

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | April, 2023



Does your Project Need a Permit?

As the weather warms up - home improvement season begins! 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 those currently licensed with the Village. All contractors must be licensed to work in River Forest, 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 vrf.us/permits. This software enables the Village to maintain precise records of permit submittals and contractor licenses and helps to 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 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,

I am pleased to report that the Village’s proposed Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Program has been completed and is available for the public to review [here](#). We are proposing for the 15th year in a row, a balanced budget. The Budget highlights the Village’s main priority for community safety, continuing to provide the highest level of essential Village services to our residents and businesses while stabilizing our property taxes. It additionally identifies our long-term financial outlook and five-year capital plan. The Village Board will begin a review of the Budget at a special Committee of the Whole meeting Monday, April 10 at 6 p.m., which will be followed by a Public Hearing. More information on the goals we seek to achieve is available in an article on the back page of this newsletter. Thank you to our Village staff for working so diligently, and for the guidance provided by the Village Board to meet this critical objective.

With tax season upon us, I would like to remind residents to be vigilant against scammers. The main objective of tax scammers is to steal personal information from residents to file fraudulent tax returns. For tips from our Police Department on ways to protect yourself against these scams, please click [here](#).

Finally, with the severe storms that have occurred in our area over the last few weeks, I would like to remind residents to visit the [ComEd Outage Status Map](#) for more information on power outages and estimated restore times. Residents can also download the ComEd app to get alerts, review outage information and more by clicking [here](#).

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



Apply to be the Next River Forest Township Clerk

River Forest Township is seeking a new Clerk. This is an elected, part-time salaried position, requiring five hours per week on average. Applicants must be a River Forest resident. This is a positive way to serve the community and engage in Township activities, which relate primarily to human services. The Clerk is responsible for taking minutes, creating agendas, meeting notices and legal notices, and assists residents with services such as voter registration and notary services. Strong administrative skills are required. Please email Supervisor Carla Sloan for the full job description at csloan.rftownship@gmail.com. Applications must be received by May 1, 2023.

River Forest Library April Highlights

Trivia Night for Adults - Thursday, April 13 from 7-8:30 p.m.

By popular demand, there is a new trivia competition just for adults! This event will be facilitated by the Chicago Trivia Guys and refreshments will be provided. **Registration is required.** Participants may bring teammates, or attend on their own. For individuals who have a team, please make sure each team member is registered.

Barbara Henry Poetry Reading for All Ages - Thursday, April 20 from 7-8 p.m.

Local author, speaker, and poet Barbara J. Henry will join us to read some of her poetry. Bring a one- or two-minute personal poem to read or a poem of the same length written by your favorite poet to join the fun at this interactive event. Children who love poetry are also welcome!

Poems for Pancakes, Grades 5-8 - Thursday, April 27 from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Who wants a pancake - sweet and piping hot? Read or recite a poem at this event, and receive a pancake with all the fixings!



Local author, speaker, and poet Barbara J. Henry



River Forest Park District

SUMMER Camps



fun guide

Resident

Registration:
Monday, 2/27

Non-Resident

Registration:
Monday, 3/20

rfparks.com

Registration Open for Spring Programs and Summer Camps!

Don't hesitate to register, because Park District summer camps fill up fast! The Spring Fun Guide is now online. View the [River Forest Park District Summer Camp Fun Guide](#) to learn more.

Village Department News

Police Department



Police Department Urges Motorists to, “Drop It and Drive”

In honor of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the Police Department is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police and more than 200 local law enforcement agencies to step up enforcement efforts across the state. Motorists can expect to see increased patrols and traffic safety enforcement zones throughout the month of April.

“Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of motor vehicle crashes on our roads today,” said River Forest Police Chief, James O’Shea. “During this awareness month, law enforcement will boost enforcement efforts, and stop anyone who is texting and driving. Remember, if you have a phone in one hand, you can expect a ticket in the other.”

