

# CONNECTIONS MAGAZINE

YOUR CRYSTAL LAKE CHAMBER MAGAZINE



OCT 2024



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

You'll likely be making plans for the upcoming holiday season as you receive your final edition of our *Connections* magazine for 2024. The holidays are crucial for small businesses to meet their annual revenue goals. Constant Contact reports that 50% of small businesses rely on holiday shopping for at least one-quarter of their yearly revenue, and 61% of shoppers are open to shopping at new places during the holiday season. Please do not hesitate to contact our Marketing and Communications Manager, Katie Sinde, or our Membership Director, Eleya Schofield, to ensure that you are taking full advantage of your member benefits.

While the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce provides a wide range of services for businesses (both for-profit and nonprofit), we recognize that we are only one piece of the puzzle, which is why we've gathered information from our members and colleagues about resources for businesses at the local, state, and national level. Thank you to our partners who assisted in this effort, including the City of Crystal Lake, McHenry County Economic Development Corporation, McHenry County College, and McHenry County Workforce Network. We trust you will learn about a program, grant, or other initiative to support and grow your business.

November marks my one-year anniversary with the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce, and I'm deeply grateful for the support I've received from the community, our members, leadership teams, and staff. It's been an honor and a privilege to be a part of the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce, and I'm excited about the year ahead.



**Catherine Peterson**

*President/CEO*

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*815.459.1300 ext. 13*



# SHOP SMALL

In Crystal Lake on  
**SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY NOVEMBER 30TH**  
and all season long!



# Maximizing Growth: Business Resources Offered by The Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce

The Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce provides essential tools and support to help businesses succeed. Whether you're new or established, the Chamber offers networking, expert guidance, and key resources to navigate the evolving business landscape. Eleya and Katie are ready to assist you in making the most of these resources, reach out today!

## 1 Networking Opportunities

One of the most significant benefits of joining the Chamber is the access to local solid business networking. The Chamber regularly hosts:

- **Mixers and events:** Informal gatherings designed to allow members to forge meaningful connections, share ideas, and find potential clients or collaborators.
- **Networking & Referral Groups:** Joining a network or referral groups allows members to connect with people in different industries to grow their business and develop professionally.



## 2 Business Education Seminars

To stay competitive in today's business environment requires ongoing education. To ensure that members have access to the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to the rapidly changing marketplace, the Chamber hosts:

- **Workshops & Seminars:** Covering topics like AI and workplace mental health, these events offer practical hands-on learning for business owners and employees.
- **Business Builders Program:** Focused sessions that equip members with tools to drive growth and success.



## 3 Marketing & Visibility

A key component of business success is getting the word out, and the Chamber offers multiple ways to increase your business's visibility:

- **Chamber Communications:** Enhance your online presence through a Chamber E-Blast, tagging the Chamber on social media to reach a broader audience, and sign up to be our member spotlight to showcase your company
- **Ribbon Cuttings:** If you're opening a new business, celebrating a milestone anniversary, or launching a rebrand for your business, a ribbon-cutting celebration is a great way to get visibility.



## 4 Community Involvement

Community involvement can boost your business's reputation and create loyalty among local customers. The Chamber helps companies to connect to the community through the following:

- **Events and Community Outreach:** The Chamber organizes several events to allow businesses to sponsor or participate to strengthen their ties in the community.
- **Volunteer opportunities:** Volunteering in Chamber-led initiatives can increase your visibility while contributing positively to the area, enhancing your brand image.



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Membership Director

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Marketing Communications Manager

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## Enhance Your Business with Resources from McHenry County College



In today's rapidly changing economy, businesses face the ongoing challenge of adapting to new technologies and workforce demands. To help you meet these evolving needs, McHenry County College (MCC) offers a diverse array of educational resources, from degree programs to hands-on training, customized workshops, and more.

### Foglia Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation

MCC's new state-of-the-art facility can help employers in the skilled trades fill skill gaps in their workforce, adapt to changing technology, and enhance overall productivity.

