



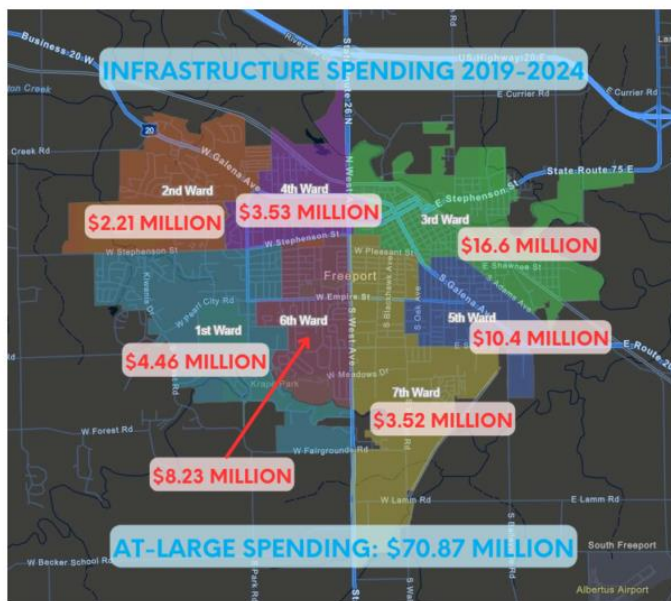
5 December
2024

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 news that's specific to 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. Thanks for your support, and now here's local news you've been missing.

Five years of infrastructure investment by Ward

As the year comes to a close, the City has made available a detailed map of infrastructure improvements made in each Ward over the past five years. Since 2019, the City has taken strides to pinpoint the areas most in need of updated and improved infrastructure such as water mains, road paving and more. City spending by ward can be found in detail at the City website (click through to the December newsletter for a link) or directly at bit.ly/WardSpendingCOF.



Street work continues

The City is continuing to work in areas that are affected by road closures related to tree removal, water infrastructure, and paving. Streets currently impacted include Adams Avenue, Ridge Drive, and Westwood Avenue, as well as finishing up several other larger street areas that are nearly complete.

Road closed signs are important to obey as they give crews the proper space and safety to work. Ignoring them could result in injury, project malfunction and further delays. During construction, residents in these areas are able to pull in and out of driveways but may experience delays maneuvering the area. At the end of each day, construction areas are reopened.

If you have any questions about updated information, please refer to the City of Freeport's Facebook page or call City Hall at 815-235-8200.

Shop With a Cop

The annual Shop With a Cop event will take place at 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 14, in Freeport at the Wal-Mart store. This event helps Stephenson County kids go shopping for needed winter clothing and a toy and who otherwise may not get these items under the Christmas tree.

Each kid is referred by a local school district and is paired up with an officer from Freeport Police or the Sheriff's department. They have a set amount to spend thanks to donations from the community. The event is funded through the local Fraternal Order of Police organization. Thank you, Freeport Police Department!

Environmental Sustainability survey for Freeport residents

The City of Freeport is looking for unique ways to create a more sustainable environment for the entire community. From maintaining a healthy Pecatonica River to creating new initiatives to support our ecosystem, we need your suggestions!

The City is interested in collaborating with other organizations in the community to improve the environment and is asking for your thoughts on initiatives that you think would be beneficial for the future of the area.

The survey is brief and won't take long to complete, and can be found through the City Website (click on the December newsletter link to find it) or directly by copying this link: bit.ly/EnvironmentCOF.

League of Women Voters Gun Violence Prevention study

The League of Women Voters of Freeport is in the midst of participating in a Statewide "Gun Violence Prevention" study. This study is taking place in local leagues throughout the State to update the League of Women Voters of Illinois statement on handgun safety education and include a more inclusive statement on the types of guns that are addressed.

Five areas to be addressed include issues related to local government, enforcement, prevention, government research and personal rights. Within these areas, many specific actions are being considered to promote public safety and a reduction of gun violence.

The local League will continue these discussions and submit their findings to the League of Illinois by the end of January for possible adoption at the 2025 Illinois State Convention.

