

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | February, 2022



Why You Should Sign Up for Community Solar

For residents of River Forest, climate action starts at home. The largest, single source of greenhouse gas pollution is residential building emissions. By subscribing to a community solar program, you are helping support the development of new solar energy generation in Illinois. Taking steps to improve our home energy use is part of the solution to fighting climate change and improving our quality of life in River Forest.

Signing up for community solar and an energy assessment is a guaranteed way to lower your utility bill, invest in your home, live more comfortably, reduce pollution, and fight climate change. Participating in the municipally sponsored community solar program that the Village is offering in partnership with program administrator MCSquared (MC2) is simple and risk-free. There are no signup or cancellation fees. The program is designed to help homeowners, renters,

and landlords reduce their utility bills and support more sustainable living.

Community solar refers to a solar project that multiple subscribers support. These solar projects generate clean, renewable electricity fed into the local grid and reduce the amount of electricity generated by polluting fossil fuels like coal and gas. Each subscriber receives credits for their share of the electricity produced by the community solar project. These credits are applied to the subscriber's ComEd electric bill. MC2 bills the subscriber for 80% of the credit as the community solar subscription fee, which results in a 20% savings over ComEd's standard rates for electricity supply. Note that electric bills consist not only of supply charges but also delivery and other charges that will remain the same.

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

Welcome to February. As you know, one of the core guiding principles the Board and I have established is to stabilize our property taxes so that we all can afford to live comfortably in our homes. Economic development is a cornerstone of that principle.

Construction has commenced for the development at the corner of Lake and Lathrop. In January, excavation took place at the site and construction began with the pouring of foundation pads and installation of piers. Earlier this week, Lake Lathrop Partners and Wintrust Bank closed on the construction loan. This marks an important step in the project as the building permit is now issued and the developer has 18 months to complete the project. Follow along at vrf.us/LakeAndLathrop for updates and more information.

The Village is committed to promoting policies that recognize the importance and address the needs of our aging population. The Village collaborates with other agencies to offer much needed services as well as to provide programs that include older people and promote their engagement in the community. The River Forest Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee continues their work, read more [here](#). Most recently, the Committee issued a survey to a randomly selected group of River Forest Seniors to collect data on what matters most to them on how they view the age-friendliness of the Village. I look forward to hearing the Committee's report.

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President
Village of River Forest

Village Board Trustees



Erika Bachner



Kathleen Brennan



Lisa Gillis



Ken Johnson



Robert O'Connell



Respicio F. Vazquez

Village Clerk



Jonathan Keller

To contact the Village Board to submit a comment or question, click the button below

Contact the Village Board

News Around Town

Why You Should Sign Up for Community Solar

Continued from front page

Supporting renewable energy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels is of growing importance as the Village addresses climate change. Visit vrf.us/CommunitySolar to learn more and reserve a spot in the Village's community solar program. For a free ComEd home energy assessment, [click here](#).

Visit vrf.us/Sustainability for a variety of programs, initiatives, and resources for creating a more sustainable environment.



Sledding Safety Tips

Regardless of your stance on sledding, most people can agree that people on slippery saucers careening down an icy hill at upwards of 25 miles per hour may be thrilling, but it can also be dangerous. Injuries often occur when the sled hits a stationary object, or an individual falls off the sled. When purchasing a sled, ensure that the sled has a steering mechanism and brakes. Children should always be under adult supervision when sledding, especially children under 10. Ensure your sledding equipment is in good condition, free of sharp edges and cracks. All sledders should wear a helmet to minimize potential head injuries such as skull fractures. Finally, remember always to follow all safety guidelines at your sledding location. For more sledding safety tips, [click here](#).

2021 Property Tax Bills

The first installment of the 2021 property tax bills is posted on the Cook County Treasurer website. Letters were mailed at the end of January and are due March 1, 2022. Due to delays in the 2021 property tax cycle, it is likely the 2021 second installment property tax bills will not be due earlier than the final quarter of 2022.

