

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CITY OF CRYSTAL FALLS

JANUARY 2008

# NEWSLETTER

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## LOW INTEREST LOANS ARE AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING REPAIRS! ( new water lines)

The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development is offering low interest housing repair loans to low income homeowners. *The loans could be used to repair or replace water lines;* install insulation, new windows, doors and siding; fix weak or damaged floors, walls, or roofs; replace or upgrade heating and electrical systems; remodel for physical disability needs or handicap accessibil-

ity; or even add needed living space, remodel the kitchen, bathroom or otherwise modernize a home.

The loans cannot exceed \$20,000 and the interest rate is only 1%.

*This is the perfect opportunity for the Crystal Falls residents who need to have their water lines replaced. With the installation of the water meters more and more homeowners are now realiz-*

*ing just how bad their water lines are. In some cases, the meters can not be installed until the water lines are replaced and that is the homeowners responsibility.*

In addition to the loans there are also grants available to very low-income homeowners who are 62 years of age or older. The grant funds can be used to remove health and safety hazards or make the home

more accessible to household members with disabilities.

To learn more about these loans and grants call: Rural Development Specialist, Darryle Stevenson at 906-228-4407

Or visit website at: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga/trh504.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga/trh504.htm) OR pick up a brochure at the City Clerk's office.

## WATER METER INSTALLATIONS UNCOVER LEAKS!

The installation of water meters in the City has revealed some leaky toilets and faucets. Just over 200 of the 850+ meters have now been installed in homes throughout the City. As a test to check the usage in the homes that now have meters installed, the meters have been

monitored by the installers using a remote reader. In a few instances excessive use of water has been discovered. In one home, usage of over 9,000 gallons in less than one month was caused by a leaking toilet, which has since been fixed. In another home over 11,000 gallons of

water has been used in less than a 3 week period. If this usage was allowed to continue the water bill will be over \$125 for the month, just for water! The City will not be using these meters for billing purposes until June or July of 2008, however, watch your usage now and get those water leaks

repaired or **IT WILL COST YOU.** The City hopes to include the monthly readings for those meters already installed on the utility bills in the near future. This will show the homeowner how much water they have used during the billing period

*(Continued on page 3)*

# CRYSTELLA SKI HILL RATES SET

The Crystella Ski Hill rates for the 2007-2008 ski season have been set by the City Council as:

**\$30 for a season pass**

**\$5 for a daily pass**

The hill was all set to open for the Christmas break beginning on Saturday, Dec. 22nd but Mother Nature had different plans and dropped rain on the scant snow cover. As soon as a sufficient amount of snow falls

on the hill it will be opened, but for now it is a waiting game. The increased temperatures have also prohibited the flooding of the skating rink.

If and when the hill is opened the hours will be:

Saturday & Sunday

Noon until 4 p.m.

Wednesday

From 4 pm -8 pm



Enjoy skiing at the Crystella Ski Hill



Did you know? the City is working on a plan with Crystal Falls Township and the Michigan Dept of Transportation to improve the lighting on US 2 from M-69 west to US 141. This Enhancement Grant application would result in decorative lighting similar to that now on Superior Avenue. In 2010, MDOT will be widening US 2 West of Wink's Woods. The resulting work will not only beautify this traffic corridor, but will make it safer for the public by providing sidewalk along the entire route.

# PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, JAN 15TH

The 2008 Presidential Primary Election is coming up fast. This election is presenting some challenges not encountered during a regular election. There are three (3) different ballot types that the voters can choose from: Republican, OR Democrat, OR a ballot without the Presidential Primary on it. The ballot without the primary is a County Proposal for Health Department Millage. Both the Republican and Democrat ballots also include the Health Dept Millage Proposal on them.

If you want an Absent Voters Ballot for the Presidential Primary election you must apply by January 12th at 2:00 p.m.

When applying you must choose which type of ballot you want. Applications for Absent Voter Ballots for this election are available at the City Clerk's office. Please apply as soon as possible in order that the Clerk may get the ballot to you in a timely manner.

Also, this is the first election in Crystal Falls that each and every voter must show a picture ID prior to being permitted to vote.

***So be sure to bring your driver license with you to the polls or you may be turned away.***



# HEALTH DEPT MILLAGE PROPOSAL

The County Proposal on the Presidential Primary Election ballot reads:

Shall the tax rate limitation for the County of Iron General Ad Valorem taxes be increased by .35 mills (\$.35 per thousand dollars of taxable value) for a period of four (4) years, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, inclusive, the taxes so raised to be used exclusively as follows:  
 .35 mill for operations of the Dickinson—Iron District Health Department. This levy would raise an estimated \$142,536 in the first year. (This is a renewal of the .25 mill levy which will expire with the 2008 levy; plus an additional .10 mill.)

