City of Crystal Lake, Illinois
CITYLETTER



200 E. Congress Parkway Public Open House

At the April 21, 2026 meeting, the Crystal Lake City Council approved a purchase and sale agreement ("PSA") with the Northern Illinois Medical Center, to acquire the 8+ acre property housing the former Healthbridge facility, as well as two nearby vacant parcels of 4+ and 2+ acres, respectively. Please see the picture on page 2.

The PSA launched a 180-day due diligence period, allowing a thorough evaluation of the use of the property for potential public benefit.

The due diligence period is designed to give the City a comprehensive understanding of the property's condition, environmental profile, and long-term capital needs. This work will be funded through the City's existing capital improvement program budget for fiscal year 2026.

Continued on Page 2

Fire Rescue Open House Page 3

Child Passenger Safety Week Page 4

Curbside Electronics Collection Event Page 5

Continued from Cover Page



During the due diligence period, the City will evaluate the following:

- Environmental conditions and hazardous materials.
- Structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- Roof, pavement, and site conditions.
- Title and easements.
- Appraised market value.
- Preliminary architectural feasibility and costs for potential facility modifications.

The City has not made a final decision regarding the usage of the facility or property. This decision will be based on future Council action and public discussion. Assuming the City's due diligence inspections confirm that the properties can be effectively used for the community, the purchase should close in the Fall of 2026.

A public open house will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, for the community to provide feedback regarding the purchase and use of the property.

For additional information, please visit the City website at https://bit.ly/4gChwb3.

Public Open House

Wednesday
September 9, 2026

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

City Hall
100 W. Woodstock Street

FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

OPEN HOUSE!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
FIRE STATION 1 - 100 W. WOODSTOCK STREET



Come meet your local Firefighter/Paramedics, enjoy a free, family-friendly event packed with hands-on activities and fire-safety fun for all ages! Event highlights include:

- Guided station tours
- Fire Skills Obstacle Course for kids
- Arson Dog demonstration
- Practice using a fire extinguisher
- Apparatus displays and more!

DONATIONS ARE BEING COLLECTED FOR:

Crystal Lake Food Pantry
No One Should Go Hungry.

Safe Charging is a Superpower!

Our homes rely on more battery-powered devices than ever before: phones, tablets, toys, power tools, e-bikes, and so much more. With all that charging happening daily, it's important to remember that safe charging habits are one of the easiest and most effective ways to prevent home fires.

- Only use the cord and charger that came with your device or use one approved by the manufacturer.
- Charge devices on a hard, flat surface like a table, desk, or bare floor.
- Unplug your device once it's fully charged and avoid leaving items plugged in overnight.
- Charge large items like scooters, e-bikes, and power tools outside when possible.
- Keep large charging devices away from exits so they don't block escape routes.
- Stop using any device or battery that feels hot, swells, smells strange, leaks, smokes, or makes popping or hissing noises.

By practicing safe charging each day, you're using a superpower that protects your home, your family, and your community!

Source: NFPA.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!

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Child Passenger Safety Week

Every day, parents and caregivers across the nation transport young children to school, daycare, and more using car seats and boosters. Shockingly, nearly half of these safety devices are installed incorrectly, potentially jeopardizing your child's safety during travel.

A child's age, weight, and height are essential factors in choosing the right safety harnesses, making it crucial to stay updated on the latest regulations and recommendations. From September 20-26th, we draw attention to child passenger safety, emphasizing that properly installed car seats and boosters provide a straightforward way to enhance your child's safety. When used correctly, these seats can reduce the risk of fatal injuries in a crash by up to 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers.

Selecting the appropriate car seat is key. For children weighing between 5 and 40 pounds, a rear-facing car seat is vital. Once they surpass this weight range, a forward-facing seat can be used, typically after the age of two. As your child outgrows the forward-facing seat, transitioning to a booster seat is ideal. The booster seat elevates your child to ensure proper fitment of the adult lap belt and shoulder belt.

Don't hesitate to contact the Crystal Lake Police Department for a free car seat inspection, ensuring your child's safety on the road.



National Night Out 2026 Thank-you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined the Crystal Lake Police Department for this year's National Night Out!

We'd like to extend our sincere appreciation to our generous sponsors — Farmers Market+ at the Dole, Ed's Rental, Eby Graphics, and Ultra Strobe for helping make this event possible. We also want to thank all of our participating vendors, our fellow first responder agencies, and every community member who came out to celebrate with the Crystal Lake Police Department.



