

Countryside CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2026

www.countryside-il.org



St. Patrick's Day Parade

The City of Countryside kicked off its St. Patrick Day celebrations during the February 25th City Council meeting with several special recognitions. The City proudly announced and honored this year's St. Patrick's Day Grand Marshal Pat Rogers, recognizing his dedication and contributions to the community. The evening also included the crowning of the 2026 St. Patrick's Day Queen, Isabella Velez, along with the presentation of the Queen's Court, Nora Grill, Ashley Karkoska, and Princess Summer Cahill Newman. Family members, friends, and community members gathered to celebrate the newly crowned royalty as they were officially recognized and sashed during the meeting. These individuals played an important role in this year's festivities and proudly represented the City of Countryside throughout the celebrations, including the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade which was held on Saturday, March 7th.



Route 66

This year, Route 66 turns 100 years old. The City participated in the Route 66 Centennial Monument Project which was offered to all cities, towns, and destinations along Route 66. This project is one of the largest public art installations in American History which pays homage to the birth of America's Main Street. Countryside was the first community in Illinois to have their sign installed. An unveiling ceremony took place on February 16th. Each stop along the Mother Road has its own unique story to tell. Visit the sign located at 9950 Joliet Road and scan the QR code to learn more about Route 66's history in Countryside. A special thanks to Jerry Carillo and Marc Ingwersen, the new owners of the Illinois Harley Davidson dealership who granted the City permission to install the sign in their right-of-way.

The City's next Route 66 celebration will be the Centennial Car Show on Saturday June 6th. This event will take place at the Local 150 parking lot at 6200 Joliet Road. It will include car competitions in several categories, food trucks, bands, and a DJ with children's entertainment. Mark your calendar! See page 11 for further details.



Coffee with the Mayor

Saturday, April 25, 2026
10-11AM



SPRING / 2026

Police Department Updates

New Officer Sworn In

On January 14, 2026, Daniel Szczesny was sworn in by Mayor Sean McDermott as the newest member of the Countryside Police Department. Officer Szczesny comes to the City after previously serving with the River Forest and Chicago Ridge Police Departments. He holds a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law and is a practicing licensed attorney in Illinois. As an experienced patrol officer, field training officer, and Drug Recognition Expert, Officer Szczesny brings a wealth of knowledge to our agency. **Welcome Officer Szczesny!**



Safe Driving Strategies for Spring

As warm months return, so do rainy days and changing road conditions. Following these tips ensures safer spring travels for all who share our roadways:

- ◆ Keep an eye out for pot holes and avoid them
- ◆ Avoid standing water/puddles to keep from hydroplaning;
- ◆ Check tire pressure and tread wear;
- ◆ Change wiper blades, if necessary;
- ◆ Watch for increased pedestrian, bicycle, and motorcycle traffic, particularly at crosswalks;
- ◆ Prepare for sun glare by having sunglasses or visors on hand;
- ◆ Respect work zones by decreasing speeds and watching for workers;
- ◆ Be aware of animals on the move, particularly at dusk;
- ◆ Heed weather service warnings and delay travel, if possible; turn on headlights, especially if it is raining; stay hands-free—no cell phones!



Fireworks are Illegal in Countryside

The Consumer Product Safety Commission states, "Fireworks are beautiful to watch, but they can be deadly when mishandled or misused, or if the fireworks themselves contain illegal components." Fireworks can explode unexpectedly or go off in the wrong direction. Fireworks burn at more than 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause burns, loss of a finger or hand and surgery/hospitalization.

It is unlawful for any person to knowingly possess, offer for sale, expose for sale, sell, use or explode any fireworks within the City limits other than supervised public displays of fireworks approved and permitted by the City. Violations shall be punishable by a fine of not less than \$250.00 and not more than \$750.00. Please respect your neighbors and their property.

