

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great Holiday Season. As we start out the New Year I wanted to share some news about a few things happening in the village.

You may have read about many communities going out and bidding for their own electrical supplier. Recent changes in electrical regulation by the State of Illinois have given residents the ability to purchase their electricity from another supplier besides Commonwealth Edison (ComEd). As part of those regulation changes, municipalities may also bid the cost of electricity on behalf of residents in order to achieve even greater savings. Please note that this only applies to *supply* and not *distribution*, which is handled exclusively by ComEd. Currently, communities that have implemented an electric aggregation program have saved over 20% in electric supply costs (source: Illinois Commerce Commission).

The Village is working with the McHenry County Council of Governments, an organization that represents Municipalities in McHenry County along with the McHenry County Board. This combined effort will allow us as one large group to have greater bargaining power. However, in order to do so, the Village must first gain public support through an advisory referendum. The Village Board recently approved placing a question on the Tuesday, March 20, 2012, primary election ballot. The Village's goal is to provide residents with as much information as possible to be fully informed of their options prior to voting. Here is a link to some [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) on electrical aggregation. More information will follow in the coming months.

The Blivin Street Bridge is still closed. This project is under the jurisdiction of the McHenry County Highway Dept. We are hoping if the weather continues to cooperate that the bridge will be open sooner than later. Because of weather the County cannot commit to an opening date. After the completion of the Blivin Street Bridge, the Village will start the replacement of the Winn Road Bridge sometime in the spring.

Yes it is true; the Village has been working with McDonalds on a restaurant in Spring Grove. The location is west of the Jewel parking lot. Currently we are in the planning and zoning phase and hope to have final approval sometime in February. If all goes well construction could start in the spring.

I have received a lot of questions about the CITGO Gas station and what might be the future there. I wish I had an answer. Our EDC committee has been actively pursuing options and working with the owner of the property. There will be a gas station open sometime in the future but at this time we have no timeframe.

Over the winter the Richardson's Farm will be constructing berms around their property to begin the first phase of their lake project. This phase is being done during the winter to keep the noise and dust to a minimum.

During the July 2, 2008, Public Hearing on the zoning of The Richardson Farm, Robert and George Richardson, 5th generation Richardsons, spoke about their [10-20 year Concept Plan](#) that showed their various ideas to promote their agritourism business beyond that of Christmas trees and corn mazes. Some of the ideas include a microbrewery, haunted house, vineyard, restaurant, cabins, butterfly house and wedding gazebo. The ideas shown on the Concept Plan are ideas of how future generations of their family can support themselves using the land and represent opportunities to do something unique in the area and to bring in tourists as well. Since 2008, the Richardsons have readjusted their [Concept Plan](#) to account for the expanding of their Adventure Farm and another lake. For more information please follow the links.

I would like to encourage anyone with questions to please attend our Village Board meetings every First and Third Tuesday at 6:00 pm.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year,

Mark Eisenberg, Village President