



RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | June, 2025



Attend the Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony

All community members are warmly invited to gather on **Wednesday, June 18 in honor of Juneteenth**, a profound moment in our nation's history. This annual flag raising ceremony commemorates June 19, 1865, the day when freedom finally reached the last enslaved African Americans in the former Confederacy.

Nearly two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas—then one of the most remote Confederate territories. There, U.S. Major General Gordon Granger delivered General Order No. 3, proclaiming that all enslaved people in Texas were free.

The order declared: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation

from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free..." It went on to affirm the "absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property" between former enslaved people and their enslavers.

That day marked a turning point for more than 250,000 African Americans in Texas, and it has since been celebrated as Juneteenth—a name chosen by those newly freed to honor their long-awaited liberation. Nearly 160 years later, we continue to recognize Juneteenth as a powerful reminder of justice, resilience, and freedom.

This ceremony is now in its fourth year and is presented by the Village and the River Forest Public Library.

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

Please save the date for the Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony on Wednesday, June 18 from 4 to 6 p.m. in front of the **Library**, that will include a **number of activities** to commemorate this important day in U.S. history. Middle and high school students are invited to be a part of the program and give a five-minute presentation - either an original or selected piece. Volunteers are also needed to assist with event setup and breakdown. If you're interested in participating as a presenter, please email rfjuneteenth@gmail.com.

Economic development continues to be a priority in River Forest with exciting updates at the **Town Center**. Whole Foods Market, a community staple since 1994, is in the process of expanding its footprint by 7,000 square feet, with renovations underway - an encouraging sign of their long-term commitment to the Village. In addition, First Watch restaurant has officially filed for permits to open a new location in the same center. This new addition will create local jobs and enhance dining options for both residents and visitors. The Village is proud to support these developments and looks forward to the continued growth of our local economy.

I invite you to attend our upcoming Village Board meeting on Monday, June 9 at 7 p.m., where several members of our Police and Fire Departments will be sworn into their newly promoted roles. The Village will also be honored with the Water Ambassador Gold Designation Award, which celebrates local governments for providing education and awareness about the water industry and the importance of water in our daily lives. Special thanks to our Public Works Department for their outstanding efforts in earning this top distinction!

And finally, congratulations to the Class of 2025 from Oak Park River Forest High School, Trinity High School, Dominican University, Concordia University, and Triton College! I'm wishing each of these young people continued success in the next chapters of their lives.

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President
Village of River Forest

Village Board Trustees



**Erika
Bachner**



**Kathleen
Brennan**



**Lisa
Gillis**



**Megan
Keskitallo**



**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: I would like to have a yard sale. What are the requirements and/or rules?

Answer: The Village Ordinance states that yard sales may only take place in the garage, carport, or in a rear yard. No front yard sales or signs advertising the sale are allowed, other than signs on your own property. You do not need a permit to have a yard sale. Sales can only take place between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and for up to two consecutive days. The full ordinance can be found [here](#).

Question: Will the garbage pickup schedule be impacted by Juneteenth (June 19th)?

Answer: No. Refuse pickup the week of Juneteenth will take place on the regularly scheduled pickup day.

Question: I mailed a check to the Village and received it back in the mail. Why did this happen?

Answer: A check will be mailed back to a resident when it is filled out incorrectly. The bank will not accept checks that are unsigned, post-dated, or have mismatched written and numerical dollar amounts. Please review your written check carefully before mailing it to the Village, or dropping it off in the green box outside [Village Hall](#). If you have any questions, please call the Village at 708-366-8500.



RF Team Member Spotlight

**Fire Chief
Thomas Gaertner**

Chicago Cubs or Chicago White Sox and why?

Definitely a huge Cubs Fan! I have been all my life. My parents and grandparents were all die hard Cubs fans. They had the game on the radio or TV every day, whether in the house or outside in the garage.