The Foglia Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation (CATI) offers a variety of degree and certificate programs that teach the most in-demand skilled trades, helping students enter these fields, increase their value to current employers by learning broader skill sets, or gain the confidence to bring new ideas to life.



Under the guidance of experienced professionals, students work with the latest industry technology and equipment and apply their skills through hands-on projects and internships. MCC's curriculum was also developed with input from local employers to ensure our students graduate with the skills most needed by today's workforce.

Featured programs include Architecture and Engineering Design Technology; Automation, Robotics, and Mechatronics; Construction Management; Engineering Technology; HVAC; Industrial Maintenance; Industrial Management and Technology; Precision Machining; and Welding and Fabrication. The Foglia CATI has also partnered with the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry to offer a Fabrication Lab, which provides both students and the community with access to advanced, production-level prototyping equipment. The partnership additionally includes a Maker's Space where anyone can work on initial concepts, hobbies, or pursue continuing education opportunities. To learn more, visit [www.mchenry.edu/cati](http://www.mchenry.edu/cati).

### Career and Technical Education

For those interested in different types of hands-on, practical training, the College offers a variety of Career and Technical Education programs that align with local industry needs.

Dozens of convenient, affordable degrees and certificates are available at MCC, including Accounting, Administrative Office Technologies, Business Management, Entrepreneurial Agriculture, Graphic Arts, Marketing, Software Application Development and Design, Nursing, Network Security, Paralegal Studies, and more.

Under the direction of expert instructors and cutting-edge curriculum, students graduate from these programs with the skills needed to hit the ground running in some of today's most in-demand careers.

For a list of MCC's Career and Technical Education programs, visit [www.mchenry.edu/programs](http://www.mchenry.edu/programs).

## Catalyst Campus

MCC's Catalyst Campus, centrally located in downtown Woodstock, provides a variety of resources for those looking to enhance their skills in existing careers, complete professional training to enter a new career, or for entrepreneurs ready to start or grow a business of their own.

- The College's Talent Impact Center offers engaging workforce training classes that cover a broad range of technical, employability, and managerial skills, including healthcare, safety, and wellness; leadership and talent management; manufacturing; technology; and workplace skills. MCC can also develop customized training for specific business goals, including employee job performance; priority business challenges; reinforcing processes, procedures, and best practices; and more.
- The Career Spark Center offers programs designed to quickly launch or advance careers in high-demand fields such as professional healthcare, real estate, veterinary assistant, home inspection, transportation and logistics, and more.
- Those looking to start or expand their business can take advantage of no-cost, confidential business advising, one-on-one counseling, monthly workshops, and entrepreneurial resources through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). MCC's diverse team of subject matter experts can help individuals at all phases of the business lifecycle create a business plan, attract more customers, improve operations, increase sales, obtain financing, and more.

For more information on Catalyst Campus programs, visit [www.mchenry.edu/catalystcampus](http://www.mchenry.edu/catalystcampus).





## The McHenry County Economic Development Corp: Providing Resources for McHenry County Businesses

By Mark Piekos

McHenry County Economic Development Corp  
*Executive Director*

The McHenry County Economic Development Corporation is a Public/Private Partnership dedicated to fostering business growth, retention, and attraction in McHenry County. Through a broad array of services, the MCEDC is pivotal in promoting a thriving local economy by providing targeted assistance to businesses of all sizes. The organization focuses on supporting industries and enterprises in ways that drive sustainable development, job creation, and overall economic vitality.

A core function of the MCEDC is to assist businesses that seek to remain competitive in an ever-changing marketplace. The organization offers a comprehensive resource to help identify growth opportunities, streamline operations, and navigate regulatory requirements. We work with our business community to provide strategic planning resources, navigate complex regulatory issues and offer customized solutions to offset challenges they are faced with. This can involve advocacy on behalf of businesses with local governments or incentive programs to maintain a competitive edge.

At any given time, there are a number of financial incentives and assistance programs aimed at businesses to spur investment and growth. The MCEDC acts as a conduit for grantors and funds to the businesses in our county. We prioritize programs that can be particularly beneficial for businesses looking to make capital investments, relocate to McHenry County or create significant job opportunities. We maintain communications with State, County, and Municipal partners to ensure awareness of relevant programs is spread effectively.

