



**31 October
2024**

Welcome to FREEPOD, 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, 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.

Remember: Your vote COUNTS!

The counting may not yet be finalized but by next week's newscast the election will be over so today is our last opportunity to remind you that your vote COUNTS!! Early voting for the November 2024 election continues Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30 p.m. through Election Day, next Tuesday November 5th, at the Stewart Centre at 50 W Douglas Street in downtown Freeport. This Saturday, November 2nd, you can also register or vote in person from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

As a point of electoral history for Stephenson County, in the 1860 Presidential election the County's voters cast 2,670 votes for Abraham Lincoln while his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, received 1,787 votes. Lincoln received almost 60% of the votes cast. Your vote counts!

Water extension still under consideration

The City of Freeport is still debating an estimated \$1 million water extension on the city's west side. One property in the proposed addition is Open Bible Learning Center. Since 1999, the school and daycare for about 200 students haven't had a working sprinkler system to protect against fires.

In May, a State Fire Marshall inspection called for Open Bible to connect to the city's water main and meet 2024's building code. The decision to extend the main awaits city council decision, which if not reached will be decided by a judge. At a recent City Council meeting, the Council heard from the public on the topic, including representatives from Open Bible and childcare advocates.

During the meeting, Freeport Mayor Jodi Miller said that this is no different than a street project and that need for City water at Open Bible and other buildings along the extension should be treated the same as any other part of the City's need to provide this utility.

Following further discussion, City Council members arrived at a proposal to include an advisory referendum putting the water main extension in the hands of Freeport voters in the April 2025 election. This proposal failed 2 to 6 in a Council vote, returning the decision to the responsibility of the Council, ensuring that the topic will be one of considerable discussion in the weeks to come.

More City news

In other news from the City, tax funding road improvements also began to be distributed to the City of Freeport in October, and the City's 2025 Budget will see the benefits.

You may have noticed that hydrant flushing is underway around the City, and it will continue until November 8th. If you see rust-colored water in your home, make sure to let your water run for 5 to 10 minutes before using it. More information can be found on the City's Facebook page.

The City also advises that West Avenue, or Route 26, is still a road to avoid when possible as lead service line replacement will be happening until about November 15th. They're going one block at a time and it is causing some major traffic backups.

***Mean Girls* comes to Freeport High School**

The theatre department at Freeport High School presents *Mean Girls: High School Version* beginning next Thursday, November 7th. The story follows Cady, the new girl at North Shore High School in Chicago, who is desperate to fit in and find friends. The magazine Variety says "Tina Fey's catty book and Nell Benjamin's saucy lyrics pump laughs into this smart, funny, musical-comedy version of the 2004 movie," making it an anthem to friendship, loyalty, girl power, and being true to yourself.

FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors directs this lively musical, and took a few minutes out of rehearsals to let us know more.

Mean Girls: High School Version will be on stage at the Jeanette Lloyd Theatre at the Freeport Junior High School, 701 W. Empire Street in Freeport, at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, November 7th and 8th and 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 9th. Please note that if the Freeport High School Pretzels football team makes the IHSA playoffs, the Saturday matinee performance will be rescheduled; watch social media for updates.



News from Highland Community College

The Highland Community College board recently approved a number of new positions and salary ranges, as well as approving several new full- and part-time positions including career pathways navigator, testing services staff, a human resources generalist, learning management systems administrator, and manager of career services. Highland Foundation Director Dan Dick reported that the recent golf outing for the Leadership Forum was a great success.

Also at the meeting, a memorandum of understanding was unanimously approved between Highland and the Highland Foundation, the city of Freeport, and the Freeport Park District that commits each of these entities to a \$333,000 contribution toward the completion of a city-wide “bike and hike” trail. These contributions will enable these local entities to qualify for a \$4 million matching grant.

Celebrating Native Americans

This Saturday, November 2nd, get a look into Native American Culture at a special free two-part event.

