City of Crystal Lake, Illinois
CITYLETTER

Community Input Survey

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Comment Form



200 E. Congress Parkway Survey and Comment Form

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.

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

The City held a public open house on September 9, 2026 to provide information and most importantly, solicit feedback from residents. We invite the community to review the presented materials on the website at https://bit.ly/4iW1v1h. After reviewing, please feel free to participate in the survey at https://bit.ly/4r21smL or you may also provide additional feedback through the comment form at https://bit.ly/4h2SFwf.

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FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Fire Rescue Open House

Stop by Fire Station One, located at 100 W. Woodstock Street, on Saturday, October 3, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to noon for the Annual Open House! Spend the morning meeting your local firefighter/paramedics, touring the station, exploring a fire truck, and enjoying a variety of family-friendly activities!

During the event, the Fire Rescue Department will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Your donations are greatly appreciated and help support our community.



Fire Prevention Week: October 4 - 10, 2026

Fire Prevention Week has been a cornerstone of public safety education for over a century. Started in 1925, it was proclaimed by President Calvin Coolidge as a national observance to honor the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, a tragic event that highlighted the need for fire safety awareness and better prevention practices. Since then, Fire Prevention Week has become the longest running public health campaign in the United States, empowering communities with knowledge to reduce fire risks in homes, schools, and businesses.

Each year, a new theme is introduced to address modern fire concerns and encourage proactive safety habits. This year's theme, "Safe Charging is a Superpower," focuses on the growing importance of safely charging everyday devices and recognizing hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries and electronics. By learning and sharing these safety messages, we help create safer spaces for everyone.

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!

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Halloween Safety

As Halloween approaches, it's important to keep safety in mind while enjoying the festivities. From candy to costumes, Halloween is always filled with fun activities. To help ensure a safe holiday, here are some tips:

- Review with children how to call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency or become lost.
- Walk on sidewalks and stay in well-lit areas.
- Make sure that everyone understands they should stay with the group.
- Help your children check their candy. Discard any items with torn or punctured packaging.
- Be cautious around roadways. Cross streets at crosswalks, obey traffic signals, and look both ways before crossing.
- If you plan on attending an event where alcohol is served, be sure to plan a safe ride home.

Halloween Events

Join the Crystal Lake Police Department for some early Halloween fun at the Crystal Lake Park District's event at Main Beach (300 Lakeshore Drive) on Saturday, October 24th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon! This free event is open to all ages - rain or shine. Wear your costume and bring a treat bag to collect goodies from trucks and other community organization displays, including us! We look forward to seeing you there.



Trick-or-Treating Hours

Halloween is on Saturday, October 31st. The recommended hours for Trick-or-Treating in Crystal Lake are 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. on Halloween.



National School Bus Safety Week: October 19-23, 2026

As we observe National School Bus Safety Week, it's important to remember the rules of the road when it comes to school buses. Here are some essential tips for drivers:

- **Stop for school buses**: Always stop when a school bus is loading or unloading children, indicated by its extended stop sign and flashing red lights.
- **Stay alert**: Watch for children near bus stops and be cautious in school zones. Stay focused and avoid distractions.
- **Obey speed limits**: Follow speed limits, especially in school zones and residential areas where children are more likely to be present.

Know what to do in different road scenarios:

- On a two-lane road, if a school bus has their stop arm out, all lanes must stop.
- On a multi-lane, one-way street, if a school bus has their stop arm out, all lanes must stop.
- On a four-lane road, if a school bus has their stop arm out, all lanes heading the direction of the bus must stop.



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!

Community Photos

Do you have any great pictures you want to share with the community? Submit your pictures to the City of Crystal Lake for the opportunity to have them featured right here in the City Newsletter! Proper photo credits will be given once permission from the individual who submits the picture is received.

Pictures can be submitted to comments@crystallake.org. Please include 'Community Photos' in the subject line with your submittal. We look forward to seeing Crystal Lake from your point of view!

WaterSmart Portal Information

The City has launched a product to all customers called WaterSmart. This is a web-based portal that will allow each resident to view and manage their water usage. Customers will also be able to view and understand their water bills.

Leak Detection

With the WaterSmart system, customers can sign up for customized alerts and receive notifications in real time about leaks or other water usage issues that may be detected. Alerts can be sent by email, voice or text. WaterSmart will provide water conservation tips and walk you through steps you should take to resolve any leaks.