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

I know it sounds corny but I have wanted to be a fireman ever since I was seven or eight years old. My father was a fireman for the Broadview Fire Department, so I spent a lot of time with him at the fire station over the years. That is where I realized this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

What position do you hold, and in what circumstances would a resident come to you for something?

I am the Fire Chief for the River Forest Fire Department. I oversee the operations of the entire Fire Department. Residents can come to me with questions or concerns about the Fire Department, fire prevention, and our emergency medical services. We also have many other programs that residents could reach out to me for more information on, such as CPR classes, car seat installation, and fire station tours, just to name a few.



Village Departments in Action

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

Finance

The Finance Department plays a vital role in managing the Village's financial resources and ensuring its long-term fiscal health. Core responsibilities include budget development, revenue collection, accounts payable, payroll, and financial reporting. A key part of this work is the annual audit, required by State law and conducted by an independent firm in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The resulting Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), provides a clear, accurate picture of the Village's finances. For the sixteenth consecutive year, the Village has received a clean audit opinion and the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The audit supports transparency, public trust, and is a valuable tool for credit rating and grant applications. The entire Finance Department is committed to maintaining financial integrity and accountability.



Fire Alarms & Sprinklers



If your home is equipped with a fire sprinkler or fire alarm system, it's essential to have these systems inspected and tested regularly to ensure they are in proper working condition. While it's not required, having your systems monitored by a professional alarm company is highly recommended. A comprehensive inspection and testing schedule typically includes monthly, semi-annual, and annual checks. If you're unsure about the components of your system, contact the Village's Fire Prevention Bureau at 708-714-3562 for assistance.

Small Business Grants

The Village's Economic Development Commission has launched a new initiative aimed at supporting small businesses located within the Village's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts along Madison Street and North Avenue. Through this program, eligible business owners can apply for grants to help cover the cost of improvements, such as energy-efficient upgrades, accessibility features, façade repairs, landscaping, updated signage, and parking lot enhancements. To learn more, or to apply, click [here](#).



Credit Card Fees



As part of the Village's commitment to fiscal responsibility and cost management, credit card processing fees will no longer be covered by the Village. Effective June 1, a 2.25% fee will apply to all credit card payments for Village services, including utility bills, permits, and other payments for services. To avoid this fee, residents can pay by check using the secure green drop box at **Village Hall**, with cash payments taken during regular business hours, or by setting up no-fee ACH payments. The Village appreciates your understanding as we continue to manage taxpayer funds responsibly.

Senior's Corner

Information, events, and resources tailored for the seniors of River Forest to stay active, informed, and connected.

Older Adults Home Modification Program

If you're a senior in need of safety modifications in your home, or a caregiver supporting a senior who needs modifications to stay independent - there are resources available! As part of your spring cleaning, consider making your home safer with the help of North West Housing Partnership (NWHP), a nonprofit serving Chicago's suburbs. Their FREE Older Adults Home Modification Program, available to seniors 62 and older, offers a range of safety modifications provided by an insured handyperson after assessments by registered nurses and occupational therapists. To learn more, call NWHP at 847-969-0561.



ID Bracelets for Emergencies

The Police Department is now offering free personalized bracelets to elderly residents in addition to those with disabilities, medical conditions, or special needs. Modeled after a program launched by Oak Park Police in 2017, these bracelets help officers quickly access essential information during emergencies, while protecting personal privacy. To request a bracelet, complete the [sign-up form](#) and contact Officer Megan Drake at 708-714-3543 or by [email](#).

Administrative Update

Stay informed with the latest news, decisions, and initiatives from the Village of River Forest.

VEHICLE STICKER APPLICATION
 Vehicle sticker must be affixed to the lower passenger's side of the windshield by July 14th.
 Make checks payable to: Village of River Forest

OFFICE USE ONLY	Year	Make	Model	Color	License Plate REQUIRED	Amount	OFFICE USE ONLY	Sticker No.
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY						TOTAL		

Name _____
 Address River Forest IL 60305 Apartment Unit No. _____
 Street City State Zip Phone Number _____

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS AND SCHEDULE OF FEES ON REVERSE SIDE OF PART 1 & 2.

