

# NEWSLETTER

## DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES RECEIVE FUNDS FOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

On February 13, 2008 the City of Crystal Falls was visited by Diane Karkau, Community Specialist with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) presented officials of the City with a check for \$165,478. This funding comes from MSHDA as part of their Community Assistance Team's Façade Improvement Initiative. The Façade initiative is designed to assist communities in making physical improvements to an entire traditional downtown area, block or portion of a block that contains buildings, properties, and businesses in need of façade improvements. This grant is supplemented



From left to right: Attorney Ron Basso, Ray Bortolini (Raven's Nest), Mayor Janet Hendrickson, Diane Karkau (MSHDA), City Manager Charles Nordeman, Michael Ferguson (First National Bank), and Councilor Jack Bicigo.

by local and private matches in the amount of \$186,407.

The participants in this project include the

First National Bank, Raven's Nest, Falls Drug, and the Crystal Manor/Crystal View Apartments. Each of these businesses has

submitted a plan to make improvements to their buildings and will receive a portion of the funds to be used toward their projects.

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## IF I WERE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL...

Have you ever said this "If I were an elected official I would..." ? If so, now is your chance, Two (2) City Council seats will be considered for election this upcoming November. The terms of City Councilors

Edna Heikkinen and Mark Valesano will expire with the November 2008 election. Running for the office of City Council is simple:

1. Pick up a nominating petition at the City Clerk's office.

2. Collect at least 25, but not more than 50, signatures of registered voters of the City.
3. Return the signed petitions to the City Clerk by the deadline of Tuesday,

*(Continued on page 3)*

# TAX NOTICES

It's that time of year again. The 2008 Tax Roll is nearly complete and the Notice of Assessment, Taxable Valuation and Property Classification change notices have been sent to the property owners. These notices, mandated by law, notify the taxpayer of a change in assessment. It also details dates and times for March Board of Review meetings.

There are a few things that City Assessor, Patti Roell, would like to explain about these Assessment Notices:

1. Change in assessment has NO effect on the tax dollars you pay—this change merely indicates an increase in the value of your property.
2. Tax dollars are calculated by multiplying Taxable Value by the local millage rate. Taxable Value will increase every year (due to Proposal "A" enacted in 1995), by either 5% or the rate of inflation; whichever is less. The 2008 rate of inflation as determined by the State of Michigan is 2.3%. This applies to all non-exempt property in the entire State.
3. If you own and occupy your home, you are entitled to receive the "Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemption". If you qualify, you do not need to pay the 18 mil school operating millage. This results in a considerable reduction in tax dollars. Check your Change Notice for the "100%" listed in the right-hand column. If you own and occupy your home but do not have the "100%" listed in this column, call the assessor and a form will be mailed to you. Also, vacant adjoining property can be claimed as a Principal Residence Exemption.

**% Exempt as "Homeowners Principal Residence": 100**

PATTI ROELL, ASSESSOR  
CRYSTAL FALLS CITY 401  
SUPERIOR AVENUE  
CRYSTAL FALLS, MI 49620

Homeowner, Mr. & Mrs.  
Amy Street  
CRYSTAL FALLS, MI 49620

Property Address  
Amy Street

Parcel No.: 052-000-000-00  
Classification: 401 Residential  
Prior Year Classification: 401

THIS IS NOT A TAX BILL

% Exempt as "Homeowners Principal Residence": 100  
% Exempt on "Qualified Agricultural Property":

Proposal A, passed by voters on March 15, 1994, places a limit on the value used to compute property taxes. Starting in 1995, your property taxes were calculated on Taxable Value (see Line 1 below). If there is a number entered in the "Change" column at the right side of the Taxable Value line, that number is not your change in taxes. It is the change in Taxable Value.

Prior to 1995, your taxes were calculated on State Equalized Value (see line 4 below). State Equalized Value (SEV) is the Assessed Value multiplied by the Equalization Factor. If any (see Line 3 below), State Equalized Value must approximate 50% of market value.

IF THERE WAS A TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP on your property in 2007, your 2008 Taxable Value will be the same as your 2008 State Equalized Value. Please see line 5 below regarding Transfer of Ownership on your property.

