

Winter Wonderland  
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# The Village News



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## Mayor's Message



Mayor Jeff Pruyn

As winter approaches, our community undergoes a remarkable transformation. The sunny days spent by the pool give way to crisp, snowy mornings. This shift is also reflected in our development projects. The MEI site at 200 Pierce Road has changed from a gravel lot into a bustling construction site. With walls now rising and interior work underway, this new facility will serve as a training center for MEI, welcoming its national and international clients. These clients will stay at local hotels and dine at nearby restaurants, supporting our local economy. This project represents an important step in diversifying our business base and fostering economic growth in our community.

In downtown, we celebrated a significant milestone in October when Holladay Properties broke ground on Itasca Station at the corner of Maple and Orchard. Once built, this five-story development will feature 87 luxury apartments and a first-floor commercial space, bringing new life and vibrancy to our community.

This winter, after enjoying a meal in one of our downtown restaurants—like Fox & Turtle, Fulla Beans, Buon Johnny's, or Tree Guys—take a stroll to Usher Park to experience our Winter Wonderland display. Thousands of sparkling lights and festive decorations have transformed the park into a spectacular holiday destination. This year's display will be even more impressive thanks to a \$2,500 grant from ComEd's Powering the Holidays Grant Program. Winter Wonderland will be on display from December 1<sup>st</sup> through January 15<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to Winter Wonderland, there are plenty of free opportunities to enjoy winter events around town, including chances to meet Santa and his friends. With offerings from the Village, Library, and Park District, there's always something happening. Check out pages 6 and 7 of the newsletter for more details. Remember to also visit local businesses' Facebook pages, as many host winter activities for all ages.

As you plan your holiday gifts and parties, remember to shop and dine locally. Shopping locally strengthens our economy and fosters a sense of community. The Village has compiled a guide on page 4 to help residents discover unique gifts, catering options, and venues for holiday gatherings. By choosing local businesses, you'll find unique gifts and support small business owners, many of whom are your neighbors and friends.

When the weather turns frigid, don't forget to check in on elderly friends and neighbors.

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## Mayor's Message Continued...

Your support and care in our community make a difference. Let's continue strengthening our neighborhood bonds this holiday season by looking out for one another. On behalf of the Village

board and staff, I want to express our gratitude to all residents and business owners for continuing to call Itasca Home. Together, we can build a brighter future in 2025. Happy Holidays!

## Administrator's Message

With the arrival of winter, our community embraces a spirit of warmth and togetherness. Village staff is dedicated to ensuring that everyone feels at home during this season. Our Public Works team will be busy keeping the roads safe and clear for travel, while the Police Department stands ready to assist motorists and offer resources to those in need. To help our neighbors facing the cold, Village Hall is collecting hats and mittens. Additionally, our Community Development team is prepared to expedite permits for urgent home repairs, ensuring residents can stay warm and comfortable.



Carrie Anne Ergo

In addition to these important services, the Village is preparing for major renovations to our community spaces. Once Winter Wonderland concludes, we will begin the much-anticipated renovations of Usher Park, which has not undergone major updates in 38 years. This project is the result of two years of planning with residents, Village, and Park District officials. We will be adding new sidewalks around the pond, widening paths to make the park more accessible to all residents, replacing the gazebo, and creating new natural play areas. Our collaboration with the Park District enabled us to secure a \$600,000 grant from the Illinois Department of

Natural Resources for these enhancements. The project is expected to wrap up by fall 2025, in time for next year's Winter Wonderland.

We have also been working closely with the Park District on the Springlake Business Park connection. This \$2 million initiative, which broke ground in August, will introduce the first pedestrian pathway connecting Springbrook Nature Center to the Ray Franzen Bird Sanctuary, Dog Park, and Softball Complex. Construction is currently underway and is scheduled for completion in May 2025. We are also optimistic about securing a third OSLAD grant, which could partially fund a \$1.2 million revitalization of the Springbrook Nature Center. If awarded, this project would include a multifunctional shelter, a seasonal glycol ice rink, an outdoor classroom, wetland restoration, and aviary upgrades, with funding shared equally between the State of Illinois, the Village, and the Park District.

These initiatives are made possible through our strong partnerships, especially with the Itasca Park District, whose support has been invaluable in moving these projects forward. Additionally, the assistance from Gift of Hope and the Springlake Business Association has been instrumental in the Springlake initiative.

As we move through the winter months, let's remember the importance of community. Whether it's sharing a warm conversation with a neighbor or participating in local events, every connection enriches our lives. Together, we can foster a spirit of unity and collaboration, making Itasca a wonderful place to call home.

## New Hires & Promotions

There's a fresh energy at the Village! In recent months, we've welcomed new talent and promoted several of our dedicated staff members. Please join us in welcoming our new team members and wishing them success in their roles as they help shape the future of our Village!



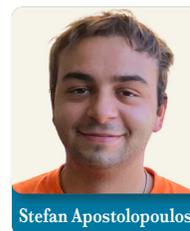
Jason Almeroth

In Public Works, we're proud to announce that Jason Almeroth has been promoted to Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent. With 14 years of experience at the Village, Jason has developed a deep understanding of the plant's operations and is well-prepared to lead his team in maintaining its critical functions. Jason holds a Class 1 IEPA Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator License and a Class C IEPA Water Operator License, along with specialized training from the Illinois Public Service Institute.