Healthy Kids Running Series which is a national non-profit youth running program, is coming to Countryside this Spring! Beginning on April 19th kids from Pre-K through 8th grade can participate in age-appropriate races designed to promote fitness, confidence, and fun through running. All races will be held at Countryside Park at 3 PM on the following dates: 4/19, 4/26, 5/3, 5/10, 5/17, with 5/31 as a **rain date**. We're grateful to our bib sponsor, Peak Running in La Grange, for supporting this season's events.



Please consider getting involved as a volunteer or sponsor to help make this exciting community event possible! <https://healthykidsrunningseries.org/>.

Public Works Reminds You . . .

Brush Pickup (March 30 - October 30)

Branch and brush pickup will be provided by the City for residents from March 30th through October 30th. Public Works crews will be covering the City on a weekly basis.

Residents are asked to observe the following rules for branch/brush pickup:

- Please keep it all in **one** pile not multiples along the parkway.
- Cut ends of limbs must face the street and be stacked in the parkway.
- Tree limbs should not be over 10 feet in length or over 4 inches in diameter; tree stumps are **not accepted** and will not be picked up.
- Do not include vines in the branches for pickup as they create a dangerous situation during handling.
- City ordinance forbids the depositing of grass clippings, leaves or any other debris in the branch pile or on the street.
- Contractors providing tree and brush trimming services are responsible for the removal of all materials they cut.



Spring Cleanup (May 18 - May 20)

This service is provided to all residents **free** of charge and is certainly one of the benefits of living in Countryside! Please note that all items (including electronics) for pick-up should be placed in one pile not multiples, at the edge of the street in front of your home by 7 a.m., Monday, May 18th.

Items **not accepted** include:

Yard waste (including brush)	Radioactive material
Bio-medical and infectious material	Concrete/Dirt
Hazardous and toxic waste of any kind	Liquids and paints
Volatile and highly flammable material	Explosive material

The hauler will not collect any materials that are excessive in size and weight. Items that are not acceptable will be tagged by the hauler. If you have any questions, please call Public Works.

LED Lights

In recent years, many homeowners and businesses have switched to LED lighting because of its energy efficiency, long lifespan, and cost savings. While these benefits are clear, a growing number of residents are raising concerns about an unintended side effect: the brightness of some new LED lights affecting nearby neighbors. LED lights can be significantly brighter and more focused than traditional bulbs. When installed improperly—especially in outdoor fixtures such as security lights, garage lights, or floodlights—they can shine directly into neighboring homes, illuminating bedrooms, living spaces, and backyards throughout the night. What was intended as a safety or convenience feature can quickly become a source of frustration for those living nearby.

Neighbors have reported issues such as difficulty sleeping, loss of nighttime privacy, and an overall increase in light pollution. Unlike older, softer lighting, some modern LEDs produce a strong white or bluish light that travels farther and reflects more intensely off surfaces. Fortunately, there are several simple steps homeowners can take to ensure their lighting is both effective and considerate:

- **Choose warmer-colored LEDs.** Bulbs labeled “warm white” (around 2700–3000K) are generally less harsh than cooler, blue-toned lights.
- **Use shielded or downward-facing fixtures.** These help direct light toward the ground on your property instead of outward into neighboring properties.
- **Install motion sensors or timers.** Lights that activate only when needed can reduce overnight glare.
- **Adjust placement and angle.** Even small changes can prevent light from shining directly into nearby windows.

The City functions best when neighbors communicate openly. If a light is causing an issue, a friendly conversation often leads to a simple fix. Many people are unaware their lighting affects others until it's pointed out. As more households adopt LED technology, balancing efficiency with courtesy will help ensure everyone can enjoy both well-lit homes and peaceful nights. Thoughtful lighting choice can make neighborhoods safer without sacrificing comfort for those next door.

Code Enforcement

Are You A Good Neighbor? Is Your Property In Tip Top Shape?

