

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | August, 2024



## Village Receives Distinguished Budget Award

One of the Village's main goals is to stabilize property taxes through fiscal responsibility while reducing spending through efficiencies. The Village is proud to once again be awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), for the Village's May 1, 2024 budget.

This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and budgeting, and a result of diligent forecasting and planning while ensuring the Village is maximizing resources to provide the highest level of services to the community. Special recognition was also received by the Village for long-range operational planning and the Capital Improvement Program. The Village is proud of this award because it prioritizes fiscal responsibility and transparency, and the strategic use of financial resources to benefit the entire community.

This award is a major achievement for River Forest, thanks to the hard work of Village Finance Director Rosey McAdams and her team.



### In This Issue

- Village President..... 2
- Village Board of Trustees.... 2
- News Around Town..... 3
- Department Updates..... 4
- Business Spotlight ..... 5
- Sustainability..... 5
- Local Organizations ..... 6-7
- Thanks Public Works ..... 8
- Village Contacts..... 8





# From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

We have exciting news to report to our residents this month regarding new businesses and economic development initiatives. I want to highlight a few of those new businesses, reminders, events and the passing of a dedicated public servant;

- Congratulations to: **Hub Kitchen** for staying local and opening their business in the long-vacant site on North Avenue. Learn more in a recent news article [here](#).
- Coming soon: **CAVA**, a Mediterranean grill, will be opening in the Town Center in the coming weeks.
- We will soon announce a very exciting initiative to engage our residents in an ongoing dialogue to shape our commercial developments throughout town.

The Village is extremely optimistic about all the recent business activity in town and we want to keep the momentum going.

Congratulations also go out to the River Foresters on the District 10 U14 Little League Junior Team, for winning their regional championship! Good luck in the World Series!

Events coming up later this month:

- The annual **Food Truck Rally** is on Saturday, August 24 from 4 - 9 p.m. in **The Depot Parking Lot/ Keystone Park West**. The whole family is invited for entertainment, inflatables, family activities - and of course, food trucks! A beer tent will also be available for adult attendees.
- The second Casual Conversation with the Village President event is on Saturday, August 31 from 9 - 10:30 a.m. at the **River Forest Park District Depot**. All community members are invited to bring questions and/or feedback about Village operations and initiatives to this informal and informational event. Learn more [here](#).

On behalf of the Village of River Forest, we would like to give our condolences to the family of Clarmarie Keenan, who served as the Oak Park Township Supervisor. Clarmarie recently passed away on July 30. She was truly dedicated to serving our community and our thoughts go out to her family, friends and colleagues at the Township.

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



# News Around Town

## Updated Service Request Platform

Stay tuned for more information this fall on the Village's updated Service Request Platform, which will make it easier for residents to submit requests about many things, including (but not limited to) garbage bin replacement, Metra parking, traffic questions, and investigations of higher than normal water bills. The Village is working to improve these convenient online services, so please stay tuned for future updates!



## Museum Scavenger Hunt

This summer, the Oak Park River Forest Museum features LEGO Minifigures of Frank Lloyd Wright, Percy Julian, and Betty White among their exhibits. Join the Hometown Legends LEGO Scavenger Hunt to find them and win a prize! Visit the [Museum](#) from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. For details, click [here](#).



## Flamingo Fridays

Flamingo Fridays have returned! This weekly event is a great way for neighbors to connect and have fun this summer. A new host stakes a flamingo on their lawn to signal they're hosting the event the week leading up to the Friday of that week. The host provides the space, a table, and an ice bucket or cooler so those who attend can bring their own beverages. Attendees should also bring their own cups and snacks. It's that simple and all are welcome! Volunteer to host a Flamingo Friday and learn more [here](#).



## Local Library Events

**River Forest's Forgotten Place: The History of Edgewater Park** - Join the [River Forest Public Library](#) for a presentation by Frank FioRito from the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest on the forgotten history of Edgewater Park. This event will take place on Saturday, August 3, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at 735 Lathrop Avenue. Discover the story of this unique, former subdivision in what is now the Thatcher Woods Forest Preserve. For more information or to register, click [here](#).