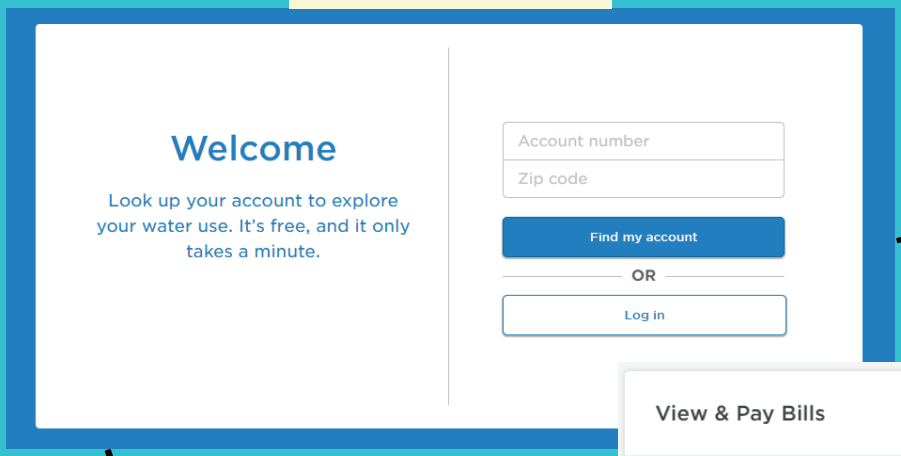
How to Sign Up

1. Go to http://crystallakeil.watersmart.com.
2. Use your account number listed on your water bill as your registration code.
3. Answer the simple profile survey to provide accurate comparisons to similar households.
4. Begin viewing hourly water usage and current bill.

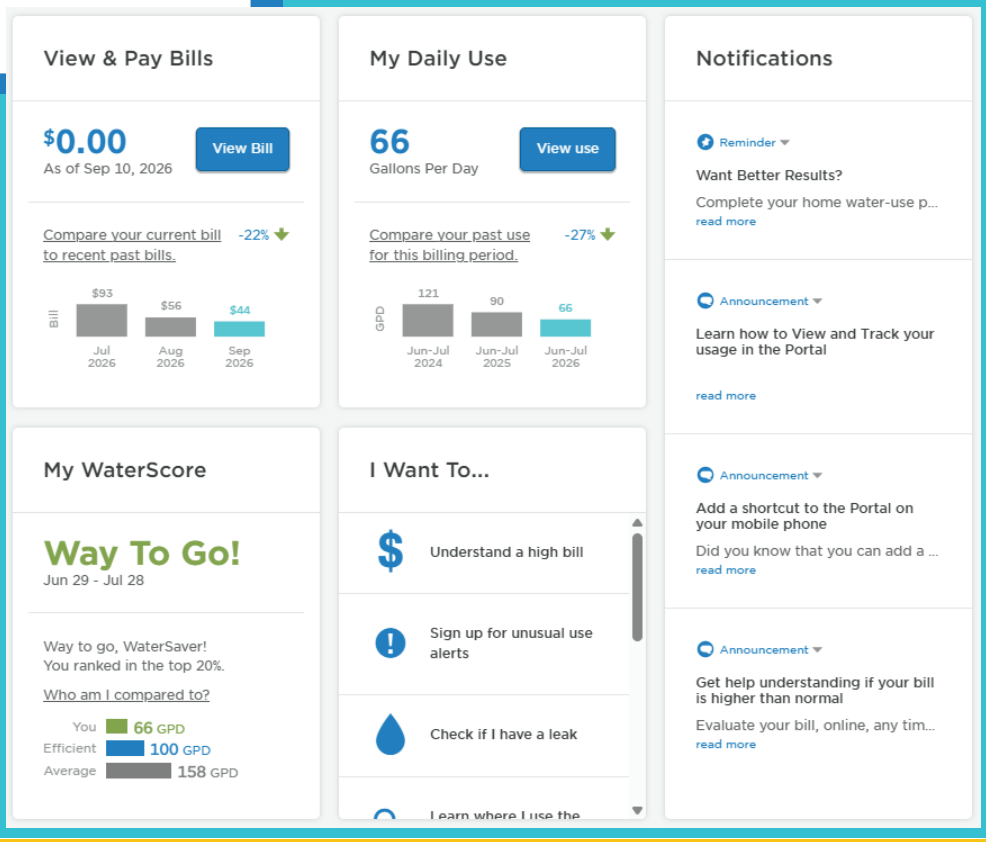
Customize Leak Alerts

Once logged in, select Settings, then Communication Preferences to customize your leak alert notifications.

