



**26 June
2025**

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 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.

Road work updates

Crews have begun work on Blackhawk Avenue, beginning at the intersection of Blackhawk and Dewey Street. Work will move North and end at Empire Street, with the project expected to be complete by July 31.

Repair and paving are also beginning on West Cleveland Street and will continue for three to four weeks. The road is now closed during the work day from Locust to Burchard. This is the first project to be undertaken as part of the City's 2025 Street Improvement Plan. After this project, crews will begin working on the intersection of Stephenson and Park.

Work also continues on Carroll Avenue, including updates on water mains and sewer as well as a complete repaving of the street.

Construction areas will be reopened at the end of each day so that residents in these areas are able to pull in and out of driveways during construction. Delays may occur and it may sometimes take longer to maneuver in the area. Signage gives crews the proper space and safety to work, and ignoring them could result in injury, project problems, and more. Please pay attention to and obey signs for everyone's safety.

Mosquito Abatement

In other City news, the Freeport Mosquito Abatement District has begun their work with an initial helicopter larvicide application in mid-June.

The Freeport Mosquito Abatement District has contracted with Clarke Environmental Services for mosquito management, surveillance, larval control, and adult mosquito insecticide applications.

Residents with comments or questions are encouraged to contact Clarke's Mosquito Hotline at 800-942-2555 or visit www.clarkeportal.com, where you can also sign up with Clarke's for notifications and receive email or text alerts when spraying is to occur. That's 800-942-2555 or www.clarkeportal.com



Cooling Centers

After the recent heatwave, it's good to remember that Freeport has several Cooling Centers that are open to the public in exceptionally hot humid weather. The Freeport Public Library, Lincoln Mall, and a number of churches and social service organizations are available to help everyone cool down. A complete listing including addresses and open hours can be found on the Facebook page of the Freeport Fire Department at

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=768621268849661&set=pb.100071053839329.-2207520000>



Greater Freeport Partnership receives grant

The Greater Freeport Partnership has received a \$50,000 T-Mobile Hometown Grant that will be utilized to transform a vacant lot at 15 West Stephenson Street currently owned by the City into a multi-functional pocket park to help drive retail and dining visitation, upper-story residential development, and promoting downtown as the place to be.

Freeport's application was selected among 991 applications to be awarded in the first quarter of 2025. Twenty-five communities from around the nation are selected each quarter for five years to receive funds for local development projects to revitalize communities.

Music on Chicago

Music on Chicago continues next week with a performance on Thursday, July 3rd by *The Real Deal featuring the Synergy Band*. This popular music event has been a tradition for over 20 years and takes place in downtown Freeport's Art Plaza at the corner of Chicago Avenue and Douglas Street. The grounds are ideal for a social gathering with friends or bring the family and blankets to take your spot on the lawn.

A \$5 admission includes access to the summer's best party and local food vendors. Volunteers also serve alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages during the event.

Music Under the Stars and Patriotic Concert

In other musical performance news, the Music Under the Stars performance by the Freeport Concert Band this Sunday, June 29th at 7:00 p.m. at the Koenig Amphitheater in Krape Park will be conducted by Bill Petersen and will feature the clarinet section and vocal soloist Aaliyah Williams.

The Band is also inviting everyone to their annual Patriotic Concert on July 6th at 7:00 p.m. to help celebrate our country and honor our Armed Forces. This performance will include the added excitement of Battery G, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery and their live cannon fire. On that point, please leave your pets home as the cannon fire could startle them. Be sure to add this holiday concert to your calendar!



Music on Debate Square

And the opportunity to enjoy music in the outdoors continues with the popular and growing Music on Debate Square concert series! Music starts at 6:30pm and concerts will be held on Thursdays for seven weeks in Debate Square, located between the Freeport Library and Union Dairy. Many fan favorites will be back this year and schedules are available at the concerts. The shows are free, but donations are accepted and appreciated. Bring a lawn chair and arrive early as the crowds grew to more than 100 people last year. Concerts usually last about an hour.