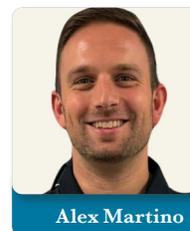
Joseph Augello

In September, Joseph Augello was promoted to Category III, Lead Worker, within the Public Works Utility Division. With more than 13 years of experience and a Class D IEPA Water Operator License, Joseph has developed the skills needed to handle a wide range of responsibilities. In his new role, Joseph will take on additional leadership responsibilities while continuing to apply his knowledge and expertise to support the team's work in maintaining the Village's utility systems.



Stefan Apostolopoulos

Public Works also welcomed Stefan Apostolopoulos as a Category I Apprentice Maintenance Operator in June. Stefan, who spent three years as a seasonal employee, has demonstrated a commitment to learning and growing within the Village. His experience and drive make him a great addition to the full-time staff.



Alex Martino

In the Police Department, Officer Alex Martino has joined our team, bringing with him seven years of experience from the Lombard Police Department, where he served as both a patrol officer and detective. Having completed his field training, Officer Martino is now on solo patrol and ready to make a positive impact on the community.



Patrick Brzezinski

Additionally, we are glad to welcome Community Service Officer (CSO) Patrick Brzezinski, who joined us in August. Patrick brings over 30 years of law enforcement experience, having started as a CSO in 1987 before moving on to various roles as a police officer in Des Plaines. His wealth of experience will be a great asset as he supports the department in maintaining safety and service in our community.



# Itasca Impact Awards

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the Village of Itasca held the first-ever Itasca Impact Awards, celebrating the outstanding individuals, businesses, and organizations that contribute to making our community a great place to live, work, and play. The event showcased inspiring stories of how one person’s efforts can spark significant positive change. The Village is proud to recognize and thank the following award recipients for their contributions:

### Citizen of the Year Award

Dan Kompanowski was honored with the Citizen of the Year Award for over 30 years of dedicated service. His tireless commitment to various initiatives and events has strengthened community bonds and instilled pride among residents.

### Business Brilliance Award

The Itasca Lions Club received the Business Brilliance Award for its ongoing charitable efforts. Their generous financial and volunteer support has uplifted numerous community events, organizations, and individuals in need.

### Civic Excellence Award

Marty Lundeen was awarded the Civic Excellence Award for his 12 years of service on the School Board. His leadership has helped improve the educational experience for local students, leaving a lasting impact on the future of Itasca’s schools.

### Community Builder Award

Bob Butler was recognized with the Community Builder Award for his leadership at The Center, which has become a true community hub. Under his guidance, The Center offers a variety of activities, including weddings, daily support groups, and Smart Recovery sessions with licensed counselors.

### Guiding Light Award

Joe Kupfer was honored with the Guiding Light Award for his dedication to mentoring local youth. Through his extensive work with Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, he has helped foster personal growth and leadership skills in countless young people.

### Guiding Light Award

Randy Okrzesik was also presented with the Guiding Light Award for his commitment to student mentorship. His compassionate approach has empowered students to excel academically and personally, creating a sense of belonging and success.

### Hometown Hero Award

Tom Kryger received the Hometown Hero Award for his courageous actions in assisting a distressed woman. His selfless bravery in a dangerous situation is a powerful example of how one person can make a profound difference through compassion and courage.

### Neighborhood Gem Award

Bob Conidi was recognized with the Neighborhood Gem Award for his unwavering service to Saint Luke church and school. Known for his culinary talents, Bob has prepared weekly meals for shut-ins and those in need, demonstrating his generous spirit and commitment to helping others.

### Neighborhood Gem Award

Melissa Christensen was also awarded the Neighborhood Gem Award for her dedication to supporting others in need. During

the pandemic, she founded the Itasca Sprinklers to spread joy and has organized fundraisers and initiatives to assist those facing challenges in the community.

### Rising Star Award

Gigi Kondracki was recognized with the Rising Star Award for her leadership and service in both Peacock Middle School and Lake Park High School. Her efforts to promote wellness and kindness have made a lasting impression on her peers, also earning her a Lake Park’s Spirit of Excellence Award.

To learn more about the awards and details of the winners, use the QR code provided. The Village congratulates all these remarkable individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions!



Dan Kompanowski



Mayor Pruyne & Lions Club Rep



Mayor Pruyne & Marty Lundeen



Mayor Pruyne & Bob Butler



Mayor Pruyne & Joe Kupfer



Mayor Pruyne & Randy Okrzesik



Mayor Pruyne & Tom Kryger



Mayor Pruyne & Bob Conidi



Mayor Pruyne & Melissa Christensen



Gigi Kondracki



## Celebrate the Season by Shopping Locally

This holiday season, make it a point to shop locally in Itasca. Our town is filled with unique shops and restaurants that offer special gifts and catering options perfect for your celebrations. By choosing to support local businesses, you help keep our economy strong and ensure that your holiday shopping has a positive impact on the community.

To help you get started, we've put together a guide highlighting some of the wonderful offerings available right here at home. This is a partial list of all the great businesses we have in town, so be sure to explore and discover even more treasures this holiday season!



### Customized Gifts – Unique and Personalized Gifts

- All Seasons Travel – 103 W. Orchard St.
- Qwik Print – 206 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Risicato Designs LLC – 1507 Industrial Dr., Unit B
- The Fine Liner – 1701 Glenlake Ave.