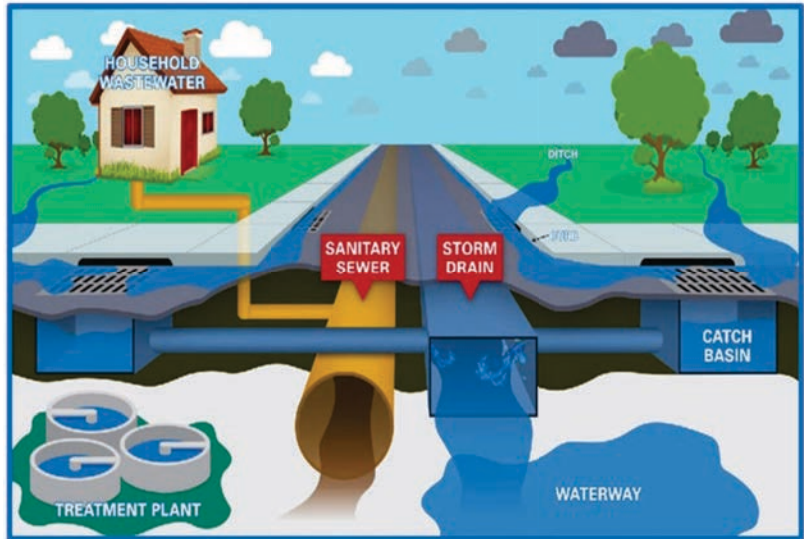
Spring is here and it is time to take a look around the exterior of your property to ensure it is up to code and looking its best for your neighboring properties and the Community of Countryside! The Code Enforcement Department will be driving through Countryside to look at properties for compliance with the City's ordinances. Below is a checklist to read through to see if your property needs some attention. This checklist will help you keep your property in good condition, maintain your property value, and make your home attractive for the neighborhood.

- **Address Numbers** on your home are so important for emergency responders. The numbers must be easily seen from the street and be at least 4 inches of contrasting color. This is required by ordinance.
- **Grass and Weeds** shall be maintained and be less than 8 inches in length. Weedy areas, especially around trees, fences, and garden beds, must be removed.
- **Trees** that are diseased, dying or dead shall be removed from your property. This includes dead branches.
- **Fences** need to be structurally sound. Repaint if necessary and replace broken or damage boards or inserts.
- **Garbage and Debris** must be cleaned up. Garbage, old grills, buckets, ladders, etc. are unsightly and need to be removed from the exterior of your property. Are you storing your garbage cans in a neat manner to keep your neighborhood looking its best?
- **Sump pumps and downspouts** shall discharge onto your own property in such a manner as to not create a nuisance to neighbors or public property. All drainage must be **25 feet from your front or rear property line, 15 feet from your side property lines. No drainage lines can go directly on to any Countryside street or sidewalk.**
- **Exterior surfaces** such as siding, soffit and fascia must be free of holes, properly painted and weather proof. Any exterior surface with chipped or peeling paint must be scraped and repainted.
- **Accessory structures** such as decks, detached garages, porches, pools and retaining walls must be structurally sound and in good condition.
- **Decks** must be in good condition. Decks in disrepair can be very dangerous. Check that handrails and guardrails are secure and not missing spindles or boards. They must be less than 4 inches apart. Loose boards must be screwed down and any cracked or rotted boards must be replaced.
- **Pools** shall be in good working order. Check your pool liner for leaks. Check electrical and gas lines for faulty equipment or connections. Pool water must circulate. Small pools without circulation must be drained daily. This is very important to inhibit the breeding of mosquitos that carry life threatening disease.
- **Recreational vehicles** (boats, campers, trailers) may **NOT** be stored in the yard or on the driveway. When stored on a residential property, they must be placed on asphalt or concrete and be screened on three sides by fencing or non-deciduous plants that are at least five feet in height.
- **Roofs** cannot be sagging, missing shingles or contain other defects that allow rain or snow to enter the building. Tarps are only allowed on a temporary basis until replacement or repair of the roof is completed.
- **Gutters** must be properly anchored to the roof, with downspouts properly connected and free from obstruction. Gutters must be properly maintained—all weeds, seeds, etc. must be removed from gutters and not allowed to grow.
- **Window** glass cannot have cracks or holes. Window frames must be in good condition.
- **Doors and door frames** must be in good condition and weather tight, this includes garage doors.
- **Driveways and walkways** should not have serious cracks, deterioration, or settlement that might cause a trip hazard.
- **Inoperable motor vehicles** are not allowed on public or private property. All motor vehicles must have all tires inflated, no broken windows, be operable, and have current proper licensing. Motor vehicle repairs are not allowed in public view, repairs must be conducted in the garage.

