



**3 October  
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.

### **Carroll Avenue shooting**

As our listeners likely already know, on Wednesday, September 25, officers of the Freeport Police Department responded to shots fired in the 900 block of South Carroll Avenue, where it was discovered that three individuals had been struck by gun fire.

In responding to the incident, which is still under investigation, Mayor Jodi Miller said, "It's incredibly frustrating and overwhelmingly disheartening for the neighborhood...as we never want anyone to have to live in fear."

City Manager Rob Boyer echoed the Mayor's comments, saying that the City's police continue their efforts every day to make sure our streets are safe and that community members shouldn't be fearful of speaking out against crime in their neighborhoods as they work to get crime off our streets.

If you see or know something, don't hesitate to call the Freeport Police Department at 815-235-8222, Stateline Area Crime Stoppers at 866-TIPSNOW, or text Tip411.

### **FREEPOD 5 Questions in 5 Minutes for 2024 public office candidates**

As we mentioned briefly last week, FREEPOD is working to get you the information you want about candidates for local office in the upcoming November election.

We have developed five questions that we believe can quickly summarize candidates' positions on topics of importance and while we could conduct in-person interviews with all of them, that is not logistically possible for FREEPOD so we have sent the questions by email to all local candidates in contested races. Their responses have a word limit, ensuring that their answers are succinct and to the point. The questions are:

1. If elected, what is the most important issue you would be working to address?
2. Why should this issue be important to voters?
3. Why would you be a good person to address this issue? Who would you solicit to help you in your efforts?
4. What steps would you take or recommend be taken to tackle this issue?
5. What is one thing that voters may not know about you that you'd like them to know?

Responses are expected later this week and as soon as possible we'll post all that we receive on our website in a side-by-side comparison format so that voters can readily compare them. WNIJ National Public Radio in DeKalb will also include this information on their website at [www.northernpublicradio.org](http://www.northernpublicradio.org).

### **Street work update**

Adams Avenue is getting its first layer of pavement and final paving will be announced soon. Projects on State Avenue, South Chicago Avenue, and West Iroquois Street are wrapping up this week.

If you need information more than what's on Facebook or [cityoffreeport.org](http://cityoffreeport.org), just let me know.

Remaining streets for final reconstruction in 2024 include Oak Avenue, Coates Street, Dirck Drive, Quail Ridge Drive, Sioux Drive, Yellowstone Court, Clinton Place and Street, Locust Avenue, and Salem Court. As an interesting data point, as of September 4<sup>th</sup> the City had laid nearly 9,000 tons of new pavement.

For more information and updates on progress, visit the City website at [www.cityoffreeport.org](http://www.cityoffreeport.org) or the City's Facebook page.

As a reminder, 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/](http://www.cityoffreeport.org/), and searching on Code Red or Freeport Alerts, by texting FREEPORTALERTS all as one word to 9941 or going directly to the enrollment section of the City website at <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BFE9C203F980>.

### **Update on new Freeport Art Museum location**

Steady progress continues in the Freeport Art Museum Block 62 Project to renovate the 100-year-old former Kunz Brothers Building at 22 East Exchange in downtown Freeport as the new location for the Freeport Art Museum. Built in 1924 by prominent businessman Fredrick Smith, significant original architectural features are being preserved and the over-14,000- square-foot historic building offers many exciting spaces for exhibits, a classroom, administrative offices and storage.

The \$3.3 million goal has seen \$1.6 million realized to date, allowing completion of the first phase that called for interior demolition and removal of all the hoists and lifts used in automobile repairs. The next phase is now well underway with the installation of museum-mandated UV glass windows, masonry work completed to tuck-point window openings, and construction of new lintels. Next will come work

to the interior to renovate the stairway and install an elevator. An exciting feature that harkens to the buildings' original purpose will be functioning glass garage doors.

Architect Scott Winter of Winter Construction designed the project and is overseeing the construction. Freeport Art Museum Executive Director Jessica Modica is serving as the driving force to get all the details just right and as well as leading the fundraising to connect this Block 62 Project with the Art Plaza. If you are interested in making a donation or learning more about this exciting project, visit the museum's web site at [www.freeportartmuseum.com](http://www.freeportartmuseum.com) or call 815-235-9755.

