City of Crystal Lake, Illinois
CITYLETTER



Memorial Day Parade and Cemetery Service

The City of Crystal Lake Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony will be held on Monday, May 25, 2026.

The parade begins at 11:00 a.m. at Central High School and runs east on Franklin Avenue, north on Williams Street, and west on Woodstock Street to Union Cemetery, where a Memorial Service is held.

If your group is interested in participating in the parade, please complete the application on Page 2 and submit to mgray@crystallake.org. As a reminder, the Memorial Day Parade and Cemetery Service is a solemn event intended to honor veterans and those who have given their lives for their country. Please do not distribute candy or fliers during the parade or ceremony, and please keep marching units and floats consistent with the nature of this event.

This event is weather dependent. The individual listed on the application will be your organization's day-of contact should the City need to notify those of any weather-related changes via email.

2026 Brush Pick-Up and Drop-Off Schedule Page 7

Three Oaks Recreation Area Opening Dates Page 8

Annual Heritage Trolley Tour Page 10

Memorial Day Parade and Cemetery Service (Continued)

APPLICATION

VETERANS

Name of Individual/Group: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Branch of Service: _____

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Type of Unit: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Indemnity/Hold Harmless for Use of City-Owned Property
To the fullest extent permitted by law, the undersigned hereby agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Crystal Lake, its elected and appointed officials, agents and employees, against all injuries, deaths, loss, damages, claims, suits, liabilities, judgements, cost and expenses (including attorney fees), which may in any way accrue against the City of Crystal Lake, its elected and appointed officials, agents and employees arising in whole or part or in consequence of the use of City-owned property by the undersigned, its employees, agents, subcontractors, and/or 3rd party, or in which may in anyway result therefore, except that arising out of the sole legal cause of the City of Crystal Lake, its agents or employees. The User of City-owned property shall, at its own expense, appear, defend and pay all charges of attorneys and all costs and other expenses arising therefore or incurred in connections therewith, and, if any judgment shall be rendered against the City of Crystal Lake, its elected and appointed officials, agents, and employees, in any such action, the User shall, at its own expense, satisfy and discharge the same.

Agreed this _____ day of _____, 20_____

_____ _____
(Signature of User) (Please Print Name)



POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dunkin' Cop on a Rooftop

Mark your calendars for Friday, May 15, from 5 a.m. to noon! Please join us for Cop on a Rooftop at the Crystal Lake Dunkin' locations, 4817 Northwest Highway and 290 IL Route 31. This is a wonderful opportunity to support Special Olympics athletes and to come together as a community!

Our officers will be stationed at both Dunkin' locations, raising funds to support the incredible athletes of Special Olympics. With every donation, guests not only contribute to a great cause but also receive a coupon for a free donut. Generous donations of $10 come with a Law Enforcement Torch Run & Dunkin' branded tumbler (while supplies last), a coupon for a free medium hot or iced coffee, and the satisfaction of making a significant impact. Additionally, exclusive shirts will be available for purchase at $20 per shirt and $15 per hat. If you can't donate, please help spread the word and let's make a great impact together.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to show your support. See you there!



DEA National Prescription Drug Take-Back

Join us in giving back to our community on Saturday, April 18, 2026, as the Crystal Lake Police Department participates in the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce's Community Clean Up Day event. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce building, 427 W. Virginia Street, we will be collecting your old or unwanted prescription drugs.

Help us make a positive impact by safely disposing of these items.

Please note that we cannot accept the following:

- **Needles (sharps)**
- **Ointments, lotions, and/or liquids**
- **Thermometers**
- **Inhalers**
- **Hydrogen Peroxide**

It is recommended to place prescription drugs in a Ziploc bag. However, if you're dropping off pills in a container, kindly ensure all labels are removed. Let's work together to keep our community clean and safe!

