



**4 April
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 specific to our community.

A reminder: we know you may not be able to jot down details when we refer to a URL or a phone number in a story, such as where to find more information or register for a program. No worries: we always include that information in the script for the episode that you can find online at our website, www.FREEPOD.org. We also occasionally include photos for specific stories.

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

The Stephenson County Board is considering a resolution that declares 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.

There is a lot we don't know about advantages and disadvantages of an action such as this. So, we're talking to a number of sources to find the answers to questions such as:

1. How many people might be coming?
2. Where are they primarily from?
3. How would more migrants impact our current homeless situation?
4. How would this impact our local job market?
5. What are the implications for local law enforcement?
6. How prepared are we when it comes to housing, healthcare, education or training, and support for non-English speakers?
7. What experiences have other Midwest communities like Freeport had with migrant populations?

We will report what we learn before the resolution comes up for a vote, which is currently planned for the April 18th County Board meeting.

Solar eclipse on Monday

Day will turn into night during the middle of the afternoon this coming Monday, April 8, and the local view of the event will be pretty good. This will be a total solar eclipse with the moon passing in front of the sun and blocking the sun's light. According to nasa.gov, the sun will be more than 88 percent obscured locally.

The show will start at 1:29 p.m. when the moon will begin to cover the sun. The two will come into greatest alignment between 2 p.m. and 2:04 p.m., when the blocking of the sun will be at its peak. The moon will then begin to move away, finally departing from the sun at 2:35 p.m. when the skies will return to normal.

If you plan to view the eclipse, remember to never look directly at the sun without protective eye wear. Approved eclipse glasses are available online, or you can also make pinhole viewers with directions you can also find online with a quick search for the term "eclipse glasses."

Total solar eclipses occur regularly around the world. The next one is in 2026 in Greenland, Iceland, and Spain. The next total solar eclipse that can be viewed from the contiguous U.S. will be on Aug. 23, 2044. Unfortunately, it will only be visible in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Given that timing, you might want to take advantage of Monday's event!

Eclipse party at the Library

Or, you might want to attend the Eclipse Party at the Freeport Public Library!

On Monday, April 8, the Library is hosting a get-together for all ages to learn about what makes this particular eclipse unusual and test our knowledge about our sun, which is the galaxy's biggest star. Kids can even make some solar slime. Then everyone will head outside to watch the daytime sky turn dark. Eye protection will be provided while supplies last.

The Library event begins at 1:00 and will finish at 3:30 to allow plenty of time for eclipse-related information-sharing and fun as well as experiencing the eclipse itself. As noted in our earlier story, the eclipse will start around 12:50 p.m., reach its darkest point around 2 p.m., and be over by 3:20 p.m. No registration is necessary – just come to the Library!

In the meantime, the Library has a website link for a localized eclipse simulator; you can find it on their website when you click on "events" or here: https://eclipse2024.org/eclipse-simulator/2024/index.html?city_id=12359

Highland Community College board retreat

The Highland Community College board held their Spring retreat meeting on Thursday, March 14. In addition to a lot of discussion about a new sports facility, which is covered in more detail in our next story, college president Chris Kuberski reported that Highland has been awarded a \$150,000 dual credit grant, enabling HCC to expand dual credit offerings in the western part of the district.

Kuberski also alerted the Board that there will soon be a \$500,000 request for new positions, including a replacement auto mechanics instructor and a third full-time agriculture instructor. Other positions to be

filled include a “success coach” and half-time positions in Career Services and Testing, a “pathways coordinator” whose salary will be covered by grant, and an information technology position.

The group discussed how students would be taught about artificial intelligence and how that subject will be incorporated into future curriculums. Kuberski also reported that interviews for the vice president of academics are beginning, following the resignation of Sam Adgasi who previously held the position.

In addition, Kuberski noted that much praise was received from basketball teams that participated in the recent regional tournament hosted by Highland.

New athletic facility proposed for Highland Community College

At the recent Spring retreat meeting of the Highland Community College board, Student Services VP Liz Gerber and Athletic Director Pete Norman summarized the findings of Sports Facilities, Inc., a consultancy hired by HCC over one year ago to do a feasibility study for a new campus athletic facility.

The new facilities are currently projected as a nearly 60,000 square foot addition to the space now occupied by the Family YMCA of Northwest Illinois in partnership with Highland. Input is being gathered from a number of sources, including the Y and Highland students.

A variety of needs have been proposed, including practice facilities for soccer, softball and baseball, golf, cheer and dance team, and possibly track and field; a larger track; and training rooms, locker rooms, and an expanded fitness center. Additional space would also be needed for offices, meeting rooms, and storage.

College President Chris Kuberski expects that the total amount needed for this expansion would be \$25 to \$30 million dollars and that building an addition instead of separate building will keep costs down. Much of this amount could be funded by capital bonds with the difference covered by fund raising, grants, and partnerships. Next steps including consulting with an architect and finalizing financing options that are still being explored.

Civilian police academy

The Freeport Police Department is taking applications for its Civilian Police Academy until next Wednesday, April 10. This behind-the-scenes course explains all operations of the Police Department.

The 8-week course begins April 18 and has a two-hour class on Thursday evenings, each featuring a different part of the department. There also are interactive parts of the Academy. Applications are online at cityoffreeport.org and class size is limited.

FREEPORT CIVILIAN POLICE POLICE ACADEMY

Spring 2024 Application

Application Deadline: April 10, 2024

The Civilian Police Academy is an 8-week, **no cost** program designed to create a better understanding and build relationships between citizens and the Freeport Police Department through a series of evening classes.