### Games & Hobby Shops – Gifts for Fun and Play

- America's Best Train, Toy, & Hobby Shop – 865 Maplewood Dr.
- Bandai Namco – 1550 Glenlake Ave. – Arcade Games
- CueSmart Billiards – 865 Maplewood Dr.

### Party Rentals – Private Rooms for Your Holiday Celebrations

- Antonio's Ristorante Italiano – 280 N. Rohlwing Rd.
- Church Street Brewing Company – 400 Orchard St.
- Cooking Skills Academy – 1201 Norwood Ave.
- Eaglewood Resort & Spa – 1401 Nordic Rd.
- Fox & Turtle – 400 E. Orchard St.
- The Westin Chicago Northwest – 400 Park Blvd.

### Restaurants & Catering – Feast on Local Favorites

- Alonti Catering Kitchen – 1260 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Antonio Ristorante – 280 N. Rohlwing Rd.
- BarleyHaus – 500 Park Blvd., Suite 177C
- Besa Mi Taco – 1180 N. Arlington Heights Rd.
- Buenos Dias Burritos – 919 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Buona Beef – 1170 Arlington Heights Rd.
- Buon Johnny's – 216 N. Walnut Street
- Church Street Brewing Company – 1480 Industrial Drive
- Deli Time – 1 Pierce Pl.
- Fox & Turtle – 400 E. Orchard St.
- Fulla Beans – 102 E. Irving Park Rd.
- Grando's Hotdogs - 925 Irving Park Rd.
- Joe Donut – 1221 Rohlwing Rd.
- Naxos Greek – 1180 Rohlwing Rd.
- No School Tomorrow – 400 Orchard St.
- Prairie River Restaurant – 1401 Nordic Rd.
- Seared - 400 Park Blvd.
- Tree Guys Pizzeria – 101 E. Irving Park Rd.

### Perfect Party Gifts – Items to Bring to Any Celebration

- USA Bouquet – 701 Hilltop Dr.
- Wine with Me – 111 Gigi Gruber Ln.



### Salons & Spas – Give the Gift of Beauty and Relaxation

- Beauty For You Salon, Inc. – 1250 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Colour Palette Corporation – 213 Catalpa Ave.
- Juju B's Hair "N" Nails – 929 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Krasa Spa Club – 500 Park Blvd., #195C
- Le Bella Salon & Boutique – 111 W. Orchard St.
- Nails Today Salon – 1230 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Salon De Cheveux LLC – 415 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Shelly's Salon & Spa – 201 N. Walnut St.
- The Beauty Lounge Salon & Boutique – 320 W. Irving Park Rd.
- The Nail E Studio – 419 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Vivant Aesthetic & Wellness – 127 N. Walnut St., Suite 105





# Business Spotlight

For 50 years, Northwest Lawn and Power Equipment LLC has been Itasca’s trusted local power equipment dealer. Known by many as the “Toro dealer,” this family-owned business has served the community with top-tier customer service and a friendly, hometown atmosphere. Specializing in the sale of new lawnmowers and snowblowers, they also offer expert repair services, ensuring that residents have a reliable one-stop shop for their outdoor power needs.

Beyond equipment, Northwest Lawn and Power has expanded its offerings to include U-Haul rentals, adding even more convenience for customers. With most of the staff being Itasca natives, the business embodies its motto of being “community-driven” in its day-to-day operations. Owner Jonny Verlotta, a proud resident of Itasca, further strengthens the connection to the community, bringing a personal touch to every interaction.

Stepping into Northwest Lawn and Power feels like walking into a



*If you are a small business owner in town and would like to be featured in our next edition, please contact [commdev@itasca.com](mailto:commdev@itasca.com) with your information.*

neighborhood coffee shop — the door never stops swinging with greetings and questions from friendly faces. It’s clear that this business is more than just a power equipment dealer; it’s a gathering place for locals who have supported it since day one. The team’s strong bond and joy in their work make it a place where everyone feels welcome.

Visit Northwest Lawn and Power Equipment to discover why they’ve been a community favorite for five decades. Stop by their location at 12515 W. Irving Park Road, check out their website at [northwestlawnandpower.net](http://northwestlawnandpower.net), or reach them by phone at (630) 250-0088.



*Follow us on Twitter:  
@ItascaMeans  
and on Facebook:  
Itasca Means Business*

The Village of Itasca is proud of its business community and is a premier destination for all types of businesses. Join us in extending a warm welcome to the following companies who recently received their Zoning Certificates to operate in our town!

### **Auto Wise Group - 1371 Industrial Dr., Unit L**

Specializing in online car sales, Auto Wise Group also facilitates auction vehicle purchases and offers local and international vehicle shipping. Learn more about their services at [autowisegroup.com](http://autowisegroup.com).

### **Buon Johnny - 216 N. Walnut St.**

Located in the former Casale’s building, Buon Johnny is the newest Italian spot in town, serving up delicious classic Italian dishes, salads, sandwiches, and pizza. Stop by for a taste of Italy.

### **Commercial Stainless Services, Inc. - 1401 Glenlake Ave.**

From high-end restaurants to hospitals, Commercial Stainless Services manufactures top-notch stainless steel equipment and fixtures for commercial kitchens. Explore their products at [commercialstainlessservices.com](http://commercialstainlessservices.com).

### **Crane Worldwide Logistics - 1460 W. Thorndale Ave.**

A full-service global freight forwarder and contract logistics provider, Crane Worldwide Logistics offers air and ocean freight services supported by warehouse solutions to meet your supply chain needs. Find more details at [craneww.com](http://craneww.com).

