



**16 October
2025**

Welcome to FREEPD, a local news source for everyone in the Freeport area. This weekly podcast is brought to you by a large volunteer group dedicated to providing to objective, unbiased updates on what's happening in our community.

You can find us on Facebook as well as our website (www.freepod.org) and the website of our NPR partner WNJI Northern Public Radio (www.northernpublicradio.org), so please visit us there and continue to share about us on your own social media. Now let's see what's happening.

City news

The City of Freeport reports that five more demolitions have been approved as part of a FEMA grant. The demolition and asbestos abatement of the five properties was approved by the City Council and will be funded by the FEMA Floodway grant program. Kleckner Excavating and Fischer Excavating will both perform two of the demolitions while Alber & Son Earthworks will perform one. The properties are located on Hooker Avenue, East Orin Street, and Henderson Road.

The City also approved more regulations related to overweight vehicles within City limits. The new regulations will help to ensure that road quality remains an important consideration in the use of overweight vehicles in the City. A one-time-use permit is priced at \$150 and an annual permit linked to one license plate is \$1200. A \$500 fine will be issued to overweight vehicles with no approved permit.

Utility price news

In other news of importance to City residents, electricity prices have changed as of October 1st. ComEd's price per kilowatt hour is now 9.689 cents and includes the supply price plus a transmission charge. While this price is down slightly from about 10.03 cents per kilowatt hour this past summer, it's still up about 47 percent from what it was last October. Overall, ComEd has estimated the price increase will cost customers an average of 10 to 15 percent, or about \$10.60, more per month. The impact can be higher for individual customers, depending on factors such as weather.

The ComEd price spike is connected to an increase in the price for reserve power, also called "capacity." The Citizens Utility Board, known by the acronym CUB, says that capacity costs have risen largely because of increased energy demand from data centers and policy problems with PJM Interconnection,

the power grid operator for northern Illinois, which runs an auction to determine the price of capacity. Among other things, CUB believes that the grid operator takes too long to connect new power sources like wind, solar and battery projects to the grid so they can help lower prices.

In Freeport, residents may also choose to receive their electric power from Ameren Illinois. This company has a two-tier pricing model where the cost for zero to 800 kilowatt hours is 8.402 cents and for over 800 kilowatt hours it's 7.483 cents. This autumn pricing represents a 31% price drop and includes the supply price, a transmission charge, and a supply cost adjustment, and is about what Ameren's supply price was before the summer price spike.

Consumers in the Freeport area can also choose to go with an alternative supplier that may have options called municipal aggregation offers that local leaders have negotiated with alternative suppliers. Even if you choose another supplier, ComEd or Ameren will still be the company that delivers electricity to your home here. They deliver the electricity and charges for delivery, but the supply charge comes from an alternative supplier if you go that route. So, you will still get a bill from ComEd or Ameren that will also include the alternative supplier charges. The alternative supplier's name will appear on the bill in the "Supply" section on ComEd bills and under "Electric Supply" or "Details From Your Electric Supplier" on Ameren bills. If companies other than ComEd or Ameren are listed in these sections, you are being billed for a supply charge by an alternative supplier.

Even with the elevated ComEd price and the reduced Ameren price, CUB has warned customers of bad alternative supplier deals and stressed that it is likely that ComEd and Ameren are the best bet for supply. A CUB review of state electricity reports revealed Illinois consumers have lost more than \$2 billion to alternative suppliers over the last decade.