ComEd trimming several areas of trees surrounding electrical wires

ComEd will be performing preventative tree trimming around power lines through the end of the year. This round of trimming will occur in areas including Route 26, South Street, Walnut Avenue, Main Street, and downtown. A full map can be found on the City website (click through to the December newsletter for a link) or directly at bit.ly/TrimmingMap.

Pretty poinsettias are not poisonous

Poinsettias are the number one potted plant sold during the holiday season, and chances are good that you will either purchase a poinsettia as a gift or receive one as a gift. Following are some tips to keep your poinsettia looking good throughout the holiday season and beyond – and your pets and kids safe and comfortable.

To keep your poinsettia looking festive, place it in a bright location out of direct sunlight without hot or cold drafts. Avoid placing the plant near drafty windows, a heat vent, or a fireplace. Poinsettias prefer temperatures between 65 and 70 degrees so avoid placing your plant in a room that tends to be substantially cooler or warmer than that. Lastly, do not overwater. Water the plant when the potting mix is dry to the touch. If the pot is covered in decorative foil, it may be necessary to poke holes in the foil and set the plant in a saucer to allow excess water to drain.

As far as safety, the idea that poinsettias are poisonous is a common belief but it's not true. In most cases, exposure to any parts of the poinsettia plant in children or pets has very little if any effect. If swallowed, it may cause mild irritation like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, and like any other physical item it can pose a choking hazard. Touching it may cause a rash for those who are allergic to its sap, although that is not terribly common.

So, you don't have to eliminate poinsettias from your home, but you still should prevent potential issues by keeping them out of reach of children and pets. If you have questions about poinsettias or other holiday plants, call University of Illinois Extension at 815-235-4125. That's 815-235-4125.

Ribbon cutting at Highland Community College

The Greater Freeport Partnership will be hosting a ribbon cutting next Thursday, December 12th at 10:00 a.m. for a new CNC/Manufacturing Lab.

In machining, numerical control, also called computer numerical control or CNC is the automated control of tools by computer. It is used to operate tools such as drills, lathes, mills, grinders, routers and 3D printers. CNC transforms a piece of metal, plastic, wood, ceramic, stone, or composite into a specified shape by following coded programmed instructions and without a manual operator directly controlling the machining operation.

This new lab will enhance the experience of Highland students learning more about jobs in the manufacturing industry. The public is invited to attend the ribbon cutting.

FHN Festival of Trees events continue

FHN's annual Festival of Trees activities for the whole family continue with Holiday Storytelling by Santa and Mrs. Claus in their visiting area at the Freeport Public Library tonight, December 5th at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 14th at 2:00 p.m.

Next Wednesday, December 11th, the FHN Holiday Classic Movie, hosted by Alan Wenzel and Ed Finch. This year's movie is A Holiday Affair, a 1949 holiday comedy starring Janet Leigh, Robert Mitchum, and Wendell Corey in an entertaining tale of a young widow torn between a boring attorney and a romantic ne'er-do-well. Showings are at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and admission is an item or monetary donation to local food pantries. There are no advance ticket sales.



Santa has also once again asked FHN to help get letters to him and Santa Letter forms can be downloaded from the FHN website at www.fhn.org. Letters can be returned to Santa mailboxes at the Freeport Public Library children's desk or the lobbies at FHN Family Healthcare Center - Burchard Hills, FHN Family Healthcare Center - Highland View Drive, or FHN Memorial Hospital. Letters can also be mailed to The North Pole, 524 W. Stephenson Street, Suite 100, Freeport IL 61032. Letters must be received by December 16 to allow time for Santa to respond.

Lighted parade highlights Christmas in Lena

The 11th annual Lighted Christmas Parade in Lena will kick off at 6:00 p.m. this Saturday, December 7th in downtown Lena, featuring dozens of holiday-themed floats from local businesses and organizations. Following the parade, Santa will lead a count-down to lighting the Community Tree.

The day's fun begins in the morning with a Craft & Vendor Show from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In the afternoon prior to the parade, inflatable bounce houses will be available for kids from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the downtown parking lot and hay wagon rides begin at 4:30 p.m. and will resume again after the parade. There is also a free photo booth, a cookie walk, a baked potato bar from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., free popcorn, and an opportunity to help neighbors in need with gift ideas on a Giving Tree. Children are invited to place their letters to Santa in the special mailbox located by the community tree before December 18th, where his elves will collect the letters and return a message if an address is included.

