



**12 September
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 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.

Hosmer Apartment armed barricade incident

A week has passed since a standoff with Freeport police occurred at the Mary Hosmer apartment building in Freeport, but residents still are shaken from the event.

On the morning of September 4, police responded to a call to a tenth-floor apartment for a woman who needed help. After talking with resident Grady Clark as well as the woman, officers got her out of the apartment but Clark remained inside.

He had allegedly said he had both weapons and a hostage and refused to come out, leading to a 12-hour standoff that eventually involved Illinois State Police. Clark finally surrendered peacefully late Wednesday night and several firearms were recovered. No one was injured and residents were advised they could return to their homes. Clark faces numerous charges from the incident.

Adams Avenue construction update

Adams Avenue has been a long and challenging project. In 2023, contractors Helm Civil and N-Trak Group started working on Adams to improve the roadway and renew the underlying infrastructure.

This project includes new pavement, water main, sewer main, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, water valves, hydrants, storm water inlets, storm sewer, and street signs. This reconstruction has faced many delays throughout its 15 months.

As crews uncovered sections of road, the historical issues left behind proved to require professional exactness. The movement of utility poles and service lines also caused delays.

The City is optimistic that this project can reach completion by the end of November, giving Freeport a beautiful new road and safe infrastructure for the Holiday season. The community's continued patience and understanding is appreciated.

The Public Works Department

Speaking of infrastructure improvements, the City's Public Works Department is one busy group of folks. FREEPOD has done several stories recently on the improvements the City is making in our drinking water system, sewer collection system, and related water systems, all of which are the responsibility of the Water and Sewer Construction Crew.

They maintain around 150 miles of water main, sewer main, and storm mains throughout the City. There are more than 1,200 hydrants and almost 1,700 valves and this team does everything to manage them, from installation to decommissioning.

You may see them out operating the Vac truck, camera truck, backhoe, or even a simple shovel. They spend their days digging holes, performing JULIE Locates, and working in water and mud. If that sounds like something for you, job opportunities can be found on the City's website.

A photo of the team is included in the print version of this newscast. Thank you, Public Works, for working for Freeport!



Freeport High School garden project receives grant

The Illinois Department of Agriculture, or IDOA, is distributing over a half-million dollars in grants over a three-year period to support the specialty crop industry in the State, and Freeport High School is one of the recipients.

The grant the high school is receiving is just over \$43,000. According to Educator Ben Skipor, who leads the program, the Freeport Student Garden, working with University of Illinois Extension, the grant will support the Garden's transition from conventional production to high tunnel production. Students will be able to extend the Garden's growing season and take a more active role in production during the school year while developing skills for specialized equipment and learning best practices.

And what, exactly, is a high tunnel? Although they may look like greenhouses, high tunnels are actually quite different. Greenhouses are usually constructed of glass and metal, with plants grown in pots above

the ground. High tunnels are polyethylene, plastic, or fabric covered hoop structures that can be assembled for a fraction of the cost, with plants grown in raised beds or directly in the ground.

High tunnels protect plants from severe weather and allow farmers to extend their growing seasons earlier into the spring and later into the fall. Because they prevent direct rainfall from reaching plants, more precise tools like drip irrigation can be used to efficiently deliver water and nutrients to plants. High tunnels also offer greater ability to control pests and can even protect plants from pollen and pesticide drift.

Perhaps the best thing about high tunnels, though, is that they help provide communities with healthy local food for much of the year that requires less energy and transportation.

Projects were selected after a competitive review process with the Illinois Department of Agriculture and an external review committee composed of representatives from the specialty crop industry, research and economic development, and producers. Only eight projects were selected for grants. Funding for this program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture was authorized by the 2018 Federal Farm Bill.

FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors recently talked with Ben about the Garden. Let's hear their conversation.

(The Skipor interview is not transcribed for print version but can be heard in the audio version)

Thanks, Tim and Ben!

Freeport High School sports

The Cross Country team had a historic summer! From June to the start of September, they recorded their miles to improve their race times from last year. Meanna Luy broke the all-time summer running mileage record by running 545 miles and Johanna Rudolph was runner up with 537 miles.

The official season started last week in Sycamore Invite and Rudolph led the Pretzels with a second-place overall finish in the varsity race. The girls will participate in the Rockford East High School ERAB invitational this Saturday.

On the boys' side, Austin Brobst and newcomer Maddux Teresi climbed the summer record board and raised expectations for their second season. The Pretzels have three home meets this season, with the next two on October 5th and October 19. All will be held at Highland Community College.

In other summer sports news, eleven Freeport High School golfers won the Jefferson Invite Small School Division in August with Keandre Luy and Cooper Hathaway finishing in the top team of both team tournaments.

