

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | April, 2025



## 100 Years of Memorial Day Commemoration

**T**his year's Memorial Day holds special significance as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of this cherished community tradition. For a century, residents of River Forest and surrounding areas have come together on this day to honor the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation's freedoms.

**Honor Our Heroes:** A highlight of the day is the Memorial Day Honor Roll, a special tribute recognizing veterans and active military personnel following the parade. We encourage residents to nominate those currently serving or who have served, ensuring their dedication is recognized in this meaningful ceremony. Those interested in marching in the parade are also invited to participate—let's make this milestone year truly unforgettable! Register for the parade and make a nomination at [rfparks.com/memorial-day-celebration](https://rfparks.com/memorial-day-celebration).

**New This Year:** In celebration of this historic year, a Business Bash will take place at Keystone Park, in partnership with the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce. This fair will showcase local businesses, reinforcing the importance of shopping at small businesses and supporting our community.

**Other festivities include:** Free hot dogs generously provided by the Kiwanis Club and Boy Scouts, food trucks offering a variety of menu options and a live concert by a local band following the Memorial Day Ceremony.

**Save the Date & Celebrate Together:** Join other community members on Monday, May 26 with the parade beginning at 9:30 a.m. and other festivities/activities to follow. Let's ensure the legacy of those who serve is not only remembered but honored as well.

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## From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

**I**n celebration of the 100th anniversary of our annual Memorial Day Parade, I'd like to remind everyone to get involved! You can nominate someone who has served in our armed forces for the Memorial Day Honor Roll or participate in the Parade. Information on both, as well as the day's festivities, can be found on the front page of this newsletter.

The Village Board has approved JLL, a top real estate broker, to bring new development to Madison Street through managing the marketing and selling of the Village-owned vacant parcels along Madison Street. With accolades from Fortune 500 companies and recognition from Bloomberg, Ethisphere, and Fast Company, JLL is also committed to sustainability and creating inclusive, healthy spaces. I'm excited to see how they help drive economic growth in the Village!

The Economic Development Commission has launched a new program to support small businesses in the Village's Tax Increment Financing districts along Madison Street and North Avenue. Beginning May 1, business owners can apply for grants to help fund energy-saving upgrades, accessibility and parking lot improvements, façade repairs, landscaping and signage. More information on this program will be shared soon in our Village Enewsletters!

Finally, for all those in our community who will celebrate Easter this month, I wish you a happy holiday.

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 Monday, April 21? (The Monday after Easter.)

**Answer:** Yes! Normal refuse pick up is scheduled for Monday, April 21.

**Question:** In the winter, compost pick up is every other week. When does it go back to weekly pickup?

**Answer:** Weekly compost resumed on Tuesday, April 1 and continues through the first Tuesday in December.



## RF Team Member Spotlight

### Police Department Deputy Chief James Greenwood

**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?** I wanted to be a macaroni maker. I was amazed by the shape of elbow macaroni and wanted to know how it was made. Then an astronaut.

**What drove you to work in Public Service?** I worked for a Park District as a lifeguard in my teens. In college, I began working for the Police Department as a student worker. I became interested in police service as a result.

**What's the most exciting part of your job?** Working with and supporting the members of the Department. I make certain they have the tools and training available to ensure they go home to their families and friends at the end of their day of work.

**What's one song or artist that you're embarrassed to admit you like?** That's Not My Name by the Ting Tings.

**What position do you currently hold and why would residents reach out to you?** I am the Deputy Chief of Police. My goal is to foster strong relationships between the Department and the community. Residents might come to me with concerns about public safety, crime prevention, traffic enforcement, or neighborhood issues. I also handle questions about police policies, community outreach programs, and emergency preparedness.



Promoted to Police Chief Effective May 1

## Village Departments in Action

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

### Forestry and Trees - Arborists

The Public Works Department includes four certified arborists and maintains more than 8,000 trees from 90 species in the Village's parkway. The Department 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 the Ash species and destroys the trees' ability to transport water and nutrients.

Each year in observance of Arbor Day, celebrated the last Friday in April, the Village arborists plant a tree for a school or park in the community. In May each year, Public Works arborists begin 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 parkways throughout the Village.





## Community Bike Exchange

District 90 Green4Good and the River Forest Sustainability Commission are teaming up to host the 5th Annual River Forest Bike Exchange on Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Roosevelt Middle School playground. Residents can:

- ◆ Donate bikes or accessories.
- ◆ Make a donation to receive a used bicycle.
- ◆ Register bikes with the Police Department for a license sticker.