A morning presentation by Kim Sigafus will provide an overview of Native American History and Culture, and will be held at the Freeport Public Library from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Authentic Native American refreshments will be offered at no charge during a break in the presentation.

Then in the late afternoon is an outdoor Honorary Ceremony conducted by Daniel Many Hawks Johnson, followed immediately by a campfire and storytelling. This Ceremony will be from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the fields at Willow Creek Farm, 25516 Spring Valley Road in Shannon. As this part of the day's activities is outdoors, it will be weather dependent. People attending should bring folding lawn chairs and wear comfortable shoes.

The public is invited to attend the morning presentation, the afternoon celebration, or both parts of this free two-part event, which is sponsored by Quiet Souls and Willow Creek Farm. For more information, call 815-291-1388 for further information. That's 815-291-1388.

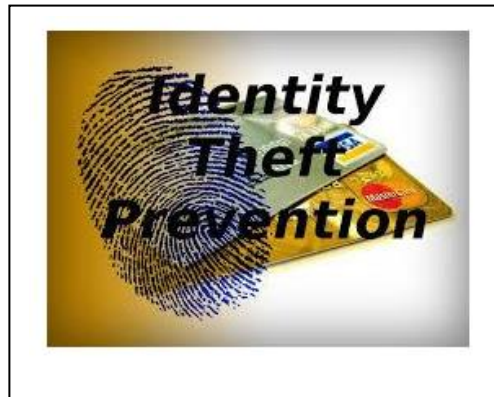
Career Fair next Thursday

Community members, high school students, and Highland Community College students and alumni are all invited to a free Career Fair at Highland Community College next Wednesday, November 6th, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the HCC Sports Complex and YMCA in Freeport. A variety of employers from the state-line area will be available and eager to meet you and discuss your future. No registration is required for this free event.

Identity theft presentation

Next Wednesday, November 6th, join Investigator Jon Johannsen from the Stephenson County Sheriff Department from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in a free program to learn how to protect yourself from identity theft and scammers, as well as what to do if your information is compromised.

This is a slide presentation with lots of time for questions. While not required to attend, please register online at the Library's website to indicate your interest at www.freeportpubliclibrary.librarymarket.com. There is plenty of seating to keep you comfortable as you become familiar with this important topic!



Trees for Freeport

A group of concerned citizens recently banded together to help the City of Freeport live up to its Tree City title.

As you can see on a drive through town, Freeport's tree population took a big hit when the invasive ash borer infiltrated the area and killed the majority of the city's ash trees. Thousands were cut down, and few have been planted to take their place.

With encouragement from members of the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and Ken Beach, local tree advocate, the city, led by Street Superintendent Pat Ingram, secured a grant that provided 108 potted trees. Unfortunately, the trees arrived at a poor time for planting, but resourceful city employees devised a plan to keep them watered and maintained, and most of the trees survived the long wait to autumn when they could be properly planted.

The trees were planted in September, in locations chosen by the city: vacant lots, water retention areas, the composting facility, and the new water tower area. Volunteers were sought to get the trees in the ground, and Ken -- along with Ted Odendahl and his YIELD group, who works through the Boys and Girls Club in Freeport -- signed up for the job. They planted a variety of species -- oaks, evergreens, magnolias, and American beeches, among others -- and then YIELD did a follow-up watering the next week.

It is a small victory for local tree enthusiasts, who hope the city will continue to seek out creative ways to plant more trees to beautify our community and add green space that benefits our air quality. Many citizens believe that opportunities exist to plant additional trees in some of the right-of-way areas where the old ashes were removed, but the seemingly simple task is complicated by challenges with utilities, sidewalk repairs, and street issues in some neighborhoods. Other communities have a more aggressive replacement policy than Freeport, including some that plant multiple trees for every one removed.

Laura Dufford, Conservation Chairperson of the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, hopes that more people get involved, suggesting that they contact their alderperson to encourage more tree plantings in the city.

