

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | December, 2025



Make Merry Memories in River Forest

Embrace the holiday season right here in River Forest! There are festive, family-friendly events coming up (including one today and Saturday), designed to bring cheer to all! Explore the highlights below:

Holiday Housewalk & Market

The [Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society's \(IWS\)](#) Holiday Housewalk and Holiday Market returns tonight, December 5, from 5-9 p.m. and tomorrow (Saturday, December 6) from 1 - 5 p.m. Tour four beautifully decorated homes for the holidays in Oak Park and River Forest. Learn more [here](#).

“Light Up the Night” Luminary Event

The Kiwanis Club of River Forest & Oak Park will host their annual “Light Up the Night” celebration on Saturday, December 20. All proceeds benefit youth programs that

serve area children. Luminary kits can be picked up on the front porch at 1043 Keystone Avenue and can be purchased for \$10. Please drop payment (cash or check) into the mail slot to the right of the door in the supplied envelope. [Send an email](#) for more information or any questions.

Village Holiday Closures

Village offices will be closed on Wednesday, December 24 and Thursday, December 25 in observance of the Christmas holiday, and again on Thursday, January 1, 2026 in observance of the New Year’s holiday. The Village will be open for business on both Fridays following the holiday closures, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Wishing you a season filled with joy, laughter, and holiday cheer from all of us at the Village!

In This Issue

- Village President.....2
- Village Board of Trustees. .2
- Front Desk FAQs.....3
- RF Team Member3
- Property Tax Update4
- Age-Friendly Corner.....4
- Keep The Wreath Red.....5
- Shopping Safety5
- Department Updates.....5
- Local Organizations6
- River Forest Celebrates ...7
- Village Contacts.....7



From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

Congratulations to Fenwick High School on bringing home their second IHSA Football State Championship! Their recent 38–28 victory over East St. Louis was an incredible achievement, and our whole community is proud of them. Go Friars!

There are two donation drives to support our neighbors in need, including the [Berkshire's Toys for Tots](#) collection (through Wednesday, December 10) and the [Bears Holiday Coat Drive](#) (through February 16, 2026). Your generosity can make a meaningful difference for those who need it most.

The holiday season is a time to connect with loved ones, enjoy traditions, and celebrate right here in River Forest. You'll find details on a few festive events on the front page. And as you plan your celebrations, please remember to support our [local businesses and restaurants!](#)

I want to thank residents for helping out their neighbors during our snowstorm last weekend. That community teamwork is part of why I love to call River Forest home. If you have any concerns or questions during or after a storm, please use the Village's online [service request portal](#) or call Village Hall.

I'm wishing everyone a safe, joyful, and memorable holiday season!

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: How will the winter holidays affect Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) refuse pickup?

Answer: LRS will conduct normal refuse pickup on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. Residents with refuse pickup that falls on Christmas Day and New Year's Day will have pickup delayed by one day.

Question: I dropped off a post-dated check to pay my utility bill (for example: the check was dated December 31, 2025 and I dropped it off December 1, 2025) and the check was returned to me. Why?

Answer: The bank will not accept post-dated checks, and the Village does not hold checks in our office. Please include the current date on checks you would like us to post.

Question: After a snow event, when can eligible senior residents/those with disabilities who participate in the Village's snow removal program expect their property to be cleared?

Answer: The Village partners with local contractors for this program, who wait until a snow event is nearly over to begin clearing. Variables include snow conditions and time of day; more than 30 homes are part of this program.



RF Team Member Spotlight

**Rosemary McAdams
Finance Director**

Can you describe your role at the Village?

I am in charge of creating the budget each year, along with our team, and oversee all financial matters of the Village. I also handle purchase requests, as well as any questions related to payroll. Inquiries about vehicle stickers, water bills, and other services provided by the Village are also managed by the Finance Department.

What's the most exciting part of your job?

Being able to provide the highest level of services to the community year after year, while being fiscally responsible with taxpayer funds and providing transparency, and having the ability to make sound financial decisions on behalf of the Village.

What's your most hated household chore?

Doing the dishes. I have always been the cook in our house, so my husband is on cleanup duty - and when he isn't around, I dread doing the dishes!



Village Departments in Action

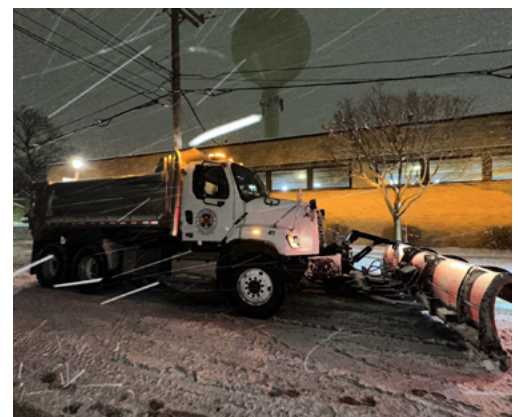
So much goes on behind the scenes as Village employees deliver services to the community.

