



# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | August, 2025



## Honoring Exceptional Police Work

Congratulations to Detective Sergeant Justin Labriola, Detective Denisse Zermeno, Corporal William Cassidy, and Officer Lane Niemann, who were recognized at the July 14 Village Board meeting for their outstanding police work on three major cases. Their efforts led to multiple arrests, recovered stolen property, and enhanced overall community safety. Below are summaries of the incidents and their outcomes.

On April 15, 2025, police responded to an armed robbery at Puff's Discount Cigarettes. Zermeno and Labriola used surveillance footage and recovered evidence to identify and arrest a suspect. They were assisted by Niemann with vehicle searches and other investigative work and confirmed the offender's identity who was in violation of parole, and charged with Armed Robbery.

On December 7, 2024, more than \$20,000 in merchandise was

stolen during a burglary at Ulta, followed by a related shooting. Working with other agencies, Labriola, Zermeno, Cassidy and Niemann used street cameras and GPS tracking to identify suspects. The primary offender was arrested in Springfield in January 2025, when more than \$40,000 in stolen goods and a firearm were recovered.

On August 19, 2024, officers responded to an armed carjacking on Thatcher Avenue. Thanks to GPS tracking, license plate readers, search warrants, and thorough evidence collection, Zermeno and Labriola identified and arrested five suspects who were charged with Aggravated Vehicular Hijacking with a Firearm.

These cases highlight the dedication, teamwork, and investigative skills of River Forest's officers and the Village thanks them for their diligence and commitment to community safety.

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## From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

I invite all community members to join me for the next quarterly, **"Casual Conversation with the Village President"** on Saturday, August 9, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at Trinity High School's newly expanded lobby, The **Annex Link**. This informal gathering will focus on the permit process for home improvements and what businesses need to know when building or renovating. As always, your questions, comments, and ideas are welcome - I look forward to seeing you there!

As our children head back to school, please remember to drive carefully as many may be walking or biking to class. Be sure to obey posted school zone speed limits, and avoid distractions like using your phone while driving. And also, please learn the new rules about E-bikes and E-scooters at [vrf.us/ebikesescooters](http://vrf.us/ebikesescooters).

I am excited to announce the Village has received a grant from the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways for over \$60,000. The grant will be used to pay for engineering design work for future **Washington Boulevard improvements**. The project will address speeding and pedestrian safety along the important roadway.

Finally, in recognition of National Senior Citizens Day, the Village is proud to be hosting a special event celebrating our older adults who continue to shape and enrich our community. While the national observance falls on August 21, this gathering will take place on Friday, August 22 at the **Fire Department**. You can find more details in the "Age Friendly Corner" on page 4 of this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President  
Village of River Forest

## Village Board Trustees



Erika  
Bachner



Kathleen  
Brennan



Lisa  
Gillis



Megan  
Keskitalo



Robert  
O'Connell



Respicio F.  
Vazquez

## Village Clerk



Rosa  
Castellano

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:** When does the 2024-2025 vehicle sticker expire and when do I have to purchase the 2025-2026 sticker to avoid a late fee?

**Answer:** The 2024-2025 Vehicle Sticker expired on July 14. The following penalties apply to those who have not yet purchased one, along with timeframes:

- July 15 to August 14: \$10
- August 15 to October 14: \$15
- After October 15: \$20.

**Question:** My vehicle is old. Can it qualify as an "Antique Vehicle" and can I get the Antique Vehicle Discount for my vehicle sticker?

**Answer:** Just because a vehicle is older, it does not mean it qualifies for the Antique Vehicle Discount. To receive this rate for vehicle stickers, the vehicle must be registered as an antique and have antique plates provided by the Secretary of State. For more information click [here](#).



## RF Team Member Spotlight

**Trish Ivansek**  
Human Resources Manager

**What position do you hold, and what does your work for the Village entail?**

I am the Village's Human Resources Manager. I handle all the employee relations, benefits, employee engagement, compliance, and Risk Management.

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

I always wanted to be a teacher. In all my employment positions over the years, I have always tried to learn as much as possible and share that knowledge with others.

**Do you root for the Cubs or White Sox - and why?**

Cubs all the way! My dad grew up near Wrigley Field and my mom grew up on the north side of Chicago. They were both Cubs fans and their enthusiasm for the team was contagious.



## Village Departments in Action

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

### Collaboration of All Departments and Village Board

During the July Village Board meeting, more than **26 agenda items** were discussed. The meeting brought together the volunteer Village Board, Village staff members, and engaged residents for thoughtful dialogue on a wide range of topics - including E-scooter and E-bike regulations, liquor licenses, fireworks, parking lot design, and drone purchases. Village staff provided detailed background information, answered questions, and addressed public comments to support informed and transparent decision-making. That evening's Village Board packet contained over 500 pages of information compiled by all Village departments.

Thank you to our Village Board for their continued commitment to community-focused leadership, and to department staff for their preparation and responsiveness. These meetings are a strong reminder of the ongoing, behind-the-scenes work that keeps local government responsive and moving forward.