Crystal Lake Police Department (815) 356-3620

Officer Kelci McGrath - (815) 356-3620 or kmcgrath@crystallake.org

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

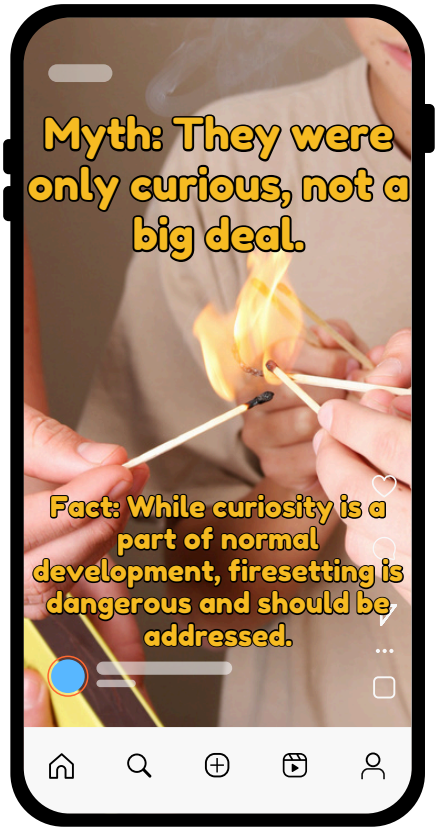
FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Youth Firesetting Intervention Program

The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department is introducing the Youth Firesetting Intervention Program. This program is a standardized, statewide initiative to reduce the frequency and severity of youth firesetting in Illinois. The program provides prevention education, intervention, and, if applicable, referrals to help children and their families obtain the assistance needed to address youth firesetting behavior.

Children may play with fire for a variety of reasons, including curiosity, boredom, and a lack of understanding of the potential dangers. It's vital to understand that children and fire are a DEADLY combination!

The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department currently has 12 certified Youth Firesetting Interventionists ready to assist our community. If you have questions about the program or would like to access our intervention services, please contact the Fire Rescue Department at (815) 356-3640.



Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Put safety first, and don't drive distracted. If you need to send a text, pull over and park in a safe location, or designate a passenger to respond to calls or messages. Remember, a text or call can wait. Drive focused and drive responsibly.

Distracted driving is a serious risk. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 16,384 people died and about 1.7 million people were injured in distraction-affected crashes from 2019 to 2023. In 2023 alone, 3,275 people were killed in crashes involving at least one distracted

Continued from Page 4

driver, accounting for 8% of all traffic fatalities that year. Recent data also shows 289,310 injuries reported in 2022 and over 3,200 fatalities in 2023.

Any activity that diverts attention from the road—such as phone calls, texting, eating, or interacting with passengers—can lead to dangerous situations. Emergency roadside operations also pose a significant distraction, as passing motorists may shift their focus toward an incident instead of the flow of traffic. Vehicle collisions and being struck by vehicles are often the second leading causes of deaths and injuries among first responders.

As you drive, especially through areas where first responders are present, slow down, stay focused on the road, and when possible, move over to provide extra space. If you see a first responder vehicle en route to an emergency, pull to the right and stop to allow them to pass safely. Let's break the habit of distracted driving and make every journey a safe one.





