

FLOSSMOOR NEWS

Summer 2021
Volume 31 / Number 1



PHOTO BY THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHIC.

AN AFTERNOON IN FLOSSMOOR

Bennett Reich takes a picture of his sisters Emerson and Peyton and their mothers Elizabeth Reich and Andrea Denney at the Flossmoor Sculpture Garden.

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celebrates 25 years
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village officials

Michell Nelson, Mayor
mnelson@flossmoor.org

George Lofton, Trustee
glofton@flossmoor.org

Gary Daggett, Trustee
gdaggett@flossmoor.org

James Mitros, Trustee
jmitros@flossmoor.org

Brian Driscoll, Trustee
bdriscoll@flossmoor.org

Joni Bradley-Scott, Trustee
jbradleyscott@flossmoor.org

Perry Hoag, Trustee
phoag@flossmoor.org

Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager
bwachtel@flossmoor.org

village numbers

Village Hall: (708) 798-2300
Fire: (708) 798-3885
Non-Emergency Police: (708) 957-4500
Non-Emergency TDD: (708) 647-0179
Public Works: (708) 957-4100
Building Department: (708) 957-4101
Emergency Only: 911

village meetings

Village Board Meeting
1st & 3rd Mondays of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

Plan Commission Meeting
3rd Thursday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals
4th Tuesday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

Public Art Commission Meeting
2nd Monday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

Community Relations Commission Meeting
4th Tuesday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

Green Commission Meeting
3rd Tuesday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.



#Flossmoor365

Find us on social media! Look for updates, photos, videos and good conversation on Facebook and Instagram! We truly appreciate all the residents, business owners and visitors who have supported us and joined the conversation!

calendar

flossmoor.org

May 22

Mother Daughter Outdoor Tea / 1:30 p.m. — Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center – Enjoy an elegant outdoor afternoon tea. Pricing is \$45 for residents, \$50 for non-residents. Register by noon on May 20 at www.hfparks.com.

May 24

Flossmoor School District 161 Virtual 8th Grade Graduation / 7:30 - 8 p.m.

May 29

Homewood-Flossmoor High School Graduation — Three in-person ceremonies from 9 to 11 a.m., 12 to 2 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m. in the HF Stadium. Graduation will be virtually streamed and recorded.

June 19

Juneteenth / 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. — Homewood-Flossmoor High School South Parking Lot. See page 5 for details.

July 3 (please note date)

4th of July Parade / 9:30 a.m. — Parker Jr. High School – The Bike Parade returns! Decorate your bikes and wagons in red, white and blue! Lineup is at 9:30 a.m. at Parker Jr. High School.

July 9-11

Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery 25-year Anniversary. See page 8 for details

August 3

National Night Out / 5 to 8 p.m. — Learn more about our Police, Fire and Public Works Departments at this fun night out at Flossmoor Village Hall. Event details will be shared later this summer.

Congratulations Flossmoor!

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is a foundational event in the Village of Flossmoor, and this spring, the Village earned a spot in the finals of the Governor's Cup for our 2019 Day of Service. The Village was one of four finalists in the statewide competition in which 24 volunteer/service projects were named in the Governor's Hometown Awards. According to Governor J.B. Pritzker, this year's Governor's Hometown Awards received the highest number of applicants since the resurrection of the program.

As a finalist, the Village received a commemorative plaque and an honorary highway sign that identifies Flossmoor as a Governor's Cup Hometown Awards finalist.

AN AFTERNOON IN FLOSSMOOR

PHOTO BY THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHIC



Justus Edwards, 6, leaps off the play set at Western Avenue School while his parents Philip and Patrice look on.

Whether you're new to the area or have yet to explore all the treasures Flossmoor has to offer, here is your guide to a wonderful afternoon in Flossmoor. Residents of all ages can find something to stimulate the senses in Flossmoor, whether it's a stroll through the tree-lined streets to the nearest park, visiting the Flossmoor Library to pick up a new book, popping into one of Downtown Flossmoor's new retail shops, exploring the world-class sculpture garden, or visiting one of Flossmoor's many restaurants.

On a sunny afternoon, gather up the family, download the free Otocast app and enjoy a guided tour of the Flossmoor sculpture collection. Hear from the world-class artists themselves and learn what inspired them to create their art, what materials were used, how the sculptures were created, and what the artists hope to inspire in viewers.

