City of Crystal Lake, Illinois
CITYLETTER



Toys for Tots

Every year, the Crystal Lake Police Department collects new unwrapped toys for the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots Program. The toys collected are wrapped and distributed to children residing in McHenry County. Last year, the Crystal Lake Police Department collected 639 toys on behalf of the Marine Corps Reserve and our goal is to beat that number!

Now through December 8th, please help us by donating a new unwrapped toy in the marked Toys for Tots cardboard box located in the Police Department lobby, 100 W. Woodstock Street. Our doors are open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Together, we can bring smiles to countless children.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT

Holiday Safety Tips

- **Secure your Home:** Ensure all doors and windows are locked before leaving home. Similarly, lock your car and avoid leaving valuables visible inside.
- **Online Shopping Caution:** Be wary of online scams and only shop from reputable websites. Avoid public Wi-Fi when making financial transactions and regularly check bank statements for any suspicious activity.
- **Designated Drivers:** Encourage responsible drinking during gatherings. Arrange designated drivers or alternative transportation options to ensure everyone gets home safely.
- **Package Delivery Security:** With increased online shopping, be mindful of package deliveries.
- **Preventing Purse Theft:** Be vigilant in crowded places, keeping your purse closed and zipped. Avoid carrying excessive cash or valuables and be cautious of distractions used by thieves.



National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Impaired, drunk, drugged, or distracted driving has impacted so many lives. Without notice, it has taken countless loved ones from their families. This holiday season, we urge you to take precautions by driving sober, designate a sober driver, or using a rideshare service.

Additionally, Crystal Lake Officers will be participating in a traffic enforcement campaign throughout the holiday weekends. Our focus remains on deterring distracted and intoxicated drivers. Remember, 'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.'

Wishing you a joyful and safe holiday season. Celebrate responsibly and ensure the safety of yourselves and others on the road.



Crystal Lake Police Department (815) 356-3620

Officer Kelci McGrath - (815) 356-3755 or kmcgrath@crystallake.org

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

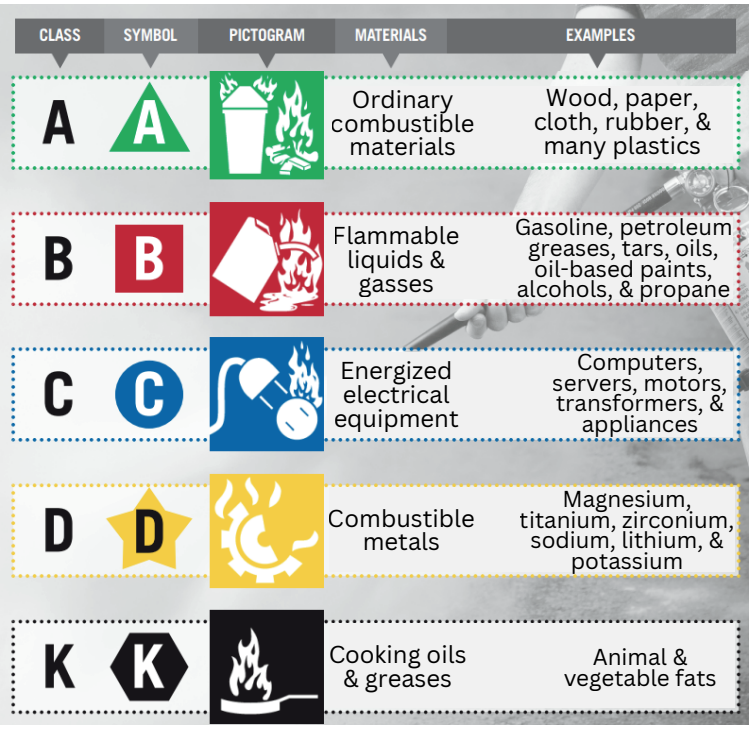
FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Fire Extinguishers - Know How to Use Them

A fire extinguisher is the critical first line of defense against property damage and loss of life. The real question is: Do you have the practical knowledge to use it safely and effectively?