NEW ELECTRIC PRICES

Utility	Rate	Details
AMEREN	8.402 CENTS PER KWH	for 0-800 kWh
	7.483 CENTS PER KWH	for 801 kWh and beyond
COM ED	9.689 CENTS PER KWH	

October 2025 through May 2026

You can read more about both Com Ed and Ameren's price changes here:

ComEd --

<https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/blog/2025/10/01/new-comed-electricity-price-still-elevated-but-cub-warns-consumers-to-beware-of-bad-alternative-supplier-deals/?highlight=Com%20Ed>

Ameren --

<https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/blog/2025/10/01/cub-alerts-ameren-illinois-customers-utilitys-price-for-electricity-has-dropped-31-percent-as-of-october-1st/?highlight=ameren>

Text message scam

The Illinois Department of Revenue reports that a nationwide text scam is targeting individuals with fake messages that appear to come from state revenue or treasury agencies. Recipients of these scam messages are asked to provide or verify their personal banking information under threat of losing a state refund.

The Department of Revenue says that such unsolicited messages that arrive by text, email or social media should be ignored and deleted and reminds everyone that official correspondence will occur through the U.S. Postal Service or the department's secure online platform at tax.illinois.gov.

Senior Lifestyle Expo

Freeport's Senior Resource Center is once again hosting the Senior Lifestyle Expo next Thursday, October 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Freeport Eagles Club across from the Lincoln Mall. This free event is designed to connect older adults, caregivers, and families with valuable resources to support healthy and independent living.

More than 50 organizations will be on hand to share information and answer questions on many topics that matter most to older adults, including Medicare coverage, assisted and independent living, health insurance, financial planning, home care, medical equipment, physical therapy, recreational and educational opportunities, free meals, community programs, and aging-in-place home improvements.

Attendees can also take advantage of free health screenings for vision, hearing, glucose, cholesterol, and balance, and free flu shots will be offered to anyone with an insurance card. A variety of giveaways will be available throughout the morning. For more information, call the Senior Resource Center at 815-235-9777. That's 815-235-9777.

Krape Park South Nature Trail Closed

The Freeport Park District is reminding walkers and hikers that the South Nature Trail is still closed to allow construction of the bicycle path. It will continue to be closed through the end of November. There are many other paths throughout the Park as well as options such as the district's Oakdale Nature Preserve for great Fall walk-about!

Spirits of Yesteryear Returns for a Spooky Evening of Local History and Storytelling

The Stephenson County Historical Society is once again hosting a hauntingly fun night of ghost stories, local legends, and eerie encounters lore that highlight the darker corners of Stephenson County's past at its annual Spirits of Yesteryear event next Saturday, October 25th from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Held on the museum grounds at 1440 S. Carroll Avenue in Freeport, this family-friendly event brings together local history and supernatural tales for an unforgettable All Hallows Eve, including paranormal Stories from Wyatt Herrmann and crew sharing firsthand accounts from ghost investigations across the region, a presentation by local author Terri Reid who is known for her Mary O'Reilly paranormal mystery series, and storytellers, spooky scenes, and themed activities throughout the grounds. Light refreshments and warm drinks will keep the chills at bay

Attendees are encouraged to dress for the weather, wear comfortable shoes, and bring their curiosity and good humor. This event is suitable for all ages, though some storytelling may be best suited for older children and adults.

Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids ages 5 through 14, and those 5 and under are free. Tickets may be purchased at the door. Follow the Museum on social media for behind-the-scenes previews.

Library hosts Not-so-Spooky Halloween Stories

If the Museum's event sounds a little too scary for your family's youngsters, you can all still enjoy Halloween tales at the Freeport Public Library's preschool story time featuring Not-So-Spooky Halloween Stories.

This story event is designed especially for young children, including preschoolers, and takes place Wednesday, October 29th from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Library. Some happy Halloween stories will be read and there will also be songs to sing and trick-or-treat through the library.

Attendees are encouraged to wear their costumes to the event for even more fun!



Trick or Treat...and the Train of Terror

Many Halloween activities will be held closer to Halloween on Friday, October 31st, but some organizations are getting an early start!

Five of Freeport's assisted living facilities will host trick or treat events all at the same time in the Senior Living Facilities Treat Bash, this Saturday, October 18th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Participating locations are Parkview, Liberty Village, Winn Prairie, Oakley Courts and Pearl Pavilion. Bocker Auto Group will also host Trick or Treat this Saturday the 18th at 11:00 a.m. at their Freeport facility.

