

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | November, 2025



Lake & Lathrop Update

On Friday, October 31, a status hearing was held on the Lake & Lathrop foreclosure case between Wintrust Bank and Lake Lathrop Partners. During the hearing, Village President Cathy Adduci was allowed to address the court regarding this long-vacant property, stating, **"Our residents and businesses deserve better."** President Adduci provided photos of the site to the judge to reinforce the poor condition of the site, and the Village's desire to have resolution in this case to make way for future development at this property. To view President Adduci's full statement to the court, click [here](#).

Also during the hearing, the court appointed receiver submitted its quarterly report, available [here](#). The report detailed costs and activities associated with ongoing maintenance of the site, and informed

the court that the fence screening surrounding it had been replaced at the request of the Village. A settlement conference for the foreclosure case is scheduled for December 15. The Village is hopeful this leads to meaningful progress toward a resolution of the litigation as soon as possible.

The Village of River Forest remains committed to attending all court hearings and continually monitoring this legal case between Wintrust Bank and the former developer, Lake Lathrop Partners. Once the case comes to a resolution, the goal for this key commercial property is to ensure a future development is a true benefit to our community.

For background information on this property, click [here](#).

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

An independent auditor has confirmed the Village continues to exceed in financial reporting and fiscal responsibility. Our Village Board is focused on maintaining a balanced budget, along with stabilizing property taxes, providing high-quality services, and pursuing new revenue opportunities and grants whenever they are available.

I want to thank Forest Park Mayor Rory Hoskins, Illinois House Speaker Chris Welch, and Senate President Don Harmon for their efforts in supporting the new transit bill, which eases the financial burden on River Forest by allowing for reimbursement of expenses incurred when our Fire and Police departments respond to CTA train station emergencies. Since 2022, our first responders have answered more than 150 calls and our Village will no longer have to absorb those costs.

Finally, congratulations to all three **District 90 schools** for receiving top designations from the State Board of Education! Strong schools are one of the keys to a thriving community, and we are blessed to have schools that are continually recognized for their achievements here in River Forest.

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: Now that Halloween is over, how can I dispose of my pumpkins?

Answer: Pumpkins can go into your compost bin or in tagged yard waste bags. They can also be placed in your regular refuse container. Please do not place them in the street with the leaves, as this can create an obstacle for street cleaning and leaf collection.

Question: How will Thanksgiving and Christmas affect Village Hall business hours and Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) collection services?

Answer: During the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas, LRS collection will be delayed by one day. For fall leaf collection, we advise residents to place their leaves out two days earlier than usual the week of Thanksgiving. Village Hall will be closed on November 27 - 28 (Thursday and Friday) for Thanksgiving and December 24 - 25 (Wednesday and Thursday) for the holidays.

Question: My vehicle sticker expired on July 14. Can I still purchase a new one?

Answer: Vehicle stickers can be purchased [online](#) or in person at [Village Hall](#) - please note: a \$20 late fee will be applied.



RF Team Member Spotlight

Michael Swierczynski
Deputy Chief of Police

Can you describe your role at the Village?

As the Deputy Chief of Police, I oversee the administrative section of our Department. I work closely with the Chief of Police and Patrol Commander to manage daily operations, programs, and policies that help us better serve River Forest. If you ever have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to stop by the station, [call](#) or [email me](#) - I'm always happy to help!

What's your least favorite household chore?

My least favorite chore is folding clothes. Apparently, I've done such a "perfect" job that my wife has now banned me from helping.

What drove you to work in Public Service?

My passion for public service comes from a true desire to give back. That sense of duty led me to enlist in the Army right after high school, and it continues to drive my commitment to serving our community every day.



Village Departments in Action

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

For this month's Departments in Action spotlight, here's a behind-the-scenes look at how the Village's Administration Team prepares for a Village Board meeting.

Before each meeting, Village staff members compile and review the Village Board meeting packet, which is then shared with Trustees and made available to residents on the [Village website](#) and through this Newsletter - which reaches more than 3,500 subscribers. Depending on the agenda, packets can range from 30 pages to more than 500 pages and sometimes include over 30 separate documents. The agenda is also posted on the Village Hall bulletin board for public access.

On the meeting day, the Administration Team readies the Village Hall Community Room and checks audiovisual equipment for in-person and remote attendees. If you miss a meeting, all of them are recorded and published on the [Village's YouTube Channel](#).



Village Acts to Preserve Trees

The Village Board has approved an important [amendment to the Village Code](#) to help preserve River Forest's beloved tree canopy. Under the new ordinance, homeowners will now be required to replace oak and elm trees that are 20 inches or more in diameter when they are removed from residential properties.

This change helps ensure that River Forest continues to thrive as a green, healthy community. Trees are vital to our environment as they produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, and filter pollutants from the air. They also cool our neighborhoods, prevent soil erosion, support wildlife, and even boost property values. By protecting mature trees, the health, beauty, and resilience of the community will be maintained for generations to come.