Are Permits Required? Some examples of work that does **NOT** require permits are as follows: painting, carpeting or flooring, landscaping (as long as it does not change the grading of the land), or sealing your driveway. Most other work around the home or business **DOES** require a permit even when you are doing the work yourself. Pools, landscape walls, patios, and decks do **REQUIRE** a permit from the City of Countryside. If you are ever in doubt, please call (708) 354-1860 and we will be happy to assist you.

Sanitary Sewer Rate Change Effective May 1st

The City of Countryside provides sanitary sewer service to approximately 354 properties in Ward 2. In December, the Finance Director in conjunction with the City's Staff Engineer completed a sanitary sewer rate study to determine the user generated charges necessary to meet the future operating, maintenance, and capital replacement costs of the system. At the recommendation of the Finance Director, the City Council approved a per unit sewer service availability charge adjustment from \$6 to \$12 per month. Additionally, a consumption based charge will apply at a rate of \$1.95 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed above the monthly allowance of 7,000 gallons. The new rates will be increased by approximately 3% annually to cover inflationary costs within the system. It should also be noted that the monthly sewer rate has been unchanged since 1991 and that this proposed rate structure will provide for coverage of future system costs while being aligned with rates charged by other local sanitary districts.



Around Town

Scout Colin Preissler of Boy Scout Troop 69 recently completed a project benefiting residents of all ages. Colin built 2 new Community Libraries to replace the City's broken down libraries at Andrew Whiting Park and Countryside Park. Colin wrote his college essay about the project and has received two acceptance letters. The City is proud to recognize a remarkable act of service and leadership from one of our community's young residents. Residents are encouraged to visit the rebuilt Little Free Libraries. Little Free Libraries help strengthen community connections by making books easily accessible to neighbors. Congratulations once again to the Eagle Scouts on a job well done—and thank you for helping keep the love of reading alive in our community.



Community Garden Program—2026 Season



Every year around this time, the City of Countryside offers its residents an opportunity to grow and cultivate a garden at the northwest corner of Kensington Avenue and 61st Street. Each garden plot (10' x 10') is available to Countryside residents to play in the dirt and be a "Community Gardener" for the season. Open registration begins on March 16th with the official season kicking off on May 4th, weather permitting of course. Please visit www.countryside-il.org or call (708) 485-4775 for more details and registration materials.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

- Anita and Kaia Buis-Mikysa
- Betsy and Andy Finn
- Desire, Paul, Andrew and Alex Kreczko
- Maureen Lovelace
- Debra Lubitz
- Vicki and Tommy Lyons
- Mary and Emily Walker
- Kim Payne

Countryside Native Pollinator Areas

The City performed controlled burns at **Countryside Park**, **Ideal Elementary School Park**, and the **Flagg Creek Golf Course**. Burning native pollinator areas in a controlled way helps keep them healthy and productive. Fire clears out built-up dead plant material, opens up sunlight to the ground, and prevents aggressive grasses or woody plants from taking over. This allows native wildflowers to grow and bloom more freely, which means more nectar and pollen for the bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. It can also improve seed germination for certain native species, keeping the plant community diverse and ensuring pollinators have a steady food source.