The Township will do its best to keep taxpayers abreast of any changes as the property tax year unfolds. Watch for announcements from the Assessor on River Forest Township's website: RiverForestTownship.org. Taxpayers with concerns or questions about their property taxes are encouraged to contact the River Forest Township Assessor's office at any time.

Cook County Treasurer's Office

MARIA PAPPAS, TREASURER

2014 Second Installment Property Tax Bill

TOTAL PAYMENT DUE \$2,348.68

| Taxing District | 2014 Tax | 2014 Rate | 2014 % | Penalty | 2013 Tax |
|---|----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| MISCELLANEOUS TAXES | | | | | |
| South Cook Miscellaneous Assessment Agency | 11.80 | 0.017 | 0.125 | | 8.60 |
| North Cook Miscellaneous Assesment of Chicago | 145.04 | 0.447 | 0.155 | 15.87 | 161.29 |
| Miscellaneous Taxes Total | 156.84 | | | | 170.89 |
| SCHOOL TAXES | | | | | |
| Elementary School District 124 Public Schools | 110.78 | 0.400 | 1.445 | | 131.02 |
| Elementary School District 124 Public Schools | 1,848.28 | 4.855 | 83.885 | 38.18 | 1,925.86 |
| Elementary School District 124 Public Schools | 1,959.06 | 5.709 | 40.365 | 68.35 | 1,997.19 |
| School Taxes Total | 3,718.12 | 10.754 | 75.935 | | 3,554.10 |
| MUNICIPALITY/TOWNSHIP TAXES | | | | | |
| Development Fee (per sq ft) | 101.28 | 0.000 | 0.000 | | 0.00 |
| Waste of Evergreen Park | 642.79 | 1.827 | 13.385 | 80.18 | 618.07 |
| Police & Fire District 124 | 100.00 | 0.280 | 1.035 | | 12.00 |
| Public Health District 124 | 8.00 | 0.022 | 0.080 | | 6.20 |
| Public Health District 124 | 20.24 | 0.076 | 0.282 | | 16.01 |
| Municipality/Township Taxes Total | 872.31 | 2.205 | 16.200 | | 722.31 |
| COOK COUNTY TAXES | | | | | |
| Cook County Public Services District | 60.00 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.00 | 24.11 |
| Consolidated Landfills | 0.00 | 0.000 | 0.000 | | 10.43 |
| County of Cook | 100.00 | 0.280 | 1.035 | 37.46 | 90.00 |
| Cook County Public Safety | 10.00 | 0.041 | 0.150 | | 79.82 |
| Cook County Health Facilities | 200.00 | 0.557 | 4.042 | | 200.00 |
| Cook County Taxes Total | 410.00 | 1.178 | 4.412 | | 384.36 |
| (Do not pay these taxes) | 4,437.13 | 14.000 | 100.000 | | 4,488.12 |

TAX CALCULATOR | **IMPORTANT PAYMENT MESSAGES**

PROPERTY LOCATION | **MAILING ADDRESS**

TOTAL PAYMENT DUE \$2,348.68

IMPORTANT PAYMENT MESSAGES

PROPERTY LOCATION | **MAILING ADDRESS**

COOK COUNTY TREASURER

CHICAGO, IL 60601-4116

- (1) Amount Due
Refer to the schedule for the correct amount to pay based on when you mail or submit payment.
- (2) PIN
This 14-digit number represents the property legal description. Verify it on your deed. Pay only on your PIN. Include the PIN on payments and in any email or letter.
- (3) Code
This stands for the combination of taxing districts that collect property taxes in the area where the PIN is located.
- (4) Classification
Assessment levels are based on property use (residential, commercial, etc.) residential classifications start with "2."
- (5) Payment Schedule
The shaded area shows the amount to pay before and shortly after the due date. Pay the one amount that matches the date you mail or submit payment.
- (6) Property Location
This is where the PIN is located (Not the Billing Address). This is maintained and can be updated by the Cook County Assessor's Office.
- (7) Mailing Address
If the name and address for this PIN were not updated when the property was sold, you may obtain a Change of Name or Address application within the FORMS section of this website, or check the box on the coupon and complete the form on the back. For the taxpayer's protection, the forms must be notarized when submitted by mail.
- (8) Return Address
Make sure this address appears through the window of the envelope used to mail your payment.
- (9) Payment Coupon
Mail this portion with your check. (If paying in person, present the entire bill)

