

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | March, 2022



Does Your Project Need a Permit?

As the snow melts and the weather warms up, construction season gets into full swing. Are you planning renovations or other upgrades to your home? [Check here](#) to see if you need a building permit before starting work. Looking for a licensed contractor and not sure where to start? [Click here](#) and enter the type of contractor you need to view a list of contractors who are currently licensed with the Village. All contractors must be licensed to work in the Village, which protects both you and your property.

Applications for building permits can be filed online using the Village's building permit software LAMA (short for LAnd Management), which can be accessed at riverforest.onlama.com or at www.vrf.us/permits. This software helps the Village maintain precise records of permit submittals and contractor licenses, and helps ensure a more efficient review process. By creating an account, you can also track the status of



permit applications at your property in real time. All applications can be made online 24/7 and applicable documentation can be uploaded at any time. Review correspondence is completed through the software to ensure direct communication with those parties closely tied to each submittal. [Click here](#) for more information about building permits, plan review timelines, and videos to help those using the software for the first time.

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

During the February 28th Village Board of Trustees meeting, the Board and I took the next step towards finishing two major projects that will benefit our community and save us tax dollars.

The first project the Board and I took action on was for the installation of an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system that will allow our residents to track their water usage online either from a computer or phone in real time instead of on their next bill. This capability will allow our residents to save money by finding leaks sooner when you otherwise may not be aware until your next bill. For more, go to page 8.

The second project that the Board and I approved was accelerating our Alley Improvement Program so that all our alleys in our community are reconstructed by 2023 vs over a 5 to 7 year period. This alley improvement program will help reduce flooding. Please [click here](#) to learn more about this program.

In order to pay for these important projects, the Board and I took action at our last meeting to issue \$5,400,000 in debt certificates. We believe this is the most financially prudent action given current interest rates are low, construction costs are rising, and our overall current debt for the Village is very low. Please [click here](#) to learn more. **Additional property taxes will not be levied for this purpose. The repayment of principal and interest will be over a 20 year period and will be absorbed through our normal operating budget.**

Also in February, the Board directed Village Staff to complete negotiations with Lakeshore Recycling Services, formally known as Roy Strom, for a renewed waste management contract. In addition to keeping prices low for our residents, we are also working to offer more options for home composting, electronic recycling pickup, and household hazardous waste disposal. More information will be forthcoming. Please watch or listen to all of our Board meetings archived on our [website](#).

March is Women’s History Month and a time to reflect on the historic contributions that women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made in our Nation and our community. As the first female President of River Forest, I am proud of all women and the role they have played in leading efforts for equal opportunity.

In closing, I want to express, on behalf of the Village Board and staff, our support for the Ukrainian people. In America, we fight for our freedom and democracy and would not tolerate losing those values.

As we approach St. Patrick’s Day and Spring Break, I wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy March!

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



Forest Park St. Patrick's Day Parade

The 26th annual Forest Park St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on March 5, 2022. The parade will begin at 1:00 pm on Madison Street and Van Buren and travel east on Madison Street into Forest Park. Parking will be permitted on the **east side only** in the 000 and 100 blocks of Ashland and Franklin and in the 000 block of Park. There will be parking only **on the south side** of Vine from Lathrop to Park. Heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic are expected in this area from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm. Lathrop, Ashland, Franklin and Park will be open to local/resident traffic only and will be closed at Madison Street. Madison Street will be closed from Lathrop to Park during the parade.

River Forest Library Special Programs

Sunday, March 6, 2-3:30 PM, Betty Crocker and Her Cookbook That Changed How America Cooks, Adult

