

Countryside CONNECTIONS

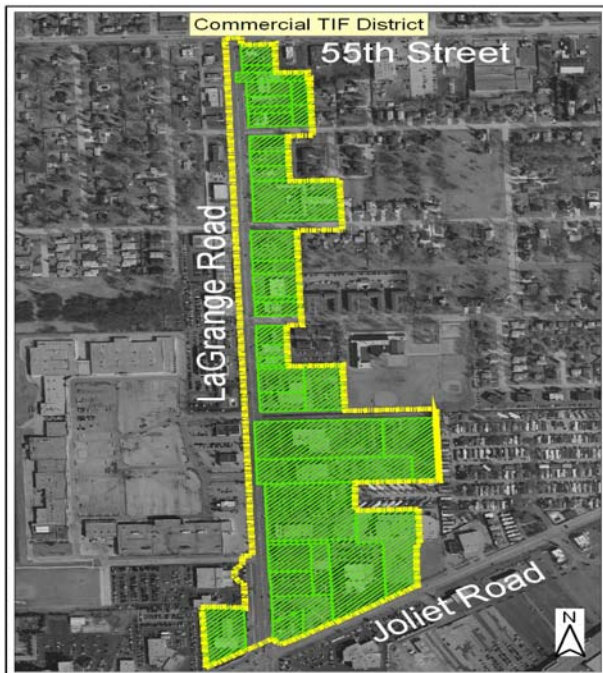
WINTER 2011

www.countryside-il.org



TIF Adopted To Promote Economic Development

The City has adopted its first tax increment financing (TIF) district in the LaGrange Road commercial corridor between 55th Street and Joliet Road. It consists primarily of the commercial parcels east of LaGrange Road and certain parcels along Joliet Road. No residential property is included in the TIF district.



Municipalities across the nation are faced with numerous challenges, not the least of which is encouraging economic growth in areas in need of development and/or redevelopment. A TIF district is a development tool used to make infrastructure improvements, attract new businesses, and help existing businesses renovate or expand. The creation of a TIF district provides the municipality certain financial benefits that otherwise would not be available.

New development and businesses often translate to more jobs, more customers, and in turn, more private investment for areas most in need. The creation of new jobs and attraction of new businesses, as well as making infrastructure improvements within the district, will make the overall TIF district a more desirable location for existing businesses, thus creating additional sales tax revenue for the City and reducing its reliance on other sources of revenue such as property tax.

The State statute on TIF districts is rather complex, but in general terms, when a TIF district is adopted, the equalized assessed value (EAV) of the properties in the district is frozen and is often referred to as the "base" EAV. All property taxes levied on the base EAV continue to be distributed to the taxing bodies including the school districts, county, township, etc. As improvements in the TIF district are completed, the EAV of the property within the TIF increases. The property taxes calculated on this additional, or incremental EAV go into a special TIF fund to be used solely for eligible expenses within the TIF district.

To summarize, the new commercial TIF district will provide the City with a wonderful opportunity to attract new businesses, improve infrastructure, and make the area more vibrant. These improvements in turn will bring additional sales tax revenue to the City. The more the City can rely on sales tax, the less it needs to rely on property taxes and other revenues to fund operations. City elected officials and staff are looking forward to this very promising and positive time in the City's history, and expect many good things to come.

The City reported on the effects of our local economy on the City's budget in the summer of 2009 newsletter. To begin discussing the current economic development environment, this article is partially reprinted:

Effects of the Local Economy on our Budget

The most difficult budget discussions revolved around the General Corporate Fund revenues. The City is faced with unprecedented declines in its current revenue sources, especially sales tax. Sales tax, our number one revenue source, accounts for approximately 70% of corporate fund revenues exclusive of grants and operating transfers. State sales tax collections have declined from a level of \$6.1 million in fiscal year 2007 to a projected \$5.3 million this fiscal year. This decline in sales tax dollars is due to major business closings as well as a decline in the overall economy. This trend is expected to continue as two additional dealerships announced closings since the budget was approved.

<u>MAJOR BUSINESS CLOSINGS</u>	
<u>Business</u>	<u>Closing</u>
Dodge City	July, 2007
Countryside Lincoln Mercury	October, 2007
Dan Wolfe Pontiac/GMC	December, 2007
Circuit City	December, 2008
Mad Max Mitsubishi	April, 2009
Continental Chrysler-Jeep	June, 2009
Continental Toyota (announced)	September, 2009

The City is happy to report approximately 18 months later we are seeing the first signs that this trend is coming to an end. Below are a few of those signs.

