

Countryside CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2024

www.countryside-il.org



Coffee with the Mayor - February 24th 10 - 11 a.m.



Mayor Sean McDermott invited Chief of Police Paul Klimek to be the guest speaker at Coffee with the Mayor in December. Chief Klimek gave a riveting presentation about the ins and outs of the Countryside Police Department. He covered several topics including Next Generation 911; technology including cameras, license plate readers and drones; task force memberships; the extensive training requirements for officers; and crime statistics.

Members of the audience had many questions for the Chief. Crime trends got a lot of attention. The Chief explained due to the City's large retail segment, they are seeing a spike in thefts. In addition, there is an increase in fleeing and eluding police officers. The Chief further explained this increase is partially due to license plate readers. This technology notifies the officers when a stolen vehicle or a vehicle involved in a crime drives through Countryside. It was a great discussion by all.

Please join the Mayor for coffee and some lively conversation at the next Coffee with the Mayor on February 24, 2024.



CRIME - ANNUAL TRENDS

Crime	2021	2022	2023 YTD
Theft	166	163	203
Residential Burglary	3	9	5
Burglary	6	18	6
Vehicle Burglary	5	11	15
Carjacking	1	0	0
Battery	30	25	22
Domestic Battery	51	44	47
Aggravated Battery	1	0	6
Armed Robbery	3	0	0
Assault	7	8	7
Aggravated Assault	1	6	4
Motor Vehicle Theft	12	17	17
Fleeing/Eluding	6	9	22
Homicide	0	0	0

City Presents a Proposed Budget Without the Use of a Property Tax Levy for the 10th Consecutive Year!



City staff presented a proposed fiscal year 2025 budget to the Finance Committee in November of 2023 which concluded that all operating and capital costs could be funded without the use of a property tax extension on residents and commercial property owners in the City. "I am pleased to report that this marks the 10th consecutive year that the City will meet its budgetary obligations without the use of property taxes" said Mayor Sean McDermott. On December 13, 2023, the City Council voted to abate all property tax levies with the Cook County Clerk. The unanimous vote eliminated any property tax extensions for fiscal year 2025. The Finance Committee will meet again in February to further discuss the fiscal year 2025 operating and capital budgets for all City funds. City staff expects to present a balanced budget to the City Council for consideration before the end of the current fiscal year (April 30, 2024) as related to the fiscal year 2025 budget.

May all our residents and businesses have a healthy and safe New Year!

WINTER / 2024

2024 St. Patrick's Day Family Parade - NEW Parade Route

Get your green shirts ready! The City of Countryside proudly announces our annual St. Patrick's Day Parade - **Saturday, March 2nd at 1p.m.** This year's Grand Marshal is **Jim Durkan**, who has been very active with the St. Patrick's Day Parade since its inception in 2016. The presenting sponsor is **Jack Phelan - Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, RAM**.

The parade steps off at 1p.m. at **55th Place and Edgewood** and ends at **63rd Street and Brainard Avenue**.

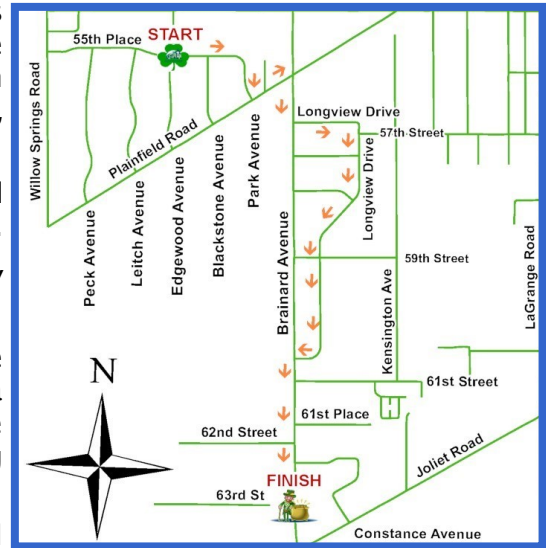
All parade proceeds will benefit **Pillars Community Health**.

PARTICIPATE. Countryside businesses and families are encouraged to march in the parade. Consider creating a float or marching with your family or group. Prizes will be awarded for the best floats, banners, and "Best Party Along the Route."

AFTER-PARTY. Everyone is invited to check out the local establishments participating in this year's **post-parties**. Establishments and specific information will be announced later via our website and Facebook page.