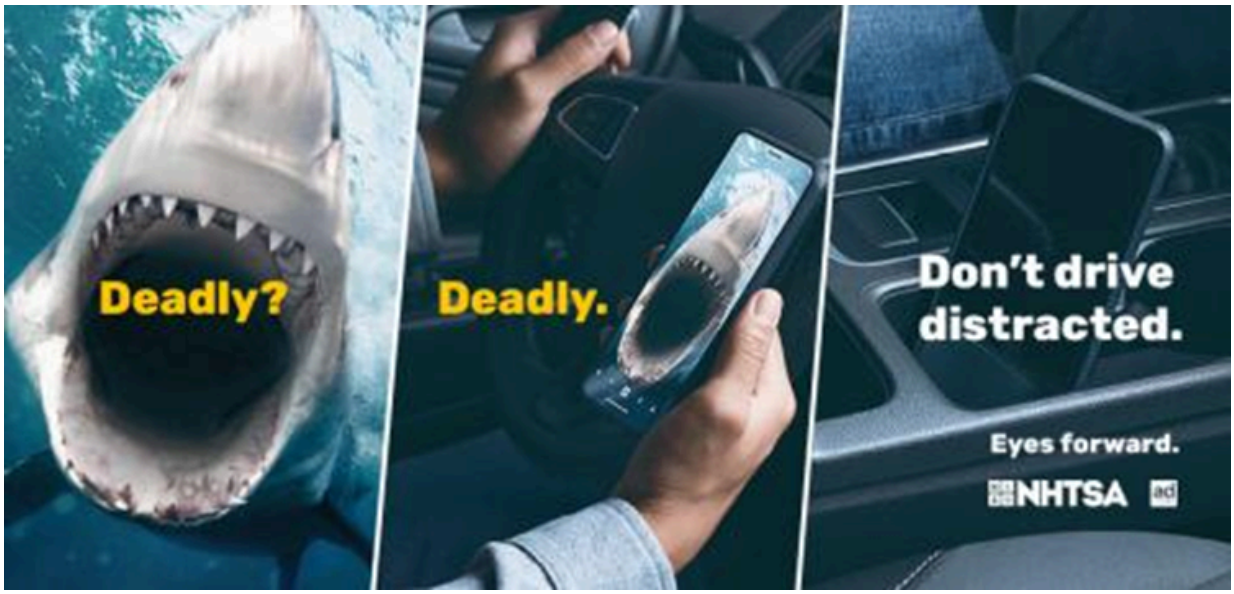


Photo from the National Highway Traffic Safety Adminstration

Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department (815) 356-3640

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

Recycling Frequently Asked Questions

There are many misconceptions around what items can or cannot be recycled. In addition to the following list, the McHenry County College offers resources for proper recycling in their annual Green Guide available at www.McHenry.edu.

The following items can be recycled:

- Cardboard, newspapers, magazines, and paper products.
- Aluminum, tin, steel, and bi-metal beverage and food cans.
- Plastics: Plastics numbered 1 and 2 are the most viable plastics for recycling.

The following items cannot be recycled:

- Cups or containers with any food or drink residue (used coffee cups, take out trays, etc.).
- Straws, plastic lids, bubble wrap, utensils, or foam containers.
- Pizza boxes or any items with food waste or grease.
- Styrofoam and boxes with Styrofoam glued to the box.
- Electronic items, including TVs, monitors, cell phones, batteries, or appliances.
- Personal Protective Equipment: Masks, gloves, or paper towels.



The City will be adding new garbage and recycling bins throughout Downtown Crystal Lake. Keep an eye out for these new additions!

Community Clean Up Day

Join the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce on Saturday, April 18 for their annual Community Clean Up Day and help keep our community clean and beautiful!

Stop by the Volunteer Kick-Off at the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce office, 427 W. Virgina Street, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to pick up supplies and enjoy a sweet treat before heading to your assigned location.

Groups of 8 or more should contact Preston Skultety at the Crystal Lake Park District (815-459-0680 ext. 2109 or pskultety@crystallakeparks.org) to secure a clean-up spot. Smaller groups and individuals can receive their location and supplies at the Chamber office that morning.

Need to recycle tires, car batteries, or automotive fluids? Visit Douglas Automotive, 123 S. Virginia Rd, Crystal Lake.

2026 Brush Pick-up and Drop-Off Schedule

The annual brush pick-up will run from May 11 - June 5. The map below designates which dates brush will be collected in your area. Please have brush placed at the curb by 6:00 a.m. on the Monday of your pick-up week. Brush must be six inches or less in diameter and six feet or less in length to be accepted. Pickup dates are subject to change due to weather events.