There are five different types of fire extinguishers. Each is designed to fight a different kind of fuel, for example, flammable liquids. Before using a fire extinguisher, make sure you are using one that will help eliminate a fire, not spread it (see chart from Femalifesafety.org below).

Types of Fire Extinguishers



When operating a fire extinguisher, remember P.A.S.S.! **P**ull the pin, **A**im low, **S**queeze the lever above the handle, and **S**weep slowly from side to side. To help you identify when it is safe to use a fire extinguisher, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I alerted others in the building that there is a fire?
- Has someone called the fire department?
- Am I physically able to use a fire extinguisher?
  - Young children should not use fire extinguishers.
- Is the fire small and contained in a single object or to a surface?
  - For example: a pan or a wastebasket.
- Am I safe from the fire's toxic smoke?
- Do I have a clear escape route?

Remember P.A.S.S.!



Source: U.S. Fire Administration & Femalifesafety.org

Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department (815) 356-3640

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

WaterSmart Portal

With the water meter replacement project underway, the City of Crystal Lake has launched the WaterSmart portal! This web-based portal allows each resident to view and manage their water usage. Customers will be able to view and understand their water bills, sign up for customized alerts, and get notified in real time about high water use that could be from leaks. WaterSmart will provide water conservation tips and walk you through steps you should take to resolve any leaks.

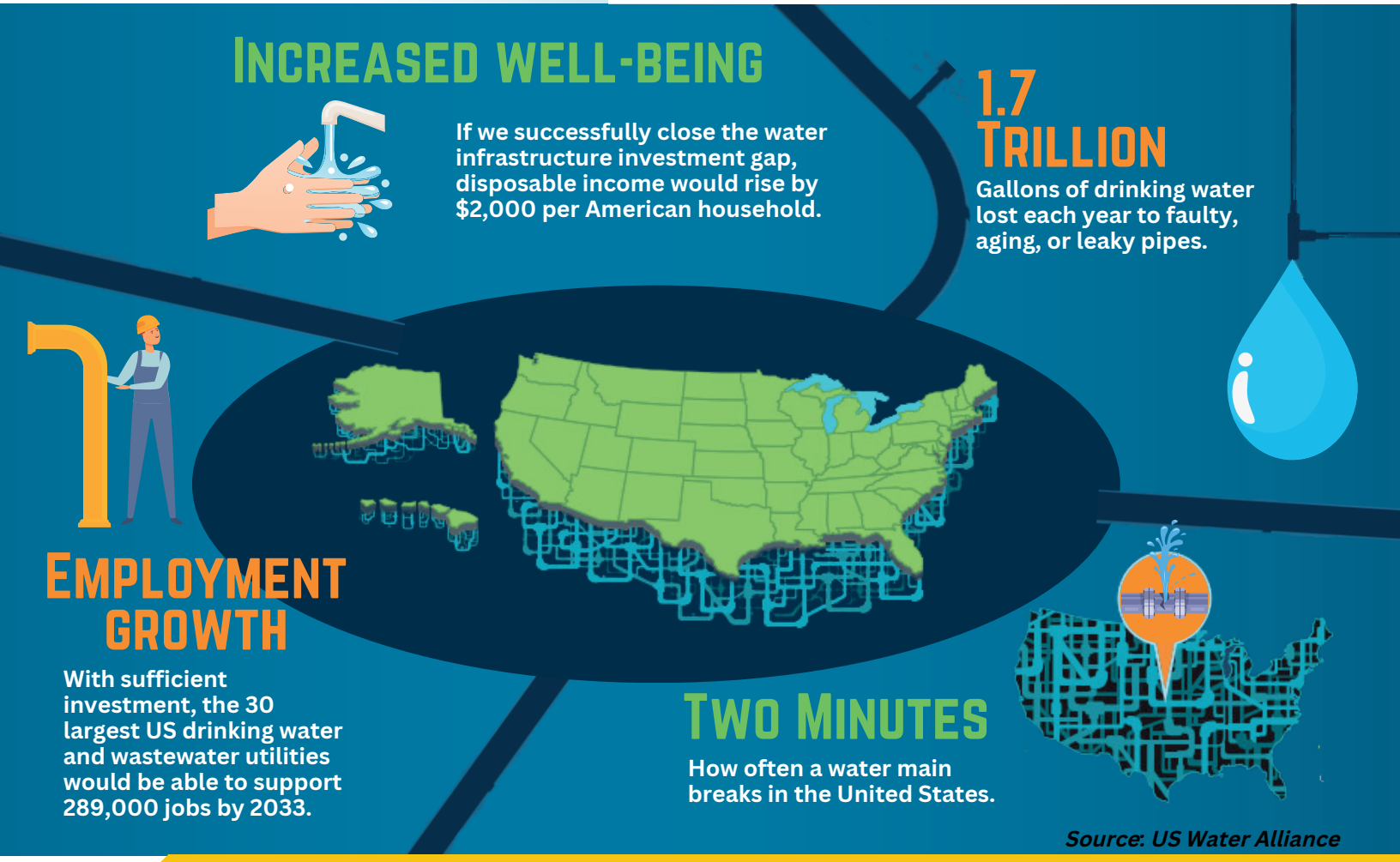
To register, go to http://crystallakeil.watersmart.com.

