

Quick Takes

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A Message from Mayor George Van Dusen

Although the economy has taken a dramatic downturn recently, the Village is proceeding with its construction program. Next year we will bid and construct the new Downtown Skokie Swift Station, located just north of Oakton Street and just west of Skokie Boulevard adjacent to the Illinois Science + Technology Park. The \$17 million project, for which the Village has received generous federal and state funding, is nearing completion of the architectural design phase and the Village's Appearance Commission recently approved the exterior station design. The new Downtown Skokie Swift Station will make an important contribution to the future development of the Illinois Science + Technology Park, which currently has approximately 800 on-site jobs at 12 different nanotechnology and biotechnology firms.

The Village also is working on plans for a new Police Station on Niles Center Road just north of Touhy Avenue. Construction of the \$30 million project is slated to begin in 2009 and will allow our Police Department to continue to serve the community as one of the nation's best law enforcement agencies.

In daunting economic times like these, public bodies are uniquely situated to engage in construction projects that stimulate jobs stability and growth. The Village's elected officials appreciate the tremendous effort and hard work of Village departments to bring these important construction projects to reality.

My best wishes to all for a happy, healthy New Year.

Village of Skokie Environmental Update

At the November 17, 2008 Village Board meeting, the Board heard reports from both the Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission, comprised of Chairman Scott Berman and five other Skokie residents appointed by the Village Board, and the Environmental Practices Committee comprised of representatives from all major Village departments (Community Development, Fire, Police, Public Works, etc.). That evening, the Village Board unanimously approved an ordinance recommended by the Advisory Commission establishing a sustainability policy stating that, "...the Village of Skokie finds it desirable to adopt policies, goals and objectives that will make it a more sustainable and environmentally sensitive municipality, the purpose of which is to become a 'Sustainable Community' [meaning] that the Village's residents, property owners and businesses are achieving economic prosperity while protecting the planet's natural systems and the needs of our community are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs..." The adoption of the ordinance furthers the Village's long-standing commitment to environmental best practices and innovations. The Environmental Practices Committee, chaired by Public Works Director Max Slankard, has met regularly since April 2007 to examine Village practices to determine if tasks and objectives can be completed in a more environmentally friendly manner. Among the committee's accomplishments are receiving a \$37,000 grant to retrofit 21 Village-owned, diesel-powered vehicles with diesel oxidation catalysts that provide a 40% reduction in particulate matter emissions and a 90% reduction in CO emissions. The Village currently has three hybrid vehicles in its fleet. Under the committee's direction, the Village held gas can replacement events in October 2007 and 2008, and exchanged 100 gas cans that emitted volatile organic compounds (VOC) for 100 new, low-VOC emitting gas cans. Slankard also reported that since weekly recycling resumed in June 2008, the Village has seen a nearly 10% increase in the tonnage of recyclables collected when compared to the same period in 2007.

Village of Skokie

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Quick Bits

1660 AM Skokie Municipal Advisory Radio Station

In late October, 2008, the Village launched its own AM radio station to improve emergency communications to the community. The non-commercial station, 1660 AM Skokie, airs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and features information on any emergency or conditions that affect the safety and well-being of the community. During winter months, the station will be used to notify the community when the Village begins the Alternate Side Parking program after a snowfall of two inches or more. In non-emergency times, 1660 AM Skokie features emergency preparedness information.

Village Board Approves use of Automated Traffic Light Enforcement System

The Village Board recently approved the use of Automated Traffic Light Enforcement systems in the community. The first such system, commonly called a 'red light camera', will be installed at the Dempster Street/McCormick Boulevard intersection. This intersection was selected due to high traffic volume and a high incident of traffic incidents. The system produces video recordings of vehicles entering an intersection against a red light indication. Once the images are verified by the Skokie Police Department, offenders will receive a citation. The system is not being installed to generate revenue, but rather to reduce traffic incidents, with citation revenues expected to offset the cost of the equipment. The first system will be used as a pilot for the community, with other highly traveled intersections considered for future systems.

Village of Skokie Communicates

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