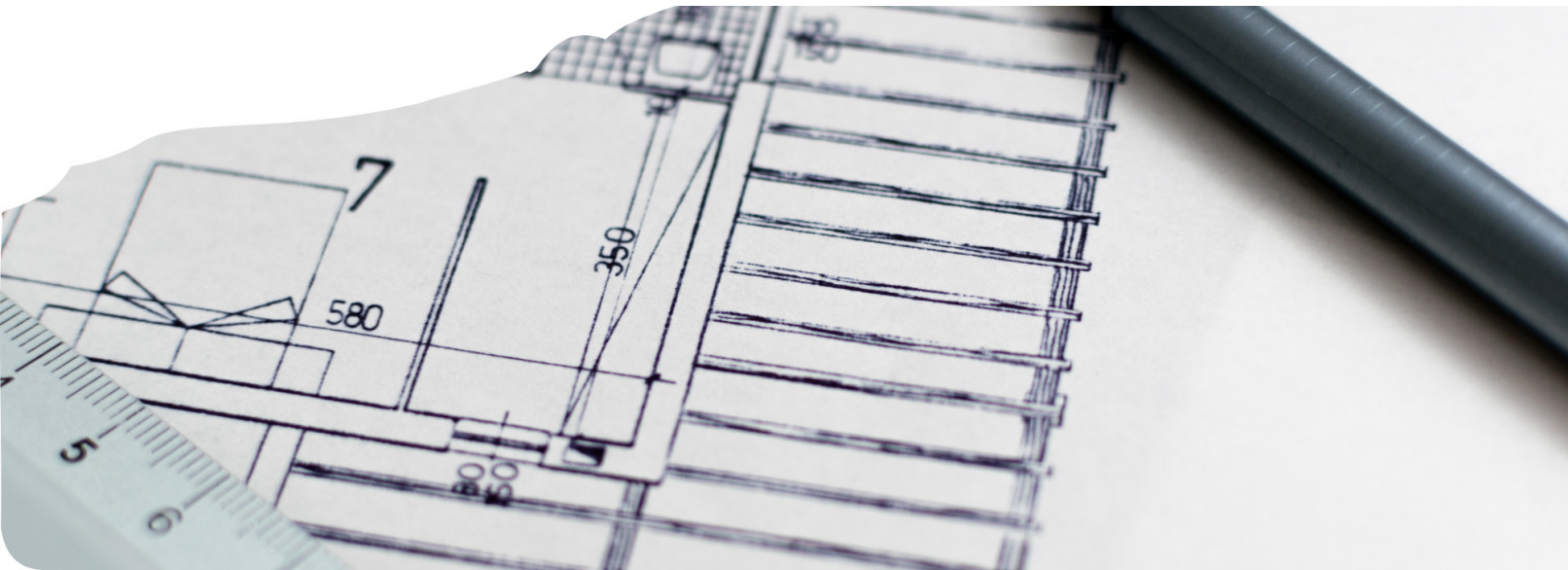


The MCEDC acts as an administrator for the McHenry County Enterprise Zone, a state program that offers a reduction in cost on real estate taxes, sales tax on the purchase of construction material and income tax.

Ensuring businesses in McHenry County have access to a highly skilled and adaptable workforce is vital to economic development. We collaborate with local educational institutions, workforce development agencies and interest groups that focus on building an unyielding pipeline of local talent. We are proud of our work in the Manufacturing Pathways Consortium. This essential program connects local manufacturers with talented job seekers, from McHenry County's education system and via alternative talent sources. We focus efforts on ensuring that job training and apprenticeship programs are well-marketed and available to local employers.



Much of our efforts are devoted to identifying suitable land, buildings or locations for businesses considering relocation or expansion in our area. We work with a number of partners including Intersect Illinois and local commercial real estate brokers to identify ideal spaces for a diverse array of industries. In engaging in this process, our team provides access to comprehensive data on zoning, infrastructure and utility services, helping to make informed decisions about a relocation or expansion. We provide cumulative data about McHenry County's economy, residents and incumbent workforce. We pride ourselves on "getting to yes" by providing solutions for complex requests.