For more details, click [here](#).



## Casual Conversation/Open House

Join The Village for an Open House at the next "Casual Conversation with the Village President" on Saturday, May 10 focused on economic development! Village President Cathy Adduci will be joined by staff from Building & Zoning, Public Works, Construction & Engineering, Economic Development, and Finance to discuss topics such as development costs, zoning processes, proposed amendments to building codes, and strategies for marketing available properties. Save the date!



JOIN US FOR A

## CASUAL CONVERSATION

**CATHY ADDUCI**

River Forest Village President

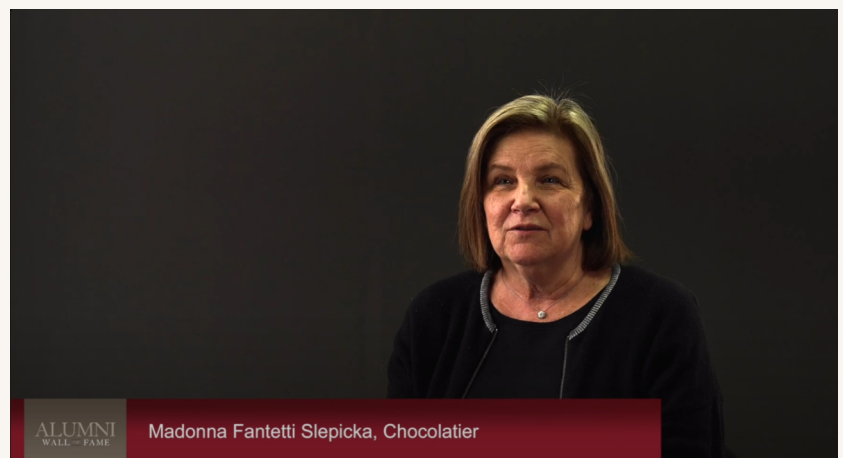
## Lake & Lathrop Update

The Village continues to aggressively pursue the demolition and restoration of the Lake & Lathrop project site. On March 28, the Village filed a briefing defending its stance that the incomplete, dangerous nuisance structures on the site must be removed as soon as possible by Wintrust Bank, the property owner. Restoring the site to a vacant lot with grass will help to prepare it for future development. The Village's priority for this property continues to be to attract appropriate an viable development that will provide many community benefits. The Village maintains zoning authority over any future development proposals for this site.

Pursuing the demolition at this site came after a judge's decision in February that confirmed the Village took appropriate actions to deny issuing a building permit to Lake Lathrop Partners. This happened after the developer missed required deadlines but sought to continue the project.

Wintrust Bank lent the developer \$20 million for the development of Lake & Lathrop, which is currently in foreclosure with Lake Lathrop Partners. The Village has continually urged Wintrust Bank to quickly resolve this litigation.

## Business Owner Inducted to Triton College Wall of Fame



Madonna Fantetti Slepicka, owner of River Forest Chocolates, has been inducted into the prestigious Triton College Alumni Wall of Fame. This accolade recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their profession and community. A proud Triton alumna, Fantetti Slepicka attributes her entrepreneurial success to the education and inspiration she received at Triton. After initially exploring other academic paths, she discovered her passion for marketing, accounting, and chocolate-making through Triton's programs. In 2011, she launched River Forest Chocolates, which has since become a renowned fixture in the Chicagoland area. Fantetti Slepicka expresses deep gratitude for Triton College's role in shaping her career and providing a foundation for her continued success.



## Administration Department Updates

### Pet licenses

Pet licenses are now available at [Village Hall](#), and are valid from May 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026. Both dogs and cats are required to be registered with the Village. For more information and to download the pet license application - or to purchase your pet license online, please click [here](#).



### Want to Get Involved?

Volunteer to Serve  
on a Village Committee



Scan the QR Code  
to Learn More

## Sustainability

### April is Earth Month

April is Earth Month, a time to celebrate our planet and take action to protect it. Earth Month extends awareness about Earth Day, which is celebrated each year on April 22. The River Forest Sustainability Commission would like to recognize actions taken by the Village to be more sustainable and share events throughout the month of April which can help reduce waste and protect the planet. And as always, please explore the [Guide to Sustainable Living](#) for other upcoming events and tips on how you can fit elements of sustainable living into your busy lives.