IF THERE WAS NOT A TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP on your property in 2007, your 2008 Taxable Value is calculated by multiplying your 2007 Taxable Value (see line 1 below) by 1.023 (which is the Inflation Rate Multiplier for the current year). Physical changes in your property may also increase or decrease your Taxable Value. Your 2008 Taxable Value cannot be higher than your 2008 State Equalized Value.

If you believe that these values, the property classification or the information on line 5 is incorrect you may protest to the Local Board of Review, which will meet at the date and time listed below.

A nonresident may protest to the Board of Review by letter. Letter appeals are to be accompanied by a completed Board of Review petition form (form L-4033) or an alternate petition form used by the local unit of government.

The petition form approved by the State Tax Commission (form L-4033) is available at: [www.michigan.gov/treasury](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury).

When you reach the site, click on "Property Tax Forms", then click on "Property Tax - Board of Review".

THE CRYSTAL FALLS CITY BOARD OF REVIEW WILL MEET MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2008 FROM 9:00 AM UNTIL NOON AND 1:00 PM UNTIL 4:00 PM AND WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2008 FROM 2:00 PM UNTIL 5:00 PM AND 6:00 PM UNTIL 9:00 PM AT THE CRYSTAL FALLS CITY HALL. PLEASE BRING THIS NOTICE WITH YOU.

	Prior Year 2007	Current Year 2008	Change
1. TAXABLE VALUE (Current amount is tentative)	14,394	14,725	331
2. ASSESSED VALUE	18,800	19,500	700
3. TENTATIVE EQUALIZED FACTOR	1.05510000		
4. STATE EQUALIZED VALUE (Current is tentative)	18,800	19,500	700
5. STATE WAS NOT a transfer of ownership on this property in 2007.			

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Homeowner's Principal Residence Affidavit Information Required by P.L.A. 247 of 2003  
If you purchased your principal residence after May 1st last year, to claim the principal residence exemption if you have not already done so, you are required to file an affidavit before May 1.

The denial of an exemption from the local school operating tax for "qualified agricultural properties" may be appealed to the local Board of Review. The denial of an exemption from the local school operating tax for "homeowner's principal residence" may be appealed to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

Protest at the Board of Review is necessary to protect your right to further appeals to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for valuation and exemption appeals and to the State Tax Commission for classification appeals.

If you have any questions about your Change Notice, please feel free to call Patti Roell, your City Assessor, at (906) 282-5848 or visit the Board of Review during the March meetings. See schedule below.

Example of how you can calculate what affect this increase in taxable value will have on your tax bill.

2007 Taxable Value = \$14,394.

Summer + Winter 2007 millage = 44.11 mills

2007 calculation: : \$14,394 x .04411 = \$634.92/ year for taxes

2008 calculation: \$14,725 x .04411 = \$649.52/year for taxes

The increase in taxes for this property is only \$14.60/year!  
(This example combines the Summer & Winter taxes and also uses the same millage for 2007 and 2008. Millage may change for 2008 )

## CITY OF CRYSTAL FALLS 2008 BOARD OF REVIEW SCHEDULE

- **Organizational Meeting:**  
Tuesday, February 26, 2008 – 10:00 a.m.
- **March Board of Review 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting:**  
Monday, March 3, 2008 – 9:00 a.m. – Noon & 1:00 – 4 p.m.
- **March Board of Review 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting:**  
Wednesday, March 5, 2008 - 2:00– 5:00 p.m. & 6:00. – 9:00 p.m.
- **Closing Board of Review Meeting:**  
Monday, March 17, 2008 – 11:00 am. (if needed)
- **July Board of Review Meeting:**  
Tuesday, July 15, 2008 – 1:00 p.m.
- **December Board of Review Meeting:**  
Tuesday, December 9, 2008 – 1:00 p.m.

## WATER METER INSTALLATIONS SLOWED BY FINISHED BASEMENTS

The meter installers are running into some problems with installations in "finished basements". It is the homeowners responsibility to clear the area where the water line enters the basement. This may mean exposing the pipe (if concealed behind a wall or cabinet), or simply clearing away furniture or other materials that may block access

to the water pipe. In these situations the meter installer will not install the meter until the homeowner has rectified the obstruction. Homeowners will be notified by the City via letter directing them to clear the area by a certain date. The meters and installation are free to the homeowner, however, if we are unable to

install the meter due to obstructions, it could result in a cost to the homeowner.