**Wednesday, 8/21, 3:30-4:30 p.m.: Welcome Back, Grades 5-8:** Enjoy a welcome back snack and find out about the terrific materials and fun programs the Library offers - just for Middle School students.

**Thursday, 8/22, 7-8:30 p.m.: Outdoor Concert Series: Bourbon Aristocracy (Bluegrass), Adult:** The Library is pleased to present a series of outdoor concerts in their garden on Thursday, August 22. This performance will be from traditional bluegrass band, Bourbon Aristocracy. Enjoy the sounds of banjo-picking and fiddle playing in the open air. Limited chairs will be provided, so attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or blanket. In the event of rain, the concert will be held indoors on the second floor of the Library. This event is brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.





# Village Department News

## Police Department

### Back to School Reminders

**School Zone Speed Limit:** The speed limit is reduced to 20 mph in designated "School Zones", which are streets that pass primary and secondary schools. The school zone speed limit is in effect from 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. on school days when children are present. School zones in the Village are located on Division Street, Chicago Avenue, and Lake Street, which are clearly marked with fluorescent yellow signs. Please note that penalties and fines are more severe for drivers caught violating the school zone speed limit.

**Use of Electronic Communication Devices:** Illinois law states, "A person may not operate a motor vehicle on a roadway while using an electronic communication device," which includes: cell phones, smart phones, tablets and any other devices. This includes looking at, manipulating, and speaking on the phone. The law allows for "hands-free" use, such as Bluetooth. Penalties are more severe for violations in "school zones." Remember, just "Drop it and Drive".

**Obedience to Crossing Guards:** Drivers must obey the direction of school crossing guards (or police officers) stopping or directing traffic to safely assist pedestrians crossing the street. Crossing guards in River Forest are identifiable by their fluorescent yellow attire and hand-held "Stop" signs. If a crossing guard is holding up a "stop" sign and/or directing you to "stop", it means "stop".

**Pedestrians in crosswalks:** Drivers must STOP and yield the right-of-way to any pedestrians within a crosswalk where there is no traffic control device (stop light, stop sign, etc.). Drivers must also yield to pedestrians waiting to cross at intersections with stop signs. The Village uses portable signs placed in the street near some heavily used crosswalks to remind drivers of this law. This law applies to all such crosswalks, not just those with crossing guards and/or signs.

**One-way streets on school days:** Sections of LeMoyné Street, Park Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Ashland Avenue, and Jackson Avenue become one-way streets on school days between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. These sections are identified by "DO NOT ENTER" and "ONE-WAY" signs. Always pay attention to road signage, but especially while driving near schools.

All schools in River Forest utilize some form of a lane dedicated for "student loading" (pick-up and drop-off) for drivers who wish to stay in their vehicles as well as a separate area for parking if drivers wish to exit vehicles and walk into the school. Please review your school's traffic plan and heed signage to ensure you are not parking in the student loading lane or driving through the parking area. *If the student loading lane is full, you should not block traffic by stopping your vehicle while waiting to enter the student loading lane.* Additionally, do not block residential driveways while parking or loading. The Police Department can, and will issue parking citations for any of these situations described above.

Finally, please keep in mind that everyone is trying to get somewhere, and the Police Department's priority is to ensure everyone gets there safely. Please drive carefully around schools and be respectful and courteous to pedestrians and motorists. Officers will be out enforcing the laws listed above and assisting with traffic flow. If you observe any unsafe situation or driver, you can always report it by dialing 911 for emergencies or 708-366-7125 for non-emergencies..

Contact River Forest Police School Resource Officer Megan Drake with any questions or concerns at 708-366-7125 ext. 343 or via e-mail at [mdrake@vrf.us](mailto:mdrake@vrf.us).

