

Countryside CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2023

www.countryside-il.org



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



Mayor Sean McDermott welcomed Senator-elect Mike Porfirio to Coffee with the Mayor in November. Mike has been a resident of the 11th District his entire life. This district covers the east side of Countryside. Mike provided personal background information about his family and his impressive military career. He also has much experience in municipal government working for the Village of Bridgeview and as a Commissioner on the Justice-Willow Springs Water Commission. He is looking forward to getting sworn in in January and receiving committee assignments. Please join the Mayor for coffee and conversation on February 11, 2023 for the next Coffee with the Mayor.



Code Corner

The City would like to notify all residents and businesses of this newly passed ordinance which is effective immediately.

22-44-O: This ordinance revises and makes additions to nuisance codes regarding landscaping and exterior lawn/yard maintenance. This ordinance requires basic standards for exterior maintenance, such as grass may not exceed eight inches, weeds must be removed/treated so as to not infect neighboring lawns, public parkway maintenance, and tree maintenance. This new code unifies exterior property landscaping into one ordinance and allows all departments to easily interpret and enforce regulations.

2023 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 4th at 1p.m.** This year's Grand Marshal is **Kevin Dahill**, 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**.

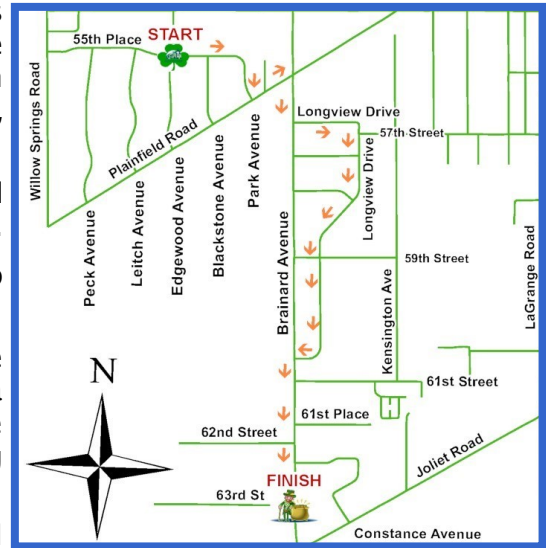
All parade proceeds will benefit the **Scouts BSA Troop 69** and the **Violet Foundation for Pediatric Brain Cancer**.

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 2023 **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 February 13, 2023. The queen will be crowned at the February 22, 2023 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 10, 2023**. 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



No Property Tax Levy for the 9th Consecutive Year!

City staff presented a proposed fiscal year 2024 budget to the Finance Committee in December of 2022 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. "Due to our responsible approach to managing City finances, I am pleased to report that this marks the 9th consecutive year that the City will meet its budgetary obligations without the use of property taxes" said Mayor Sean McDermott. On December 14, 2022, the City Council voted to abate all debt service property tax levies automatically filed with the Cook County Clerk. The unanimous vote eliminated any property tax extensions for fiscal year 2024. The Finance Committee will meet again in February to further discuss the fiscal year 2024 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, 2023) as related to the fiscal year 2024 budget.



Children's Holiday Celebration

The 2022 Children's Christmas Party was held on Saturday, December 3rd at Premiere Catering and Events. Over 100 children attended. Performer Scribble Monster entertained guests with his interactive show and sing-alongs. Two boys and two girls from each age group were awarded a specialty wrapped gift, presented by Mayor Sean McDermott. Two grand prize winners were each given a \$200 gift certificate from Terry's Bike Haus good for the purchase of a new bicycle. Thanks to Santa and all his helpers and a big thank you to Premiere Catering and Events and their staff for helping make the event such a success.



GRAND PRIZE WINNERS - Emmie Totonchi & Forrest Neel

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 75 individuals from 19 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

Virtual Reality Training Simulator

In June 2022 City Council approved the purchase of the Apex Officer Virtual Reality (VR) Training Simulator for the police department. Apex Officer is a virtual reality training system that was developed for law enforcement officers. The simulator offers scenario based training in realistic and immersive surroundings. The training environment provided by Apex Officer VR places officers in a wide variety of real life situations where they can develop and enhance their skills with regard to the use of force and decision making.

Following the purchase of the Apex Officer VR system the police department developed a training curriculum which has been certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. This curriculum will assist the police department in meeting training mandates set forth by the State of Illinois with regard to use of force and realistic scenario-based training.

