

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | May, 2025



New Budget Year, Same Strong Foundation

May 1 marks the start of a new budget year for River Forest, and the Village is proud to announce that the Village Board adopted a balanced budget — continuing a 13-year tradition! Also, for the 16th straight year, the Village has received the prestigious Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2024. This is the highest form of acknowledgment in governmental budgeting and financial reporting, and highlights a commitment to transparency and responsible planning.

You can explore the budget at vrf.us/finance and find on **page 182** that the Village's property tax rate has steadily declined over the last 10 years, despite rising costs. Budget highlights include:

Investing in Our Infrastructure: Examples include curb repairs, road resurfacing, and sidewalk ramp upgrades. These projects start as early as possible in the year to get competitive bids and minimize disruptions over the summer months.

Enhancing Safety: The orange and yellow delineators installed along major streets are meant to be traffic-calming measures. These delineators have helped to reduce speeding and improved pedestrian safety.

Growing Our Vibrancy: Well-maintained infrastructure and safety make River Forest attractive to new businesses. Recent additions include Hub Kitchen, Black Fodder Coffee, MJ Floral Design, CAVA, J. Crew Factory, and First Watch Restaurant - all of which contribute to River Forest's vibrancy and grow the tax base.

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

I am proud to share that the Village Board officially adopted our new budget, which is balanced, and our previous year budget received an award for financial reporting. I would like to thank Village Administrator Matt Walsh and our Village Finance Director, Rosey McAdams and her staff for all of their hard work on this important yearly project!

I hope you will join me at the next, "Casual Conversation with the Village President" on the morning of Saturday, May 10. The focus of this quarterly community engagement event will be on the important topic of economic development and potential future growth in our community. Village staff members and I will be there to share information and answer any questions. Learn more on page 3 of this newsletter.

Finally, please save the date for two important upcoming community events.

On Monday, May 26, we will commemorate Memorial Day with our annual parade, the Memorial Day Honor Roll, and a special celebration featuring a brand-new Business Bash. Join us for food trucks, live music, and a chance to come together as a community to honor and remember those who serve in the armed forces. Find more information in an article on page 3, and [here](#) – where you can nominate someone for the Honor Roll, and take a brief community poll regarding this day of events.

The Village's Juneteenth celebration, hosted in partnership with the River Forest Library, will take place on Wednesday, June 18 from 4 to 6 p.m. Please note the updated time, which is different from previous years. More information can be found in an article on the back page of this newsletter.

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](#)

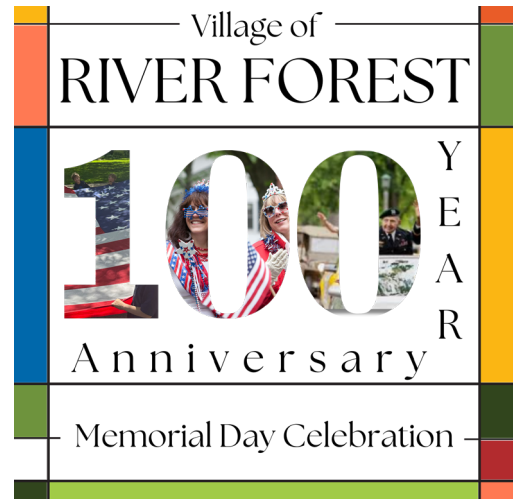
Get Involved!

Memorial Day of Events

In partnership with the Village, the River Forest Park District, Kiwanis Club of River Forest-Oak Park, and Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce are proud to present the 100th annual River Forest Memorial Day Parade, Ceremony, Community Picnic and Business Bash on Monday, May 26. The day begins with a 9:30 a.m. parade, followed by the Memorial Day Honor Roll ceremony recognizing veterans and active service members. Residents are encouraged to nominate honorees and register to march in the parade [here](#). New this year is a Business Bash at **Keystone Park**, in partnership with the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce, featuring local vendors, food trucks, and a live concert. Enjoy free hot dogs courtesy of the Kiwanis Club and Boy Scouts, and celebrate this special milestone with your community. Learn more [here](#).

Casual Conversation/Open House

You're invited to an Open House at the next "Casual Conversation with the Village President" on Saturday, May 10 at 9 a.m. in Room 202 of the River Forest Community Center! Join Village President Cathy Adduci for an informal gathering where community members can ask questions, share feedback, and learn more about Village operations and initiatives. This session will focus on economic development, with Village staff members on hand to discuss topics such as development costs, zoning processes, proposed updates to building codes, and strategies for marketing available properties.