Serving as a voice for the business community and advocating for policies that promote a favorable business climate in McHenry County is germane to our mission. We facilitate networking opportunities between the public and private sectors as well as provide a resource for entrepreneurs to grow and sustain their businesses. The MCEDC recognizes the need for business leaders to connect with each other and those responsible for making decisions in our region.

The McHenry County Economic Development Corporation is a key resource for businesses seeking to grow and thrive in McHenry County. We are tasked with ensuring that companies in McHenry County and those that choose to relocate here have the tools and support they need to succeed.



# CITY HALL

## MAIN ENTRANCE

## The City of Crystal Lake Welcomes Entrepreneurs and Businesses!

Crystal Lake is home to over 4,000 companies and nearly 30,000 jobs across retail, office, and industrial sectors. The City's staff and elected officials are dedicated to creating a cooperative atmosphere to aid the establishment of new businesses and support the expansion of existing businesses in the area. A strong dedication to its business environment and exceptional services are vital to the growth of our business community. By promoting business investment and redevelopment, the City offers unique opportunities for success and provides valuable links to state and regional resources for new and expanding companies. The City offers a wide range of business resources and services to assist our community's new, growing, and existing businesses.

Whether your business is new to the community or celebrating a major milestone anniversary, the City is here to support it every step of the way. Resources can start with site selection assistance for businesses looking for a location or financial assistance for revitalizing an existing business. The City encourages the community to shop and dine locally and provides free advertising and promotion opportunities on Clearly Crystal Lake's Facebook and Instagram platforms.

Customer service is at the forefront of what we do, and we know running a business can be challenging, so we are here to help make the process as smooth as possible. City staff will answer building questions and help businesses understand what permits, licenses, and registrations are required. For example, permits should be obtained through the Building Division and include building permits, a Certificate of Occupancy, sign permits (including temporary banner permits for grand openings), and an outdoor seating permit. The City Building Division staff can be reached at (815) 356-3605, and they are happy to assist businesses by walking them through the online application process using the ezAPP.

For new businesses, the City offers a pre-application meeting and on-site walk-through with the Building and Fire Departments to help eliminate code enforcement surprises for new occupants. The City has a grant for new and expanding retailers and restaurants matching up to \$10,000 for new fixtures and equipment. A \$5,000 matching grant is also available for restaurants interested in adding an outdoor patio to their establishment.



The City also provides matching grants of up to \$10,000 to new and expanding manufacturers. This grant program is designed to facilitate job creation and assist business owners in occupying vacant manufacturing space. The program awards grant funds to new manufacturers for hiring new employees and offsetting the purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment.

For existing retailers and restaurants, the City has a program designed to encourage property reinvestment and façade improvement. Through this program, the City will award a matching grant up to \$30,000 for facade improvements.

### **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**

Entrepreneurs looking to grow or expand in Illinois can receive assistance from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. If you would be creating or retaining jobs in Illinois, you could qualify for tax incentives, workforce development assistance, and infrastructure support. Entrepreneurs and innovators can access incentives through the Illinois Angel Investment Credit Program, which ensures that innovative companies grow and expand in Illinois. For more information about this program go to: <https://dceo.illinois.gov>.

### **Small Business Development Center**

The Illinois Small-Business Development Center is a grant-funded program that provides business resources for McHenry County businesses that employ up to 500 people. The SBDC offers no cost one-on-one business advising and monthly workshops. For more information go to their website at [www.mchenry.edu/isbdc/](http://www.mchenry.edu/isbdc/) or contact John Mink at (815)479-7677 or [jmink@mchenry.edu](mailto:jmink@mchenry.edu).

### **Incumbent Worker Training**

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program helps local businesses to develop and implement training programs to retain current employees. Business service team members can assist employers in finding a trainer that suits their needs. Based on the size of the company, 50% or more of the costs of training can be reimbursed through the program.

