



## Village of River Forest E-News



# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

Thank you for taking the time to read the Village's E-News. These messages are sent approximately once per month and include timely information regarding Village events, news and other useful information. We strive to keep the content brief and relevant to the issues that matter most to the community.

### Message from the Village President



Dear Residents,

What a year! I hope you will enjoy this "end of year review" letter.

River Forest has made significant strides in improving on the goals that have long shaped our community's vision and values: strengthening property values, stabilizing property taxes and keeping our community safe. This has been the focus of everyone who makes River Forest municipal government work - from members of the Board of Trustees to the police officer on the street and the public works employee who drives a snowplow.

Below are some of the many accomplishments across a spectrum of important categories that make our goals reachable.

#### Aging

In 2019, we made strides to make aging in place a priority. River Forest will look at how we can create programs and services that will help integrate seniors into as many facets of life as possible. Here are some of the steps we have taken:

Our Village has been accepted into the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#). This is the first step to becoming designated as an Age-Friendly Community. The network provides a structured process to encourage communities to prepare for the nation's aging population.

River Forest has joined the [Dementia Friendly America](#) network of communities. Through this series of initiatives, we will be looking at innovative ways to reduce stigma, support persons living with dementia, and provide aid to their families. Dementia Friendly River Forest will be exploring the development of the "River Forest Care Corps" in order to provide opportunities for volunteers to offer respite care.

In a newly created Senior Snow Program, eligible seniors 65 and older and residents with disabilities can have their snow removed on public sidewalks and private walkways leading to a property's front door. For more information and an application, click [here](#).

My peers throughout the Chicagoland area appointed me as Chair of the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus' Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative, a subcommittee on aging. Trustee Respcio Vazquez will join me as a member of this subcommittee. Together this will allow River Forest to have a more robust series of programs that will help us build a better community.

## Development

Senior Lifestyles broke ground on the [Sheridan at River Forest](#) located at the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Harlem Avenue. This construction should be completed by Spring 2021.

Lake and Lathrop LLC, a development company, started demolition and remediation of the properties located at the corner of [Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue](#). On December 16, the developer submitted a building permit application, which shows the building will be roughly 10 feet lower than the maximum height approved by the Village Board of Trustees. Once the Village approves its building permit, the developer will begin construction on May 1st or 30 days after the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency provides approval of the remediation action plan for the project, and has until November 2021 to complete construction.

The developers for [Bonnie Brae Townhomes](#) located at Bonnie Brae and Thomas Street will be submitting proposed building plans to the Development Review Board for consideration soon.

The Board approved the purchase of a third property near Madison Street for the purpose of redevelopment within the [Madison Street Tax Increment Financing \(TIF\) District](#).

Our updated [Comprehensive Plan](#) was approved in May and is in effect. This document sets forth long-range recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of the community as well as desirable improvements, developments and redevelopments. In short, the plan will help set the future course of our land use.

A byproduct of the Comprehensive Plan was the creation of our first [Bicycle Plan](#). This five-year guide sets out priority projects with key implementation dates and, in the long run, will create paths that will accommodate cyclists riding for transportation, pleasure or exercise, and will offer children another way to get to school. Our near-term goal is to create a Bicycle Ambassadors program, which will educate the public on safety, maintenance and rules on sharing the road. Thanks to a contribution from [Wheel & Sprocket](#) in Oak Park, we now have our first bike repair station near the Metra Station on Keystone Avenue.

## Collaboration

Launched in January 2019, [RFHappenings.com](#) is an online community calendar and was accomplished with the help of all local units of governments. It is a great example of how working together makes for a stronger, better informed community. Thanks to Trustee Tom Cargie and Village staff member Jon Pape for being our representatives during this important civic initiative.

The River Forest Civic Center Authority (RFCCA), the River Forest Community Center, Opportunity Knocks, River Forest Park Board, D90, D200, and the Village have begun assessing the future of the Community Center building at Madison Street and Thatcher Avenue.

The Village and Elementary School District 90 collaborated to create a [Safe Walking Routes to School plan](#). This initiative sets out the safest walking routes to the schools in the Village.

We responded to residents' concerns, and together with Union Pacific and Metra, worked out an agreement that will lead to improved safety and lessen sound along the tracks.

## Sustainability

On April 22, Earth Day, West Cook County Solid Waste Agency presented the 2019 GreenQuality Achievement Award to the Village for its dedication to recycling with the [Annual Recycling Extravaganza](#) event and for its commitment to offering sustainable services and programs to residents.

The Village received a \$5,000 grant from the ComEd [Green Region Program](#) to help fund the third season of [Parkways for Pollinators](#), which is a hands-on garden planting activity.

that is available through the hosting of Green Block parties.

The Village is now a [SolSmart](#) community, a national designation program to make it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar. SolSmart gave the Village a Bronze Designation, which will improve our visibility as a promoter of an alternative form of energy.

