

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | March, 2025



Annual State of the Village

During the Monday, February 24 Village Board meeting, Village President Cathy Adduci presented the State of the Village Address. This annual address highlights the achievements of the past year and offers a preview of the projects and initiatives the Village has planned for the year ahead.

President Adduci highlighted:

- ◆ Plans to make Traffic & Safety Improvements along Washington Boulevard, Lake Street and Thatcher Ave to reduce vehicle speeding and improving pedestrian safety.
- ◆ Continued progress on the Climate Action Plan, focusing on tree preservation, encouraging composting, and enhancing the Village's electric vehicle infrastructure.
- ◆ Investments in systems to grow our storm preparedness and reduce future flooding.

- ◆ The recent openings of J Crew Factory, CAVA, and Black Fodder Coffee highlight positive momentum in economic development.



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From Village President Cathy Adduci



Dear River Forest residents,

During last Monday's Board meeting, I had the honor of delivering the annual State of the Village Address, and one of the many highlights was the importance the Village places on community engagement. I'm very proud of the progress we've made so far, which includes:

- ◆ We have sent postcard mailers to all residences in River Forest on a quarterly basis to alert them to engagement opportunities over the last year.
- ◆ Our newsletter boasts a nearly 70% open rate, which is 23% higher than the industry average.
- ◆ We have also hosted quarterly, "Casual Conversations with the Village President" and Neighborhood Dialogues in an effort to gain thoughts and feedback from community members on various issues and topics, including potential economic development for our available commercial properties.

I would love for more residents to get involved in conversations about Village operations and initiatives through the Causal Conversation events. If you are unable to attend in-person meetings, please reach out to the Village via email at info@vrf.us or call us at 708-366-8500 to share your thoughts, questions and ideas on how to continually improve quality of life in River Forest.

The next in-person event for residents will be an Open House, combined with the "Casual Conversation with the Village President" on Saturday, May 10. This event will focus on helping all community members learn more about economic development. Representatives from the Village Board and staff from the Administration, Building & Zoning, and Public Works & Engineering Departments will be available to discuss a variety of topics and answer any questions. These topics can include (but are not limited to) associated costs of development projects, the Village's zoning process, proposed zoning amendments, and different strategies to market available properties in the Village. The Village's goal is to attract the right developers, so that we can maximize the use of available properties while enhancing amenities and products or services provided to our community. I invite you to attend - so please save the date!

Along with prioritizing community engagement, the Village has made significant technological advancements, including launching the WaterSmart portal for water bills and usage, as well as new Police Department and Administrative Service Request portals. We've also made key community improvements, such as:

- ◆ Initiating the removal of the unused Chicago Transit Authority water tower
- ◆ Advancing efforts initiated by our own community members to reduce Union Pacific train idling
- ◆ Receiving the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Award for promoting green infrastructure

I look forward to the opportunity to engage in conversations about community efforts and continuously improve the services the Village provides for you!

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](#)

Front Desk FAQs

Answers to the most recent, frequently asked questions from community members.

Question: Will my garbage be picked up on Monday, March 17 (St. Patrick's Day)?

Answer: Yes! Regularly scheduled waste pick up will occur on St. Patrick's Day.

Question: When is the next Electronic Waste Pick-Up?

Answer: Collection will be the week of March 17 on your normal waste collection day. Requests for this service must be received by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, via the [LRS website](#).



RF Team Member Spotlight Fire Department Deputy Chief Dave Bochenek

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Being a teacher was the first career I can recall wanting to pursue. I have always enjoyed history, science, and sociology in particular. I stumbled upon being a first responder when I had the opportunity to choose an elective class, and chose to take an Emergency Medical Technician class in my second year of college. From then on, it was evident that being in the fire service was the route I wanted to pursue. It is truly an honor to respond to someone's worst experience and improve it, however I can.

Do you collect anything?

I collect hugs from my daughters and wife. My family is my greatest accomplishment, and I am so proud of all of their accomplishments.

What's your go-to karaoke song?

Nobody wants me to sing... trust me.

Can you describe what services are provided by the fire department, in addition to fighting fires and providing emergency medical treatment?

