



**17 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.

City news

After much work behind the scenes, a \$550,000 Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation from the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund was awarded to the City of Freeport. These funds were available to low-to-moderate income residents to improve their owner-occupied single-family homes, with \$64,000 allocated to grant administration and \$486,000 to rehabilitation.

While other properties are also in line to be approved, Council approved the rehabilitation of the first home on Center Street, with work including electrical renovations, new windows, exterior stair replacement and more. "Though the application period for this particular grant has wrapped up, we look forward to continuing to find unique ways to helping residents improve their properties," said Community and Economic Development Director Wayne Duckmann.

In more City news, the Council approved improvements for the Shawnee and Hancock viaduct for safer passage for all traffic in that area. Improvements include replacing the water main and storm sewer as well as lowering the road by two-and-a-half feet so that semi-truck traffic and safety equipment will permanently be able to enter the Arcade area from this viaduct location. The project is expected to be completed by May 2025 with Fehr Graham overseeing the contract carried out by the Helm Group.

The Council also approved a grant of almost \$16,000 to replace old tasers for the Freeport Police Department, where officers are required to carry them as a less-lethal use-of-force option.

In more news about the police department, Freeport Police Chief Chris Shenberger presented an Award of Valor to Patrolman Daniel Moore for his bravery and professionalism during the high-pressure scenario at Hosmer Apartments on September 4th. Among many other actions taken that day, Moore was able to carefully remove a woman from a threatening individual with firearms.

Street Work Update

Street work continues around the City, with current projects underway. These include replacement of lead service lines, one block at a time on West Avenue, moving south from Galena Avenue to Empire

Street through November 13th, water work and road paving on Adams Avenue from Exchange Street to Float Avenue with estimated completion by Thanksgiving, water infrastructure and paving on Ridge Drive and Westwood Avenue through December.

Construction areas will be reopened at the end of each day and residents are able to pull in and out of driveways, but delays are possible when maneuvering construction zones. The signs saying "Road Closed" give work crews the proper space and safety to work. Ignoring them could result in injury, project delays, and more. The City asks that drivers observe and obey signage with great caution.

If you have any questions about street projects, please refer to the City of Freeport's Facebook page or call City Hall at 815-235-8200. That's 815-235-8200.

Early voting going well

Business has been brisk at the Stephenson County Clerk's office as early voting has been a popular choice for many of the County's residents. As of a few days ago, County Clerk Jazmin Wingert said about 2,200 people have cast their ballots already for the November 5th general election and the polling place in the lower level of the Stewart Centre at 50 W. Douglas Street in Freeport has been busy.

Just for reference, according to the Election Dashboard website there were 21,576 total votes cast in the 2020 election in Stephenson County, with 12,521 Republican votes and 9,055 Democratic votes. This makes the current count almost 11% of the 2020 total since early voting began just a month ago on September 19th.

Early voting continues from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Stewart Centre.

Little Cubs Field burglarized

We're sorry to report that Little Cubs Field, a replica of Wrigley Field on Empire Street, was broken into within the last 10 days and burglars made off with a significant amount of cash according to the facility's Vice President Denny Garkey.

Garkey said that a window was broken to gain entry. While the cash register and donation jars were emptied and some food and drinks also stolen, Garkey said it was fortunate that beyond the broken window there was no vandalism.

Garkey said the field's board will hold a meeting to determine if more security is needed. In the meantime, they are working with the Freeport Police Department to review security footage from a nearby business. Little Cubs Field attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Flu shots

FHN is holding a series of public flu shot clinics throughout northwest Illinois. Adults under age 65 will get a trivalent vaccine that protects against three strains of influenza for \$35 while those 65 and older will receive a high-dose version of the vaccine for \$85.

There is no out-of-pocket cost for those covered by Medicare Part B or Medicare HMO accepted by FHN. Please bring your Medicare or Medicare HMO card to the event. If paying directly, please bring cash or

a check payable to FHN. No credit or debit cards will be accepted. Please also bring a photo ID as this is required by federal guidelines to prevent identity theft.

