City of Crystal Lake, Illinois
CITYLETTER



Love Where You Live - Shop Crystal Lake!

Shopping locally plays a vital role in keeping our community vibrant and thriving. When individuals choose to spend their money in Crystal Lake, it helps boost the local economy, create and sustain jobs, and fund public services through local tax revenue. In fact, for every $100 spent at a local business, approximately $68 stays in the community, compared to just $43 when spent at non-local businesses. Small businesses in Crystal Lake are not just shops, they're our neighbors, friends, and supporters of local causes, from youth sports to community events.

Supporting Crystal Lake's businesses both large and small also helps maintain the unique character of the area, encourages community growth, and ensures that local establishments can continue to serve and invest in the people who live here. Whether you're dining, shopping, or using local services, every dollar spent in Crystal Lake helps build a stronger, more connected community, ensuring it remains a thriving place to live, work, and visit throughout the year. Remember to shop and dine locally when you can in Crystal Lake.

Cease the Grease Page 2

Welcome New K-9! Page 3

Pop's Corn Crib Page 5

New Businesses Opening This Month!

Lake Roots - 475 W Virginia Street
Lake Roots, owned and built by locals, created a new welcoming gathering spot in the heart of Crystal Lake with a cozy café, curated market and lively bar all under one roof.

LAKE ROOTS
CAFE · MARKET · BAR

VASA Fitness - 6120 Northwest Highway
New fitness facility offering premium amenities and boutique-style classes with a variety of memberships. The facility will offer machines, free weights, a performance lifting area, functional turf and an indoor pool!

VASA FITNESS

Cease the Grease

During the upcoming holiday season, it is important to remember that fats, oils and grease don't just clog your arteries; they can clog the City's arteries too. Grease can cause significant problems in the City's sewers and increases the potential for failure in the system. When a clog develops in the sanitary sewer, the line is surcharged behind the clog and can result in sewage overflowing into basements, roadways, or other low-lying public areas. These backups can create an environmental and health hazard depending on where the discharge point is located.

Grease is a byproduct from cooking with meat fats, lard, oils, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baked goods, sauces, and dairy products.

When washed down the sink, grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and under the street). Over a period of time, it can build up and block entire portions of your home's plumbing system. Remember, garbage disposals may allow table scraps to fit in the drain, but do not prevent grease from sticking in the sewer. The best way to prevent fats, oils and greases from clogging in your sewer is to never put these materials down the drain.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal.
- Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.



The Public Works Department needs your help to cease the grease buildup in the City's sewers. If you have any questions, or would like more information about the hazards of fats, oils and grease in your sewer system, contact the Public Works Department at (815) 356-3614.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Welcome New K-9!



The Crystal Lake Police Department is excited to introduce its newest member: K-9 Osaka! Osaka is a specially trained police dog who will be working alongside his handler, Officer Lewandowski, to assist in searches, tracking, and community demonstrations. Be on the lookout for Osaka at future events and follow the Crystal Lake Police Department on social media for updates on his training and work in the field. Welcome to the team, Osaka!

Toys for Tots

The Crystal Lake Police Department is proud to once again support the Toys for Tots program this holiday season. You can drop off new, unwrapped toys in the marked Toys for Tots cardboard box located in the Crystal Lake Police Department Lobby, 100 W. Woodstock Street. This year, the need for toys for children ages zero to two and ten and above is the greatest.

The lobby is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Donations will be accepted through December 8th. Help bring smiles to local children in need this holiday season!



Thanksgiving Safety

The night before Thanksgiving, often called “Blackout Wednesday,” is one of the busiest nights of the year for bars and alcohol-related incidents. The Crystal Lake Police Department will have increased patrols to keep our roads safe. This year, Thanksgiving is on Thursday, November 27, 2025.

Please celebrate responsibly:

- Designate a sober driver or use a ride-share service.
- Buckle up — seatbelts save lives.
- Avoid distractions while driving. Stay off your phone and keep your focus on the road.
- Report suspected impaired drivers by calling 911.