Fire and Emergency Medical Services provide a wide breadth of solutions for public safety, public education, and public engagement. From block parties to STEM fairs to Medical Camps with Concordia University, our staff is dedicated to creating innovative solutions to many problems. We thrive on developing these solutions for the community that simultaneously enhance community resilience and also allow for engagement with the citizens we serve. If residents or business community members have any questions, I encourage them to reach out to our department at (708) 366-7629.



Village Departments in Action So much goes on behind the scenes as Village employees deliver services to the community.

Public Works

The Village's Snow & Ice Control Operations from the Public Works Department are designed to keep our roads safe during winter storms. Plowing begins once snow accumulates to 2 inches, covering 32 miles of roadways and 63.2 miles of plow lanes (both lanes). They also clear municipal lots, alleys, and salt school parking lots. The goal is to promptly remove snow and ice after each storm, with Public Works employees on call 24/7 during the winter season.

Ahead of winter storms, the Public Works Department treats roads with salt brine to prevent ice buildup. This approach is part of their salt conservation policy, which helps protect the environment by minimizing the impact of road salt on our environment.

During the recent February 12-13 storm, all roads were pretreated with 2,200 gallons of brine. Plowing began at 5 a.m. and wrapped up by noon the next day. A total of 72.6 tons of salt was used, and Village equipment covered 928 miles.

Please help our Public Works Department by moving your vehicle off the street during snow events to ensure plowing is safe and efficient. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!



Village Now Accepts CO Alarms For Recycling

The Village is taking another step toward sustainability by expanding its recycling program to include fire and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, giving residents a convenient way to responsibly dispose of expired devices.

Most smoke alarms last about 10 years, while CO alarms need replacement every 5–7 years. Regular testing - by pressing the “test” button - helps ensure these alarms are working properly.

Residents can recycle old alarms at the yellow bins in the **Village Hall’s** second-floor lobby or the **River Forest Fire Station**. This initiative promotes safety while supporting environmental sustainability.



Now Accepting CO Alarms

TIF Small Business Improvement Grant Program

A new Façade Improvement Grant program will soon be under consideration, and is aimed at enhancing the visual appeal and economic vitality of businesses along North Avenue and Madison Street. This initiative seeks to support commercial property owners and business tenants who want to make exterior improvements that contribute to a more attractive and inviting streetscape.

The proposed program is scheduled for introduction to the Village Board at the March 10 meeting, and property owners and business tenants are encouraged to attend. The program will provide financial assistance to eligible businesses for improvements including new signage, awnings, exterior lighting, and façade renovations that align with the Village’s aesthetic and economic development goals.

The Village recognizes that well-maintained commercial properties play a critical role in attracting customers, increasing property values, and supporting a thriving business community. By offering financial incentives, investment in the commercial corridors along North Avenue and Madison Street will be encouraged, and will assist in strengthening the local economy.

Details regarding grant eligibility, application procedures, and funding availability will be shared following the Village Board’s review. For further updates, visit the **Village’s website** or contact the Economic Development Commission via email at info@vrf.us.

This initiative underscores River Forest’s commitment to fostering a vibrant and visually appealing business environment that benefits both local business and property owners, as well as the broader community.

The More You Know – River Forest Township

The **River Forest Township Board of Trustees** meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 PM, except in January, April, and September, when meetings are held on the second Tuesday. Committed to enhancing community well-being, the board provides essential services and programs for residents of all ages. With a focus on serving the Township’s population, the organization offers social services, youth and senior programs, mental health resources, and property tax assistance.

One of the Township’s key functions is supporting local seniors through transportation services, wellness programs, and social activities that encourage and support engagement and independence. Youth services include scholarships, educational workshops, and recreational programs designed to enrich young residents’ lives. The Township also prioritizes mental health by funding initiatives that provide counseling, crisis intervention, and other essential resources to support community well-being. Additionally, the River Forest Township Assessor’s Office assists residents with property tax assessments, appeals, and exemptions, ensuring transparency and accessibility in the process. The Township also partners with various local organizations to expand its reach and effectiveness.

