



**27 June
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.

Please continue to share about us on your social media and thank you for your enthusiasm – now here's local news you've been missing.

New water well for Freeport

The City of Freeport Water Department is a busy place! They have announced they will receive \$6.5 million to begin constructing Well #12 and its filter plant, bringing a completely new source of water and more safe drinking water to residents. This amount is in addition to \$900,000 already accepted from Congressman Eric Sorensen.

The Lead Service Line Replacement Program is also receiving over \$2 million for Phase 4, the potential final phase of the City's planned water improvements, ensuring a safer future for the City. Both of these new funding sources are part of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency forgivable loans program.

What do you need to do in your garden in July?

As summer starts to heat up, there are several tasks we should do in the garden. Start with deadheading annual plants to keep them blooming and fertilize container plantings.

In the lawn, consider raising your mowing height to 2.5 to 3 inches as temperatures exceed 85 degrees Fahrenheit to help shade the roots of the grass plants and keep your lawn healthy and strong.

Be sure to water newly planted trees and shrubs, and finally, get rid of those weeds so they don't go to seed. Remember that when you let weeds go to seed, a year of seeding equals 7 years of weeding.

If you have home gardening questions, the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners are here to help! Just give them a call at (815) 235-4125.

A peach of a deal

The Stephenson County Farm Bureau is once again offering fresh, delicious peaches from Rendleman Orchards of southern Illinois. It is a family business that has been in operation since 1873. A portion of each box ordered will be donated to the Stephenson County Farm Bureau Foundation, which provides high school and college students with scholarships and funds the Ag in the Classroom Program in Stephenson County.

25-pound boxes are \$43 for Farm Bureau members and \$48 for non-members. Orders need to be placed by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24th and can be picked up at the Farm Bureau office on Wednesday, August 7th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Stop in the office or call 815-232-3186 to reserve your peach order.

Garbage Rates Frozen

Council members approved freezing the garbage pick-up rate for Freeport residents before the monthly rate was set to increase \$2.50 on July 1, 2024. This revised ordinance helps residents by pausing a contract that saw increased rates for several more years.

Per ordinance, the rate for garbage pick-up that customers pay would increase from \$21.83 to \$24.33 on July 1, 2024. Based on positive balances in the Health and Environment Fund, the City took this opportunity to allow residents to remain at the lower rate until the increase date comes up again in 2025.

Childhood vaccinations and measles

Since 1963, when measles vaccine became a standard component of childhood vaccinations, cases of measles dropped so dramatically that it was considered eliminated in the U.S. by the year 2000. However, with ongoing global transmission, infections in the United States still occur.

Measles is highly contagious. About 10 people will become infected if they are unprotected and in close contact with a person infected with measles. In contrast, about 3 people will become infected when in close contact with a person infected with the COVID virus.

In March of this year, a measles outbreak occurred in a migrant shelter Chicago. Most cases occurred in unvaccinated persons. Of the 57 Chicago measles cases, most were associated with living in or being in contact with persons associated with the shelter. A prompt and coordinated response with a high-coverage mass vaccination campaign reduced the size and duration of the outbreak.

Through the first five months of 2024, there have been 67 cases of measles in Illinois, compared to 38 cases in the previous nine years.

The best protection against measles is measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. MMR vaccine provides long-lasting protection against all strains of measles. Receipt of 1 and 2 doses of measles vaccine is 93% and 97% effective, respectively, in preventing measles.

Over the past ten years, MMR vaccination rates have held steady in Illinois at 97%. During the same time period, Stephenson County has seen 98% coverage, slightly better than the state average. Way to go, Stephenson County!

School physicals

Speaking of vaccinations, will your child start Kindergarten, 6th or 9th grade this fall? They will need a school physical to register, so avoid the last-minute hassle and give their provider's office a call today!

FHN provides speedy referral service if you need to find a provider for your child. Just call the FHN Physician Referral Line at 815-599-7060 Monday through Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or Fridays from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You'll have an appointment scheduled before you hang up the phone.

Registration open for 2024-2025 school year

And speaking of school coming up soon, new-student registration is now open for the 2024-2025 school year for Freeport School District 145, for new kindergarteners as well as students of any age who have not previously attended classes here. Registration can be done online at www.fsd145.org in either English or Spanish.

