



**19 December
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 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.

FREEPOD over the holidays

As we begin, we want to let you know that FREEPOD will not have news podcasts on Thursday, December 26th or Thursday, January 2nd so this is our last news podcast of 2024. This isn't because we wouldn't have anything to say – there's always lots going on in the Freeport area! However, we record these Thursday podcasts on Wednesdays and Christmas is on Wednesday the 25th and New Year's Day is January 1st.

We will, however, have in-depth interviews for both those weeks! On Tuesday, December 24th FREEPOD and TimBeck2 hosts Tim Connors and Becky Connors will visit with LaFrancine Baker about Kwanzaa, which begins on Thursday, December 26th and continues through January 1st. Then on Tuesday, December 31st, we take a look back at all the in-depth interviews we did in 2024. FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel joins Tim and Becky to review the many topics we covered, what they learned and enjoyed, and what they hope you, our listeners, also learned and enjoyed. Both of these in-depth interviews will post on their respective Tuesdays at noon. That's Kwanzaa with LaFrancine Baker at noon on Christmas Eve Day, and our in-depth interviewers' roundtable discussion at noon on New Year's Eve Day.

Our regular Thursday podcasts will return on Thursday, January 9th and between now and then, we at FREEPOD wish you all a very merry holiday season and a happy year ahead in 2025!

Trash and bulk item collection

Beginning in January, residents who live within the city limits of Freeport will be able to bring trash and bulk items to the Freeport Transfer Station located at 2133 S. Walnut Road from 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. the first Saturday of every month. For January, that will be Saturday, January 4th.

ID's will be required for verification of residency. Tires, hazardous waste such as paint and oils, TVs, computers, or other electronics **are not accepted**.

City officials urge residents to take advantage of these free events in order to eliminate illegal dumping within the City. Events for the collection of items not accepted on these Saturdays will be organized later in the year. Freeport thanks the partnership of Gill's Freeport Disposal for this landmark initiative.

CPR/First Aid classes at YMCA

The Family YMCA of Northwest Illinois has teamed up with the American Red Cross to provide CPR/First Aid classes to the public. The classes, which include defibrillator training, will be offered on seven dates through June 2025. The first class will be held the day after Christmas, Thursday December 26th, from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the Y with the next class scheduled for Thursday, January 9th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Cost for the class is \$50 for members of the Y and \$60 for those who are not members. We'll keep you updated on the rest of the class dates as they draw nearer. Register online at www.freeportymca.org.

FAMILY YMCA OF NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

CPR/AED/FIRST AID

- Dec 26 12 - 2 PM
- Jan 9 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Feb 10 12 - 2 PM
- Mar 12 4 - 6 PM
- Apr 9 10 - 12 PM
- May 16 6 - 8 PM
- June 11 5:30 - 7:30 PM

Member \$50 Non-Member \$60

American Red Cross

Proud Provider of Red Cross Training

the Y

Dreaming of travel in 2025?

If you're dreaming of travel in your plans for next year, you'll be interested in a presentation by the Stephenson County Farm Bureau and Tri State travel on Thursday, January 15th at 5:00 p.m. at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau's offices at 210 West Spring Street in Freeport.

There will be info about a Mackinaw Island trip in 2025 and a trip to Australia and New Zealand in 2026. Please call the Farm Bureau at 815-232-3186 to help ensure that there will be enough materials for all

attendees. The program is free and both the program and these trips are open to everyone, not just Farm Bureau members.

National Day of Racial Healing

On January 18th, the Freeport Branch of the NAACP will host the Freeport area's National Day of Racial Healing at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau building in Freeport from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This national celebration is dedicated to fostering understanding and promoting healing in our community. It brings people together to engage in meaningful conversations and activities that promote unity and respect.

The event is free and open to the public, and reservations can be done online at www.eventbrite.com by searching on "National Day of Racial Healing" and selecting the Freeport location. The Farm Bureau building is located at 210 West Spring Street in Freeport.

Twice as Nice news

Twice As Nice Consignment Shop and also the Home goods store in downtown Freeport will be moving to a new location in the former Menards space at the Lincoln Mall in Freeport. All of the clothing and the home store items will be combined in the new location.

In preparation for the move, the downtown home store will close on December 21 with the clothing store closing soon thereafter. Owner Carmela Jackson said she hopes the move will be complete in February.

Senior Resource Center provides valuable services in 2024

During this year's Medicare Open Enrollment period, the Senior Resource Center provided a good deal of valuable assistance to the Freeport-area community. They successfully helped over 400 older adults navigate their Medicare options to help ensure that they received the best coverage for their needs. As a result of these efforts, those individuals collectively saved \$193,000 on their healthcare costs. Slightly more individuals changed their plans than had their existing plan details confirmed by meeting with representatives from the Senior Resource Center.

