

Village News



YOUR FRANKLIN PARK NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2012

Mayor's
Desk

FROM MAYOR BARRETT F. PEDERSEN



The Village of FRANKLIN PARK

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VILLAGE HALL HOURS
Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri.
8-4:30 pm
Wed. 8-6 pm
Sat. 9-12 pm

Village Hall Closed
February 20th

Promoting Literacy

I was delighted to participate in the Mystery Guest Reader Project at Pietrini Elementary School recently. Roseanne Zoccaro started the program as a fun way to engage parents in classroom reading with her 2nd graders. Twice a month a parent is invited to share a favorite book or story with the children. Sometimes the parent reads the story in their native language, while the child translates to his classmates. I had the great pleasure of reading the book "Mayor For A Day" about a boy who wants to be Mayor of his town. I am hoping to work with the School Board to develop a Village-wide writing contest challenging our bright, young minds to think about ways they can make a positive impact on our community and our planet. I am very proud to work with a school district that has embraced innovative ways to promote reading and writing in the classroom and in our homes.

Mayor Pedersen participates as the 'Reader Project Mystery Guest' with 2nd graders in Rosanne Zoccaro's class at Pietrini Elementary School.



Flood Improvement Study Underway

The Village has retained Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. (CBBEL) to study flooding problems at several locations within our Village. The study will collect additional survey information and further analyze existing chronic flooding conditions. The effort will identify cost-effective short-term and long-term actions to alleviate flooding within the Village. Potential solutions under review include optimizing flood control storage at the Jack B. Williams Reservoir

and at the basin called Structure 102, located south of Irving Park Road. In addition to storage, CBBEL is reviewing storm sewer and channel improvements to increase conveyance capacity of both the Village's storm sewers and Silver Creek. Updates will be provided on our website and in the newsletter as the work progresses throughout the spring and summer. As always, we will work to uncover state and federal funding to support these projects.

Electrical Aggregation Referendum on March Ballot

Our Board and staff work hard to protect taxpayer dollars. We keep our operational costs down and seek grants wherever possible to keep program and capitol costs at a minimum. Now, the Illinois General Assembly has given municipalities the ability to seek competitive prices for

electrical services. The process is called Municipal Electrical Aggregation. Many villages have discovered that by combining electrical service for all individual customers into a single bid, consumers have lower electric bills and save money.

Mayor's Desk continued on page 2.





Electrical Aggregation Referendum (Mayor's Desk Continued)

Residents must approve such a program through a referendum that will appear on the March 20th ballot. The referendum will ask voters if the Village should have the authority to seek competitive pricing bids for electrical services under a single contract that would include residents and some businesses.

Voter approval of the referendum is the first step in the process of trying to achieve better consumer pricing for our residents and businesses. Please note, even if the referendum is passed, our residents will still have a choice to "opt-out" of any Village negotiated program. In other words, if you are happy with your current service and do not want to change, you will not have to. The Village will not enter into the arrangement if the competitive bid

process does not reduce electric bills and directly benefit residents and businesses.

Included in this newsletter are some frequently asked questions about Municipal Aggregation. We will continue to give you updated information on this referendum in our next newsletter and on the Village website (www.vofp.com). If you have additional questions, please contact Village Hall at 847-671-4800.


BARRETT F. PEDERSEN

Frequently Asked Questions on the March 20th Ballot Referendum on the "Electrical Aggregation Program Referendum"

What is the referendum question on the March 20th ballot?

"Shall the Village of Franklin Park have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of such program?"

What does the referendum mean to me?

The Village Board is seeking to reduce electricity costs for Franklin Park's residents and small businesses. To accomplish this, the Board recently passed an ordinance in support of a referendum being placed on the March 20th, 2012 ballot asking the voters of Franklin Park if they support allowing the Village to implement an Electrical Aggregation program. The Board took this action based on a new state law granting municipalities the power to negotiate bulk electricity purchases from third party suppliers on behalf of its residents.

If the referendum passes, what will it provide for?

The proposed referendum will authorize the Village to create a bulk energy purchasing program to bundle power accounts from households and small business customers. The referendum seeks to empower the Village to negotiate a lower price on their behalf.

If the referendum passes, how will the Village choose a new supplier?