Village Department News

Police Department

Tips for Exercising After Dark

Pay Attention: Make a note of your surroundings, including cars and pedestrians. Music should not hamper your ability to hear your surroundings.

Stay Visible: Wear bright, vibrant, and reflective colors such as yellow, orange, or white. Many athletic apparel companies offer high-visibility fabrics. Your gloves, hats, and shoes should have reflective properties as well. Look into reflective tape or wearable LEDs to customize your illumination.

Stick to Well-Lit Areas: So you can see and be seen.

Wear Eye Protection: To protect from low-hanging objects such as tree branches.

Switch Up Your Route: Avoid predictability by choosing new routes and times.

Joggers, Stay on the Sidewalk: State law requires pedestrians to use sidewalks when provided, with some exceptions. (625 ILCS 5/11-1007)

Use an App: If you get lost or need help, running apps have various features, including GPS, emergency contact lists, safe running routes suggestions, and one-touch messaging. Not to mention tracking steps and calories burned.

Bring A friend: it is more fun and a safer way to exercise.

Bicycle Safety Tips

Mandatory Light and Reflector:

State law requires all bicycles to be equipped with a white, front-facing headlight and red rear reflector or light, visible from 500 feet.



Right to the Road: Bicyclists generally have the same rights as motorists. However, they also have the same duties.

Stop Signs and Traffic Control Devices: Bicyclists are required to come to a full and complete stop at stop signs and red lights, just like motor vehicles.

Be Mindful of Your Speed: Do not outride your lights. Give yourself time to react.

Ride Defensively: Drivers are not always looking for cyclists at night.

Visit vrf.us/Bicycling to register a bicycle and for more information about bicycling in the community, including the Village's Bicycle Plan and general safety tips.

Questions or Comments? Contact Crime Prevention Officer Ben Ransom: bransom@vrf.us or 708-714-3543

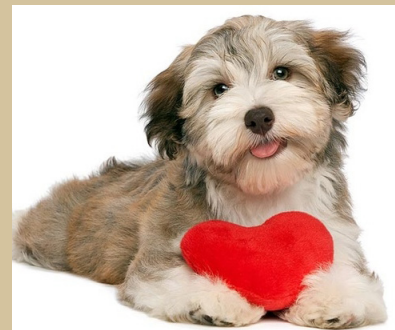
Fire Department

Valentine's Day Fire Safety

Don't let an accidental fire ruin your Valentine's Day! Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish any candles when you leave your home, room, or go to sleep. Avoid using a candle where medical oxygen is being used.

Valentine's Day Pet Safety

Ensure your pets are safe when celebrating Valentine's Day. Artificial sweeteners in candy can cause the blood sugar levels of your pet to drop to unsafe levels, meriting a veterinary visit. Ensure that milk chocolate, dark chocolate, and baking chocolate are stored away from pets as they are toxic if ingested. Keep bouquets containing lilies away from your pets. [Click here](#) for more Valentine's Day pet safety tips.



Public Works/Development Services



Community Portal

Have you ever wondered what your zoning district is, who your elected representatives are, or how your tax dollars are allocated? This information and more can be found on the Village website through a tool called Community Portal. You can visit Community Portal via the Village [website](#) by entering your address in the "Find your property" search bar or by clicking [here](#). The Portal is broken down into the following categories:

- Property Summary
- Government Representatives
- Zoning Information
- Map Gallery
- Property Tax Breakdown

Through the links provided in each category you can find helpful information such as your Parcel Identification Number, State and Federal Representatives, zoning district, community maps, and a breakdown of your annual tax bill.

