I hope that you and your family enjoyed a healthy and happy holiday season. We have transitioned to winter so please be careful outside with the increased risk of frostbite. If you are outside enjoying various winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding, skating, or have to work outside, please wear the proper clothing and take frequent short breaks in a warm dry shelter to allow your body to warm up. If you see the City's big yellow trucks, give our outstanding Public Works employees a wave and thank them for keeping our streets safe and clear this winter.

Since I last talked with you this past fall, so much has happened in Countryside. As many of you are aware driving near Joliet and LaGrange Road, Texas Roadhouse is open and the waiting crowds to get in have been well welcomed. Hooters of Countryside is now open for everyone to enjoy tasty wings, and Starbucks for the people who crave delicious coffee and other tasty beverages. Countryside has fully transitioned its dispatch function to Southwest Central Dispatch and there are ten new part time Community Service Officers who will be manning the police front desk 24/7. Our new Police Chief, Joe Ford, has made it a priority for officers to be more visible in our City, so also give them a wave when you see them in your neighborhood and thank them for keeping Countryside a safe community to raise your family.

Last year the council voted to abate approximately one-third ($500,000) of the annual real estate tax to pay for debt service on the twenty million dollar bond that was used to purchase the property at the Countryside City Center. For the next fiscal year, city council approved that $1,321,921 of the $1,471,921 will be abated. What this means is that the City will be levying a tax of only $150,000 to help pay the annual debt service on this bond. This will cost the average residential property owner with a home value of $300,000 only about $44.00 this year.

Finally, I want to wish that everyone enjoys this winter and to look forward to longer days and warmer weather this upcoming spring. Please contact me via email or phone and let me know what you think (good, or not so good). Your opinion counts! We all work for you, the residents of Countryside. My direct line is (708) 485-2050 and my email address is ekrzeminski@countryside-il.org.

Warm regards,

Mayor Ed Krzeminski
Ward Reports

WARD 1

Alderman James Jasinski  (708) 828-3563  jjasinski@countryside-il.org
Alderman Robert Pondelicek  (708) 354-5001  bpondelicek@countryside-il.org

◆ Andy’s Frozen Custard at the corner of 58th Street and LaGrange Road is expected to open mid January.
◆ The former Countryside Inn hotel site at 5631 S. LaGrange Road is presently being marketed by a private real estate development company (Oak Lane Development). At the November 21, 2013 Economic Development Committee meeting, a preliminary plan for a 20,000 sq. foot indoor soccer facility coupled with six retail spaces was proposed by the development company for consideration. The City and the development company are in preliminary discussions about the project at this time.
◆ T-Mobile is now open in the City Center. Stop by and check out their store.
◆ Hooters restaurant is now open for business. Come on down to the City Center for a great dining experience at both Hooters and Texas Roadhouse.
◆ The following road work was completed as part of the City's resurfacing program: Bobolink Drive from LaGrange Road to 9th Avenue; 7th Avenue from 55th Street to Plainfield Road; Alleys - South of Plainfield Road from 6th Avenue to 9th Avenue.

WARD 2

Alderman Karen Michalczyk  (708) 917-2573  kmichalczyk@countryside-il.org
Alderman John Von Drasek  (708) 482-7663  jvondrasek@countryside-il.org

◆ Take some time and visit the completely renovated Westfield Ford Dealership at Joliet and LaGrange Roads.
◆ The new lift station at 6607 Sunset Avenue has been completed. The lift station has two pumps, a generator in case of power outages, as well as a telemetry feature that connects any outages to our Water Department in case of problems.
◆ The following drainage projects were completed: On Prescott Road, a new catch basin was installed in the parkway to help flooding in the roadway area; and on Sunset Avenue and 74th street, a stone base course for shoulder stabilization in the parkway to prevent roadway washout.
◆ The following road work was completed as part of the City's street resurfacing program: Dawn Avenue from 67th Street to Stalford Road and 71st Place from the West Limit to Willow Springs Road.

WARD 3

Alderman Sean McDermott  (708) 354-2350  smcdermott@countryside-il.org
Alderman Scott Musillami  (708) 334-5803  smusillami@countryside-il.org

◆ The northwest corner of LaGrange and Joliet Road was the temporary home for Westfield Ford during their construction project. The property owner is working diligently to find a new tenant for this property.
◆ The drainage project between 5615 and 5633 Ashland Avenue was completed by installing a catch basin to the parkway storm sewer to prevent flooding.
◆ The following road work was completed as part of the City's street resurfacing program: Southeast Court from Willow Springs Road to 55th Street; 56th Street from Madison Avenue to LaGrange Road; Ashland Avenue from the South Limit to 60th Place; and 60th Place from Ashland Avenue to LaGrange Road.
Economic Development Update

Texas Roadhouse had its grand opening on Monday, September 23, 2013. This restaurant features hand cut steaks and the best fresh baked rolls. The employees not only serve you they also entertain you. Stop by and be sure to check out the artwork featuring local history and don’t forget to tell them when it is your birthday so you can take a ride on the saddle!

