



**11 April  
2024**

Welcome to FREEDOD, 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 specific to our community.

Quick reminder: we want to hear from you! We have a short survey online to help us understand how we're doing at giving you the news you've been missing. It'll only take about 5 minutes and you can find it at our website, [www.freepod.org](http://www.freepod.org). We'd really appreciate your feedback, so please respond if you can!

We're getting more listeners every week, and much of that is thanks to you. Please share about us on your social media and thank you for your enthusiasm – now here's news you've been missing.

### **“Non-Sanctuary County” resolution proposed**

As mentioned in last week's broadcast, the Stephenson County Board is considering a resolution to declare the county a “Non-Sanctuary County” as related to the arrival of migrants and undocumented immigrants. It also urges the Illinois Legislature to repeal the 2021 Illinois TRUST act, which generally prohibits local law enforcement from participating in immigration enforcement.

Andrew Chesney, Illinois State Senator for the 45th District, which includes Freeport, is the chief sponsor of Illinois Senate Bill 3596 to repeal the TRUST Act and supports the County Board resolution.

We said we will provide additional information on the impact and roles of migrants and undocumented immigrants overall in our region and we plan to do so. However, for the moment we wanted to remind you that this resolution is still scheduled for a vote next Thursday at the County Board meeting so that you have time to contact your County Board representative if you have questions or comments. Here is where you can find all the Board members and their contact information:

[https://stephensoncountyil.gov/government/county\\_board/index.php](https://stephensoncountyil.gov/government/county_board/index.php)

### **No zooming while cruising**

Did you know that Illinois law prohibits “zooming” while cruising?

Legislation became effective at the start of this year that makes it illegal for motor vehicle operators to attend meetings via video while driving. While hands-free technology has allowed phone calls to

become common in the car, the state of Illinois has made it clear that video conferencing is unacceptable and dangerous for those behind the wheel.

With “Zoom” and “FaceTime” both offering live interfaces, it may be challenging to stop this trend. According to Illinois State Police, more than 7,200 citations and 10,000 warnings for distracted driving were issued in 2022. On average, distracted driving kills more than 3,000 people nationwide each year. That's about eight fatalities per day, according to the National Safety Council.

Hands-free, audio-only calls are still acceptable but no zooming while cruising. Everyone please stay careful out there!

### **Support FHN Pediatric Therapy**

Mark your calendar for Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> for a great evening of bowling fun with your friends and family! That's the date of the Rolling Through the Decades event at this year's Striking for Success bowling tournament at Four Seasons Bowling in Freeport. Funds raised at this year's bowling event will support renovations for pediatric therapy, including new equipment and storage space. Teams can start arriving at 5 p.m. and the first ball is thrown at 6 p.m.

To play, you just need a team of six bowlers, and each team member needs to raise or donate \$50 as an entry fee. Individuals who raise \$100 or more will receive a Striking Success for Children t-shirt and individuals raising \$250 or more will get the t-shirt and a Striking Success for Children hooded sweatshirt!

At the event, all teams will enjoy pizzas and a silent auction. One item already received for the auction is a lady's Harley Davidson leather jacket.

The FHN Foundation invites teams to dress up representing their team's chosen decade, such as Roaring 20s, Rockin' 50s, 60's Counter Culture, or whatever creative decades-related theme your team develops.

To register your team and download pledge forms, head to [fhn.org/strikingssuccess](http://fhn.org/strikingssuccess) or contact the FHN Foundation and get ready to Strike for Success!

### **Keep your hormones healthy**

In February of this year, the Endocrine Society issued its latest report on the health effects of exposures to endocrine disrupting chemicals. The Endocrine Society, founded over 100 years ago, is the preeminent scientific organization in the world devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals, sometimes referred to as EDCs, are individual substances or mixtures that can interfere with our natural hormone functioning and lead to disease or even death.

EDCs in the environment may contribute to disorders with a hormonal basis such as diabetes, neurological disorders, reproductive disorders, inflammation, and compromised immune functioning.