The Flossmoor sculpture collection currently features 10 permanent sculptures and seven rotating sculptures. Rotating sculptures are typically replaced every three years. You can learn more about the Flossmoor sculpture collection and the Flossmoor Public Art Commission, which curates and supports the sculpture collection, at www.artflossmoor.com.

Flossmoor also features some of the most unique and breathtaking architecture in the Chicago suburbs, boasting homes by Frank Lloyd Wright and Keck & Keck. But, Flossmoor is more than its notable architects.

Take a tour of Flossmoor's six distinct neighborhoods and you'll see a rich housing stock of Prairie, Spanish,

Mid-century, Victorian, colonial and contemporary homes, all nestled in tight-knit neighborhoods. Flossmoor's architecture is so historic, that Village staff and volunteers have been working on an historic building survey since 2019. If you're interested in volunteering to help capture the Village's history, like original blueprints, architect information or historical uses, contact the Village at info@flossmoor.org to get involved.

After your stroll through neighborhoods, stop by Downtown Flossmoor for a unique shopping experience at Gypsy & Co., an indoor shopping center that features a number of different businesses, or pick up a tasty treat for your family pet at Healthy Hounds.

Finish up your special day in Flossmoor with a delicious meal. Flossmoor is home to as many as 11 restaurants including fast-casual chains like Lou Malnati's, Buona Beef and Jersey Mikes. But, what makes Flossmoor's dining scene special, is the made-with-love dishes at our local restaurants.

Enjoy upscale elegance in Downtown Flossmoor at The Bistro on Sterling or a casual dining experience at Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery or Dunning's Market. Visit Flossmoor Commons to enjoy local favorites like Siam Thai and Kingsberry Waffle House. Whatever you're hungry for, chances are you'll find it in Flossmoor.

There is so much to explore in Flossmoor when you take time to notice. Visit www.discoverflossmoor.com to learn how you can enjoy all of Flossmoor's hidden gems.

flossmoor faces & places



Meet Your Mayor — Michelle Nelson

Michelle Nelson never really had a desire to pursue public office, but her unwavering love of the Village of Flossmoor gave her the push to embrace a campaign for Mayor, a campaign that led her to becoming Flossmoor's first woman Mayor.

"I never thought about public office but as I became more involved in the Village in various commissions, different events and as I talked to more people, it became clear to me that my skills and interests would fit perfectly into the role of Mayor," said Nelson.

Professionally, Nelson is trained as a civil engineer with a degree from the University of Illinois. For nearly a decade, Nelson worked as a construction manager with Lincoln Property Company, a large commercial real estate company in Chicago, and was in charge of managing construction projects in their six million square foot portfolio.

One of the most satisfying aspects of her work as a construction manager was seeing an architect's vision come to life and watching her clients' dreams become reality, said Nelson. But, after giving birth to she and husband Cameron's third child, Nelson made the difficult decision to step back from her professional career to raise her family.

"At the University of Illinois over half of the women in

engineering dropped out and went to a different college because it was a such a challenging program. Taking a pause on my professional career doing work that I loved, after working so hard, was really tough at

the time," said Nelson. "Looking back, I don't regret it for one moment."

Instead of feeling discouraged, Nelson channeled her skills and professional experience into creating HF Robotics and serving as a founding board member of the Homewood Science Center to provide area students a hands-on STEM experience.

It is that same drive, ambition and desire to improve, that Nelson intends to bring to the office of Mayor.

"So much of the Village's operations are based on engineering and solving problems, which are areas of strength for me," said Nelson. "My goal is to build a strong town, but there's a lot that goes into building a strong town other than infrastructure. We also need to focus on creating events and spaces that are community oriented, increasing our opportunities to capitalize on economic development, and raising property values."

"Flossmoor is a beautifully diverse and inclusive community with great access to public transportation, historic homes, tree-lined streets, fantastic schools and friendly small business owners," said Nelson. "I can't imagine wanting or needing anything else from a community. I thank all of the residents who are trusting me with their most important assets, their families and their homes."

Juneteenth Festival Comes to Flossmoor

Get ready for a celebration of Black culture with the inaugural Juneteenth Festival, coming to Flossmoor on June 19. You Matter 2, Inc. founder Destiny Watson felt a Juneteenth Festival would be successful in the HF community because of the area's emphasis on diversity and the community's response last year to nationwide protests against injustices on black communities.