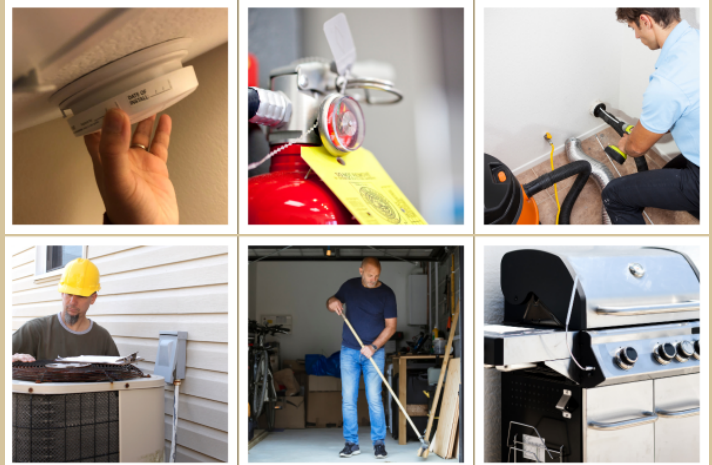


In Illinois, the use of phones while driving is only permitted when using handsfree mode. The Illinois Distracted Driving Campaign is funded with federal traffic safety funds administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Fire Department

Spring Cleaning and Fire Safety

For many River Forest residents the early days of April serve as a painful reminder that it is time to work on their Spring Cleaning and Safety Checklist. As many begin the arduous task of cleaning and clearing the debris that accumulated over the winter months, the River Forest Fire Department recommends that residents add home fire safety to their list.



To assist you with your Spring cleaning, please consider the following safety tips:

- Check and clean your smoke alarms by vacuuming any dust that may be on the cover.
- Replace all alarms if they are 10 years or older, with new 10 year alarms.
- Check and clean your carbon monoxide alarms.
- Check your home and auto fire extinguishers.
- Have your clothes dryer exhaust cleaned and vacuumed out.
- Have your gutters and downspouts cleared of any debris before the spring rains hit.
- Make sure electrical outlets and extension cords are not overloaded.
- Have air conditioning units and other electrical appliances checked by a licensed professional.
- Clear your basement, attics and garages of old papers, oily rags, and broken furniture.
- Make sure all fire exits or escape routes that are identified in your fire escape plan are clear of any debris and are not blocked.
- Inspect your charcoal/gas grills for cracked hoses and rusted parts and replace them before you start to use them for the season.
- Keep mulch at least a foot away from the house and use a noncombustible barrier near the house, such as rock.
- Finally, when you are finished spring cleaning, make sure all cleaning products are stored in child safety latched drawers and cabinets with the original labels.

For more information please call the River Forest Fire Prevention Bureau at 708-714-3562.

