

## Village ice skating rink gets warm reception

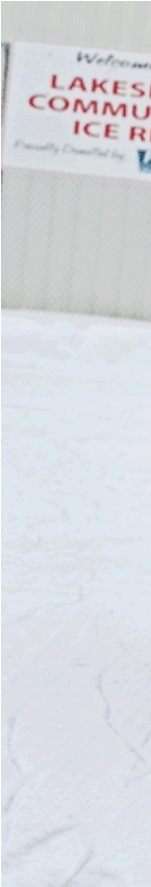
Written by MICHAEL LoCICERO  
Tuesday, 31 December 2013 16:07

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### Park's tennis courts receiving plenty of use thanks to winter makeover

The recent cold snap throughout the area has allowed the Belgium ice rink to open and thrive.

Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said the village opened the rink at the tennis courts across from Community Park on Dec. 13 and is pleased with the number of ice skaters so far.



"I think as we keep seeing cold temperatures, we'll see more and more people," Birenbaum said.

The rink has a liner that protects the courts.

The Lakeshore Communities Junior Woman's Club spearheaded a fund-raising campaign to buy the rink and liner. The rink was moved from the softball field to the tennis courts three years ago.

"We like the tennis courts because we have lights for safety that are on until about midnight or so," Birenbaum said. "We also have a water source from a hose that is right there, so it just makes more sense logistically to have it set up there."

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About 30,000 gallons of water is used to flood the courts and workers will periodically spray a thin layer of water to “get the rough spots out and make it smooth again, Birenbaum said.”

Frigid temperatures the first weeks of December spurred village officials to get the rink up and running.

“I’d say from now until about the end of February we’ll get quite a bit of people,” Birenbaum said. “I went over there the other day and it was packed.”

With Port Washington officials announcing there will not be any parks flooded this year, Belgium is the only village in the area with a designated ice rink.

Grafton clears off an area on the Milwaukee River for skating when the ice is thick enough.

Birenbaum wasn’t sure if that would lead to more ice skaters.

“I think it’s too early to tell. It’s really a weather-dependent type thing,” he said. “If we keep having a winter like this, I think we’ll see quite a few people.”

Birenbaum said there are bathrooms near the rink, but they aren’t open now.

“If we get enough complaints from people, we may open them up,” he said.

There is no specific time to play hockey, Birenbaum said.

“We just ask that the older kids be respectful if there are younger kids skating so nobody gets hurt,” he said.

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Image Information: A DEEP FREEZE allowed Kennedy, 10, (left) and Danika Schoeder, 7, to skate on the tennis courts near Community Park in Belgium last week. The flooded tennis courts are the only dedicated rink in the area after Port Washington decided not to set up a rink this year. Skaters in Grafton go out on the Milwaukee River when the ice is thick enough. Photo by Sam Arendt