Front Desk FAQs

Answers to the most recent, frequently asked questions from community members.

Question: Are 2025-2026 Pet Tags for sale?

Answer: Yes! 2025-2026 Pet Tags can be purchased online or in person at Village Hall for \$10. Current rabies vaccination documentation is required to purchase a tag.

Question: When will the 2025-2026 Vehicle Stickers be for sale?

Answer: Early June. Towards the end of May, you should receive your renewal notice in the mail.

Question: Will my garbage be picked up on Monday, May 26th Memorial Day?

Answer: No! Memorial Day is observed by our refuse pick-up provider, Lakeshore Recycling Systems. Service will be delayed by one day the week of May 26 due to the holiday.



RF Team Member Spotlight

Assistant Village Administrator
Jessica Spencer

What position do you hold and in what circumstances would I come to you for something? I'm the Assistant Village Administrator, and you can come to me for just about anything - from navigating local government processes to finding solutions for community needs. I'm here to help with a wide range of tasks and ensure things run smoothly!

What inspired you to work in Public Service? I've always wanted to make a real impact in people's day-to-day lives. Local government felt like the perfect place to do that - where the work is tangible, and you can see results right in the community.

What's the most exciting part of your job? Problem-solving. Whether it's developing a new program, coordinating across departments, or improving internal processes, I enjoy finding practical, forward-thinking solutions that make the Village run more smoothly and better serve our residents.

What show are you currently binge-watching? I can always watch Parks and Recreation. I can't resist a show that mixes local government with a little comedy (and a lot of Leslie Knope energy).



Thank You to Our Outgoing Elected Officials!



Thank you to our outgoing Village Clerk Jonathan Keller and Trustee Ken Johnson who did not seek re-election. The Village thanks these two individuals for their dedication and involvement on the Village Board. Both will be publicly acknowledged at the May 12, 2025 Village Board meeting, when the newly elected officials will be sworn into office.



Meet Your Newly Elected Officials



Cathy Adduci, Village President

Cathy Adduci was recently re-elected Village President. Her tenure serving the Village began in 2007-2009 when she served as Village Clerk, then as a Trustee from 2009-2013 and was elected Village President in 2013 where she is entering her fourth term. Cathy is very grateful for the community's continued vote of confidence in leading the Village.

During her tenure as Village President, Cathy has taken an active role in helping to shape state policies relating to local government, including serving as the President of the Illinois Municipal League, as well as other committees. Her involvements also have included the West Central Municipal Conference (WCMC), where she co-founded the Cross-Community Climate Collaborative (C4) to pursue sustainable best practices across 14 local municipalities. She served as WCMC's President in 2017.

Cathy worked for a global Fortune 500 corporation for more than three decades, where she retired as Executive Vice President and General Manager. She was responsible for a nearly \$800 million revenue operation budget with more than 1000 employees. She credits her years of experience in helping to gain skills in budgeting, operations, team leadership, and long-term planning, which she now applies to ensure River Forest runs efficiently and sustainably.

She also serves on the Board of Directors on various non-profit boards as well as a local community bank.

Respicio F. Vazquez, Village Trustee

Respicio F. Vazquez has served as a Village Trustee since 2017 and was recently reelected to serve a third term. Respicio says he is honored and grateful for the trust residents have placed in him to continue to serve on the Board Trustees.

Born and raised in Chicago, Respicio received his law degree from DePaul University. He is a practicing attorney with a focus on public education law, representing elementary and high schools, community colleges and state universities as an attorney in a private law firm. He currently serves as an in-house General Counsel for an Illinois public community college.

Respicio and his wife Annie moved to River Forest in 2014. He previously volunteered for District 90 serving as a pronouncer and judge for spelling bees and on the Kindergarten Review Committee to review the program and recommended a new model. He additionally served on the Inclusiveness Advisory Board (2016-2024). Respicio also served as the Chair of the Village's Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee.



Meet Your Newly Elected Officials

Lisa Guglielmone Gillis, Village Trustee

Lisa Guglielmone Gillis was first elected as a Village Trustee in May 2021 and was re-elected to serve a second term. As a Trustee, Lisa has been a liaison with the River Forest Sustainability Commission and is a previous member of this Commission, first as a commissioner, and then as its chair.

Born and raised in New York, Lisa earned a Bachelor of Science in Operations Research and Industrial Engineering from Cornell University and an MBA in Marketing from New York University. Her career spans 35 years in advertising and marketing, with a focus on collaborating across diverse groups, building teams, creating new competencies, and driving operational effectiveness/efficiency.