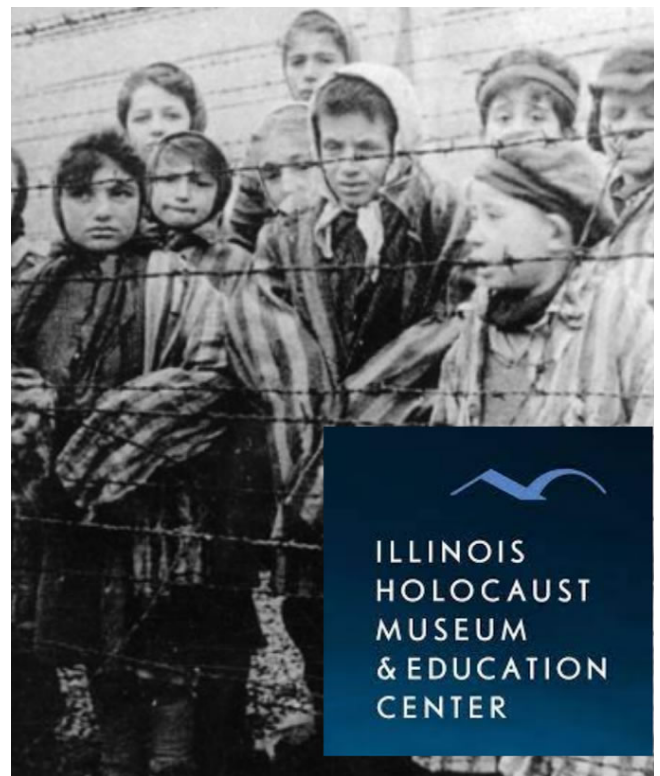
This fun illustrated lecture by historian Leslie Goddard looks at how Betty Crocker was invented, why her cookbook has endured, and what makes her so iconic. It's perfect if you're feeling like cooking up some nostalgia. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.

Sunday, March 13, 2-3:30 PM, Stories of Holocaust Survival, Adult

Second Generation Speaker Karen Schaap Gillett shares the story of her father, Klaus Schaap, and what he endured as a young boy during the Holocaust. Karen, a daughter of two Holocaust survivors, joined the Illinois Holocaust Museum in 2020, following her mother's footsteps as a docent and speaker. Growing up, Karen heard the sad and heart-wrenching stories of what both sides of her family endured during the Holocaust, learning the importance of teaching others the history and lessons of the Holocaust.

Wednesday, March 16, 7-8:30 PM, My College Planning Team: The Art of the Appeal, Everyone

Now more than ever, colleges are more willing to say yes to appeals for more financial aid and scholarship money for new and returning students. This workshop provides detailed guidance for families on how to appeal for more financial aid and improve the likelihood of a successful appeal. This free, 90-minute seminar is presented by My College Planning Team. **Advanced registration is required.**



Business Corner

Blumen is your local source for all your floral needs, specializing in floral workshops and event floristry for all holidays and celebrations. Blumen specializes in floral parties for adults where individuals can learn how to create a floral arrangement that reflects the seasonal beauty and abundance of forms, textures, and colors of creative floral design, what to look for when buying flowers, and how to make them last. These very social and custom-designed flower parties can be held in whatever ambiance or venue you may choose. Blumen will provide all the materials needed and happily flower up your party. Flowers can be arranged on any large table inside or outside or on a large kitchen island.

Visit sabinesblumen.com to schedule your floral party or register for an upcoming workshop. For further questions, call 708-860-2260 or email info@sabinesblumen.com.

Village Department News

Someone to Know

Fire Department

Smoke Detector Act

In conjunction with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance, the River Forest Fire Department would like to inform all residents of the new Illinois Smoke Detector Act. The Act was updated when statistics from around the country indicated that 71% of smoke alarms that failed to operate in residential fires had missing, disconnected, or dead batteries. The Act will require all Illinois residents to replace their old smoke alarms with the type that has a long-term 10-year sealed battery by the end of 2022. At the end of the 10-year life cycle, these new smoke alarms will automatically alert the homeowner to replace the alarm. The Fire Department is working on developing a program to be able to accept old smoke detectors to recycle sustainably. For more information on smoke alarms and the updated Act, please call the River Forest Fire Prevention Bureau at 708-714-3562.

Check your alarm.



Police Department

Carjacking Prevention Tips

Location, Location, Location

Certain areas make it easier for carjackers to engage with you. Park in well-lit, visible areas. Look around for suspicious persons sitting in vehicles or loitering in the area before entering your vehicle. When you enter your vehicle, lock your doors immediately and drive away. Motorists should especially be on guard any time they are forced to slow or stop, whether by street design, traffic or something else. Give yourself room to maneuver to avoid getting "boxed in". Equip your vehicle with anti-theft/GPS and create a 911 profile containing your vehicle information. Keep your cell phone in your pocket and trust your instincts. **Do not stop** for apparently stranded strangers along the road. Instead note their location and call 911.



If you Are the Victim of a Carjacking

In the event you are the victim of a carjacking, give up your car and leave the scene. The vehicle is replaceable, you are not. Avoid verbal/physical altercations with the suspect, and remember the suspect's physical and vehicle description (if applicable). If there is a child in the vehicle, state it plainly to the carjacker.

For any further questions or information, please contact the River Forest Police Department at 708-366-7215.