Products that could contain EDCs include furniture, toys and children's products, food packaging, water and soft drink bottles, cosmetics, insecticides, and many others.

This recent report states that EDC exposures can be harmful at any age, but they may be most harmful when people are exposed during sensitive developmental periods, such as during fetal development, infancy and childhood, adolescence, and pregnancy.

Although difficult to do, experts suggest that we reduce our exposure to plastics as much as possible. One of the simplest ways to do so is to not consume food or liquids that have been heated or served hot in plastic containers such as Styrofoam cups and take-out containers or frozen, microwaveable, ready-to-eat meals packed in plastic containers. Here is a list of products that have tested positive for EDCs on our website, as well as an infographic with details on how you can avoid EDCs:

<https://silentspring.org/sites/default/files/product-names.pdf>

[https://static.ewg.org/pdf/kab\\_dirty\\_dozen\\_endocrine\\_disruptors.pdf](https://static.ewg.org/pdf/kab_dirty_dozen_endocrine_disruptors.pdf)

### **Robins arrive**

You probably have already sighted a Robin or two, and the first Robins you see in the year are always a sign that Spring is around the corner, even if we still get a couple of snowstorms as we have this year!

You may have also heard that when the Juncos are gone, it could very well mean that spring is here to stay. Juncos, which are also often called snowbirds, are sparrow-sized birds that are two-tone gray, with the darker gray on the top half of the bird. They migrate to more northern forests in late Spring to nest and raise their young. They will be back here in the fall to spend the winter season.

Determining the date of your last Junco sighting means you must watch for them every day. Starting now, you can put a mark on your calendar for every day that you see one. As the month progresses the marks on your calendar will get more spread out, and eventually they will end. Perhaps then spring is really here to stay!

### **Lifelong Learning birding class**

And speaking of robins, would you like to learn more about our feathered friends? Your knowledge can take flight during a class offered through Highland Community College's Lifelong Learning Program. Basic Birding will be from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 27, at the Oakdale Nature Preserve.

The class begins with an instructional session inside the Mogle Center where students learn about common birds that reside in or migrate through northwest Illinois. Photographs and taxidermy specimens are used to show examples of the birds. Participants then travel the accessible one-third mile paved trail to see and identify birds.

Handouts are provided but attendees should bring a field guide and binoculars if they have them. Binoculars provided through the class will be shared.

The class instructor is Highland biology instructor Juliet Moderow, who says the class is held rain or shine. In case of rain, students will observe birds from the building overhang.

The Basic Birding Class costs \$15. The class begins in two weeks, so please register online at the Lifelong Learners section of Highland's website in the "Academics" section:

<https://highland.corsizio.com/event/6581b93aed769998544d6d86>

### **Stephenson County She-Roes**

March was Women's History Month, and the Greater Freeport Partnership promoted "She-Roes" who were nominated by women who live and work in Stephenson County. The She-Roes celebrated on the Partnerships website are:

- Dorothy Chatman, a case supervisor of Healthcare Plus
- Dr. Rocio del Castillo, Assistant Superintendent for Bilingual Education in Freeport School District 145
- Liz Gerber, Vice President and Chief Student Services Officer at Highland Community College
- Ashley Huffines, Executive Director at the Freeport Public Library
- Chris Kuberski, President of Highland Community College
- Haley Kurtz, English teacher and Yearbook Advisor at Freeport School District 145
- Jane West, Human Resources manager at Hispanic Cheese Makers Nuestro Queso
- Nakita Woods, co-owner of Woods Garage Automotive in Freeport

You can read all about these women leaders at the Greater Freeport Partnership website at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://www.greaterfreeport.com). Congratulations to all these deserving She-Roes of Stephenson County!

### **Local composting project**

Interested in turning your food waste into fertile soil instead of putting it into the landfill? Local households in Freeport have the opportunity to join a project aimed at reducing food waste while having a positive effect on the environment.

