, according to a city press release.

The city offers residents several ways to interact with the City Council and its advisory boards and commissions. In July and August, residents may:

- Attend a meeting in person. Chairs will be spaced to provide dis-

tance between members of the public.

- Watch or listen to the meeting live. For City Council, Housing & Redevelopment Authority and Planning Commission, residents can watch on Edina TV (Comcast Channels 813 and 16) or Facebook Live. For other groups, residents can watch via YouTube. A phone number to call in to listen will be listed at the top of an agenda.

- Submit a Commission Correspondence Form at edinadocs.edinamn.gov/Forms/contact. As always, correspondence is emailed directly to commissioners.

- Submit public hearing testimony online at bettertogetheredina.org/public-hearings. In most cases, the City Council takes action the meeting after a public hearing is held.

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ceived some level of damage during the unrest.

In response, the Lake Street Council and Rotary Club District 5950 partnered to build a coalition that would actively aid these businesses – not by just sending in money. The Rotary Club of Edina, as one of eight Rotary clubs to partner with eight individual businesses in the Lake Street area, was matched with Post Plus to provide services to help keep the business thriving.

The partnership between the Lake Street Council and the Rotary District was put on display during a June 26 event in which members of the Rotary District and Lake Street Council, along with Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, toured each of the partnered businesses for an open house event. The groups moved from business to business while meeting with the owners.

In addition to Post Plus, the other businesses that are part of the overall



(PHOTO COURTESY ROTARY CLUB OF EDINA)

Damages incurred by Post Plus during civil unrest following the police killing of George Floyd.

partnership are El Amor Fashion, La Loteria Market, Healing Path Wellness Services, Los Andres, Pineda Tacos Plus, Midori's Floating World Cafe and La Michoacana Purepecha.

The work is ongoing, said the Rotary Club of Edina's project coordinator for this partnership, Sandy Schley.

"We'll stick with her and continue to help her

in ways that make sense to her," Schley said of Osman. "It's been a really all-out effort."

Osman has run the business for her mother over the past three years. The Osman family has owned Post Plus, which offers mailing and worldwide shipping services, since 2013.

When unrest in south Minneapolis erupted after the killing of Floyd by



(PHOTO COURTESY ANYA MAGNUSON)

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey (second from left) poses with (from left to right) Sylvester Thomas, chair of the Rotary District-Lake Street Council open house event; Amina Osman, of Post Plus; and Tom Gump, Rotary District 5950 governor. Frey toured Post Plus and seven other businesses that suffered damages during the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd last year.

former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin last year, many businesses near Lake Street were damaged and looted. In the first days of the riots, Osman said she was hopeful things would calm down – but the opposite occurred. The destruction soon hit Post Plus.

"We really didn't think it was going to go as far as it went," Osman said. Post Plus' office was physically destroyed while equip-

ment, like computers and the safe, and packages were stolen, Osman said.

In its aftermath, Osman had to navigate dealing with insurance and other types of legal work – something she had never experienced before. In all, the Lake Street Council estimated about \$250 million in damages to its small businesses during the unrest, according to The Associated Press.

Months later, the idea to partner with the Lake Street Council began forming. Suzanne Kochevar, of the Rotary Club of Excelsior, spearheaded the original idea, prompting the entire Rotary District to want to join in on the initiative, said district governor and Rotary Club of Edina-Morningside mem-

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I am grateful for Shana Bouley; who is willing to sit down with me and my team to help us understand all of the different online media avenues that APG-ECM offers. I am not super "techie" and she is willing to explain things over (and sometimes over) again so that it starts to make some sense. Being in the real estate service industry, it is important for us to have a positive online presence and for our community to know that we are here to help them as they transition into the next chapter in their lives. I feel that in utilizing Digital Targeted Display, Geo-Fencing, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and ads on their local newspaper website we are able to offer this to our clients and customers. Thank you for all that you are doing Shana and team!

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- Michele, Primp Salon

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COMMUNITY NOTE

County offers incentives to close COVID-19 vaccine gap

The Hennepin County Board has authorized the use of \$100,000 in federal funding for COVID-19 vaccine incentives. Sixty-five percent of Hennepin County residents have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according

to the county. While that is viewed as a relatively good overall rate, there are disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates by race and zip code. Fewer than 60% of residents in 19 zip codes in Hennepin County have received one dose of COVID vaccine, and fewer than 50% of residents in five zip codes in Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center have received one dose. The vaccine incentives are meant to make it easier for people to take the shot and close the vaccination

gap within communities and neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19. The effort comes as the virus – especially its variants of concern – continues to circulate and make people sick. “This action is an opportunity to build on Minnesota’s statewide vaccine incentive strategy in a way that’s specifically tailored to the unique needs and concerns of Hennepin County residents,” said District 6 Commissioner Chris LaTondresse,

of Hopkins. “For us, this means addressing vaccine disparities by race and neighborhood.” Between July 1 and August 15 (or as long as supplies last), everyone 12 and older is eligible to get a \$50 Visa gift card when they receive a first or a second COVID-19 vaccine dose at any Hennepin County vaccine event. People who receive both doses will get two \$50 Visa gift cards. These are county sponsored vaccine events, so there is no charge for the

vaccine and participants don’t need to be Hennepin County residents. For a list of upcoming vaccine events that are open to the public, go to hennepin.us/vaccineregistration. For questions, call the COVID-19 navigator line at 612-348-8900 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Help is available in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. In addition to incentives to individuals directly, Hennepin County is of-

fering community organizations up to \$3,000 in grants to use toward vaccine incentives. Examples of incentives that community organizations may offer include food, entertainment, vaccine education events, gift cards and thank you packs. Organizations must use their vaccine incentive funds by September 30. Community organizations can apply for vaccine incentives grant at hennepin.us/community-vaccination.

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ber Tom Gump.

“The George Floyd murder happened within our district. ... We needed to do something,” he said. Already, the district had facilitated programs with the YMCA Equity Innovation Center of Excellence to provide awareness of unconscious bias

and the history of racism, Gump noted. But he said it seemed that members wanted to do something more. “We wanted to do something that just wasn’t writing checks,” Gump said. In the short term, the partnership between the Rotary District and the Lake Street Council is meant to help the businesses get back up and running and stay afloat, aided

by volunteered technical services like insurance advice and software training, as well as help in the fields of public relations and marketing, according to Rotary documents. But over the course of time, another goal is to create long-lasting friendships, Gump noted. “This was a project like no other that we’ve ever had (done) in Rotary before in our district,” he

said. Prior to being paired with businesses, each Rotary club was asked a series of questions to gauge their members’ scope of languages spoken, areas of expertise and expected levels of time commitment. The Lake Street Council then matched each of the partners. This took place near the beginning of 2021, according to Rotary documents. Each business was

also asked which areas of support were most needed and what their goals were for the next year. The Rotary Club of Edina has so far provided a review of insurance policies and made electrical repairs for Post Plus. Future plans to support Post Plus include helping to provide training on accounting services, build community leadership skills, review other legal documents and

create a business plan. Osman said she is thankful for the help the Rotary Club of Edina and the Lake Street Council have provided to her business. “We were on the verge of losing hope. ... We truly do appreciate everything that they do, and they continue to do, to help us get better and stronger.”

— Follow Caitlin Anderson on Twitter @EdinaSunCurrent

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