Countryside Veterinary Center had a ground breaking ceremony on November 15th at their new location 9825 W. 55th Street. This facility will be open 24 hours/7 days a week. They will provide state of the art clinical evaluations and treatments including diagnostics, on-site lab, digital radiology, ultrasound, and various dental and surgical procedures. The center will create an initial 30 new full and part-time jobs. They plan to open in May 2014.

Pictured L-R: Bryan Swanson, Gail Paul, Alderman Pondelicek, Mayor Krzeminski, Dr. John Coyne, Alderman Jasinski, Dr. Arlene Rodriguez and Dr. Jeremy Buishas.

Hooters opened on Monday, December 16, 2013. The restaurant has seating for 155. This business has brought 90 new jobs to the City. Stop by and visit the Hooters girls.

Westfield Ford moved back into its newly renovated facility at 6200 S. LaGrange Road. There was a formal ribbon cutting ceremony on December 13th. The facility has incorporated “green” elements, has a quick service lane and additional service bays. This renovation has created 15-20 new sales, customer service, and service department jobs.

Pictured L-R: Alderman Musillami, Carm Scarpase, Alderman Michalczyk, Alderman Von Drasek, Alderman Jasinski and Allison Quatrochi, with owner Sal Quatrochi in the background.

What’s Coming Next . . .

Andy’s Frozen Custard and Outriggers Steak & Seafood restaurant have both made significant progress. Andy’s is expected to open mid January and Outriggers is anticipating to open during the first quarter of this year, and is projecting to bring in 25-35 new jobs. We are looking forward to their openings and a very successful 2014.

The City is actively pursuing an end user for the old Dominick’s store which closed on December 28, 2013. The City has had discussions with another grocery chain and will continue to work on securing a suitable end user for this site. However, since the City does not own this property we do not have the final say in this matter.
Police Updates

Citizens Police Academy - Class of 2013


The Academy concluded on November 6th with a graduation ceremony.

New Rules Effective January 1, 2014

Hand Held Cell Phones
Illinois drivers will be prohibited from using all hand held cell phones or any other electronic communications on the road. Fines will begin at $75 and will increase with subsequent offenses. If a driver used their cell phone and was involved in an accident causing great bodily harm, the offender can be sentenced to up to a year in jail. Hands free devices such as a Bluetooth are still allowed. Drivers can use their cell phone for emergency situations or while the vehicle is in park.

Throwing Cigarette Butts out of a Vehicle Window
The Illinois Litter Control Act has been amended to add the word “cigarettes” to the definition of litter. Throwing a cigarette out of your window is a class B misdemeanor with a fine not to exceed $1,500 for a first time offense.

Chief's Corner

The Holiday season is upon us and the Countryside Police Department is finishing the year strong with our commitment to community. Some of the programs that we have recently completed include: the Citizen’s Police Academy, the Senior Leaf Raking project, and our new “Shop with a Cop” program.

Now in its third year, the Citizen’s Police Academy still remains a community favorite as indicated by the great evaluations which we receive at the end of each session. CPA students graduated on November 6th. The event was attended by graduates as well as alumni and a number of our city officials, some of which happen to be alumni as well. We will begin advertising for the 2014 session sometime in July, so keep an eye on our webpage.

Our brand new “Shop with a Cop” program took place on December 14th, which was organized by Officer Paul Lanzi. This is a need-based program where officers accompanied 10 Countryside children on a holiday shopping trip to the TJ Maxx Store. The children were each issued a $100 gift card to purchase items for themselves or a family member. Afterward, the children returned to the police department for gift wrapping and lunch. This is the first year of the program in Countryside but we hope to continue it for years to come. It is another great way to establish positive relationships between our police officers and the children in the community. This year’s event was sponsored by the Countryside Business Association, with support from Westfield Ford.