The Apex Officer VR system places officers in realistic simulations of actual situations that they could encounter during their regular course of duty. Scenario-based training includes situations that vary from routine traffic stops to active shooter and de-escalation exercises within a multitude of environments. Many types of real world situations, can be dangerous and extremely difficult to re-create in real world training circumstances. They often require numerous role players (actors), expensive training equipment, significant amounts of time to setup scenarios, and locations to conduct real life training can be difficult to secure. Apex Officer is an efficient and invaluable tool that allows for our officers to train in and experience dangerous or life-threatening scenarios using only the VR equipment and a single instructor while also being in a conveniently located, safe, and controlled training environment.



Shop With a Cop

The Countryside Police Department held its annual Shop With a Cop event on Saturday, December 17, 2022. This event provided ten children from Countryside an opportunity to interact in a positive way with law enforcement officers while shopping for holiday gifts. Each child received a \$100 gift card to purchase gifts. After shopping at T.J. Maxx the children were returned to the police department where they wrapped their gifts and had pizza and cookies. Each child's family also received a \$100 gift card to Jewel Osco. A special thank you to the officers, volunteers, T.J. Maxx and Ledo's Pizza for helping to make this a successful event and to the Autobarn VW of Countryside and Westfield Ford we express our sincere gratitude as it is through their generosity that we are able to hold this event each year.



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

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...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, 2023.

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.

City Maintains Strong Budgetary Performance

At its December 14, 2022 meeting, the Finance Committee reviewed and discussed the City's Departmental Requested Budget for fiscal year 2024. The budget, among other things, demonstrates the City's strong budgetary flexibility and very strong reserve position. The proposed budget provides for nearly \$1.3 million in capital investment including the 2023 water main replacement project and re-pavement of Sunset Avenue, re-pavement of 67th Street, and new infrastructure improvements including the design of the Joliet Road Bike Path Project and the City's local share of the significant improvements initiated by the Illinois Department of Transportation on the East Avenue Project. The East Avenue project will include, among other things, intersection and lighting improvements as well as the installation of a pedestrian path that will eventually connect to the proposed Joliet Road and completed Brainard Avenue bike paths.



In addition to the significant capital improvements funded through the budget, the budget also provides for an excess Police Pension contribution of just over \$2.2 million which will help meet the City Council's strategic priority of reaching 100% funding in the plan by the end of fiscal year 2024. The City's very strong financial position has been frequently recognized by external rating authorities including Standard and Poor's (S&P) and Moody's. In fact in February of 2022, S&P confirmed the City's AA rating which means that the City's capacity to meet its financial commitments is very strong. According to S&P, the City has "strong management with good financial policies and practices" under their Financial Management Assessment (FMA) methodology. Under its FMA methodology, the City is also "supported by consistently strong budgetary performance."

Composting

What is composting? Composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a soil-like material called humus. Humus is often used as a fertilizer to enrich soil and plants.

Why should I compost? Composting is an eco-friendly activity that lets you reduce your family's waste while also creating healthy soil feeder. Composting is good for the environment and provides you rich fertilizer. You can mix your compost with organic fertilizer and sprinkle on your garden to grow healthy produce and beautiful flowers.



How do I compost at home? There are several great sites on the internet to help you get started composting. Check out one of these sites:

www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home

www.facty.com/network/how-to/how-to-compost-at-home/1/

www.agrothrive.com/blogs/garden-tips/how-to-compost-at-home-6-easy-steps

Things that can be composted

- Coffee grounds and filters
- Eggshells
- Fruits and vegetables
- Grass clippings
- Hair and fur
- Hay and straw
- Houseplants
- Leaves
- Nutshells

Things that should NOT be composted

- Coal or charcoal ash
- Dairy products and eggs
- Diseased plants
- Fats, grease, oils
- Meat or fish bones and scraps
- Pet feces or litter
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*

Reducing and Reusing - The most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place. Making a new product emits greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and requires a lot of materials and energy - raw materials must be extracted from the earth, and the product must be fabricated then transported to wherever it will be sold. As a result, reduction and reuse are the most effective ways you can save natural resources, protect the environment and save money.



How can you reduce and reuse?

- Reuse or repurpose items such as old clothing, cloth grocery bags, and containers to prevent waste.
- Donate unused clothing, electronics and building materials to make sure others can reuse them.
- Buy products made with recycled materials. Check labels to see if a product or its packaging is made from recycled materials.
- Maintain and repair products, like clothing, tires and appliances, so that they won't have to be thrown out and replaced as frequently.
- Borrow, rent or share items that are used infrequently, like party decorations, tools or furniture. Reduce your food waste by shopping smart, buying what you need, composting food scraps, and donating unused food to food banks or shelters.

Benefits of donation:

- Prevents usable goods from going into landfills.
- Helps the community and those in need.
- Tax benefits may be available.

