



**8 August
2024**

Welcome to FREEROD, 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 that's 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.

Cruise Night!

Freeport Cruise Night returns to downtown Freeport this Saturday, August 10! From 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., there'll be something for everything, from the car show, commercial vendors, music, and food vendors starting at 4:00 pm. Cars are displayed in the municipal lot along Douglas Street, the east lot at the corner of Adams and Exchange Street and on Exchange Street. Food vendors will be on hand east of the Arts Plaza with merchandise vendors and the new Family Fun Area in the Ferguson Arts Plaza across from the Library.

As one of the original and remaining true "cruises" for more than 40 years, the Freeport cruise heads out from downtown Freeport to Park Boulevard beginning at 6:00 pm. This year, the cruise will kick-off with a Grand Marshall car from J. H. Barkau & Sons.

The route will travel west on Stephenson Street, then south on Park Boulevard, east on Empire Street, north on the newly repaved Locust Street, east on Main Street and north on State to complete the route. Drivers are encouraged to enter the cruise route at any point and spectators can view the cruise along any of these streets. Signage will be posted throughout the route.

Nicole Haas, the Brand Director for the Greater Freeport Partnership, said "The cruise has become so popular that we couldn't fit any more cars in the sixteen-block route. The classic cars idled and then overheated and it didn't continuously move as we intended. The expanded route has worked out well to keep cars moving and residents and viewers love sitting along the streets throughout the city to watch the amazing display of automobiles."

For more information on Freeport Cruise Night, visit greaterfreeport.com/events.

School starts 21 August

Summer is nearly over, and school for Freeport School District 145 students starts in just two weeks on Wednesday, August 21st. There are a number of events before then, though, that parents and guardians will want to know more about, and there's a handy Back to School Guide listing all of them online at the school district's website. We'll include the exact URL in the show notes for this episode, but you can also easily find by just heading to www.fsd145.org as it is linked to from the home page. Here is the exact URL: <https://www.fsd145.org/domain/1245>

Some of the dates that are important to note include new student orientation for the Alternative High School on August 13th and 14th, freshman and new student open house for the high school on August 19th, and a student schedule walk-through on August 15th for Freeport Middle School. Dates for Meet the Teacher Nights are also shown, as well as a listing of school fees, bus information, dress guidelines, athletic schedules and participation requirements, school meals information, and much more.

City news

With just one month officially left of summer, the City is working against the clock to complete road infrastructure projects around the community. In addition to last-minute enhancements to the repaving of Locust avenue and replacement of lead service water lines, the nearly \$11 million Adams Avenue reconstruction is still making progress with work planned to be complete by Thanksgiving.

To keep up to date on road closures and other important City emergency information such as weather warnings, boil order advisories, and criminal activities, sign up for Code Red provided by the City. You can register for this free service by heading online to the City website, www.cityoffreeport.org/, and searching on Code Red or Freeport Alerts or by texting FREEPORTALERTS, all as one word, to 9941. Here is the direct link for online registration: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BFE9C203F980>

A fun contest has also begun: The City of Freeport's inaugural Photo Contest is now open for submissions! Photographers can share up to three photos that adhere to the contest guidelines, which can be found on the City website. The submission deadline is August 31 and the City will then host a public poll in early September, where residents can cast votes for their favorites. The winning entry will be featured in a fall City newsletter and showcased in the City Hall lobby for a year. Let your creativity shine and show everyone the beauty of Freeport through your lens!

More explanation on yard waste removal

In other news from the City of Freeport, there have recently been several more questions about the City's policy on removal of yard waste. To recap information in a recent episode of FREEPOD, sticks, tree limbs, and cut-up logs may be taken to the wood lot at 2133 S. Walnut Avenue, otherwise known as Timber Industries. This location is open to the public weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

Timber Industries does not accept grass clippings, piles of leaves (bagged and unbagged), weeds, soil, or rocks. For residents looking for ways to dispose of these types of yard and garden waste, yard waste

toters are available from Gill's Freeport Disposal. They can also mulch or spread grass clippings back onto their own lawns. The City does not provide drive-by pickup of such waste.

According to Director of Communications Bryan Bridge, there are about five City workers trying to take care of a long list of tree removal in areas of the City's right of way, which is the space between sidewalks and the street. They are very busy trying to accomplish as much of this work as possible before winter.