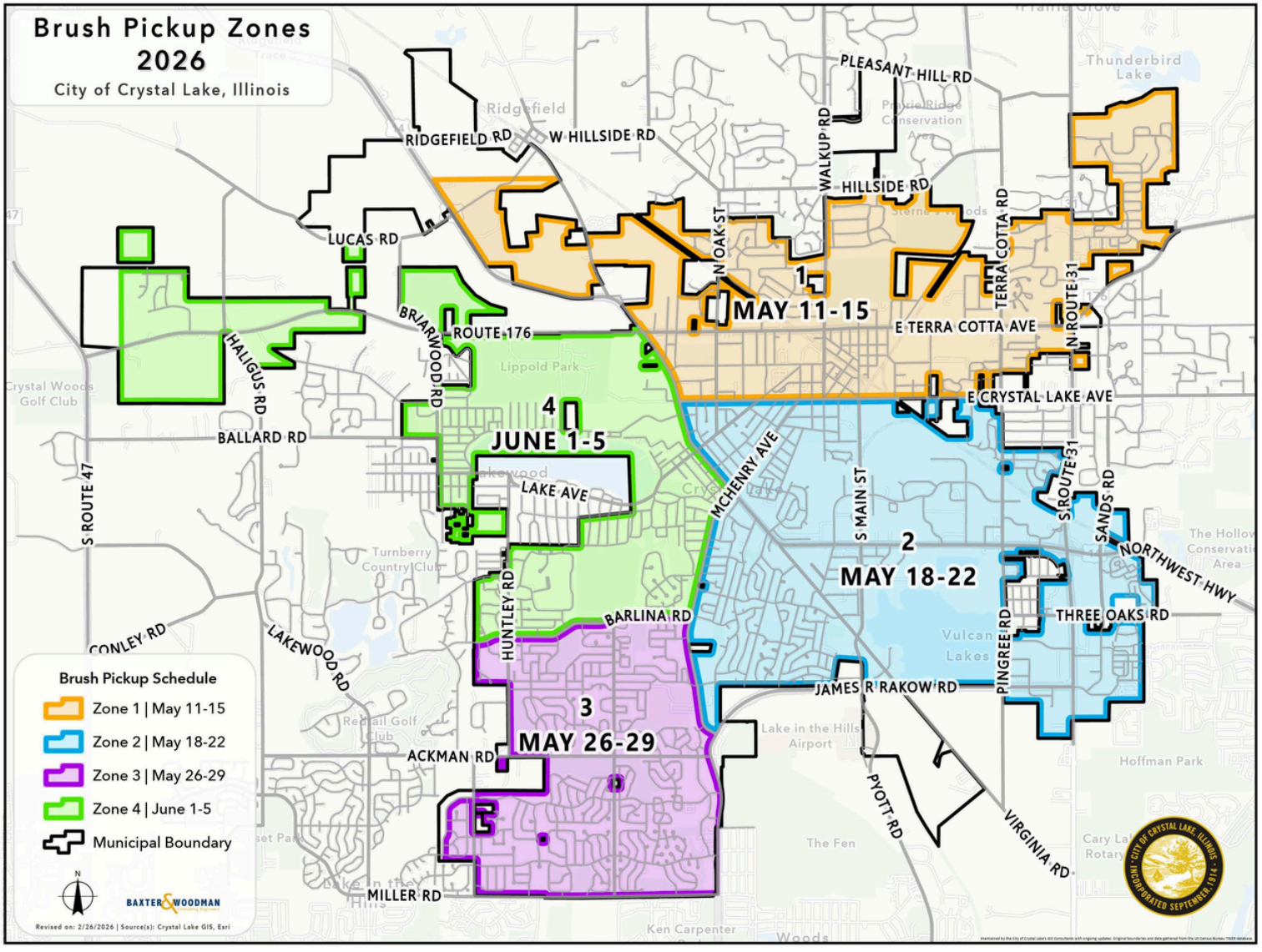
City crews will make a single collection pass on each street, so please ensure your brush is at the curb on time to avoid missing out. For your convenience, any brush not placed at the curb on time may also be taken to the City's Brush Drop-Off Site, located at 410 S. Main Street. The site is open the first and third Saturday of each month from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., April through November.

Zone 1 – May 11 - 15
North of Crystal Lake Avenue and East of US Route 14

Zone 2 - May 18 - 22
South of Crystal Lake Avenue and East of US Route 14 and McHenry Avenue

Zone 3 - May 26 - 29
South of Barlina Road and West of McHenry Avenue and Randall Road

Zone 4 – June 1 - 5
North of Barlina Road and West of US Route 14 and McHenry Avenue



THREE OAKS RECREATION AREA

Park Hours
6:30 A.M. - Sunset

Opening Dates

Marina
The Marina will tentatively open for the season on Saturday, April 18, 2026.

- The Marina will be open on weekends only (Saturday and Sunday) in April.
- Only row boats will be available in April due to the cold weather. Our entire fleet of boats will be available at the Marina in May.
- Please visit the Three Oaks Recreation Area page on the City website or https://bit.ly/476YJ2y for Marina hours.

Swim Beach
The Swim Beach will tentatively open for the season on Saturday, May 23, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Scuba Zone
The Scuba Zone will tentatively open in May, weather permitting.

Open Water Swim
Open Water Swim (OWS) is described as distance swimming beyond the boundaries of the beach's buoy markers only on select dates. OWS will be held on Thursdays and Saturdays in June and July. There will be no OWS on July 4th due to the holiday.