A full list of the FHN flu shot events in northwest Illinois can be found at www.fhn.org

Medicare open enrollment informative event

As we have mentioned, October is Medicare open enrollment month! To provide you with personalized, specific Medicare advice, the Freeport Public Library will host Josh Smith from Medicare 411 for a free informative discussion on Thursday October 24 at 10:00 a.m. Josh will also be available to answer questions on Tuesday October 22nd and 29th from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at a table in the Library hallway. There is no registration for these free events.

Community concerts

The Freeport Community Concerts are back! The Freeport Community Concerts Association or FCCA has been bringing interesting, varied, mostly classical music to Freeport for the past 91 years, making it the longest running community concert series in the country. The first concert of the current season by Alliance Brass was just presented, and the next concert is scheduled for next Saturday, October 26 at the Freeport Masonic Temple at 305 W Stephenson Street.

FREEPOD host and TimBeck2 Becky Connors recently visited with community resident and FCCA supporter Marjorie Phillips.

(audio clip)

Thanks, Becky, and how great that all future concerts are planned to be free! To support FCCA's efforts, please be a part of the audience at the concerts and let your family and friends know about them. You can find out more at the Freeport Community Concerts Association on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FreeportCommunityConcertAssociation>.

Inaugural City Photo Contest winner

The City of Freeport held its inaugural photo contest in August and early September, inviting all residents and photographers to show off their beautiful views of our community. This year's winner is Eli Michael with his photo of a vintage car in front of the historic Wagner House building. Congratulations, Eli, and thank you to all who participated. We look forward to next year!



Sorensen Accepting Applications for Military Academy Nominations

Congressman Eric Sorensen is accepting applications from high school students in Illinois' 17th Congressional District seeking nominations to a U.S. Service Academy for the Fall 2025 term. The deadline for applications is Friday, November 1, 2024, at 5:00 P.M CT.

Sorensen will nominate qualified high school students from the District for attendance at four service academies: the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York; the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. The Coast Guard Academy does not require a nomination.

According to Sorensen, these institutions shape our future leaders, saying "I'm excited to help our local high school students take this path to prepare for a career of service as an officer in a branch of the U.S. military." Applicants should visit Congressman Sorensen's website to learn more about the process and documents required for nomination. For more information, answers to frequently asked questions and an application packet, please visit Congressman Sorensen's website at www.sorensen.house.gov

Run Stephenson County Race

The YMCA of Northwest Illinois is still seeking volunteers for their Run Stephenson County Race this Saturday, October 19th, starting at 8:00 AM. Volunteers are needed for water stations and turn-arounds from 7:30 AM to noon. These roles are crucial to the safe operation of the race, which is held at the Richland Creek Trailhead in Orangeville.

Volunteers can find out more about the positions that still need staffing and sign up by searching on "Stephenson County" at <https://runsignup.com/Race/Volunteer/IL/Orangeville/RunStephensonCounty> or calling the Y at 815-235-9622. That's 815-235-9622.

Beginning Birder Club

The second class in the Beginning Birder Club, taught by the area Audubon Society's Education Chair Juliet Moderow, will be this Saturday, October 19th, at 10:30 a.m. at the Freeport Public Library.

This is a fun, educational program for youths to learn about different topics about birds with lessons tailored for ages 6 through 10. Topics include identifying bird songs, how birds use their beaks and feet as tools, migration patterns, bird feeders, how nests are built, and more. All sessions are independent from each other, so you are welcome to attend any or all sessions that fit your schedule.

Programs are held on the third Saturday of the month so to remember the dates, remember that "third" rhymes with "bird!" They will begin indoors at the Library but weather permitting will end outdoors to look for birds so please dress appropriately for the weather and note that youth must have an adult attending with them. While the sessions are all free, please register in advance as space is limited and to help determine how many materials are needed. For more information, visit www.nwilaudubon.org

You can register online at the Library's website, www.freeportpubliclibrary.org, or by contacting Moderow at nwilaudubon@gmail.com

Amity Haunted House

Looking for a scary good time to start off your Halloween celebrations? Then plan to visit the Amity Learning Center Haunted House from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. this Saturday, October 19th at 511 S. Liberty Ave. in Freeport will be completely transformed for this event. The cost is \$5 a head, and organizers promise you will keep your own head.

