



**28 August  
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](http://www.freepod.org)) and the website of our NPR partner WNJI Northern Public Radio ([www.northernpublicradio.org](http://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.

### **Rent increases for privately owned properties in Freeport**

There have been a number of announcements concerning rent increases in Freeport that have been a topic of discussion at recent City Council meetings. These increases are related to purchase of Chapman Properties by PPG Homes, both of which are private landlords. PPG Homes is an out-of-area management company.

While the City has been urged to address these rent increases, the state's Rent Control Preemption Act City does not give the City that authority. This law states that a local government cannot enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance or resolution that would control the amount of rent charged by a privately owned company leasing a private property.

According to Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, Illinois landlords have the right to change rental rates at will and can raise the amount for any property they rent in a week-to-week or month-to-month tenancy. They must provide a seven-day notice for a week-to-week lease or a 30-day notice for a month-to-month lease. Landlords cannot raise rent for properties with a fixed-term lease. Rent for a property with a year-long lease, for example, cannot be raised before the end of the lease.

As a reminder, the City of Freeport is a Home Rule community, which many times allows actions to be taken which other municipalities without home rule may not be able to enact. So, while the City wants to ensure that all residents have access to affordable housing, City officials cannot affect rents charged by private parties.

The City does maintain a rental registry program to help maintain communication with local landlords and provides a tenant inspection program for anyone who believes that their rental property does not meet applicable building or maintenance codes. Inspections can be scheduled with the Department of Community Development by filling out a Tenant Inspection Request, which is available online at

[www.cityoffreeport.org](http://www.cityoffreeport.org). Tenants also have leasing rights and anyone believing that their legal rights may have been violated is urged to contact Prairie State Legal Services at 815-965-2134.

In addition, Freeport Township offers rental assistance programs and can be reached at 815-235-8012, or by visiting the Township office at 524 West Stephenson Street in Freeport. A listing of other potential resources that may be helpful in the case of a rent increase, such as the Freeport Housing Authority and the Northern Illinois Community Action Agency, are listed in the print version of this episode.

- Freeport Area Church Cooperative (food, shelter, clothing and emergency services) (815) 233-0435
- Freeport Housing Authority (housing) (815) 232-4171
- Illinois Department of Human Services (discrimination complaints and financial assistance)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) (utility assistance)
- Northern Illinois Community Action agency (NICAA) (housing assistance)
- Salvation Army (emergency rent and utility assistance)
- Veterans Assistance Commission (assists veterans in all matters, including housing issues)

For more information, FREEPOD has located a landlord transition notice on the PPG website (<https://ppg-homes.com/>) and a copy of the notice appears in the print version of this episode.

### Important Notice to All Tenants

Chapman Properties has recently been acquired by Freeport Portfolio, who has put PPG Homes in place currently to now manage your property.

Effective June 12, 2025, all rent payments must be made through PPG Homes payment portal. Please Log on this website to Make a Payment to continue paying rent online via ACH & Debit/Credit card. If you were a previous resident center user, login information should remain the same. New users will need to setup an account, using the same link above.

#### NEW BANK DEPOSIT INSTRUCTIONS

You can now go to Fifth Third Bank located at 1534 S West Ave, Freeport, IL 61032 to make your deposit via Cash or Check/Money Order.

Follow the following instructions:

Business name: Freeport Portfolio LLC

Cash: Write your street address and your name on the deposit ticket

Check/Money Order: Write our street address and your name on the deposit ticket and ensure MEMO section of Check/Money order also references your street address

If you have any questions or need assistance with the new payment process, please contact PPG Homes at:

Phone: 815-493-8710

Email: [property-management@piedpipergroup.com](mailto:property-management@piedpipergroup.com)

Office: 411 S State Freeport, IL 61032. Hours: M-F 8 AM – 5:00 PM

Maintenance staff will remain the same, and your primary point of contact is Gabby. Who can be reached at the number 815-493-8710, Option > 2 during business hours.

Thank you for your cooperation during this transition.