"Seeing how the community showed up during the local protests and how open everyone has been to things like that, it really inspired me to bring a Juneteenth festival to the area," said Watson. "Last summer a lot of people showed up and I wanted to continue the education and celebration of Black culture instead of it being only last summer and that's the end of it."

The Juneteenth celebration, which is scheduled to happen in person at Homewood-Flossmoor High School, will include a virtual parade, local entertainers, music and dance performances, a Double Dutch club demo, and an exclusive art exhibit from the University of Dayton, Watson's alma mater, "Ferguson Voices."

Meet Chef Yvette

When The Bistro on Sterling began its search for a new executive chef late last year, owner Rich Cairo knew who he would call first. Chef Yvette Zavala started her career in the kitchen with The Bistro on Sterling, or as it was known then, Fresh Starts, and intends to explore a whole new level of culinary creations in her return as the new executive chef.

"Coming back was like coming home," said Zavala. "I was so excited to get the call from Rich to come back. He offered me free reign of the menu and it really has been great to play around with different ingredients and different flavors, and so far, people are really happy with the flavor profile."

As with most things in the last year, COVID-19 threw a wrench in Zavala's return to The Bistro, as well as her intentions to update and expand the menu. But, Zavala has been able to get creative with different dishes that she can feature in weekly and week-

end dinner specials.

Among some of Zavala's most popular new creations are her chicken marsala, shrimp scampi, short ribs and a number of different pasta dishes. With each of her weekly specials, Zavala is intentional to serve an appetizer, protein, vegetable, pasta and often creates dishes that are vegetarian or vegan friendly.

"I love cooking for first timers and loyal customers alike, they all have really embraced the new specials," said Zavala. "We've all had a challenging time with COVID but so many people have said 'your food is worth eating outside.' That meant so much to me. I put so much love and passion in my food. There is a piece of

Attendees will also get to enjoy local food trucks, and can get their hands on some special Juneteenth merchandise to show their support of the national celebration of Black culture. Items for sale include t-shirts, yard and window signs, wine tumblers, porch signs and more.

While the entertainment and fun are a big part of Watson's vision for Juneteenth, her biggest goal is to make sure that the spirit of Juneteenth and the important conversations of race and Black history and culture are the true spirit of the event.

"My hope is that people walk away with some type of experience other than shopping or eating," said Watson. "I want to really highlight the diversity of the community and I hope this is something that can continue for many years."

You Matter 2, Inc. has partnered with the Village of Flossmoor, Village of Homewood, Homewood-Flossmoor High School, K Carlton Inc. event planning, and a number of Black-owned businesses to bring Juneteenth to the H-F community. If you are interested in sponsoring or volunteering for the event, visit www.youmatter2.org to learn more.



Executive Chef Yvette Zavala

me in everything that I put out, so I appreciate how kind everyone has been."

The Bistro on Sterling is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday and 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. It is closed on Sunday and Monday. Also, keep an eye out for Chef Yvette on the Food Network's *Chopped*.

NEWS TO USE!



Trustee Gary Daggett

New and Returning Village Board Members

Gary Daggett is the newest member of the Flossmoor Village Board of Trustees after being elected in the April 6, 2021 consolidated election. Trustee Daggett is a property inspector and business owner with Daggett Property Inspections. In addition to the new faces on the Flossmoor Village Board, we also welcome back current Board members who were elected in the April 6 consolidated election. **Trustee Brian Driscoll** was first elected to the Village Board in 2017. Trustee Driscoll is an attorney and certified municipal hearing officer. **Trustee Joni Bradley-Scott** was appointed to an unexpired seat held by former trustee Phil Minga. She was previously elected to the position of Village Clerk in 2017. Trustee Bradley-Scott is a licensed real estate agent. **Trustee George Lofton** was appointed to the vacant trustee position in 2020 previously held by Gyata Kimmons. He is a retired executive from Commonwealth Edison and is the founder of Lofton & Associates.

Thank You Departing Village Officials

The Village of Flossmoor would like to send a sincere and heartfelt thank you to our departing Village officials: Mayor Paul Braun, Trustee Diane Williams, Village Clerk Ananda Billings and Interim Fire Chief Greg Berk.