Public Works, Keeping Roads Safe

Over the past several days, the Public Works team has worked around the clock to keep streets, alleys, and public facilities safe and passable after two snow events.

The first started on November 29 and resulted in 11.6 inches of snow. Salting began at 4 a.m. and Public Works equipment shifted from leaf collection to snow operations. Plowing began at 9:45 a.m. and continued through late morning on November 30 when additional salting was completed for streets, Village and school parking lots, and alleys. Seven crew members remained on duty for more than 32 hours, with 62 tons of salt used and roughly 899 miles traveled. A second snow event started on December 1 and added another 1.4 inches of snow. Salting resumed around 3:30 p.m. and continued until 1 a.m. on December 2, with 44 tons of salt used and about 195 miles traveled.

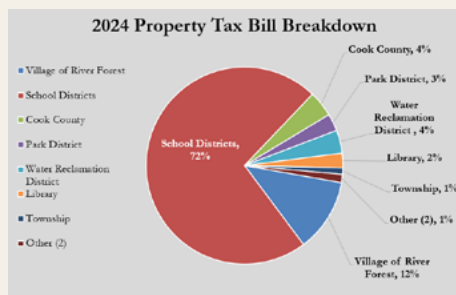
The Village is grateful to the dedicated Public Works team who worked extremely hard during difficult conditions to keep the community safe.



River Forest Property Tax Update

On November 17, the Village Board approved an estimated River Forest property tax increase of 1.90%. Property tax increases are governed by the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), which limits the annual increase to the less of 5% or the change in the Consumer Price Index from December 2023 to December 2024. The Consumer Price Index for that period increased by 2.9 percent.

The Village remains committed to responsible financial management while continuing to deliver critical and comprehensive services to the community. The effect on individual homeowners will differ based on changes in assessed property values and the levies of other taxing bodies. The accompanying pie chart illustrates how your property tax dollars are distributed among the various taxing bodies that serve River Forest residents.



Winter Compost Updates



Now through March 2026, compost cart collection will occur every other Tuesday. Residents can continue to compost yard waste and food scraps throughout the winter in compost carts. Upcoming collection dates are December 16 and 30, 2025 and January 13 and 27, 2026. February and March dates will be shared in future updates. Weekly compost collection will resume on Tuesday, April 7, 2026.

Lead Service Line Subsidy Program

The presence of lead in water service lines can pose health risks. To determine if your service line contains lead, please complete [this survey](#). To assist residences that have lead water service lines, the Village is offering a Lead Service Line Replacement Subsidy that provides partial funding for their removal and replacement. A reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost for the property owner's portion of the line (a maximum of \$2,500) is part of the program, in addition to a reimbursement of up to \$5,000 for the Village's portion of the water service line (if it also contains lead). Program details can be found [here](#).



Age-Friendly Corner

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

Snow Removal Assistance

The Village offers a Snow Removal Program for eligible residents, including seniors aged 65 and older and individuals with disabilities. Seniors who qualify for a senior freeze property tax exemption - or who have a demonstrated financial or unique hardship can apply. The Program provides assistance with clearing snow from public sidewalks and the front pathways leading to eligible homes. For full details and to access the application, click [here](#). Completed forms should be returned to **Village Hall**, 400 Park Avenue.

Home Repair Program

The Village and River Forest Township have partnered to provide a program that can help seniors with small repairs around the home. This program is called CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place, Advancing Better Living for Elders) and is available through an organization called North West Housing Partnership

The goal is to help older adults live more independently in their homes by providing a licensed handyperson who coordinates with a nurse and occupational therapist to identify home safety needs. For more information, please call North West Housing Partnership at 847-969-0561 or email paulabush@nwHP.net.

Older Adults Home Modification Program (OAHMP)



Eligible Modifications :

- Grab Bars
- Chair Lift*
- Electrical Repairs
- Smoke/CO Alarms
- ADA Toilet
- Showers
- Sinks and More!

*subject to pricing



Call Us: 847-969-0561

Police Department

Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

The holiday season is one of the busiest shopping times of the year and unfortunately, it can also attract opportunistic thieves and scammers. Whether you're shopping online or visiting local stores, consider the below precautions:

In-Store Shopping Safety: Shoppers are encouraged to stay aware of their surroundings by keeping belongings close, securing purses or wallets, and avoiding large amounts of cash. Always park in well-lit areas, lock your vehicle, and keep bags or valuables out of sight. When returning to your car, have your keys ready, check the back seat before getting in, and request store security assistance if you feel unsafe. Finally, limit distractions such as texting or phone calls while walking through parking lots to stay alert and safe.

