



Hello and welcome to FREEPOD. I'm Lynn Feaver...

And I'm Pat Norman...

In this week's episode, state agencies roll out recovery resources after last week's storms...

A local collective challenges us all to eat local...

And we all have the chance to strike up some fun for a good cause.

This is Freepod for April 30th, 2026 and here is the news that you've been missing...

CORRECTION

Before we get in to this week's stories, we need to offer a quick correction and apology. In last week's episode, we reported on the Stephenson County Farmer's Market temporarily moving due to downtown construction. Unfortunately, we misreported on the proper new location. The farmer's market will temporarily be found at the intersection of Exchange and State, beginning on May 9th from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

We here at Freepod strive for accuracy and integrity and we sincerely apologize to the purveyors of the market, and our listening audience, for our mistake.

STORM RECOVERY RESOURCES

Residents across northwest Illinois impacted by recent severe storms are being urged to take action to recover losses and stay safe.

The Illinois Department of Human Services says SNAP recipients who lost food may qualify for reimbursement — but applications must be submitted within 10 days of the loss. Officials encourage affected residents to apply quickly and contact their local DHS office for help.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Department of Public Health is reminding families to use caution with food after power outages. When in doubt, throw it out, as spoiled food can lead to serious illness.

Residents are also encouraged to complete a voluntary damage survey through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to help officials assess storm impacts and coordinate recovery efforts.

Farmers should report damage to the USDA Farm Service Agency before making repairs to remain eligible for potential disaster assistance.

SNAP - <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=18623>

IEMA Survey - <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/56baf3b44854af192993d73a2201765?portalUrl=https://ilema.maps.arcgis.com>

USDA - <https://www.usda.gov/guidance-documents/disaster-protection-and-recovery/fsa/emergency-disaster-designation-and-declaration-process>





LARGE REPAVING EFFORT UNDERWAY IN KRAPE PARK

The Freeport Park District and the City of Freeport are moving forward with a road improvement project in Krape Park.

Following last week's park board meeting, officials approved an agreement to reconstruct and repave Gladewood Drive, located in the southeast corner of the park.

Construction began April 28th, with the Gladewood Drive entrance inside the park being closed during the first phase. Residents will need to use an alternate entrance near the sledding hill.

The project includes more than 1600 feet of roadway identified for full replacement.

Work is expected to wrap up by the end of May and will not impact the park's south entrance improvement project.

Residents can sign up for updates by texting "GLADEWOODFREEPORT" to 91896.

HIGHLAND NAMES NEW HEAD COACH FOR MEN'S BASKETBALL

Highland Community College has announced Devin Kastrup as the new head coach of the Cougars men's basketball team, pending approval by the Board of Trustees. Kastrup brings years of college coaching experience, along with a background as a professional player overseas in Spain and China.

He began his coaching career in 2017 and has since held positions at Western Colorado University, Southwestern Community College, Cloud County Community College, and most recently Idaho State University.

Athletic Director Michael Broskowski says Kastrup stood out for his success rebuilding programs and building strong team culture. Kastrup says he's ready to lead Highland into a new era, focused on discipline, competitiveness, and championship-level play.



Kastrup replaces Erik Walton, who coached the Cougars for one season.

Long-time fans will recognize that Highland is still recovering from a tumultuous turnover, with the unpopular firing of previous head coach Luke Norman.



GENNINGS DUNKER DRAFTED BY PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Lena native and Iowa offensive lineman Gennings Dunker is turning heads after a standout pre-draft run, capped by his selection in the third round by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The 6-foot-5, 320-pound lineman went viral at the NFL Combine for his unique style and personality, adding to a growing national profile that began at the Senior Bowl. Despite the attention, Dunker remains grounded, known by teammates for his humor and positive energy.

On the field, the former Lena-Winslow Panthers and Iowa Hawkeyes football standout built a reputation as a

dominant blocker, helping anchor one of the nation's top offensive lines. His physical play and versatility made him a valuable draft pick.

Now, Dunker looks to bring that same intensity—and personality—to the next level in Pittsburgh.

CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE ANNOUNCED

The City of Freeport is launching a new community event this summer—the Freeport Find Fest.

The citywide garage sale is set for June 18th through the 20th, inviting residents to either host their own sale or spend the weekend searching for bargains across town.

Organizers are encouraging participants to sign up in advance to be included on an official map of sale locations, helping shoppers easily find deals throughout the community.

Sales will run daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

City leaders say the event aims to create a fun new tradition in Freeport while giving residents a chance to connect with neighbors and make some extra cash.

CITY OF FREEPORT IS EXCITED TO LAUNCH . . .

FREEPORT FIND FEST CITY-WIDE GARAGE SALE



Three Days. One City. Endless Finds.

June 18, 19, 20

CALLING ALL FREEPORT RESIDENTS

WHY JOIN?

1. Make Extra Cash while Cleaning Out Your Home
2. Be Included on the Event's Official List & Map
3. Help Start a New Freeport Tradition!



LET THE ANTIQUING & TREASURE HUNTING BEGIN!



FAM ART CAMPS OPEN REGISTRATION

Calling all young artists—summer creativity is just around the corner.

