



**Village Manager's Report**  
**Week ending Jan. 31, 2014**

**Meetings scheduled for the next week:**

- February 3:
  - Village Board Executive Session, 6:30 p.m., room 130
  - Village Board Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201
  
- February 4:
  - No Scheduled Meetings
  
- February 5:
  - Citizen Involvement Commission, 7pm, room 101
  - Public Art Advisory Commission, 7pm, room 102
  - Zoning Board of Appeals, 7pm, room 201
  
- February 6:
  - Plan Commission, 7pm, room 201

**Cross-border collaboration continues** – Excitement and momentum continues to build in the collaborative meetings being held between residents of Oak Park and the Austin/West Garfield Park neighborhoods. Nearly 200 individuals from Oak Park and the west side of Chicago came together the evening of Jan. 30 at St. Catherine-St. Lucy's Maguire Hall for the [Community of Congregations](#) annual meeting. In this second gathering of communities, partnership opportunities were discussed in three areas – economic justice, youth empowerment and radical hospitality. Community Relations Director Cedric Melton participated in the radical hospitality session, presenting information on the popular [Dinner & Dialogue](#) project. Many session participants viewed the dinner concept as a great tool to help bridge cultural gaps between the communities. Several entities and congregations also requested coordination assistance from the department with developing future dialogue sessions that could cross community boundaries.

**Snow update** – Public Works Department crews took advantage of the lull in snowfall following the relatively minor effects of three snow events over the past weekend. The accumulation was not significant, so attention focused on equipment repair and maintenance in preparation for a series of snow events predicted to occur through the week. Predictions are for eight or more inches to fall through Sunday, with additional snow next week. Crews have responded to 24 separate snow events since the first snowfall on Nov. 11. Last year, the first snowfall didn't come until Dec. 20 and by the end of January 2013, crews had only nine snow events.

**Shift in street salting strategy** – Like most communities in the region, we will have to change how we salt streets to conserve supplies. We will receive our maximum

allotment of 3,600 tons of salt under the current state purchase agreement. Combined with salt remaining from the previous year, we will have had about 5,000 tons available. Purchasing more salt outside of the state consortium is difficult and very expensive and municipalities willing to pay top dollar for salt probably won't be able to get it. So far this year, our crews have spread more than 3,300 tons of salt on Village Streets, compared to about 4,000 tons used all of last winter. We will continue to plow all streets and alleys as usual. Main streets also will be salted as is normally done. However, salt will be spread only once down the middle of major east/west streets, north/south residential streets will be salted only at intersections and stop signs and, depending on conditions, salt may not be spread until snow stops falling. We will consider mixing sand with salt to provide traction, but only as a last resort because it can clog sewer lines. We are urging drivers to give themselves extra time, slow down and increase following distances.

**Water main breaks** – The Water & Sewer Division repaired water main breaks at Lake Street and Humphrey Avenue and at Chicago Avenue and Lombard Avenue. Crews worked through the night to repair one break and a contractor was called in to repair the other. Crews also repaired a leaking four-inch valve at 14 Lake Street that had caused considerable water to flow and set off the fire sprinkler system alarm inside the building. In addition, crews repaired a frozen water service at 942 Hayes Avenue and continued checking and thawing frozen hydrants throughout the Village.

**Idling trains** – The Union Pacific Railroad alerted us this week to the potential of trains idling along their tracks. According to the letter, complications caused by extreme weather have created rail congestion throughout Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The letter said they are making every reasonable attempt to keep operations moving as usual, but there may be trains idling for extended periods of time. They have assured us that the situation is temporary and operations should be back to normal soon. Residents with concerns can call the railroad's 24-hour response management communications center at 888.UPRR.COP (888.877.7267).

**Building & Property Standards update** – The volume of permit and plan review applications decreased about 48 percent in December as the winter construction slow-down continues. At the end of the month, 22 applications were in the plan review queue with eight cases overdue an average of five days. Among December activities, staff responded to a foundation wall collapse of a single-family home undergoing a basement remodel and worked with the architect and contractor to approve stabilization methods to keep the remainder of the house stable. [Click here to read a detailed report](#) comparing 2013 activities to 2012.

**Employee appreciation breakfast a hit** – The much-anticipated employee appreciation breakfast arrived last week, with meals provided at the Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works Center and Village Hall. More than 300 staff attended the events, with several employees winning raffle prizes, such as a week of reserved parking at Village Hall and the Public Works Center, logo lanyards for identification cards and insulated lunch bags. The breakfast proved to be a great way to thank employees for a job well done in 2013, ring in the New Year and foster a sense of camaraderie and team work among municipal staff.

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