

FREEPOD – 9 October

Hello everyone! Welcome you to the October 9th, 2025 episode of FREEPOD. Now let's see what's going on.

Citadel and Saint Joseph Village

Citadel Healthcare has announced that Ascension Living Saint Joseph Village in Freeport will now operate as The Citadel at Saint Joseph Village. Saint Joseph Village has a long-standing legacy of care in the Freeport community and with the added resources of Citadel Healthcare, it will continue to provide quality post-hospital care, rehabilitation, and long-term support.

The Citadel at Saint Joseph Village will work through Citadel to strengthen outcomes and support residents in their recovery and long-term needs by combining Citadel Healthcare's focus on clinical expertise with personalized care.

With a growing presence across Illinois, Citadel Healthcare is recognized as an engaged community partner. Each center is designed to foster a supportive environment where residents can focus on recovery and return confidently to daily life. For more information, visit www.citadelhealthcare.com or the link included in the print version of this episode

Wine and Witches

Today's the day for Wine and Witches in downtown Freeport! From 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., grab your best ghoulish friends and goblins and join downtown Freeport businesses for a night of shopping and tasty potions. Interactive and performative entertainment continue throughout the event with dance performances, balloon art, caricatures, live music, and much more.

Wine & Witches is a free event, but VIP tickets can be purchased that include a special VIP bag of swag and downtown merchandise offers. The Freeport Festival District is also in place for the event, allowing attendees to take beverages from any restaurant or bar with them as they browse participating shops. Check in for the event to get your tasting cup and wristband at Rootz & Branchez at 101 West Main Street. The VIP experience can be purchased online by registering at www.greaterfreeport.com/events or on the Greater Freeport Partnership's event page on Facebook.



Judge Hauser retires

After 20 years on the bench, the Honorable James Hauser has announced he is retiring effective in December 2026. He is a resident judge on the 15th Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois, which includes Stephenson, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, and Ogle counties and has served as the presiding judge for

Stephenson County. He was elected to the bench in November 2016, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Theresa Ursin.

There will be a primary election in March to find his replacement, followed by the general election in November. Already filing as a candidate for the future vacancy is Attorney Judd Thruman (through-men) of Fishburn, Whiton and Thruman Attorneys at Law in Freeport. Thruman is an Orangeville High School graduate and has been an attorney for 20 years. He lives in McConnell with his wife and they have two adult children. He is a board member with local financial businesses and also has served in roles with the Freeport Chamber of Commerce.

Stephenson County Sheriff Steve Stovall seeks re-election

Stephenson County Sheriff Steve Stovall has officially announced that he will seek re-election for a second term as Stephenson County Sheriff.

Sheriff Stovall said that serving the people of Stephenson County as Sheriff since December 2022, has been the honor of his life. He added that although he believes that a lot was accomplished in his first term, there is still more to be done. During his first term, he led the Sheriff's office through a significant process of modernization.

Free paper-shredding event

State Representative John Cabello from Machesney Park and Illinois House Minority Leader Tony McCombie are hosting a free paper-shredding event in Freeport this Saturday, October 11th in Parking Lot B at Highland Community College from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

The lawmakers recommend residents use this event as a chance to safely and securely dispose of any paper documents that contain sensitive personal information, including outdated healthcare information or financial documents. This event is free and open to all residents of the 89th and 90th House Districts.

The shelves are bare at the Salvation Army

The shelves are pretty bare at the Salvation Army and they need your help. Items of particular need include cereal; cookies that don't melt; crackers; canned vegetables, especially corn, carrots, and peas; canned soups, including chunky versions, cream of chicken and cream of mushroom, chicken noodle, and vegetable; dried and canned potatoes; and pasta.

Donations can be dropped off at 106 West Exchange Street, across the street from the Stephenson County Courthouse. You can also make a cash donation that the Salvation Army can use to purchase groceries at <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/freeport/>.

The Salvation Army is also urgently requesting donations of winter coats, hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to help meet community needs for cold winter days ahead. They are also seeking volunteer bell

ringers for the upcoming holiday season. Volunteer bell ringers play a crucial role in the holiday fundraising efforts and you can register online at www.registertoring.com

Tech tips for seniors

Today's technology can be a challenge for many folks and the Senior Resource Center in Freeport is here to help with Tech Time, a new series of technology classes designed specifically for older adults. The sessions will be led by Ed Alderman, owner of *The Computer Tutor*, who brings years of experience teaching people how to use technology with ease and confidence.

There are five classes with topics covering common computer problems, iPhones and iPads, Android phones, using the internet and email safely and securely, and digital photo management and cloud storage. Tech Time will give attendees the tools and confidence they need to better utilize technology in their daily lives. A list of dates for the classes is included in the print version of this episode, with the first class on Common Computer Programs coming up next Friday, October 17th from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Sessions are free of charge, but space is limited and advance registration is required. To register, call the Senior Resource Center at 815-235-9777 or email the Center at awalker@srcntr.org. Participants are asked to bring their own devices. All classes will be held at Senior Resource Center at 206 E. Stephenson Street, Freeport.