Mitsubishi is Back!

The City is happy to announce the Continental Motors Group has been successful in bringing Mitsubishi back to Countryside. The dealership located at 5800 South LaGrange Road will offer the full line of Mitsubishi products including new car sales, leasing, parts and service. They even offer a Courtesy Carriage for service customers to and from the Burlington Northern train station. Rental vehicles are also available on the premises as well as collision repair services. Continental Mitsubishi can be reached at (708) 354-1400 or visit them at www.continentalmitsubishi.com.



<u>MAJOR BUSINESS OPENINGS OR EXPANSIONS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS</u>	
<u>Business</u>	<u>Opening/Expansion</u>
Continental Nissan	April, 2008
The Tile Shop	October, 2008
Autobarn Mazda	November, 2008
Jack Phelan Dodge & Suzuki	January, 2009
Salem Square Shopping Center	Summer, 2010-2011
Coopers Hawk Winery	Summer, 2010
Continental Mitsubishi	Fall, 2010
Autobarn Volkswagon	Spring, 2011
Autobarn BMW Motorcycles	Spring, 2011
Autobarn Subaru	Summer, 2011

Updates

Autobarn is Expanding and Bringing BMW Motorcycles!



The Autobarn Ltd. owns and manages seven Chicagoland automotive dealerships. Three of these dealerships are located within Countryside. Mazda is the #2 selling dealership in the Chicagoland area for the second year with sales growth of 24% over last year; Volkswagen (VW) is the #1 selling dealership in the Chicagoland area and Subaru the newest in the group has grown 1200% over the past 2 years and is the #2 selling dealership in the Chicagoland area.

The success of the Autobarn coupled with the anticipated growth of VW in the U.S. led the Autobarn to discuss expansion plans with the City early in 2010. Several options and sites were considered over the past several months. The expansion plans presented by Autobarn included moving the VW to a larger newly renovated facility, moving Subaru from its current location on LaGrange Road to the current VW facility on Joliet Road and bringing a new car or motorcycle line to Countryside.

The City is happy to report that the Autobarn is scheduled to close on the property located at 6161 Joliet Road early in 2011. The new dealership will showcase Volkswagen's new showroom concept known as the "white box" the first in the Chicagoland area. Once completed the old VW dealership at 6191 Joliet Road will be renovated into a "lighthouse" Subaru dealership allowing for a significant expansion of showroom and service space. Finally, the old Subaru dealership on LaGrange Road will become home to a brand new BMW motorcycle dealership scheduled to open in April, 2011.

When asked why Countryside, Richard Fisher, owner of the Autobarn responded, "I don't think that there could be a better geographic location for business in Chicagoland than Countryside; we are ideally located near key Chicagoland arteries and easy to get to for customers living in the City of Chicago...doing business with the City of Countryside as a municipality couldn't be better; it's hard to imagine a more progressive and positive

Keep a Look Out ...

Watch for these other business openings pending review and approval:

Five Below, a discount retailer geared towards teenage customers has submitted plans for a store in Countryside Plaza. This store should be opened early 2011.

Taco Bell has run a successful restaurant on LaGrange Road for many years. They have submitted plans to build a new 3,100 sf. restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining. This new restaurant will encompass both their existing property as well as the adjacent vacant CarX property. The opening is scheduled for Summer, 2011.

Welcome New Businesses

Card Frenzy

5555 S. Brainard Avenue
Retailer (Cards, gifts, wrapping, etc.)

Coopers Hawk

430 E. Plainfield Road
Winery (Retail store opening TBA)

Disc Replay

5 Countryside Plaza
Resaler (Previously used DVD's, games, etc.)

Enhance Fitness Studio

6475 Joliet Road, Suite A1000
Fitness Service Merchant

L. Howard Handyman Service

54 E. Plainfield Road
Handyman Service Merchant

Pepe's Mexican Restaurant

9945 W. 55th Street
Restaurant (New Owners)

TLC Car Wash

5640 S. LaGrange Road
Hand Car Wash Merchant

What's Going On There?