Mayor Braun joined the Flossmoor Village Board in 2003, and was elected Mayor in the Spring of 2009.

Trustee Diane Williams was first elected in 2005 and served four consecutive terms. Former **Village Clerk Ananda Billings** was appointed to the position of Village Clerk in 2019, filling a vacancy created by Joni Bradley Scott's appointment to Village Trustee. **Chief Berk** came out of retirement in 2020 to serve the Flossmoor Fire Department for a year as Interim Chief. Berk served the Flossmoor Fire Department as chief for 25 years, from 1978 to 2003. Thank you to all of our departing officials for your commitment and service to the Village of Flossmoor and its residents.

Reuse Your Newspaper, Lose Your Weeds!

Old news is good news when you want to make weeds disappear. Did you know that newspaper applied in thick layers will smother weeds for an entire season? The paper will also keep any buried weed seeds from germinating. Begin by laying newspaper over the weeds, and be sure to apply it thickly. Don't worry about black print versus colored print as all newspapers contain all non-toxic pigments. Keep the pages from blowing out of place by spraying them with water. Lastly, cover the newspaper with two to three inches of mulch. Newspaper makes a better weed-suppressant than regular mulch alone as the paper blocks out the light plants need for photosynthesis. Additionally, water can soak through the paper so worms and natural insect life is not compromised. The best part is you can plant right away in a bed that's been newspaper mulched. Wet newspaper cuts very easily and works great as a natural spacer. Simply use your trowel to make a hole then plant your plants.

Next Steps for \$10 Million G.O. Bonds

This spring, the Mayor and Board of Trustees accepted a bid from Robert W. Baird & Co. for the Village's voter-approved \$10 million General Obligation bonds for street, sidewalk and flooding improvements and a current refunding of the Village's 2013 General Obligation bonds, which were used to finance watermain improvements. The net interest rate for the bonds is 1.7825%.

The \$10 million bond issue will be used to finance street and sidewalk rehabilitation throughout the community, as well as flooding mitigation projects for Berry Lane and the Flossmoor Road viaduct. The flood mitigation project on Berry Lane and the surrounding area is currently in the engineering phase and construction will begin later this year. Engineering on the Flossmoor Road viaduct flood-

ing project will begin next year. Actual construction for the Flossmoor Road viaduct will not begin until 2022 and 2023.

The Village will also undertake approximately \$5.3 million in street and sidewalk replacement projects over the next two years. Watch for additional updates on street projects and road assessments as planning continues at www.flossmoor.org.

Commute with Confidence on Metra

With more vaccines in distribution, Metra is looking to reignite local businesses and bring life back to downtown with “My Metra.” With the “My Metra” campaign, Metra is taking responsibility for each passenger by adopting the most stringent safety and cleaning protocols in the transportation industry. Some of these precautions include requiring masks or face coverings onboard, installing hand sanitizer dispensers and cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing trains and stations on a regular basis.

Metra recently announced an upgraded high-tech air filtration system that is expected to remove and eliminate 99 percent of all airborne particulates, bacteria and viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. Riders can already breathe easy say Metra officials thanks to Hospital-grade MERV-13 air filters that replace the air on cars every four minutes, demonstrating even more that passengers can commute with confidence on Metra trains. So, when the time is right for you to return to public transportation, Metra is the right choice to get you to the places you love the most.

Proper Dog Care in Flossmoor

Flossmoor loves dogs, there’s no doubt about that. But, it’s important that as pet owners, we are responsible pet owners and good community members, too. The Village of Flossmoor has specific ordinances that are designed to help remind residents of the best ways to be responsible pet owners and good community members. All dogs must be leashed in public spaces and must be controlled or restrained by a person of sufficient strength. The leash must be of sufficient size and strength to control the size and strength of the dog and must be no longer than eight feet. Another important aspect of being a responsible dog owner is picking up after your furry friends. Please pick up all dog waste on any property that is not your own and dispose of the waste in a proper receptacle. If you have any questions about the Village’s municipal code in reference to pet ownership, visit www.flossmoor.org.

Village Continues FREE Brush Collection

Brush collection occurs monthly on the FIRST week of each month. All brush to be collected must be set out by 7 a.m. the Monday of collection week, but no earlier than 3 days prior to collection. Please note that brush generated by a private contractor is to be disposed of by the contractor. For additional information, contact the Flossmoor Public Works Department at (708) 957-4100 or visit www.flossmoor.org for complete details.