### **Safety**

We continued our quarterly police meetings to educate our residents on safety, answer residents' questions and field concerns. Please click [here](#) for the first 2020 Quarterly Community Crime Prevention Meeting.

Our five-year [Capital Improvement Plan](#) included a number of safety improvements, including installing flashing speed indicators to alert drivers to speed limits and putting safety cameras on Thatcher Avenue and Lake Street and near the River Forest Metra Station.

The Village was the recipient of a \$95,000 FEMA grant, which will help fund the replacement of emergency responder radios.

The River Forest Police Department won first place in its category in the 2018 [Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge](#) for its commitment to street safety in the community. As part of this award, the Department also won a drawing for a \$30,000 suite of squad equipment.



### **Accountability**

To encourage community engagement, we have increased our use of social media. Our [quarterly community crime prevention meetings](#) are now on [Facebook](#) Live, and our Village Board of Trustees meetings are regularly streamed on the Village's website and [YouTube](#). River Forest also is now on [Instagram](#).

Requesting overnight parking will now be easier with a new online portal, which is accessible by clicking [here](#). The Village will continue to take phone calls, in addition to the portal, to alert our Police Department of overnight street parking requests.

In 2019, we welcomed new Trustees Erika Bachner, Katie Brennan and Bob O'Connell. Each Board member assumed leadership roles for the following initiatives:

Collaboration: Tom Cargie

Communication: Patty Henek

Aging and Disabilities: Res Vazquez

Development: Bob O'Connell

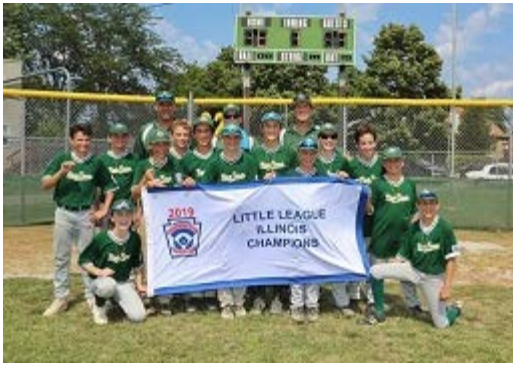
2020 Census: Erika Bachner

Legislative Affairs: Katie Brennan

### **And...**

Eric Palm, our Village Administrator, earned the 2019 Jack Williams Award. The award, presented by the West Central Municipal Conference, honors an elected official or appointed representative who has advanced the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal government through intergovernmental cooperation.

The 12-and-under River Forest Little League team became the first in the 67-year history of our program to win a state title. The team may have lost at the Great Lakes Regional championship game in Westfield, Indiana, but they still exhibited the kind of teamwork and sportsmanship that makes them champions.



River Forest has formed its Complete Count Committee for the 2020 US Census. A [forum](#) on the importance of the Census will be conducted by the League of Women

Voters at 9:30 a.m., on Tuesday, January 14 at the Nineteenth Century Club, 178 Forest Ave., Oak Park. Our representative at this event will be Trustee Erika Bachner.

Lastly, in January the Board will be taking up the decision on moving forward with the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and separately to create a resident task force to address the long-term maintenance and management of wildlife in our community. Please visit our website at [www.vrf.us](http://www.vrf.us) for more information on wildlife management.

Thank you to the entire community for making 2019 a successful year for the Village. We wish you and your families a happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci  
Village President


## Village Spotlight

The Village Board of Trustees will begin preparing next year's budget by setting goals for the year. The Board will also review the Village's annual capital improvement plan (CIP) at its Committee of the Whole meeting on [Monday, 1/27, 6 PM](#). These are the first steps in beginning to shape the Village's 2021 Fiscal Year that will begin on May 1, 2020.

## Affordable Housing Plan

The Plan Commission will discuss the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan at their meeting on [Tuesday, 1/21, 7 PM](#). The draft plan is available online for public review by clicking [here](#).

## Census 2020 Hiring for Temporary Workers

 The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting thousands of people across the country to assist with the 2020 Census count. Local workers help their communities connect with and count underrepresented groups. Click [here](#) to find out more.

## Holiday Greens Collection Schedule

Roy Strom will collect Christmas trees, wreaths, and garland every Tuesday in January. Residents should remove all decorations, lights, metal wiring and place holiday greens on the parkway by 7 AM on these days. Please note, this does not include yard waste and/or leaves.



**River Forest Police Department**





Driving in snow or icy conditions can be dangerous, but sometimes it is unavoidable. Click [here](#) to see driving tips for winter travel. Stay warm and stay safe!

## River Forest Fire Department

### Sledding, Shoveling, and Snow Blower Safety

Being prepared for snowfall can help prevent injuries. Click [here](#) for sledding safety tips and click [here](#) for safety tips for snow shoveling and snow blower use.