As we reflect on another incredible National Night Out, we're reminded of what makes Crystal Lake such a special community. The evening was filled with fun, connection, and meaningful conversations, reinforcing the strong partnerships between our residents, local businesses, and first responders.

Thank you for making this year's National Night Out such a memorable success. We can't wait to see you again next year!

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!

Curbside Electronics Collection Event: September 14 - 18

LRS will be conducting curbside electronics collection during the week of September 14 - 18, 2026. Residents may set out a maximum of five electronic items, including a limit of one TV or one computer monitor. The electronics will be collected on residents' regularly scheduled collection day. LRS will conduct the next electronics collection week in March 2027. The following table details which items may and may not be set out for electronics collection.

Please contact LRS at (844) 633-3577 with any questions regarding the electronics collection event.

Acceptable Electronic Items	
One Television or One Computer Monitor	Fax Machines and Printers
Cell Phones, Telephones, and Tablets	Holiday Lights
Cameras	Modems
CD Players	Paper Shredders
Computer Drives	Satellite Receivers
Cords and Cables	Scanners
Electronic Mice and Keyboards	Stereos and Video Game Consoles

Items NOT Accepted	
Air Conditioners	Hair Dryers and Hair Irons
Batteries	Humidifiers
Appliances and Refrigerators	Liquids or Chemical Waste
Battery Operated Toys	Smoke and Fire Detectors
Coffee Makers	Packaging Materials
Computer Disks	Microwaves
Dishwashers	Water Softeners

The next electronics collection event will take place in March 2027.

THREE OAKS RECREATION AREA

Park Hours
6:30 A.M. - Sunset

Beach Closure

The beach will close for the season after Labor Day, Monday, September 7, 2026.

Thank you for a great 2026 beach season! We can't wait to see everyone again next year.

Marina Hours

During weekdays, Monday - Friday, the Marina will be closed. Please check our website for current hours of operation through the month of September for weekend dates.

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

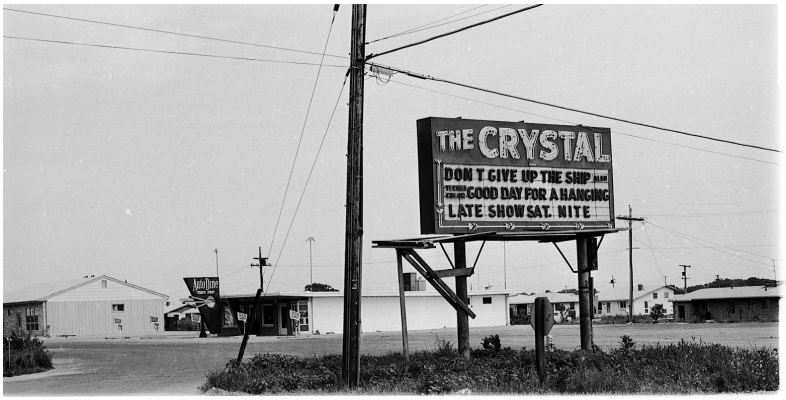
CRYSTAL DRIVE-IN THEATRE

DIANA KENNEY

Let's spin the clock back to the 1950s--a decade where poodle skirts, saddle shoes and drive-in movie theatres were in their heyday. There were over 200 outdoor drive-in movie theatres in Illinois during the 1950s, including the Crystal Drive-In Theatre.

In early March 1953, Crystal Lake resident Larry DeMarce purchased 110 acres of land, commonly known as the Simpson farm. The property was roughly bordered by today's Route 31 to the east, Route 14 to the north, Pingree Road to the west and Rakow Road to the south. DeMarce immediately petitioned to rezone 30 acres of the property from agriculture to business, with 18 acres set aside to build an outdoor movie theatre. The re-zoning was quickly approved and the first shovel of dirt for the "Crystal Drive-In" was turned over on April 8th. DeMarce had plans to develop the remaining 80 acres of the Simpson farm into a residential subdivision which is known today as "The Manor".

Construction of the outdoor movie theatre progressed quickly. The drive-in had room for 750 cars, whose occupants could view a movie on the large 58 x 68-foot screen. There was a service building with wash rooms, projection room and a cafeteria. The cafeteria was known as, "The Auto Dine" and served sandwiches, ice cream and candy. As a final touch, DeMarce had over 500 rose bushes planted so all fences could be covered with beautiful flowers.