From my staff and I at the Countryside Police Department, we would like to wish all of you a healthy and happy holiday season.
Countryside Electric Aggregation Savings Continue Rolling In!
The City implemented an electric aggregation program back in August 2012 to help residents and eligible small businesses save on electric utility costs. Over ninety percent of residents are participating in the program and have a locked in electric rate with First Energy of $.0475 per kilowatt hour. This rate is good through August 2014, at which time it will need to be re-bid. When the $.0475 rate was locked in with First Energy at the inception of the program, the then-current rate being charged by Com Ed was $.083 per kilowatt hour which calculated to a savings of 44%. In order to remain competitive, Com Ed has since dropped its rate to the current $.060 per kilowatt hour which is still greater than the aggregation First Energy rate. For the first twelve months under this program, Countryside electric aggregation customers have saved an average of $208. On a combined basis for the entire city, Countryside customers participating in the program have saved $443,000 over this same period. This provides more discretionary funds for dining out, entertainment, or to pay other bills. Please see the graph showing cumulative savings to date.

City Property Tax Levy Drops For Next Year!
Four years ago the City levied a property tax which started with the great recession in 2008. This levy has been necessary in order to balance the budget and keep reserves at healthy levels. Typically, municipalities must levy a property tax to pay for general operating expenditures, as well as funding pension plan funds but this has never been the case with the City of Countryside. For the three years subsequent to the start of the recession in 2009, the City only levied enough to cover the amount needed to pay interest and principal on one of its three bonds which it issued to fund redevelopment efforts in its new City Center Development along LaGrange Road.

In the current fiscal year, the City was able to reduce this levy by approximately 33%. For next year, the levy will be further reduced by another 85%! The City remains hopeful that as sales tax revenue increases from an improving economy and from new business openings in Countryside, there is the possibility that elected officials may feel comfortable eliminating the entire tax levy in the near future.

Water Committee
New Water Rates Effective January 1, 2014
The City of Countryside indirectly purchases its water from the City of Chicago via the Village of McCook. Effective January 1, 2014, the City of Chicago has increased the price of water they charge McCook by $.44 per thousand gallons. The Village of McCook will pass through this entire increase plus an additional $.04, or $.48 per thousand, to the City of Countryside. The Water Committee met during December to discuss the increased cost of water, and the Committee will recommend to City Council that the new rates shown in the table below be formally approved in January. Unlike many other municipalities which pass through the percentage increase they are charged which translates to much higher rates, the City of Countryside only desires to capture the actual additional amount they must pay for the cost of water and last year, only half of the increase was passed to non-municipal Countryside water customers.

If you have any questions about the new water rates, please contact the City’s Finance Department at (708) 354-7270.
**Quarry Activity**

Hanson Quarry has not blasted since the seismic event on November 4, 2013. The Lyons Township Advisory Council “LTQC” has met twice since the blast. The latest meeting was held on December 10, 2013 with eight out of twelve delegate communities present including Congressman Lipinski to review what has been done to date and to put a collaborative plan in action to get answers to the looming question: “Did the quarry blast cause the earthquake?” Several actions have been taken to date:

1. A meeting was held to review all the blasting data available with the United States Geological Society “USGS”. Several suggestions came out of this meeting which led to some of the actions taken below.
2. Northwestern University has agreed to study the seismic data collected in the area.
3. Seismic monitoring equipment has been placed on the quarry’s property. The data collected by this equipment will be transmitted directly to the USGS for storage, thanks to Congressman Lipinski.
4. Council members discussed a recommendation from the Illinois State Geological Survey which included contacting Memphis University’s Center For Earthquake Research and Information for assistance. According to Timothy Larson from the Illinois State Geological Survey, the university is located on a fault line and is one of the leading authorities on earthquakes. They have also completed a study on fracking which may be applicable to our area. Hanson will be contacting the USGS for their input on trying to coordinate a study between the two universities.
5. Council members also discussed some unique characteristics of the rock in our area which stretches from here to Niagara Falls. In particular, the Deep Tunnel project discovered that the rock in this particular area is different than most rock. When you press down on the rock in this area the stress is not equal in all directions. A council member will be contacting the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for more information.
6. Congressman Lipinski suggested that the Council members reach out to their state representatives to get them more involved in the process as the IDNR is the authority over the quarries and any assistance needed from the federal government should be supported by the state.

**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. 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.

**Help Keep Fire Hydrants Clear of Snow**

With winter upon us, it is important to remind our residents the significance of keeping the City’s fire hydrants free and accessible. 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.

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

**Pre-Sale Home Inspections**

In our last newsletter, we discussed the City's Pre-Sale Inspection Program. A question that commonly comes up is, “what if the person buying my home has plans to tear it down?” When a home is inspected, if it fails, there are two options which are; fix the violations, or have the buyer set up an escrow with the City. The escrow option and then tearing the home down will be discussed below.

