



**25 September
2025**

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 updates on what's happening in 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. Now let's see what's happening.

911 system upgrade complete

Stephenson County residents now can feel a little more at ease as a major upgrade is finally completed to our 9-1-1 system. More than a year in progress behind the scenes, the improved software and computer equipment were put into use last week.

The investment in new equipment cost hundreds of thousands of dollars which the 9-1-1 Board, the Freeport Police Department, and the Stephenson County Sheriff's Department paid for through a tax collected just for this purpose.

Freeport police department receives grant

The Freeport Police Department was recently awarded a \$9,000 Organized Retail Crime Grant from the Office of Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and \$630,000 in appropriations for 2025 from U.S. Senator Dick Durbin's office.

The appropriations will go toward funding the existing Sound Thinking Shot Spotter coverage, leasing a live video camera trailer and a radar trailer equipped with a License Plate Reader, leases for two additional license plate readers, 20 additional body worn cameras, two additional squad video cameras and DVRs, a new drone, and a mobile command trailer.

In other City news, a Special Service Area was approved for the Gladewood Subdivision where road infrastructure improvements will be funded through an annual levy of \$400 per taxable parcel in the subdivision. Specifically, this will ensure improvements to the subdivision's upper and lower entrances, including roadway base and asphalt upgrades.

Brewfest is this weekend!

This Saturday, September 27th, bring your friends and enjoy the best beer-tasting event in the region! There will be over 150 flavors of craft beer to taste, showcased by 60 breweries. Check out the full beer list at the URL in the print version of this episode (<https://buff.ly/O0rPKA6>) you can also enjoy taste treats from a number of food trucks as well as competitive games.



\$40 general admission tickets include entry, 20 tasting tickets, and a souvenir glass. There are also a limited number of \$75 VIP passes that include entry an hour early, 30 tasting tickets, access to special releases and the VIP lounge, a Brewfest t-shirt, VIP souvenir glass, and swag bag.

Tickets can be purchased in advance online by searching on “events” at www.greaterfreeport.com. Tickets will also be available at the gate for \$40 for general admission and designated-driver tickets can also be purchased the day of the event for \$10 but VIP tickets will not be available. This is a rain-or-shine event that is open to those 21 and older.

New Pilates studio opens in downtown Freeport

Studio Élan, a new Pilates studio in downtown Freeport, is now open. Pilates is a form of exercise that focuses on strengthening and improving the body's core muscles, flexibility, and posture. It involves precise movements, controlled breathing, and use of multiple muscle groups.

FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Becky Connors caught up with founders Laura Pierce and Jenna Alderks to find out more about this new business venture for Freeport.

(audio clip) Thank you, ladies!

Free safety seat check



Parents can get child safety seats checked during an event from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 27, at the city parking lot across from the Stewart Center in downtown Freeport. The Freeport Fire Department and Stephenson County Sheriff's Department will host the free event.

A Slice of Time – and Pizza! – Just for You!

The FHN Women's Health Team is once again hosting its popular Slice of Time event at Cannova's on Monday, October 6th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Join FHN Women's Health provider Sara Smith in a discussion on the Menopause Journey and How to Navigate the Change with Confidence as well as Risa Tyler, Director of the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital providing information on cancer screening. Members of the FHN team will be available to answer questions you may have regarding FHN services. All attendees will also receive a goodie bag.

This event fills up fast so be sure to secure your spot by registering online at <https://www.fhn.org/slice-of-time-registration.php>.

Autumn Leaf Run

As part of the Freeport Park District's annual Oakdale Fall Festival on October 4th, the Freeport Parks Foundation is once again hosting the Autumn Leaf Run. The 5K run is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 4th. It's open to all ages and skill levels of runners, walkers and nature enthusiasts and winds through diverse terrain, including wide tree-lined trails, moderate hills, prairie areas, bridge crossings and several single-track trail sections. The start and finish lines will be close in proximity.

Pre-registration is just \$25 by next Wednesday, October 1st and your t-shirt is guaranteed. Registration on race-day is \$35 between 7:00 and 8:30 a.m. and a t-shirt is not guaranteed. Register online at the Park District's website at www.freeportparkdistrict.org or by calling 815-235-6114. All proceeds go to the Freeport Parks Foundation to help fund upcoming projects at Oakdale Nature Preserve Park. Once again, that number is 815-235-6114. We'll have more info about the Oakdale Fall Festival in next week's episode of FREEPOD but in the meantime, be sure to sign up for the Autumn Leaf Run soon!