Larry DeMarce had experience in operating movie theatres. Before coming to Crystal Lake, DeMarce managed several theatres in Minnesota. In 1951, he purchased the stock of Sidney R. Sankstone in the Crystal Lake Theatre Building Corporation which owned the Lake Theatre on Williams Street (now Raue Center for the Arts). Sankstone operated the downtown movie theatre for only a few years before ill health forced him to retire and sell his stock to DeMarce.

Opening night for the Crystal Drive-In was Thursday, July 16, 1953. The first movie was "Hangman's Knot" with Randolph Scott and Donna Reed. Admission was free. DeMarce said, "I want to extend a most cordial invitation to everyone to be my guest at the opening tonight. I feel that you will enjoy one of the finest outdoor theatres in Illinois."

A few weeks later, a severe windstorm caused heavy damage to the new theatre's movie screen. Thanks to a good insurance policy, a brand new screen was quickly installed. The new screen was said to withstand wind velocity up to 109 miles per hour.

In November 1959, Larry DeMarce, age 58, died unexpectedly in his office at the Lake Theatre. His widow Ruth continued to operate both the downtown and drive-in theatres for a number of years. In 1967, Ruth DeMarce sold the Crystal Drive-In. The new owner also operated the Skyline Drive-in (McHenry) and Waukegan Drive-In theatres. By that time, the Crystal Drive-In also featured a kiddyland of rides including a ferris wheel, merry-go-round and pony rides.

In the 1970s, movie choices were less than "family-friendly" and considered by many to be unacceptable given the theatre was located in the middle of a neighborhood of families. The owners also proposed hosting rock concerts at the venue, but these plans were successfully shot down in court. By the late 1970s, the site was closed, shuttered, and overgrown. It remained that way for a long, long time.



This photo was taken in March, 2005. It is the last photograph of the old drive-in movie screen before it was hauled away. The site is now occupied by townhomes.

If you're looking to revisit the fun of going to a drive-in movie, take a drive just up the road to the McHenry Outdoor Theatre, which is one of only eight outdoor movie theatres still operating in Illinois.

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

Fall Happenings

Scan the QR Code to the right to view various events and things to do this Fall!

CLEARLY CRYSTAL LAKE CORNER

Shop Local, Fall in Love with Crystal Lake

As summer winds down and the crisp days of fall arrive, it's the perfect time to rediscover all that Crystal Lake has to offer right here in our own community.

From locally owned shops and restaurants to entertainment and outdoor recreation, there are plenty of ways to spend a day supporting local businesses while enjoying the places that make Crystal Lake special.

Grab an ice cream or coffee and take a stroll around Depot Park. Take in a show at the Raue, hike around the Three Oaks Recreation Area Lake Loop Trail for some fresh air and exercise. Looking for somewhere new to eat? Check out local favorites or the newest addition to Crystal Lake's dining scene, including May Thai Kitchen at 40 W. Terra Cotta Avenue.

In the mood for something sweet? Stop by Batch, Crystal Lake's newest small-batch ice cream shop, located at 10 N. Williams Street. It's a great spot to enjoy a treat while exploring the surrounding shops and businesses.

When you shop, dine, and spend locally, you're supporting the people who invest their time, talent, and resources in our community. Those everyday choices help create vibrant commercial districts, support local jobs, and preserve the unique character of Crystal Lake.

So this fall, make a point to shop local, dine local, explore local, and support local. Discover a new business, revisit an old favorite, and enjoy everything our community has to offer. This fall, fall in love with Crystal Lake all over again!

www.clearlycrystallake.com

www.facebook.com/clearlycrystallake | **www.instagram.com/clearlycrystallake/**

CALENDAR | SEPTEMBER 2026

All Meetings at City Hall , 100 W. Woodstock Street

Tuesday, September 1
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, September 2
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Monday, September 7
City Offices Closed - Labor Day

Wednesday, September 9
Public Arts Commission Meeting
8:00 A.M.

Wednesday, September 9
200 E. Congress Parkway Public Open House
4:00 P.M.

Thursday, September 10
Youth Commission Meeting
4:00 P.M.

Monday, September 14
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, September 15
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, September 16
Sustainability Committee Meeting
6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, September 16
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

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

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 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	Option 5
Community Development Department	(815) 356-3605	
Finance Department	(815) 459-2020	Option 0
Fire Rescue Department	(815) 356-3640	
Human Resources Department	(815) 459-2020	Option 7
Police Department	(815) 356-3620	
Public Works and Engineering Department	(815) 356-3614	