



Crystal Lake Township Newsletter

Winter 2023-24

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BROADBAND: It is just the beginning, but it has actually started. Fiber optic “open access” fiber optic cable is being installed down M-115, for now to specifically reach the new Emergency Services tower being constructed in Frankfort. The township board voted to give over its \$100K+ in America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, allotted to CLT from the Federal government more than 2 years ago, for the cause of --first and foremost-- connecting our under-served and the un-served constituents to broadband services. We are working with Benzie County and the private company, Cherry Capital Connections (CCC), who says it is committed to ultimately bringing fiber to every household and small business in our service region, and efforts will be focused on delivering the best possible high speed internet access and telephone service at a reasonable price using this critical fiber optic infrastructure.

VOTING: Thanks go to all of the election inspectors who made the November 7, 2023 a success! A round of applause goes to Anne Burt, Jesse Burt, Harold Comer, Kathy Fishburn, Miranda Guzman-Shrake, Brian Halliday, Deputy Clerk Sondra Halliday, Melissa Hamp, Wendy McDaniel, Ruth Paris, Maryellen Paull, Monica Schultz, Elizabeth Shrake, Sue Sullivan, Cathy Wilkinson, David Wynne, Janet Wynne, and Clerk Judy VanMeter.

We’re already gearing up for the first election of 2024, the Presidential Primary. With the passage of the 2022 Promote the Vote Initiative came the right to vote in statewide and federal elections in person at an early voting site. The early voting site will be open for nine consecutive days beginning the second Saturday before the election. The Presidential Primary will be the first election using the new, nine-day, early voting process.



The Crystal Lake Township Hall will be the early voting (EV) site for CLT residents. Depending on the date for the Presidential Primary, we could start EV as early as February 17, 2024. Each of the nine days, the EV site will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Those voting by absentee ballot will receive a Presidential Primary ballot selection form sometime the end of December 2023 or first part of January 2024.

With the nine extra days of in-person voting, more election inspectors may be needed. If you are interested in working elections, please contact Clerk Judy VanMeter for further information and an application at 231-352-9791, or clerk.clt@gmail.com. Watch the CLT website for updates on the 2024 elections.



NEW OPTIONS FOR MEETINGS: We urge you to observe township government in action, to participate in the democratic process at its most local level. One way is to attend the board meetings in person. But if not in person, a second way is to check out our new YouTube Channel which allows you to watch a meeting's proceedings from a remote location, such as the comfort of your own home. It also gives you the choice of watching it in real time or later at a more convenient time of your

choosing. Click on a link supplied on our website or use <https://www.youtube.com/@CrystalLakeTownship-BenzieCoun>. Live streaming is coming soon.

NEW SECURITY PROTOCOL: There may be changes for constituents wanting to access the interior of the township hall. Because of security concerns on the part of some elected officials and staff, a special meeting (available to watch online; see our website) was called due to the perception by some that "township facilities, employees and the visiting public face a variety of threats including assault, illegal weapon and explosive possession, robbery, civil disturbances, homicide and arson." Hence forward, if you cannot gain easy entrance, look for signs on the doors with instructions to call a cell phone number; at such time the employee(s) inside the hall may, at personal discretion, decide on options, including allowing or denying entrance to the building.



PROPERTY ASSESSMENT & TAX INFORMATION: Did you know that your property assessment information and related tax records are available on our website? In fact, all your CLT neighbors' information is there, too, because this data is in the public domain. You can look up a variety of tax-related answers to your queries. Here are some examples: you've lost your bill and need to know how much you owe; you want pay online (additional fees apply); you want to know when the treasurer cashed your payment or need a tax receipt; you would like to see your legal property description; or, you are just curious about another's property assessment. Our website is your go-to answer center. We recommend looking up both our "Assessment" and "Taxes" webpages.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION: Special thanks to the volunteers who give of their time and energy, to both the township and the community at large. Want to volunteer? Get more involved with township government? Talk to Supervisor Ferris. For example, several constituents help to staff the Clean Up Days twice a summer. Many others help to both install and then later remove the American flags that mark the graves of veterans of our armed forces. We even had high school teachers and students assist with cemetery grounds maintenance! Last but not least, there are many who serve on committees such as those dedicated to the cemeteries, to buildings & grounds, the airport and media.

CLEAN UP DAYS: Plan ahead with these two summer 2024 first-Saturday-of-the-month dates May 4th and August 2th for getting your oversized or awkward junk items to the dump paid for by the township taxpayers collectively. The location is still planned for the Frankfort Dow Airport parking lot on Airport Road. Look for instructions on our website as the dates draw nearer.