

## **Blizzard Review and Ice Rinks in Clarence**

Last year when I wrote this article we were still unraveling everything that happened during the December Blizzard, where 47 people lost their lives in Western New York. The one year anniversary reviews reminded me how our Volunteer Fire Departments and Highway employees were stellar in helping the stranded and clearing out our roads. We had all hands-on deck, additionally including snowmobile volunteers, farmers, and contractors helping in the efforts. I feel confident saying that we had one of the best storm responses in the entire county.

What a difference a year makes. Now, we've barely received snow for this season, thus far. I went on a motorcycle ride in the 60-degree weather on Christmas day, just so I could send a picture to my friends who left us for warmer weather. I know in the seventies I was on my snowmobile in the first weeks of November. Now, Winter doesn't really start until late January. The Town does save money during our warm winters. A day without snow is a day without snow. One trip around Town with a full Highway crew salting is around \$10,000.

Various Social Media pages related to our town blew up with activity from a rumor started by a person who doesn't even live in Clarence, that we were not going to have an ice-skating rink this year. That couldn't be farthest from the truth.

The Town's outdoor rink, due to unforgiving warm winter temperatures, has only been skateable a few weeks and perhaps only days during the winter months. Most of the time the rink which is set up on a tennis court was either water or slush. A plastic liner is put down to hold the water and protect the tennis court. Even though the rink was closed people would skate literally "On thin Ice" tearing the lining and/or even worse cutting grooves into the tennis court below. It costs around \$8,000 to resurface a tennis court.

The Town in the past has had a skating rink in Meadow Lakes Park and that is the plan for this year, weather permitting. The much larger rink area is already being flooded. When the weather finally changes Parks, employees will prepare the ice even if it means using Hydrant water to get it ready. With no liner and a deeper layer of water the hopes are that the ice will be easier to make and maintain. If it is cold enough the Town will prepare the rink on the Tennis Courts at our Main Park for Winterfest.

With that said, while also not having an indoor skating rink, Councilman Peter DiCostanzo is getting pricing on outdoor refrigeration equipment. The vendors claim to be able to make ice in 40-degree temperatures. In the future, if the cost is reasonable the plan would be to start the rink in late November and keep ice until the end of February, if not weeks into March. In addition to the cost of the refrigeration equipment, we might need more power than what is available at our park at this time.

The Clarence Chamber of Commerce is hosting our State of the Town January 18<sup>th</sup> at noon at Samuels Grand Manor. This year's message will be focused on the great things happening in the

near future for our Town. They will also have a Business Expo this year which starts at 11:30 am. Reservations can be made at [Clarencechamber.org](http://Clarencechamber.org).