The Stephenson County Antique Engine Club Train of Terror has also started its terror-ific train rides! As the harsh light of reality fades into darkness these autumn evenings, there is nothing in the dark that is not there in the light. Or is there? This Saturday, October 18th and next Saturday, the 25th, the darkness casts only a thin veil over your primeval fears, and that veil is pierced on these nights by the twin steel rails of the Silver Creek and Stephenson Railroad.

The Train of Terror takes passengers through a surreal realm haunted by ghosts, ghouls, vampires, zombies and other pillars of the undead community. Through the years, many terrors have been visited upon the passengers of this train. Is your nightmare an insane killer with a bloody machete and flaming torch? Perhaps it's a ghost ship whose pirate crew barrages you with cannon fire, or maybe you'll encounter imprisoned lost souls laboring away in an eternity of despair. All these have been seen in past years. What does this year hold for the unwary traveler? Ride the train and find out... if you dare.



The Train departs from the Silver Creek Depot hourly from 6:00 p.m. through 9:00 p.m. both of the next two Saturdays, and all tickets are \$10. The Freeport Train of Terror is proud to be listed for Illinois tourists by www.hauntedillinois.com.

FREEPOD will have more details on other fun Halloween events next week, including a list of Freeport homes with especially spooky outdoor displays.

Community leadership honored by The Foundation for Northwest Illinois

Leadership efforts by two community organizations were recently honored at the Foundation's annual Nonprofit Leadership Symposium hosted by the Foundation of Northwest Illinois. Amity Society of Freeport, led by Executive Director Ashley Harms, was presented with the Community Impact Award. Amity serves more than 100 children and families each day through childcare and quality programs that benefit our entire community and region. Tasha Mazique, who manages the Teen Reach program at the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Illinois and Westview Community Building was presented with the Rising Leader Award. Mazique's program serves 62 kids and under her guidance the program has received several certifications from the After School Network.

Harms, left and Mazique, right, are shown here with Michelle DeHaven-Quast, CEO of the Foundation.



VOICES observes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

From sobering simulations to dart and pickleball tournaments, VOICES of Stephenson County has a number of events and activities to mark October's designation as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The goal of all the events is to emphasize the prevalence of domestic violence and ways to prevent it.

Beth Maskell, VOICES of Stephenson County executive director says that at all the events, they will be talking about how widespread domestic violence is and its effects in the community, country and world as they expand awareness of the fact that 20 people in the country are abused every minute by an intimate partner. Next week, for example, VOICES will host an In Their Shoes domestic violence

simulation experience from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. next Wednesday, October 22 at Building H at Highland Community College. No registration is required for the free event, and all are invited.

Other activities will reach their peak next Saturday, October 25th when play begins in VOICES' Second Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Pickleball Tournament at 9:00 a.m. at the Krape Park Pickleball Courts. At noon that day, sign-up starts for the Aiming for a Change One Dart at a Time Dart Tournament benefiting VOICES at Jerod's Bar & Grill in Shannon. Play begins at 1:00 p.m. and the event includes a donation drive of items needed by VOICES survivors.

FREEPOD host named President of Illinois Communication and Theatre Association



FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors has been named President of the Illinois Communication and Theatre Association for the upcoming year. This is a professional association for high school and higher education teachers and coaches of communication, speech, debate, theatre, and media and is almost 100 years old. For any regional teachers looking for ideas, guidance, or direction for high school and higher education communication or theatre programs, just go to their website at www.illinoiscta.org.

Tim says that it's time for all of us to speak up, and we agree. Congratulations, Tim!

The week ahead...