## Public Works

### Summer Construction

Each summer, Public Works manages a variety of construction projects to maintain and improve infrastructure. In recent weeks, three construction projects improving streets and ADA curb ramps in the Village have been completed. These projects represent more than \$1.4 million in infrastructure investments, of which more than \$830,000 was funded through State of Illinois and Cook County grants, and an additional \$350,000 through State motor fuel tax.

Key Facts:

- 3.4 miles (10%) of Village-owned streets were resurfaced this year with 6602.79 tons (331 truckloads) of asphalt.
- 132 sidewalk ramps were reconstructed and brought into compliance with ADA requirements.

### The Village Needs to Identify Your Water Service Line Material

The Village's Public Works and Engineering Department strives to maintain the safety and quality of our water infrastructure by complying with the Lead Service Line Replacement Act, a requirement by the State of Illinois. As part of this initiative, the Village is working to identify all residential water service line materials. Prior to the 1980's, water systems used lead or galvanized material for water service lines (or pipes) that run from the Village water main to the water meters in homes and businesses.

The next step in this project is to identify the material of the pipe serving homes or businesses - to ultimately replace lead water service lines.

### What Do I Need to Do?

1. Test and identify the material of your water pipes. (See the instructions at the [survey link](#)).
2. Tell the Village what you found from the test by completing the survey [here](#) or scan the QR code in the accompanying graphic.

Once the Village collects this information, a plan will be developed to systematically replace the lead service lines throughout the Village by coordinating directly with impacted property owners. If lead is detected, you can click [here](#) for more information..

**RIVER FOREST**  
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"Get The Lead Out"  
by completing the survey

**TAKE THE SURVEY**  
[vrf.us/leadsurvey](https://vrf.us/leadsurvey)



## Village Department News

### Fire Department

#### Biking the Safe Way

Bike riding in River Forest is an excellent leisure activity, promoting fun, health, and socializing. With ample neighborhoods and bike lanes, this opportunity is accessible for everyone. Prioritize safety with an "A-B-C" check before riding: **A**ir in tires, functioning **B**rakes, and a properly aligned **C**hain.

Head injuries can be very serious for cyclists, and helmets can reduce this risk by up to 85%. Ensure bike helmets fit properly and that straps are securely buckled. Encourage helmet use in children by setting an example. You can also wear bright clothing, reflective materials, and LED lights for visibility. Stick to the right side of the road or in bike lanes and remember to follow traffic rules. Teach children to bike safety and supervise them until they're confident.

#### Walking to School Safely

Parents should work with their children to plan the route they are going to take if they are walking to school. It's important to try to minimize the number of streets they have to cross. Remember to keep it as simple as possible. Then, do a dry run before the first day of school, so children feel comfortable. Teach them to keep away from vacant lots, fields, and any other locations that have few people around. Also, please make sure your children do not walk alone, especially if they are young. Have your child walk with older siblings or neighbors, or walk with them if no one else is able.

### Village Administration

#### Pet and Vehicle Registration

Pets (dogs/cats) and vehicles are required to be registered with the Village. Pet tags can be purchased for \$10 online or at Village Hall and are valid from May 1 - April 30, each year. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Also, the deadline for purchasing and displaying vehicle stickers without penalty was July 14. Late fees on vehicle stickers will increase from \$10 to \$15 on August 15. To avoid being ticketed, purchase stickers online or at Village Hall. For more details, click [here](#) or call 708-366-8500.

## Business Spotlight

**River Forest Chocolates** is a community staple offering a plethora of chocolates, popcorn, personalized favors, custom event sweet tables, and more! The location now proudly offers coffees, lattes and hot chocolates in sustainable cups. Learn more or place an order [here](#).



Please support local businesses whenever possible! If you have a business located in River Forest with a valid business license, it can be featured in the Village's business spotlight through weekly E-newsletters and on its social media channels. If you'd like your business to be featured, please send us an [email](#). You can find a listing of River Forest businesses on the Village's [Shop River Forest website](#).