These data are made available as part of the Village's GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software. GIS is a system that creates, manages, and analyzes data, while connecting the data to an interactive map. Assets such as public utilities (sewer, water main, street lights, parkway trees, etc.) can all be accurately represented in geographic space and information such as repair records, maintenance records and photos can all be stored in a manner that directly ties the information to the asset itself. Additional information such as parking restrictions, aerial imagery, and zoning districts are also incorporated, allowing Village Staff to analyze a vast amount of data in an efficient and organized manner.

Committee/ Commission Spotlight

River Forest Sustainability



Economic Development Commission

The function of the Economic Development Commission is to advise the Board of Trustees on the economic and community impact of potential developments, including developments involving changes in land use, use of vacant property, and adaptive reuse of existing structures. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Village Board. Seven members make up the Commission, who are residents of the Village and appointed by the Village President with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees. The Commission's functions include: identifying and assessing underutilized properties to develop strategies for their best use, encouraging and supporting development within the Village in conjunction with existing corridor plans, land uses, and the Village's development goals, investigating and recommending incentives to facilitate economic growth, maintain relationships with existing businesses and make recommendations to retain, enhance and market, Receive direction from the Board of Trustees and provide feedback and recommendations, Coordinate economic development outreach to surrounding units of local government.

The Committee has been exploring ideas to benefit the local economy in the past year, such as using American Rescue Plan Act funds to support River Forest business chamber memberships and advertising through the Chamber of Commerce.

Repair Cafe - Oak Park

Do you have electronics in need of repair? Stop by **Repair Cafe - Oak Park** where you can bring your broken electronic items such as toasters, vacuum cleaners, mixers, clocks, lamps, and more for repair! A crew of skilled volunteers will work to repair your beloved, yet broken items for **FREE**.

Located at 624 S. Oak Park Ave in the Fox Center in Oak Park, Repair Cafe is open the first Saturday of every month from 10am-1:30pm.

Repair Cafe is part of an international movement that began in 2009 in Holland to limit the waste that ends up in landfills. There are more than 1,000 repair cafes worldwide, with 23 in the United States. The repair success rate at all the cafes is 60%! The cafe does not turn down anyone and repairs don't cost a cent.

Repair Cafes attract people from many different backgrounds. Are you a problem solver too or do you want to become one? Consider becoming a volunteer at a Repair Cafe. Please reach out to McLouis Robinet at mrobinet@ameritech.net to join the crew. For more information, [click here](#) for Repair Cafe - Oak Park or learn more at the Repair Cafe USA [website](#).



Someone to Know

Cuyler Brown currently serves as the Chair of the Economic Development Commission. He has served on the Commission for four years and as Chair for five months. Mr. Brown first moved to River Forest while he was in high school and moved back in 2008. He lives in the Village with his wife and three children, the oldest attending Fenwick High School as a freshman. Chair Brown currently works at Huntington Bank as a commercial lender.

He chose to serve on the Economic Development Commission because he has a passion for helping the community grow and prosper. Serving on the Commission also allows him to use his professional expertise as a commercial lender to fulfill the Commission's purpose and improve the quality of life for residents.

Chairperson Brown's passion for serving the community expands beyond his efforts on the Economic Development Commission. He also serves on the Boards of Directors at Beyond Hunger, a local hunger relief non-profit organization, and the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, a philanthropic organization.



**Cuyler
Brown**

Organizations Serving River Forest



Township

Many Township services and programs are returning to meeting in-person. To learn more, visit RiverForestTownship.org, the River Forest community calendar at rfhappenings.com, or email Supervisor Carla Sloan at supervisor@riverforesttownship.org.