As we look at the week ahead, you can still sign up for the third annual Run Stephenson County 5K, 10K, and Half Marathon this Saturday, October 18th hosted by the YMCA of Northwest Illinois. This event is the only 10K and half marathon within a 45-mile radius, with the closest other such run being held in Rockford. The start and finish of the race is at Richland Creek Trailhead in Orangeville. Visit www.runsignup.com and search on "Run Stephenson County" or click here <https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Orangeville/RunStephensonCounty> to support the YMCA's annual campaign that helps to provide scholarships for all their services. For more information, contact the YMCA of Northwest Illinois at 815-235-9622 or check out their Facebook page. That's 815-235-9622.

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by supporters of Bethany United Church of Christ. They'll be there both Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to serve up brats, burgers, hot dogs, and ribeye sandwiches.

As always, don't forget the Farmers Markets Saturday morning both in downtown Freeport and near Higher Grounds on the south edge of the City, as well as in Lena (<https://www.stephensoncountyfarmersmarket.com/vendors>).

For all the football fans out there, we also wanted to mention that former Freeport Pretzel and Illinois State Redbird Keondre Jackson was elevated from the Baltimore Ravens practice squad for last Sunday's NFL game. He plays Safety for the Ravens and as a Pretzel, he was a two-time first-team all-conference

selection and led the conference in solo tackles as a senior. He graduated from Freeport High School in 2020. Good luck, Keondre!

If you are looking for something to do this week or any week, visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website at www.greaterfreeport.com and click on “weekly events” for a comprehensive listing of many more entertainment and dining events and activities throughout Stephenson County. You can also subscribe to the City of Freeport’s monthly newsletter at their website, www.cityoffreeport.org. We have links to both in the print version of FREEPOD episodes.

We also wanted to remind everyone that we’re really enjoying the great in-depth interviews you can hear every week on FREEPOD, and are sure you will too if you’re not already! This week’s interview featured FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel visiting with Hester Bury, Development Officer and Yvette Sellers, Agency Relations Area Manager for the Northern Illinois Food Bank that provides food for food pantries, soup kitchens, daycares, and schools and other child program sites over a 13-county area in Northern Illinois as they provide food items for over 8,000 people a month. The interview, which aired first on Tuesday, is available online and can be listened to anytime.

Next Tuesday, Alan visits with Freeport Police Chief Chris Shenberger, who has announced that he will retire next Wednesday after 27 years of service. This conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, October 21st and be available to listen to then or at any time after that – just head to our website or your favorite podcast platform to select the programs of your choice.

In closing...

In closing, as we’ve mentioned before, we need your help! When you’re listening on your favorite podcast platform, please “like” or “follow” us – this helps us to move up in the rankings of podcasts and enables us to better promote ourselves throughout the region. On Facebook, also please click on “like” as the algorithms there also depend on user input to help us increase our presence.

And speaking of increasing our presence remember that FREEPOD is now on YouTube! The program is currently audio only but having it on the YouTube platform now gives you another super-easy way to listen. You can find both English and Spanish versions – just head to YouTube.com and search for FREEPOD or click the link in the print version at <https://www.youtube.com/@FREEPOD61032/podcasts>. Please tell all your friends and family members about our YouTube channel too – everything you do can help get local news out to our community!

FREEPOD couldn’t come to you without the Mass Communication Department at Highland Community College and our community liaisons and reporters. Thank you, Team FREEPOD! You can always find us on our Facebook page or the website of our National Public Radio partner, WNII in DeKalb, at www.northernpublicradio.org. For more info, including how to make a tax-deductible contribution to support our work, visit our website at www.freepod.org.

With that, time’s up for this week. Tune in again next Thursday at noon – or any time after that on our website or your favorite podcast platform – and thank you for listening!

Listen next week for more about what’s happening in the Freeport area!

LINKS TO OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS NEWSLETTERS BELOW



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While you're signing up for more of what's going on in our community, you can also subscribe to the City of Freeport's monthly newsletter at their website, www.cityoffreeport.org, or with the QR at the right.

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