Lisa has been a resident for 27 years. She and her husband raised their three children here, all who attended Willard Elementary and Roosevelt Middle schools, where she served on both PTOs. She is a 25-year member of the Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society, serving as the Circle President and as a member of the Board of Directors. She additionally serves on the Board of Directors for Trinity High School.



Megan Keskitalo, Village Trustee

Megan Keskitalo has served the community for the last decade, including an appointment to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion advisor group. The group was recognized by the Wednesday Journal as the 2022 River Forest Villager of the Year. Megan has worked with her neighbors, the Village, the State of Illinois, Metra, and Union Pacific to install fencing around the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks, improving safety and reducing noise.

A Research Director with more than 15 years of experience across the public and private sectors, Megan specializes in strategy, data science, research, and AI development.

Megan's children attend Lincoln Elementary and Roosevelt Middle Schools. She has served on the D90 Equity Action Plan District Educator Leadership Team and co-chaired the Belongingness and Inclusion Committee at Lincoln. Megan works with the Lincoln PTO Auction Committee to fundraise for the school and is an organizer for the annual River Forest Pride and Inclusion Walk.

Rosamaria Castellano, Village Clerk

Rosamaria Castellano has been involved in the community through volunteering on various committees, including the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) at both Willard and Roosevelt schools. She served as treasurer and co-president at Willard. She was also a board member at Thrive Counseling Center for seven years and served as the chair for two of those years.

A Loyola University graduate with a degree in accounting, Rosamaria is a Certified Public Accountant. Throughout her career, she worked in both public accounting and private industry and has since retired.

Rosamaria says she is honored to be your new Village Clerk and is grateful to be able to give back to the community that she loves through civic engagement. She and her husband have lived in River Forest for the last 20 years, and raised their two sons here, who are now in their twenties. She also has a seven-year-old dog.



At the Monday, May 12 Village Board Meeting starting at 7 p.m. at Village Hall (400 Park Avenue) outgoing elected officials Village Clerk Jonathan Keller and Trustee Ken Johnson will formally be thanked for their service to the Village. Newly elected officials - including Village President Cathy Adduci, Trustees Respcio Vazquez, Lisa Guglielmone Gillis and Megan Keskitalo and Village Clerk Rosamaria Castellano – will all be sworn into office at this meeting. As with all Village Board meetings, community members are invited to attend in person, or to view it virtually at <https://www.youtube.com/@VillageofRiverForest/streams>.

Village Department Updates





Administration

As part of the Village's ongoing efforts to manage costs responsibly and maintain high-quality services, the Village will no longer absorb processing fees associated with credit card payments. Beginning June 1, residents will be responsible for a 2.25% fee on credit card transactions on all Village services, including utility bills, permits, and more. To avoid these charges, residents may pay by check using the secure green drop box in front of Village Hall or by cash during regular business hours. Payments can also be debited directly through ACH for no fee. The Village appreciates your understanding as we strive to be fiscally responsible with tax dollars.

Police Department Frontline Portal

The Police Department would like to remind residents about the Frontline Portal, available through the Village's website. This convenient tool allows you to submit a variety of police service requests, including Overnight Parking and Vacation Watch requests, bicycle registrations and keyholder entries - to provide contact information to the police in case of an emergency. As the weather warms up and more time is spent outdoors, don't forget to register your bicycle for free through this portal. Doing this helps the Police Department keep your bicycle information on hand if it is lost or stolen.

For additional information, please contact Police Department Crime Prevention Officer [Megan Drake](#) at 708-714-3543.

 OVER NIGHT PARKING Provide us the details of your vehicle and the location it will be parked over night. We will add your request to our database to ensure a ticket is not given. SUBMIT NOW	 VACATION WATCH Provide us the details of your property and the date ranges you will be gone. Once added to our database, your property will be added to our list of vacation watches for officers to check on (time permitting). SUBMIT NOW	 BIKE MANAGEMENT Provide us the details of your bicycle. Once added to our database, your bike information will be available to the police department in case of lost or stolen. SUBMIT NOW	 KEYHOLDERS If you are a local business or residence, enter your contact information here for our records. In the event of an emergency, we will have quick access to your key holders. SUBMIT NOW
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Fire Department

Reminder: Call JULIE Before You Dig

Planning to plant, landscape, or install a fence? Before you put a shovel in the ground, contact JULIE by calling 811 or visiting [illinois1call.com](#) — it's free, easy, and required by law in Illinois.

