

Your Town Talk

December 2015



Good to Know

'Tis the season to get in the holiday spirit, and this year, the Town has something for everyone. Whether you're hoping for festive lights, searching for unique gifts or needing to send your wish list to Santa, the holidays shine in Castle Rock. Check out these additions to help you celebrate the season:

Rink at the Rock
Enjoy music and ice skating with the family. Open generally from 4 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; 4 to 9 p.m. Fridays; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays. Check out rinkattherock.com for holiday hours and ticket information. Located at 414 N. Perry St.

Season of the Star
The star has been illuminated, and holiday lights have made Downtown glow even brighter this year.

Now, join the Town, the Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Alliance for an all-new event series that began right after Starlighting. Season of the Star helps celebrate the warmth of our community and makes Saturdays shine in Downtown Castle Rock.

From an Elf House, where you and your family can take fun photos, to stories and S'mores, to a holiday movie and Castle Rock's own Polar Express, there are many new ways to make memories. The series started Nov. 28 and will continue through Jan. 2. Join us from 4 to 7 p.m. every Saturday throughout the season, and find out what the holidays are really about - magic, merriment and memories.

Visit CRgov.com/StarSeason for the most current information on Season of the Star. Admission to all events is free.

The gift that keeps giving: shop local

During the hustle and bustle of this season, we often hear about the importance of shopping locally. Of course, this helps keep our friendly local businesses open, and we're thankful for that. Did you know it also helps your police officers and firefighters?

First, think about all the services you want from your local government. As a full-service municipality, Castle Rock provides fire, police, emergency medical, road maintenance, snow removal, code compliance, parks and recreation maintenance, and more. Your Town enjoys providing these services. They're what make Castle Rock such a desirable place to live, and it's our honor to help make Castle Rock the strong community it is. Still, we all know these services require funding.

Now, take a look at your property tax bill. On average, the owner of a \$300,000 home in Castle Rock pays just \$40 in property tax to the Town (\$35 in 2016). As a result, we depend on sales tax. That means, the more you shop in Town, the more money that's available for these services.

So, as you're making your list and checking it twice, make sure you look to your friendly local businesses first. You'll be providing a better future for our entire community.

2016 Budget focuses on six priorities

It's important to provide for community growth in the Town's annual budget.

The 2016 Budget, which Town Council approved Dec. 1, focuses on six strategic priorities:

1. Provide outstanding public health and safety services
2. Secure the community's long-term renewable water future
3. Create primary jobs, expand the tax base and improve the business climate
4. Provide a safe transportation system, minimizing traffic congestion
5. Provide an outstanding parks, recreation, trails and open space system
6. Maintain community character and identity, with a particular focus on Downtown Castle Rock

Various initiatives are planned within these areas to ensure the Town can maintain its levels of service next year and into the future. All of the initiatives can be accomplished without any tax increases or new taxes. In fact, the property tax mill levy rate for 2016 is 1.474, down from 1.703 in 2015.

The decrease is due to a provision in the Municipal Code that limits the Town's property tax revenue growth to 5.5 percent over the previous year. Assessed valuations have increased by over 20 percent, necessitating the mill levy decrease.

The only increase in the cost of Town services the average resident can expect in 2016 is a 76 cent-per-month water bill increase related solely to funding long-term water projects.

The budget includes \$199 million in expenditures - about \$103.3 million toward capital improvements, debt payments and interfund transfers, and \$95.7 million for operations - and \$165.4 million in revenues. The difference between expenditures and revenues is planned and involves the use of accumulated savings for capital projects.

Details of the budget, including a four-page Budget in Brief document, are available at CRgov.com/2016Budget.

Minimal increase with major impacts

Securing water for the future is a primary goal of Castle Rock Water. For years, our community has been too dependent on nonrenewable groundwater. With foresight and planning, the department is working to make sure a renewable water supply is secured for our future.



Castle Rock Water's long-term water plan is helping make this possible. The plan includes acquiring and cleaning water from East Plum Creek, maintaining storage space in Rueter-Hess and Chatfield reservoirs and pumping in water from renewable sources in the north through the WISE project. Castle Rock Water's priority is to make sure the costs for these projects are spread between both current and future customers. That's why rates and fees are evaluated annually.

While Castle Rock Water's combined rates and fees are competitive with other South Metro water providers with similar plans to develop renewable water supplies, Castle Rock's water conservation and supply programs are some of the most successful and progressive in the state.