Let’s work together to ensure a safe holiday weekend for everyone.

Crystal Lake Police Department (815) 356-3620

Deputy Police Chief Rick Neumann - (815) 356-3756 or rneumann@crystallake.org

Follow The CLPD on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on the latest news, events, and safety tips!

FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Happy THANKSGIVING

- **Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires with more than three times the daily average for such incidents.**
- **Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove top so you can keep an eye on the food.**
- **Stay in the home when cooking your turkey, and check on it frequently.**
- **Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay three feet away.**

Change Your Clocks, Check Your Smoke Alarms

Daylight saving time ends on Sunday, November 2, 2025. When you change your clocks, take a moment to check your smoke alarms! Press and hold the test button on your smoke alarm to verify it is in working condition. Replace any smoke alarms that are not working properly.

Smoke alarms make a big difference when it comes to safety. In the event of a fire emergency, smoke alarms enable residents within a home to be alerted to the present danger. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of a tragedy in a home fire by half!

Source: NFPA



Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department (815) 356-3640

Follow the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department on Facebook for safety tips, events, and community updates!

POP'S CORN CRIB

DIANA KENNEY

Who can resist the smell of popcorn popping? Based on the popularity of Pop's Corn Crib over the past six decades, it appears that very few of us can resist!

Founded by local resident, Harold "Pop" Hughes, Pop's Corn Crib started out as a part-time operation in 1966. Hughes built the first Corn Crib himself and opened for business on Railroad Street near his house. The design of the stand was similar to a farmer's corn crib, narrow at the bottom with walls that tapered out as they rose. For a farmer's corn crib, this unique design kept the rain from getting at the stored ears of corn. Pop found the shape provided a functional interior space for his popcorn stand as, "he didn't need as much room for his feet as for his shoulders."

Harold "Pop" Hughes was born October 8, 1907 in Wisconsin. On May 30, 1940, he married Loretta Pfeiffer in West Bend, Wisconsin. The couple brought their young family to Crystal Lake in 1951, where Harold worked for Harnischfeger, a manufacturer of diesel engines. Five years later, he started Hughes & Son Sign Co. The company is still owned and operated by Hughes family members.

Within a year, Pop's dream for the business was all about expansion. The original Corn Crib was moved to Williams Street, just south of the railroad tracks and another one was placed on Route 14 near the Crystal Lake Plaza. Pop knew that he could build the Corn Cribs and sell them to others. The Corn Cribs were built on skids which could then be transferred to a special trailer for moving to various destinations. By the summer of 1968, a Corn Crib was in operation on Green Street in McHenry, another on Washington Street in Woodstock and another on Route 83 in Burlington, Wisconsin. One summer (1976) there was a Corn Crib down near Main Beach.

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5



Original Pop's Corn Crib when it was located at the southeast corner of Williams & Woodstock Streets. Photo taken ca. 1981

So what was the secret to his success? Pop used only high-quality ingredients. The popcorn sold at Pop's Corn Crib was popped fresh in coconut oil and topped with pure hot butter. Otherwise, he kept the rest of his formula a secret. In addition to selling popcorn by the bag, the stand offered fresh-buttered popcorn balls and apple cider. During the holiday season, the production of popcorn balls ramped up and Loretta "Mom" Hughes went into full production of those holiday treats. During the 1972 holiday season, Mom made over 9,000 popcorn balls. Many of these were consumed locally, but orders were taken and the tasty treats were shipped all over the country.

Ads for the downtown stand boasted that the popcorn was the world's tastiest. When asked how he knew that, Pop responded that, "no one had ever told him any different". In 1980, Hughes estimated he used 15-20 pounds of butter per week and figured he popped 15 to 30 batches of popcorn on an average weekday, more on summer weekends. He said they were selling from 10,000 to 14,000 popcorn balls every year.

By 1981, the offerings at Pop's Corn Crib had expanded to plain, buttered, cheese, cheese/buttered, or caramel popcorn and drinks included cola and root beer in addition to the apple cider.