1. If the Buildings Official’s estimated cost of correcting the outstanding violations is $3,000 or more, the purchaser will place the sum of $1,500 in escrow with the City, or;
2. If the Building Official's estimated cost of correcting the outstanding violations is less than $3,000, the City will accept an attorney's letter. The letter must be notarized by the purchaser stating the repairs will be made within 30 days. If the purchaser is unable to obtain the attorney's letter, then an escrow shall be established in the amount of $750 or less, as deemed by the Building Official.

If the purchaser has plans to demolish the home, the money placed in escrow will be returned to the purchaser after they have submitted a demolition permit with all the supporting documents to the Building Department. For more information on this program, or to answer any questions, please call the Building Department at (708) 354-1860.

**Sump Pump Discharge**

Winter is coming 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 requires 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 can assist you.

**Code Corner**

The City would like to notify all residents and businesses of these newly passed ordinances which are effective immediately.

**13-57-0:** Prohibits Airdancer and Feather Flag signs in all areas of the City.

**Airdancer** – a large inflatable device comprising a long tube attached to a fan which causes the tube to move in a dancing or flailing motion. Airdancers are generally called an inflatable tube or a moving figure, such as “windyman”, “skydancer”, “tube man”, “wacky waving inflatable arm flailing tube man”, and “flyguy”. Variants of an airdancer may resemble humans with tube arms. Airdancers are generally about 20 feet in total height and are often used in advertising and at personal events.

**Feather Flag** – a sign with or without characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to cloth, paper, flexible plastic, or fabric of any kind with only such material for backing. Feather flags are generally a single sign attached to a support post and typically having a dimensional ratio of 4 high to 1 wide. This definition also applies to Tear Drop Flags, Windfeather Flags, Bow Flags, Falcon Flags, Dance Flags, and other similar type signs.

**13-61-0:** Updates the Skate Park Rules at Countryside Park. The use of scooters and unicycles are prohibited within the skate park. Skateboards and BMX bicycles are allowed.

For more information on these and other ordinances, please contact City Hall at (708) 354-7270.

**FYI**

The Department of Public Works would like to remind everyone that it is in violation of City Code (7-3-2) to push snow from your driveway onto any public street.

**Did You Know...?**
The DPW chipped 119 truckloads of brush last season.
**City Services**

**Driveway Apron Snow Removal:** Senior citizens and disabled Countryside residents may sign up each year to have their driveway aprons plowed if more than 2-inches of snow falls. This removal will be done after all City streets are cleared. The City is **not** responsible for any driveway damage. To receive this service, please call the City Clerk’s office.

**Selling Your Home or Business:** All property sales in Countryside require a pre-sale inspection and the following information:

- A completed Real Estate Property Transfer Declaration form;
- A final water meter read;
- A paid sewer receipt.

The cost of the stamp is $50 (no personal checks), and is the responsibility of the seller.

For more information about these services, please contact the Clerk’s office at (708) 354-7270. **Forms are also available on our website.**

**Energy Assistance**

If you or someone you know is struggling to pay your Nicor Gas bill, you may qualify for financial assistance. Nicor Gas has the following programs available:

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** - Qualifying low-income households can receive assistance in one annual payment for energy bills. LIHEAP assistance does **not** need to be paid back.

**Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)** - Eligible Nicor Gas customers pay a percentage of their monthly income to maintain utility service. The PIPP offers an affordable payment plan and a chance to eliminate past-due balances.

Documents needed to apply:

- Proof of gross income from all household members;
- Copy of most recent utility bill. (Must provide entire bill);
- Proof of social security numbers of all household members;
- If a member of your household receives TANF, you must bring their medical eligibility card;
- Applicants that have their utilities included in the rent must bring proof of rental agreement stating the monthly rental amount and that utilities are included along with landlord contact information.

For more information, please call 1-(877) 411-9276.

**Speak Out!**

“Speak Out” provides a way in which YOU can communicate with the City of Countryside elected officials and administration. Your advice, suggestions, questions and opinions are appreciated and will receive a response. If you need more space, please attach a separate sheet.

Full Name: ___________________________ as a citizen/business owner of the City of Countryside, it is my opinion that: ________________________________________________

______________________________________________

Date: ___________ Address: __________________________ Phone: ________________

Mail to: “Speak Out” City of Countryside, 5550 East Avenue, Countryside, IL 60525 or e-mail to: cityhall@countryside-il.org

Full Name, mailing address, or e-mail address are required for a response.
Someone You Should Know … Frank Zika

A few things about Frank ... he has been a resident of Countryside for a little over 27 years, he served in the Army for two years during the Vietnam War, he is an avid supporter of his wife Elaine’s efforts in the Susan G. Komen Foundation at various golf outing events, and he’ll tell you that “he’s a man who stands up for what is right, and expresses his opinion”.