Items not collected by the Village during brush pick up:

- Root balls or stumps
- Brush cleared or cut by contractors
- Any yard waste including but not limited to leaves, grass clippings, compost
- Any type of lumber, including construction lumber, landscape timbers, fence posts, or other processed wood products
- Brush put in bags, boxes or containers of any kind
- Foreign objects such as metal

Brush Pile Requirements

Branches must be stacked in a pile on the parkway, with cut ends facing the curb, and placed away from parkway trees, mailboxes, utility poles/boxes, sidewalks and hydrants.

- Maximum diameter: 6 inches
- Maximum length: 12 feet
- Brush piles should not be bundled in any way (string, twine, wire, zip ties, etc.)
- Brush should not be placed in containers
- Brush must not overhang into the street or sidewalk
- Do not pile higher than 4 feet
- Do not pile wider than 20 feet



business spotlight



Gypsy Fix and Gypsy & Co. celebrated their grand openings in April at 1056 Sterling Avenue.

Cheers to 25 Years at Flossmoor Station!

Carolyn and Dean Armstrong didn't anticipate that Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery would become an anchor of Downtown Flossmoor when they opened the brew pub 25 years ago.

"We did not have any type of goal when we started. We just felt that when you surround yourself with good people, anything can happen," said Carolyn. "We couldn't have done this without the Village staff, without our employees and without the support of the community. We've all done this together."

Though the restaurant business brought on challenges, including the 2008 recession and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Carolyn attributes the Station's success to her dedicated employees and the Station's loyal customers.

That's why to celebrate the 25-year anniversary, Flossmoor Station is pulling out all the stops. The 25-year anniversary celebration will take place July 9 through July 11 and will include indoor and outdoor activities. Brewmaster Ryan Czaja is rolling out some signature craft beers including a batch of the Station's fan-favorite Wooden Hell that has been barrel aged for 25 months. Customers will also have a chance to get their hands on a commemorative 25-year anniversary t-shirt, enjoy special beer pairings and live outdoor music to ensure social distancing, among other celebratory events.

Carolyn hopes the 25-year celebration not only excites loyal customers and the community at large, but she also wants her employees to be recognized and celebrated for their years of continued service to the community.

"I have employees that have been here for a very long time and others that have been here 10 to 15 years," said Carolyn. "We're all a big team, a big family. I could have given up many times and there were some times that I actually thought about it, but I keep doing it for them."

More information about times, different events, and ways to get involved will be shared as the event draws closer. To stay informed of the event, follow Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery on Facebook or sign up for the Village of Flossmoor e-newsletter at www.flossmoor.org.

Gypsy & Co. Grand Opening

Downtown Flossmoor continues to thrive despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, as Gypsy & Co. embraced collaboration to create a shopping destination. Gypsy Fix and Gypsy & Co. celebrated their grand openings in April with a showcase of the local artists, crafters and business owners that occupy the 11 spaces that were designed, expanded and customized to create an indoor shopping space in Flossmoor's Civic Center Building.

Joining Gypsy Fix, a retail boutique that features clothing, home décor, accessories and more, in the space at 1056 Sterling Avenue include:

- Wild Card – A health, wellness and mindfulness studio.
- Pioneer – Vintage suitcase speakers wired for Bluetooth connection.
- J. O'Blooms – A plant enthusiast and gardener's boutique.
- Sweet Finds by Marge – Children's boutique featuring seasonal items for girls and boys.
- J.A.D.E.D. – Art gallery. Follow @who_is_kylan to uncover the mystery.
- Unraveled – Local knitting studio and yarn store.
- HoneyPot Designs – Handmade home décor and custom tumblers.
- Modern Antique Radios – Antique radios that are customized with modern electronics.
- Wired: The Design Boutique – Women's clothing curated for today's modern trends.
- KD Crowns – Pageant gowns and accessory resale, and etiquette coaching.
- Here to Assist – Strategic branding and business services.

school spotlight

Flossmoor School District 161 Teacher Named Lifechanger of the Year

Serena Hills Elementary School special education teacher Amy Sizemore-Green is not one to seek the spotlight. In fact, she tries her best to stay behind the scenes and do the work that she loves. So, when she earned the National LifeChanger of the Year award for her selfless work during the COVID-19 pandemic, it came as quite a surprise.