Village Board of Trustee Ken Johnson has served as a Co-Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group since its inception during the spring of 2021. He has been a resident of the Village for over 15 years and his favorite thing about River Forest is the residents' ongoing engagement with the community. He views resident engagement as a critical driver for continued innovation and success, resulting in the Village moving forward and progressing faster than other communities.

Trustee Johnson has been practicing law for over twenty-five years. He opened his law firm in 2003, where he is a Managing Partner of one of the few minority-owned, multi-office law firms in the Midwest. His law firm specializes in Energy Regulatory Law, focusing on sustainability, Real Estate and Banking Litigation, and Immigration Law.

Trustee Johnson feels the most important thing about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group is it will help bring about new, innovative ideas and ways of thinking about diverse thought that will help keep River Forest as one of the most desirable places to live. Furthermore, Trustee Johnson believes the work of the Advisory Group will lead to a stronger sense of community where all residents feel safe, respected, and more connected.

Trustee Johnson has a passion for volunteering. He is a Mentor and Vice-Chair of a nonprofit known as Link Unlimited Scholars. LINK Unlimited Scholars is a 50-year-old Chicago-based institution working to change the trajectory of high-potential African American youth through unique programming and mentorship opportunities in the classroom and beyond.



**Ken
Johnson**

Battery Fire Safety

Nine-volt batteries power our smoke alarms, gadgets, and household items, and if not stored safely or disposed of with care, these batteries can be a fire hazard. Taking precautions when storing or disposing of nine-volt batteries can help reduce the risk of a fire hazard. Ensure batteries are kept in their original packaging until you are ready to use them. If loose, keep the posts covered with masking, duct, or electrical tape. Do not store them loosely in a drawer or store them in containers with other batteries or metal objects. When disposing of batteries, please do not throw them in the garbage. Instead, dispose of them at a collection site for household hazardous waste.

Committee/ Commission Spotlight



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Group consists of 43 members appointed by the Village President with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees. The Advisory Group consists of three chairs: two members of the Village Board, and the Village Administrator. All members other than the Village Administrator are required to be residents of the Village.

The mission of the DEI Advisory Group is to identify and remove barriers that prevent the participation, engagement, and an equitable and welcoming environment for all residents, business members, visitors, and municipal employees in municipal services community and civic engagement; and, in doing so, build trust amongst all parties. Responsibilities of the Advisory Group include: 1) Drafting a request for proposal to engage a third-party consultant with experience in DEI matters to design a comprehensive work plan to inform how the Village can best approach DEI in the Village's policies and practices. 2) Providing advice on carrying out Village partnerships and priorities related to equity, including partnering with the Village of Maywood on the Twin Village Covenant, partnering with Dominican University's Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center, and other partnerships identified by the Advisory Group, Village, and community. 3) Acting as a community resource concerning issues of equity, including being a source for residents and community members to communicate comments and concerns at Advisory Group meetings, or in other ways, regarding equity issues in our Village and assisting in the Village's efforts to educate the public about how their comments and concerns can be addressed. 4) Supporting the Village in the compilation, documentation, and identification of information and data relating to equity within the Village. 5) Promoting and celebrating equitable relationships and opportunities and fostering mutual respect and trust in the community. 6) Making recommendations to the Village President and Village Board of Trustees to adopt policies, programs, and/or goals that would improve or sustain equity. For more, visit vrf.us/DEIAG.

River Forest Sustainability

Healthy Lawn Healthy Family

Do you have children - pets - people - living in your home? Do you enjoy your outdoor space, playing in the grass, gardening or just having a BBQ? Do you like to keep everyone safe and healthy?

We have a lot of lawns in River Forest! Unfortunately, the use of synthetic lawn care products leads to the pollution of our waterways through runoff and negative impacts on the health of people, pets and wildlife. Many people do not realize that homeowners apply up to 10 times more chemical pesticides to lawn turf per acre than farmers use on crops.

A growing body of evidence in scientific literature shows that pesticide exposure can adversely affect neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine systems in humans, even at low levels. Children are especially sensitive to pesticide exposure because they 1) take up more pesticides (relative to their body weight) than do adults, and 2) have developing organ systems that are more vulnerable to pesticide impacts and less able to detoxify harmful chemicals.

Fortunately, there are proven safe, effective, and affordable ways to maintain attractive lawns and playing fields without the use of toxic pesticides.