### **StephenSun County – solar energy in our backyard**

If you have driven through Stephenson County over the past couple of years, you must have noticed the many solar arrays that have popped on farm land as well as on commercial and residential buildings. According to 2023 data from the Illinois Power Agency and the U.S. Energy Information Agency, Stephenson County ranks fourth in Illinois for kilowatt capacity already online, just behind Coles County in southeastern part of the state, Cook County, and Clark County, also in southeastern Illinois. When planned facilities are completed, Stephenson County will rank only behind Cook County for total kilowatt capacity.

A recent New York Times article reported that in 2023, the world installed 444 gigawatts of new solar photovoltaic capacity. Although solar power still provides just under six percent of global electricity, its share has nearly quadrupled since 2018, an exponential curve that is expected to continue for some time.

With the passage of the Climate Equity Jobs Act in 2021, Illinois has positioned itself to produce 40% renewable energy by 2030 and 50% renewable energy by 2040. The State has become one of the national leaders to commit to green energy and Stephenson County is doing its part.

Visit [www.ilsolarmap.com](http://www.ilsolarmap.com) for an interactive map of the solar installations throughout Illinois. The map was last updated in June and allows you to explore solar projects by Census Tract, Place, County, and State Congressional Districts, as well as by category of project.

### **Highland theatre production**

A Highland Community College production of "Eurydice" opens this weekend at the Ferguson Fine Arts Center at the college. The play reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice not through Orpheus's infamous pilgrimage to retrieve his bride, but through the eyes of its heroine. Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. The script is by Sarah Ruhl, the play is directed by Karley Morton, and it includes selections from Broadway, Disney, The Big Screen, and pop. Groups performing will be the Highland youth choir, chorale, and chamber, as well as the Royal Scots.

Performances are at 7:00 PM this Friday and Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, and 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Ticket prices range from \$5 to \$12.

## **Shingles shots**

Most people have heard of the dread condition called “shingles”. Despite its name, the disease has nothing to do with roofing materials but has everything to do with the chicken pox virus that we all have had when we were kids, either through natural exposure or through vaccination. After you've had chickenpox, the virus stays in your body for the rest of your life. The painful rash, nerve pain, and malaise that characterize “shingles” is actually due to a reactivation of the chicken pox virus along nerve trunks.

Luckily, there is a very effective vaccine that doesn't guarantee that you won't get shingles but will likely reduce the course and severity of the disease if you do. The vaccine is approved and recommended for people age 50 and older, whether they've had shingles or not, although only about one third of adults over 50 have received the vaccine. The cost is covered by most health insurance plans.

## **Winter Parking to Switch to Odd/Even System November 1**

As an early winter update, In order to aid street crews in plowing efforts, the Freeport City Council has approved a parking system requiring all vehicles to be parked on a specific side of the street only when there is at least half an inch of snow.

This new system, which is in effect from November 1 to March 31, helps in multiple ways. First, residents will no longer need to rely on posts by the City for parking instructions. Second, plowing will take less time and allow neighborhoods to see clear streets sooner, and third, snow plows will drive more safely down narrow streets to help avoid unnecessary accidents with other vehicles.

More information will be coming closer to the first anticipated snowfall.

## **Fall garden tips**

Before freezing temperatures become common, now is the time to divide or move perennial plants. Do you have perennials in your landscape that are getting to large for their homes? Consider dividing and transplanting them.

Here are some tips for successful division and transplanting of perennial plants:

1. First, make sure the ground is moist to make digging easier and reduce stress on the plant.
2. Then dig out the entire clump. For most plants, use a spade to dig down at least seven inches to get most of the root ball.
3. Once out of the ground, discard weak or dead sections of the plan.
4. Once all the debris is removed, separate the clump into three-to-five pieces with a sharp knife or spade edge. It is best to leave three-to-five growing points in every clump. If separating peonies, they need at least three growing points, called eyes, to ensure flowering the next season.
5. Immediately plant one clump back into the existing spot if you want to maintain some of it in the same place. Clumps planted elsewhere should go into holes twice as wide as the clump. Add organic matter as needed for extra plant nutrition.

6. Trim back any foliage to 6 inches from the ground to reduce transpiration and transplant shock, and then finally....
7. Mulch with two-to-four inches of organic wood mulch.

Fall is also a great time to plant trees and shrubs. You can count on cooler air temperatures and warm soil temperatures to use the season to the advantage of trees and shrubs planted in the fall, as this will encourage the growth of their root system to become established. The roots of trees and shrubs will grow anytime soil temperatures are above 40 degrees, which generally continues in this area until sometime in November.