Even small digging projects can damage underground utility lines. Hitting a gas, electric, or water line can cause serious injury, service outages, or costly repairs.

Why this matters:

- A utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S.
- Calling 811 reduces the risk of damage to less than 1%.
- Over half of homeowners skip this step — putting themselves and others in danger

JULIE will alert utility companies to mark buried lines at your location, usually within two business days.

The warmer weather is here - play it safe and know what's below before you dig by calling JULIE at 811!

Public Works

Summer Construction

Each summer, the Village begins key infrastructure projects to maintain streets, sidewalks, and sewers - ensuring River Forest remains a safe and well-maintained place to live and work. Annual programs include street patching, crack sealing, and resurfacing to extend pavement life and avoid costly reconstruction in the future. Sewer mains are also inspected, lined, or repaired as needed to prevent system failures, in addition to damaged curbs and sidewalks being replaced on a rotating 3-year cycle. Many of these projects are partially funded by state Motor Fuel Tax dollars. For updates and more information, click [here](#).

The Village Needs to Identify Your Water Service Line Material

The Village's Public Works and Engineering Department is diligently working to ensure the safety and quality of our water infrastructure, and that it complies with the Lead Service Line Replacement Act. Work is currently being done to identify all residential water service line materials to ensure they do not contain lead.

If you have not already done so, please test and identify water pipes on your side of the Village water lines. See the instructions at the link below to take the survey (or scan the accompanying QR code) to communicate what you find from the test by completing this online survey.



Once the Village collects this information, a plan will be developed to systematically replace the lead service lines throughout the Village by coordinating directly with impacted property owners. Residents can also participate in the Resident Assistance Program "[Get The Lead Out](#)" to assist with costs.

Please click [here](#) for more information.

BEFORE You Dig!
Call JULIE 811



Sustainability

International Compost Awareness Week!

The first full week of May marks International Compost Awareness Week, a global educational initiative focused on promoting compost production and use. This year's theme is, "Sustainable Communities Begin with Compost!" and highlights how composting at any scale - from backyard bins to large-scale facilities - supports healthier soil and stronger, more resilient communities.

To support this initiative, the Village and Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) offer several composting options through the yard waste and food scrap compost program. Residents can choose from three cart sizes and monthly pricing plans, including a cost-effective cart-sharing option that lets neighbors split the cost - bringing composting to your curb for less than \$7 a month. Learn more and sign up [here](#). The Village also provides convenient drop-off composting locations. The original compost cart at Village Hall is now joined by two new drop-off sites at the Public Works Garage and Water Pumping Station. These sites accept food scraps, compostable paper products, and compostable plastic materials.

Want to dive deeper into composting? Check out a variety of virtual and in-person events hosted by the Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition [here](#).



Senior Citizen's Corner

Senior Capable Program

North West Housing Partnership (NWHP) proudly administers the CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place, Advancing Better Living for Elders) program, helping seniors remain safe and independent in their homes. This program offers seniors up to six at-home visits from an occupational therapist, four visits from a registered nurse, and a day of handyman services over four months. The occupational therapist helps address barriers to daily activities and conducts home safety assessments, while the handyman installs items like grab bars, handrails, and makes minor repairs. The nurse reviews medications for potential conflicts, evaluates pain management, and can coordinate with primary care doctors if needed. To apply for the CAPABLE program, seniors or their caregivers should contact NWHP by calling 847-969-0561 or email paulabush@nwHP.net.

Senior Pancake Breakfast

The Fire and Police departments are teaming up to host a senior outreach event focused on public safety. Representatives from River Forest Senior Services and the Township will also be present to support the event and provide additional resources. The event will feature a pancake breakfast on Thursday, May 15 at 9 a.m. in the [Village Hall Community Room](#), with breakfast served to seniors by the Village's first responders. Learn important personal safety tips, including how to avoid financial scams and improve home security - while enjoying a warm meal and connecting with your community. Learn more [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](#).



Celebrating Seniors Week

The Township is proud to sponsor several programs during Celebrating Seniors Week (May 8-15) and recently proclaimed May 2025 to be "Older Americans Month." The Township urges every citizen to take time this month to honor our older adults and the professionals, family members, and volunteers who care for many of them. Celebrating Seniors Week will have more than a dozen free events for older Americans to enrich quality of life - a list of the programming can be found [here](#).

Township Budget Hearing is May 20

The Township levies about 1% of your property taxes with 80% of the Township dollars going to resident programs. Learn more about the budget at the [Budget Public Hearing](#) at 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 20. The final hearing and action on the budget will be taken at the regular meeting held on Tuesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. The budget is also posted on the Township website - learn more [here](#).