By 1987, the popcorn stand needed to relocate due to the straightening of Woodstock Street and a downtown development project. A new, larger popcorn stand was built and still sits on the south edge of Depot Park. Pop Hughes worked in the new stand until 1994, when he reluctantly retired and sold the business.

Since his retirement, there have been three owners of the popcorn stand, with a new owner getting ready to re-open soon. Pop's kernel of an idea back in 1966 to open Pop's Corn Crib has provided residents and visitors to Downtown Crystal Lake with the world's tastiest popcorn and the most wonderful smells we just can't resist.

About the Author: Diana Kenney is President of the Crystal Lake Historical Society. To contact Diana, email info@cl-hs.org.

NO LEAVES IN THE STREET

As a reminder, local ordinances do not allow leaves to be deposited on City streets. Instead, the City's refuse and recycling provider offers leaf collection services during the fall through December 12.

Place all leaves in biodegradable bags, or plastic containers marked for leaves only for collection. Once bagged, leaves should be placed on the parkway in front of all residents' homes on their regular refuse collection day.

Brush Drop-off Site Closes

The Brush Drop-off Site is located at 410 S. Main Street in Crystal Lake. It is open 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from April through November. Residents may dispose of brush, sticks, and branches six inches or under in diameter, and six feet or less in length. This site cannot accept leaves, grass clippings, root balls, twine-bound bundles of sticks, or branches bigger than the stated parameters. If you used twine to bind brush during transport, you must remove the twine once you get to the site.

Remaining brush drop-off dates for 2025:
November 1 & November 15

2026 Crystal Lake Calendar

Camp Crystal Lake! If the horror movie, *Friday the 13th* is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear those words, then you've got a lot to learn about historical campgrounds and camping programs in and around Crystal Lake. Let us help you explore our community's rich history of outdoor adventure in the 2026 Crystal Lake Historical Society calendar which is available now for purchase. Each month features a different camp or program, including Camp Sokol, Camp Bob, G.A.R. Encampments, Camp Covenant, Crystal Lake Park District Outdoor Education Camp, Girl Scout Camp and many more!

The calendar can be purchased in person for $10.00 at:

- Crystal Lake City Hall
- Colonel Palmer House
- Heisler's Bootery
- The Inside Scoop Ice Cream

The calendar can also be purchased online for U.S. mail delivery for $14.00 at: www.cl-hs.org in the Support and Shop section. Quantities are limited, so don't delay!



CALENDAR | NOVEMBER 2025

Monday, November 3
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, November 4
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 5
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Tuesday, November 11
City Offices Closed

Wednesday, November 12
Public Arts Commission Meeting
8:00 A.M.

Thursday, November 13
Youth Commission Meeting
4:00 P.M.

Tuesday, November 18
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 19
Sustainability Committee Meeting
6:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 19
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Thursday, November 27
City Offices Closed

Friday, November 28
City Offices Closed

All Meetings at City Hall 100 W. Woodstock Street

City of Crystal Lake, Illinois

MAYOR
Haig Haleblian

COUNCILMEMBER
Ellen Brady
Brett Hopkins
Cameron Hubbard
Ian Philpot
Denise Smith
Natasha Teetsov

CITY MANAGER
Eric Helm

Police/Fire/Ambulance
Emergency Only
911

All Other Departments
(Non-Emergency)
815-459-2020

www.crystallake.org

Commercial Use or any reproductions of any materials contained in this newsletter is prohibited without permission of the City of Crystal Lake

City of Crystal Lake
100 W. Woodstock Street
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Crystal Lake, IL
Permit No. 29

Go green by signing up for the City's Newsletter electronically.

Visit: https://www.crystallake.org/your-government/communications/enews-sign-up

to receive the newsletter by e-mail only.

WE VALUE YOUR OPINION

The City of Crystal Lake values the opinion of its residents. If you have any concerns or comments about the City Letter, please express them in the space provided below. (If you need more space, please attach a separate piece of paper). Clip this and mail to: City Letter, City of Crystal Lake, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL 60014. Questions or comments can also be emailed to comments@crystallake.org.