Online Shopping Safety: When shopping online, stick to trusted retailers and avoid deals that seem "too good to be true." Always use secure payment methods such as credit cards or reputable payment platforms, and ensure websites show "https://" before entering personal or payment information. Be cautious of phishing scams by avoiding links in unsolicited emails or messages claiming issues with orders or deliveries. Finally, track your packages, bring them inside promptly, and consider using secure pickup locations or package lockers to protect your deliveries.

At Home: To keep porch deliveries safe, try to schedule packages for times you'll be home or ask a trusted neighbor to pick them up. Motion-activated lights and doorbell cameras can help deter theft and capture suspicious activity. If you notice anyone following delivery trucks or lingering near porches, report the behavior to 911 immediately.



The River Forest Police Department wishes you a safe and joyful holiday season!

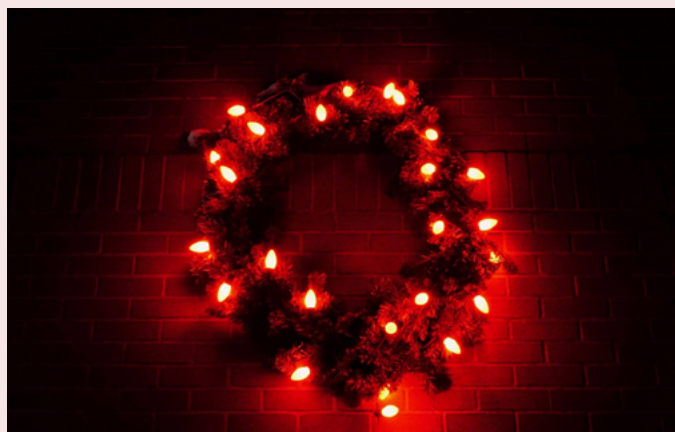
Public Works

Support Snow Operations

Winter weather has arrived, and residents can help keep snow removal operations running efficiently by following parking regulations whenever two inches or more of snow has fallen. Vehicles left on the street during these conditions force snow plows to back down roads and return later, slowing the overall process by delaying street clearing and increasing the potential for vehicle damage. Parking is also prohibited when this amount of snow has fallen, because it can impede our Police and Fire departments from responding quickly to 911 calls.

To reduce the amount of snow pushed back onto residential driveways by snowplows once they are done, residents should place shoveled snow on the parkway to the right of their driveway (when facing the street). Please avoid depositing snow onto streets that have already been plowed: it can refreeze and create hazardous conditions. Residents on corner lots are also responsible for clearing sidewalk squares leading to crosswalks, ensuring pedestrians, including those with limited mobility, can travel safely.

Fire Department



Keep the Wreath Red

The Fire Department is again participating in the "Keep the Wreath Red" holiday safety program - which raises awareness about fires caused by holiday decorations and seasonal activities. Through Sunday, January 11, 2026, a wreath with red lights will be displayed at the River Forest Fire Station. If a fire occurs in the Village related to holiday decorations, such as trees, lights, overloaded cords, candles, or wrapping paper, a red bulb will be replaced with a white one as a visual reminder to stay alert to holiday fire risks.

Here's how residents can help keep the wreath red:

- Inspect holiday lights and cords and replace damaged items*
- Use outdoor-rated cords for exterior decorations and avoiding cords under rugs
- Keep live trees well-watered and disposing of them when needles fall
- Use candles carefully and do not leave them unattended
- Ensure fireplaces and chimneys are clean and working properly
- Avoid burning wrapping paper or tree branches

*A collection bin is on Central Avenue near Village Hall, under the train overpass, through January 16, 2026 to dispose of holiday lights and cords (only).

Sustainability

EcoShip Holiday Collection Campaign

During the holidays, the average American produces 25% more trash, much of which includes packaging that can often be reused instead of ending up in landfills. To help reduce waste, the River Forest Sustainability Commission is partnering with EcoShip, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that collects packaging and shipping materials from Chicagoland communities and redistributes them to businesses and individuals for reuse. From Tuesday, December 9 through Monday, January 12, 2026 Village Hall will host an EcoShip dropbox for clean, tape-free packaging materials that are in reusable condition. Through this program, Illinois small businesses have saved more than \$21,000 on packaging by reusing donated materials. Find accepted materials [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](#).



Township Welcomes New Clerk, Mark Hosty

On November 18, the Township Board appointed Mark Hosty to fill the vacancy for the Township Clerk, with the term expiring in May 2029. Mark has been serving on the Township's Youth & Family Services Committee for the last two years. He brings tremendous experience in local government, having served as a Commissioner for the Village of Forest Park from 1999-2016. On behalf of the entire Township, congratulations to Mark on his appointment. Learn more [here](#).