Freeport showcased as one of the 9 Most Comfortable Towns in Illinois for Seniors

According to the World Atlas, Freeport is one of the 9 Most Comfortable Towns in Illinois for Seniors. Noting that retirement is a chance for a fresh start in life, transitioning into a new chapter allows seniors to slow down and focus on enjoyment, and Illinois offers many comfortable small towns that provide an easygoing environment suited for this stage.

According to the article, "Pretzel City" Freeport boasts friendly neighbors and rich cultural experiences at the Winneshiek Playhouse, one of the country's longest-running amateur theaters. In addition, the Freeport Art Museum provides visual art exhibitions where seniors can also attend classes and workshops. The article also mentioned the Oakdale Nature Preserve as a perfect escape for outdoor recreation with a serene setting spanning 133 acres of hickory and oak woodlands and winding trails for pleasant trekking adventures. The average home price was stated as \$120,000.

The other eight towns included in the article are Arcola, La Salle, Macomb, Mendota, Taylorville, Jacksonville, Gilman, and Olney. More information can be found at www.worldatlas.com/cities/9-most-comfortable-towns-in-illinois-for-seniors.html.



Prenatal classes for Spanish-speaking families

Next Tuesday, November 5th, FHN is hosting an initial prenatal class for Spanish-speaking families from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room Dining Room in the lower level at FHN Memorial Hospital.

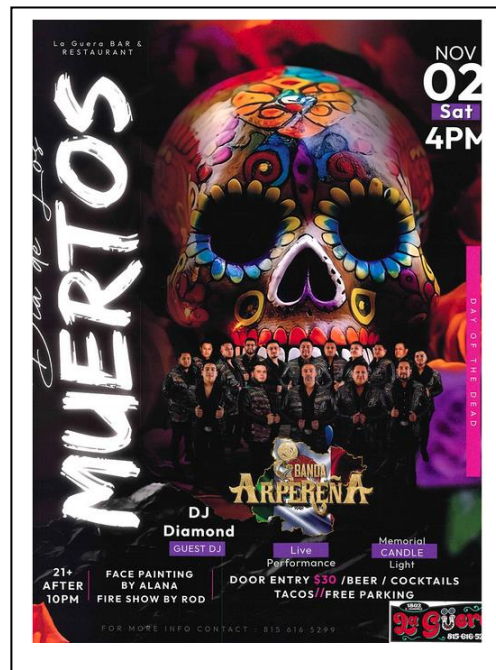
Taught by OB Registered Nurse Juana Penaloza, these classes provide information about pregnancy, labor, delivery, cesarean section, and postpartum recovery. Register at www.fhn.org/ob under Class Registration.

Day of the Dead in Freeport

Many people will celebrate Halloween today, but another Halloween-adjacent event that is usually celebrated on November 1st and 2nd is The Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos. The Day of the Dead is traditionally observed in Mexico and by people of Mexican heritage in other parts of the world. The

multi-day festive holiday involves gathering to fondly remember friends and family members who have died by building home altars and enjoying special music and traditional dishes.

This year, the Day of the Dead will be celebrated on Friday, November 1st and Saturday, November 2nd and in Freeport, there's a special event beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday at La Guera Mexican restaurant at 1802 East Shawnee Street. The event will feature Alana face painting, a fire show by Rod, and a musical performance by the 16-person group Banda Arpereña at 10:00 p.m. Attendees are welcome to bring flowers and photos of loved ones who've been lost and candles are allowed. Homemade Mexican street food, other Mexican specialties, beer, cocktails, and – according to La Guera – the best tequila will be available. Door entry is \$30 per person and adults only, please, after 10:00 p.m. For more information, visit the La Guera restaurant page on Facebook or call 815-616-5299.