Good luck to all the teams competing in Fall sports!

Fiesta Hispania

The public is invited to Fiesta Hispana at Jehovah-Nissi Church this Sunday, September 15th to celebrate the start of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which begins on Sunday and continues through Tuesday, October 15th.

The fun-filled day begins at 11:00 a.m. and continues until 4:00 p.m. and includes music, special beverages, and delicious food from the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Columbia, Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, and Costa Rica.

The theme for this national week in 2024 is “Pioneers of Change: Shaping the Future Together.” Beginning in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson, this national month-long observation was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15.

Jehovah-Nissi Church is located at 1421 West Galena Avenue next to the Big Apple Restaurant.



New exhibition at the Freeport Art Museum

A new exhibition at the Freeport Art Museum opened last Friday. The Midwest Lands Exhibition focuses on farmland, rural landscapes, and the aesthetics, psychological, and emotional content of these themes.

Featuring works by renowned artists Dan Brinkmeier, Barry Roal Carlsen, Ellen Holtzblatt, Tom Linden, Stuart Roddy, and Mark Weller, the pieces capture the beauty and complexity of rural life. There are also works by members of the local Momentum Art Guild.

Complementing the visual art, the exhibition includes poetry from “Poems from the Winter House” by Daniel Smith whose work is rooted in a rural heritage and reflects on his love for a spouse, a farm, and a way of life.

The show runs through Saturday, October 12th, at the Museum at 121 N Harlem Ave in Freeport.



East Field at Beaver Creek by Tom Linden

Public input provided for City budget

At a public input meeting held last week at City Hall, Freeport residents were able to voice City budget concerns and ideas about what they would like to see funded in their neighborhoods and the community at large.

Among the topics that were mentioned were increases in staff and wages for the Public Works force, bolstering police efforts around the City, the options being considered for dilapidated homes and buildings, and solutions for illegal dumping.

The public will have another opportunity to offer input to City Manager Rob Boyer and the Finance Department staff during a similar meeting on Monday, October 28th.

FHN talks about sepsis

September is Sepsis Awareness Month, and FHN is hosting a Speaker Series session on the topic next Wednesday, September 18th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the FHN Family Healthcare Center - Burchard Hills, 1010 W. Fairway Drive in Freeport.

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection, and it can be deadly. Join 2 FHN experts for an informative talk about how to recognize sepsis and what types of treatments are available to address it. For more information on this FREE program and to register, visit fhn.org/sepsis or call 1-877-600-0346, ext. 901. That's 1-877-600-0346, ext. 901.

Flu/COVID shots

Flu shots are already available and this year's seasonal vaccine is a trivalent vaccine, meaning that it covers three flu virus subtypes including two Group A viruses and one Group B virus. In previous years, the vaccine included an additional Group B subtype but that subtype has not been detected since 2020 so it is not included in this year's vaccine.

The new COVID and influenza viruses can be administered at the same time but that is a more personal choice based on an individual's circumstances rather than a scientific choice. Remember that neither the COVID or flu vaccines are live virus vaccines so you cannot get either disease from the shots.

FFHS car show/sale

This Saturday, September 14th, Freeport's Friends Forever Humane Society is hosting The Bruce Nielsen Memorial Car Show and while car registration begins at 8:00 a.m., this fundraising event is much more than just cars! Food will be available for purchase throughout the day, and there will be music and events to keep you entertained.

From 8:00 to 3:00, temperatures permitting, the High Flying Huskies will be providing mushing demonstrations once per hour. There will also be a meet and greet with the sled dogs throughout the day. Check them out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HighFlyingHuskies

Also from 9:00 to 1:00 the shelter will be holding their annual mum sale, and Fall decorations will also be available. Mums are available in three sizes at \$13, \$22, and \$40.

There is no fee for spectators and friendly, leashed dogs are welcome, although the shelter requests no retractable leashes. Friends Forever Humane Society is located at 966 West Rudy Rd.



The Wienermobile!

To close out this week's newscast with a hot dog of an interview, FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel had a chat with the drivers and hosts of the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile when it cruised through northwest Illinois last week. Take it away, Alan!

(The Wienermobile interview is not transcribed for print version but can be heard in the audio version)

The week ahead...

Well, it's pretty hard to top that, so – we won't try. But in closing we're pleased to share that Alan will also host next week's Tuesday In-Depth Interview with Stephenson County Clerk Jazmin Wingert about the upcoming election with detailed information about voting in the County. This important conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, September 17th.

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 make a tax-deductible contribution to support FREEPOD, visit our website at www.freepod.org.

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