**ALL HOMES ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE A WATER METER INSTALLED.**

**SO PLEASE make the water pipes accessible.**

Some homeowners complained about noisy water pipes and leaking hot water heaters after the water meter was installed in their home. It was discovered that the valve installed with these meters was causing the problems. Those valves are no longer being used in the meter installation, however, if your meter was installed before mid-January and you are experiencing a problem with your hot water heater, call the City offices at 875-3212 ext 0. The City will send someone to replace the defective valve.

## WATER METER USAGE TO APPEAR ON BILLS IN APRIL

Nearly 50% of the water meters have been installed. The readings for these water meters will begin to appear on the utility billings beginning on the bill for March 2008. (This is the billing received by customers on April 1, 2008) Because this will be the first time the readings and usage

will appear on the billings the usage may appear to be quite large. The usage will reflect the water used from the date of the meter installation and some of these usages may cover a period of 3 to 4 months. Do not be alarmed! We will not be billing based on this usage until some time this sum-

mer. We will continue to bill the minimum of \$36/month until most of the meters are installed. With these readings shown on the billing you will be able to see how much water you are using each month. If your usage is high you may have a leak somewhere, maybe in a faucet or toilet, and you

can correct the problem before we begin using the readings for billings. Each household unit is allowed 4,500 gallons/month for the minimum of \$36.00. Anything over 4,500 will be billed at the rate of \$8.00 per 1,000 gallons.

## If I Were an Elected Official (cont)

(Continued from page 1)

- July 29, 2008 (4:00 p.m.)
- 4. Complete the required paper work (provided by the City Clerk) when returning the petition.
- 5. The Clerk then checks the signatures on the petition to determine they

- are valid.
  - 6. Once the signatures are verified the City Clerk forwards your information to the County Clerk for inclusion on the November ballot as a candidate for office.
- The City Council seats are four (4) year terms that will expire in November 2012. City Councilors are

non-partisan officials. Councilors are currently paid \$150/month for their services. Newly elected officials terms begin upon being sworn in on the day of the first Council meeting after their election. Election day is November 4, 2008 and the November Crystal Falls City council meeting is scheduled for

Monday, November 10th. The City Council meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. and occasionally has special meetings throughout the month as the need arises.

***Do you have something to contribute to your community as a member of the City Council? OF COURSE YOU DO! Get your petition started today!***

## CITY OF CRYSTAL FALLS

401 SUPERIOR AVENUE  
CRYSTAL FALLS, MI 49920

Phone: 906-875-3212 EXT 0  
Fax: 906-875-3767  
E-mail: CFCLERK@UP.NET

### ACCESS TO ELECTRIC METERS

*The electric meter must be accessible to the meter reader each month in order to obtain an accurate reading for the utility billing. More and more homeowners have enclosed yards with fences or built additions onto the buildings that are prohibiting the meter reader's access. These obstructions result in inaccurate, estimated billings.*

**IF YOU HAVE AN OBSTRUCTION IN FRONT OF YOUR ELECTRIC METER—PLEASE REMOVE IT OR MOVE YOUR ELECTRIC SERVICE TO A LOCATION THAT IS ACCESSIBLE.**



### 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

City Council meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
[WWW.CRYSTALFALLS.ORG](http://WWW.CRYSTALFALLS.ORG)

## NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT RIVERWALK?

When the V J Day Committee disbanded a few years ago they donated \$1,000 toward the purchase of new playground equipment for Lincoln Park. (Lincoln Park is the grassy area that overlooks the Paint River Walkway.) Because this was not enough to purchase even the smallest of playground equipment it was invested by the City, along with the proceeds of the sale of the V J Day Float trailer (\$400), and earmarked for the playground equipment. Today the funds have grown to \$1,550 with the interest earned on the CD.

There is a small group of

citizens interested in seeing this dream of the V J Day Committee become reality.

Today's playground structures are designed to promote creativity and fun, allowing children to build social and leadership skills while building muscles and getting much needed exercise. Participation in imaginative play comes naturally on the playground and creates a setting where children can develop life skills.

The problem is—how to raise enough money to buy the equipment. The City simply can not afford to fund this project.



The playground equipment shown above is an example of what could be in place at Lincoln Park. This particular model sells for \$31,927.

*Perhaps someone reading this article may have some suggestions?*

If so, call Dorothea at the City Hall—875-3212 ext 0.