### Road work update

In other City news, updates to water mains, sewer systems, and repaving continue on Carroll Avenue and until later today, the intersection of Carroll Avenue and Galena Avenue will be closed for manhole work. Carroll Avenue is currently undergoing a \$2 million reconstruction and will continue to be closed from Empire Street to Adams Street until the end of September. A number of other streets in Freeport, including Stephenson Street near the Park Boulevard intersection and Greenfield Drive are in various stages of closure too and construction has now also begun on Hance Drive.

Construction areas are reopened at the end of each day so that residents in these areas are able to pull in and out of driveways during construction. Delays may occur and it may sometimes take longer to maneuver in the area. Signage gives crews the proper space and safety to work, and ignoring them can create safety hazards for all involved.

### **Stephenson Nursing Center news**

The long and sometimes bumpy road the Stephenson Nursing Center, formerly known as Walnut Acres, has traveled the past few years may have come to an end. In a 12-4 vote last week, the Stephenson County Board voted to sell the facility and all of its operations to Serenity Estates Freeport, a company based in the suburbs that deals only with operating assisted living facilities and nursing centers. The company is also sometimes referred to as Freeport Nursing LLC. The vote comes after years of discussion about the fate of the facility.

Debates on the subject have been heated over the years. The recent vote by the County Board determined that the financial condition of the facility had reached a point where a sale was the only way to keep the place open and residents in the home they have known for years. However, a local citizens' coalition, Hope in the Midwest, had previously filed an injunction against the sale prior to the Board meeting where the current vote was taken. The facility was built in the 70s after a referendum was passed by local voters to support its construction and the coalition believes that the decision to sell the facility should also be decided by voters.

The vote that was just taken would make the sale effective September 1<sup>st</sup> if no legal barriers prevent the sale from proceeding. The new owners would begin their management of the facility with a temporary license and would need to secure a permanent license from the State to legally operate the facility.

### **School dates to remember**

School has started for Freeport School District 145 and a full calendar of important dates is available at [www.fsd145.org](http://www.fsd145.org). We are sure that all Pretzel fans would want to know that the first home football game will be next Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, against Belvidere North and Homecoming 2025 will kick off with the Homecoming Parade on Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

As classes and school activities get underway, please remember to be alert for students walking to or from school and frequent stops by school buses. We hope that all area students and teachers have a great start to the 2025-2026 school year!

### **Quilting program at Freeport Art Museum**

As part of its programming entitled *Art in Every Stitch: A Quilt Show*, the Freeport Art Museum is hosting a bed turning event next Thursday, September 4th from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Museum at 121 North

Harlem Avenue in Freeport. Featured artists will lift and “turn” quilts from a stack, sharing the personal stories, techniques, and inspirations behind each piece. Guests are invited and encouraged to bring their own quilts to add to the “bed pile” and share their histories in this community-centered tradition.

A bed turning is a traditional social event and type of presentation for sharing quilts where multiple quilts are stacked on a bed and displayed one at a time by "turning" or rolling them back to reveal each one. Historically, bed turnings were community gatherings where women would showcase their quilting skills to friends and neighbors. The event provided an opportunity for guests to see the intricate handiwork and a wide range of quilts, often made at homes during long winter nights. As the quilts were turned over, the story, history, or details behind each quilt were presented, providing context and appreciation for the maker's work and the historical significance of the piece while helping to preserve the stories and heritage associated with antique and family heirloom quilts.



### **FHN healthcare scholarships**

FHN is offering up to three \$1,000 scholarships to students pursuing specific healthcare careers. The FHN Healthcare Career Scholarship Program is open to any student residing in FHN's service area and currently enrolled in an accredited program of study in support of a wide variety of healthcare professions including imaging, information technology, nursing, pharmacy, rehabilitation services, respiratory therapy, health information management, surgical technology, laboratory services, and more.

Applicants must provide evidence of a current GPA of 3.0 or better and submit an essay explaining why they are working towards a healthcare and how their involvement would benefit FHN's service area. Finalists must also participate in an interview if selected as a finalist. The application form and more details are available online at <https://www.fhn.org/scholarships.asp>. Winners will be announced in December and funds disbursed to the winning students' college or university to be applied toward expenses for the Spring 2026 term.

Applications are due next Friday, September 5th. For more information, call FHN Human Resources at 815-599-6336 or email [recruitment@fhn.org](mailto:recruitment@fhn.org). That's 815-599-6336.