For more information about services, programs, and upcoming events, visit riverforesttownship.org. Whether you need assistance, resources, or other supportive services, River Forest Township is committed to serving and strengthening the local community.



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Caring | Connection | Community



Board, Commissions & Committees Updates

Historical Preservation Commission

The Village is committed to preserving its architectural heritage and safeguarding the community's historical character for future generations. The **Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)** plays a crucial role in reviewing renovations, construction permits, and demolitions, to ensure the integrity of significant properties across the Village.

The HPC is also responsible for the designation of landmarks and historically significant properties, with a **comprehensive survey** of these sites available to the public. An interactive **Google Maps tool** further allows residents to explore the Village's historic properties.

We encourage all residents to **utilize these resources** to better understand the importance of historic preservation and contribute to maintaining River Forest's unique character. The Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, and we welcome your attendance, questions, and comments. For more information, please email **Deputy Clerk Luke Masella**.



Want to Get Involved?

Volunteer to Serve
on a Village Committee



Scan the QR Code
to Learn More

Sustainability

Electronic Waste Curbside Pickup

Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) is now accepting requests for pickup of electronics waste from your home, at no extra cost for residents who participate in the Village's waste collection program.

Electronic waste collection will take place the week of March 17-19 on your regular waste pick-up day. The deadline for electronics pickup requests is Wednesday, March 12 by 5 p.m. LRS will collect up to seven (7) accepted items total, with no more than two (2) TVs or computer monitors per collection, per household.

Here's how it works:

- ♻️ Click on the Electronic Waste Pick-Up link in the upper right side of the **LRS webpage**.
- ♻️ Fill in your address information, select the items you have for collection, then click submit and a submission confirmation will appear.
- ♻️ Materials must be placed in the front of your home at the curb near the parkway no later than 7 a.m. on the day of collection.
- ♻️ Collection does not take place in the alley due to the nature of the materials.
- ♻️ Items are collected on your regular pick-up day the week of collection.
- ♻️ Small electronic items may be placed at the curb in a brown paper bag or a small cardboard box.
- ♻️ Mark the box or bag with a marker as E-Waste so the crew can easily see it.

LRS partners with E-Works from Elk Grove Village, an R2 state certified, non-profit electronics recycler - to properly recycle and manage e-waste collected from Village residences. Please visit the **Village of River Forest E-Waste webpage** or the **LRS River Forest webpage** for further information, which includes a list of acceptable materials.

Senior's Corner

Event Registration for Senior Programs

If you have a free event for seniors that takes place during Celebrating Seniors Week (May 8 - May 15) and would like to promote your event through the Celebrating Seniors Coalition, the deadline to submit program information and an event description is Monday, March 24. Events should be held in public spaces and topics should present information, education and/or entertainment for residents primarily over the age of 60. For additional information, click **here** or email **Lydia Manning, PhD**.

Spaghetti Dinner for Seniors

Save the date! The Celebrating Seniors Coalition will be hosting a free Intergenerational Spaghetti Dinner, open to everyone, on Friday, May 9 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the **Howard Mohr Community Center in Forest Park**. Donations will be accepted and more information can be found by filling out the form found **here**.

Celebrating Seniors Coalition

You're Invited



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](#).



Take the Township Survey!

River Forest Township is interested in hearing from YOU! Please consider completing a survey to share your thoughts and experiences with mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services in Oak Park and River Forest. The largest portion (28.8%) of the Township budget goes to supporting Mental Health. Your feedback will be used to help the Township better meet the needs of the greater community, and to plan for investment in additionally needed services. The survey takes about ten minutes to complete. [Click here to take the survey.](#)

Township Assessor

Property Tax Exemption Applications

Property tax exemption applications are expected to be mailed out by the Cook County Assessor's Office early this spring. Residents should receive a booklet in the mail and will need to use 2023 income information to file for a Senior Freeze Exemption, you should receive a booklet in the mail. Residents who turn 66 years of age any time in 2025 qualify and can apply for this exemption when the forms become available.