SPONSOR. SPONSORSHIP LEVELS AND FEES:

- ✱ **\$1,000 Pot of Gold Sponsor** (name on website, shirts, and large print on banners)
- ✱ **\$500 Emerald Sponsor** (name on website, shirts, and banners)
- ✱ **\$250 Shamrock Sponsor** (name on website and banners)
- ✱ **\$100 Parade entry fee for Political Parties and Non-residents**
- ✱ **\$25 Parade entry fee for Non-profits & Residents**
- ✱ **Local Schools are FREE**
- ✱ **Non-advertising Business Sponsor** - support the parade and our charities by making a donation in any amount you choose.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! There are many volunteer opportunities available for teens and adults. Please contact Parade Chairman John Finn at (708) 299-7387 or send an email to parade@countryside-il.org.



St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen. The 2024 **Parade Queen** will be selected from applications received from the community. We are seeking candidates who possess any of the following: Irish heritage, demonstrated community involvement, or reside in the Countryside area. Applications are available on the City's website and at City Hall. Applications must be received by January 29, 2024. The queen will be crowned at the February 21, 2024 City Council meeting.

Rules, forms, and ongoing parade updates can be found on the City's website www.countryside-il.org under the special events tab, or at the Municipal Complex. Applications and fees should be returned to the City of Countryside **no later than February 9, 2024**. If you have any questions please contact **Parade Chairman John Finn** at parade@countryside-il.org or (708) 299-7387.



JACK PHELAN



DODGE

CHRYSLER

Jeep



Welcome to Countryside

Adipurush, Inc.

5526 S. LaGrange Road
Retail store - sells tobacco, vapes and smoke related accessories

Blue Sky Van Rides (formerly: Blue Sky Home Care)

7041 S. Willow Springs Road
Transportation for wheelchairs, non-medical

Cameo Dental Specialist

475 W. 55th Street, Suite 104
Dental office

Camila's Hair Studio (Formerly: Salvatore Hair Salon & Spa)

5536 S. LaGrange Road
Hair and skin services

Creative Academy, LLC

6535 Joliet Road
Caring & educating children, ages 6 weeks - 6 years

Home Instead 2

475 W. 55th Street, Suite 105
Supportive home care

Honey Jam Café

181 Countryside Plaza
Restaurant servicing breakfast & lunch

LaGrange Medical Center & Urgent Care

911 W. 55th Street
Medical office - primary/urgent care

Lucky Dog

5545 S. LaGrange Road
Restaurant & video gaming

RufPuf Distribution

5340 East Avenue
Retail store - convenience store & novelty items

Valenssa Beauty

475 W. 55th Street, Suite 205
Facials, waxing and lashes

VMD Primary Providers of Chicago, PLLC

9910 W. 55th Street
Provides outpatient healthcare medical services

Children's Holiday Celebration

The 2023 Children's Holiday Party was held on Saturday, December 2nd at Premiere Catering and Events. Over 150 children attended. The performer Headspin Guy entertained guests with his awesome inspiring gravity defying dance moves. Two girls and two boys from each age group were awarded a specialty wrapped gift, presented by Mayor Sean McDermott, Alderman John Von Drasek, Alderman Mark Benson, and Alderman John Finn. Two grand prize winners were each given a \$200 gift certificate from Terry's Bike Haus. Thanks to Santa and all his helpers, City Clerk Liz Kmet, Treasurer Courtney Bolt, and Deputy Clerk Liz Saucedo, and a big thank you to Premiere Catering and Events and their staff for helping make the event such a success.



Angel Tree Program Update

Thank you to all of the generous "Angels" who participated in our Angel Tree Program. This award-winning holiday program is designed to assist our residents who are experiencing a hardship during the holiday season. The generosity and goodwill of the community make this program a success!

This year, we were able to assist 116 individuals from 27 families. Wish lists included items such as winter coats, snow boots and gloves, along with requests to assist with payment of utility bills. Clerk's Office staff members coordinate this program each year. They work diligently to identify families and individuals who qualify for the program. Happy Holidays to all of our Angel Tree participants!



Police Department Updates

Shop With a Cop

The Countryside Police Department held its annual “Shop With a Cop” event on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Our officers were partnered up with a great group of 10 kids for a fun filled morning of shopping at TJ Maxx. After shopping, the group took a tour of the police station and got to enjoy some delicious Ledo’s pizza while wrapping gifts.

Westfield Ford, Autobarn Volkswagen & Subaru, Tressler LLP, and the LaGrange Rotary Club sponsored the event this year. Their generous donations, combined with Officer Cahue’s hard work in coordinating the event, made this year’s “Shop With a Cop” a great success!



Vacation Watch Program and Overnight Parking Requests are Available Online

Residents that wish to have the police department conduct extra patrols on their residence while they are away on vacation can sign up for our Vacation Watch program. During their daily patrols, an officer will stop by and check on a resident’s home while they are away.