Franchise agreement with Comcast

The City of Freeport has a Cable TV Franchise agreement with Comcast of Illinois/Indiana/Ohio which is expiring soon. After negotiations and on the recommendation of City Manager Boyer, the Freeport City Council reviewed and renewed a new 10-year franchise agreement for Comcast service in the Freeport City limits.

The City receives tax from the services that Comcast sells within the community, and this agreement also supports the City's connected and accessible community goal in their Strategic Plan.

Farmers markets

Local spring and summer produce is beginning to be ready for your table!

This is a reminder that we're lucky to have four Farmers Markets in Stephenson County, including the Stephenson County Farmer's Market downtown, the Freeport Farmer's Market on South St, and the Lena Farmer's Market near Main Street.

All of these markets are open for you to find the freshest produce, baked goods, and many other great items every Saturday morning (starting times vary from 7:30 to 9:00, and closing times are 11:00 a.m. or noon – for specific times, head to the Greater Freeport Partnership website at <https://greaterfreeport.com/visit/weekly-events-guide/> or see the poster in the printed version of this

episode at the FREEPOD website. You can also check out the McConnell market in the McConnell VFW lot on the second Sunday of each month from 10:00 to noon.

Eat healthy....and local!



Music Under the Stars Patriotic Concert

The 4th of July is next week and the Freeport Concert Band is ready to kick off the holiday with their annual Patriotic Concert, sponsored by Tri Star Metals. Join the Freeport Concert Band this Sunday night, June 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Koenig Amphitheatre in Krape Park for an evening of patriotic music celebrating our country and Armed Forces. The conductor for the evening is Highland Community College's Scott Stich, and the featured vocalist is Michelle Stubbe ("[Stooby](#)").

You won't want to miss the added excitement provided by Battery G, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery* and their period cannons in several numbers. We request, though, that you leave your pets at home as they may not be as excited about the cannons as we are, and we don't want to startle them.

We hope to see you there!

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The most recent few episodes will still always be available on our website, and there is also a print version of those episodes too if you prefer to read your news. We do not provide print versions of our Tuesday in-depth interviews.

Please take just a moment to sign up through a podcast platform so you’ll always receive reminders and click-through convenience for the most recent postings!

The week ahead...

As always, there’s plenty to do Freeport in the week ahead, starting with Music on Debate Square tonight, June 27th. This week’s performers are the creative musicians of Ukulele Express 815, so bring your lawn chairs or blankets, treats from Union Dairy, and join us at 6:30. Dogs on leashes are welcomed. Debate Square is located right next to the Freeport Public Library whose address is 100 E. Douglas. There is no cost, although free-will offerings are gladly accepted.

There’s still time too to get ready for the FHN Gran Fonda Bike Ride Against Cancer this Saturday, June 29! Enjoy a healthy bike ride through some of the most beautiful roads in northwest Illinois while fighting cancer! The ride begins at 8 a.m. at the Tutty’s Crossing Trailhead at 250 E. Stephenson Street with your choice of 30-, 50-, and 75-mile paved routes as well 40- and 50-mile gravel routes and a short 5-mile out-and-back Family Fun Ride. Find out more, including links to GPS maps and cue sheets, and register online at www.fhn.org.

And finally, if you’re looking forward to fireworks on the 4th, you’ll need to wait just a bit longer in Freeport. Fireworks this year will be part of Tutty Baker Fest, a fun-filled community celebration with something for everyone taking place from July 12th to the 14th. We’ll have a lot more info on this big event next week but with Independence Day coming up next week, we wanted to let you know that there WILL be fireworks on Friday, July 13th.

Until next week...

As we close, we’re pleased to announce that next week’s Tuesday In-Depth Interview will feature FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel interviewing Dr. Jack Herrmann. As a Clinical Associate Professor in Veterinary Clinical Medicine at the University of Illinois-Champaign, Dr. Herrmann is a practitioner of veterinary medicine. He also has a Master’s degree in public health and in 2003, took a sabbatical from his veterinary practice to serve as a Congressional Science Fellow in the U.S. Senate office of Illinois Senator Dick Durbin, where he developed public health policy related to prion diseases, dietary supplements, genetically engineered organisms and public health workforce development. Their conversation will be posted at noon on Tuesday, July 2nd.

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 as well as our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, Highland and Team FREEPOD!

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