



**6 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.

We're getting new 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 local news you've been missing.

Timber Industries

In the aftermath of some destructive storms, we want to remind you that Freeport has a drop-off location for woody debris that is open to public every weekday from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Timber Industries at 2133 South Walnut Avenue accepts drop-off of small to medium woody debris including branches and cut-up logs. Timber Industries does not accept grass clippings, bagged or unbagged leaves, soil, or rocks.

Residents looking for ways to dispose of yard waste like clippings, leaves, soil, or rocks can purchase a yard waste toter trash bin from Gill's Freeport Disposal. Grass clippings can also be spread back onto their lawns to help fertilize future growth. The City of Freeport does not provide drive-by pickup of such landscape waste. Here is the link for Gill's Freeport Disposal:

<https://www.gillsfreeportdisposal.com/our-services>.

FACC expands, moves location

The Freeport Area Church Cooperative will be expanding its food pantry operation after deciding to move it to another location. FACC will be leasing the former Radex Stereo building on West Galena Avenue as the new home for the food pantry, roughly across from the FasMart gas station.

The move will allow FACC to better serve its clients on the west end of Freeport with more space for food storage, offices and meetings with social services staff. Renovations are ongoing and FACC staff hope to move into the new location sometime in June or early July.

BEAUTIFUL at HCC

As part of its Summerset 49 season, *BEAUTIFUL, the Carole King Musical, A Woman's Struggle to Be Heard*, will be presented June 21st, 22nd, 27th, and 29th at 7:30 and June 23 and 30 at 3 PM at the Ferguson Fine Arts Performing Center at Highland Community College.

Directed by Randy Haldeman, the musical is the inspiring true narrative of Carole King's struggle to be heard and her journey from teenage songwriter to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. It is based on a book by Douglas McGrath that tells the story of her early life, using songs that she wrote, often together with Gerry Goffin, as well as other contemporary songs by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, Phil Spector and others. This musical has 26 roles and is rated PG13.

Tickets are \$10, \$18, and \$20. To buy tickets and reserve our seats, call the box office Monday thru Thursday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at 815- 599- 3718.

Freeport Student Garden accepts SNAP and Link Match Programs

You may recall we've mentioned that the Freeport Student Garden, also known as FSG, was one of the first student gardens to be approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, also known as the SNAP program. Customers can use their benefits to purchase produce, meat, eggs, plants, and baked goods all grown or produced by Freeport High School students.

The Garden is now also participating in the Link Match program which is a 1-to-1 match program. As an example, if someone has \$25 in EBT/Link/SNAP benefits available to them, they get an additional \$25 to spend.

The Link Match Program is administered by Link Up Illinois. For many low-income Illinoisans, the only foods available to them are those that may be purchased with their Link card. In order for farmers markets and student gardens to be accessible to them, they must have Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) systems in place that allow customers to use their Link cards.

Link Match doubles the value of Link purchases at local farmers markets and gardens by providing matching currency redeemable at the market for fresh local fruits and vegetables. Combined with targeted outreach efforts, these programs have dramatically increased Link purchases at markets and gardens, which nearly vanished when "food stamps" shifted from physical stamps to electronic bank cards. Link Up Illinois ensures more Illinois families are able to access and afford the freshest fruits and vegetables grown in Illinois! For more information, visit https://www.experimentalstation.org/link_match.

Summer EBT/SUN Bucks

In other food-friendly news, this summer, low-income families with school-aged children in Illinois will receive money for free groceries -- but they may have to apply for the benefit. The state is launching Summer EBT, which is short for electronic benefits transfer, a new grocery benefits program that provides families with \$120 for each eligible school-aged child to buy groceries when school is on summer break. The program will also be known as SUN Bucks.

Summer is a time when many children lose access to meals they normally receive at school, and when households might need a little extra help putting meals on the table. Most families will get these benefits automatically, but some Freeport School District 145 families will need to complete a Household Application with the Nutrition & Dining Services Department. This new program is being offered in addition to free meals that kids of all ages can get at summer school and open meal sites in the district.

Freeport School District 145 Students are automatically eligible for the program if the household already participates in SNAP, TANF, income-eligible Medicaid or the foster program, or the student qualifies based upon the household income meeting the requirements for free or reduced-price school meals.

Freeport School District 145 students who may not meet the above criteria but think they may be eligible will need to apply via the household application by July 1. Benefits are paid via a LINK card, which will be issued in late August or early September, according to the Illinois Department of Human Services. Contact the FSD administration office at 815-232-0300 for more details.

Bird flu and you

In February, 2022, federal veterinarians confirmed bird flu in a commercial poultry flock in the United States. Since then, the highly contagious disease has been found in poultry operations throughout the country. Close to home, the second bird flu outbreak in a week was reported Sunday, with nearly 103,000 turkeys infected in northwest Iowa's Cherokee County, following a report from the Iowa Department of Agriculture that an egg facility with 4.2 million laying hens was also found infected. The birds at both facilities will be destroyed to prevent the highly contagious virus from spreading. The disease is fatal to domestic birds, who are believed to be infected by migrating wild birds that often don't appear sick.