If you need help filling out the forms, the Township Assessor is available to assist. Contact them by phone at 708-366-2787 or send an [email](#). You can follow the Cook County Assessor's website for additional exemption updates [here](#).

riverforesttownship.org - 708-366-2029 x11

Library



Calling Local Artists! The Library is hosting a Local Artisan Fair on April 5 and is currently accepting applications from participants. [Read all about the event and submit your application.](#)

Visit the River Forest Public Library [Calendar](#) to see whats happening at your Library. They offer events and activities for all ages. Below is a highlight:

Sunday, 3/9, 2-3:30 p.m.: Women's History Hindsight: The Struggle for Suffrage, Adult:

Celebrate Women's History Month at the Library with this talk by historian, performer, and museum professional Ellie Carlson on the history of the suffrage movement that won the right to vote for women. This presentation will focus on the influence of trade and teacher's unions, women in higher education, fundraising through cookbooks and bazaars, marches, songs, letter writing campaigns and how women's influence over the voting men in their lives brought about the reform. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.



riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

Park District



River Forest Park District

Summer Camp Fun Guide is Now Available

The Park District's Summer Camp Fun Guide can now be viewed online at rfparks.com. Click here to view all of the camps that are being offered this summer. Resident registration for camps is now open. Non-resident registration for camps opens Monday, March 17 at 8:30 a.m. Registration will be available online at rfparks.com and at [The Depot](#).

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

District 90



Kindergarten Information Night

All River Forest families with children planning to attend kindergarten at District 90 Schools for the 2025-26 school year are invited to Kindergarten Information Night on Thursday March 13 from 6-7 p.m. The event will take place at both [Lincoln Elementary School](#) and [Willard Elementary School](#). Meet principals and teachers, learn about the school day, and how to register. Find more information about registering [here](#).

district90.org | 708-771-8282

District 200



OPRFHS Honors Illustrious Alumni

Oak Park and River Forest High School recently hosted its annual Tradition of Excellence Awards event, which recognizes alumni who have made outstanding contributions to society through their personal and professional pursuits. Here's a brief look at this year's honorees.

Robert "Buck" Halperin, Class of 1927 (posthumous award) College athlete, military veteran, Olympian, started Lands' End

A highly decorated World War II Navy hero, Buck Halperin was part of the first class trained in a top-secret program called the Navy Scouts & Raiders, a predecessor of the Navy Seals. He was one of the first Americans to go ashore in France on D-Day.



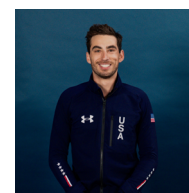
Major General Devin Pepper, Class of 1987 Military veteran, Space Force/NATO leader

A career space and missile operations officer, Devin Pepper currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategic Plans and Policy, NATO's Supreme Allied Command Transformation, in Norfolk, VA. Maj. Pepper is the first prior-enlisted and first African American general officer in the Space Force, which was established in 2019 as the first new branch of the armed services since 1947.



Emery Lehman, Class of 2014: Olympic Speed Skating Medalist

A three-time Olympian, at age 17, Emery Lehman was the youngest speed skater at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia, as well as the youngest male in the U.S. Olympic delegation that year. He went on to compete for Team USA in the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea, and he won bronze in the men's team pursuit at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.



oprfs.org | 708-383-0700

What's Happening In River Forest

Black Fodder Coffee

On February 22, the Village welcomed Black Fodder Coffee, an exciting new small business, to the community. This coffee shop offers delicious espresso drinks, teas, coffees and pastries in a beautiful space. Pictures from their grand opening are below. To learn more about this business, [click here](#).



TICKETS ON SALE!
 SVF ATHLETICS PRESENTS
MARCH MADNESS
04.05.25



SVF KYTE HALL
6:30 - 10:00PM

\$50/PER PERSON
 INCLUDES DINNER,
 DESSERT, WINE, BEER
 & SODA

Live Game • Raffle • Basketball Squares

This Land Is Your Land: The Folksongs of Woody Guthrie

On Sunday, March 23 the River Forest Public Library will be hosting music historian Bucky Halker. This adult event combines performance and spoken commentary in this tribute to legendary folk singer-songwriter Woody Guthrie. Hear live renditions of Guthrie's songs along with historical context, biographical information, and other details about each song. There will also be sing-alongs! Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.



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
 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.