The City receives many inquiries about what is happening in certain locations. We will try and keep you updated as developments occur.

Salem Square Shopping Plaza – Inland Real Estate is the owner of the plaza. They completed the underground detention and parking lot improvements this year. They are in the process of completing the construction of an out-lot building. According to a representative of Inland, they have a lease for a nail salon. In addition, a zoning application for a physical therapy facility has been submitted. However, final approvals are pending. Finally, Inland is purchasing the Speedway Gas Station. It is Inland's intention to develop the corner into a banking facility in the future which would require approval by the City Council.

City Owned Property at LaGrange & Joliet Roads – The City began assembling properties in 2008 with the intention of developing a City Center in this area. The City purchased the vacant Ethan Allen, Dodge City, and Toyota properties in 2008. The City worked with a developer for approximately one year on several plans but unfortunately could not finalize plans which the Council felt were in the best interest of the City. The Council decided it was better to wait and get the right development than to rush a development which may not work.

During this process it became evident to the City that a TIF district would be necessary to provide incentives to attract private investment to our community. The process of determining if the area was eligible for a TIF district was initiated and the process of adopting a TIF district was completed in 2010. In addition, the City appointed Bradford Real Estate as the preferred developer for marketing the development.

The City has just purchased the final parcel of property needed for this development, the old Circuit City property. We are currently negotiating with a national company to be the anchor at this site. In addition, the City is in the process of negotiating terms with Bradford to develop all the city-owned parcels on a comprehensive basis which would incorporate elements from our streetscape project and allow for a public area and public parking. To date Bradford's marketing efforts have resulted in several letters of intent from national companies. This is a large scale development with many components. The City is working diligently on making sure this development is successful. We will continue to negotiate over the next several weeks and make announcements as they become available.

Water Main Break Procedures



Heavy rains followed by deep freeze are largely responsible for the 9 water main breaks since late October. If breaks occur during normal waking hours, city staff will generally attempt to notify the affected homes and businesses in person. However, if the break affects a large number of properties, a "Reverse 911" call will be initiated. If the break occurs after 10pm, the Water Department will make repairs and generally request a "Reverse 911" call in the morning (5am) if repairs are not complete.

The Reverse 911 system is an important tool for notifying residents of all kinds 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.

A New Look for Police Department Squad Cars

The Countryside Police Department updated their supervisor car with highly reflective striping and the word, "Supervisor." The improvement to the car will help residents and motorists distinguish a supervisor car from other patrol vehicles. The reflective striping will also afford greater visibility after dark.



Sergeant Boyd with the updated supervisor car.



Side-by-side comparison of reflective vs. non-reflective striping.

Winter Driving Tips

Winter conditions call for different driving tactics. Slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slow braking.

- **Slow down** for wet, snowy, or icy conditions; when visibility is poor; or when conditions are changing or unpredictable.
- **Increase the car length between vehicles in front of you and give yourself plenty of room to stop.** Stopping on snow and ice requires extra time and distance. Even if you drive an SUV with four-wheel drive, you may not be able to stop any faster, or maintain control any better, once you lose traction. Four-wheel drive may get you going faster, but it's won't help you stop sooner. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Brake early, brake correctly, and *never* slam on the brakes.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These are all candidates for developing black ice - a thin coating of clear ice that can form on the pavement surface that may be difficult to see.
- When driving in adverse road conditions, look farther ahead in traffic than you normally do. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.
- Remember to accelerate *gradually*.
- Don't take chances when pulling out in front of approaching vehicles. Remember, they may not be able to slow down and you may not be able to accelerate as quickly as possible.



No parking on city streets after 2" snowfall.

Ward Reports

WARD 1

Alderman Robert Pondelicek
Alderman Michael Smetana

- ◆ Commercial properties located on the east side of LaGrange Road from 55th Street to Joliet Road will be included in the City's first commercial TIF district.
- ◆ Welcome E. Formella & Sons to 411 East Plainfield Road in the Dansher Industrial Park.
- ◆ Welcome back Pepe's Mexican Restaurant. They are under new ownership.

WARD 2

Alderman Karen Michalczyk
Alderman John Von Drasek

- ◆ The Sunset Avenue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project greatly improved the runoff street drainage.
- ◆ Fourteen Countryside residents moved into the Countryside Senior Apartments.
- ◆ Alderman Michalczyk is the chairperson of the Infrastructure Committee and Alderman Von Drasek is the chairperson of the Recreation Committee.