The day's activities are coordinated through the Lena Business & Professional Association, who also invites all ages to shop and enjoy extended hours throughout the day.

The week ahead

Once again, there are plenty of things coming up in the Freeport area in the week ahead. First off, we'd like to send lots of positive vibes to the Freeport High School Speech Team as they enter into their 84th year of competition when they bring a team of 34 students to the DeKalb Corn Classic this Saturday, December 7th. Team Captain and last year's State Speaker senior Mya Ortiz have a young, energetic team ready to represent Pretzel City. Good luck, Pretzels!

Of course we don't want to miss the last year of *Christmas Memories*, with performances tonight and tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at the Jeannette Lloyd Theatre. Tickets for this beloved community holiday theatre production are \$6 plus a food donation for the Freeport Area Church Cooperative and can be purchased at fsd145.org/tickets or by calling 815-232-0428. That's 815-232-0428.

Don't forget that area families are invited to the annual Cookies with Santa event at the YMCA of Northwest Illinois this Saturday, December 7th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Y. Attendees will meet and take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus and receive take-home crafts and holiday cookies ready for decorating at home. The gathering is free and open to the public.

As we mentioned last week, the Senior Resource Center is hosting a Medicare Basics Class next Tuesday, December 10 at the Senior Resource Center Activity Room. The session will cover essential Medicare information and provide an opportunity for attendees to get their Medicare questions answered. Walk-ins are welcome at the Center, which is located at 206 E. Stephenson Street in Freeport.

We're also looking forward to *Christmas Wizards, a Trans-Siberian Orchestra Tribute* hosted by the Greater Freeport Partnership, Mayor Jodi Miller, and the City of Freeport. Scheduled for next Friday, December 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Masonic Temple. Featuring iconic holiday music, a state-of-the-art light show, and exciting special effects, this show always sells out theatres so you may want to get your tickets soon! Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$50 and can be purchased online through a link at the website of the Greater Freeport Partnership, just click on "calendar" in the navigation bar and then on

the date of December 13th . All proceeds from the fundraising concert will be utilized for holiday decorations in Freeport.

As we mentioned last week, there are also literally dozens of holiday events throughout the community, many of which you can find on the website of the Greater Freeport Partnership and others by checking with churches, schools, and businesses with which you are familiar.

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 subscribe to their free weekly events newsletter there too.

In closing...

In closing, we'd like to remind you that through year-end we're having a fundraising drive to help offset some of FREEPOD's expenses. We've been bringing you newscasts and interviews for almost a whole year and most of the generous start-up funding support we received has been spent to get us up and running. While our staff is all volunteer, we do have other ongoing business expenses including insurance and marketing to help more people learn about us, and it's time to reinvigorate our bank account. Please visit us at our website for more details, and thank you in advance for considering a donation for our holiday stocking.

We also want to remind you that last week's in-depth interview, which is available on our website, through our Facebook page, and at WNII Northern Public Radio's website, was a double feature starting with FREEPOD and TimBeck2 hosts Tim Connors and Becky Connors previewing *Christmas Memories* a Tim then visited with the folks at Twice as Nice, who just celebrated the 25th anniversary of their stories in Freeport. Next Tuesday we'll hear from FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel, speaking with Freeport City Manager Rob Boyer about what's ahead for the City in 2025. Their conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, December 10th.

With that, time's up for this week. Tune in again next week for more about Freeport businesses, City plans and progress, area rewards and recognition, local impacts of state and national news, and more.

As we say each week, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the help of many others. We're especially appreciative for the assistance of the Mass Communication Department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast. We're also grateful to WNII and Northern Public Radio in DeKalb, a member station of NPR National Public Radio, for partnering with us in reaching even more listeners with news of events and activities in northwest Illinois. And of course, here's a big shout-out to our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, Team FREEPOD!

If you have story suggestions or would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support FREEPOD, visit our website at www.freepod.org or contact us through our Facebook page.

Listen next week for more news you've been missing!