Two months ago, a multi-state outbreak of bird flu, called H5N1, was reported in dairy cows, which was followed by reports of the disease being confirmed in herds of dairy cows in a number of other states, so far not including Illinois. This is the first time that bird flu virus was found in cattle and has been the subject of quite a bit of media attention. The spread of the H5N1 virus within herds indicates that cow to cow spread occurred, likely through mechanical means. While bird flu is deadly among birds, this isn't the case for dairy cattle. Infected animals recover from generally mild symptoms with supportive treatment and few to no deaths.

When it comes to humans, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, confirmed one case of bird flu infection in a worker on a dairy farm in Texas, which was presumed to be infected with the virus. The affected individual had very mild symptoms and recovered without any complications.

People who have job-related or recreational exposure to infected birds or animals, including cows, are at greater risk of contracting bird flu virus. CDC believes the current risk to the general public from bird flu viruses is very low.

The Food and Drug Administration does not currently have concerns about the safety of milk products that are pasteurized, including pasteurized cheese, sold nationwide. No active virus has been found in

any commercial dairy products because the pasteurization process kills disease causing bacteria and viruses.

Because of the limited information available about the possible transmission of bird flu virus in raw, unpasteurized milk, it is recommended that people do not consume raw milk or raw milk cheeses, especially that which is produced by infected herds.

A word or two about raw milk

In follow-up to that story, and because there are locations in our rural community where raw milk can be purchased, we wanted to update everyone on how drinking raw milk can be related to bird flu.

Based on the limited research and information available, the FDA does not know at this time if bird flu virus can be transmitted through consumption of unpasteurized, raw milk and milk products, including products such as cheese and yogurt that are made from unpasteurized milk from infected cows.

However, FDA has long known that raw milk can harbor dangerous germs that pose serious health risks to consumers. The Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, which requires that all dairy products sold through interstate commerce be pasteurized, originated in 1924 and has dramatically reduced the risk for foodborne illness associated with dairy products for 100 years.

According to a recent CDC study, in the eleven-year period from 1998 through 2018, there were over 200 outbreaks linked to drinking raw milk that resulted in illnesses and hospitalizations. Of these, 78% occurred in states that allow the on-farm sale of raw milk.

Looking ahead...

There's a lot of summer fun ahead in Freeport! Here are two for just tomorrow night.

Healthy Kids Day and FHN Health Fair 2024

If you're looking for some family fun tomorrow night, be sure to check out Healthy Kids Day and the FHN Health Fair, which is tomorrow, Friday June 7th from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. in Parking Lot C at Highland Community College. A joint effort of FHN and the YMCA of Northwest Illinois, this event is free and open to the public with many family-friendly activities brought to you by local not-for-profits in Freeport and Stephenson County on the Highland Community College campus lawn. The festivities include:

- Fun with animals at the Little Rascals petting zoo and Hoo Haven Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center;
- K-9 demonstrations with the Stephenson County Sheriff's Association;
- Barrel train rides;
- Snack and dinner options, available for purchase from several food trucks;

And much more! This event, which is the largest annual public event at the YMCA, is designed for families of all ages to learn more about healthy lifestyle options and support available to them in

Freeport and beyond. FHN will offer a free blood pressure screening and in all, over 30 local agencies will be providing fun and educational activities for kids. Join them...tomorrow!

Music on Chicago

On the music scene, the ever-popular Music On Chicago season returns to downtown Freeport tomorrow night, Friday, June 7th, with a performance by *In the Stix With DJ Cup*.

In The Stix is one of the hottest Modern Country cover bands to emerge out of Chicagoland area. The band members are highly talented with a great stage presence that's full of energy. Inspired by touring acts such as Jason Aldean, Keith Urban, Brantley Gilbert, Luke Bryan, and Randy Houser, the band works to get the audience fired up, moving, dancing to the beat and involved in the show. Their goal is to give everyone a musical experience of "Rockin' Modern Country Music at Its Best" every time!

Enjoy the band at the Ferguson Art Plaza across from the Freeport Public Library on the corner of Chicago Avenue and Douglas Street. The grounds are ideal for a social gathering with friends or bring the family and blankets to take your spot on the lawn.

\$5 admission includes access to the concert as well as local food vendors with snack and dinner options. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are available. See you at the Plaza!

Until next week...

As we close, we want to remind you about next week's in-depth interview that will be posted at noon on Tuesday, June 11th. FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel is interviewing The Computer Tutor Ed Alderman to get his tips on how to identify and avoid email scams and to make sure you don't fall into any traps. This is a really informative interview that you won't want to miss! If you are subscribed to FREEPOD through a podcast platform you will receive notification of it as soon as it's posted. If you haven't yet subscribed to FREEPOD through the podcast platform of your choice, please visit our website at www.freepod.org for super-easy instructions on how to do it so that you'll never miss notification of a new in-depth interview or our regular Thursday newscasts. It will also be posted on the FREEPOD website for a limited time, as are all our previous newscast episodes.

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!

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

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