Feed the birds this winter!

The birds will be hungry this winter and you can help! Buy your annual supply of top-quality bird seed from Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance and proceeds from your purchase will support the programs and projects of the Alliance. These include programming like monthly natural history

programs, educational events for kids and families, and a wide variety of other conservation and preserve efforts that are open to the public. A wide variety of high-quality seed is available at bargain prices. The deadline for ordering is next Thursday, October 2nd. Order online at <https://nwilbirdnaturealliance.org/annual-birdseed-sale/>.

The week ahead...

As we look ahead, the Rockford-Freeport Illinois Kennel Club Dog Show will be held at the Stephenson County Fairgrounds is coming up this weekend. On Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. you can see many of the dog breeds that are included in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show as this is a qualifying show for that event, meaning that dogs that win recognition here are eligible to compete in other shows leading up to the Westminster show at Madison Square Garden in New York City in January 2026. The cost is just \$2 per car.

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by supporters of the Freeport Elks Lodge 617. They'll be there both Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to serve up brats, burgers, hot dogs, and ribeye sandwiches. As always, don't forget the Farmers Markets tomorrow morning both in downtown Freeport and near Higher Grounds on the south edge of the City, as well as in Lena.

On Wednesday, October 1st, Ed Finch and FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel will host the next movie in the Lindo Theatre's Select Pix Classic Film Series. Just in time for the Halloween season, they'll be screening the 1971 psychological thriller *Play Misty for Me*. Showtimes are 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at regular ticket prices, and attendees are invited to stay after the show for a discussion about the film and a question and answer session. This was the first film directed by Hollywood icon Clint Eastwood, who also stars in the movie along with Jessica Walter and Donna Mills. 2025 is the 15th year for the popular film series hosted by Finch and Wenzel.

You might also like to learn more about how to use your slow cooker for yummy cooler weather recipes at a program hosted by the Stephenson County Senior Resource Center next Friday, October 3rd. During this program, they'll review slow-cooker basics, discuss food safety, have a taste test, and send attendees home with recipes to try on their own.

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 also subscribe to the City of Freeport's monthly newsletter at their website, www.cityoffreeport.org. We have links to both in the print version of FREEPOD episodes.

In closing...

In closing, if you haven't already done so be sure to listen to this week's in-depth interview where FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors visits with Kurt Steffen, Cub Foods store manager about how it takes a village to make a supermarket great. The interview is available online and can be listened to anytime.

Did you know that Freeport has its very own observatory? You can find out all about it next Tuesday when FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Becky Connors visits with Jim Dole, director of the Doug Firebaugh Observatory and executive director of the Planetary Studies Foundation to talk about the observatory and how they'll be celebrating International Observe the Moon Day on Saturday, October 4th. This pod will post at noon on Tuesday, September 30th and be available to listen to then or at any time after that – just head to our website or your favorite podcast platform to select the programs of your choice.

We need your help, too! When you're listening on your favorite podcast platform, please "like" or "follow" us – this helps us to move up in the rankings of podcasts and enables us to better promote ourselves throughout the region. On Facebook, also please click on "like" as the algorithms there also depend on user input to help us increase our presence.

And speaking of increasing our presence, we have exciting news – FREEPOD is now on YouTube! The program is currently all audio and no video, but having it on the YouTube platform now gives you another way to listen. You can find both English and Spanish versions at <https://www.youtube.com/@FREEPOD61032/podcasts> or just head to YouTube.com and search for FREEPOD. As noted, please tell all your friends and family members about our YouTube channel too – everything you do can help get local news out to our community!

As always, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the Mass Communication Department at Highland Community College and our community liaisons and reporters. Thank you, Team FREEPOD! You can always find us on our Facebook page or the website of our National Public Radio partner, WNJI in DeKalb, at www.northernpublicradio.org. For more info, including how to make a tax-deductible contribution to support our work, visit our website at www.freepod.org.

With that, time's up for this week. Tune in again next Thursday at noon – or any time after that on our website or your favorite podcast platform – for more about what's happening in Freeport, and thank you for listening!

Listen next week for more about what's happening in the Freeport area!

LINKS TO OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS NEWSLETTERS BELOW



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