Residents will have the opportunity to provide contact information and other relevant information when enrolling in the program. If an officer notices something wrong or out of place, they will contact the resident or other designated person to inform them as soon as possible. Signing up for the program can be completed online at www.countryside-il.org/departments/countryside-police-department by clicking on “Overnight Parking/Vacation Watch Request” under Quick Links. Please call the police department non-emergency line at (708) 352-2171 in order to sign up.

Illinois AG Organized Retail Theft Crime Grant

The Countryside Police Department was awarded a grant in the amount of \$7,500 from Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul’s Office to purchase three License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras to assist with investigating retail theft crimes. The new cameras will be incorporated into our existing LPR camera system and will be installed at locations which will assist in identifying retail theft offenders that target the City’s businesses.

Car Seat Checks and Installation

We have four police officers who are certified through the National Child Passenger Safety Certification Program to inspect and install child safety seats. While it is not necessary to make an appointment, we recommend calling ahead to confirm that one of our car seat installers is on-duty and available to assist you. Please call Darrell DuRell at (708) 352-2171 or email ddurell@countrysidepolice.org to confirm the availability of our installers.



Water Department

Water Main Break Notification Procedures

If a break occurs during normal waking hours, City staff will generally attempt to notify the affected homes and businesses in person. If the break affects a large number of properties, a "Reverse 911" call will be initiated. If the break occurs after 10 p.m., the Water Department will make repairs and generally request a "Reverse 911" call in the morning (5 a.m.) if repairs are not complete.



The Reverse 911 system is an important tool for notifying residents of problems or conditions. ***It is important to remember that Reverse 911 calls go only to listed phone numbers.*** If you have an unlisted phone number and want to be added to the call list, contact the police non-emergency number at (708) 352-2171.

Help Keep Fire Hydrants Clear of Snow

The City asks that you help to keep fire hydrants accessible for firefighting operations by keeping space clear around sides of the hydrant as you do your shoveling or snow blowing. With 446 fire hydrants in Countryside, it is not possible for the City's employees to clear them all after a major snow storm when the priority is snowplowing the roads.

If you notice a damaged or leaking fire hydrant, please call the Public Works Department at (708) 354-3390.



Sump Pump Discharge

Winter is here and with that comes ice. City code prohibits sump pumps and downspouts from discharging into the street since the water freezes and creates hazardous situations. The ice can also create a dam that prevents melting snow from reaching the storm sewers. Please take a moment to ensure that your sump pump and downspouts are in compliance. City Code section 7-7-5 states that sump pumps and downspouts shall discharge the water at least 25 feet from the front or rear property line and at least 15 feet from the side property line.

If you are unsure about your property, please feel free to contact the Community Development Department at (708) 354-1860 and we will assist you.

Don't forget to disconnect any hoses that may have been connected to outside spigots to prevent frozen pipes.

Owners of vacant properties are reminded to have enough heat in their buildings to keep pipes from freezing.

Reminder...NO Parking After 2" of Snowfall

Per the City code, there is **NO** parking on any public street in the City at any time within twelve hours after a snowfall of two inches or more has occurred, unless the snow has been plowed off or otherwise removed from the street.



Holiday Decorations Reminder

Please be cognizant of how long your holiday decorations stay up.

We ask that all holiday decorations be removed no later than January 31, 2024.

Sign Up Today

Countryside residents can receive City News updates via email. To join the list, click on "Sign Up for E-News" on the home page of the City's website, www.countryside-il.org, and follow the easy onscreen instructions.

Infrastructure Projects

Water Main – The water main on Sunset Avenue was scheduled for replacement this spring/summer. Unfortunately, due to the high demand for work, the City received no bids. The project was rebid for fall construction and then the City received bids. The water main has now been installed and tested. The contractor has closed the street for the winter. They will return in the spring to complete restoration. The cost of this water main project is over \$1.1 million. Sunset Avenue will also be resurfaced in the spring, see details below.

MWRD Recommended Drainage Improvements – In 2007, MWRD started a detailed drainage study of the East Avenue Ditch, 67th Street Ditch, Des Plaines River Tributary A (also known as Peck Avenue Ditch) and Flagg Creek watersheds within Countryside, Indian Head Park, La Grange, Unincorporated Cook County, and Western Springs. The purpose of the study was to identify drainage problems within these communities and offer a regional solution to possibly lower the high water elevations in the identified problem areas. Unfortunately, the result of this study showed that the proposed capital improvement project identified to help these areas was not justifiable due to design and construction challenges as well as the fact that the project did not meet MWRD's "Cost to Benefit Ratio" criteria. After persistent inquiries by the Mayor, in 2020, MWRD agreed to do local drainage studies for the 5500/5600 blocks of Kensington Avenue, Catherine Avenue, Ashland Avenue and Madison Avenue as well as the 5400 blocks of 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue. The improvements recommended in the MWRD's Local Drainage Area Study were implemented by the City of Countryside as the "2023 Drainage Improvements Project".