### Bio Diesel for the Village Fleets

In September of 2024 the Village transitioned its diesel fuel to B20 Biodiesel for use in fire trucks, snowplows, and other diesel powered vehicles. The Village prides itself on being environmentally conscientious, and using a cleaner burning fuel reduces our carbon footprint. Biodiesel is a renewable, domestically produced fuel made from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease, and is used as a substitute for petroleum-based diesel fuel in diesel engines. The American Lung Association and the Illinois Soybean Association welcomed the Village of River Forest as an Affiliate Member of the B20 Club of Illinois due to this sustainable decision.

### Save your packaging materials for reuse

For Earth Month, the River Forest Sustainability Commission is teaming up with EcoShip, a 501(c)(3) non-profit that collects shipping materials from Chicagoland communities and distributes them to businesses and individuals for reuse. In the month of April, [Village Hall](#) will have an EcoShip drop box container for the collection of clean, tape-free packaging materials in reusable condition. You can learn more about what materials are and are not accepted [here](#).

## Senior's Corner

### 2024 Exemption Applications Now Available

If you'll be turning 66 years of age in 2025, now is the time to file for a Senior Exemption for your property taxes. Exemption applications are now available online, so you no longer need to wait for your booklet to arrive in the mail to apply. The River Forest Township Assessor's Office is ready to assist with your application. Simply fill out a form to get started by clicking the [Application Assistance for River Forest Residents](#) link. File your exemptions directly with the Cook County Assessor [here](#).

### Upcoming Senior & Disability Events at River Forest Township

Join River Forest Township for Coffee Monday, a monthly gathering at the [River Forest Public Library](#) from 10 to 11 a.m. Every Thursday, seniors and individuals with physical disabilities can enjoy Mahjong at the [River Forest Community Center](#) from 1 to 3 p.m. Benefit counseling is available on the third Thursday at the [River Forest Township](#) Office, while State Health Insurance

Assistance program (SHIP) counseling takes place on the fourth Friday at the same location. For additional information on upcoming Senior and physical disability events, [email Betsy Kelly](#) or call **708-366-2029 ext. 13**.



# 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](#).



### ANNUAL TOWN MEETING - APRIL 8

Join River Forest Township on Tuesday, April 8 at 6 p.m. at the [River Forest Community Center](#) - room 202 - for their annual Town Meeting. This essential meeting offers residents the chance to engage with Township leaders, learn about ongoing activities, and participate in discussions on key community initiatives. It's a valuable opportunity for civic engagement, allowing community members to voice concerns and ask questions. A representative from each of the Township's programs - Assessor, Seniors & Disability, Mental Health, Youth & Family and Township Administration, will summarize activities and initiatives over the past fiscal year and share plans for the future. [Learn more.](#)

## Township Assessor

### 2025 Cook County Assessor Appeal Period

The River Forest Township Assessor is accepting appeals with the Cook County Assessor until Friday, April 18 at 11:59 p.m. This year marks the third of the triennial appeal cycle. If your property is assessed close to market value, or if you successfully reduced your assessment with the Cook County Board of Review in the past two years, you may not need to file an appeal. The Cook County Assessor's Office now requires all appeals to be filed online, and the Township is available to provide appeal packets for this process. If you believe your residential property is over-assessed and would like to receive an appeal packet, fill out the [Appeal Packet Request](#) Form.

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

## Library



### Local Artisan Fair on Saturday, April 5

Explore the talents and creativity of local artists at the River Forest Public Library on Saturday, April 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., where fifteen artisans will showcase a variety of wares, including coffee, candles, jewelry, stained glass, ceramics, photography, artwork, and more. Visit all the artisans to enter a raffle for a chance to win one of three gift baskets filled with donated pieces. Special demonstrations throughout the day include:

- ★ **10:30 a.m.:** Syphon brewing with Black Fodder Coffee
- ★ **11:30 a.m.:** Fused glass pendant-making with Stern Glassworks (\$15 fee)
- ★ **12:30 p.m.:** Watercolor art demonstration with Casey Jones, Avian Artist
- ★ **1:15 p.m.:** Candle-making demonstration with LaTonya and Company

### New Collection Display Case in the Children's Room

The Library has introduced a new collection display case in the Children's Room, where kids in grades PreK - 4 can showcase their collections for two weeks. Whether it's stuffies, Legos, books, trading cards, or anything else, the possibilities are endless! Want to share your collection with the community? Stop by the Children's Room to sign up.