### **Exhibitus - 150 Pierce Rd., Suite 240**

Specializing in experiential marketing environments, Exhibitus helps brands create memorable experiences that turn recognition into customer loyalty. Discover how they can bring your brand to life at [exhibitus.com](http://exhibitus.com).

### **Jacobs Engineering - 555 Pierce Rd., Suite 190**

Jacobs Engineering provides a broad range of technical, professional, and construction services for industrial, commercial, and governmental clients worldwide. Learn about their innovative solutions at [jacobs.com](http://jacobs.com).

### **MGD Property Specialists / Association Pro Services - 500 Park Blvd., Suite 50**

Providing full-service property and condominium management, MGD Property Specialists handle everything from 24/7 emergency support to legal services and budgeting, always with a client-first approach. Visit [mgdproperties.com](http://mgdproperties.com) to see their services.

### **Nagase America Holdings - 300 Park Blvd., Suite 500**

Nagase America offers transportation, storage, distribution, and regulatory services across multiple fields, including chemicals, electronics, and healthcare. For more information, check out [nagase.com](http://nagase.com).

### **NewRez LLC - One Pierce Pl., Suite 255C**

NewRez is a residential mortgage lending expert offering a unique combination of mortgage expertise, financial strength, and innovative products. Find out more at [newrez.com](http://newrez.com).

### **Plus500 US - Two Pierce Pl., Suite 200**

A global fintech group, Plus500 offers technology-based trading platforms with a wide range of products, including CFDs, share dealing, and futures trading. Learn more at [plus500.com](http://plus500.com).



# Celebrate Our Community

To register for a library event, please call (630) 773-1699 or visit [www.itascalibrary.org](http://www.itascalibrary.org).  
To register for a Park District event, please call (630) 773-2257 or visit [www.itascaparkdistrict.com](http://www.itascaparkdistrict.com).



**Sun., December 1<sup>st</sup>  
thru January 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Winter Wonderland  
Usher Park**

Experience a Winter Wonderland like no other, with thousands of twinkling lights and 10-foot displays that bring the magic of the season to life. It's a sight you won't want to miss.



**Mon., December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Chris White Jazz Trio  
Library  
6:30 p.m.**

Experience a bit of nostalgia as The Chris White Trio performs Vince Guaraldi's complete A Charlie Brown Christmas.



**Sat., December 7<sup>th</sup>  
Luminaria Pickup  
Itasca Village Hall  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Get into the holiday spirit by picking up your Luminaria from the Lions in the Village Hall parking lot. Luminarias should be lit at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve (rain date Christmas Day).



**Sat., December 7<sup>th</sup>  
Dog Photos with the Grinch  
Barking Lot  
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

Help the Grinch's heart grow three sizes! Bring your furry family member for free doggie photos with the Grinch. Don't forget your camera to capture this festive moment!



**Sat., December 7<sup>th</sup>  
Free Pictures with Santa  
Usher Park  
11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Capture the magic of the season with a free visit from Santa! Don't forget your camera. The Itasca Park District is collecting toys for Toys for Tots and non-perishable food items.



**Sun., December 8<sup>th</sup>  
Free Pictures with Santa  
Usher Park  
11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Capture the magic of the season with a free visit from Santa! Don't forget your camera. The Itasca Park District is collecting toys for Toys for Tots and non-perishable food items.



**Wed., December 11<sup>th</sup>  
Free Pictures with Santa  
Usher Park  
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

Capture the magic of the season with a free visit from Santa! Don't forget your camera. The Itasca Park District is collecting toys for Toys for Tots and non-perishable food items.



**Thurs., December 12<sup>th</sup>  
Hot Chocolate Stix and Gifts  
Library  
4:00 p.m.**

Make edible stir sticks to melt into hot chocolate and decorate gift bags at this festive program. For teens in grades 6-12. Registration is required.



**Sat., December 14<sup>th</sup>  
Luminaria Pickup  
Itasca Village Hall  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Get into the holiday spirit by picking up your Luminaria from the Lions in the Village Hall parking lot. Luminarias should be lit at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve (rain date Christmas Day).



**Tues., December 17<sup>th</sup>  
Dog Photos with the Grinch  
Barking Lot  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

Help the Grinch's heart grow three sizes! Bring your furry family member for free doggie photos with the Grinch. Don't forget your camera to capture this festive moment!



**Wed., December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Holiday Trolley Lights Tour  
Waterpark Hideaway Room  
5:00, 6:00, or 7:00 p.m.**

All aboard! Enjoy hot cocoa from Fulla Beans while viewing the lights around Itasca and Usher Park's Winter Wonderland. A special guest will bring holiday magic. Registration is \$10 per person.



**Wed., December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Free Pictures with Santa  
Usher Park  
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

Capture the magic of the season with a free visit from Santa! Don't forget your camera. The Itasca Park District is collecting toys for Toys for Tots and non-perishable food items.



**Thurs., December 19<sup>th</sup>  
Holiday Trolley Lights Tour  
Waterpark Hideaway Room  
5:00, 6:00, or 7:00 p.m.**

All aboard! Enjoy hot cocoa from Fulla Beans while viewing the lights around Itasca and Usher Park's Winter Wonderland. A special guest will bring holiday magic. Registration is \$10 per person.