FREEPOD also recently published a story on tree-trimming and vegetation management activities being conducted by Com-Ed around Freeport over the next several weeks. As a reminder, if they are planning a visit to your property, they will notify you with a statement of what types of activities are planned and contact information for any concerns you may have. The City has a map on their website at [www.cityoffreeport.org](https://cityoffreeport.org) of the areas that are scheduled for maintenance. Also included are some types of trees that are appropriate for planting around power lines, which may be of interest as planting season for most types of trees will be coming up this fall. Here's the URL for the map: <https://cityoffreeport.org/comed-preventative-tree-trimming-map-and-notice/>

PAWS for Reading

This Saturday, just like the second Saturday of every month, therapy dogs will be at the Freeport Public Library – and they are just waiting for stories to be read to them! PAWS FOR READING is the Library's therapy dog program where certified therapy dogs listen to any and all kinds of books that young readers might like to share with them.

This event will occur from 11:00 a.m. to noon this Saturday, and we hope there will be plenty of readers to entertain the furry listeners who will be waiting for them!

HCC news

In addition to the discussion reported last week about a potential new athletic and events center, budget items were passed for a number of projects at a recent board meeting at Highland Community College. Funding was approved for major capital bond expenditures including an agricultural farm building, reconfiguration of the second-floor instructional space in Building M, a welcome center in Building H, a new entry and hallways for Building T, a new softball and baseball parking lot, and reconfiguration, asbestos removal, and some remodeling for Building N, as well as the move of the testing center from Building N to Building M.

During an overview of the college's fiscal year 2025 budget provided by Vice President Jill Janssen, total revenue was estimated at \$17.6 million with local taxes making up 54% of that figure and tuition accounting for 30% with the rest from other funding sources such as contributions through the Highland Foundation. Jo Daviess County provides 40% of revenue, Stephenson provides 35%, Carroll County funds 16%, and Ogle County contributes 8%.

The tuition rate at Highland continues at \$151 per credit hour, and credit hours have rebounded to about 28,600, up from about 27,000 the last few years. Highland President Chris Kuberski announced

that summer enrollment for 2024 was up 4%, fall enrollment also appears to be holding at an increase of 4% increase, and nursing enrollment is also up.

With total expenses estimated at about just over \$18 million, there is a deficit gap of about a half-million dollars between the budget and the projected revenue, although further increases in enrollment can close the gap.

September 24, 2024 is the date for approval of the final 2025 budget, with a public hearing to be held around August 19th. Notice will be provided through the Freeport Journal-Standard.

Another topic raised for discussion was a master lease opportunity with Westwind Apartments, located adjacent to HCC. The owners of Westwind approached Highland to determine whether the college would be interested in entering into a master lease for student housing in the apartments, primarily for athletes but for non-athletes as well. Janssen presented the challenges and benefits of leasing, which will be reviewed at a later date.

Krape Park Art Walk

A new event filled with creativity and inspiration is planned for next Saturday, August 17th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Krape Park. The Krape Park Art Walk will be an artisan marketplace to foster connections between artists and those who value unique, handmade treasures.

This one-day art fair has attracted thousands of visitors and features artists, live music and a variety of regional food vendors during its original timeframe over Labor Day Weekend. As in the past, artists and crafters from across the region will showcase and sell their finest work including paintings, glass work, photography, jewelry, sculptures, woodworking, crafts, and more. There will be live music, carousel rides, tasty refreshments from local food vendors.

The Krape Park Art Walk is free to the public and designed for the whole family to enjoy. Additional activities that will also be available include paddling on Yellow Creek in a variety of character paddle boats, mini-golf in the new Wing It! mini-golf course, and climbing and other fun activities in a number of play areas.

Tomato season is here!

You say ta-may-toe, I say toe-MAH-toe, but however you say it, tomato season has arrived! If you'd like to learn more about how to enjoy these wonderful fresh-from-the-garden treats, you can do so at an event hosted by the University of Illinois Extension. "Harvesting a Rainbow of Tomatoes" will be held at the Freeport Public Library on Wednesday, August 21st from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

At this seminar, you can learn more about which varieties of tomatoes work well in various dishes, why some have more flavor or are more watery than others, and why tomatoes are so good for you.

Cost for the event is \$5, and to register, just call the U of I Extension at 815-235-4125 or register online at go.illinois.edu/jsw. We'll include that URL again in the show notes for this episode of FREEPOD.