2025 Sustainable Accomplishments

Each year the Sustainability Committee reviews the major sustainable accomplishments from the prior year and sets new initiatives for the upcoming year. Below is a summary of each:

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Harvest honey from a City hive
- ✓ Integrate sustainability into capital planning
- ✓ Promote green building practices
- ✓ Support and promote family & community gardens
- ✓ Enhance parks, open space & recreational opportunities accessible to all residents
- ✓ Collaborate to offer active & healthy lifestyle programs to residents
- ✓ Assess infrastructure & public safety threats from extreme weather

2026 INITIATIVES

- ✓ Create an award to encourage & report sustainable behaviors for residents & businesses
- ✓ Increase sustainable landscaping through subdivision & development codes
- ✓ Update the stormwater ordinance to integrate with the IL state model local stormwater ordinance
- ✓ Support proper disposal of fats, oils and grease
- ✓ Harvest honey from both City hives

Tree Programs

The City of Countryside's Shared Cost Tree Removal Program helps residents with the cost of removing dead, diseased, storm-damaged, or designated nuisance trees located on private property. Through this program, the City reimburses 50% of eligible tree removal costs, up to \$500 per household per fiscal year, helping promote public safety and maintaining the beauty of our community. Nuisance tree species including cottonwood, willow, mulberry, and ash trees are eligible when stump and chip removal are completed at the same time. The program runs seasonally from May 1st through November 15th and is subject to annual funding limits.

The City also has a free parkway tree program. Residents interested in having a parkway tree planted can contact the Department of Public Works to be added to the planting list; parkway trees are planted in the spring and fall only. Please call the Clerk's Office at (708) 354-7270 for more information or to participate.

Flagg Creek Golf News

Resident Rates

Effective January 1st, all residents of the City of Countryside or residents that live within the boundaries of Pleasant Dale Park District qualify for resident golf rates. However, you **MUST** renew or establish your resident status **YEARLY!** A valid driver's license or photo I.D. and current utility bill is required. **You will not be eligible for resident rates unless you are registered as a resident at the golf course.**

Online Tee Time Reservations

Tee time reservations are available 24/7 under the "Tee Times" tab. Log on to www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.com. Golfers are able to book 7 days in advance, one foursome at a time. Payment is required at the time of booking. The "BEST" rates are found online! Contact Michele at Flagg Creek if you have any questions about registrations or future events at (708) 246-3336.



Junior League Registration

TUESDAYS TEE TIME @ 7:30AM—12PM ∞ June 9-30 & July 7
(Rain Date July 14)

WEDNESDAYS TEE TIME @ 10:30AM—1PM ∞ June 10-24 & July 1 & 8 (Rain Date July 15)

AGES: 8 -13 ∞ **FEE:** \$155 (Resident), \$175 (Non-Resident)

REGISTRATION:

Resident - (in-person only) beginning March 23, 2026

Non-Resident - (**online only**) starting April 7, 2026

Spring Scramble

SUNDAY, May 17, 2026
3:00 PM Shotgun Start

COST: \$280 per foursome
Includes golf, cart, food, & prizes

Register in-person or online:
www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.com

SPACE IS LIMITED



St. Patrick's Day Party

Flagg Creek was happy to host one of the St. Patrick's Day parade after party host! The golf course proudly unveiled its new bar and clubhouse renovations just in time for parade day!! The revamped clubhouse gives guests the perfect place to celebrate, relax, and take in the festivities. There was live entertainment by The Dirty Wellies, corned beef & cabbage, green beer, and face painting.



How To Get Along With Your Neighbors

Living near other people is a normal part of modern life, whether you live in an apartment, townhouse, or single family home on a busy street. Good relationships with neighbors can make a community feel safe, friendly, and supportive. While conflicts sometimes happen, there are simple ways to build positive connections with the people who live around you.