Fall Photo Contest Winner



The winner of the "Fall in Love with River Forest" Community Photo Contest has been announced! Residents selected Option E, a charming photo of two fawns by the water, as the top entry. The photographer Avery O'Dell, received a \$40 gift card to First Watch. Thank you to everyone who voted and to all who participated to help showcase River Forest's fall beauty and spirit.

Protect Our Water Protect Our Health

Residents should have received postcards with important information about their home's water service lines. This is part of the State's Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act, which requires all Illinois communities to identify and replace lead water lines.

Lead in drinking water can be a serious health concern — especially for young children and pregnant women. The Village is committed to ensuring safe, clean water for every household. Some residents may not know what material their service line is made of, and that's where the Village can help. For questions or to schedule an inspection to determine if your home has lead pipes, contact the Public Works Department at 708-714-3551. If your service line contains lead, it must be replaced under State law. The Village's [cost-sharing Lead Service Line Replacement Program](#) can make this process easier and more affordable for homeowners.



Age-Friendly Corner

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

Gentle Yoga

Join the River Forest Public Library for Gentle Yoga on Saturday, November 8, from 2 to 3 p.m. in the [Barbara Hall Meeting Room](#). Featured instructor Rhonda Fentry of Rhonda's Rhythms will lead a gentle yoga class designed for all skill levels, including older adults. Registration is required, and participants should bring their own yoga mat. This program is presented in partnership with River Forest Township. Learn more [here](#).

Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors

The AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) connects adults ages 55 and older with local organizations for meaningful volunteer service. Sponsored by Triton College since 1983 and funded by AmeriCorps Seniors, the Illinois Department on Aging, Leyden Township, and Triton College, RSVP allows volunteers to choose how, where, and when they serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week. Volunteers support thousands of organizations who are addressing local, regional, and national challenges. Participants often report improved health and well-being due to service to the community. Learn more [here](#).



Police Department

Secure Your Home While Traveling

The holiday season is here, and many residents are preparing to travel to visit family and friends. The Police Department offers the below tips to help keep your home secure while you're away:

1. Sign up for the [Frontline Vacation Watch Portal](#). Officers will check on your property while you are gone.
2. Lock all doors and windows. Consider using deadbolts or security bars for extra protection.
3. Use a security system. Cameras and alarms can help deter intruders.
4. Set up timed lights. Indoor and outdoor lights on timers or motion sensors make it look like someone is home.
5. Hold mail and deliveries. Ask a neighbor or friend to collect them or alert the post office to hold your mail until you are back.
6. Tell a trusted neighbor. Let them know your travel plans so they can keep an eye on your property.

The Police Department wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season.



Sustainability

Sustainability Scorecard

The Sustainability Commission is always exploring new ways to help residents adopt sustainable practices in daily life. The Commission is excited to introduce the [River Forest Sustainability Scorecard](#), a tool designed to highlight actions you can take to live more sustainably. There are a variety of options, from simple steps like using reusable water bottles and shopping bags to larger home upgrades with induction stoves and solar panels - allowing residents to find what fits their lifestyle. Explore the scorecard and its resource links to see how your habits measure up.

The Commission is also seeking to recognize community members who go above and beyond in promoting sustainability. Nominate any resident or organization by completing the survey linked [here](#). Selected nominees may have the opportunity to share their story in a future Village Newsletter.

Public Works

Preparing for Snow and Ice

In preparation for the 2025 - 2026 snow season, Public Works recently held its annual Snow and Ice Control meeting to review snow removal routes, protocols, and plans with the entire crew. Preparation includes proactive maintenance, winterization of equipment, and preparation of snowplows, brine equipment (to prevent snow from becoming icy), and inventory. While snow removal often goes unnoticed until a storm hits, these steps ensure the Village maintains a well-trained and prepared workforce for the season.

This year, the Village has two new snowplows, and residents have been invited to help name them! Five finalist names have been selected, and the community can now cast their vote to choose the winners [here](#).



Fire Department

Fry Your Turkey Safely

Frying a turkey can create a delicious holiday centerpiece, but it can also cause fires and serious burns if not done safely. Always fry your turkey outdoors, on a level, sturdy surface - well away from homes, garages, decks, and trees. Keep it at least 10 feet from any structure, and the burner at least two feet from the fuel tank. Do not move the fryer while in use, operate it in rain or snow, or leave it unattended.



Turkeys should ideally be eight to ten pounds and be completely thawed and dry (no stuffing). Turn off the burner when lowering the turkey into the oil, then relight it once it is safely submerged. Wear goggles and oven mitts for protection and keep a grease-rated fire extinguisher nearby - do not water to put out a grease fire. After cooking, turn off the burner, let the oil cool overnight, and dispose of it safely. For a safer alternative, consider using an oil-less or air fryer.