Vehicle Registration Deadline is July 14

Vehicle stickers for 2025-2026 are now available for purchase. Updated stickers need to be affixed to windshields by July 14 to avoid late fees and citations. Please note that all vehicles registered in Illinois with a River Forest address must also be registered with the Village through the purchase of a vehicle sticker. For more information or to purchase a sticker online, click [here](#).

Is it Time to Get Your Building Permit?

Before starting any work, be sure to apply for the necessary building permits to help ensure the safety of your home, neighbors, and the Village. For a detailed list of projects that require a permit, click [here](#). Work is allowed in River Forest from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays; no work is permitted on Sundays or major holidays. If your property is listed as historic, additional permit requirements may apply - click [here](#) to find out.

Want to Get Involved?

Volunteer to Serve
on a Village Committee



Scan the QR Code
to Learn More

Police Department

Summer Bicycle Safety

As summer approaches, more cyclists are hitting the streets to enjoy the outdoors, stay active, and explore. Whether you're an experienced rider or new to biking, it's important to stay safe.

Bike Safety Tips:

- Always wear a properly fitted helmet.
- Follow all traffic laws - bikes must obey signals, signs, and lane markings just like cars.
- Use hand signals to communicate turns or stops.
- Ride with the flow of traffic, staying as far right as safely possible.
- Be visible: wear bright clothing and use lights and reflectors, especially in low-light conditions.
- Stay alert - avoid distractions like headphones or phones while riding.

To encourage safe cycling, the Police Department has partnered with River Forest Chocolates. Officers will hand out coupons for a free chocolate truffle to riders spotted wearing helmets, as required by Village Ordinance 9-4-8.

You can also register your bicycle for free with the Village. This helps the Police Department recover it, if it's ever lost or stolen. You can register online [here](#). For more information, contact Crime Prevention Officer Megan Drake at 708-714-3543.



Public Works

Safe and Maintained Village Streets

The Village has taken, and continues to take, many actions to ensure the physical conditions of our streets are safe for all residents.

- In 2023, the Village Board commissioned a comprehensive Traffic Study to assess traffic conditions throughout River Forest and establish guidelines for reviewing traffic-related requests. As part of ongoing efforts to enhance safety, you may notice orange and yellow delineators along major streets. These are traffic-calming devices that have already helped reduce speeding and improve pedestrian safety.
- The Village implemented its first Bicycle Plan in 2021, which was developed using crash data, community surveys, and input from a dedicated Task Force. The Plan outlines preferred routes for bike lanes, shared lanes, and signed paths. To learn more, and to view the route maps, click [here](#).
- The Village's Traffic and Safety Commission advises the Board of Trustees on potentially hazardous traffic matters on a regular basis. It uses nationally recognized standards and the Village's Traffic Calming Toolbox to evaluate requests for new traffic control measures.
- Each summer, the Village undertakes various construction projects to maintain and upgrade infrastructure. These include resurfacing streets that are in poor condition, patching roads in otherwise good shape, and replacing hazardous sidewalk sections. For updates and project details, click [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](#).

Serve on a Township Committee - Apply by June 10

The Township has openings on the Mental Health Committee and Senior & Disability Services Committee. Each committee generally meets once per month pending availability. The Board relies on River Forest resident volunteers to evaluate programming in each respective area. Interested in helping us by serving on the committee for a 3-year term beginning September 2025? Contact Township [Supervisor John Becvar](#) by Tuesday, June 10.

Township Budget Approval Is Set for June 17

The Township is funded by approximately 1% of your property taxes, with 80% of the Township dollars going to resident programs. Following the Budget Public Hearing in May, the final hearing and action on the budget ordinance will be taken at the regular meeting held on Tuesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. at the [Township Office](#). Learn more [here](#).