The week ahead

Here are a few reminders of events coming up between now and our next newscast. Remember that there's a Community Clean-up Day tomorrow, Friday, November 1st from 8:00 a.m. to noon to tidy up the Taylor Park area. Volunteers should meet at the intersection of East Jackson Street and South Hancock Avenue. And speaking of tidying up, tomorrow is also the start of the City's leaf pic-up program. You can find a leaf collection map on the City's website at www.cityoffreeport.org.

Tomorrow is also Highland Community College's Fall Instrumental Music Concert at 7:00 p.m. in the Ferguson Fine Arts Center on campus, and don't forget to get your tickets for the FHN Festival of Trees Gala to raise funds for a new linear accelerator for the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital! The event is Friday, November 15th at the Freeport Masonic Temple and tickets must be purchased online at www.fhn.org or through the FHN Foundation office by next Friday, November 8th.

We're also looking forward to the model railroad open house hosted by Stephenson County Society of Model Trainmen and the Northwest Illinois Rock Club's 2024 Jewelry, Gem, Fossil, and Mineral Show. Both of these are the weekend of November 9th and we'll have more information on them in next week's newscast.

We'd also like to offer optimism for the Freeport High School Pretzel football team, which last made the IHSA playoffs in 2008. That long drought could be over after the Pretzels just defeated Rockford East 22 to 12 for their fifth win of the season. Go Pretzels!

And since today is Halloween, we wanted to let you know that Illinois farmers grow more pumpkins than anywhere else in the world. In fact, they grow almost 95% of the pumpkins for consumption, which are processed in Morton, Illinois, the Pumpkin Capitol of the World. We also have a Halloween treat for our listeners: FREEPOD asked Ed Finch and Alan Wenzel, hosts of the Classic Movie Series every month at the Lindo Theatre, for their best scary movie suggestions. The FREEPOD editorial staff weighed in too and we've prepared a flyer that you can download at our website with dozens of movies to chill your spine anytime, not just on Halloween.

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 newsletter there too.

In closing...

In closing, we also want to remind you that if you haven't yet heard last week's in-depth interview, be sure to check it out. It's available on our website and through our Facebook page with FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors interviewing locals in a special spooky double Halloween feature about haunted venues in the area. Next week's in-depth interview will be FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel speaking with folks from Kent Land Farms about this year's agricultural harvest, which will post at noon on Tuesday, November 5th.

With that, time's up for this week but 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 WNIJ 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!



House of Wax (1953) – Vincent Price stars in a film about revenge and jealousy.

The Raven (1963) – Boris Karloff and Vincent Price in a film about wizards trying to best each other. Peter Lorre as the Raven.

The Tingler (1959) – This film is worth it only to hear Vincent Price say “The Tingler is in the theatre.” The only actor who could get away with that line without being mocked.

The Blob (1958) – Stars Steve McQueen. Worth watching just to see McQueen, but definitely better than the follow-on remakes.

The Innocents (1961) – Based on “The Turn of the Screw” (1898), this film is a gothic psychological horror picture about a governess who is driven to insanity by the two children she was hired to supervise. Deborah Kerr and Michael Redgrave.

The Village of the Damned (1960) – A sci-fi horror film in which the residents of a small British village suffered mass unconsciousness, and seven months later, all the women of the village give birth on the same day. He children all look remarkably alike and can communicate through telepathy.

Tremors (1990) – Kevin Bacon and Fred Ward – witless humans versus monsters in the Nevada desert.

Contagion (2011) – Matt Damon, Kate Winslet, and Laurence Fishburn. Honestly, this is the scariest film I have ever seen. When I saw it in 2011, I was haunted by the story line—until 2020.



Cat People (1942) – This atmospheric supernatural horror film uses shadowy visuals depict a woman who turns into a panther to stalk her victims.

The Thing from Another World (1951) – Scientists at a remote Arctic research station are threatened by a hostile interplanetary being they find frozen in the ice.