## Sustainability



#### Visit the River Forest Guide to Sustainable Living

The River Forest Sustainability Commission encourages residents to check out the new [Guide to Sustainable Living](#) to find different ways to incorporate elements of sustainable living into all of our daily lives. Resources for reducing your carbon footprint include information on the River Forest rooftop solar, community solar, and green energy electric aggregation programs, as well as energy efficiency savings and rebate programs available through ComEd and Nicor. Guides are also available to highlight ways to reduce water usage and create a green ecosystem.

Find information on upcoming green events and regional sustainability initiatives, including through the [Cross Community Climate Collaborative](#). Learn about the Village's efforts for a sustainable community, such as the curbside composting program, the WaterSmart portal for monitoring water usage and leak alerts and the Green Alleys project with permeable pavers to manage stormwater. Additionally, the Green Block Party program offers Sort-It-Out Waste Stations for trash, recyclables, and compost sorting. Learn more about what the Village has done and what you can do by visiting the River Forest Guide to Sustainable Living [here](#).



# Organizations Serving River Forest



## Township

To learn more about Township programs and services, click [here](#), visit the River Forest [Community Calendar](#), or email [Supervisor John Becvar](#).

### Coffee Monday, August 5

Mary Anne Ojeda from Senior Services of Oak Park-River Forest Townships will be the guest speaker at August's Coffee Monday (the first Monday of every month) in the Barbara Hall Meeting Room at the [River Forest Public Library](#) from 10 - 11 a.m. on August 5. Mary Anne will discuss Township services and resources that are available to support the Village's older adults.

### Backpack Program - Friday, August 9

The Township has been collecting new backpacks and school supplies for students Pre-K to high school seniors, to ensure every student has the tools they need to succeed in the upcoming school year. Backpacks will be filled with folders, rulers, scissors, notebooks, crayons, pencils, erasers and other vital supplies for the school year! For young people in need of these supplies, backpacks can be picked up during the [Township Back-to-School Social](#), on Friday, August 9 from 4-6 p.m. in the [Oak Park Community Recreation Center](#) parking lot.



### Second Installment Tax Bills

To view, print, and/or pay your 2023 Second Installment Property Tax Bill, which was due Thursday, August 1, visit the [Cook County Treasurer](#). Does your bill accurately reflect all of your qualified exemptions? If you think you may be missing an exemption, contact the [River Forest Township Assessor's office](#) immediately.

### Property Tax Community Outreach - Monday, August 5

River Forest Township Assessor, Pamela Kende, is hosting a Community Outreach event with the Cook County Board of Review on Monday, August 5 at 6 p.m. at the [River Forest Community Center](#). Although the Township is not currently open for appeals with the Board of Review, you may request to be put on the appeal packet list request [here](#). Once Township appeals open, appeal packets will be emailed in the order in which they were received.

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

## Park District

### Party in the Park

Join the River Forest Park District for Party in the Park. This event will be on Thursday, August 15 from 6-7:30 p.m. at [Constitution Park](#). Bubble guy Scott Ingerson will be there, along with a balloon artist, as well as grilled



hot dogs, chips, and dessert! Live entertainment will be provided by the Abby Kay Band. This up-and-coming band plays rock, country, and pop hits spanning multiple decades and is sure to have the crowd engaged and dancing! This event is free for all ages and all you need to bring is a blanket or lawn chair! To learn more, click [here](#).

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

## Library

Visit the [calendar](#) to see everything happening at the Library. There are events and activities for all ages. Below are some highlights:

**Please note upcoming closure and hours change:** The Library will be closed on Monday, September 2 in observance of Labor Day. Additionally, Sunday hours of 1-5 p.m. will resume on Sunday, September 8.

Registration can be completed for the events listed below, [here](#).