[riverforestlibrary.org](http://riverforestlibrary.org) | 708-366-5205

## District 90



### A Little Night Music

Community members are invited to attend an evening of live music performances by students, staff, and alumni on Friday, April 25 at Roosevelt Middle School. Doors open at 6 p.m. and music starts at 7 p.m. You can purchase tickets [here](#).



### Willard Art at River Forest Library in April

Visit the [River Forest Public Library](#) to enjoy artwork created by Willard students on display, following the Lincoln student display in March.

[district90.org](http://district90.org) | 708-771-8282

## District 200



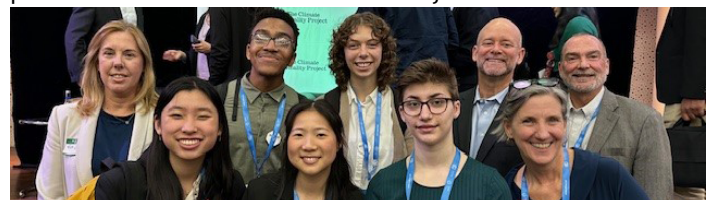
### A Message from Supt. Greg Johnson: Students Lead in Addressing Climate Change

Last fall, I traveled with Oak Park River Forest High School (OPRFHS) students to the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Along with world leaders, scientists, and advocates, our students did more than just listen - they engaged. They asked insightful questions, led critical discussions, and saw firsthand how complex and urgent the fight against climate change truly is.

Their presence reminded me of an important truth: education isn't confined to the four walls of a classroom. It happens in all facets of our lives - and at OPRFHS, we're striving to integrate climate change awareness throughout our programming.

In AP Research and AP Seminar, students can select and study specific climate-related topics in depth, while the Environmental Club monitors our district's sustainability goals. Bio Research Club recently presented research on mitigating nitrogen runoff and methane gas emissions at MIT's BioBuilder program. Two of our students have internships with our sustainability partners, Gilbane and Veregy. Gilbane, our construction firm, has salvaged or recycled 94% of the construction waste for Project 2, and they're working with Veregy to install a geothermal system that will provide 100% of Project 2's heating, cooling, and ventilation.

Through this work, I am constantly reminded that our students are not just future leaders; they are leaders today. Their insights, passion, and determination inspire me, and I have no doubt they will continue to push us all toward a more sustainable and just world.



[oprfs.org](http://oprfs.org) | 708-383-0700



# What's Happening In River Forest

## River Forest Public Library Earth Day: Our Planet, Our Power

Join the River Forest Library on Sunday April 13 and help put this year's Earth Day theme, "**Our Power, Our Planet**" into action. The Library will screen a nature documentary, followed by a presentation from River Forest Sustainability Commission member Louise Mezzatesta: **You Can Fix the Planet: Three Things you can do to address global warming.**



## Forest Preserve Trash Bash

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County will be having their annual Trash Bash at Miller Meadow-South on Saturday, April 5 from 9 a.m. to noon. Event partners will be collecting electronics, prescription drugs, books, musical instruments, bikes, clothing and more. For more information and a complete list of items being collected, please visit the Forest Preserve [website](#).



## Community Egg Hunt

Join the River Forest Park District for a FREE Egg Hunt Saturday, April 19 at Keystone Park West, starting promptly at 11 a.m. Children ages 2-10 will be divided into age groups to hunt for hundreds of candy and sticker-filled eggs. Residents can also enjoy a VIP Bunny Experience before the Community Egg Hunt - please note pre-registration is required. This ticketed event includes a bunny meet and greet, a private egg hunt, face painting, balloon twisting, a goodie bag, and a donut. [Register here](#) and [click here](#) for more information.

## Sign Recycling in River Forest

Recycling for corrugated plastic yard signs is once again available in specially marked carts in front of Village Hall. Only corrugated plastic signs will be accepted; metal stakes must be removed from the signs prior to recycling. A separate bin will be available for the disposal of metal stakes. Drop off is open to the public through Tuesday, April 15. Recycling carts will be located just north of the main entrance of [Village Hall](#). Please note, this is a special pick up and that corrugated plastic and metal stakes do not go in the curbside recycling bin.



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.