Frank graduated from Morton High School in Cicero, IL in 1960. While working full-time, he took classes at night and on the weekends, achieving his Bachelor’s Degree from Governor’s State in 1984. In an effort to further his education, he also took classes at Northern Illinois University and in 1990 received a Master’s Degree majoring in Industrial Engineering. Some of the employers he worked for as an engineer were: Aircraft Gear Corporation, Litton Precision Gear and Kennametal. During these years he developed 5 patents in machine and tool design.

Frank had been very instrumental in the 5th Avenue Cutoff annexation into Countryside. He was also involved in organizing the petitions and contributed information to get this unique area zoned as rural/residential.

NOTE: Owners of vacant properties are reminded to sufficiently heat their buildings to keep pipes from freezing.

Public Works New Vehicle

The Department of Public Works recently purchased a new 2014 Ford F-350 pick-up truck, equipped with a plow and salt spreader. This truck will be used to plow and salt parking lots.

Upcoming Meetings

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Senior Citizens Club</td>
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<td>Plan/ZBA Commission</td>
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<td>City Council</td>
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<td>Countryside Women’s Club</td>
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<td>Flagg Creek Admin. Board</td>
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<td>Aging Well</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
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Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 19
10am at Countryside Park
Over 1,000 candy filled eggs to be hidden in the park
Age groups: 0-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-11

For more information, please call 708-485-2595.
Community Happenings

Leaf Raking for Countryside Seniors

Approximately 30-40 LT students and community members volunteered their services to help 27 houses clear their properties of leaves. Officer Bisignani, CSO Robinson, and Aldermen Von Drasek and Jasinski joined in on the event on November 16th to help out.

Halloween at City Hall

Sergeant Boyd along with Officers Alonzo and Lanzi answered students questions on safety while trick-or-treating.

Ideal School students visited the City Hall and Police Department for the annual Halloween tour. 90 students were transported to the police department in squad cars where employees, dressed in costume, greeted the children.

Officers talked with the students about safety issues before embarking on their adventure. The tour included stops at every department in City Hall including the Police Department and each child received a goody bag filled with treats.

It was a spook-tacular time for all!
Community Happenings
Countryside Business Association

The Countryside Business Association (CBA) sponsored a Thanksgiving dinner for Countryside residents who needed some assistance during these tough economic times. The event was held at the Park Place of Countryside on Thanksgiving Day.

Approximately 279 family members enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, stuffing, yams, green beans, and pumpkin pie. In addition, a food drive was conducted by the CBA which provided each family with a gift card and a shopping bag overflowing with non-perishable goods.

A Special Thank You To...
All of the sponsors and volunteers, and the staff of Park Place of Countryside.

Children’s Christmas Party
Last year’s Children’s Christmas Party was held at Park Place on December 7th. The party included entertainment, light refreshments, a raffle and Santa of course.

Countryside children were singing and dancing and forming a party train to the sounds of Scribble Monster at the party.

Mayor Krzeminski presents a gift to one of the winners of the raffle at the party.

Happy Holidays
Best wishes to our residents and their families and for a healthy and successful 2014!
### OFFICIALS

**Mayor**
Ed Krzeminski

**Clerk**
Sharon Sweeney

**Treasurer**
Steven Jasinski

**Aldermen**
- James Jasinski
- Sean McDermott
- Karen Michalczyk
- Scott Musillami
- Robert Pondelicek
- John Von Drasek

### WEBSITES TO KNOW

- City of Countryside: [www.countryside-il.org](http://www.countryside-il.org)
- Cook County Clerk: [www.cookcountyclerk.com](http://www.cookcountyclerk.com)
- Pleasantview Fire Protection: [www.plvw.org](http://www.plvw.org)
- West Suburban Chamber: [www.westsuburbanchamber.org](http://www.westsuburbanchamber.org)
- Countryside Business Association: [www.shopcountryside.net](http://www.shopcountryside.net)
- Flagg Creek Golf Course: [www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.org](http://www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.org)

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Main</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Emergency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Hall</td>
<td>(708) 354-7270</td>
<td>(708) 354-9445</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Department</td>
<td>(708) 352-2171</td>
<td>(708) 352-1032</td>
<td>911</td>
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<td>(non-emergency)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerk's Office</td>
<td>(708) 354-7270</td>
<td>(708) 354-9445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>(708) 354-3390</td>
<td>(708) 354-9445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Billing</td>
<td>(708) 485-2465</td>
<td>(708) 354-9029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>(708) 354-1860</td>
<td>(708) 354-9029</td>
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