Kids ages 7 to 12 are invited to take part in upcoming Summer Art Workshops by the Freeport Art Museum, featuring three week-long sessions led by talented local artists. Each day offers a new hands-on project, from painting and sculpture to mixed media.

Families can register for a full week or choose individual days, with flexible scheduling and affordable pricing.

Organizers say space is limited and classes are expected to fill quickly, so early registration is encouraged.

For more information, or to register, please visit <https://www.freeportartmuseum.com/art-camp>.

ASTRONOMY BEGINNERS COURSE BEING OFFERED AT FIREBAUGH OBSERVATORY

Interested in the night sky? The Doug Firebaugh Observatory is offering a six-week course designed for beginners looking to explore astronomy.

“Starting Out in Astronomy” runs every Thursday from May 7th through June 11th, from 7 to 9 p.m., and will feature lectures, discussions, and hands-on activities. No prior experience is required.

The course is open to those 16 and older, with a cost of \$75 due on the first day of class.

To Register, contact Observatory Director Jim Dole at (815) 291-3072.





HOW TO TICKPROOF YOUR YARD WITHOUT CHEMICALS

As more people spend time outdoors this spring, experts are warning about a growing health concern in backyards across the country—ticks.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, disease-carrying ticks are now found in all 48 contiguous states, and cases of tick-borne illnesses have been rising in recent years.

Researchers at Cornell University say there are dozens of tick species, many capable of spreading diseases like Lyme.

Experts say simple yard maintenance can significantly reduce your risk. Keeping grass trimmed to about three inches, removing leaf piles, and clearing tall weeds can make your yard less inviting to ticks.

Adding a dry mulch border between wooded areas and your lawn can also help create a barrier.

Homeowners can even test for ticks by dragging a cloth over tall grass to see if any latch on.

And when spending time outside, wear long sleeves, use insect repellent, and always check for ticks when you come indoors.

With a few precautions, you can safely enjoy your yard this season.

TAKE THE BREAKFAST LOCALVORE CHALLENGE

The Jo Daviess Local Foods Collective is launching its first-ever Breakfast Localvore Challenge, inviting residents to eat local for the most important meal of the day.

The week-long event runs May 3rd through May 10th and encourages participants to source all breakfast ingredients from local farms, markets, and producers. The challenge is free to join, with an optional \$5 donation that includes access to a private online group and a chance to win a gift card.



Organizers say the goal is to highlight the region’s strong network of local food producers while making it fun and accessible for everyone to participate from home.

Events leading up to the challenge include a producer meet-and-greet on May 1st and a “Find Your Farmer” presentation on May 2nd. For more information, please visit the link found in the print version of this story on our website.



250,000 ILLINOIS HOUSEHOLDS SET TO LOSE FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

Changes tied to President Donald Trump’s “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” also known as H.R. 1, are putting hundreds of thousands of Illinois residents at risk of losing food assistance.

New work requirements and eligibility rules affecting the Supple-

mental Nutrition Assistance Program—or SNAP—took effect earlier this year. Some recipients who can't meet the requirements may lose benefits starting May 1st.

State officials say more than 250,000 Illinois households could be impacted.

At a recent rally at the Illinois State Capitol, advocates and lawmakers pushed for new legislation to help families who lose assistance.

Supporters say the cuts are already creating stress for working parents trying to balance jobs, childcare, and rising food costs.

Several bills are now under consideration in Springfield aimed at offsetting the loss of benefits and studying the long-term impact.

SCHOOL CELL PHONE BAN LOOKS LIKELY

The Illinois House has approved a measure that would limit cellphone use in public school classrooms.

Senate Bill 2427, sponsored by Representative Michelle Mussman, passed overwhelmingly and would require school districts to adopt policies banning devices like cellphones, tablets, and laptops during the school day by the 2027 school year.

Supporters say the move targets distractions and student well-being, citing research linking device use to lower academic performance and increased anxiety.

Under the plan, younger students would face a full-day, bell-to-bell ban, while high schools could allow limited use during lunch or breaks.

The bill includes exceptions for medical needs and educational purposes.

Because of changes in the House, the measure now heads back to the Senate. Governor JB Pritzker has voiced support for similar restrictions.



HCC HOSTS SPRING INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT

Highland Community College invites the community to the Spring Instrumental Music Concert on Friday, May 1st at 7 p.m. in the Ferguson Fine Arts Center.

The event features music performed by students and community members and includes the final conducting performance of Scott Stich, who is retiring after 28 years leading the Wind Ensemble.

\$12/\$10/\$5 • 815-599-3718 • HIGHLAND.EDU

IT'S ALL HERE  **HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$5 for students. You can get your tickets at the door, or by following this link: <https://highland.vbotickets.com/events>.

COST OF LIVING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE SERIES FINAL LECTURE

The Environmental Study Group is wrapping up its lecture series on the cost of living with climate change.

The final session will be held on Wednesday, May 6th at the Freeport Public Library, featuring expert speakers discussing how climate change is impacting northwest Illinois—and what's being done at the local, state, and federal levels.