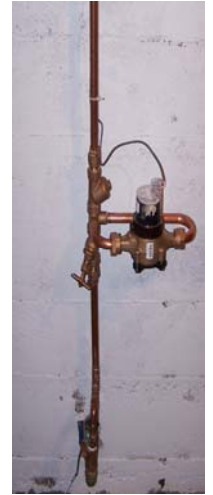
## CLEAR THE WAY!

The City is requesting that homeowners clear the area surrounding the site of the entry of the water line into their home to allow for the installation of a water meter. If your home has a finished basement and the water pipe is not exposed—

**expose it!** If you have stuff piled in front of the water pipe where it enters your home—**clear it away!** The meter installers are not expected to move obstructions from in front of the water lines prior to instal-

lation of water meters. When the installers encounter an obstructed water line that prohibits the installation of a meter they will reschedule the installation for another date—***AFTER THE HOMEOWNER CLEARS THE WAY!***

This is how the water meter will look when installed in your home.



The City crews clean up the snow on Superior Avenue. Please use caution when driving near any snow removal equipment.

## WATCH OUT FOR THE SNOW PLOWS

Public Works Foreman, Kelly Stankewicz, has asked that drivers use caution near snow plow trucks and snow removal equipment. These vehicles have some limited visibility zones and fast moving passenger cars and trucks are not always visible to the drivers.

Also, when removing snow from your sidewalk and driveway, be sure not to push the snow onto the streets. Not only does this create a hazard to motorists but it is also against the law.

## ELECTRIC RATES INCREASED

The Crystal Falls City Council heard from the experts and then moved to increase the electric rates for users of the Crystal Falls electric distribution system effective with the billing

mailed to customers December 31, 2007.

For residential customers the rate increase is only \$2..50 per month with the increased minimum now set at \$9.00. For commercial users

the minimum meter charge is now set at \$12.00/month and the first 5000 kwh are billed at .0985 with the balance over 5000 kwh billed at .084.

This increase was deemed necessary to

offset the increased cost to the City to purchase electricity from WE Energies.

Even with these increases, the City's electric rates are still lower than those of WE Energies.

## Water Leaks (continued from page 1)

and allow them some time to fix any problems prior to when the City actually uses the readings to bill for water usage.

In some other instances, old, brittle pipes, have been discovered. If the installer determines that the water pipes in a home

are too old to install the meter, then the meter will not be installed until the homeowner replaces the pipes. It is the homeowner's responsibility to have their water pipes in good condition to allow for the meter installation. *Failure to*

*comply may result in the termination of water service to the home until rectified.* Need help financing a new water line? See the front page story about low interest loans!



The water meters are easy to read.



CITY OF CRYSTAL FALLS

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### CRYSTAL FALLS CITY OFFICIALS

Janet Hendrickson, Mayor	875-3291
Edna Heikkinen, Councilor	875-6590
Michael Smokevitch, Councilor	875-6350
Mark Valesano, Councilor	875-6043
Jack Bicigo, Councilor	875-6588
Charles Nordeman, Manager	875-6647
Dorothea Olson, Clerk/Treas.	875-3212
Robert Sherwin, Police Chief	875-3012
John Ahola, Fire Chief	875-6614

*Did you know that the residents in the City of Crystal Falls are now drinking water from the Crystal Falls Township Well?*

We're on the Web:  
[www.crystalfalls.org](http://www.crystalfalls.org)

## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEWS ORDINANCES

The Public Nuisance Ordinance (Ord. No. 2) and the Blight Ordinance (Ord. No. 2.18) are currently being reviewed by the Crystal Falls Planning Commission.

The Public Nuisance Ordinance addresses several items that are deemed to be of concern including:

- Depositing of animal or organic matter into any reservoir, stream, lake, pond, sewer, or well in the City.
- Unnecessary loud or unusual noises that annoy, injure, or endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of the public.
- Operation of machinery that causes electrical interference with the operation of radio or TV.
- Attaching of sign, ads, or other written or printed matter on light & telephone poles, hydrants, etc within the City.
- Throwing or scattering of posters, etc in any public street, ally or place.
- Regulation of on-site storage facilities for garbage.
- Regulation of cutting of grass, weeds, etc by the 15th of each of the months of June, July,

August, and September.

- Prohibition of use of barbed wire fencing in the City.

The Public Nuisance Ordinance was originally adopted in 1959 and was amended in 1995, 1996, and 1999.

The Blight Ordinance is to prevent or eliminate contributing factors and causes of blight that exist or may exist in the future in the City. Some of the blight factors that are addressed are:

- Buildings, either in disrepair or damaged by fire or other disasters, or deterioration.
- The accumulation of junk and garbage on properties within the City.
- The storage of building materials.
- The existence of unsecured vacant buildings

The Blight Ordinance was originally adopted in 1999 with amendments in 2007.

The Planning Commission meets again next on January 17, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Map Room.

**Applications for a vacancy on the Planning Commission are now being accepted by the City Council.**