Freeport Community Composting has seen remarkable success in its first two years. It was launched in the summer of 2022 through a collaboration between Freeport High School and the Environmental Study Group, supported by the The Foundation for Northwest Illinois, the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, and the University of Illinois Extension.

In its first year, the initiative collected 4,000 pounds of food waste, yielding over 1,000 gallons of compost for the Freeport High School Student Garden. This nutrient-rich soil has fueled the growth of bountiful produce from the Garden, which uses gardening as a tool to teach Freeport youth job readiness skills. You can purchase produce from the Garden at the Stephenson County Farmers Market in downtown Freeport on Saturday mornings beginning May 11<sup>th</sup> or at their Self-Service Farm Stand behind Freeport Middle School just off Locust Street.

The Garden's produce is also sold through the high school's Community Supported Agriculture or CSA program. The high school's CSA Spring and Summer program, which was almost sold out last week, brings boxes of fresh produce to your doorstep every other week during the season.

The Freeport High School garden project is the first known high school in the country to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Electronic Benefits Transfer payments, also known as SNAP and EBT, for purchases from a student garden to encourage and allow broader access to fresh produce. The project is part of a cooperative agreement with the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs and the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service that will provide financial support for the garden in offering to fresh, locally produced foods through 2026.

As the project enters its third year, it has doubled its participant households and compost production. Higher Grounds, a local coffee shop, has also joined the effort by contributing their coffee grounds twice weekly. To get involved, interested parties can contact Ben Skipor at [ben.skipor@fsd145.org](mailto:ben.skipor@fsd145.org) or Deborah Lischwe at [Deborah.lischwe@gmail.com](mailto:Deborah.lischwe@gmail.com). Plans for the garden have already started, so get in touch soon!

### **Juried Art Exhibit at HCC**

The 51<sup>st</sup> annual District High School Juried Art Exhibit at Highland Community College opens next Wednesday, April 17 at the Highland Gallery in the Ferguson Fine Arts Center.

The juried art exhibit is designed to recognize the many talented high school artists in Northwest Illinois and celebrate their visual contributions to the community. According to Art Instructor and Gallery Director Robert Apolloni, "Highland Gallery has been hosting this juried high school art exhibit for 51 years, serving as a highly successful collaboration between the college and our district high schools."

An Opening Reception and Awards Presentation will take place on Wednesday, April 17 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Awards will be given at 5:30 p.m. outside the Highland Gallery. The exhibit continues through Wednesday May 8<sup>th</sup> during campus hours 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and is free to the public.

### **Rate FREEPOD on podcast platforms**

Now that FREEPOD is available on most major podcast platforms like Amazon, Apple, and iHeart, we need your help! All of these platforms use an algorithm to place podcasts they host, and those with the most positive reviews appear at the top of platform searches for that name. These reviews also help the platform make suggestions to new listeners about podcasts they might enjoy, and we would like lots of people to have FREEPOD suggested for them.

To help make that happen, scroll to the bottom of the list of FREEPOD episodes you're receiving on whatever platform you're using. There will be a scale there to ask you to assign a rating to FREEPOD, usually one to five stars, with five stars being the best. You can also leave comments. Usually there is no limit on how many times you can provide a rating, so you could just do so after listening to every new episode.

We hope you'll give us good reviews, and appreciate your comments too. Your input can help us move right on up those platform ratings!

**Until next week...**

As we close, we'd like to let everyone in on something special coming your way on next week's FREEPOD episode. It will be hosted by students from the Freeport High School broadcast journalism class, led by educator Jena Kleindl! Class reporters have done most of the stories, and the hosts themselves will be students. We're very excited to have been able to partner with the school on this special episode, and hope to be able to do so in semesters to come. It'll be a great episode, so be sure to tune in!

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 related to state and national news, and more.

As we say each week, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the help of many local supporters. We're especially appreciative for the Mass Communications Department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast, and to our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, Highland and Team FREEPOD!

If you have story suggestions or would like to donate to support FREEPOD (now tax-deductible), visit our website at [www.freepod.org](http://www.freepod.org).

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