How to Sign Up



Dashboard





You may also choose to watch the City's helpful video with a simple walkthrough of how to navigate the portal at https://bit.ly/CrystalLakeWaterSmart

Update Your Email

If you have opted to receive your water bill via email, please review that the email address you signed up with is still the correct one you wish to use. If you would like to change the email address in which to receive your water bill, please email finance@crystallake.org or call 815-459-2020.

Fall Leaf Collection

Raking leaves into the street is a violation of City Code and can lead to blocked storm drains. To help dispose of leaves, the City's Annual Fall Leaf Pick-up Program will begin Monday, October 5th and will continue until Tuesday, December 15th. Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) crews will collect bagged leaves placed at the curbside in front of residential homes along public streets. Bags must be placed in the parkway before 7:00 a.m. on residents' regular refuse collection day.

Leaves can only be placed in biodegradable paper bags or resident-owned waste bins clearly marked for leaf disposal in order to be collected. Paper leaf bags are available at local grocery and hardware stores. The City and Lakeshore Recycling Systems do not provide leaf bags. There is a 50-pound maximum weight limit per bag. Please be aware that wet leaves will add to the weight of the bag. Leaves placed in containers such as plastic bags, unmarked waste bins, boxes, or in bags too large for one person to handle will not be accepted.

To contact Lakeshore Recycling Systems with any questions, please call their customer service number (844) 633-3577 or visit their website at www.lrsrecycles.com.

As a reminder, leaves are not accepted as part of the City's brush drop-off program.



THREE OAKS RECREATION AREA

Park Hours
6:30 A.M. - Sunset

Off-Season Hours of Operation

Park Hours: Open daily, 6:30 a.m. to sunset year-round.

Trail & Shoreline Fishing: The park and lake loop trail will be open daily throughout the fall and winter. Shoreline fishing is available until the lake begins to freeze over.



Thank You!

As the 2026 season draws to an end, we want to thank our incredible team of Marina Attendants, Lifeguards, and Managers for their contribution and dedication to making Three Oaks Recreation Area a fantastic experience for all. In addition, we would like to extend our appreciation to the staff at Gianelli's, The Board House, and The Quarry Cable Park for their contributions and services.





Apply for the Crystal Lake Sustainability Committee!

Are you looking for a meaningful opportunity to educate the community about sustainable practices? The City of Crystal Lake Sustainability Committee is a volunteer-based committee appointed by the Mayor and City Council to carry out short-term, long-term, and cost-effective goals for the City of Crystal Lake to become more sustainable. This includes partnering with the National Wildlife Federation to protect native habitat and participating in litter collection. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

To apply, please visit our website at bit.ly/4c2dshM or contact Victoria Wojcik at vwojcik@crystallake.org. Applicants must work, live, attend school, or own a business within Crystal Lake City Limits. Each term consists of three consecutive years.



CLEARLY CRYSTAL LAKE CORNER

As cooler temperatures arrive and the leaves begin to change, it's the perfect time to fall into local and discover something new right here in Crystal Lake.

Fall into Local: The Clearly Crystal Lake Mug Hunt

Cooler weather means it's time to cozy up by the campfire and we've got a new way for you to warm up to local businesses! Our Clearly Crystal Lake mug is hitting the road! Each week through Thanksgiving, the mug will have a new home at a Crystal Lake business. Follow along for clues shared on social media, visit the featured business, and see if you can be the first to find it. The scavenger hunt is about more than finding the mug, it's a fun way to discover new local businesses, explore the community, and support the businesses that make Crystal Lake special.



www.clearlycrystallake.com
www.facebook.com/clearlycrystallake www.instagram.com/clearlycrystallake/

A WALK IN THE TREES

DIANA KENNEY

When someone encourages you to take a walk in the trees, one would think you are being directed to a forest or park. In this case, I am directing you to take a walk in a cemetery – specifically Union Cemetery on Woodstock Street.

Some of the most unusual gravestones in Union Cemetery are shaped like trees, logs, or even stumps. One of the first "trees" you'll see when entering the cemetery is the grave marker for Dr. Colin C. Watson.



The tree gravestone of Dr. Colin C. Watson

The popularity of tree-shaped gravestones began around 1890 and continued for several decades into the next century. In 1890, Joseph Cullen Root founded Woodmen of the World (WOW), a fraternal benefit organization. Membership in WOW included a life insurance policy AND a free gravestone. Both great benefits for after you die. The gravestones were typically made of limestone and carved to look like tree stumps. They came in a variety of styles and heights. The stone was often decorated with a variety of WOW symbols including axes, mauls and other woodworking instruments. By 1900, the price of gravestones had increased enough that members had to buy a special $100 rider on their policy to cover the price increase. The WOW gravestone benefit was discontinued in 1920.