Order your peaches

Back by popular demand: peaches! The Stephenson County Farm Bureau is once again offering Illinois peaches from Rendleman Orchard in southern Illinois. Boxes hold 25 pounds of delicious summer fruit and are \$43 per box for members of the Farm Bureau and \$48 for non-members. In addition to the discounted price for Farm Bureau members we will also be offering the members of the Carroll and Stephenson County Farm Bureaus an extra benefit of \$1 per box when paying with cash or check. Membership must be in good standing through August 31, 2025, to receive member discounts. For more info or to place an order, call the Farm Bureau at 815-232-3186

Spaces still available for FAM Summer Art Camps

The first session of the Freeport Art Museum Summer Art Camp is officially underway, and the creativity is flowing. Campers are having a blast exploring new materials, learning from local artists and art teachers, and bringing their imaginations to life. Each day features a different one-day project designed for kids ages 7 through 12, taught by a talented local instructor.

And there's still time to join the fun! The Museum has limited availability for the session from July 14th through the 18th, and there are also open spots for August 4th through 9th. Contact the Museum at 815-235-9755 for more information. That's 815-235-9755.

Freeport Senior Resource Center offers new classes

The Senior Resource Center is offering a number of new classes for the next few months. Two of these focus on better physical health, including Move More for Better Health that highlights the difference between physical activity and exercise, the recommended amount and types of physical activity, and the importance of staying active as you age and a chair yoga class. Other classes include Medicare Basics, an AARP Safe Driver Course, and a Lunch 'n Learn class providing information about how to understand and avoid fraud targeted specifically at seniors.

All classes take place at the Center at 206 East Stephenson Street and registration is required. For more information call 815-235-9777 or email awalker@srcntr.org. That's 815-235-9777.

FHN \$25 Sports Physicals support local schools

FHN healthcare providers are once again offering fast and hassle-free sports physicals at an affordable price for all area athletes, and all proceeds are donated back to the schools affiliated with their local FHN clinics.

For just \$25, each athlete will receive an exam that meets Illinois and Wisconsin eligibility requirements for all sports. Sport physical forms must be completed and signed by a parent before the exam. If a parent does not accompany student, he or she must bring a Consent for Medical Care form signed by a parent or guardian. Forms are available at area schools and online at www.fhn.org/sports-physicals-area.asp. No appointment is necessary. Check the schedule at www.fhn.org for a location coming soon to a location near year.

Tree removal throughout Freeport parks

For the safety of park visitors as well as the long-term health of the community's urban forest, the Freeport Park District is removing 18 potentially hazardous trees in several parks. These trees have been professionally assessed and identified as high-risk due to structural instability, disease, or severe decline. Left unaddressed, they pose a safety risk to the public, nearby structures, and park amenities.

Some trails, playgrounds, or park sections may be briefly closed during the removal process, weather permitting. Crews will work carefully to limit impact. Replanting will take place in the next planting season to help restore and grow the urban tree canopy.

The week ahead...

As we look to the week ahead, don't forget that Highland Community College's Summerset Theatre production of *Cinderella* continues this weekend with both evening and matinee performances. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and \$10 for students and children and can be purchased online at www.Highland.edu or can be purchased in person at the theatre box office or by phone at 815-599-3718.

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by the Mighty Richland Players Theater. They'll be there both Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to serve brats, burgers, hot dogs, and ribeye sandwiches. Also on Saturday morning don't forget to see what's fresh and delicious at the two Farmers' Markets in Freeport as well as one in Lena.

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.

In closing...

In closing, if you haven't already done so, be sure to listen to this week's in-depth interview where guest FREEPOD host Shary Gibson visits with Aquin Principal Beth Heitkamp and Aquin student parent Blake Musser about the recent changes at Aquin. The interview is available online and can be listened to anytime.

Next Tuesday, FREEPOD host Matt Mullen will talk with Freeport Mayor Jodi Miller at about Tutty Baker Fest coming up July 11th through the 13th. Their conversation will post at noon on Tuesday July 1st 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.

As always, 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, WNIJ 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 – for more about what's happening in Freeport, thank you for listening, and again, Happy Juneteenth!

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

LINKS TO OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS NEWSLETTERS

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