**Sat., December 21<sup>st</sup>  
Breakfast with the Grinch  
Itasca Rec Center  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**

Join the holiday cheer in Whoville! Enjoy crafts, games, a "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" viewing, and a special appearance by the Grinch. Fees: \$15 residents, \$20 non-residents.



**Tues., December 24<sup>th</sup>  
Light Your Luminaria  
Itasca Lions Club  
5:00 p.m.**

Please light your candles at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Rain date will be 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Day.



**Wed., January 8<sup>th</sup>  
Family LEGO Build  
Library  
6:30 p.m.**

LEGO enthusiasts can join us for a fun night of building space-themed creations that will be displayed in the Library. For families. Registration is required.



# Celebrate Our Community



**Sat., January 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sip & Create**  
Nature Center  
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Join the Park District to create a winter canvas craft! They supply everything needed—just bring your favorite drinks.  
\$35/\$37, 21+ only. Registration required.



**Sat., January 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**Winterfest**  
Springbrook Nature Center  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Explore snowy trails with snowshoes, hot cocoa, and s'mores by the fire. Enjoy dog sledding, ice carving, crafts, a scavenger hunt, and meet reptiles and birds of prey!



**Thurs., January 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sweet Treats of the Midwest**  
Library  
7:00 p.m.

Join author and food enthusiast Amy Gail Hansen as she uncovers the fascinating history of four desserts originating in the Midwest.



**Mon., February 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sip & Create**  
Nature Center  
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Join the Park District to create a winter canvas craft! They supply everything needed—just bring your favorite drinks.  
\$35/\$37, 21+ only. Registration required.



**Wed., February 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Be Mine Storytime**  
Library  
10:00 a.m.

Join us for stories, songs, and a craft all about love and Valentine's Day. Geared to ages 6 and under. Registration is required.



**Sun., February 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**Color an Owl**  
Nature Center  
2:00 - 2:45 p.m.

Discover the fascinating world of owls! Meet resident owls, learn about their abilities, and color an owl picture to take home.  
Registration required. \$10/\$12



**Mon., February 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**A Poisoner's Afternoon Tea**  
Library  
6:30 p.m.

Scientist and educator Neil Bradbury uses a unique combination of science, true crime, and murder mystery to discuss the cultural role of teatime favorites in murder.



**Tues., February 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Kids 'N Critters**  
Nature Center  
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Learn about snakes, spiders, and turtles and get the chance to meet some live critters. Kids will participate in activities and crafts.  
Registration is required. \$10/\$12

## Winter Wonderland Display

Celebrate the holiday season with a magical evening at Usher Park's Winter Wonderland light display! After a festive lighting ceremony that kicked off the season, the park has been transformed into a winter wonderland of twinkling lights and beautifully illuminated pathways. Open nightly through January 15<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting), this dazzling display is perfect for families, friends, and anyone looking to experience the spirit of the season.

Take a peaceful stroll along the decorated walkways, capture treasured holiday photos, and immerse yourself in the sparkle and

joy of this unique display. Usher Park's Winter Wonderland is a great way to share seasonal cheer and make memories together—whether you're coming for a quiet evening stroll or a fun outing with loved ones, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Admission is free, making it easy for everyone to join in on the magic! Make visiting Usher Park's Winter Wonderland part of your holiday tradition, and don't miss this beautiful community display that brings the joy and beauty of the season to life for all to enjoy.

## Gingerbread Scavenger Hunt

"Run! Run! As fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

The Gingerbread Man is back and has once again escaped Grandma's kitchen. Join the Park District in the quest to find him! Participants will search for clues, puzzles, and riddles hidden throughout Itasca. The hunt is open to all ages and will take place from December 13<sup>th</sup> to December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Registration is required by Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>; fee is \$10 per family. You can register additional members to receive more entries for a prize. Email [mtarchala@itascaparkdistrict.com](mailto:mtarchala@itascaparkdistrict.com) with the correct locations the Gingerbread Man visited to be entered for a prize. The first clue will be emailed to you on December 13<sup>th</sup> at noon.



## Winter Reading Challenge

This winter, the Library invites young readers to keep their minds engaged with the *There's Snow Better Time to Read!* Winter Reading Challenge. Children and teens from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade can grab a challenge sheet at the Youth Desk beginning Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. By completing the challenge, participants can earn fantastic prizes!

The reading adventure wraps up on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, so don't miss your chance to join in. For more details, the Library can be reached at (630) 773-1699.





## Illuminate the Holidays

The Itasca Lions invite the community to take part in a cherished holiday tradition: the Christmas Luminaria. This event began in 1960, started by Boyd and Barbara Hindman. Inspired by a Mexican custom, the Luminaria features candle-lit bags lining walkways and streets to symbolize the guiding light of the Christ Child.



Residents can pick up their Luminaria kits at the Itasca Village Hall parking lot on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, and December 14<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>, participants are encouraged to light their candles at 5:00 p.m., with a rain date set for Christmas Day at the same time. A drone will capture images of the illuminated streets, with photos and videos available for everyone to view after the event.

The Itasca Lions appreciate the generosity of residents through donations for the Luminaria. Contributions can be made during pickup or via Venmo @ItascaLionsTreasurer. These donations support the Lions Club in its mission to assist those in need within the Itasca community.

Join in this celebration of light and community spirit this holiday season!

## Winter Warriors: How Birds Brave the Cold

Have you ever wondered how wildlife copes with cold temperatures during extreme weather? As humans, we bundle up in layers of clothing to insulate ourselves from the chill, but insulation is equally important for many cold-weather animals.