Amity staff and volunteers conjured up the haunted house that completely transform the hallways of the King Community Campus. This year, the event is apocalypse-themed and features zombies, gas masks and other surprises that staff member Jordan Lampe says should be appropriate for kids 8 years and older. She noted that while spooky, guests aren't touched at all in the haunted house.

Amity has held a haunted house every Halloween for about 15 years to raise funds for teacher appreciation and miscellaneous expenses at the day care center. Amity is still seeking volunteers to work in the haunted house or help with final touches. Donations are also welcome. If you can assist, please call Amity at 815-233-0015. That's 815-233-0015.

Halloween 2024!

There are quite a lot of other great ghoulish events occurring over the next week in anticipation of Halloween 2024 in Freeport.

First, the very popular Train of Terror hosted by the Stephenson County Antique Engine Club is also tearing up the tracks both this Saturday, October 19th, as well as next Saturday the 26th. If you dare, you can board the train at 2954 South Walnut Road at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, or 9:00 p.m. There are no advance ticket sales and all tickets are \$10.

Next Saturday, October 26th, young ghosts and goblins can enjoy two more spectacular spooky scenes on Bootiful Saturday in downtown Freeport and the Trick or Treat Trail at Krape Park.

For *Bootiful Saturday*, costumed kids and their families can head downtown to enjoy Halloween with downtown businesses! Classic Cinemas Lindo Theatre will have a 10:00 a.m. free showing of the 2020 movie SCOOB, a potential Dogpocalypse when Scooby Doo and the gang face their most challenging mystery ever: a plot to unleash a ghost dog upon the world. After the movie, everyone can enjoy trick-or-treating at over 30 downtown stores until 1:30 p.m.

If the morning doesn't yield enough treats, the *Trick or Treat Trail at Krape Park* should do the trick. From 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., this festive, one-stop, safe, family-friendly event begins at the Carousel and trails through the park to stock up on treats from local businesses and service organizations. The route is stroller friendly and dogs are welcome too, in costume or not.

Then for the seminal day, we can report that Trick or Trick will fall on Halloween evening, October 31st, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Happy Haunting, everyone!

The week ahead

As we look to the week ahead we are thinking that with all the wind we've had this week, many residents may be beginning fall leaf cleanup, so we want to remind you that leaf pickup begins November 1st so plan your raking accordingly and remember, only leaves!

Also remember that play begins in VOICES' First Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Pickleball Tournament at 10 a.m. this Saturday, October 19th at the Krape Park Pickleball Courts in Freeport. Spectators are encouraged to come out and support the players and the cause.

We also have a tidbit to share from our history experts: 155 years ago on October 19, 1869 the cornerstone of the Civil War Soldiers Monument was laid. Standing on the corner of Stephenson Street and Galena Avenue, it was the first monument raised in the United States to honor service men of the American Civil War.

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 fun events and activities throughout Stephenson County. You can subscribe to their free weekly newsletter of events there too.

In closing...

In closing, we want to let you know that we will be posting some great Northern Light photos from the Freeport area next week – they're spectacular! We also want to remind you that last week's in-depth interview, which is available on our website and through our new Facebook page, was FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Tim Connors speaking with Freeport High School Head Football Coach Anthony Dedmond and Assistant Football Coach Marty Sellers about this year's Freeport High football season. Next week's in-depth interview will be FREEPOD and TimBeck2 host Becky Connors speaking with Joe and Jennifer Kanosky about the Save the Tabernacle effort to ensure the future of the 105-year-old Tabernacle, currently on the Landmark Illinois Endangered List, at the Freeport Park District's Oakdale Nature Preserve just south of the City. Their conversation will post at noon on Tuesday, October 21st.

With that, time's up for this week but tune in again next week for news about Freeport businesses, City plans and progress, area rewards and recognition, local impacts of state and national news, and more.

As we say each week, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the help of many others. We're especially appreciative for the assistance of the Mass Communication Department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast. We're also grateful to WNII and Northern Public Radio in DeKalb, a member station of NPR National Public Radio, for partnering with us in reaching even more listeners with news of events and activities in northwest Illinois. And of course, here's a big shout-out to our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, 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.

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