Dr. Colin C. Watson was a member of several fraternal organizations, including the Woodmen of the World. It was reported that his insurance policy with WOW provided for a $2,000 death benefit.

Colin Christopher Watson was born June 3, 1850 in Ontario, Canada. His parents, Hugh and Nancy (Best) Watson were originally from Pennsylvania. Both of Colin's grandfathers were Revolutionary War veterans.

Orphaned at a young age, Colin went to live with his uncle John Best on a farm in Fingal, Canada. Despite some early hardships, Colin finished public school, then taught for a time before enrolling in the medical department at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. After one year, he moved to Illinois and worked on a farm while continuing his medical studies.

Colin C. Watson graduated from Rush Medical College in 1878. Soon after graduation, he moved to Nunda where he built a successful medical practice. In 1879, Colin married Vilate E. Mansfield. The couple had one son, Hugh, born in 1880. For the next twenty years, Dr. Watson attended to the sick and injured in town and in the rural areas surrounding Nunda and Crystal Lake. Dr. and Mrs. Watson built a beautiful Queen Anne Victorian style home around 1898. The home still stands at 67 Gates Street.

Despite being a physician, Dr. Watson suffered from a number of ailments including diabetes. He died at the age of 51. Per his request, his funeral services took place at his home on Gates Street before his body was laid to rest in Union Cemetery.

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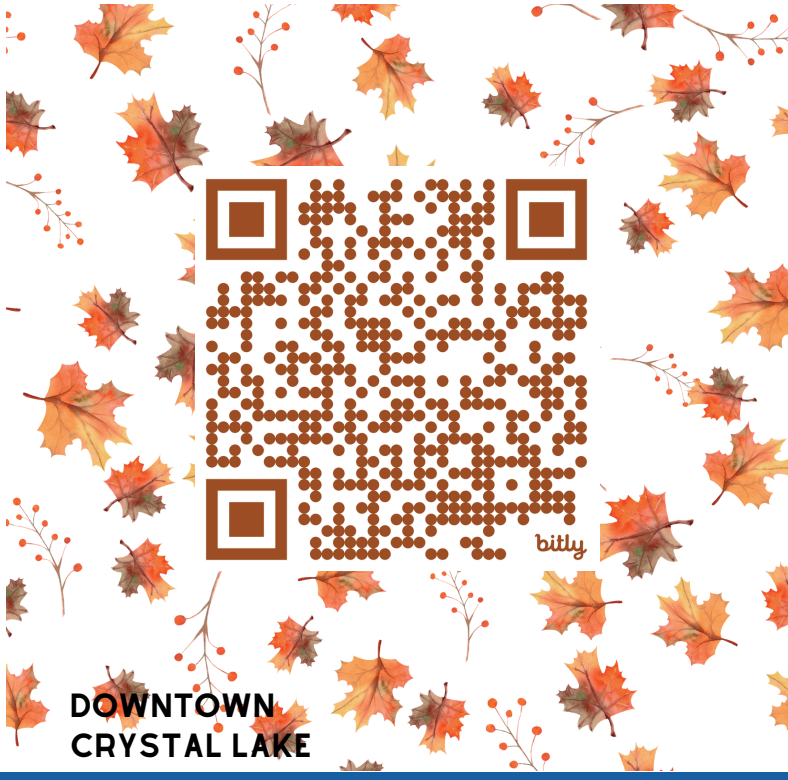
Besides Dr. Watson's tree grave, there are several other tree graves in Union Cemetery. Some were erected for WOW members while the owners of other tree graves appear to have no connection to WOW. Each tree grave in Union Cemetery is unique and beautiful. Some of these are tall, some short, some have one trunk and some have several trunks.

Take a "walk in the trees" at Union Cemetery and see if you can find these other tree graves: Hamilton, Hale, Foster, Lanning, Stewart and Young.

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 codes below to view various events and things to do this fall!



CALENDAR | OCTOBER 2026

Monday, October 5
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, October 6
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

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

Thursday, October 8
Youth Commission Meeting
4:00 P.M.

Tuesday, October 20
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, October 21
Sustainability Committee Meeting
6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 21
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Tuesday, October 27
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
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

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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 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	