For birds native to our region that don't migrate, fat and feathers provide the necessary warmth to get through the winter. Down feathers, in particular, are excellent thermal insulators. They create a barrier close to the birds' bodies, trapping air and preventing body heat from escaping while keeping cold air out. Some species even have feathers on their toes for added warmth.

For instance, many owl species, including the Great Horned Owl, which serves as an ambassador at Wings and Talons, have feathered feet to help them stay warm.

So this winter, as you layer up against the chill, consider the incredible adaptations of our local birds. Take the opportunity to visit the Springbrook Nature Center and witness firsthand how these resilient creatures thrive in cold weather. You might just gain a new appreciation for the natural world and the wildlife that endures the winter alongside us.

## Be a Snow Champion This Winter!

You don't need superpowers to make a difference—just good health, warm boots, and a shovel or snowblower (cape optional). Are you ready to take on the challenge?



**Sidewalk Champion:** Keep your sidewalks clear and safe for children heading to school or for neighbors taking their morning walks.

**Driveway Defender:** Clear the snow from driveways for residents in need, whether it's an elderly couple or a neighbor recovering from surgery.

**Hydrant Guardian:** If there's a fire hydrant in front of your home, make sure you keep it free of snow and easily accessible in case of emergency. Your efforts could save lives!

## Hat and Mitten Tree

This holiday season, the Village invites you to spread warmth and joy through our annual Hat and Mitten Tree event. From December 2<sup>nd</sup> to January 3<sup>rd</sup>, stop by the Village Hall lobby during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) and exchange a candy cane for a new hat, scarf, or mittens. All donations will go to the Itasca Food Pantry to support families in our community. Let's make the winter brighter for those in need!



## Energy Assistance Applications Now Open

DuPage County is now accepting applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps residents with home heating and energy costs during winter. Applications are being accepted until August 15, 2025.

LIHEAP is designed for:

- Seniors aged 60 and older
- Individuals with disabilities
- Households that have been disconnected from energy services
- Families with children aged 5 and under
- Homeowners whose furnaces are non-operational or deemed unsafe

Program benefits are paid directly to the utility companies on behalf of eligible households. To qualify for assistance, applicants must provide various documents, including a social security card, proof of income, a lease, and current electric or heating bills.

For more information, DuPage County residents can call (630) 968-2087 or visit [www.dupageco.org/LIHEAP](http://www.dupageco.org/LIHEAP).



## Secure Your Season

As the holidays approach, it's important to focus on keeping your home and family safe during this busy time. With all the excitement and activity, consider these simple tips to ensure your security.

**Smart Shopping:** With more gifts around, staying cautious is wise. When shopping, using credit cards or checks is generally safer than cash. If you need to use cash, keep it organized in your wallet.

**Hide Gifts Right:** When hiding gifts, skip the garage—it's usually an easy target. Instead, find a locked closet or the attic for better protection.



**Store It, Don't Show It:**

Always lock your car and avoid leaving packages in plain sight. To deter thieves, grab the bigger items last during your shopping trips. If you need to leave things in your car, stash them in the trunk.

**Grinch-Proof Your Porch:** With deliveries coming in, schedule them for when you're home if possible. If you won't be there, arrange for trusted neighbors to receive your packages. If a delivery person seems suspicious, feel free to ask for ID or call the police.

**Traveling This Holiday?** If you're heading out of town, let the Itasca Police Department know at (630) 773-1004. They'll keep an eye on your home while you're away. You can also set timers for your lights or ask a neighbor to check in to make it look like someone's home.

## Holiday Refuse Reminders

This winter, holiday festivities won't affect garbage pick-up days. After the holidays, residents should have their refuse toters out on Sunday after 4:00 p.m. for Monday's collection. It's important to bring all toters back in by 10:00 p.m. on Monday.

During snowy weather, please do not place toters in the streets. Instead, position them just before the curb line in your driveway so that plow trucks can clear the snow.

When it's time to say goodbye to your Christmas tree, Republic Services is ready to help. They will pick up real Christmas trees (no artificial ones) on your regular garbage day during the first two weeks of January.



Be sure to remove all ornaments, garlands, lights, and tinsel before placing the tree in the parkway right-of-way, next to the street. Position the tree with the trunk facing the street for easy pickup. Wreaths, garlands, and other natural décor will not be collected during this service, so please dispose of them separately.

## 'Tis the Season: Your Holiday Recycling Guide

As the holiday season comes to a close, many find themselves with a mountain of wrapping paper and decorations to dispose of. To make recycling a breeze, Republic Services offers a simple guide to help you sort your items this year.

**What to Toss**

Some festive items can't be recycled. These include:

- Bubble wrap and foam peanuts (consider reusing them)
- Ribbons and bows (save them for next time)
- Decorations that were on the tree
- Sticky gift labels
- Coated or metallic gift bags and wrapping paper
- Soiled paper plates and utensils

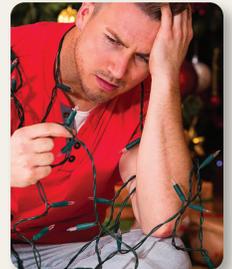
**What You Can Recycle**

On the bright side, many holiday items are recyclable! Feel good about tossing in:

- Plain gift boxes
- Shoe boxes
- Holiday cards and envelopes
- Tissue paper (if clean)
- Paper gift bags

## Shine Bright, Recycle Right

As the holiday season approaches, it's time to tackle those tangled strings of lights that have seen better days. We're excited to announce the return of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Lights Recycling Program, in partnership with Elgin Recycling. This initiative allows residents to recycle their old holiday lights, keeping them out of landfills and contributing to a more sustainable community.