School Supply Drive Now Through August 1

River Forest Township is seeking school supplies for youth in Oak Park-River Forest to benefit Pre-K to high school students. Please note - only new items will be accepted. Folders, rulers, scissors, notebooks, crayons, sharpies, pencils, highlighters, erasers, glues, and backpacks are needed supplies. Donations can be dropped off at either the Oak Park or [River Forest Township Office](#) or at the [River Forest Public Library](#).

[riverforesttownship.org](#) - 708-366-2029 x11

Library



Summer Reading Programs for All Ages Through August 1!

The Library invites community members to embark on a journey of art and creativity, as they, "Color Our World" - this year's summer reading theme. Library card holders can enjoy reading all summer and collect prizes along the way by signing up for adult, teen, or kids' summer reading programs. Enjoy color-inspired programming all summer long that will get your artistic juices flowing. Get all the details [here](#).



Upcoming Events

Saturday, 6/21, 2-3:30 p.m.: Monet Lives: A Portrayal of Claude Monet, Adult

Actor and artist Jim Parks, former host of HGTV's New Spaces, brings Claude Monet to life in a captivating art history performance. As Monet, Parks shares stories of the artist's struggles, passions, and successes - along with his candid thoughts on fellow impressionists and life in the 1860s in Paris. The event also includes a display of Parks' handmade reproductions of works by Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh, and others. Presented in support of the Summer Reading Challenge, Color Our World, this program is offered in partnership with River Forest Township.

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

[riverforestlibrary.org](#) | 708-366-5205

Park District



River Forest Park District

Save the Date for Upcoming Park District Events

The Park District is pleased to announce a full lineup of engaging events for the upcoming season. They invite you to join them in celebrating community, wellness, and fun throughout the coming months. Please save the dates below:

- **June 19, July 17, August 14:** Party in the Park Series
- **August 22:** Food Truck Rally
- **September 20:** Color Run
- **September 26-27:** Family Campout

The Park District invites all community members to participate! To learn more, or to view the full calendar of events, click [here](#).

[rfparks.com](#) | 708-366-6660

District 90



Roosevelt Student Leaders Visit Village Hall

Roosevelt Middle School's Student Leadership Club, now engaging students from all grades, is working to improve the school environment. Recently, members visited Village Hall for an interactive local government experience. Hosted by Village President Cathy Adduci, they toured Police and Fire departments and participated in a mock Village Board meeting, debating issues like buying a new fire truck and funding Washington Boulevard improvements.



[district90.org](#) | 708-771-8282

District 200



Investment in Project 1 Pays Off

The bright, spacious Oak Park River Forest High School (OPRFHS) Makerspace hums with creativity. In addition to scheduled classes, up to 50 students drop in daily to explore 3D printers, laser engravers, sewing machines, craft supplies, LEGO bins, and more - all while building STEM skills in a fun, hands-on environment.

Opened in 2022 as part of the Imagine OPRF Project 1, marking the High School's first major facility upgrade since the late 1960s, the Makerspace has been transformative for students like junior David Ikeemeka. After learning to use the vinyl cutter and heat press from instructional technology coordinator Emily Cepican, David began experimenting with designs, eventually creating beanies featuring his brand name, V3RZATILE. Some early creations didn't work out - and that's precisely one of the expectations in the Makerspace.

"A lot of students fear failure in school," says Cepican. "Here, they can explore and fail safely, without the pressure of grades - we're here to encourage them."

David's creative journey didn't stop there. He completed a three-week entrepreneurship workshop, co-led the first Oak Park Youth-Led Business Pop-Up Shop, and last fall, earned the Village of Oak Park's Neighborhood STAR (Service Together Achieves Results) Award. Congratulations to David!

[oprffhs.org](#) | 708-383-0700

River Forest Memorial Day Celebration



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

Jim Greenwood

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.