River Forest Sustainability

Forestry and Trees

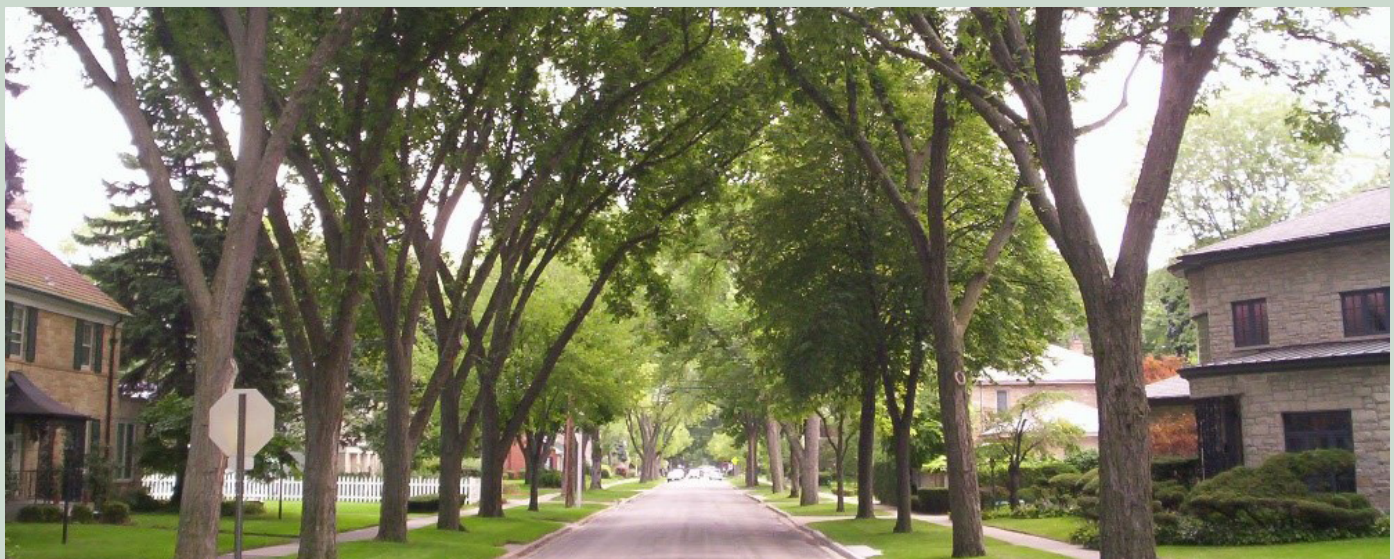
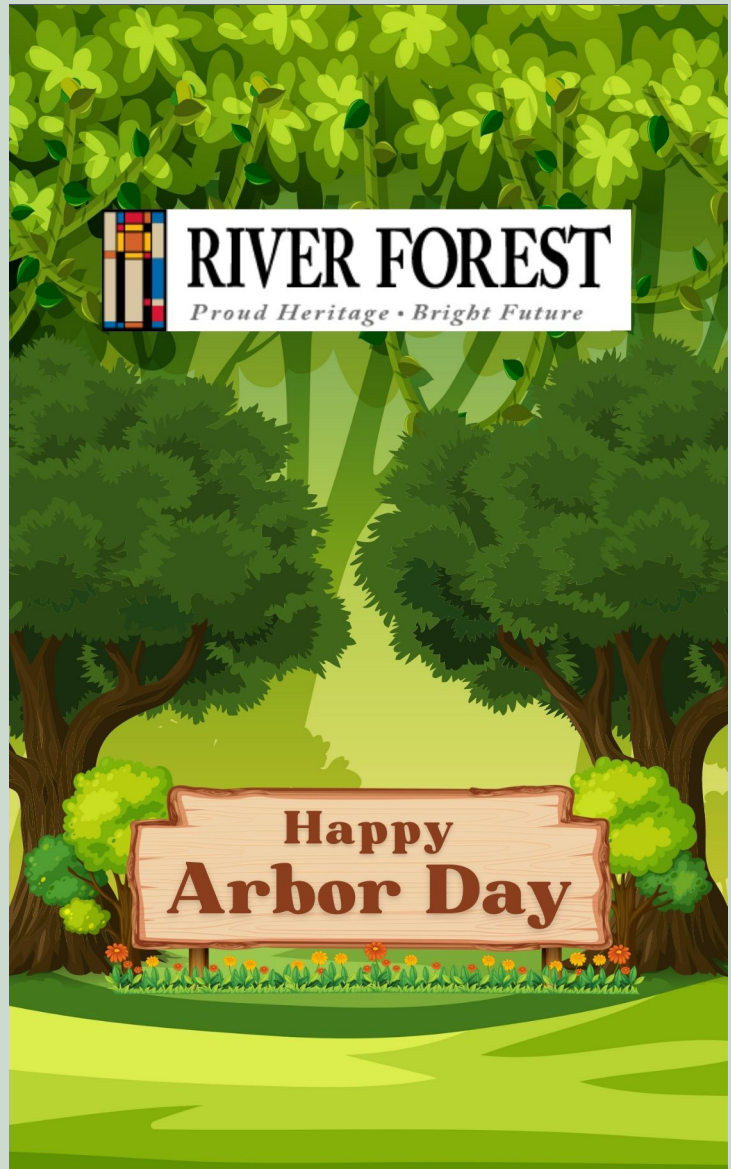
Since 1998, the Village has been named Tree City USA in honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management. The Village achieves this recognition by meeting the program's four requirements, to have a tree board or department, **a tree care ordinance**, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. The Village is also recognized as a **Level 1 Accredited Arboretum** by the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and the Morton Arboretum, for achieving particular and preferred standards of professional practices for arboreta and botanic gardens.

The Forestry Division of Public Works includes four Certified Arborists, and the Division maintains more than 8,000 trees from 90 species in the Village's parkways. The Division inspects, monitors, trims, removes, and plants trees throughout the Village year-round. They also monitor and, every other year, inoculate Ash parkway trees against **Emerald Ash Borer**, an invasive beetle that feeds on this species and destroys the trees' ability to transport water and nutrients.

Forestry Division crews proactively trim trees on a **four-year pruning cycle**, which maintains the trees' health, removes hazardous limbs, ensures fewer limbs fall during high winds, and improves traffic and pedestrian sightlines on our streets. Residents can **submit a service request online** or call the Village to report parkway trees that appear to be unhealthy or could cause a safety hazard.