The improvements consisted of the construction of a Relief Storm Sewer on the 5500/5600 block of Kensington Avenue, replacement of existing curb-line drainage structures with high efficiency inlets on the 5500/5600 blocks of Kensington Avenue, Catherine Avenue, Ashland Avenue, and Madison Avenue, replacement of existing curb-line drainage structures with high efficiency inlets at 6th Avenue and Bobolink Drive, replacement of existing curb-line drainage structures with high efficiency inlets at 7th Avenue and Bobolink Drive and on the 5400 Block of 7th Avenue, curb & gutter removal & replacement, pavement removal & replacement and parkway topsoil and sod restoration. The improvements have been completed. The contractor has restored the concrete curb and street paving. They will restore the parkways in the spring. These improvements cost \$695,000.

Street Resurfacing – Two streets were budgeted for resurfacing including Sunset Avenue (71st to Stalford); and 67th Street (Sunset Avenue to East limit). This resurfacing is scheduled for spring as the Sunset water main was just completed in December. This resurfacing is estimated at \$655,000.

The City has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant for street resurfacing in Ward 1. Lorraine Avenue (Rosemary Court to Rose Avenue), Rose Court, and Rose Avenue (Lorraine Avenue to 58th Street) will be resurfaced in the spring with grant money. The cost of this project is estimated at \$385,000.



Energy Audit

The Sustainability Committee recommended the City participate in the ComEd Energy Savings Program. This program assigns a vendor to assess the City's energy usage in each facility. Three projects were recommended as a result of the energy audit.



Flagg Creek Golf Course – The customized project plan included the installation of new LED fixtures outside and networked lighting controls. The total cost of these improvements was \$35,055. ComEd provided the City \$30,000 in incentives. The net cost to the City was \$5,055. The estimated annual cost savings from these improvements is \$5,137. The estimated payback period is only 1 year.

Pump House – The improvements include changing fixtures to LED, installing lighting controls and hard wired LED exit retrofit kits. The total cost of these improvements was \$9,402 of which ComEd provided incentives to the City in the amount of \$6,065 with the City responsible for the remaining \$3,337. The estimated annual savings is \$2,538, a payback period of 1.3 years.

Pump House & ESDA Building – The improvements included the early replacement of two air conditioners, one for the Pump House and one for the ESDA Building, and also changing the non-programmable thermostats to Smart or Advanced thermostats. The total cost of these improvements was \$27,477. ComEd provided the City with \$7,900 in incentives leaving a balance of \$19,577 for the City. The estimated annual cost savings is \$1,177. Although the payback period is 16.6 years, the City approved the improvements as the AC units were scheduled for replacement in a couple years.

Overall, the City will be saving almost \$30,000 in energy cost annually. For a free home energy assessment visit www.comed.com/ways-to-save/for-your-home/home-energy-savings/single-family.

Considering Solar?

Are you considering going solar at your home or small business? If so, Solar Switch Chicagoland may be a good opportunity for you.

Cook County is partnering with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association and the Citizens Utility Board to co-sponsor another round of Solar Switch Chicagoland. This group buying program offers high quality solar education and an affordable way to install rooftop solar panels and optional battery storage. By coming together as a group, Cook County residents can secure a discounted price on a rooftop solar installation for their home or small business.

It is free to register online and there is no obligation to purchase solar. Residents will have the option to move forward with a solar installation based on program-negotiated pricing that includes the group discount with a qualified installer.

During the most recent program, participating households were able to save \$4,000 on average on a typical-sized solar installation. Combined state and federal incentives can further reduce costs by 60%. Solar Switch participants will have access to free educational webinars on solar 101 and installer webinars. For a schedule, visit www.SolarSwitch.com/webinars.

For more information and to apply, visit: www.SolarSwitch.com/CookCounty.

Congratulations!

Fran Prokop, recording secretary for the City of Countryside was recognized at the December 13th City Council meeting for her 30 years of service.

Fran has worked with four Mayors, four City Administrators, four City Clerks and four Deputy Clerks. Fran stated, "I believe that working part-time after retirement is important and am very happy that I have continued to challenge myself with this job". The City thanks Fran for her service.



