

CITY OF CRYSTAL FALLS

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

BUDGET CUTS LEAD TO CITY LAYOFFS

At a special meeting of the Crystal Falls City Council held on Wednesday, February 10th, action was taken to address the financial deficits of the City. To reduce the City's expenditures the following cuts were enacted:

- Elimination of contribution to the Summer Recreation Program
- Turned utility billings at Lion's Club buildings, etc over to the Lions
- Discontinued annual contributions to the Crystal Theatre, Harbour House Museum, and Contemporary Center

- Discontinued recycling service
- Elimination of spring clean up (drop off at Bristol Mine)
- Elimination of part-time police officers

Additional action directed Interim City Manager Olson to pursue the lease or sale of the city owned golf course.

Council action at yet another special meeting of the City Council held on Monday, February 15th led to the layoff of 3 employees: Police officer Anthony Starr; Equipment Operator John Lortie; and, Elec-

tric Apprentice Lineman Tom Stachowicz. The school crossing guard positions were also terminated during this meeting.

These actions, along with previous employment terminations, changes in employee benefits, and a reduced funding of the Fire Authority, have resulted in a reduction of the City expenditures by over \$500,000. The likelihood that additional cuts need to be made will be revealed upon the completion of the City's 2009 fiscal year audit which is expected soon.

Habitat for Humanity will be building a home in Iron County in 2010. They are currently accepting applications and invite any interested families to attend a meeting on **Tuesday, March 2, at 5 p.m.** in the **Crystal Falls District Community Library** to learn more.



Habitat for Humanity will hold an annual fundraising event on Friday, March 26 at 6 pm at Pine Grove Country Club in Iron Mountain. \$25/per person—Tickets available at Habitat office.

Call 906-779-5377

WATER & TV RATES INCREASED

City water customers will see an increase in the water rates on the enclosed utility billing. The rate was increased to \$37.00 minimum each month and the usage included in that minimum was decreased to 3,000 gallons of water. Everything over the 3,000 gallons will be

billed at the rate of \$8/per 1000 gallons.

The water rate increase was necessary to satisfy the requirements of Rural Development for the refinancing of a loan and a new water project.

The Cable TV rates were increased from \$23/month to \$24.50/

month for basic cable. The HBO rate was increased from \$11.50/month to \$11.70/month. These increases also appear on the enclosed utility billing and are a reflection of the increases imposed upon the City to receive the signal for the networks carried on the system.

CRYSTAL FALLS CITY OFFICIALS

Janet Hendrickson, Mayor
875-3291

Jim Burke, Councilor
875-6670

Michael Smokevitch, Councilor
875-6350

Jeff Hagglund, Councilor
875-6369

Jack Bicigo, Councilor
875-6588

Dorothea Olson, Clerk/Treas/
Interim City Manager
875-3212 ext 102

Tara Peltoma, Deputy Clerk/Treas
875-3212 ext 103

Robert Sherwin, Police Chief
875-3012

John Ahola, Fire Chief
875-6614

City of Crystal Falls Launches New Energy-Saving Programs

City of Crystal Falls customers have multiple new ways to save energy and help lower their electric bills thanks to the utility's new Energy Optimization programs, which are being introduced this month.

Residential customers may now be eligible for rebates on qualifying energy-saving equipment and services including:

ENERGY STAR® Appliances - Refrigerators, clothes washers, dryers, dishwashers, room air conditioners and dehumidifiers

Efficient HVAC Equipments - Furnaces with variable speed motors, central air conditioner units, and electric water heaters

ENERGY STAR Lighting - Compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs and light-emitting diode (LED) night lights and holiday lights

Central A-C Tune-Ups - Tune-ups by participating contractors to central air conditioning units

Business customers may be eligible for rebates on qualifying:

Energy efficient lighting upgrades, and

Non-lighting equipment upgrades, including air conditioning and air source heat pumps, chillers, variable frequency drives, efficient motors, vending, refrigeration, ice machines and sprayers.

Dollar values for each rebate will vary based on the cost of the equipment or service and its energy-saving potential.

The programs result in part from the passage of Michigan Public Act 295 of 2008, which requires electric pro-

viders to create and carry out Energy Optimization plans to help customers save energy.

Customers interested in reducing their energy use through rebate programs are encouraged to visit City Hall or call Tara at 875-3212 ext 103.



ONLINE BILL PAYMENTS NOW AVAILABLE

YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR UTILITY BILLS ONLINE! This long awaited service is now available to all utility bill customers of the City of Crystal Falls. It is easy to sign up with a few clicks on your computer. Here are the steps:

- Go to the City's website at www.crystalfalls.org.
- On the opening page you will see

a button on the left hand side that says "Make Utility Bill Payments On-Line". Click on that button and it will take you to the utility billing website.

- Click on the link "Utility Billing" accounts on-line.
- You will then be asked to create an account and a password will be emailed to you.

- Log in using the password that was emailed to you (you can change the password to whatever you like later).
- You will need to know two things to start your online payments:
 1. The amount of your last payment
 2. The location ID from your utility bill (found in the upper right corner of your utility bill) This must be entered exactly as printed on your bill.
- Follow the instructions to enter your payment information.

Not only can you pay your bills online but you can look at your account history and usage.

If you have any questions or problems using this service please feel free to call Tara at 875-3212 ext 103 during our regular office hours 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Monday -Friday.

2010 PROPERTY TAXES

You should have received your 2010 Notice of Assessment, Taxable Valuation, and Property Classification change notice by now. If you wish to protest your assessment, you need to attend one of the Board of Review meetings scheduled for March. Remember that a change in assessment has NO effect on the tax dollars you pay, unless there has been a transfer of ownership (sale) on your property.

If you own and occupy your home you are entitled to receive the Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)

which reduces your tax bill by the 18 mill school operating millage. Check your change notice to the 100% listed in the right-hand column. If you own and occupy, but do not have the 100% listed in this column, call the assessor. Vacant adjoining property can also be claimed as a PRE.

The 2010 Board of Review Schedule is:

- Monday, March 8th
 - 9 am—Noon
 - 1 pm—4 pm
- Wednesday, March 10th
 - 2 pm—5 pm
 - 6 pm—9 pm