Township Assessor

Second Installment Tax Bills

The Cook County Treasurer mailed the 2024 Second Installment Tax Bills in mid-November, and they are due by Monday, December 15. When available, residents can view, print, and pay the 2024 Second Installment Property Tax Bill via The [Cook County Treasurer's Website](#).

File for Missing Exemptions

The River Forest Township Assessor's Office is available to help with [Certificates of Error](#) - or residents can file them directly with the [Cook County Assessor](#). For those who would like help from the Township Assessor, please email assessor@riverforesttownship.org or call 708-366-2787.

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.

Holiday Closures:

Closed on Wednesday, December 24 and Thursday, December 25
Early closure at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 31
Closed on Thursday, January 1, 2026

December Art Display: Casey Jones

Explore the vibrant work of Casey Jones, on display upstairs through December. Casey is a self-taught artist who finds inspiration in folk traditions and unconventional creators from around the world. Her work, especially the bird-themed pieces, reflect a deep connection to nature and a commitment to environmental awareness. Through her art, Casey hopes to encourage viewers to reflect on conservation issues and explore creative ways to recycle and repurpose materials. Don't miss this inspiring exhibit - visit the second floor to experience Casey's work firsthand.

Tuesday, 12/16 - Thursday, 12/18, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.: Exam Cram, Grades 9-12

Need a place to study for exams? Head to the meeting room at the [Library](#). Tables will be set up, and snacks along with de-stressing activities will be available.

Wednesday, 12/31, 11 a.m. - noon: Noon Year's Eve, Families

Count down to the noon year with the [Library](#) at this annual program. Make a craft (while supplies last), make some noise, and enjoy a dance party with Library staff!

riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

Park District



Keystone Park Sledding Hill

The sledding hill at Keystone Park is now open - weather permitting. Sledding hours are Monday through Friday from dawn until 7 p.m. Hours for Saturdays and Sundays are from dawn to dusk. Sledders should walk up the side of the sled hill to get to the top. **Please note:** the sled hill is unsupervised, so residents and visitors must sled at their own risk.

Santa's Mailbox @ The Depot

Drop off letters to Santa Claus at the [River Forest Park District](#) Monday through Friday until December 15 between 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Make sure to include a return address so Santa can write back!

Resident registration is now open for the [Winter-Spring Fun Guide!](#)

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

District 90



All District 90 schools were awarded Exemplary or Commendable Designations, the top two of five issued by the Illinois State Board of Education. Lincoln and Willard Elementary schools earned Exemplary Designations, marking the third and fourth years in a row, respectively, and Roosevelt Middle School received a Commendable Designation. The designation index scores for both elementary schools indicate performance in the top 6% of schools statewide, and Roosevelt's indicates performance in the top 14% of schools statewide. Learn more [here](#).

district90.org | 708-771-8282

District 200



OPRFHS Math Teacher Named Top Teacher

Oak Park and River Forest (OPRF) High School's Performing Arts program has reached another milestone, with 55 students selected to perform in the prestigious Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) District 1 Festivals held in mid-November. This includes students in band, orchestra, choir, and jazz, with an extraordinary 71% of OPRF auditionees earning a coveted spot. Five students earned two performance spots apiece.

"This is one of the most competitive districts in the state," said Band Director Anthony Svejda. "District 1 is a powerhouse, so to see this level of success speaks volumes about our students' dedication and talent. Every jazz student who auditioned made it. That's practically unheard of."

The festivals are the culmination of a rigorous audition process and offer a space for students to collaborate with peers across the region. From there, top-ranked performers can be selected for the All-State Festival held in January.

With the performing arts program continuing to grow, thanks in part to strong feeder programs and passionate staff, the excitement is also building around the future of arts facilities at OPRF.

oprffhs.org | 708-383-0700

River Forest Celebrates



Congratulations Fenwick Friars

Fenwick High School is celebrating an exciting achievement after the football team won the 2025 IHSA Class 6A State Championship after a 38–28 victory over East St. Louis. This is the Friars’ second state title – with their first in 2021 – thanks to a comeback in the final minutes of the game.

A clutch 31-yard field goal broke a late tie and put Fenwick ahead 31–28 with just under three minutes remaining. Moments later, an interception set up the final touchdown, sealing the win and igniting celebrations across the Friar community.

Congratulations to the entire team on an outstanding achievement this season!

Santa Visits the Village

Santa paid an early visit to River Forest at the recent Holiday Tree Trimming celebration - and he certainly made an entrance with the Fire Department! Even without snow on the ground, the evening was filled with holiday magic. Families enjoyed cheerful music, hot chocolate, individually wrapped treats, visits and photos with Santa, and a chance to send letters straight to the North Pole. It was a bright and festive start to the holiday season!



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 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.