### **Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance programming season begins**

The Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance starts their new season of programming next Tuesday, September 2nd with a potluck at 6:00 p.m. at St. John United Church of Christ at 1010 South Park Boulevard in Freeport. The meal will be followed at 7:15 p.m. by a program on the Spring Migration of birds through the Mid-coast of Maine by Kee Henze, a biology major Highland Community College. Attendees should bring a dish to pass and their own table service; beverages will be provided. Guests can also attend the program only and arrive after 7:00 p.m.



Henze, pictured at left, will review photos and observations from a trip to mid-coast Maine for Hog Island Audubon Camp's Spring Migration. Highlights of this trip include a firsthand look at Project Puffin's reintroduction of the Atlantic Puffin to mid-coast Maine, a nesting female Northern Parula, and a stunning flurry of warbler activity on Monhegan Island, a migratory hotspot. Henze has many photographs and anecdotes to share about the adventure.

### **The week ahead...**

As we look at the week ahead, FREEPOD reminds local photographers that the City of Freeport 2025 photo contest closes on Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Up to three photos can be submitted and the winner will be chosen by the community in an online public vote in early September, be featured in a Fall issue of the City newsletter, and then be showcased in the City Hall lobby for a year. Rules for the contest can be found on the City website at [www.cityoffreeport.org](http://www.cityoffreeport.org)

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by supporters of the Experimental Aircraft Association 475 of Freeport Pilots. 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 (<https://www.stephensoncountyfarmersmarket.com/vendors>).

Next Wednesday, September 3rd, movie lovers will enjoy the next film in the Lindo Theatre's Select Pix Classic Film Series. The 1989 movie *Steel Magnolias* highlights the bonds of friendship among a group of women in a small Louisiana town and stars Sally Field, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts, Olympia Dukakis, Tom Skerrit and a number of other well-known actors. It will be shown at 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. at regular ticket

prices and moviegoers can stay after both showings for a discussion with Classic Film Series hosts Ed Finch and Alan Wenzel. This year is the 15th year for the film series hosted by Ed and Alan.

Looking further ahead, be sure that Brewfest is on your calendar! This very popular annual event hosted by the Greater Freeport Partnership is coming up on Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. As always, attendees will not only be able to enjoy a variety of local beers but also a whole afternoon of fun and entertainment to celebrate the season. FREEPOD will have more details in future episodes but tickets are already available online at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://www.greaterfreeport.com) – just search on “Brewfest” to get yours today.



And finally, if you're enjoying the cooler temperatures that are ushering in the Fall season, you might want to check the temperature every now and then, but what if you don't have a thermometer or your phone's weather app handy? Just turn to Mother Nature's temperature checkers: crickets. That's right, crickets! Science has proven that crickets can not only accurately tell temperature, they can also communicate it to you! Just count how many times they chirp in 15 seconds and then add 40 to that number to find out the temperature in Fahrenheit.

How do they do that? Crickets are cold-blooded, meaning their body temperature matches their surroundings. So warmer temperatures give them the energy to chirp more rapidly and when temperatures cool down they chirp more slowly. Amazingly, they're almost always within two degrees or less of the temperature you'll find on a thermometer. So just remember the numbers 15 and 40 when you're within earshot of crickets, and you'll know whether or not you'll need a jacket.

If you are looking for something to do this week or any week, visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://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](http://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 with FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors visiting with Area Music Director Bill Peterson about creating great music for the community and all the wonderful friends that join in the effort. The interview is available online and can be listened to anytime.



Next Tuesday, Tim will visit with Dr. Anna Alvarado, Superintendent of Schools for Freeport School District 145, about the recent changes in locations for lower grades that took effect for this new school year. This pod will post at noon on Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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, WNII in DeKalb, at [www.northernpublicradio.org](http://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](http://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



To find something to do this week or any week, visit the Greater Freeport Partnership website at [www.greaterfreeport.com](http://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 with this QR code if you prefer.

While you're signing up for more of what's going on in our community, you can also subscribe to the City of Freeport's monthly newsletter at their website, [www.cityoffreeport.org](http://www.cityoffreeport.org), or with the QR at the right.

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