- Use your account number listed on your water bill as your registration code.
- Answer the simple profile survey to provide accurate comparisons to similar households.

Scan the QR code to watch a helpful video on how to navigate your account in the portal!

The Value of Water Campaign

As a recognized Water Ambassador Community by the Illinois Section American Water Works Association, the City of Crystal Lake takes part in the Value of Water Campaign to highlight the importance of water in our daily lives. Water sustains everything around us including our homes, health, and community. It's what keeps our gardens growing, businesses running, and sustains the environment. Join us in celebrating the value of water by keeping our waterways clean, conserving water, and supporting a sustainable future.



CRYSTAL LAKE KITCHEN ORCHESTRA

DIANA KENNEY

The women of Crystal Lake sure do know how to have fun! The featured photo of the Crystal Lake Kitchen Orchestra was taken near the porch of the Cowlin House (30 N. Walkup). The lettering on the washtub (left) says, “Crystal Lake Kitchen Orchestra.” The sign in the middle is advertising an upcoming performance and reads, “Eastern Star Entertainment, 8PM March 31, Masonic Hall, Admission 25 cents.” Masonic Hall was located on the second floor of the old city hall building (corner of Main & Beardsley Streets). The Crystal Lake Herald did not cover the event, but apparently performances by the group were in demand.

A headline on the front page of the April 28, 1911 Herald announced, “The Kitchen Band Will Play at W.R.C. May Day Party.” The letters, “W.R.C.” stand for Women’s Relief Corps, an auxiliary organization of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). The G.A.R. was a group of veterans who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. The W.R.C.’s mission was to raise money to provide assistance to veterans and their widows and children. The May Day Party was held in the G.A.R. Hall, which was located on the second floor of the Teckler Building. Today this is known as Old Towne Hall and is located over Heisler’s Bootery.

The May 2, 1911 Herald declared, “The ‘Kazoo Band’ gave a wonderful concert”. The article provides this description: “On the walls hung flags, battles scenes and portraits of brave men. A great quiet came on the throng and all here hushed. Suddenly there came the notes of a march, two doors in the rear of the hall swung wide and there entered a double file of women wearing kitchen dresses, aprons and dusting caps, marching up to the stage in front of a large crowd”.

The article continues, “Mrs. R.H. Pate stepped before a music tripod fashioned of brooms, waved a feather duster, Mrs. Frank W. struck the keys of the piano, and then a wonderful change came over the room. Washboards became bass violins and tubs and dishpans were transformed into bass and snare drums. Mrs. Gilbert Morley was playing a clothes ringer and Mrs. A.B. Conover played a washboard with a bar of soap. Kettle covers, a dish pan, a soup ladle, a mixing spoon, a sieve, a dipper, a pancake turner, a potato slicer and a folding hat rack were among the instruments the women in the kitchen orchestra were playing”.

It was reported the Crystal Lake Kitchen Orchestra played: “Marching Through Georgia”, “Dixie”, “Yankee Doodle”, “Swanee River”, “A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” and other favorites. Each song was awarded with a thunderous applause from the spellbound crowd.