### **New Hire Training Grants**

On-the-Job Training (OJT) can assist employers who are looking to expand their businesses and assist applicants to address their skill gaps. OJT is a “hire-first” program in which the employer enters into an agreement with McHenry County Workforce Network to hire, train, and retain a job seeker upon successful completion of the training program. Employers that participate in the OJT program may receive up to 75% reimbursement of the trainee’s wage rate.

For more information about Incumbent Worker Training or New Hire Training Grants, visit [www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/workforce-network/employers](http://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/workforce-network/employers).

For additional information please check out the Business Resource Guide on our website at [www.ClearlyCrystalLake.com/site-selection](http://www.ClearlyCrystalLake.com/site-selection) or contact Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager at (815) 356-3737 or [economicdevelopment@crystallake.org](mailto:economicdevelopment@crystallake.org).

The City also has partnerships with other organizations to assist small businesses and promote programs that may benefit employees.



For more information on the business resources available at the City of Crystal Lake reach out to Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager at (815) 356-3737 or [economicdevelopment@crystallake.org](mailto:economicdevelopment@crystallake.org).

# WORKFORCE

## McHenry County Workforce Network's Business Resources

McHENRY COUNTY  
Workforce Network



At the McHenry County Workforce Network (MCWN), we look at job seekers and businesses similarly as they are both our customers. Job seekers need to find quality employment while businesses need to find quality talent. We offer a bevy of services for job seekers to develop their career pathways within the county while also working with businesses to help develop their workforces.

Our workforce system was established through a federal act called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or WIOA for short. This act established the workforce services that we have today for businesses. Each year we receive funding through the Department of Labor to implement a variety of services such as work experiences, On-the-Job Trainings (OJT), incumbent worker trainings, provide labor market information and other businesses recruitment resources.



### Work Experience

Work experiences are the workforce's term used for internships. The goal to a work experience is to provide participants who have very limited occupational exposure with opportunities for career exploration and skill development.

This service benefits both the job seeker and host business as the job seeker gains critical real world job experience while the host business can receive some additional labor at no cost. At the end of the work experience, there is never an expectation to hire on the job seeker although this happens frequently. For a business, this can be a great opportunity to try out a job seeker to see if they are a fit in the organization with limited risk. There is no cost to the employer. WIOA funds will cover the wages and liability for the job seeker. The work experience starts with 12 weeks at 15 to 40 hours a week.



## **On The Job Training**

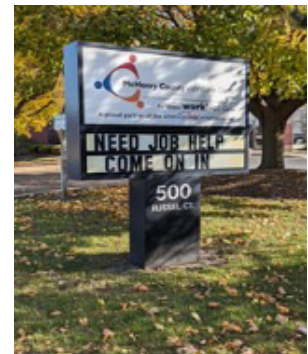
On-the-Job Training (OJT) can assist employers who are looking to expand their businesses and assist applicants to address their skill gaps. OJT is a “hire-first” program in which the employer enters into an agreement with McHenry County Workforce Network to hire, train, and retain a job seeker upon successful completion of the training program. This is a great way to engage in workforce development of entry level job seekers while also receiving the necessary resources to maintain your organization. Employers that participate in the OJT program will receive 50% to up to 75% reimbursement of the trainee’s wage rate. The OJT timeframe will be set based on the skills that need to be acquired and can last for several months.

## **Incumbent Worker Training**

The Incumbent Worker Training program helps local businesses to develop and implement training programs to retain current employees, The program helps offset the cost of training by reimbursing 50% or more back to the company. This service helps businesses to avoid layoffs, downsizing or closures by providing an opportunity to work with current employees who need to improve their skills. If your company produces good and services in McHenry County, you may be eligible. Your local Business Service Representative can help make that determination. We will help you design a training plan that meets your needs. Employers can be reimbursed for up to 50%-90% (dependent on the size of the company) of the costs of training.

## **Labor Market Information**

The McHenry County Workforce Board puts out a yearly Labor Report that has a ton of different labor market information. One of the great offerings that businesses can take advantage of from the McHenry County Workforce is customized labor reports to cover relevant information for their business to make educated decisions.