Each year in observance of Arbor Day, celebrated on the last Friday in April, the Village plants a tree for a school or park in the community. In May, the Forestry Division begins planting new trees to replace diseased or damaged trees that have been removed. Click **here** to see the Village's tree inventory map, which identifies the species of trees in the parkway throughout the Village.

Visit **ArborDay.org** to learn more about trees and the Arbor Day tradition to plant a tree.



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.

From the Township Assessor...

Automatic Renewals due to COVID-19 for Senior Freeze and Veterans Exemptions have ended. Be on the lookout for postcards regarding your exemption status from the Cook County Assessor. The roll out of all property exemption application forms has again been delayed by the Cook County Assessor. The forms are expected to become available in late April or early May. Please sign up [here](#) to receive a notification of when the forms become available. Sign up today!



If the oldest member of your home is turning 66 years of age in 2023, they may be eligible for the Senior Exemption. Please apply online at [cookcountyassessor.com](https://www.cookcountyassessor.com).

River Forest Township Launches Emergency Assistance Program

Emergency Assistance (EA) is a new financial support program starting April 3 for River Forest residents. EA is a needs-based program that offers one-time (per year) financial assistance for unpaid bills and expenses that pose a challenge to the safety of an individual or family, such as eviction, inability to get to work, or shutoff of utilities. EA is not available to people receiving General Assistance, SSI or TANF. Income and asset requirements do apply. For more information, email Supervisor Carla Sloan cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com.

Township is Seeking Two River Forest Residents to Serve on Township Decennial Committee

The recently passed Local Government Efficiency Act requires all Illinois taxing bodies (except counties and municipalities) to form a Decennial Committee to study and report on local government efficiency. Two RF residents, plus the Township Board of Trustees, will make up this committee for the Township. This Committee will meet by June 10, 2023 and must hold at least three meetings; efficiency reports and recommendations must be completed within 18 months. Learn more about River Forest Township's many programs, services and partnerships! If you are interested in serving on this committee, please email Supervisor Carla Sloan cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com by May 1, 2023. For more information, email Supervisor Carla Sloan cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com.

Park District

Des Plaines River Cleanup

Make a difference this Earth Day by participating in the annual Des Plaines River Cleanup! You can volunteer your time to help clean up the Des Plaines River Bank and Thatcher Woods on Saturday, April 22 from 8-10 a.m. Clean up bags, disposable gloves, and first aid supplies will be available at both the [River Forest Park District](#) and the [Trailside Museum of Natural History](#). Register today for the [Des Plaines River Cleanup](#).



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

Library

[Visit the library website to see everything happening at your library.](#) There's something for everyone at the library!

Construction News

Additional work has begun to renovate a mechanical room on the north side of the Library's children's space, into a second program/meeting room. The building's old air handler has been removed and a new one will be installed in the newly-built enclosure. Temporary heaters have been installed around the building.

A portion of the north side of the Children's Room will be closed for three to four weeks until the installation is complete. All events will continue as scheduled and the Library will remain open during construction. Please visit the [Library's website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

The Library's thanks patrons for their patience as they continue to work on this exciting project to add a second program/meeting room to the Library.

Have additional questions? Find more details in this [FAQ document](#) or call the Library at 708-366-5205 for additional information.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events: Visit the [calendar](#) to learn about everything that's happening at the Library!

Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest
High School



Roosevelt
Middle School



Willard
Elementary School



Lincoln
Elementary School

District 200

OPRFHS AP Testing

As AP students across the U.S. get ready for the annual AP exams in May - Oak Park and River Forest High School students have set a high bar by turning in the school's best-ever results last year. In the spring of 2022, Huskies took the greatest number of AP exams in school history: 1,768 exams in 22 different subjects. This record number of students also achieved record results:

Four AP classes saw their highest enrollment ever: English Literature and Composition, Environmental Science, Statistics, and U.S. Politics and Government. Remarkably, each of these four courses also had their highest average scores ever at respectively, 3.81, 3.35, 4.09, and 3.99. Two additional courses—European History and French—also saw their highest average scores of 4.32 and 3.26.

Six courses with their highest average scores in the same year is the largest number OPRFHS has seen in recent years.

Overall, students earned a 3.0 or better on 79% of the tests they took. This was only three percentage points less than the school's highest percent ever in 2019. Given that AP classes are among the most challenging high school courses available and that students also were dealing with the challenges of their first full year of in-person school since the pandemic, why are they performing so well?