2022 Property Tax Cycle Begins

The new year introduces the start of a new property tax cycle. The timing of things this year will be slightly different. However, we will continue to have appeal sessions with the Cook County Assessor and the Board of Review. Exemption applications will be processed, tax levies will be determined by taxing bodies, and 2021 property tax bills will be calculated, sent, and due before the end of 2022.

Exemptions

In the past, Seniors who qualified for the Senior Freeze Exemption received their renewal notices in January. This year due to COVID, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi is automatically renewing the 2021 Senior Freeze Exemption for most qualifying seniors who had the Senior Freeze Exemption last year. The same rules will apply to the 2021 Disabled Homeowner Exemption.



There will be some circumstances when exemptions will not automatically renew, such as when a property has been sold, the property owner owns multiple properties or is held in a trust. The Cook County Assessor will be sending out a letter or postcard to previously qualifying seniors regarding Senior Freeze Exemptions around the beginning of March.

Homeowner and regular Senior Exemptions, once applied for, automatically renew. Homeowners who purchased their homes in 2020 and homeowners who turned 65 in 2021 should be able to file for their Homeowner and Senior Exemptions around the beginning of March 2022.

2021 Assessed Valuation Appeals

The deadline to file 2021 appeals with the Cook County Board of Review has passed. Decision letters on 2021 appeals from the Board of Review are expected at the end of March 2022. Adjustments in assessed values made due to those appeals will show up on the 2021 second installment property tax bills.

2022 Assessed Valuation Appeals

2022 is the 3rd year of the 2020 triennial reassessment for River Forest Township. Taxpayers may file assessed valuation appeals every year and will have the opportunity to do so this year as well. The Cook County Assessor has not announced that date at this time.

riverforesttownship.org - 708-366-2029 x11

Park District



River Forest Park District

River Forest Park District Updates

The River Forest Park District Spring and Camps Fun Guide will be available on rfparks.com on Monday, February 14. Resident registration will begin at 8:30 AM on Monday, February 21 at The Depot, 401 Thatcher Avenue, or our website. The guide will showcase our program options for the spring season and summer camps. The Park District offers a variety of programs for all ages and abilities, sponsorship and advertising opportunities, community events, and more. Programs include but are not limited to: tot programming, STEAM, dance, music, youth sports, yoga, and fitness offerings for adults, adult leagues, Bridge, and more. Early registration helps make sure the programs you want to participate in don't get canceled due to low interest. The Park Bench e-newsletter is a great way to stay informed of upcoming programs and events. [Click here](#) to join. We'd love to see you and your family this winter and spring! Visit rfparks.com to stay up to date on District happenings.

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

Library

Due to the latest COVID surge, **the Library is converting all programs through mid-February to virtual formats** and hopes to return to in-person programming at that time. Please check our [event calendar](#) for the latest information as we continue to assess the situation in our area. The Library is still open, but if you are not comfortable coming into the building, contact the Library at 708-366-5205 x 304, and we will do our best to assist you. Please remember that **masks are required when visiting the Library**, and thank you for your understanding and patience as we continue to navigate this changing landscape together.

Join us for this special program:

Sunday, 2/6, 2-3:30 PM, Jacqueline Kennedy: The Aesthetics of Style, Adult

Dr. Michelle Mishur examines Jacqueline Kennedy's impact on culture in America during her tenure as first lady and illuminates the interrelationship between Jackie's style, grace, and poise and her interests in fashion, art, and other subjects. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township. **Advanced registration is required to receive the zoom link.**



Dr. Michelle Mishur

riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

District 200

New Renovations Unveiled

On January 10, Oak Park-River Forest High School unveiled the most extensive renovations to its campus since the 1960s. The first project of the multi-phase facilities plan includes a three-story addition comprising a revamped South Cafeteria, new Student Resource Center, an expanded Student Commons, and Balcony that is already proving to be well used by students.

The extensive renovations were made based on the needs of students, who shared with the planning committee that they wanted to spend more time in the building, especially before and after school. Having spaces such as the library and tutoring center scattered throughout the million-square-foot campus had made that difficult. The school now has a secure central hub of student spaces to study, collaborate, and socialize.