Park amenities may close due to inclement weather. This includes, but is not limited to, high winds, anticipated thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, cold temperatures, severe weather, or if our lightning detection system sounds. To stay informed on weather conditions at Three Oaks, please check our Rainout Line.

Employment

The Three Oaks Recreation Area is currently hiring Lifeguards for the 2026 season. Lifeguards must obtain Red Cross certification prior to the beginning of the season. However, potential applicants can apply before receiving the certification. Apply today at: https://bit.ly/CrystalLakeApplications.

Three Oaks Guest Photo Submissions

With permission from our park guests, photos submitted to Three Oaks may be featured in the City's Newsletter. Proper photo credits will be given. Pictures can be submitted to threeoaks@crystallake.org. Submit your very own Spring photos today!



Photo by Susan Wright



Photo by Linnea Maria



Photo by Linda Lipecki



Photo by Susan Wright

The 26th Annual Heritage Trolley Tour

The Historic Preservation Commission and the Crystal Lake Historical Society are joining forces this year to co-host the 26th annual—and much-loved—Crystal Lake Heritage Trolley Tour.

Save the Date: Sunday, June 14, 2026!

The tour will begin and end at the historic Colonel Palmer House, where ticket holders can enjoy food trucks, live music, and additional educational displays inside the home before and after their tour.

This year marks a major milestone in our nation's story—America's 250th birthday. Just 85 years after our founding, the country faced its greatest internal test during the Civil War. In the spirit of reflecting on where we came from and how we arrived here, this year's tour theme is "Homes of Our Civil War Veterans." The tour will highlight residences connected to local veterans, bringing personal stories of service, sacrifice, and community to life through Crystal Lake's historic homes.



Tickets are $25 and include the 45-minute trolley tour, a commemorative booklet, and an interior tour of the Colonel Palmer House. Tickets are time-specific and must be purchased for your selected tour departure. Please arrive on time to ensure your spot on the trolley.

Tickets may be purchased:

- In person at Heisler's Bootery, 50 N. Williams Street (cash or check only) starting May 1st, or
- Online at: bit.ly/4sORxAF

Proceeds from this community event are reinvested directly into preserving Crystal Lake's historic homes and buildings. Property owners whose homes are officially landmarked may also qualify for Historic Preservation Commission grants, which can be used to support eligible exterior and façade improvement projects.

The Commission is also actively seeking event sponsors and new commissioners. Local businesses interested in supporting the Trolley Tour while advertising to the community, residents who want to get involved, and property owners curious about landmarking are encouraged to reach out with questions.



For sponsorship opportunities, commission involvement, or landmarking inquiries, please contact Elizabeth Maxwell, Crystal Lake City Planner, at emaxwell@crystallake.org or 815-356-3738.

We look forward to celebrating Crystal Lake's history with you.

THE HALE HOUSE

DIANA KENNEY

The Hale House at 84 N. Walkup Avenue is arguably one of the prettiest homes in Crystal Lake. With most of its original features still intact, this Queen Anne style home is as beautiful today as it was when it was built in 1905.

Characteristics of Queen Anne architecture include an asymmetrical look accomplished by an irregular roofline and variety of peaks and projections. The avoidance of flat walls is another characteristic and is accomplished by a variety of siding materials and designs. The Hale House features clapboard siding on the first floor, shingles on others, and a fan design in the gable peaks. Arched, oculus and tripartite windows embellished with lead and stained glass provide additional interest to the façade. The use of multiple paint colors also adds to the charm of the home.

The beauty of the Hale House carries through to the interior. Through the years, we have been able to peek inside the home, which features original oak trim and a fireplace built with locally produced terra cotta.



Photo credit: Scott Carter, Hearth & Home: Real Estate Media Professionals

The home was built by Alva and May Hale in 1905. Both Alva and May Hale trace their roots to some of McHenry County's earliest settlers. Alva Hale was born in 1869 on his family's 800-acre farm near Burton's Bridge. When he was 17 years old, he moved into town with his parents. Later, Alva operated a grocery store with Ben Throop. On June 6, 1894 he married May Hamilton. The newlywed's first home was in a house on Williams Street, just north of the Methodist-Episcopal Church.

May Hamilton Hale's mother's family came and settled in McHenry County in 1835. Her father's family settled here in 1840. Both May and Alva were proud of their family heritage.

In 1905, Alva sold his grocery business and became a farm implement dealer. That same year, the Hale's beautiful home on Walkup Avenue was built. The couple had two children: Hamilton and Marion.