For her principal and nominator Elizabeth Reich, the honor couldn't have been more deserved.

"In education, we talk a lot about 'the whole child.' Amy doesn't just stop at the whole child," said Reich, in her nomination letter. "She makes sure the whole community gets what they need. That's her way. Whether it's extended time on a test, fewer choices in a word bank, clean clothes, a place to talk, or bread and milk, students get what they need in order to feel loved, safe, capable, nourished and whole."

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Flossmoor School District 161 and students turned to remote learning, the staff at Serena Hills grew concerned for students that rely on the school's free and reduced lunch program. Sizemore-Green went straight to work to uncover a solution to this concern.

As a "Blessings in a Backpack" school, Serena Hills did have a modest stock of food available for students, but Sizemore-Green took it to the next level and partnered with Marian Catholic High School and a handful of local restaurants to secure meals for families in need. Once secured, she hand-delivered meals and other resources to families around the community.

"We have a lot of need in our community and since I'm not a classroom teacher, when the pandemic hit and we went to remote, I had a tough time catching my kids and doing my job," said Sizemore-Green. "Especially since a lot of my kids were out for a while, it was hard to reach them. I was going crazy not being able to see them or help them."

While it is unclear how many total meals were delivered by Sizemore-Green, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic she was delivering as many as 30 meals a day.



Amy Sizemore-Green sends a thank-you to students virtually during the 2020-21 school year.

Currently, Sizemore-Green continues to support anywhere from 30 to 40 families across the District every week.

"The District 161 community is so proud of Amy's hard work and support of our families," said Superintendent Dr. Dana Smith. "She is an excellent example of someone who sees an issue and springs into action to solve a community problem. I am so thankful that she is part of our team."

When asked why she feels compelled to go above and beyond for not only her students, but the entire Serena Hills community, and what the LifeChanger of the Year award means to her, Sizemore-Green had this to say.

"I'm not naive in thinking that what I did changed their lives, but it certainly added something good and positive to their day," said Sizemore-Green. "This is what it's all about. Giving our community and the students with the highest needs the feeling of a little bit of hope. This is why it's so amazing to be recognized for what I do."

department updates

Flossmoor Welcomes New Fire Chief



Fire Chief Robert Kopec

A new chief is at the helm of the Flossmoor Fire Department and he joins the department with an impressive resume and years of local knowledge. Robert Kopec officially took on the position of Fire Chief of the Flossmoor Fire Department on April 5, lifting the responsibilities from Interim Fire Chief Greg Berk. Kopec beat out a competitive pool of candidates following a recruitment process by the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association to take over the department. The Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved the appointment of Kopec, who joins the

Flossmoor Fire Department after serving as Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Chief for seven years at the City of Country Club Hills Fire Department.

“Robert Kopec comes to us with more than 20 years in fire service and an impressive resume,” said former Mayor Paul Braun. “He proved to be the top candidate and [is] a valuable asset to the Village of Flossmoor. He left myself and the Village trustees with little question that he would be an excellent fit as Flossmoor’s Fire Chief.”

Prior to serving as Fire Chief for the Country Club Hills Fire Department, Chief Kopec held a number of roles including Deputy Chief and Captain with the Beecher Fire Protection District, as well as experience with the Markham Fire Department, Harvey Fire Department and the Thornton Fire Department. Chief Kopec also holds a Chief Fire Officer certification from the Illinois State Fire Marshal Office.

As a career fire service member, Chief Kopec has served in a number of different department settings, but one thing he appreciates in joining the Flossmoor Fire Department is the balance of volunteer firefighters, part-time firefighters and full-time firefighters in the Department.

“As a combination department, we can introduce cadet programs and train and hire the next generation of firefighters right in house. It is a department that we can bring a young person on-board and guide them through the entire process, starting with cadet to volunteer to paid on-call. The ultimate goal is to hire them on a part-time or full-time basis. Unfortunately, not many career departments have that opportunity,” said Kopec.

“Bob Kopec stood out among a plethora of strong candidates based on his nearly two decades of experience, but also because of the energy and new ideas he’s interested in bringing to the Village of Flossmoor,” said Village Manager Bridget Wachtel. “Bob understands the importance of our department’s regional relationships and his time spent with the Country Club Hills Fire Department, one of our regional training partners, has been incredibly valuable in providing a smooth transition to his position of Fire Chief in Flossmoor.”