Economic Development Updates

Physicians Immediate Care - Finally, the old Speedway property at the intersection of Plainfield and Brainard has been developed. The Physicians Immediate Care Center will provide a wide range of patient services from general medical evaluations to specialized services like minor surgical procedures. They are in the process of moving furniture and equipment into the facility. They anticipate opening in the first quarter.



Lucky Dog - The owner of Russell's BBQ previously located at 5545 S. La Grange Road closed the restaurant in 2023. He is restructuring his business. Once he receives his approvals from the State of Illinois, he will reopen as a Lucky Dog restaurant in early 2024. Currently, there are 4 Lucky Dog locations in Berwyn, Broadview, Cicero and Melrose Park.



Duckee's Travel Center - This project kicked off this fall with the clearing of the property located at 10000 75th Street. Duckee's will include the remodeling of the old Eddie Z's building (located in Hodgkins) and the vacant lot to its west (located in Countryside). The project includes a restaurant, convenience store, video gaming, lounge area for truckers, and a fuel station. Construction will begin in the spring.

This project, overlapping into two jurisdictions was possible through the negotiation of an intergovernmental agreement between Countryside and Hodgkins. This agreement includes splitting all taxes generated from the project which, are estimated to be \$1.1 million annually.

Luka Travel Mart - The City Council approved a mixed use development for the old City Hall property. This project included a fueling station, convenience store, coffee shop, grocery store, restaurant and brewery. The City's redevelopment agreement (RDA) to sell the property has been on hold until they could secure end users acceptable to the City. Negotiations of the RDA continued in December. The City is hopeful that the RDA will be finalized and presented to the Economic Development Committee in the first quarter of 2024 for their consideration. This project is estimated to generate nearly \$1 million annually from sales tax, gas tax, restaurant tax, and video gaming tax.



Community Happenings



WHERE: *Flagg Creek Golf Course*

DATE: *Saturday, January 13, 2024*

TIME: *1 - 4 P.M.*



Together, the City of Countryside and Flagg Creek Golf Course will be sponsoring this event in 2024. Join family and friends for fun filled winter activities on Saturday, January 13, 2024. The event kicks off at 1:00 p.m. with Bingo for the kids, a balloon twister, a face painter, indoor games, a fire pit with the fixings for s'mores, hot chocolate bar, a craft project by Home Depot, and a ball drop as the finale. There will also be food and beverages available for purchase.

City Employees Service Recognition in 2023

Congratulations!

Darrell DuRell	20 years
Nate McDonald	20 years
Tim Wherry	20 years
Maria Gonzalez	10 years
Liz Saucedo	10 years
Kevin Cerny	5 years
Connor Rinehart	5 years
Rich Trent	5 years

Breakfast with Santa at Flagg Creek Golf Course

Back by popular demand... Flagg Creek Golf Course was excited to bring back one of their favorite family events this year on Saturday December 9th & Sunday 10th. The children couldn't bear their excitement when Santa appeared rolling down the fairway in his shining green golf cart. The happiness and joy will make memories to last a lifetime. Looking forward to Santa visiting Flagg Creek again next year!

Happy Holidays!

Upcoming City Meetings

January

2	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:15 p.m.
10	City Council	7:30 p.m.
16	Flagg Creek Admin. Board	6:00 p.m.
24	City Council	7:30 p.m.

February

6	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:15 p.m.
14	City Council	7:30 p.m.
20	Flagg Creek Admin. Board	6:00 p.m.
28	City Council	7:30 p.m.

March

5	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:15 p.m.
12	Fire & Police Commission	5:00 p.m.
13	City Council	7:30 p.m.
19	Flagg Creek Admin. Board	6:00 p.m.
27	City Council	7:30 p.m.





City of Countryside
803 Joliet
Countryside, IL 60525

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Clerk

Elizabeth Kmet

Treasurer

Courtney Bolt

Aldermen

Mark Benson

John Finn

Tom Frohlich

Thomas Mikolyzk

Scott Musillami

John Von Drasek



WEBSITES TO KNOW

City of Countryside

www.countryside-il.org

Cook County Clerk

www.cookcountyclerk.com

Flagg Creek Golf Course

www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.org

Pleasant Dale Park District

www.pdparks.org

Pleasantview Fire Protection District

www.plvw.org

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY 911



City Hall/Clerk's Office:

Main: (708) 354-7270

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Community Development:

Main: (708) 354-1860

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Police Department:

Main: (708) 352-2171 (non-emergency)

Fax: (708) 352-1032

Public Works:

Main: (708) 354-3390

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Water Billing:

Main: (708) 485-2465

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Disclaimer: If you attend a local festival or City function and the event is photographed, your image may be used for news and promotional purposes.