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](#).



Free Monthly Pickleball at RFCCA

The Township is offering free pickleball classes every month now through March of 2026, for older adults who reside in River Forest, at the **River Forest Civic Center Authority (RFCCA)** building. The next date for this class is Friday, November 21. Pickleball helps improve your physical fitness, flexibility and balance and, compared to many sports, is relatively easier on the joints. Advanced registration for each afternoon session, along with a participation waiver, is required. Register by emailing Seniors@RiverForestTownship.org. Learn more [here](#).



The Township also has two positions opening on the Township Board: one Commissioner/Trustee and one Township Clerk. Please send any interest to Township Supervisor [John Becvar](#)

riverforesttownship.org - 708-366-2029 x11

Library



River Forest Public Library
Your journey starts here.

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

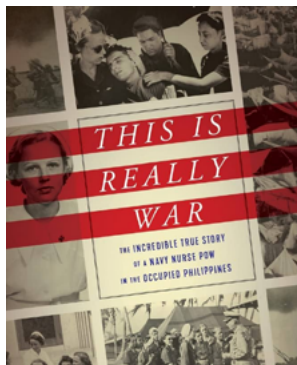


Phase 2 of Community Room Project Has Begun

The Library is excited to begin the next phase of improvements! These updates will enhance the Community Room and Children's Services areas at the Library, making them more functional and welcoming for all. The project is expected to last four to five months, with completion anticipated in February 2026. Get more details [here](#).

Sunday, 11/9, 2-3:30 p.m.: This is Really War: The True Story of Navy Nurse POWs in World War II, Adult

Local journalist Emilie Lucchesi, author of the book *This is Really War*, returns to the Library to share the true story of twelve U.S. Navy Nurses who were taken as prisoners of war in the Philippines in 1941. Providing medical care to fellow prisoners, these heroic nurses saved thousands of lives during the war. This program is brought to you in partnership with the River Forest Township. Learn more [here](#).



riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

Park District



River Forest Park District



Santa's Arrival & Holiday Tree Trimming

Join the Park District in celebrating the holiday season by participating in the annual tree trimming - and welcoming Santa to town! Community businesses, organizations, and neighborhoods are invited to sponsor a tree, which will be on display along Lake Street in Memorial Parkway through the New Year. A tree with lights will be provided, and sponsors should bring and hang their own decorations. All 25 trees will be lit at 5 p.m., on Thursday, November 20 with the help of Santa! Click [here](#) for more information. Register [here](#) for one of two timeslots.

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

District 90



The District 90 Inclusion Preschool Program has a limited number of openings each year for River Forest children who are not in need of specific interventions. Families can apply online until November 20 (2025) for their child to participate in the program for the 2026-27 School Year. Students will be selected randomly through an electronic lottery. Learn more about the program and how to apply [here](#).

district90.org | 708-771-8282

District 200



OPRFHS Math Teacher Named Top Teacher

Oak Park and River Forest (OPRF) High School math teacher Sheila Hardin has been named the state's top high school math teacher by the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She received the Excellence in Secondary Mathematics Teaching Award, recognizing classroom excellence, professional growth, and contributions to the field. An OPRF alumna in her 31st year of teaching, Hardin has spent her entire career at the school, instructing courses from Transitional Math to Advanced Placement Calculus.

Beyond teaching, Hardin has presented at national conferences, served as a College Board AP Calculus reader, mentored teachers locally and nationally, sponsored the OPRF Math Team, and helped lead the school's equity initiatives and Faculty Senate.

Planning to retire in 2028, Hardin says she remains passionate about teaching. "Since I was little, I wanted to be a teacher. I explored other paths, but teaching was always the right choice."

oprfs.org | 708-383-0700

Thank You to Village School Resource Officers

Dear Chief Greenwood,

I know that not every email that comes your way brings good news—so I wanted to be sure to send a note that fills your inbox with something positive and heartwarming to express my genuine appreciation for the incredible support your School Resource Officers continue to provide to the Lincoln School community, most notably Officer Megan Drake and Officer Ben Ransom.

Their presence makes a meaningful difference—not only in helping ensure our students and staff feel safe, but also in the way they consistently go above and beyond to be a part of our school family. Whether it's showing up to our Back-to-School Picnic, joining us at the Ice Cream Social, or most recently, spending time with families at this past weekend's Pancake Breakfast, they are always there with a smile and a willingness to connect.

These moments matter. Their participation helps build strong, trusting relationships with our students and families, and it truly enhances the sense of community we strive for at Lincoln Elementary.

I am deeply grateful for our partnership and for the continued dedication your department shows to our school. Please extend this thanks to all the officers who give so generously of their time and presence.

With much appreciation.
Casey Godfrey
Principal
Lincoln Elementary School



Officer Megan Drake



Officer Ben Ransom



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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.