TAKE OUR RIVER FOREST HEALTHY LAWN - HEALTHY GARDENS PLEDGE!
www.vrf.us/HLHF

Join the 110 other River Forest families, RF Park District, D90, Trailside Museum and West Suburban Temple Har Zion. Pledge to eliminate synthetic chemical use on your own lawn and garden and at all locations where children, pets, and wildlife live and play!

Yes, it's scary to try something new. Here are some sites with valuable information and ideas on how to get started! www.beyondpesticides.org and midwestgrowsgreen.org

Organizations Serving River Forest



Township



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

Senior Freeze and Disabled Homeowner 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 apply to the 2021 Disabled Homeowner Exemption.

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

Homeowner and Regular Senior Exemptions

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

Sibshops Winter/Spring Session: it's not too late to join!

Sibshops is a program specially designed for siblings of kids with special needs, disabilities, and health challenges. Siblings have fun and share experiences with each other and specially trained facilitators. Sibshops will start virtually and hopefully return to in-person. The program will take place Saturdays from 11:30 am-1 pm on 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, and 4/16. The price is \$10 per session. Scholarships are available.

For more information or to register, contact Javier Sanchez at 708-383-7500 x316 or sibshops@thrivecc.org.

Seniors: Sign up for the New and Improved Community Connect Weekly Email

The Community Connect weekly email has a new attractive and easy-to-read format! Sent out every Friday, Community Connect is full of info about upcoming events in River Forest, Oak Park, and surrounding communities. The weekly email is geared toward older adults but is for everyone. To be added to the list, email Betsy Kelly at communityconnectmail@gmail.com. The Community Connect weekly email is supported by River Forest Township and Arbor West Neighbors.

[riverforesttownship.org](https://www.riverforesttownship.org) - 708-366-2029 x11

Park District



River Forest Park District

Spring and Summer Camps Registration has begun!

The River Forest Park District spring and summer camp season are around the corner, and registration has begun. Some highlights include Chess Wizards Spring Break Camp, Run Forest Run Club for adults, East Ave Lacrosse, Parent-Tot Dance, Yoga Self Care with Julia, and Science Made Fun for youth.

Summer Camp is a place for kids to play games, meet new friends, play outside, and learn new skills. Camp offerings are for tots through age 14. Join us for one week or the entire summer!

River Forest Park District is hiring for various part-time positions and is looking for qualified applicants to apply today. Visit [rfparks.com](https://www.rfparks.com) to view current and summer job opportunities.

To stay up to date on programming, special events, and District updates, join the [Park Bench](https://www.parkbench.org) e-newsletter.

[Click here](https://www.parkbench.org) to view the Fun Guide and register for programs.



[rfparks.com](https://www.rfparks.com) | 708-366-6660

Library

Masking Policy Update

As of February 28, masks will be optional in the Library. However, we encourage anyone who feels safer wearing masks to continue wearing them.

Masks are still required for indoor, in-person children's programs for all attendees (adults and children). Masks are strongly encouraged for indoor in-person programs for all other age groups but are not required.

See everything your Library has to offer by visiting our [website](https://www.riverforestlibrary.org).

[riverforestlibrary.org](https://www.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

Respect the Mic: Celebrating 20 Years of Poetry from a Chicagoland High School has arrived! This extensive anthology celebrated the 20th anniversary of the OPRFHS Spoken Word Club and was co-edited by Spoken Word founder and OPRFHS English teacher Peter Kahn.

Since its founding in 1999, the Spoken Word Club has aimed to be a place of belonging for students, particularly those of color, where student voices and confidence are cultivated, respected, and celebrated.

Over the years, this poetry club has produced the National Youth Poet Laureate, two National Student Poets, recipients of college scholarships because of poetry, recipients of master's degrees in creative writing, national writing competition winners, and some of the youngest writers ever to be published in Poetry magazine.

Here are just a few thoughts about the power and impact of Spoken Word:

"OPRF's Spoken Word Club has been my most profound high school experience. It has completely transformed me and changed how I view myself and the world. Spoken Word taught me that poetry is not just pretty words on paper but a form of healing. It's a form of taking the harshness of life and turning it into something that could have power."

—Senior Peera Serumaga

"I always hated on myself and my work, but looking back at the creative output I got to produce in my time as a Spoken Word member inspires me today. I would never have grown into the person I am and the person I'm becoming without Spoken Word."