## GREEN NEWS

### Holiday Light Recycling

The Village is collecting holiday lights for recycling **now through 1/15**. Please drop off working and non-working lights/cords on Central Avenue in the container by Village Hall. No CFL or fluorescent bulbs - only holiday lights please. These include Italian mini-lights, traditional lights, extension cords, rope lights, and LED lights.



### Need to Make Room for New Electronics?

Roy Strom will pick up and recycle old electronics curbside for a small charge. Simply call Roy Strom Refuse Removal Service at 708-344-5000 to schedule a collection. **Please have items out by 7 AM on the scheduled electronics collection day and do not place the items at the curb prior to the scheduled pickup.** Payment for collection will be made over the phone with a credit card and will be charged upon collection. Click [here](#) for more information on electronics recycling.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 90 SPOTLIGHT

### Classes Resume in District 90

After Winter Break, classes in District 90 resume on **Monday, 1/6**. The District Office returns to regular business hours of 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM.



### Kindergarten Information Night

It is time to begin the registration process for children who will be five years old on or before 9/1. To help families prepare, Willard and Lincoln will host a Kindergarten Registration and Information Night on **Thursday, 2/6**. Kindergarten registration starts at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7 PM. The program will include presentations from kindergarten teachers, the school nurse, the principal, and leaders from the PTO. Families who reside north of Chicago Avenue should attend the Willard program, while families who live south of Chicago Avenue should attend the Lincoln event. Click [here](#) for more information.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 200 SPOTLIGHT

### D200 Community Meeting

**Monday, 2/24, 7 PM - 8 PM:** *Facilities Project 1 Community Meeting.* OPRF Staff Cafeteria, 201 N. Scoville Ave. In June 2020, Oak Park River Forest High School breaks ground on its most significant renovations in 50 years. Join us to learn more from the project team, including design and video "walkthroughs," timeline, and construction impacts to the campus.

## PARK DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

## Part-Time Employment Opportunities

River Forest Park District is hiring seasonal staff for a variety of part-time positions beginning now and for the summer. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Winter Programming

Don't miss the exciting programs offered for Winter & Spring. Click [here](#) to register. Now that winter is here, ice skating and sledding will be available, weather permitting. A flag system is utilized on-site (green is open; red is closed) and the weather hotline will be updated when there is a change. Call 708-802-1314 for updates.

## RIVER FOREST LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

Visit [www.RiverForestLibrary.org](http://www.RiverForestLibrary.org) to find out everything happening at the Library.

### Regular Programming is Back

2019 was a whirlwind with lots of exciting changes and improvements to the Library. Now that all of the work is complete, regular programming is back!



The *Foreign Film Forum* (1/11) and *Film Lover Fridays* (1/17) both return in January. Middle schoolers will be able to stay busy in the Makers Program on Tuesdays and Gaming/Movie Program on Fridays. Children's story times are also back in full swing.

Kick off reading in 2020 by signing up for the Winter Reading Program. There are programs for all ages, even adults! Read, log books, and win prizes. Sign up in the library or [online](#).

## TOWNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

To learn more about the programs and services provided by River Forest Township, please visit our website, [www.RiverForestTownship.org](http://www.RiverForestTownship.org), or the River Forest community calendar at [www.RFHappenings.com](http://www.RFHappenings.com).

### Special Program on January 12 Combines Memoir Writing with Genealogy

All are invited to attend a special free program on **Sunday, 1/12, 2 PM - 4 PM**, "Where Memoir Writing Meets Genealogy", at the River Forest Public Library. Local genealogist Charlie Thomas will blend these two emerging trends and show through live examples how genealogy research can creatively and effectively enhance memoir writing. Contact Cathaleen Roach at 708-771-6159 X234 or [croach.rftownship@gmail.com](mailto:croach.rftownship@gmail.com) with any questions.



### Make the Winter More Fit and Fun with Senior Pickleball!

Come and play pickleball! Unique time slot for people age 55+: **Wednesdays, 2 PM - 3:30 PM**, at The Tennis and Fitness Centre, 301 Lake Street, Oak Park. Pickleball is America's fastest growing sport and is easy to learn and fun to play! Club members and non-club members are welcome. For all levels, including beginners. \$6/members; \$10 non-members; free equipment rental. Parking available. For more info, call Township Supervisor Carla Sloan 708-366-2029 or [cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com](mailto:cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com).

## AROUND RIVER FOREST

Still looking for more River Forest info? Click below.

[River Forest Community Calendar – RFHappenings.com](https://www.rfhappenings.com)

[Village of River Forest](#)

[River Forest School District 90](#)

[OPRF High School District 200](#)

[River Forest Park District](#)

[River Forest Public Library](#)

[River Forest Township](#)



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