The *Infrastructure Committee* works with the City Engineer and City staff to oversee any repairs and improvements to City owned property such as facilities and streets. The Infrastructure Committee also makes recommendations to the City Council with regards to Building Code Changes, Building Department fee changes, and changes to the sign ordinance.

The *Recreation Committee* works with City staff on planning City special events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Concerts in the Park, Tree Lighting Ceremony, and the Children's Christmas Party.

WARD 3

Alderman Sean McDermott
Alderman Wayne Straza

- ◆ Welcome Card Frenzy (Salem Square) and Continental Mitsubishi.
- ◆ The Marathon Corporation closed the Speedway business at Brainard and Plainfield Road and the Inland Real Estate Company is purchasing the property.
- ◆ The property located at 6150 S. LaGrange Road (Dutch Village) will be included in the City's first commercial TIF district.



Water Tower Gets A New "LOOK"

The project included sand blasting the interior and spot blasting the corrosion on the exterior. The Water Tower was last painted in 1996.

A new corrosion inhibiting system was also installed inside the tank as a rust preventative.

Our Water Tower holds 500,000 gallons of water.

Code Corner

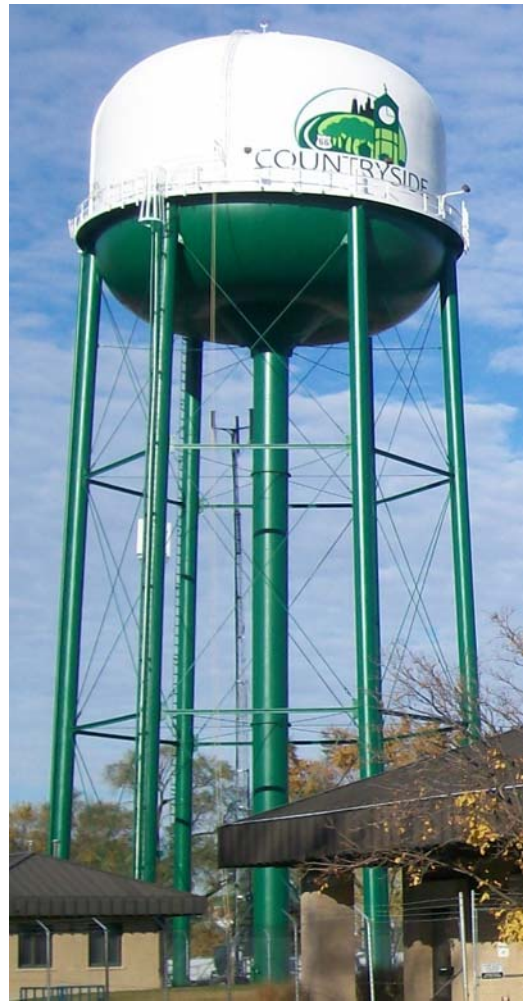
The City would like to notify all residents and businesses of the ordinances newly passed and/or changed. Please review and note as the ordinances are effective immediately.

10-54-0: LaGrange Road has been designated as a retail district. This will require that all new businesses which plan to occupy a space on LaGrange Road must either have 50% of their business produce sales which generate a sales tax or shall obtain a special use through the Plan Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals.

10-61-0: Permit Fees for new construction, remodeling, and additions will change as follows: \$0.20 per square foot (minimum of \$50) plus \$0.10 per square foot for each electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work being performed (minimum of \$25.00 each).

Change the definition of remodeling work to include: "additions, remodeling projects, and construction of accessory building". The minimum fee for this is \$50.00. This would also cover all roof, window, door, siding, and gutter permits.

For more information on these and other ordinances, please contact the Community Development Department.



Calendar

January

4	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:30 p.m.
4	Senior Citizens Club	6:30 p.m.
12	City Council	7:30 p.m.
18	Senior Citizens Club	6:30 p.m.
19	Flagg Creek Administrative Board	7:00 p.m.
26	City Council	7:30 p.m.

February

1	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:30 p.m.
1	Senior Citizens Club	6:30 p.m.
9	City Council	7:30 p.m.
15	Senior Citizens Club	6:30 p.m.
16	Flagg Creek Administrative Board	7:00 p.m.
23	City Council	7:30 p.m.

