



**21 November
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.

City news: demolitions planned and well planning underway

The City Council has approved the demolition and asbestos abatement of nine properties through the funding of the Illinois Housing Development Agency's Strong Communities Program Grant. Kleckner Excavating will perform two of the demolitions and Fischer Excavating will complete seven. The properties to be demolished are on Winneshiek, Benton, Float, Rotzler, Henderson, Warren, and Pine streets.

The City of Freeport is also in the design process of Well House #12 after receiving a commitment from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Eric Sorensen, Freeport's Congressional representative for Illinois's 17th congressional district, to fund \$13.3 million of the originally estimated \$14 million of the project. The City Council approved a building architecture contract and mechanical engineering contract for the project.

Also, here's a quick reminder to be respectful of the street crews completing a number of projects throughout the City in order to be ready for smooth winter travel about town.

Ribbon cutting for Mobile Medical Unit at HCC

The Greater Freeport Partnership is hosting the ribbon cutting ceremony for Highland Community College's Mobile Medical unit at Building N on the Highland campus. The public is invited to attend the event on Monday, November 25th at 11:00 a.m.

The Mobile Lab provides students with field experience and offers Northwest Illinois residents convenient access to care in their own communities. For example, it allows students to work with

nursing staff and nurse practitioners to offer local flu clinics and blood pressure checks, providing welcome access to healthcare in rural areas.

Downtown Freeport kicks off the holidays

The holiday shopping season begins in Downtown Freeport this weekend, November 23, with the City's traditional Mistletoe Walk. Dozens of businesses, shops and boutiques open their doors with holiday music, treats, and shopping specials on Saturday. Special live music appearances are scheduled throughout downtown with community carolers walking the streets and horse-drawn carriage rides are free to all attendees from noon to 4 pm. A Holiday Tree lighting will take place at 5:00 p.m. in front of the Stephenson County Courthouse.

Following the tree lighting, join downtown businesses for the Hot Cocoa Stroll until 8:00 p.m. as you stroll the streets lit by luminary lights. New this year, warm up at the Greater Freeport Partnership's S'mores Station at 15 their 15 West Stephenson Street location.

FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors caught up with Nicole Haas of the Greater Freeport Partnership for more details (*audio clip*).

Tim Connors named Volunteer of the Year

Thank you for that interview, Tim, and FREEPOD is very proud of you for winning Volunteer of the Year at the 2024 Lieutenant Governor's Illinois Main Street Achievement Awards! Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton presented the awards to recognize exceptional contributions in supporting the Illinois Main Street program that strengthen so many communities like Freeport.

Other awards presented went to the Pretzel Pickers for Volunteer Recognition, the Rediscover Your Downtown Campaign for Promotional Approach, the Greater Freeport Partnership for Organizational Approach, and the BASE Camp program for Economic Vitality.

Since 1993, Illinois Main Street has worked with communities across the state to revitalize downtowns and commercial districts through place-based economic development. Illinois Main Street programs have collectively secured nearly \$1.2 billion in public and private reinvestment, added over 11,000 jobs, created over 24,000 new businesses, and rehabilitated 1,220 buildings.



FREEPOD is grateful for the contributions of all the people involved in these efforts, and again, we're especially proud of Tim!

Tim Connors, at left in brown suitcoat, at the Main Street Achievement Awards event.

Historical Society hosts annual holiday gift and craft show

The Stephenson County Historical Museum will host its annual holiday gift and craft show this weekend. Hope for unique gifts handmade by local artists and craftspeople, books on local subjects, pretzel ornaments and jewelry, small antiques, and traditional Rawleigh products. The free event, held at the Museum at 1440 South Carroll Avenue, runs from 9:00 to 5:00 tomorrow, 9:00 to 4:00 on Saturday, and 11:00 to 4:00 on Sunday.

Stockton girls finish second at State

Congratulations to the Stockton girls' volleyball team on their second place finish in the State! The Lady Blackhawks and coach Maddie Pontius earned their first-ever trip to the State finals but lost in the championship match. They finish the season with a 37-3 record and we are proud of how they represented our region. Way to go, Lady Blackhawks!