Class sessions will meet every Thursday from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Participation is limited; complete your application TODAY!

Spring 2024 classes begin April 18, 2024

Applications available online at cityoffreeport.org

VOICES Book Nook half-price sale

Pick up a good book and help a good cause at the annual VOICES Book Nook Spring half-price sale! The sale runs from today through next Saturday, April 13th with proceeds benefiting VOICES of Stephenson County.

Diane Leverton, VOICES Book Nook manager, says the sale includes gently used hardcover and paperback books, DVDs, records, puzzles and books on CDs. Some rare and collectible books will be available as well as a silent auction featuring a book-themed quilt.

Leverton also reminds listeners that donations of books or materials are **not** accepted during the sale because it's too hectic. The sale opening typically draws large crowds with people standing in line to get first pick. So better get there early!

The VOICES Book Nook is located in Lincoln Mall in Freeport. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursdays. VOICES of Stephenson County offers services that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Historical Society annual dinner

The Stephenson County Historical Society is hosting its annual fundraising dinner on Thursday, April 18th at the Eagles Club in Freeport. The event begins with a social hour at 5:00. Dinner is served at 6:00 and at 7:30, attendees will enjoy a presentation titled "How History Can Shape a Community."

Freeporter Danaïro Thomas is the presenter and also the creator of "The Soil Project," an immersive documentary project dedicated to uncovering the rich tapestry of the Black community of Stephenson County. Through extensive research, compelling interviews, and the exploration of cultural contributions, the project sheds light on untold stories and historical milestones.

Thomas will discuss how to use history to understand both the struggles and achievements of those who came before us and how learning about the past can help improve our future through greater awareness, pride, and understanding of our county's diverse heritage.

Tickets for this fundraiser are \$50 per person, and registration is due by next Friday, April 12th. Contact the Historical Society for more information at 815-232-8419.

"Ordinary People" at Winneshiek Theatre

"Ordinary People" is on stage at the Winneshiek Players theatre starting next Friday, April 12th. The play is about a family living in the aftermath of the death of one of their two sons. The other son is overcome by grief and misplaced guilt to the extent of a suicide attempt. He feels trapped between his parents and is trying to hold the family together. In 1980, the play was made into a major film starring Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore and won four Oscars, including Best Picture.

Show dates are April 12th, 13th, and 19th at 7:30 p.m. and April 20th at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Non-member tickets are \$17 with discounts available for groups of 10 or more. Winneshiek Players is one of the oldest continually running, all-volunteer amateur theatres in the country, beginning in Freeport in 1916. This is the theatre's 95th season.

Two music events this Saturday night

The Jimmys, a blues band from Madison, will perform this Saturday, April 6 at the Masonic Event Center in Freeport. The Jimmys are a leading band at many blues festivals and a fan favorite in the Midwest, and received a 2021 Independent Blues Award Winner for Best Contemporary Blues Song. They have produced four albums.

Doors open at 6:00 and the show begins at 7:00. Food and a cash bar are available. General admission tickets are \$20 and are available online at greaterfreeport.com/events.

If you're more into punk than blues, we've got you covered there too. Also on Saturday night, PunkaMania is happening at 7:00 pm at The Exchange, which is located at 223 S. Chicago in downtown Freeport. This punk rock show brings in a super Chicago band called The Iron Spiders, whose members include performers from 88 Fingers Louie, The Bollweevils, and Live Band Karaoke. Also on the bill are Freeport favorites Badkin, Flaccid Pickle, and Blackcat Manor.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at Mort's Bar and Grill in downtown Freeport. For more information, check out Flaccid Pickle and PunkaMania on Facebook.

Sign up for FREEPOD on a podcast platform

And finally, just a reminder that after this week's episode we will no longer be sending email announcements from the FREEPOD team to remind you about new episodes. However, reminders will be sent by the numerous podcast platforms on which FREEPOD appears. You can also listen to all the archived episodes of FREEPOD on these platforms.

If you are unsure how to sign up for FREEPOD through a podcast platform, please visit our website for easy instructions. It only takes two or three clicks, and we've got screen captures to show you exactly how to do it on your smart phone or computer.

Until next week...

As we close, we have a correction to the story about SHOWTIME in last week's episode. Through an epic comedy of errors, we messed up the dates. So, for the record, SHOWTIME is on stage at the Jeanette Lloyd Theatre at the Freeport School District Middle School April 4th through 6th – that's tonight, tomorrow night, and Saturday night—at 7:00 p.m. and on Sunday, April 7th, at 2:00. Reservations are required and tickets can be purchased by calling 815-232-0428 or online at fsd145.org/tickets.

For anyone who doesn't know, Showtime is a musical production put on by the Freeport High School Varsity choir and showtime band members, who rehearse all year and go on a tour during spring break performing at schools and other venues. The money raised through the Freeport performances helps pay for the tour. Oh, and we also messed up the number of years this event has been an annual event. This is the 44th year for the program, not the 42nd. We apologize to the school and hope they have record attendance!

As always, FREEPOD is proud to be part of a growing movement to stop and reverse the decline of local news sources in Illinois, and we invite you to tune in for news about Freeport businesses, City plans and

progress, area rewards and recognition, local impacts related to state and national news, and more.

As you know, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the help of many local supporters. We're especially appreciative to the Mass Communications Department at Highland Community College for their help 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), check out our website at www.freepod.org.

Check back next week for more news you've been missing!