A flyer for 'Tech Time for Seniors' classes. It features the Senior Resource Center logo at the top left, which is a tree with colorful leaves. To the right is a photo of Ed Alderman, an older man with glasses, holding a smartphone. The title 'Tech Time for Seniors' is in large green letters. Below it, a list of classes is shown with checkmarks: 'Common Computer Problems' (Oct 17), 'iPhone & iPad Tips' (Nov 7), 'Android Phone Tips' (Nov 21), 'Internet 101, Security & Email Basics' (Dec 5), and 'Digital Photo Management & Cloud Storage' (Dec 17). On the right side, there is an orange box with 'Details' including the time (1:30-2:30 pm), location (206 E. Stephenson St.), and that it's free. It also includes a 'Reserve Your Spot Now!' section with a phone icon and contact information: Call: 815-235-9777 or Email: awalker@srcntr.org. At the bottom right is a small photo of an older woman looking at a laptop.

Friday 17 October	Common Computer Problems	1:30-2:30 pm
Friday 7 November	iPhone & iPad Tips	1:30-2:30 pm
Friday 21 November	Android Phone Tips	1:30-2:30 pm
Friday 5 December	Internet 101, Security & Email Basics	1:30-2:30 pm
Wednesday 17 December	Digital Photo Management & Cloud Storage	1:30-2:30 pm

Hope Wins family event

Hope Wins will host another eat and learn event through its RISE parents' support group from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. next Thursday, October 16th at Grace Episcopal Church in Freeport. Linsey McDanel ([Mic Danell](#)) and her staff will cook a home-made meal for kids and parents attending the event. After the meal, the kids will split off and do an activity while the parents will hear an educational presentation and have time to talk with other parents facing similar issues. Send an email to hopedwins20237@gmail.com or check out www.hopedwinsfreeport.org for registration information.

YMCA Run Stephenson County is next Saturday

The YMCA of Northwest Illinois is hosting its third annual Run Stephenson County 5K, 10K, and Half Marathon next Saturday, October 18th with the start and finish of the race being at Richland Creek Trailhead in Orangeville. This event is the only 10K and half marathon within a 45-mile radius with the closest being held in Rockford.

To participate in the run or volunteer, visit www.runsignup.com and search on "Run Stephenson County" or visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Orangeville/RunStephensonCounty>. This event is part of the YMCA's annual campaign that helps to provide scholarships for all their services. For more information, contact the YMCA of Northwest Illinois at 815-235-9622 or check out their Facebook page.

Safe Sitter Essentials class at FHN

FHN is hosting a *Safe Sitter Essentials with CPR* class this Saturday, October 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at FHN Memorial Hospital. The class designed to prepare students in grades 6 through 8 to be safe when they're home alone or babysitting. The full-day course is \$50, which includes the Safe Sitter Essentials Student Handbook, completion card, and basic CPR skill practice. Registration is required and can be easily done at www.fhn.org/safesitter. Financial assistance is available for eligible students. For more information on the class or the scholarships, call 815-599-6707. That's 815-599-6707.

Pumpkin decorating at Freeport Public Library

Fall has arrived at the Freeport Public Library, along with their annual Book Character Pumpkin Decorating Contest! This year, they've added a category for teens so everyone in the family can participate in the fun. Adults are also welcome to showcase their art and craft skills by decorating a pumpkin. Bring your pumpkin to the library by this Saturday, October 11th to enter and then stop by from October 15th through the 25th to vote for your favorite!

The week ahead...

Amity's Attic has reminded us that while they were closed earlier this week, they are now open again for the Fall and Winter seasons with lots of great new finds for you to explore as you support Amity's Daycare and Learning Center with your purchases.

If you're hungry tomorrow or Saturday, the Cub Foods Brat Stand this weekend will be run by supporters of the Freeport Lions Club. 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. For more information, visit www.stephensoncountyfarmersmarket.com/vendors.

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.

We also wanted to remind everyone that we're really enjoying the great in-depth interviews you can hear every week on FREEPOD, and are sure you will too if you're not already! This week's interview, for example, featured FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim going a little batty with Adam Moderow in discussing the bat population in general as well as what to do if one decides to visit inside your home. The interview, which aired first on Tuesday, is available online and can be listened to anytime.

Next Tuesday, FREEPOD host Alan Wenzel visits with Hester Bury, Development Officer and Yvette Sellers, Agency Relations Area Manager for the Northern Illinois Food Bank. The Food Bank provides food for food pantries, soup kitchens, daycares, and schools and other child program sites over a 13-county area in Northern Illinois. In Stephenson County alone, their services provide fresh produce, frozen meats, dairy products, and shelf-stable food items for over 8,000 people a month and close to 900,000 people a year. Their website, www.SolveHungerToday.org, provides more information about their efforts and they were the most recent recipient of the 100 Women Who Care of Stephenson County's \$12,000 donation. This conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, October 14th 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.

In closing...

In closing, as we've mentioned before, we need your help! 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 remember that FREEPOD is now on YouTube! The program is currently audio only but having it on the YouTube platform now gives you another super-easy way to listen. You can find both English and Spanish versions – just head to YouTube.com and search for FREEPOD or click the link in the print version at <https://www.youtube.com/@FREEPOD61032/podcasts>. 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, WNII 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. Have a great Labor Day weekend and thank you for listening!