Additional financially oriented support is available through the Center in the form of assistance with other types of information, information on tax freeze and homestead exemptions, free income tax preparation, and help with license plate sticker discounts.

The Center helped throughout 2024 in many other ways too. For example, 21,000 rides were provided to older adults and adults with disabilities in Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties through Pretzel City Area Transit and the Center's medical ride program. The Center also arranged vital supportive services such as adult day centers, non-medical in-home care, emergency home response systems, and automated medical dispensers for nearly 500 people, allowing them to remain in their homes and maintain their independence and the Center's Adult Protective Services program helps ensure clients' safety and well-being during challenging times. Thank you, Senior Resource Center!

FHN recognized for stroke care

Every year, more than 3,000 hospitals nationwide participate in the American Heart Association's [Get With The Guidelines®](#) and other programs to improve outcomes for Americans who experience heart disease or stroke.

Heart disease and stroke are the No. 1 and No. 5 causes of death in the United States, respectively, with someone in the country suffering a stroke every 40 seconds. These health crises require swift and proven treatment to ensure the best outcomes for patients. The American Heart Association sets the standards for high-quality, science-based care and access.

The American Heart Association recognizes hospitals across the country for consistently following up-to-date, research-based guidelines based on science-based research to ensure all patients have access to lifesaving care. In Illinois, 71 hospitals were recognized in 2024, including FHN. Congratulations to those at FHN involved in these important healthcare services!

Classic Film Series continues in 2025

The 1987 film *The Untouchables* is the first offering for 2025 in the long-running Lindo Theatre's Select Pix Classic film series. Airing Wednesday, January 8th at the Lindo this action crime movie stars Kevin Costner, Sean Connery, Robert DeNiro, and Andy Garcia. Show times are 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. at regular ticket prices. 2025 is the 15th year for this popular film series hosted by Alan Wenzel and Ed Finch.

Christmas light displays

In the spirit of the season, FREEPOD gathered together a list of some of the great holiday decoration schemes around Freeport. There are literally too many to include, but we've included a list in the print version of this podcast with quite a bit of variety in it. If you drive down many other streets you'll likely find other creative displays, and we hope you take the opportunity to appreciate the efforts that went into these and many other impressive holiday scenes around the community.

1. Christmas on Chelsea north of Freeport on Chelsea drive and the Apple Tree on Stephenson Street across from Fitness Lifestyles, both of which were featured in this week's in-depth interview
2. Smith Street between Harlem and Whistler
3. Country Court, with a number of displays all grouped together
4. 1475 South Deming
5. 1725 South Chicago
6. Several on Empire Street between Cannova's and Empire School
7. 2810 Cheyenne Drive.
8. Bethany United Church of Christ on West Stephenson
9. 1539 West Stover (includes music you can tune into on your radio)
10. 1461 Benson Blvd.
11. 1547 West Harrison
12. 4 East Jefferson, and many on Chicago Avenue

13. 716 South Park Blvd.
14. 2040 West Laurel
15. 1849 and 1857 West Revere
16. 2209 Wheatland Terrace
17. Intersection of Cherry and Pleasant Streets
18. FHN Memorial Hospital and the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital
19. Krape Park, in the area of the bridge across Yellow Creek
20. Downtown Freeport!

The week ahead

Holiday events continue through year-end, and you can find many of them featured on the website of the Greater Freeport Partnership and others by checking with churches, schools, and businesses with which you are familiar.

This Sunday, December 22nd, FHN will again be part of the Freeport Community Luminaria Night. Residents along Freeport's Stephenson Street and Lincoln Boulevard, including FHN Memorial Hospital and the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, will light luminaria at dusk. Traditionally held the last Sunday before Christmas, this free public event offers everyone a chance to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the season. Visitors are encouraged to walk or drive along the streets to enjoy the scene, and don't forget to also check our list of impressive holiday decorations in the print version of this podcast.

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

As a reminder, 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, please remember that the FREEPOD fundraising drive continues through year-end. Your donation can help us offset some of our expenses such as insurance, various fees, and marketing 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, 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 WNIJ Northern Public Radio's website, featured FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors visiting with the creators of some spectacular outdoor holiday decorations. As noted earlier, next Tuesday fellow FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Becky Connors joins Tim in speaking with LaFrancine Baker about Kwanzaa. Their conversation posts at noon on Tuesday, December 24th.

With that, time's up for this week. 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.

Again, we'll be back again with our Thursday podcasts on Thursday, January 9th and hope you'll tune in for our Tuesday in-depth interviews every week including the weeks our Thursday podcasts are on hiatus. Thank you for listening, and we at FREEPOD sincerely wish you all a very merry holiday season and a happy year ahead in 2025!

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