If the referendum is approved, the Village would then have to develop and adopt a Plan of Operation for the aggregation program. Two public meetings are required before the Village

could adopt this plan. The Village would utilize a third-party energy consultant to seek bids from several energy companies. The Village would implement a competitive bidding process to select a licensed alternative retail electric supplier who must be approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission. Bid rates will be compared to Com Ed's current rates and the Village will only select an alternative supplier if their rates are lower than the rate offered by the current supplier, Com Ed. If the Village cannot identify an alternative supplier who offers a lower rate, then the Village would continue service through Com Ed.

Will I be required to utilize the new supplier if the Village selects one?

No. If the referendum passes but you prefer not to be a part of the Aggregation Program, you can opt out and continue to receive electricity from ComEd. Before the Village chooses any power supplier, all residents and small businesses will be notified by mail that they can opt out of the Program by completing and returning a form.

Will Com Ed no longer be my electric company and will some other company become my electric company?

No. Com Ed would still be responsible for delivering your electricity and managing the infrastructure required to transmit the electricity. Com Ed would also still be responsible for responding to any service requests and if there is a power outage, you would still contact Com Ed. The only thing that may change would be the supplier. In fact, your bill would still come from Com Ed and it would include services charges for the

new supplier on their bill. The Village would have nothing to do with supplying or delivering your electricity.

Why is the Village pursuing an Electrical Aggregation Program?

Many surrounding municipalities have already initiated similar programs including Oak Park, Orland Park, Highland Park, Frankfort and Mokena or are considering them on the ballot. In communities where the new program is underway, residents have seen savings of 8 to 12 percent on their Com Ed bills. Village officials felt that such an effort could have similar benefits for Franklin Park residents and small business users.

I have been contacted by suppliers who have offered a rate reduction already. Should I consider making a switch now?

Several alternative energy suppliers have been marketing their rates and service offers to residents in Franklin Park via mail and through door-to-door contact. While you certainly can enter into an agreement with any of these suppliers, residents should proceed with caution. Please note that none of these suppliers have been selected as the authorized alternative supplier for our Village. You should thoroughly research the rate information they provide with a credible website like www.pluginillinois.org. In addition, you should be aware that some companies are falsely marketing themselves as Com Ed or as a designated affiliate of Com Ed. Also, please proceed with caution when entering into an agreement with these alternative suppliers. Potential severe cancellation clauses with high termination fees have been reported.



Com Ed's Modernization Plan Aims to Reduce Frequency and Duration of Power Outages

Com Ed has proposed a 10-year, \$2.6 billion Infrastructure Investment Plan that calls for a \$1.3 billion investment to strengthen the electric system and another \$1.3 billion to add new, digital smart grid and advanced meter technology to transform the delivery of electricity to homes and businesses throughout northern Illinois. The plan was submitted to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) in January. The company considers it their road map for improved system reliability, enhanced customer service and a 21st century electric distribution system that will support the digital economy and the greener economy of the future.

In the first, five years of the program, Com Ed will reinforce the electric system infrastructure to improve reliability and reduce the frequency and duration of power outages. Significant investments also are aimed at reducing the susceptibility of certain power line circuits to storm-related damage, including high winds, thunderstorms and ice storms. Power lines will be prioritized based on their historical susceptibility to storm-related damage and the ability to provide the greatest customer benefit. The 2012 reliability investments also include inspection and treatment of approximately 133,400 wood utility poles.

The plan also calls for the installation of advanced meters in homes and businesses and is slated to begin later this year, subject to approval by the ICC. Additional investments planned will include modernizing 10 electrical substations through which electric power flows to customers. This upgrade should result in a range of customer benefits, including increased reliability and reduced power delivery expenses. For more information, go to www.comed.com.



Village's Electronic Recycling Container Available

A new law prohibits residents from disposing electronic items in their trash. The Village's electronics recycling container is available, free of charge, to all Franklin Park residents, schools and businesses at 9364 Franklin Avenue, just West of Martens. Drop-off hours are Monday through Friday, from 7 AM to 3 PM and the container is closed on Village holidays.



Village Wins Grant for a New Fire Truck

The Village of Franklin Park recently learned that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded our Fire Department with a \$333,000 grant to support the purchase of a new fire engine.