**Wednesday, 8/7, 4-5 p.m.: Flying Fox Conservation Fund, K-8:** Join the Flying Fox Conservation Fund and learn about some of the most amazing creatures from around the world. There is something for all young people K-8 at this unique, hands-on animal program event. Meet many furry friends in person, including a sloth! Registration is required.

**Wednesday, 8/14, 3:30-4:30 p.m.: Community Art Project – last chance, All Ages:** Stop in for a few minutes or the whole hour and work with others on a piece of community art that will be displayed at the Library! The community art project occurs on select Wednesdays and is ongoing. The last day to participate will be Wednesday, August 14.

**Saturday, 8/17, 2-3:30 p.m.: Around the World in 80 Sandwiches, Adult:** Local author Mike Curtis's new book, "Around the World in 80 Sandwiches" tells the story of one man's attempt to show his sons the world through sandwiches—either made at home or found at restaurants around Chicagoland. Mike and his sons discovered sandwiches representing 42 countries and 25 states. At this event, he will discuss their sandwich adventures and the impact they had on his family. Learn all about the world of sandwiches, and how to share your own stories through self-publishing. This event is brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.

[riverforestlibrary.org](http://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 90

### First Day of School

The first day of school for students attending District 90 Schools is Wednesday, August 21. All River Forest families planning to send their children to District 90 schools are reminded to register as soon as possible. Both returning and new students must be registered as the number of students attending is critical to school staffing. Information about residency requirements and registration is available on the [District 90 website](#).



### District 90 Summer Offerings

District 90 (D90) Schools offered a variety of classes to students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade during Summer School in June and July. During Board Game Class with Ms. Gail Barrett, middle schoolers had fun playing Giant Uno at Roosevelt Middle School.



Also during the summer months, custodian teams at D90 have been hard at work cleaning every corner of the schools in preparation of this coming school year. Jacob Rositas, Jerry Jenkins, Angelo Betancourt, and Michael Ritchey emptied every classroom at Lincoln Elementary School to scrub and wax the floors.

## District 200

### Professional Days Help Students Envision Their Future

As part of its efforts to ensure that all students are prepared for life after high school, this year Oak Park River Forest High School (OPRFHS) expanded on its long-running annual Black Professionals Day and added a Hispanic Professionals Day. Future plans include adding similar events with Arab and Asian professionals.

Roughly 20 professionals participated in each school-day event, representing a range of jobs that included entrepreneur, attorney, academic, surgeon, theater producer, pastor, and more. Students got to hear brief presentations from the participants, then rotated through small groups where they had a chance to ask individual questions.



OPRF Outreach Coordinator Ty Garland, who organized the events for the Office of Equity and Student Success, says, "It's important for kids to see past the walls of OPRFHS—to have a game plan beyond high school." He went on to add that it's equally important to see that there are many paths to success. "Making that connection helps kids understand that everyone's journey and path is different."

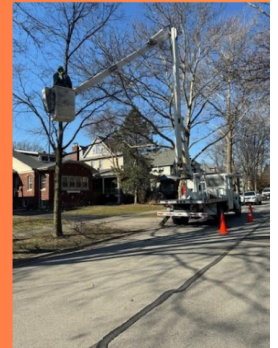
Rising senior Langston Short is pursuing his own path after learning from presenter Kenneth Johnson, a River Forest Trustee and co-founder and managing partner of Johnson, Blumberg & Associates, LLC, that the firm offers internships. He's been offered and accepted paid summer work with its administrative team.

"I've always dreamed of being an entrepreneur," Langston said, adding that he loved going to his parents' offices on Take Your Child to Work Day. "This opportunity gives me the chance to learn to be in a professional setting, to learn about teamwork and communication. I'm really excited."

If you're interested in presenting at one of the OPRFHS professional days, email [tgarland@oprfs.org](mailto:tgarland@oprfs.org).



# Thank you to our Public Works Department



Follow the Village on Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



***River Forest Events***



## Village Contact Information

Village Administration  
708-714-3563

Village Administrator  
Matt Walsh

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 Jack Bielak

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.