Them (1954) – Irradiated creatures found in the New Mexico desert threaten the general populace until the final, epic battle in the L.A. storm drains.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) – Extraterrestrial spores, assume human form, create nearly perfect people duplicates, and quietly take over a small California town.

The Haunting (1963) – This scary horror film depicts a small group of people who are invited by a paranormal detective to investigate a haunted house.

Night of the Living Dead (1968) – This realistic, landmark film follows seven people chased and trapped by reanimated corpses and popularized modern zombies.

Play Misty for Me (1971) – Clint Eastwood directed and stars in this psychological thriller about a radio disc jockey stalked by an obsessed female fan.

The Exorcist (1973) – This controversial movie about a young girl's demonic possession and her mother's attempts to rescue her was critically acclaimed.

Halloween (1978) – Considered one of the most influential horror films ever made, it is set in what could be anyone's neighborhood in any hometown.

Alien (1979) – Setting new standards for science fiction horror movies, this story features an alien creature tormenting the crew of a spaceship.

FREEPOD *Editorial's Halloween Picks*

Young Frankenstein (1974 comedy) -- As a respected researcher and physician, Dr. Frederick Frankenstein, the grandson of the more famous Dr. Victor Frankenstein, who did experiments on bringing back the dead, tries to disassociate himself from his more famous relative, even to the point of pronouncing their surname differently. Regardless, Frederick is drawn back to the small Transylvanian town and castle where Victor conducted his experiments, leaving behind his somewhat "untouchable" fiancée, and becomes drawn into his grandfather's research. As Frederick tries to reanimate a dead subject with the help of his hunchbacked aide Igor and his beautiful assistant Inga, rumors abound in the town of what he is doing and the townspeople try to stop him. Stars Gene Wilder, Cloris Leachman, Madeline Kahn, Peter Boyle, Marty Feldman, and Teri Garr.

Hocus Pocus (1993 comedy) -- 300 years have passed since the Sanderson sisters were executed for practicing dark witchcraft. Returning to life thanks to a combination of a spell spoken before their demise and the accidental actions of Max, the new-kid-in-town, the sisters have but one night to secure their continuing existence. Stars Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Kathy Najimi.

The Mummy (1999 adventure) -- English librarian Evelyn Carnahan becomes interested in starting an archaeological dig at the ancient city of Hamunaptra. She gains the help of adventurer Rick O'Connell and along with her brother Jonathan they set off, unaware that another group of explorers are interested in the same dig. Unfortunately for everyone, this group ends up unleashing a curse which been laid on the dead High Priest Imhotep. Now 'The Mummy' is awake and it's going to take a lot more than guns to send him back to where he came from. Stars Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, John Hannah, and Arnold Vosloo.

Arsenic and Old Lace (1944 comedy) -- Mortimer Brewster is a newspaperman and author known for his diatribes against marriage, but in the opening scene he is getting a marriage certificate at city hall. Now all that is required is a quick trip home to tell Mortimer's two maiden aunts. While trying to break the news, though, Mortimer finds out his aunts' hobby; killing lonely old men and burying them in the cellar. It gets worse. Stars Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Peter Lorre, Josephine Hull, and Jean Adair.

Van Helsing (2004 supernatural adventure) -- Monster hunter Van Helsing is in the world to rid all evil, even if not everyone agrees with him. The Vatican sends him and his ally, Carl, to Transylvania. They have been sent to this land to stop the powerful Count Dracula. While there they join forces with a Gypsy Princess called Anna Valerious, who is determined to end an ancient curse on her family by destroying the vampire. They just don't know how! Stars Hugh Jackman and Kate Beckinsale.

Death Becomes Her (1996 dark comedy) -- When a novelist loses her man to a movie star and former frenemy, she winds up in a psychiatric hospital. Years later, she returns home to confront the now-married couple, looking radiant. Her ex-fiance's wife wants to know her secret, and discovers that she took the same potion which grants eternal life to the person who drinks it as she herself already has taken. Stars Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn, Bruce Willis, Isabella Rossellini.