"We were all very excited to hear that Franklin Park submitted a winning application," said Fire Chief Steve Iovinelli. "The new, high-tech fire truck will include safety features that will help protect our firefighters and will also allow us to better serve our community during emergencies."

FEMA received over 5,600 applications from fire departments across the country and Franklin Park was one of the first 40 municipalities to receive the grant. The Village will need to provide a 5 percent match to the grant award, which will be covered mostly by the recent sale of a decommissioned ambulance.

"This grant will allow us to provide a modern, state-of-the-art fire engine for our community at a very low cost to the Village," stated Mayor Barrett Pedersen. "Given our location to O'Hare International Airport and that we are the fourth largest industrial district in Illinois, it is critical that Franklin Park have the very best fire fighting vehicles and equipment available. Winning this grant helps us tremendously in this effort."

Currently, the Fire Department has four fire engines with the oldest one held in reserve and which will most likely be retired when the new one arrives. The new fire engine will be ordered this month and the Village should receive it by the fall.





Meals on Wheels Available for Our Seniors

Senior citizens, 60 and older, who are unable to get out to shop for themselves due to physical limitations or who are simply unable to drive, can receive a hot lunch delivered to their home. The Meals on Wheels Program provides a hot lunch five days a week, delivered between 10 AM and 2 PM. A spouse or caretaker living in the household can also qualify even if they are not 60. In addition, frozen meals that can be easily prepared on the weekend, are available. The Program not only provides a hot meal, but it also provides a well being check of the senior every weekday. The Meals on Wheels Program works in partnership with West Suburban Senior Services (WSSS) and conducts a background check on their drivers, many of whom are Village of Franklin Park employees. The cost of a daily meal is a suggested donation of \$3.25-\$3.50 but anyone in need of the program should apply. To learn more about the program, please call WSSS at 708-547-5600 or contact Meals on Wheels at 847-678-8777 to sign up.



North Park's Café Hosts Daily Lunch for Seniors

The Franklin Park Community Café is open to all seniors, age 60 and over, and serves a daily hot meal at 11:30 AM, Monday through Friday, at an affordable price. The Café is located at the North Park District Building at 10070 West Addison, and most days it also includes an optional Soup / Sandwich / Salad Bar. The Café opens at 9 AM and closes at 2 PM and features daily Bingo! In addition, the Café schedules movies, guest speakers, Health Fairs, Day Trips, parties. It's a great place to get together with friends and neighbors over a cup of coffee. For more information, call 847-678-8777, or stop by to pick up a menu for the month. The suggested donation is \$2.75 - \$3.00. Your first lunch is always free!



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program – Apply Now

Income eligible residents can file for help paying winter home heating bills through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The program provides a one-time payment to utility companies on behalf of qualified recipients. Senior citizens and individuals and/or households with disabled members who receive SSI and SSDI benefits, are encouraged to apply. Applications are taken at Village Hall on Tuesdays from 9 AM -1 PM. Please bring the following documents: your social security card, your photo ID, a current Nicor bill and current Com Ed bill and your proof of income for last 30 days.

Lions Club Honors Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year

In December, the Manila Lions Club paid tribute to our police officers and firefighters by recognizing their important contribution to our community at their annual holiday event. Police Officer Steve Ross was selected as the Police Officer of the Year and Steven Rutz was named Firefighter of the Year.

Officer Ross is a 20 year veteran of the Police Department and has served as a Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer and Crime Scene Evidence Technician. This year he distinguished himself in service by being one of the best officers in Driving Under the Influence enforcement. Throughout his illustrious career, Officer Ross has exhibited a willing spirit, superior leadership skills and an ability to mentor younger officers, on and off the job.

Firefighter Steven Rutz recently celebrated his 15th year of service with the Franklin Park Fire Department. Steve knew at a young age that he wanted to help people and hoped to do so as a firefighter. When the Fire Department took over their ambulances from an outside ambulance service, Steve's leadership and commitment at the time helped to facilitate a smooth transition. Steve has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the job and to our community. He loves what he does and enjoys helping and serving the residents of Franklin Park.

Congratulations Officer Ross and Firefighter Rutz!



Demolition has begun on the Graco building, located at 9451 Belmont Ave, which is the future site of the new Franklin Park Police Station. Construction will begin in the early spring and the expected completion date is June 2013.