In order to continue the plan, in 2016 rates will be increased 3 percent – an average of 76 cents per residential customer per month. Those fees will be allocated specifically for these renewable water efforts. Water, stormwater and wastewater rates will remain the same. Additionally, development fees will see a slight increase to ensure growth in Castle Rock continues to pay for growth.

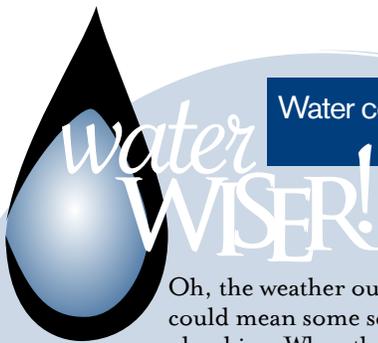
More information on everything happening within Castle Rock Water is available at CRgov.com/water.

Victims Assistance program needs volunteers

Compassionate neighbors, community servers, caring listeners – Castle Rock Police need your help. Applications are still being accepted for the department's Victims Assistance volunteer program.

Volunteers certified as victims advocates provide important emotional support and crisis intervention for victims of crimes and other tragic events. Volunteers must be at least 21 years old; be able to work on-call; have an open and nonjudgmental attitude; and be able to communicate and listen effectively. Training classes begin Tuesday, Jan. 12, and will be held in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays through Tuesday, March 1.

Applications and more information is available at CRgov.com/va.



Water conservation and efficiency tip
CRgov.com/waterwiser

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, and that could mean some scary things for your home's plumbing. When the outside temperatures plunge below zero degrees, there are a few things you can do indoors to keep your pipes from suffering. Be sure and let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall of the house. This small amount of water might be all it takes to keep pipes from freezing. Also, open cabinet doors to allow heat to access uninsulated pipes under the sink, and never set your thermostat lower than 55 degrees. Find more tips at CRgov.com/water.

CONTACTS

Town information	303-660-1015
Library	303-791-7323
Recreation Center	303-660-1036
The MAC	303-733-2222

Events in Castle Rock

CRgov.com/events

Dec. 4: Breakfast with Santa, 9-10 a.m., Outlets at Castle Rock. Free hot pancake breakfast with Santa, including entertainment for the kids and live broadcast from KS107.5. See other holiday events at the Outlets at OutletsAtCastleRock.com.

Dec. 5: Storytellers and S'mores, 4-7 p.m., Festival Park. Part of the new Season of the Star event series. Enjoy S'mores while listening to stories.

Dec. 12: 12 Stops of Christmas, 4-7 p.m., Downtown. Help your community by shopping locally at this Season of the Star event. Visit all vendors and be entered to win a prize. Stop by the information booth before you start shopping.

Dec. 19: Castle Rock Polar Express, 4-7 p.m., Festival Park. During this Season of the Star event, Festival Park turns into the North Pole. Enjoy a short train ride from the Fairgrounds to Festival Park, food vendors, and live entertainment.

Dec. 19: Castle Rock Chorale Wintersong concert, 7:30 p.m., New Hope Presbyterian Church, 3737 New Hope Way in Castle Rock. General admission is \$12, \$10 for students and seniors and free for children 12 and younger.

Dec. 20: Castle Rock Chorale Wintersong concert, 2:30 p.m., New Hope Presbyterian Church, 3737 New Hope Way in Castle Rock. This Sunday concert is specifically designed for seniors and families and includes sing-a-long carols and a visit from Santa. General admission is \$12, \$10 for students and seniors and free for children 12 and younger.

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Services, 4 p.m., Festival Park. Join your community as several churches host various candlelight services.

Dec. 26: Christmas tree recycling begins. Bring your Christmas tree to Metzler Ranch, Paintbrush, Centennial or Founders parks. Mulch from these recycled trees will be available at the same parks through March 31, or until gone. Recycling drop-off runs through Jan. 31.

Dec. 26: Downtown holiday movie – "Elf," 4 p.m., Downtown. This holiday movie will be displayed outside on a giant screen on Second Street. Bring a lawn chair, and dress for the weather.

Jan. 2: Winterfest, 4-7 p.m. Kick off the new year at Winterfest, a celebration of the new year. Features a variety of events and activities including ice carving, light installations, a 5k Resolution Run and Cyclocross race.

Visit CRgov.com/StarSeason for details on the Season of the Star events.

crgov.com
On the Web: snow!

When it snows, safety is a top priority for the Town. Residents can expect one lane cleared on residential streets when 4 inches of snow or more is expected to accumulate. The main goal when clearing residential streets is for emergency vehicles to have access. Want to know when to expect a plow in your neighborhood during a snowstorm? Track the plows at CRgov.com/plowtracker.