Early Childhood Education

The Freeport League of Women Voters is sponsoring a presentation by Sara Latimer, Director of Early Childhood Education for Freeport School District #145. Latimer will focus on the importance of getting young students off to a good start in their early school years and how that can be accomplished through cooperative efforts by students' parents and other family members as well as teachers.

The event scheduled for Tuesday, August 27th at 6:30 p.m. in one of the Early Childhood Education classrooms at Blackhawk Elementary School, is open to the public and discussion will be encouraged.

Saturday morning bike rides

The Freeport Chainlink Cyclists have started a Saturday Morning Bike Shop Ride and reports that riders are having a great time!

This ride happens every Saturday, leaving from PHK Bicycles at 205 N Adams Avenue, directly east of Union Dairy in Freeport, at 8:00 a.m. every Saturday morning. The ride is on all paved roads for a complete route of about 24 miles. The pace ranges from 12 to 16 mph, so it's not a slow ride but not a real fast ride either. This is a no-drop ride with waits at stop signs, and if there are some riders that want to go faster or slower than others, the riders can be broken into separate groups. There is also an opportunity before the halfway mark to cut the ride a little shorter for anyone who needs to get back earlier or is running out of energy.

The ride ends up back at PHK Bicycles and everyone is welcome to join the fun!

August in the garden

According to University of Illinois Extension Program Coordinator Nikki Keltner, August is the time to divide bearded iris. It is recommended to divide bearded iris every 3 to 5 years. To divide them, dig the iris rhizomes, which are the underground networks of roots that connect them. Then inspect them for iris borer or other insects, and discard any rhizomes that have borers or other issues. Then cut the leaves back to 3 to 4 inches tall and replant with more space for them to fill.

Nikki also reminds everyone that it's important to continue to water newly planted trees and shrubs as well as our container gardens during August, when continuing high temperatures can stress plants. It's also a good time to inspect your landscape plants to make sure they are insect and disease-free. And, of course, continue to keep your gardens free of weeds. Remember the old gardening saying "one year's seeds, seven years of weeds", which is very relevant at this time of year. If you have plants going to seed you want to keep in your garden, leave them be but if not, act now to avoid seven years of weeding!

If you have a home gardening question, feel free to call the U of I Extension Master Gardeners at 815-235-4125.

Foundation for Northwest Illinois Gala

The Foundation for Northwest Illinois invites you to join them in celebrating a half-century of funding support for our region.

They are hosting a gala event on Saturday, August 17th from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at The Rafters restaurant in Lena. "Celebrating 50 Years: A Legacy & A Promise" will review the legacy of 50 years of community impact with a look to what the future holds for Stephenson, Jo Daviess, and Carroll counties as well as the surrounding collar areas.

Tickets are \$50 per person and attire is cocktail casual. Call 815-801-3035, email sarah@forNWIL.org, or purchase online at <https://forwil.org/gala-registration/> Registration is requested by tomorrow, August 9th, so you'd better hustle!

Congratulations on your golden anniversary, Foundation for Northwest Illinois!

The week ahead...

As always, there's plenty going on in the Freeport area during the coming week! First up, we're looking forward, with a bit of melancholy, to the final Music on Debate Square tonight. John Hartman and the Jazz Alliance are sure to attract a crowd with a great performance. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets as well as pocket money for a free-will donation...and a treat from Union Dairy next door.

Don't forget to build your personal library with a stop at the VOICES book sale, which continues through this Saturday, and looking a little further ahead, Paint the Port returns on Friday, August 23rd. Another popular local event, Beats and Eats, begins at 5:00 p.m. on the 23rd and continues at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday the 24th. We'll have more details on both events in next week's FREEPOD. And of course, as mentioned earlier, there's Cruise Night this Saturday!

Until next week

As we close, we're pleased to share that next week's Tuesday In-Depth Interview will be FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel speaking with Wayne Duckmann, Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Freeport. Duckmann discusses various aspects of the City of Freeport's approach to dealing with abandoned buildings and blighted properties, including the City's ongoing plan for addressing issues with abandoned buildings, the challenges and dilemmas the City faces when trying to resolve issues with neglected properties, and the role that citizens can play in helping the City on this matter. This conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, August 13th.

With that, time's up for this week but tune in again next week for news about Freeport businesses, City plans and progress, area rewards and recognition, local impacts for 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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If you have story suggestions or would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support FREEPOD (now tax-deductible), visit our website at www.freepod.org.

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