## E-Scooter and E-Bike Safety

E-scooters and E-bikes are an increasingly popular and eco-friendly way to travel, but safety - as well as compliance with local and State laws - is extremely important. In River Forest, E-scooter riders must be 18 or older, and Class 3 E-bike riders must be at least 16 years old. All must ride solo, avoid sidewalks, and only ride on roads - but not on those with speed limits over 35 mph, including state highways. Riders must follow all traffic laws, including stopping at stop signs, yielding to pedestrians, and have a white front headlight and red rear light installed on the scooter and/or bike when riding at night. Riding under the influence is strictly prohibited. Please be safe and responsible to protect everyone on our roads and sidewalks.



## Lead Line Identification



Have you noticed the Village truck pictured above parked near your home? That's our Public Works team hard at work, identifying water service lines throughout the Village. If you haven't yet completed the lead line survey, please do so [here](#). This important effort supports the Village's commitment to eliminate lead piping from our water system which can pose safety hazards, as well as meet State requirements.

## SCAM ALERT

### Individuals Posing as Village Staff Members

The Village has been made aware of recent incidents involving individuals posing as Village staff in an attempt to gain entry into homes or to collect their personal information. Please remember: all Village employees carry official identification and drive in clearly marked Village vehicles. If someone comes to your door claiming to be a Village employee and you're unsure of their identity, **do not** provide any personal information to them, or let them in your home. Instead, call **911** right away. Staying vigilant is key to protecting yourself and your neighbors from fraud and other scams.



## Age-Friendly Corner

Information, events, and resources tailored for older adults living in River Forest to stay active, informed, and connected.

### Celebrate Older Adults with a BBQ, Bingo and Ice Cream Social!

In honor of National Senior Citizens Day, the Village is proud to host a special celebration dedicated to highlighting our older adults. On Friday, August 22, an afternoon including lunch, bingo and a classic ice cream social will take place at the **Fire Department** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Come out and enjoy a lighthearted afternoon of great food and games, and the chance to make connections with other community members. This event is meant to recognize the contributions and spirit of our older residents while offering them a welcoming space to gather and socialize.

Transportation assistance is available. Seniors who need help getting to the event should call the Village at **708-366-8500**.

We look forward to seeing you there!



## Administrative Update

### Pet & 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.

The deadline to purchase and display vehicle stickers without penalty was July 14. Beginning August 15, late fees will increase from \$10 to \$15. To avoid a ticket, make sure to purchase your sticker online or at Village Hall. For more information, click [here](#) or call 708-366-8500.

## Pet Licenses



## Fire Department

### Avoid Fire Hazards from Lithium-Ion Batteries

The Fire Department wants to educate residents about the risks associated with lithium-ion batteries, which are used in E-scooters and E-bikes, as well as other electronic devices. These include portable electronics, electric vehicles, and home energy storage systems. While these batteries are generally safe, they can become dangerous if damaged, overheated, or improperly charged. To reduce risk, use batteries and chargers approved by the manufacturer and certified by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory, such as UL, FM, or CSA.

#### Other safety tips:

- Store/charge batteries at room temperature; avoid temperatures below 32°F or above 105°F
- Keep them away from heat sources and flammable materials
- When charging, place them on a flat, dry surface away from children, direct sunlight, and doorways or exits
- Do not leave devices charging unattended, especially overnight, and unplug them once charging is complete
- Do not store batteries in hot vehicles or in direct sunlight

Stop using any battery or device that smells strange, changes color or shape, feels excessively hot, leaks, smokes, or fails to hold a charge. For more safety information, contact the River Forest Fire Prevention Bureau at 708-714-3562.

## Public Works

### August is Water Quality Month

This month, let's appreciate our Public Works Department and how they ensure we have clean water for drinking and swimming, and practice conscious habits to prevent water pollution. Here are some ways you can help keep the water system in good condition:

- Plant trees and other vegetation to help improve water quality
- Properly dispose of household chemicals, paint, pet waste, and medication that could otherwise end up in our water system
- Don't dump waste into water or litter on land—both harm the quality of our water.

Public Works was recently awarded with the Water Ambassador Gold Designation. This achievement recognizes communities that excel at enhancing public education about water quality. River Forest was one of only 19 communities in Illinois to achieve the Gold Designation this year!

### Take the 2025 Cross-Connection Survey

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency requires all cities and villages to conduct a survey to determine where cross-connections may exist. This is where there may be an unknown link between a potable (drinking) water system and a non-potable source (sewer) that has the potential to contaminate the drinking water supply. Information from this survey is used to ensure any possible cross-connections are eliminated. Please complete the survey [here](#).

## Sustainability

### Conserve Water with a Rain Barrel

One of the simplest and most effective ways to conserve water at home is by installing a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect rainwater that can be used to water your lawn, garden, or houseplants - reducing your water bill and easing the burden on the Village's sewer system during heavy storms. In partnership with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), River Forest makes it easy for residents to [purchase rain barrels for home use](#). According to the Environmental Protection Agency, each barrel can save up to 1,300 gallons of water per household per year. MWRD also offers an easy guide for DIY installation.