—Matt Buchta, Class of 2020

"When I entered high school, I could not say that I knew who I was or even what I wanted to do when I got older. I may have naively said a 'marine biologist' or a 'veterinarian,' but science was never my strong suit. It wasn't until I witnessed the powerful moment when a Spoken Word Club teaching assistant silenced my rowdy freshman classroom by performing a poem that I understood what I wanted to do for the rest of my life—I wanted people to listen to me."

—Asia Calcagno (Class of 2010)

Thanks to the generosity of private donors, all OPRFHS employees and students received their own copy of *Respect the Mic*. Here, Spoken Word founder Peter Kahn (second from left) and club aide and anthology contributor Noelle Berry (left) hand out copies to colleagues.



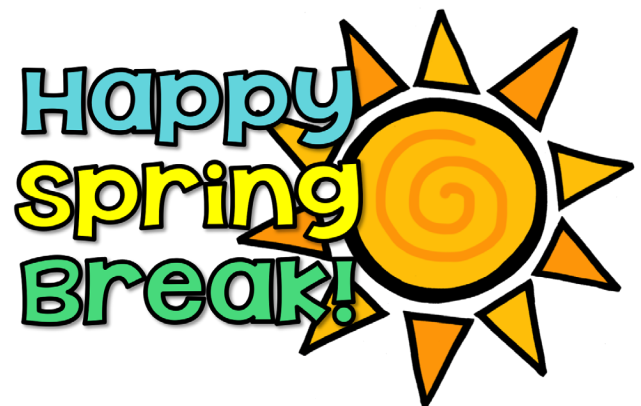
oprfs.org | 708-383-0700

District 90



Parent-Teacher Conferences

District 90 will hold Parent-Teacher Conferences on Thursday, March 3 (in the evening) and Friday, March 4. Students will not be in attendance on Friday, March 4. Reservations for Parent-Teacher Conferences can be made by visiting the District's website, www.district90.org. These conferences provide an opportunity for families and teachers to share information and work together on behalf of students. Teachers look forward to helping parents/guardians understand what happens in the classroom and their student's responses to classroom activities. If needed, computers are available at the River Forest Public Library to register for Parent/Teacher Conferences.



Spring Break Begins on March 28

The coming of Daylight Savings Time early in March signals the coming of spring and the arrival of District 90's Spring Break. This annual hiatus starts on Monday, March 28, and ends on Friday, April 1. Students return to school on Monday, April 4. Spring Break is important for students, families, faculty, and staff, as they take some time to recharge, try to relieve some stress, and enjoy the brief interlude. Please remember to use Spring Break as a time to strengthen family relationships. Enjoy the Spring Break!

district90.org | 708-771-8282

Smart City Remote Water Reading Technology

As part of the Village’s ongoing “smart city” advancements, the automated metering infrastructure (AMI) project is underway. Residents will begin seeing trucks around the Village with the project logo. This AMI technology automates water readings, allowing residents to monitor their home’s water consumption in real time. With AMI, residents can receive notifications about high usage by setting threshold alerts on their accounts. Unusually high water consumption is often due to leaks or running toilets, and unfortunately, residents often only become aware of these issues after receiving a high water bill. Soon, residents will be able to discover irregularities as they occur and locate otherwise unnoticed leaks and get them repaired before they lead to high bills.

This technology also ties into the Village’s sustainable practices. By moving to remote water meter readings, Public Works staff will no longer need to conduct “drive by” reads, thus reducing the Department’s carbon footprint. This technology will also significantly reduce water loss throughout the Village at a time when Lake Michigan water supply allocations are being closely scrutinized, and it helps promote overall water conservation.

Visit www.vrf.us/AMI for more information about all the benefits of this project, a short project video, and Frequently Asked Questions.



Concordia University Track Reopening



Concordia University Chicago is pleased to announce that it will reopen its track to the public this spring. In discussions with Village officials, the university expressed appreciation for the patience and understanding of residents as it navigated its way through ever-evolving COVID mitigations.

Once open, the track will be accessible via the south entrance only, providing better access control and security for all users. Posted public access hours and rules will provide consistency and eliminate ambiguity regarding facility availability. As in the past, the university’s NCAA athletic teams and local K-12 school partners will retain priority use of the track and field for their practices and games.

“CUC is dedicated to maintaining a positive relationship with the community and to, once again, provide a variety of services, facilities, and events to our neighbors,” said Eric Matanyi, Associate Vice President for communications and marketing. *“We look forward to seeing smiling faces back on the track.”*

An exact opening date is forthcoming and will be determined by weather conditions and post-winter maintenance.



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.