The program runs from December 2<sup>nd</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup>. Residents can drop off their holiday lights at the Itasca Police Station located at 540 W. Irving Park Road anytime, or at the Itasca Public Works at 411 N. Prospect Avenue during regular business hours from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

What can you recycle? Bring in your mini lights, C7 and C9 lights, rope lights, LED lights, and extension cords. Please remember to avoid including lawn ornaments or other decorations—this collection is focused solely on lights and cords.

## Holiday Parking Made Easy

The Itasca Police Department is lifting overnight parking restrictions for the holiday season! From December 19, 2024, to January 3, 2025, residents and their overnight guests can park from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. without the need to call in your vehicle.

Even with the overnight parking rules lifted, remember you can't park in front of fire hydrants or when there is one inch or more of snow on the ground. Let's keep it clear for Santa and his plows this holiday season.



## Stay Safe This Winter

As winter sets in and the snow begins to fall, it's essential to be prepared for the colder months and the unique challenges they bring. From staying safe on icy sidewalks to preventing home heating hazards, a little preparation goes a long way in keeping yourself, your family, and our community safe this season. Whether you're shoveling snow, driving in wintry conditions, or simply enjoying the beauty of a snowy day, follow these tips to ensure a safe and comfortable winter.



### 1. Safe Snow Shoveling

When shoveling snow, be sure to properly warm up and stretch to avoid muscle strain. Also, take the time to ensure you are using the proper technique. Always bend at the knees and lift with your legs to keep your back protected. Lastly, be sure to take breaks as needed. Snow can be heavy, so taking frequent breaks can help to avoid overexertion, especially in very cold weather.

### 2. Preventing Slips and Falls

During winter months, slips and falls are more likely due to slick weather conditions. To prevent this, make sure your walkways are clear of ice and snow. Also, be sure to apply salt or sand after clearing walkways and driveways to provide traction on surfaces that may become icy. It is also recommended to wear boots or shoes with good traction to prevent slipping on icy surfaces.

### 3. Driving Safely in Snowy Conditions

There are steps we can take to ensure that we are driving safely this winter season. Slowing down and increasing the following distance is an excellent way to combat accidents when roads become slick. Take the time to clear snow off your entire vehicle, including your windows, mirrors, headlights, and roof. This ensures full visibility and prevents snow from flying onto other cars. Lastly, keeping an emergency kit with essentials such as a blanket, flashlight, first-aid kit, jumper cables, and snacks can be useful in case of a breakdown.

### 4. Heating Your Home Safely

As the temperature drops, it's important to keep your home warm safely. Start by checking that your heating systems, including fireplaces and space heaters, are in good working order before regular use. Keep flammable items at least three feet away from heat sources to reduce fire risks. Additionally, install carbon monoxide detectors to protect against CO poisoning, and be sure to test them monthly to ensure they're functioning properly. These simple precautions can go a long way in keeping your home safe and cozy this winter.

### 5. Staying Safe Outdoors

To stay safe and comfortable in cold weather, dressing in layers is essential; wearing multiple layers helps retain body heat, especially when temperatures dip below freezing. Protect against frostbite by covering exposed skin and wearing gloves, hats, and scarves, and limit time outdoors if the cold becomes extreme. Don't forget to stay hydrated, as cold air can be surprisingly dehydrating—drink water regularly, even if you don't feel thirsty. These small steps can help you enjoy the winter months safely.

## Gratitude for Generosity

The Village would like to extend a special thank you to Dave Schlueter of the Law Office of David Schlueter for his unexpected generosity in catering lunch on Veterans Day for the Police Department and Fire District. His thoughtful gesture was greatly appreciated by all who received it.



Located at 401 Irving Park Road, the Law Office of David Schlueter offers expert legal services in real estate, business, and estate planning. If you're in need of legal services, be sure to stop by his office and support a local business that gives back to the community.

Dave's generosity is just one example of how local businesses contribute to making our village a great place to live, work, and play. Thank you, Dave Schlueter, for your thoughtful contribution and ongoing positive impact on our community.

## Support Our Snow Plow Drivers

As winter blankets the community, our Public Works Department is ready to tackle snow and ice. Equipped with plows, they work tirelessly during snowfalls to keep roads clear. However, they need your help. When snow arrives, please follow these simple guidelines to help keep the roads safe and accessible for everyone.



- **Parking Restrictions:** When 1 inch or more of snow falls, remove all vehicles from the streets, including garbage totes. This rule is in effect at all times, day or night.
- **Snow Disposal:** Please do not shovel or blow snow into the streets. This creates dangerous driving conditions and complicates our efforts to clear the roads. Instead, pile snow in your yard or parkway.
  - Tip:** When shoveling the end of the driveway near the street, place the snow to the right of the driveway (as you face the road). Snow piled on the left side adds to the amount that can be spread into the driveway.
- **Keep Clear for Snow Plows:** Give our plow drivers room to work. Don't drive too close; keeping your distance is important for everyone's safety.



## Power Smart, Shop Smart

When holiday shopping, being battery-smart is key! Lithium-ion batteries power a wide range of products, including e-bikes, scooters, hoverboards, smartphones, laptops, and power tools. These batteries are known for their longer lifespan and faster charging capabilities. However, they require special care to prevent overheating, which can lead to thermal runaway and potentially cause significant fires.