Alva H. Hale was an active community member. For 32 years, he served as president of the Union Cemetery Association. He also served 26 years as Nunda Township Supervisor. Other notable positions include grade school and high school board member, director of Citizen State Bank and later director of United State Bank. He was a member of the Nunda Lodge No. 169.

According to McHenry County property records, the Hale family owned the house until 1967. In 1973 it was purchased by Hugh and Virginia Engelman, who spent over three decades restoring the home to its former grandeur. The Engelmans removed aluminum siding to expose the original wood clapboards and decorative wood shingle work. In 1998 Hale House became the first privately owned home to be landmarked by the newly formed Historic Preservation Commission. This landmark status protects the home from inappropriate changes to the exterior and ensures that future residents and visitors will be able to view and appreciate this beautiful Queen Anne style home located in the heart of Crystal Lake.

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

Flood Hazard Areas

Information on whether your property is at a higher risk for flooding can be obtained by viewing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps online. Maps are also available for viewing at the Community Development counter in City Hall along with other flood-related information. Links to these maps can also be found on the Engineering Division webpage at www.crystallake.org. Contact the City Engineer in the Engineering Division at (815) 356-3605 for further assistance. City staff is happy to assist residents in reading these maps and locating individual properties. City staff is also available to provide flood protection assistance over the phone or by visiting a property.

Flood Safety

During heavy rains or flash floods, the following general guidelines can help protect you from the dangers of flooding.

- Do not drive through standing water or a flooded area. Do not drive around barriers, as hidden flooding dangers are likely to be present beyond sight of the initial warning signage.
- Do not walk through flowing water. Currents can be deceptive. As little as six inches of water can knock a person off their feet.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. If your house is in danger of flooding, turn off the power at the service box. Electrical current can travel through water. Electrocution is the second leading cause of death during floods.
- Be alert to gas leaks. Turn off the gas to your house if your home is in danger of flooding. If you smell gas, report it to a City official or your gas company. Do not use candles, lanterns or open flames if you smell gas or are unsure if your gas has been shut off.
- Keep children away from the flood waters, ditches, culverts, and storm drains. Flood waters can carry dangerous moving objects that are not visible from the surface. Culverts may also pose hidden dangers and trap children.
- Clean everything that has been wet. Floodwater will be contaminated with sewage and other chemicals, which pose severe health threats.
- Do not use gas engines, such as generators, or charcoal fires indoors during power outages. Carbon monoxide exhaust can pose serious health hazards.

Property Protection Measures

There are many basic maintenance techniques that you can employ to help minimize potential damage to your property during heavy rains.

- Check sump pumps regularly.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts regularly.
- Watertight seals can be applied to brick and block walls to protect against low-level flooding.
- Utilities such as heating and air conditioning systems, water heaters and other major appliances can be elevated to higher floors in the structure or on raised platforms.
- Temporary measures such as moving furniture and other valuables to higher floors or sandbagging exterior openings will also help.



Floodplain Permit Requirements

All development within the 100-year floodplain (not just construction of buildings, but filling, excavation, fences, etc.) are required to obtain a permit from the City. Applications must be made prior to doing any work in a floodplain area.

Please contact the Engineering Division at (815) 356-3605 to receive more information. You may report any illegal development activities to the above number as well.

Flood Insurance

Many residents are unaware that most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. Flood insurance is available to residents of Crystal Lake through their individual insurance carriers, as the City is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Additionally, because the City participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, flood insurance premiums are discounted for residents in the 100-year floodplain.

If you currently have flood insurance, be sure to check your policy to ensure you have adequate coverage. Usually these policies cover the building structure, but not the contents. Contents coverage can also be obtained and there is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance coverage becomes effective. Plan ahead; do not wait until a flood is predicted before purchasing flood insurance.

If you are building inside the floodplain, the purchase of flood insurance is mandatory if using a federally regulated and insured bank for a loan.



Drainage System Maintenance

Keeping smaller ditches and streams free of debris can dramatically improve the run-off capacity of low-lying areas, as well as greatly reduce the overland blockage that significantly contributes to flooding. It is illegal to dump materials (including, but not limited to, oil, grease, pesticides, or other pollutants) into a waterway or down storm drains and violators may be fined. If you see someone in the act of dumping or see debris in one of our watercourses, please contact the Engineering Division at (815) 356-3605.