The public ribbon-cutting ceremony was canceled due to COVID-19. However, the school did hold a more intimate ribbon-cutting with students. To see a video highlighting the new Student Resource Center, visit bit.ly/SRCreveal.



Student leaders celebrate the opening of the new OPRFHS Student Resource Center.

oprfrhs.org | 708-383-0700

District 90

February Non-Attendance Days in District 90

District 90 students will not attend school on two separate occasions in February. On Monday, February 21, 2022, the entire District 90 will be closed for the Presidents' Day holiday. Also, students will not be in attendance on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, due to an Institute Day when teachers take part in professional development.

Kindergarten Registration Begins

District 90 will begin registering children for Kindergarten on Friday, February 4, 2022, for children who turn five years of age on or before September 1, 2022.

District 90 now processes all Kindergarten registrations electronically. Families registering students in District 90 for the first time must contact Josephine Ribaldo, District Registrar, by phone at 708-771-8282 to begin the registration process. Families who have a student already attending a District 90 school must also contact District Registrar Josephine Ribaldo to begin the Kindergarten registration process.



District 90 encourages all families with children eligible for Kindergarten this year to register as early as possible. Doing so enables district administrators and principals to make critical decisions about staffing, the number of morning and afternoon sessions, and other matters. Starting the registration process also allows families to make all the necessary appointments required to enroll in Kindergarten, such as medical, dental, and eye exams. For more information about registering for District 90's Kindergarten, please click this link: [D90 Kindergarten Registration](#) or visit the [D90 website](#).

district90.org | 708-771-8282



Black History Month

February is Black History Month. This is a time to celebrate the achievements and recognize the contributions of African Americans to our history. All of River Forest is encouraged to honor the accomplishments of African Americans and acknowledge our country's history through museums, books, films, research and reflection. Locally, excellent resources are available for research and learning including the [River Forest Public Library](#) and [Oak Park River Forest Museum](#).

Village Welcomes New Fire Chief

Fire Chief Tom Gaertner comes to the Village of River Forest with 37 years of fire service. He was born and raised in Broadview, Illinois, the son of a Broadview firefighter. He knew he wanted to become a firefighter from the age of five by accompanying his father to the firehouse. After graduating from Proviso East High School in Maywood, Illinois, he enlisted in the United States Air Force and served as a firefighter for four years. After his honorable discharge, he was hired by the Broadview Fire Department and served there for 30 years, working as a firefighter/paramedic, Lieutenant, Captain, and Fire Chief. He retired in 2015 and took the position of Deputy Director at the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA) in Glenview, Illinois. He served in that position for a year and a half before being hired as Deputy Fire Chief, then later Fire Chief for the North Riverside Fire Department.

Chief Gaertner says he takes great joy at being a part of saving people's lives and making their days better. He was part of a group that went to New York City after the September 11, 2021 attacks, and he also traveled to New Orleans as part of a team of firefighters to assist with disaster relief after hurricanes Katrina, Gustov, and Ike. In his free time, Chief Gaertner enjoys playing golf and cooking. He stated, "If I didn't become a firefighter, I think I may have gone to culinary school to pursue becoming a chef."

Please join us in welcoming Chief Gaertner to the Village!



River Forest Fire Chief Tom Gaertner



Follow the Village on Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



River Forest Events



Village Contact Information

Village Administration
708-714-3520

Village Administrator
Brian Murphy

Finance Department
708-714-3524

Director Rosemary McAdams

Fire Department
708-714-3560

Chief Tom Gaertner

Public Works and Development Services
708-714-3551

Director Jeff Loster

Police Department
708-714-3540

Chief James O'Shea

Emergency Services
Dial 911

400 Park Avenue River Forest, IL 60305

708-366-8500

708-366-3702 (fax)

Monday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Tuesday- Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.