



**10 July  
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](http://www.freepod.org)) and the website of our NPR partner WNJI Northern Public Radio ([www.northernpublicradio.org](http://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.

### **Street closures update**

Road work continues with a number of streets in Freeport undergoing updates to water mains, sewer systems, and repaving. Carroll Avenue continues to be closed from Galena to Empire for these upgrades. Construction is nearing completion on Cleveland Street between Burchard and Locust Streets and continues on Blackhawk Avenue between Empire and Dewey Streets. Work on the intersection at Park Boulevard and Stephenson Street will begin soon, as well as on Stephenson Street between Sunset Avenue and Greenfield Drive.

Construction areas are 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.

### **Stephenson County Fair**

The Stephenson County Fair is just around the corner! It begins on Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> and continues through Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup>. In addition to all the great food, exhibits, and vendors, big news for this year's Fair is that gate admission now includes grandstand access!

Admission to the Fair is \$10 per person and now includes general admission to all grandstand events at no extra cost. For the first time in over 30 years, you can enjoy exciting events like the tractor and truck pulls, the Tough Truck Challenge, concerts, and the demolition derby without additional ticket fees. This

change means more value and more reasons to bring the whole family or meet up with friends during an unforgettable fair week.

For more info on events and times just visit the Fair's website at [www.stephensoncountyfair.org](http://www.stephensoncountyfair.org) and don't forget that the Carroll County Fair will be coming up soon too, from August 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup>.



### **FHN conducting Community Health Needs Assessment**

Every three years FHN fulfills a Federal requirement to determine community health needs and then completes an implementation strategy to address them. The last survey and report were done in 2022 and are posted on FHN's website and FHN hopes everyone will take the opportunity to participate in this year's survey to provide input on what priorities should be addressed through 2028. FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors visited with FHN Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Kathy Martinez, who is also FHN's Chief Nursing Officer, about this important healthcare project.

*(audio clip)*

The survey is linked from the homepage of the FHN website at [www.fhn.org](http://www.fhn.org) and only takes about 10 minutes to complete. Please check it out and let your voice be heard when it comes to local healthcare!

### **Ticked off about ticks?**

Multiple mild winters over the past three years and warmer spring and summer temperatures due to climate changes have increased the tick population in Illinois. Ticks usually have a two-to-three-year lifecycle and normal winters with cold temperatures and consistent snow cover kill off many ticks, but warmer average daily highs and nightly lows can shorten the tick life cycle and result in the population explosion that we have been seeing in northwest Illinois over the past two years.

Dr. Jack Herrmann, a retired veterinarian and Professor Emeritus from the University of Illinois, says that the current increase in tick populations and the threat of new tick-borne diseases was predicted in a paper that he and his colleagues published 12 years ago. "Tick species have migrated north with warmer temperatures so, in addition to having to worry about Lyme Disease from deer ticks, we now have to worry about Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Anaplasmosis and Ehrlichiosis. The ticks that typically carry those diseases, which were isolated before to central and southern Illinois but now they're here."

So, what to do? In Illinois, ticks are most active beginning in April. By September, the adults are inactive and are rarely observed. During the spring and summer months, it's a good idea to wear light-colored

protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants with cuffs tucked into socks, and a head covering.

You can apply insect repellent containing 10 percent to 30 percent DEET to clothes and sparingly to exposed skin. Longer lasting repellents containing permethrin can also be used to treat clothes -- especially pants, socks and shoes -- but not skin.

In outdoor areas, walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you and check yourself, children, and other family members every two to three hours for ticks since most ticks seldom attach quickly and rarely transmit disease organisms until they have been attached four or more hours. If your pets spend time outdoors, check them for ticks too and consult your veterinarian for the best preventative products.



If you have an unexplained illness with fever after having been outdoors in areas where ticks were present or traveled to areas where tickborne diseases are common, contact a physician and be sure to tell them you've been outdoors in areas where ticks may have been present.

### **Disaster Preparedness event**

Next Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> join the Stephenson County Farm bureau and the Stephenson County Health Department for a free family presentation about disaster preparedness where you will learn how to prepare yourself and family for the unexpected. The event will last for an hour from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. A light dinner will be provided and each household will leave with starter items for their disaster preparedness kit.

Space is limited so don't delay reserving your spot today at 815-232-3186. This program is free and open to the public. That's 815-232-3186.

### **Master Gardeners available to answer your home gardening questions**

Is it a weed or a tasty herb? Is your soil healthy? And what can you do about those shiny bugs that keep eating your flowers? If you have gardening questions let the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners help you find the answers.

This free service provides research-based horticulture information for the home gardener. You can call the Stephenson County Master Gardener Hotline at 815-235-4125 or submit your questions online at

<https://extension.illinois.edu/jsw/horticulture>. That's 815-235-4125 or find them under "horticulture" on the website for the University of Illinois Extension for Stephenson, Winnebago, and Jo Daviess counties.

### **The week ahead...**

As we look at the week ahead, we're looking forward to Ukulele Express performing tonight at 6:30 as part of the Music on Debate Square concert series. The music starts at 6:30pm in Debate Square, located between the Freeport Library and Union Dairy. The shows are free and last about an hour, but donations are accepted and appreciated. Bring a lawn chair and arrive early as the crowds grew to more than 100 people last year. On Friday, the Freeport Park District is also hosting a free outdoor music event with Music on the Patio at the Park Hills Golf Course on Friday evening from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Then by all means don't miss Freeport's Tutty Baker Festival, beginning tomorrow, Friday July 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. and continuing through Sunday. A carnival, parade, petting zoo, fireworks, axe throwing and lots of other activities are planned with something sure to appeal to everyone. Just head downtown and you can't miss it. If you come on Saturday, be sure to stop by the FREEPOD booth at the Stephenson County Farmers Market from 8:00 a.m. to noon in the downtown parking lot across from the Post Office. We'll have some fun raffles and info about FREEPOD for everyone.

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by the Freeport Noon Kiwanis. 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.

Then on Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup> don't miss the Music Under the Stars Concert by the Freeport Concert Band at 7:00 p.m. at the Koenig Amphitheater in Krape Park, led this week by conductor Scott Benson.

You can also still register for FHN's Healthy Heart Hustle 5K too for some healthy heart fun that raises money to support the FHN Cardiopulmonary Department. The timed race and a 1-mile Victory Lap for alumni, kids, and families will take place on Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:00 a.m. at the FHN Family Healthcare Center-Burchard Hills. For more information and to register, visit the FHN website at

If you are looking for something to do this week or any week, visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://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](http://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 Tim Beck2 host Tim Connors interviews Xavier Lassandro, a Freeport High School graduate currently in his senior year at West Virginia University. Lassandro is a master puppeteer who makes his own puppets and has worked with a number of professional puppet masters, including those involved in the creation of the Muppets. The interview is available online and can be listened to anytime.

Next Tuesday FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel interviews Kate Boyer, Executive Manager for the Stephenson County Fair that begins on Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Their conversation will post at noon on Tuesday July 15<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://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!

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

## LINKS TO OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS NEWSLETTERS



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