### How Can You Prevent a Lithium-Ion Fire?

- **Choose Wisely:** Purchase products from reputable manufacturers, retailers, or online vendors. Bargain deals may indicate poor quality.
- **Look for Certifications:** Seek products with certifications from recognized laboratories, like Underwriters Laboratory. These certifications confirm that the product meets safety and quality standards.
- **Check for Recalls:** Before buying, check for any product recalls. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission at [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov) provides regular updates.

### Charging Tips

- Only use the charger that came with your device.
- Never leave lithium-ion-powered devices unattended while charging.
- Always plug devices directly into a wall outlet.

### Warning Signs

Stop using it immediately if you notice any warning signs such as the device becoming hot, making unusual noises, smoking, or emitting an odor. Unplug the device and move away from flammable materials. Leave the area right away and call 9-1-1.

For more information, contact the Itasca Fire Protection District at [itascafd.org](http://itascafd.org) or (630) 773-1223.

## Keep the Season Flowing

As the holiday season approaches, thoughts of delicious meals and joyful gatherings fill the air. Once the feasting is over, however, the cleanup can feel like a race against time. In the hustle to tidy up, it's tempting to pour leftover grease down the drain while stacking dishes in the sink. What might seem like a quick fix can lead to clogged pipes and costly plumbing repairs later on.

To make disposal easier, Public Works has teamed up with SCARCE to offer a permanent cooking oil collection site at our Public Works Garage. This free program operates Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 411 N. Prospect Avenue. Just bring your used cooking oil in a container, and we'll take care of the rest.

## Chimney Maintenance

There's nothing quite like a cozy evening by the fireplace when it's cold outside. However, it's important to think about the role of your chimney. A chimney safely directs smoke and harmful gases from your fireplace, wood stove, or furnace out of your home.



If not properly used or maintained, fireplace and chimney systems can pose serious safety risks. Follow these preventive measures to help protect your home from chimney fires this winter:

- **Schedule Annual Inspections:** Have your chimney cleaned and inspected by a professional every year to ensure it's in good working condition.
- **Avoid Overloading the Fireplace:** Do not overcrowd the firebox with wood. This can lead to dangerous conditions and increased creosote buildup.
- **Use Dry, Well-Seasoned Firewood:** Burning only dry, seasoned wood helps minimize creosote accumulation, a highly combustible by-product of wood burning.

## Prepare Your Pipes

As the weather changes and the temperatures become cold, special attention should be given to water pipes and meters directly or indirectly exposed to cold temperatures. Pipes and meters can break if located in an unheated crawlspace, on an outside wall, or in unheated closets or cabinets. Below is a list of recommendations that may prevent cold weather issues:



- Ensure your water meter is in an area that will receive circulated heat by opening cabinets, closets, or access panel doors to allow room heat to circulate.
- Insulate around water pipes and water meters if located in an unventilated area.
- Avoid turning off or lowering your heat below 55 degrees if you are leaving for extended periods of time.

### How do you know that you have a frozen pipe?

When you open your faucet and only a small trickle comes out and slows to a complete loss of water, you may have a frozen pipe. You can isolate the location by opening the other faucets in your home and observing the flow at each faucet. If all your faucets are affected, you may have a frozen water service line. Please contact Public Works during regular business hours at (630) 773-2455 for assistance. For calls after 3:30 p.m. or on weekends, please call the police non-emergency number at (630) 773-1004.

**The Village News**  
is the official publication  
of the Village of Itasca.

**Mayor**

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**Village Clerk**

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Carie Anne Ergo

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**Village Administrator**

773-0835

**Village Clerk's Office**

773-0835

**Community Development**

773-5568

**Public Works**

773-2455

**Wastewater Treatment Plant**

773-5571

**Police Department Non-Emergency**

773-1004

**Police Department Emergency**

9-1-1

**Itasca Chamber of Commerce**

773-2949

**Springbrook Nature Center**

773-5572

**Library**

773-1699

**School District #10**

773-1232

**Park District**

773-2257

**Fire District Non-Emergency**

773-1223

**Fire District Emergency**

9-1-1

**O'Hare Noise Hotline Complaints**

(800) 435-9569



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**New Chapter for Downtown**

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Village celebrated the groundbreaking of Itasca Station, marking a significant milestone for downtown. Developed by Holladay Properties, this five-story building will feature 87 luxury apartments and first-floor commercial space, infusing fresh energy and opportunity into the area.

Itasca Station is part of the Downtown Plan, which was shaped by input from hundreds of residents and business owners. It will offer new living options for those looking to downsize while staying in the Village, and it will attract newcomers seeking a suburban lifestyle with easy access to the city. Mayor Pruyn shared, "This was a team project that brings our vision for downtown to life. With support from our TIF program, Itasca Station will be a standout addition to our Village."

With construction just around the corner, we are ready to embrace the new chapter that awaits downtown Itasca in the coming year.

**Thank you to all the contributing editors  
of the newsletters, especially:**



**Schedule of Monthly Meetings**

**Monday:**

No Meetings Scheduled

**Tuesday:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday** - Board of Trustees - 7:00 p.m.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday** - Board of Trustees - 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday** - Plan Commission - 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday** - Historical Commission - 7:00 p.m.

**Friday:**

No Meetings Scheduled