

August 24, 1961

Bloomington Urges Merger

A convoy of Bloomington administrative workers, assisted by the League of Women Voters, took a census of Burnsville township Wednesday.

The group also left with each home in Burnsville a leaflet inviting discussions of the possible creation of a new suburban city.

The city would be Bloomington, and Burnsville's 25 some square miles would be part of it.

Bloomington went ahead with the census and distribution after its city council Tuesday put the final okay on plans to include NSP's tax-rich Black Dog plant within its boundaries.

Legal machinery for consolidation of the two cities is already set in motion, and a petition has gone forward to the state municipal commission for hearings on the question.

In presenting its case to Burnsville residents, the leaflet stated that about "90,000 people will be added to the Bloomington - Burnsville area in the next twenty years. United we can face this future and build a fine community with lower taxes for everyone. Divided we may not be able to stand before the tide."

Citizen task forces made up of Bloomington and Burnsville residents is proposed to discuss

possible consolidation. On the docket for discussion would be "possible cost savings and lower taxes through eliminating duplication of municipal services, ways of handling the population growth, opportunities for united development of the Minnesota river valley into a great residential, recreational and industrial center, and protection of rural areas from being forced to pay heavily for costs created in the urban parts of the city."

Following these discussions, the state municipal commission will hold hearings on the question.

No school district changes are proposed. The consolidation would affect only the two municipal units.

Assuming a \$15,000 home, average taxes in the united city would come to \$27 annually for all urban services, the booklet points out.

If combined, the community would have some 60,000 residents, the fourth largest municipality in the state, in an area of 65 square miles (larger than either Minneapolis or St. Paul).

In addition, the consolidated city would have a strong economic base, "one that could become the strongest of any in the metropolitan area by 1980."

The booklet presented these

specific examples of how people residing in Burnsville will benefit from the proposed consolidation:

1. Firm control of growth to keep down city and school district taxes.

2. Installation of a fully equipped fire station, reducing fire insurance rates.

3. Complete police emergency service.

4. Excellent recreation program for adults and children alike.

5. Comprehensive building controls and inspection.

6. Comprehensive health service.

7. Efficiently organized, non-political council-manager government.

8. Low costs for all services.

9. A complete water, sewer, storm sewer, drainage and road plan laid out for the entire area, charting well in advance of development the most economical system.

In winding up its presentation, the booklet concludes that "there is little doubt that a united community in the southwestern metropolitan area—small enough to keep local government but large enough to operate efficiently—can provide better governmental services with lower taxes than can separate municipalities with duplicating facilities."