Highland Community College purchases property

A November 12, 2024, special meeting of the Highland Community College Board was called to discuss the purchase of property, resulting in a unanimous vote to approve the purchase of a residential property at 3156 W. Pearl City Road at a purchase price of \$200,000.

President Kuberski noted that the college has no immediate plans for the property, but its location near the entrance to the Maintenance Building on Pearl City Road allows the college flexibility to construct a safer west entrance to the campus as well as allowing for other possible campus expansion.

In other Highland news, on November 26, 2024, there will be an Audit Meeting at 3 p.m. followed by the regularly scheduled board meeting at 4 p.m. There will be no regular board meeting in December but the board will meet for a quarterly retreat on December 12.

Holiday food drives

FREEPOD has received much information about many food drives in the Freeport area, as well as drives for clothing, toys, and other items for families in need who could use a helping hand during the holiday season. Rather than try to mention all of them and unintentionally missing any of these worthy holiday activities, we suggest that you visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website for additional information in their newsletter or just check with places you frequent throughout the year to find locations accepting items and monetary contributions. There are many opportunities at churches, businesses, schools, and other locations, and your support is greatly appreciated.

Leaf pickup

With all the wind we've had recently, even stubborn leaves are starting to come down and many residents are finishing their fall leaf cleanup. Here are a few reminders from the City about how to

support efficient leaf pickup in your neighborhoods. First, leaf piles need to be on the curb line in straight line. Avoid placing piles near power poles and guy wires as well as storm drains, and don't park close to piles of leaves to allow the leaf-pickup folks ample room to maneuver.

Crews will continue to pass through the City until the first significant snowfall. A leaf collection map is posted on the City's website home page at www.cityoffreeport.org. The City updates it throughout the season but as the crews will make several rounds and if a section is marked as complete that does not mean it will be left unattended for the rest of the season. Crews may just be done with that area for a time and will return again soon. Plan your raking accordingly and remember, no other landscaping waste -- only leaves!

Your November gardens

While you finish up your leaf-raking, the time has come to also complete some final garden tasks complete before winter sets in. Before we store away our garden tools away, consider proper cleaning and storage of equipment to keep it in good working order and to prepare it for the next growing season.

Remove caked on soil from tools using a scraper or a wire brush. Spray metal parts with penetrating oil to prevent rust during storage. Sharpen tools and tighten nuts, bolts and screws and sand rough spots on wooden handled tools and treat with linseed oil. Then store tools in a dry indoor area for the winter.

The week ahead

Once again, there are plenty of things to do in the Freeport area in the coming week. The Children's Hands-On Museum of Northwest Illinois at the Lincoln Mall, often called by its acronym CHOM, is hosting Space Days this Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. As we've reported in the past, they now have a Star Lab and many parents may fondly remember the school district's Star Lab from their days at Freeport Schools. Admission is \$6 for visitors over age 2.

We're also looking forward to the Friends Forever Humane Society Cookie Walk and Holiday Bazaar this Saturday, November 23rd from 8:00 a.m. to noon at the Eagles Club at 1200 West Galena Avenue. In addition to cookies, there'll be wreaths, a Longaberger basket sale, and a room full of gift baskets ready for everyone on your holiday list. And of course, it's all for a great cause in helping to support the adoptable dogs and cats at Friends Forever.

This is also a Saturday for the Stephenson County Winter Farmers Market at the Farm Bureau Building at 210 West Spring Street. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. you can browse taste treats like home-baked bread and desserts, homemade jams and jellies, and crafts from a variety of vendors as you enjoy free coffee.

And finally, with lots of friends and family gatherings coming up, it's important to stay healthy and keep others at these events healthy too so we're reminding you that free COVID tests are available at covidtests.gov.

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'd like to remind you that we're having a year-end 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 FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors visiting with Nate and Penny Ewing Peterson of Wishful Acres Farm and Brewery. Next week, Tim will talk with Steven Winter about the creation of another great local brewery, Generations, about how they got started and their future plans. Their conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, November 26th.

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 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!