Recycling - Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products. **Benefits of recycling include:**

- Reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators.
- Conserves natural resources such as timber, water and minerals.
- Increases economic security by tapping a domestic source of materials.
- Prevents pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials.
- Saves energy.
- Supports American manufacturing and conserves valuable resources.
- Helps create jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States.

Curbside recycling is very common. Check with your refuse hauler for a complete list of recyclable materials. The City recycles batteries and collects pharmaceutical drugs for proper disposal at the City Hall. You can also recycle your electronic waste at the Department of Public Works located at 5315 9th Avenue.

**Information for this article was obtained from the EPA recycling website.*

Common Products made with recycled materials:

- Aluminum cans
- Car bumpers
- Carpeting
- Cereal boxes
- Comic books
- Egg cartons
- Glass containers
- Laundry detergent bottles
- Motor oil
- Nails
- Newspapers
- Paper towels

Survey **REQUIRED** of All Residents & Businesses

The City is required to inventory all water services lines in our water system by the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act. A survey was mailed to all residents/businesses in June and a second notice was sent out in October. The City is requesting that you complete the survey with the type of material (i.e. lead, copper or galvanized steel) your service is made of and return as soon as possible.

NEED HELP? If you need help identifying your service line, you can contact the Countryside Water Department at (708) 354-8827 and schedule an appointment to have your service identified.

Planning/Zoning Board of Appeals



Pictured L to R: Danielle Edenfield, Tina Grotzke, Marco Gutierrez, Tom Geraghty, Robert Schwarz, Steve Kehr, Ronald Ward and Bryan White. (Absent: Jonathan Gertsmeier)

Commissioners are responsible for land use planning and zoning including review of variance and special use requests.

Board of Fire & Police Commission



Pictured L to R: Michael Wilson, Mary Louise Pisone, and Edward Carter.

Board members independently fulfill all duties and responsibilities associated with the hiring, firing, promotion and discipline of Countryside's police officers.

Want To Get Involved?

Have you ever thought about serving on a board or commission? Now is the time. Residents are appointed to the Board of Fire and Police, Flagg Creek Golf Course Advisory Board, Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals and the Police Pension Board with a recommendation by the Mayor with concurrence by the City Council.

Any interested resident 18 years or older may complete the Committee/Board Member Interest Form on the City's website at www.countryside-il.org/forms-permits/ or you may obtain a copy from the Clerk's Office. Applications are kept on file for a minimum of 2 years.

Community Happenings

Winterfest

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

WHERE: *Flagg Creek Golf Course*

DATE: *Saturday, January 14, 2023*

TIME: *1 - 4 P.M.*

A Special Thank you to our SPONSORS

5/3rd Bank
Lehigh Hanson
Mesirow Financial
NuMark Credit Union
Schwartz Excavating
Vulcan Materials Company



The City of Countryside and Flagg Creek Golf Course are pleased to announce that Winterfest will be back in 2023! Join family and friends for fun filled winter activities on Saturday, January 14, 2023. The event kicks off at 1:00 p.m. with Bingo for the kids, a balloon twister, face painter, a craft project by Home Depot, a magic show, a visit with a Reindeer, a fire pit with the fixings for s'mores, kids indoor games, and a D.J. and photo booth. There will also be food and beverages available for purchase.

EASTER EGG HUNT

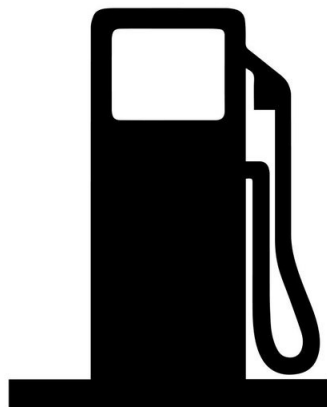
Saturday, April 8th
10 a.m. at Countryside Park

Over 1,000 hidden candy filled eggs.

For more info. call (708) 354-7270



Gas Card Promotion



The gas card promotion was a huge success. The City gave away over 1,600 cards to Countryside residents during the months of October and November. Just a little way to give back during these times of high inflation.

Welcome to Countryside

Lead Accounting, LLC
6412 Joliet Road, Suite 2
CPA firm

Vesco Oil Corporation
5318 East Avenue
Distributor of automotive car appearance products



City Employees Service Recognition in 2022

Congratulations!

Joe DiGangi	20 years
Jim Stern	15 years
Gail Paul	15 years
Patricia Littlejohn	15 years
Don Decker	15 years
John Hays	10 years
Ryan Jakubowski	10 years
Paul Lanzi	10 years
Joanne Hernandez	5 years
Chris Batzel	5 years
Rich Richter	5 years
Kelly Keach	5 years



City of Countryside
803 Joliet
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

Countryside Chamber of Commerce

www.countrysidechamber.org

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.