Looking to take your green efforts even further? Consider replacing a traditional concrete driveway with permeable paving, which allows rainwater to seep into the ground instead of running off. These driveways last longer than standard concrete and help prevent water damage by minimizing pooling and runoff.

Water conservation not only saves money - it also reduces the energy needed to treat, pump, and heat water. For more tips, visit the [Village's Guide to Sustainable Living](#) or click [here](#) for 12 more ways to save on your water consumption.

# 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](#).



## Township Assessor

### River Forest Township Open for Assessment Appeals August 5

Please note - any reduction received based on the [Assessment Appeal](#) will be reflected on 2025 property taxes, payable in 2026. Therefore, this appeal does not impact your 2024 second installment property tax bill which will be due later this year.

**When will the 2024 Second Installment Property Tax Bill be mailed by the Cook County Treasurer?** Second Installment property tax bill will be delayed. Cook County has stated they expect to mail the second installments either this month or by September (2025). Property tax bills will be due 30 days after the date they are mailed.

**Online Appeal Process:** Property owners can file a property tax appeal online. The Township Assessor will provide an online link to instructions, if needed, as well as assistance with required supporting documentation.

### Online Property Tax Appeal Deadline is August 5

Please note - walk-in assistance is not available at this time and the deadline is soon to file an appeal. If you want to file an appeal and would like the Township Assessor's Office to send an appeal packet, click [here](#). Their office may be able to assist you with your appeal until noon on Monday, August 4. The deadline to file online independently is Tuesday, August 5.

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

## Library



Visit the River Forest Public Library [Calendar](#) to see everything happening at your Library - with events and activities for all ages.

### Upcoming Adult Programs at the Library

#### Monday, 8/4, 10-11 a.m.: Coffee Monday

Come to the River Forest Public Library on the first Monday morning of every month for coffee and conversation about local matters. It's a great way to get to know your neighbors and learn about what's going on in the community. This month, the Police Department will provide safety tips, and River Forest Township will share information about their services. Learn more [here](#).

#### Saturday, 8/16, 2-3:30 p.m.: Roadside Attractions with Leslie Goddard

Have you ever slept in a wigwam? Or taken a selfie with Paul Bunyan? Ever stepped inside an alligator's mouth? Since Americans took to the highways for long-distance travel in the 1920s, entrepreneurs have been dreaming up unusual structures to attract and entertain passing motorists. Although the heyday passed with the arrival of interstate highways, thousands of quirky roadside attractions remain. Historian Leslie Goddard, PhD, will explore these unique structures and what they tell us about the history of road travel. Learn more [here](#).

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

## Park District



River Forest Park District

### Food Truck Rally

Join the River Forest Park District for the 2025 Food Truck Rally on Friday, August 22 from 5 to 9 p.m. at [Keystone Park](#). Enjoy an exciting evening filled with delicious food, refreshing drinks, and fun for the whole family. Featured food vendors (tentatively) include Billy Bricks on Wheels (wood-fired pizza), Spoon Burger (burgers and cheese fries), Happy Lobster, 5411 Empanadas, Hawaiian Food Truck, Pinoy Grill (Filipino street food), My Funnel Truck, Hello Boba (boba tea and smoothies), and Roost Chicken & Biscuits.

Don't miss this community celebration to close out the summer! Learn more [here](#).

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

## District 90



### D90 Student Enrichment, Facility Improvements

Throughout this summer, District 90 students enjoyed a variety of enrichment classes - like Make & Bake, Gardening, and Drawing - while also building their reading, writing, and math skills through core academic summer programs. Meanwhile, school facility improvements have been ongoing to ensure everything is ready to welcome students back on the first day of school, on Wednesday, August 20.



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

## District 200



### Classroom to Boardroom: Student Entrepreneurs Pitch Like Pros

At Oak Park and River Forest High School, students in the Business Incubator course are turning classroom learning into real-world business experience. In the program's final stage, seven out of 18 student teams advanced to a Shark Tank-style competition, presenting their startup ideas to a panel of judges for a chance to win \$4,000 in seed funding.

The course is led by Matt Prebble, head of Career and Technical Education, along with Melissa Martinez. Prebble describes the program as hands-on and immersive. "It's not just reading about business," he said. "It's actually doing it." Students work in teams to build a business from the ground up - developing an idea, testing it with customers, and pitching it to investors.

Their concepts were both innovative and practical. One team created portable soundproof dividers for musicians who play or perform at home. Another matches teens certified in social media marketing with small businesses in need of digital support. A third offers an application (app) to help travelers navigate airport wait times and amenities.

After a long deliberation, the judges awarded the prize to Team Orbit for its customizable employee onboarding app for more ease at the airport. Team member Teagan O'Carroll said "I'm beyond grateful for the support. This class has been an incredible experience."

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

# Your Village at Work



Follow the Village on  
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***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 Jim Greenwood

Emergency  
Services  
Dial 911

400 Park Avenue River Forest, IL 60305

708-366-8500

708-366-3702 (fax)

Monday - Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.