## **Businesses Recruitment Resources**

The McHenry County Workforce Network can also help with businesses recruitment needs. We have a free job board located on our website along with offering onsite hiring events to businesses that would like to do in person recruitment. The more job opportunities that we know, the more we can inform job seekers that walk through our doors.

## **Contact Us:**

Pete Hall  
Business Services Representative  
pchall@mchenrycountyil.gov  
(815) 334-2773  
500 Russel Ct., Woodstock, IL 60098

# Additional Business Resources

Whether you're looking to start a new venture, expand your existing operations, or relocate to a vibrant, business-friendly environment, we have the resources and support to help you succeed.



**Illinois**  
Department of Commerce  
& Economic Opportunity

The Illinois Dept of Commerce & Economic Opportunity is the single state wide resource for entrepreneurs and businesses to obtain regulatory and permitting information. They also have grant and loan programs for large and/or growing businesses. This is also the place to go for a resource guide to opening a business.

**ILLINOIS**.gov

All businesses must register with the Illinois Department of Revenue if they conduct business in the state of Illinois. This includes sole proprietors and exempt organizations. If you engage in a type of retail sales business, you must have a sales tax number which you can register and obtain your sales tax number at Illinois.gov.



The Illinois Department of Labor provides information and compliance assistance for employers about worker wages, and State labor and employment laws.



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

The US Small Business Administration has you covered from idea to launching, to managing, and growing your business. They provide grants, financial assistance, contracting opportunities, compliance assistance, counseling, disaster assistance, and online training.



The SBDC at McHenry County College is the place to go for small business owners to help them find growth opportunities through planning, promotion and profitability. They help new entrepreneurs assess the viability of their business ideas and navigate the steps to getting their business up and running. They offer their services at no cost, and provided by experts who have years of business experience.



Any corporation or partnership requires a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). While a sole proprietorship may be able to use its social security number. Visit IRS.gov to obtain your FEIN.



The United States Department of Labor has a wealth of valuable resources and information to ensure each business entity in the state of Illinois is in compliance with the U.S. Department of Labor agencies requirements.



The Illinois Department of Employment Security is the code department of the Illinois state government. They administer state unemployment benefits, run the employment service and Illinois job Bank, and publishes the labor market information.

# Enhanced Members

## Inspire Level



## Visionary Level



## Invest Level



## Engage Level



## Elevate Level

AFC Materials Group  
American Community Bank  
Black Diamond  
BMO Harris Crystal Lake  
Camfil  
Campbell's Temperature Powered by Legacy Homes  
Currant Contracting Company  
General Kinematics  
Hampton, Lenzini & Renwick  
Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa Crystal Lake

Insight Financial Partners  
Insperity  
La Rosita Fresh Market  
Mariano's  
Michigan State Federal Credit Union  
Miller Verchota  
Northwest Herald  
Professional Wealth Advisors  
Redwood Homes  
Walmart

# 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025



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First Institute



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Vice Board Chair  
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Hammortree  
Financial Services



## Exceptional care without the wait

We understand your time is valuable. That's why we offer convenient **same-week appointments** for many services, allowing you to prioritize your health and well-being without extended delays.

Our state-of-the-art emergency department is here for you 24/7, and with **wait times of 15 minutes or less**, you'll be seen quickly. We also offer convenient urgent care services for non-life-threatening conditions.

**We offer a full range of services designed to keep you and your family healthy:**

- Audiology
- Cancer care
- Cardiology
- Diabetes education
- Dietitian services
- Ear, nose and throat care
- Emergency care
- Family medicine
- Gastroenterology
- General surgery
- Gynecology
- Infusion therapy
- Lab services
- Obstetrics
- Occupational therapy
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedics
- Pain management
- Pediatrics
- Pharmacy
- Physical therapy
- Podiatry
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology
- Sleep medicine
- Speech-language pathology
- Urgent care
- Urology
- Vascular surgery
- Women's health
- X-ray services

### Mercyhealth Hospital and Physician Clinic

875 S. Route 31, Crystal Lake

Clinic: (815) 356-7494

Hospital: (779) 220-5500



Mercyhealth