Serve on a Township Committee - Apply by May 31

The Township has openings on the Mental Health Committee, Senior & Disability Services Committee, and Youth & Family Services Committee. Each committee meets once per month, 8-9 times a year. The Board relies on resident volunteers to evaluate programming in each respective area. Interested in helping the Township by serving on the committee for a 3-year term? Contact Township [Supervisor John Becvar](#) before Saturday, May 31!

riverforesttownship.org - 708-366-2029 x11

Library



Visit the River Forest Public Library Calendar to see all that's happening at your Library with events and activities for all ages.

May Local Spotlight Display - Judy Steed Mosaics

Don't miss the beautiful display of mosaics by local artist Judy Steed! The display runs through Saturday, May 31. Judy has been sharing her mosaic work with the Library for more than 15 years and always supports various charities by donating proceeds from her shows. This year, she is donating 100% of the proceeds from sales of her pieces, shared equally between Doctors Without Borders and the Good Memories Choir for people in the early stages of dementia. Please email [Judy](#) if you would like to learn more.



riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

District 90



Willard 5K

Participate in the Willard PTO's third annual 5k at 8:15 a.m. on Sunday, May 18. Open to runners and walkers of all ages and abilities, the race includes a ¼ mile loop for the youngest runners. Register [here](#).

district90.org | 708-771-8282

District 200



Students Cultivate Belonging

Feeling a sense of belonging in a school community has profound effects on students; it's a stronger predictor of academic motivation and performance. Even brief social-belonging interventions have been shown to reduce disparities in achievement for traditionally marginalized students.

Oak Park River Forest High School's (OPRFHS) new Student Equity and Belonging Council (SEBC) knows what the research shows, and is taking on the challenge of building a more inclusive, connected culture at the high school. "Students who feel connected are more inclined to want to come to school," says SEBC member Cheslynn Ash, a sophomore. "If there's no sense of belonging, no safety net, there's no want to come to school."



SEBC includes members from a cross-cultural mix of OPRFHS's student clubs, such as Best Buddies, Black Leaders Union, Healthy Youth Peer Educators, Middle Eastern North African Student Alliance, and the Pride Club. Launched this past fall, SEBC has been busy studying school climate data, attending the Multicultural Student Achievement Network (MSAN) student conference in Lansing, Michigan, and conducting peer research. They've even delved into Board policy.

What have the students learned so far? "One of the biggest things is representation," says senior Langston Short. More students of color in honors and Advanced Placement classes, as well as a more diverse faculty, have emerged as key areas of focus. "When people don't see people who look like them, they don't feel a sense of belonging, and that makes it harder to succeed."

SEBC is already taking action. Club members have gone through anti-bias training in preparation for getting involved in the hiring process. Langston recently participated on a hiring committee for a new division head of Fine and Applied Arts for next year, a process he expects will continue with other students. "As a senior, my goal was to set up a path to success," he explains. "I want to help build a plan so people years behind me can see it through."

oprfs.org | 708-383-0700

What's Happening In River Forest

Senior Citizen's Tea

River Forest senior citizens are invited to attend Willard Elementary School's 37th annual Big Hearts, Little Hands Senior Citizen's Tea on Friday May 9 from 9:15 - 11 a.m., a morning of entertainment, artwork, and refreshments organized by students and PTO volunteers. **The event is free - but space is limited.** Please RSVP by Monday, May 5 [here](#).

Summer Reading Kickoff Party

Save the Date! The Library's Summer Reading Kickoff Party will be held on Friday, June 6, from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Sign-up for the Library's summer reading program and you'll receive a ticket for a free Kona Ice Shaved ice cup, while supplies last. Festivities will include a live music performance by School of Rock Oak Park, photo booth, face painting, and a bubble performance. This event is generously sponsored by The River Forest Public Library Foundation.

Juneteenth Celebration

Join the Village, in partnership with the River Forest Public Library, on Wednesday, June 18 from 4 to 6 p.m. for the River Forest Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony in front of the River Forest Library. This special event invites the entire community to come together in recognition and celebration of freedom, unity, and progress. Following the ceremony, enjoy delicious refreshments on the lawn from local favorites Wittl Pies, The Peppered Table, and Kribi Coffee. You'll also have the chance to shop from several women and minority-owned vendors offering unique items for purchase. The celebration continues with a live performance by the Jackson Wolff Band - don't miss this inspiring and joyful afternoon! Learn more [here](#).



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 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday- Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.