"I would say that the greatest factor is having a school and a larger community that supports reading—and supports challenging students with the stories they read," said AP Lit teacher Bernie Heidkamp. "And of course, credit goes to our students. Despite it being the last year of a very disrupted high school career, plus the intellectual challenges and the amount of reading and writing, they brought enthusiasm and engagement most every day."

Doing well on AP tests can have significant benefits for students whose chosen college or university gives credit for their results. OPRFHS parent Tnsri Bratakusumo says that her daughter's AP credits have put her on track to graduate college in three years, representing a huge savings in college tuition. Another parent notes that they didn't save any money, "but our child started college with nine credits due to AP test scores. This will enable her to easily double major within four years."



District 90

April Non-Attendance Day in District 90

On April 28, District 90 students will not attend school due to staff professional development. Faculty and staff members will be engaged in numerous activities, including middle school social studies curriculum review, standards-based learning collaboration, continued efforts to prepare for the transition to full-day kindergarten, and implementing the Board-approved Desmos math materials for ATP students.



District 90 Orchestra and Band Alumni Invited to Join in A Little Night Music

Roosevelt Middle School Band and Orchestra alums are invited to participate in A Little Night Music, the largest fundraiser for the District 90 Band and Orchestra program. The event will be held on Friday, April 21 at 7 p.m. at Roosevelt Middle School! It's billed as an evening of enjoyment for the entire family, and features musical performances, desserts, raffles, and a silent auction.

Musical performances will be performed by returning alums of the Roosevelt Band and Orchestra. If you're an alum of the musical program, please consider returning to participate in the Oak Park River Forest High School Marching Band, the Roosevelt Alumni Jazz Band, or your own family act. For more information, contact Mr. Hufnus at hufnusb@district90.org or view the flyer with the QR code. It promises to be a fun-filled and delightful evening!

River Forest Parents Invited to Parent University

Please consider attending an evening of parent workshops about Healthy Teen/Tween Relationships, Student Mental Wellness, Substance Use Prevention, and De-escalating Your Teen. Parent University will be held at Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) on Wednesday, April 19 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. This event is free and open to all parents in River Forest, Oak Pak, and the surrounding communities. It is sponsored by OPRFHS, District 90, District 97, +Positive Youth Development, River Forest Township, and other agencies. Click [here](#) to view the flyer for more information and to register.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Is Ready for Review!

The Village will hold a public meeting on Monday, April 10 at 6 p.m. to discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget, for the fiscal period starting May 1, 2023 and ending April 30, 2024. Residents are encouraged to get involved in this discussion and can review the Budget [here](#). The three overarching goals of the Budget are to ensure that the Village is providing a safe and welcoming community for residents, staff, businesses and institutional partners, enhancing property values by strengthening quality of life, and implementing strategies to stabilize property taxes.

The Village continues to support training and professional development opportunities for public safety employees, as well as invest in technological advancements to assist with crime prevention. Additionally, a priority is to address the safety and traffic flow concerns of residents through a recent Village Wide Traffic Study Survey that will help to identify areas around town where improvements could be made for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

In an effort to strengthen quality of life, the Village will also continue to responsibly invest in infrastructure, including our streets, water, alleys and sewer system - while pursuing state, federal and county funding to cover the costs of this important maintenance. A concurrent goal is to maintain and preserve the charm and aesthetic appeal that makes River Forest a desirable place to live, work and play.

Finally, the Village is actively taking steps to stabilize property values by ensuring that zoning regulations are aligned with the ability to encourage reinvestment in the community. The Village Board is interested in identifying strategies for development in key corridors and properties, while also working to retain existing businesses and attract new business community members. More information on FY24 goals can be found [here](#) on pages 26-27.



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS



**Annual Budget
Fiscal Year 2024**
400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois 60305
www.vrf.us



Follow the Village on Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



River Forest Events



Village Contact Information

<p>Village Administration 708-714-3563 Interim Village Administrator <u>Matt Walsh</u></p> <p>Finance Department 708-714-3524 <u>Director Rosemary McAdams</u></p> <p>Fire Department 708-714-3560 <u>Chief Tom Gaertner</u></p>	<p>Public Works and Development Services 708-714-3551 <u>Director Jeff Loster</u></p> <p>Police Department 708-714-3540 <u>Chief James O'Shea</u></p> <p>Emergency Services Dial 911</p>
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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.