First, communication is very important. A simple greeting or short conversation can help create a friendly atmosphere. Saying hello, introducing yourself when someone new moves in, or occasionally chatting outside can build trust and familiarity. When people know each other, misunderstandings are less likely to turn into conflicts.



Respecting personal space and property is another key factor. Avoid making excessive noise late at night and make sure your activities do not disturb others. Small acts of consideration—like controlling loud music or keeping pets from wandering onto a neighbor's property—show respect and help maintain peace.

Being helpful can also strengthen neighborly relationships. If a neighbor needs assistance, such as carrying groceries, shoveling snow, or watching their home while they are away, offering help can build goodwill. These acts create a sense of community where people look out for one another.

Handling disagreements calmly is also important. If a problem arises, it is best to talk about it politely rather than letting frustration grow. Listening to the other person's perspective and trying to find a compromise can often resolve issues quickly. Remaining respectful during disagreements helps prevent long-term tension.

Finally, participating in community activities can help neighbors connect. City events or even casual gatherings can create opportunities for people to get to know each other better. A strong community is often built through shared experiences and cooperation.

In conclusion, getting along with neighbors requires communication, respect, kindness, and patience. By practicing these simple habits, people can create a more pleasant and supportive living environment for everyone in the neighborhood.

Healthy Countryside



OptWell.org TheCommunityHouse.org

presents

Brain Health MATTERS

What **Parents, Teens, and Adults** Need to Know



THURSDAY, APRIL 16



6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Resource Fair open 30 minutes before & after



THE COMMUNITY HOUSE
415 W. Eighth Street, Hinsdale, IL, 60521



FREE EVENT

RSVP here:



SPONSORS



Inquire about sponsorship opportunities
info@optwell.org

<https://brainhealthmatters.eventbrite.com>

Reminders ...



COUNTRYSIDE
ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL
CAR SHOW
JUNE 6, 2026

CAR SHOW
REGISTRATION
8AM-12PM

CAR SHOW
JUDGING
12PM-4PM

SHOWCASE CLASSICS
Events

LIVE MUSIC
4-9PM

6200 JOLIET RD

COUNTRYSIDE

ROUTE 66
MOBILE DINER
EST. 2003

Milk Menny
Brewing

TOP DISTRICT

DA TACO GOAT

BuckleDown
BREWING

MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, GO TO
WWW.HTTPS://WWW.SHOWCASECLASSICS.COM/

Upcoming City Meetings

April

14	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:00 p.m.
8	City Council	7:30 p.m.
21	Flagg Creek Admin. Board	6:00 p.m.
22	City Council	7:30 p.m.

May

5	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:00 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.

June

2	Plan/ZBA Commission	7:00 p.m.
9	Fire & Police Commission	6:00 p.m.
10	City Council	7:30 p.m.
16	Flagg Creek Admin. Board	6:00 p.m.

Welcome to Countryside

Veteran Cannabis Cultivators LLC
430 E. Plainfield Rd.
Wholesale ; Not open to the public

Caraways
6562 S. Joliet Rd
Restaurant & Bar

RMJ Cargobull LLC
6502 Joliet Rd, Suite #201 & 202
Trucking office



Edith Photography, LLC
6568 S. Joliet Road
Photography Studio by appointment



SAVE THE DATE
COUNTRYSIDE
BLUEGRASS FEST
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026
3:00PM-10:00PM
COUNTRYSIDE PARK 630 61ST STREET

FIVE BANDS

FOOD TRUCKS & BREWERIES

FOR MORE INFO CALL 708-485-2595



COUNTRYSIDE
CHICAGO'S WESTERN GATEWAY

EASTER EGG HUNT
APRIL 4 | 10:00AM
COUNTRYSIDE PARK- 630 61ST

DON'T FORGET YOUR CAMERA FOR PICTURES WITH THE EASTER BUNNY



City of Countryside
803 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
So Suburban, IL
Permit No. 928

Officials:

Mayor

Sean McDermott

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.com

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.