This entertaining fundraising event netted the Women’s Relief Corps a total of $23.



Members of the Crystal Lake Kitchen Orchestra – Front: Pearl Truax, unknown, unknown, Mrs. Lynn Richards, Mrs. Nonie Hansen, unknown, unknown, Mrs. Tomiskey. Back: unknown, Miss Mae Rose, Mrs. Ethel Brown, Elsie Pingry, Mrs. Grace Wilber, Mrs. Wm. Cowlin, unknown, Mrs. Lillian Gilbert, Mrs. Addie Kitchen, Mrs. Ed Schueneman, Mrs. May G. Hale.

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

THREE OAKS RECREATION AREA

Park Hours
6:30 A.M. - Sunset

Pavilion Rental Reservations

Reservations for 2026 will begin on Friday, January 2, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. for rental requests. Rental requests submitted online prior to 8:00 a.m. on January 2nd will not be accepted.

Be sure to set your special event date for the year as pavilions go quickly!

Employment

Applications are being accepted to join us this upcoming 2026 season! Seasonal Lifeguards, Cashiers, and Marina Attendant roles are available. For position details, visit the City of Crystal Lake Human Resources Employment page and complete an employment application today!





www.crystallake.org/three-oaks-recreation
Information Line: (815) 356-2447 | Rainout Line: (815) 506-9333 | threeoaks@crystallake.org
5517 Northwest Highway, Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Holiday Lights Recycling

The Crystal Lake Sustainability Committee would like to remind all residents that there are correct ways to dispose of old lights that you don't use anymore. Bring your old or broken holiday lights to City Hall to have them properly recycled this season! Look for a green recycling bin placed in the vestibule before entering the lobby. Please ensure that all lights are removed from any plastic bags you may have used for transportation.

Drop- off is available Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. during the holiday season.

CLEARLY CRYSTAL LAKE CORNER

Celebrate the Reason for the Season, Shop Small in Crystal Lake!

The holiday season is here, a time for gathering with friends and family, sharing joy, and celebrating the spirit of community. This year, make your celebrations even more meaningful by shopping and dining locally right here in Crystal Lake!

When you choose to shop small, you're not only finding unique gifts, delicious meals, and personal service, you're also helping to keep our community strong. Every gift you buy from a local shop, every cup of cocoa from a neighborhood café, and every dinner shared at a local restaurant helps support the businesses that make Crystal Lake such a special place to live.

When you shop small, you're spreading cheer right here at home. Take a stroll through our charming downtown, discover one-of-a-kind treasures, and enjoy delicious meals made with love. Whether you're checking off your gift list, meeting friends for a bite, or simply soaking up the holiday magic, you'll find everything you need close to home.

Crystal Lake has something special for everyone on your list and maybe a little something for yourself too! Your support makes a big difference to our local businesses, to our community, and to the spirit of Crystal Lake.

Shop local. Dine local. Love local. Together, we make Crystal Lake shine brighter than ever.

New Business Now Open
2 Hours of Freedom Inflatable Playground

Crystal Lake's newest indoor inflatable playground is here! Now open at 6250 Northwest Highway, right next to Hobby Lobby. It's the perfect place for kids to burn energy and stay active all winter long!

CALENDAR | DECEMBER 2025

Monday, December 1
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, December 2
Economic Development Committee Meeting
8:00 A.M.

Tuesday, December 2
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, December 3
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Thursday, December 11
Youth Commission Meeting
4:00 P.M.

Tuesday, December 16
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, December 17
Sustainability Committee Meeting
6:00 P.M.

Wednesday, December 17
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, December 24
City Offices Closed

Thursday, December 25
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

City Hall
(Non-Emergency)
815-459-2020

www.crystallake.org

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

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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 Newsletter, please email City staff at comments@crystallake.org.

If you have questions or concerns for specific City departments, please contact the following:

City Manager's Office	(815) 459-2020
Community Development Department	(815) 356-3605
Finance Department	(815) 459-2020
Fire Rescue Department	(815) 356-3640
Human Resources Department	(815) 459-2020
Police Department	(815) 356-3620
Public Works and Engineering Department	(815) 356-3614