If you have other fall gardening questions, the Master Gardener Helpline is still open and can be reached at 815-235-4125...that's 815-235-4125.

### **VOICES programming during Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, VOICES of Stephenson County is hosting a community presentation titled "DV 101" from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at the Freeport Public Library to provide information for survivors or those experiencing domestic or sexual violence as well as their families and support systems.

On Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> VOICES is also hosting an interactive, drop-in event at the Library called "In Their Shoes." Any time between 1:00 and 4:30 p.m., attendees can experience decisions domestic and sexual violence survivors must make. A series of Lunch & Learn programs at local restaurants are also planned throughout the month. For more information, contact VOICES at 815-235-9421...that's 815-235-9421.

Also, don't forget that the deadline for registration for the VOICES pickleball tournament is coming up this Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. The round-robin fundraising tournament is open to players of all skill levels, and kicks off with a pickleball basics session at 8 a.m. with play beginning at 10 a.m. Cost is \$30 a player. The tournament will be held on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Krape Park Pickleball Courts in Freeport and registration can be done via a QR code on VOICES Facebook page.

### **Apple season info**

Come and celebrate the fall apple season by learning more about this wonderful local fruit! Join the University of Illinois Extension's Local Foods and Small Farms Educator, Grant McCarthy, for the Growing Great Apples program at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at the Freeport Public Library.

In this presentation you will learn about general production of apples, new and unique varieties, rootstocks, seasonal issues encountered in 2024, insect challenges, harvesting, and preparing your trees for winter. The program is for both those currently growing apples or people wanting to add trees for a small orchard as well as those interested in learning more about apple production in Northern Illinois.

There is no charge to attend but registration is required. Register by calling the University of Illinois Extension at 815-235-4125, that's 815-235-4125, or go online at [www.extension.illinois.edu/jsw](http://www.extension.illinois.edu/jsw).

## **Oakdale Fall Festival and Autumn Leaf Run**

Don't forget the Oakdale Fall Festival and Autumn Leaf Run this Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Oakdale Nature Preserve Park off Baileyville Road just south of Freeport! The Festival will feature wagon rides, trails to explore, a scavenger hunt, guided nature walks, fireside chats, live music, a hay maze, pumpkin painting, food trucks, and Fall treats. Most of these family-friendly activities are free.

If you want to participate in the Autumn Leaf Run on Saturday morning, you can still register from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. with the race beginning at 9:00. The 5K trail for this run winds through wide tree-lined trails, moderate hills, prairie areas, bridge crossings, and several single-track trail sections. The start and finish lines are in close proximity and the race will be timed using a chip-timing system. All proceeds go to the Freeport Parks Foundation for upcoming projects at Oakdale Nature Preserve.

The weather looks wonderful for Saturday, so we hope you can enjoy Oakdale that afternoon!

## **The week ahead**

Don't forget that the registration deadline is coming up for the THRIVE Nonprofit Leadership Symposium, which is being held on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau. This full-day event is designed for nonprofit leadership including CEOs, executive directors, assistant directors, board members, and even aspiring nonprofit leadership. The \$50 registration for the forum includes lunch and snacks for the all-day event is due tomorrow, October 4<sup>th</sup> and can be done at [www.ninastrong.org/thrive/](http://www.ninastrong.org/thrive/) or by calling The Foundation for Northwest Illinois at 815-801-3035, that's 815-801-3035.

Also remember that the Chainlink Cyclists group is still holding bike rides every Saturday morning and this cooler weather is a great time to get out and enjoy a ride with them. They depart from PHK Bicycles at 205 North Adams Avenue at 8:00 a.m. for a 24-mile ride out to Dakota and back at a pace of 12 to 16 miles per hour. The ride is all on paved roads, with an alternate route available on gravel for the last five miles or so.

And next week is Homecoming Week for Freeport! The homecoming parade kicks things off the afternoon of Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> from Benson Blvd. off Empire Street to Freeport High School. We'll have more details on the game and other homecoming events next week.

For a more comprehensive listing on many more fun events and activities throughout Stephenson County, visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://www.greaterfreeport.com) and click on "weekly events."

## **In closing...**

In closing, we're happy to share that next week's Tuesday In-Depth Interview will feature FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel speaking with FHN CEO Mark Gridley about the region's largest healthcare organization. This conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, October 8th.

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](http://www.freepod.org).

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