Additional Information

If you would like more information regarding flood-related issues in Crystal Lake, here are some additional sources:

City of Crystal Lake Website
https://www.crystallake.org/your-government/departments/community-development/engineering/flood-hazard

National Flood Insurance Program Website
www.floodsmart.gov/

City of Crystal Lake Engineering Division
100 West Woodstock Street
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
(815) 356-3605

Crystal Lake Public Library
126 W. Paddock Street
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
(815) 459-1687

Pedestrian Beacon Safety

Have you noticed those flashing lights at certain crosswalks around town? They're called Pedestrian Crossing Beacons, and they're here to make crossing safer for everyone! These beacons are activated by a push button and are placed at busy crossings without traffic signals.

For Drivers

- Stop for pedestrians entering or already in the crosswalk.
- Never pass a car that's stopped or slowing down at a crosswalk.
- Keep crosswalks clear—don't block them.

For Pedestrians

- Make eye contact with drivers before stepping into the street.
- Check all lanes to make sure traffic has stopped before crossing.
- Walk defensively, look both ways and be sure drivers see you.



Quick Tip: Push the button, wait for the flash, and cross safely!

Let's work together to keep Crystal Lake safe and walkable!

Youth Commission

The City Council approved the formation of a new Youth Commission in May 2024 to study, investigate, plan, implement and advise the City Council on matters related to youth. In particular, the Commission is charged with recommending policies, programs and services that empower, support and inform youth; that create a family friendly community; and that enable and encourage youth to be productive members of the community.

The Crystal Lake Youth Commission is committed to advocating for youth by providing them the opportunity to learn, lead and serve through community outreach, service projects and establishing youth-adult partnerships.

The Youth Commission is seeking interested applicants from the community. Applicants must be aged 16 to 20 years old and attend Crystal Lake Central High School, Crystal Lake South High School, Prairie Ridge High school, Haber Oaks, Crystal Lake Private High schools, home school (in Crystal Lake), or McHenry County College.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Nick Hammonds, Deputy City Manager, at (815) 356-3675 or nhammonds@crystallake.org to obtain an application.

CLEARLY CRYSTAL LAKE CORNER

April in Crystal Lake: Shop, Dine & Explore Local

As spring arrives, Clearly Crystal Lake invites residents to get out and experience everything our community has to offer. April is the perfect time to support local businesses, enjoy seasonal events, and rediscover the unique shops, restaurants, and entertainment options that make Crystal Lake special.

From strolling through Downtown Crystal Lake to exploring shopping centers, residents will find fresh spring merchandise, new menu items, and special promotions designed to welcome the season. Local boutiques are showcasing spring fashion and gifts, while restaurants and coffee shops are gearing up to introduce outdoor dining and seasonal flavors.

Entertainment options are also blooming across town. Catch a live performance or event at the Raue Center for the Arts, enjoy community programming at the Dole Mansion or spend time outdoors along trails and parks as warmer weather returns.

Spring is also a great time to plan a visit to local salons, fitness studios, and specialty services that help keep our community thriving. Every purchase made locally helps support Crystal Lake's small businesses, strengthens the local economy, and keeps our downtown vibrant.

This April, make it a goal to shop small, dine local, and enjoy entertainment close to home. Follow Clearly Crystal Lake on social media for updates on events, promotions, and ways to support the businesses that make Crystal Lake a great place to live, work, and play.



www.clearlycrystallake.com

www.facebook.com/clearlycrystallake

www.instagram.com/clearlycrystallake/

CALENDAR | APRIL 2026

Wednesday, April 1
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Monday, April 6
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, April 7
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Thursday, April 9
Youth Commission Meeting
4:00 P.M.

Wednesday, April 15
Sustainability Committee Meeting
6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, April 15
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, April 15
Library Board Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 21
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 28
Economic Development Committee Meeting
8:00 A.M.

All Meetings at City Hall
100 W. Woodstock Street

City of Crystal Lake, Illinois

MAYOR
Haig Haleblian

COUNCILMEMBER
Ellen Brady
Brett Hopkins
Cameron Hubbard
Mandy Montford
Ian Philpot
Denise Smith

CITY MANAGER
Eric Helm

Police/Fire/Ambulance Emergency Only
911

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

www.crystallake.org

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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 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.