Speakers include Dr. Jessica Rudnick, a climate resilience specialist with a decade of experience in environmental research and community planning... along with Freeport City Manager Rob Boyer and Environmental Coordinator Randi Kohlbauer.

The event is presented in partnership with several local and regional organizations, including the University of Illinois Extension and the Illinois Sierra Club.

The program is free and open to the public, beginning at 6:30 p.m., and will include time for questions and discussion. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information, visit <https://freeportpubliclibrary.librarymarket.com>.



VOICES TO HOST MOTHER'S DAY FLOWER SALE

VOICES of Stephenson County is getting ready for its annual Mother's Day Flower Sale.

Organizers say shoppers can expect a wide selection of hanging baskets, mixed containers, and other spring favorites, all sourced from the same grower who supplied last fall's popular mums.

There will be no pre-orders for the sale, so customers are encouraged to arrive early for the best selection.

The event will run until everything is sold out, with organizers reminding the community that once the flowers are gone—they're gone.

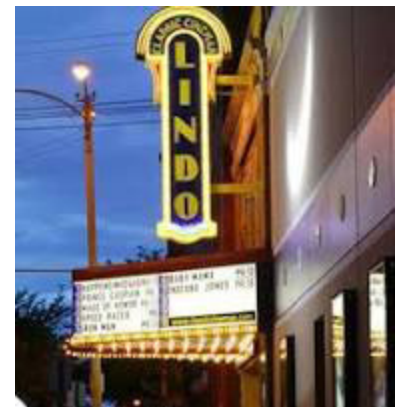
You can get your flowers at VOICES's location in the Lincoln Mall from noon to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6th, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 7th, or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, May 8th.

ALAN AND ED'S FILM CLUB

Classic film fans have a chance to experience a legendary Western on the big screen.

Alan and Ed's Film Club returns to the Lindo Theatre to host special showings of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* on May 6th at 1:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Directed by Sergio Leone and starring Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef, and Eli Wallach, the 1966 film is considered one of the greatest Westerns of all time, known for its sweeping style and unforgettable score by Ennio Morricone.



THE COST OF LIVING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE LECTURE SERIES

FINAL SESSION: CLIMATE RISKS & RESILIENCE AT LOCAL & STATE LEVELS

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas St., Meeting Room at 6:30 pm

Dr. Jessica Rudnick, State Climate Specialist with the University of Illinois Extension, will be joined by Rob Boyer, Freeport City Manager, and Randi Kohlbauer, Environmental & Regulatory Compliance Officer, to discuss climate risks and resilience at local and state levels.



Sponsored by the Environmental Study Group
ESG
In partnership with the Northwest Illinois Trails Foundation, the University of Illinois Extension, the Northwest Illinois Bird & Nature Alliance, the Illinois Sierra Club, and the City of Freeport.
For more information on each of the speakers, visit freeportpubliclibrary.org/



Organizers say it's a rare opportunity to see a cinematic classic the way it was meant to be seen—on the big screen.



GETTING THE SCOOP ON DIETARY GUIDELINES

Health officials say more than 60% of Americans are living with at least one diet-related chronic disease, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

To help address that, a community workshop is coming to Freeport. "Getting the Scoop on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans" will be held May 6th from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Senior Resource Center.

The session will focus on how everyday food choices impact long-term health and offer practical guidance based on national dietary recommendations.

There is a \$5 fee, which includes materials, and pre-registration is required. Organizers say the event offers both valuable information and a chance to connect with others in the community.

MERCYHEALTH HOSTING STRIKING SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN EVENT

A fun-filled fundraiser is rolling into Freeport to support local children and families.

Mercyhealth will host its annual "Striking Success for Children" event on May 7th at Four Seasons Bowling Center. This year's circus-themed event—"Bowling Under the Big Top"—will feature food, games, prizes, and a silent auction. Check-in begins at 5:15 p.m. and the festivities kick off at 6:15.

Proceeds will benefit Mercyhealth's Pediatric Rehab program, which provides therapy services for children across northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin, helping those with developmental delays, autism, injuries, and other conditions build essential life skills.

Organizers say the event is not only a great time, but also an important way to support children working to reach their full potential.

Registration is \$50 per bowler and can be done here: <https://www.mercyhealthsystem.org/foundation/events/bowl/>.



IN CLOSING...

As we wrap up this week's show, we'd like to remind you all to listen to this past week's interview. Freepod host Becky Connors chatted with Scott Stich. Scott is retiring as the conductor of the Highland Community College Wind Ensemble after serving in that role for 28 years. Stich's final concert is Friday, May 1st.

This coming Tuesday, Tim Connors will share his conversation with Katie Quittschreiber. Katie is the new owner of Lena Brewing Company. Tim and Katie will talk about how she went from employee to owner and her plans for the beloved establishment moving forward. That interview will be available starting at noon on Tuesday, May 5th. You can find it, and all of our other interviews, on our website, www.freepod.org, or wherever you get your podcasts from.

We'd like to thank our community liaisons and reporters for providing pivotal content for our program, our partners at WNIJ in DeKalb for helping to share Freepod to a larger community, and the Mass Communication department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast.

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This has been Freepod. Thank you for listening.



FREEPOD

The news you've been missing.