March

1	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:30 p.m.
1	Senior Citizens	6:30 p.m.
9	City Council	7:30 p.m.
15	Senior Citizens Club	7:30 p.m.
16	Flagg Creek Administrative Board	7:00 p.m.
23	City Council	7:30 p.m.

Countryside Senior Apartments 55 + Community

Located at 6406 W. Joliet Road, Countryside Senior Apartments is an exciting new housing choice for renters age 55 and older. All units are one-bedroom/one-bath and approximately 556 square feet. Each apartment is equipped with a modern and fully applianced kitchen, including a dishwasher. Applicants must be 55 years or older and have a minimum annual income of \$18,100 and a maximum income of less than \$31,560 if occupancy is one person and less than \$36,060 if occupancy is two persons. Rents are no more than \$750 a month. For more information on unit availability, please call (708) 579-0349.



Aging Care Connections



Reception party held at the Countryside Senior Apartments on December 8, 2010.

The programs and social services offered by Aging Care Connections are provided to adults age 60 and older and their family members. Programs and services are designed to provide options for care to seniors in order to enhance their ability to remain as independent as possible in their own communities.

An Information and Assistance Specialist is available daily to answer questions, make referrals, and discuss options for care. Staff are able to offer consultation in the home, local rehab facilities and the hospital.

For more information on programs or services available, please call (708) 354-1323 or refer to their website www.agingcareconnections.org.

Public Safety Pension Reform

On the November 2, 2010 ballot, the City of Countryside asked voters via referendum if they were for or against the reform of public safety pensions in Illinois. The result of this referendum showed that approximately 81% of Countryside voters were for public safety (police and fire) pension reform. Recently, the Illinois House and Senate passed the police and fire pension reform bill. The final step in the process for this bill to become law will be the governor's signature.

Some of the changes to public safety pensions included in the reform bill relate to increasing the normal retirement age, creating pensionable salary caps, and changing the formula for annual cost of living adjustments. In addition, the bill amended the municipal funding requirements for public safety pensions. Although the pension benefit changes in the reform bill will only affect new police officers and firefighters hired after January 1, 2011, it will in time decrease the total cost to taxpayers for funding these pensions.

2010 Special Events



Countryside's 50th Anniversary celebration at Countryside Park On September 25, 2010.



Some of our younger residents enjoying the festivities at the party in the park.



Congressman Lipinski congratulates Mayor Conrad and Elected Officials on the City's 50th Anniversary.



Once again, the Summer Concert series was a big success!



Smiling with SANTA at the annual Children's Christmas Party.



Children visited with Mr. & Mrs. Claus at the Tree Lighting Ceremony.



Having fun at the Easter Egg Hunt!

Thanks to ... Countryside Business Association, AT & T, Busy Builders/Busy Brushes, Continental Auto Group, Groot, Hunt Printing, Infinity Signs & Graphics, Inland Bank, Lyons Township, State Bank of Countryside, Tavern on La Grange, Vulcan Materials, Westfield Ford, and William Tell/Holiday Inn.

We look forward to your continued support of all our events in 2011!



City of Countryside
5550 East Avenue
Countryside, IL

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Officials:

Mayor

Robert A. Conrad

Clerk

Sharon Sweeney

Treasurer

Steven Jasinski

Aldermen

Sean McDermott
Karen Michalczyk
Robert Pondelicek
Michael Smetana
Wayne Straza
John Von Drasek

Websites to Know

City of Countryside

www.countryside-il.org

Cook County Clerk

www.cookcountyclerk.com

Pleasantview Fire Protection

www.plvw.org

West Suburban Chamber

www.westsuburbanchamber.org

Flagg Creek Golf Course

www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.org

City Hall Contacts

City Hall:

Main: (708) 354-7270

Fax: (708) 354-9445

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

Police Dept.:

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

Fax: (708) 352-1032

Emergency: 911

Clerk's Office:

Main: (708) 354-7270

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Public Works:

Main: (708) 354-3390

Fax: (708) 354-9445

Water Billing:

Main: (708) 485-2465

Fax: (708) 354-9029

Community Development:

Main: (708) 354-1860

Fax: (708) 354-9029

Recreation:

Main: (708) 485-2595

Fax: (708) 354-9445