Beware of Ruse Burglaries

After learning of some burglaries and attempts in surrounding towns in which criminals pose as utility workers or Department of Public Works employees to invade or rob homes, the Village of Flossmoor and Flossmoor Police Department want to remind residents of the types of situations that would require Flossmoor Department of Public Works employees to enter their homes.

Issues Requiring the DPW to Enter Residence or Backyard

- Sewer or water issues (i.e. water main breaks, service leaks and sewer repairs)
- Water meter change outs (scheduled by resident)
- Investigation of drainage issues

How to Recognize DPW Employees

- Vehicle(s) marked with Village of Flossmoor logo and Public Works lettering and strobe light activation (if working on the street).
- DPW employees have “Flossmoor Public Works” lettering on their uniform/clothing.
- DPW employees carry Village of Flossmoor DPW photo identification on their uniform/clothing or person and will display it to residents upon request.
- DPW workers will attempt to contact residents prior to entering backyard for service calls but are permitted by law to enter backyards without residents’ permission for service emergencies.

How to Verify Workers / Report Suspicious Activity and Persons

1. Residents can call DPW at (708) 957-4100 to verify workers are from the Flossmoor DPW.
2. Residents can call the Flossmoor Police Department non-emergency number at (708) 957-4500, to report anyone or anything suspicious.

commission corner

Barrels of Hope on Display in Flossmoor

Keep an eye out for more public art in the Village of Flossmoor as the Flossmoor Public Art Commission gets set to unveil its Barrels of Hope art project. Modeled after the Northern Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Project, Flossmoor's "Barrels of Hope" project engaged local artists to paint old whiskey barrels with messages of hope and inspiration. The barrels, which were donated by Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery, will be displayed in Flossmoor from July 5 until September 11, the day of the Hidden Gem Half Marathon. Once the barrels are displayed, the Flossmoor Public Art Commission will open an online auction and you can bid to take your favorite barrel home.

There will be a total of 24 painted barrels, featuring messages of hope, inspiration and love painted by local artists. Like Flossmoor's statues and parks, the painted barrels will be eye-catching pieces of art that help attract people to our beautiful community.

Visit www.artflossmoor.com to learn about each artist and to bid on your favorite barrel once the auction opens in July.

Start a Backyard Compost Bin

What is compost? It's every gardener's secret ingredient, one that improves soil fertility, encourages vigorous root growth, and helps plants retain nutrients. Compost brews in an open or closed structure and can be started with things like grass clippings, coffee grounds, fruit and veggie scraps, leaves, shredded paper, nut shells and more. Over time, and with heat, the ingredients decompose into an Earthy blend of "gardener's gold."

Why compost? Composting is an inexpensive way to improve your garden soil while also reducing the volume of wasted scraps sent to a landfill. It's an easy and Earth-friendly way to recycle right in your backyard. Composting can be done year-round and is a helpful, healthy new habit for you and your family to start.

Start with your bin. The best option for a compost bin is a two-chambered or shelf system that allows decomposed matter to fall away from solid scraps. Keep your bin in a convenient location near the house or garden and cover it to ward away local rodents, raccoons and deer.

Add your scraps. Break the scraps into bite-size pieces to aid the composting process. A good rule of thumb is to add three parts "brown stuff" (leaves, shredded paper, nut shells) to one part "green stuff" (grass clippings, coffee grounds, fruit and veggie scraps). If you collect too many scraps, bag and freeze them to use later.

Turn and cook. Turn or spin the compost every few days to keep things "cooking." It's often a slow process and could take the better part of a month before you see any compost crumbles. Once it's cooked, work your compost into any garden area during planting seasons. Add compost to each new hole you dig for a new plant or shrub.

For more tips, the Flossmoor Green Commission recommends videos and how-tos from Joe Gardener at www.joegardener.com.



PHOTO BY MARCELLUS MARSH.

Barrel of Hope Artist Michael Miller

Welcoming New Residents

During April of each year, the Community Relations Commission holds a New Resident Event to introduce new residents to the many services, businesses and restaurants in the community. Due to the continued COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to host this year's New Resident Event in person, but that didn't prevent all involved from having a wonderful time. The CRC partnered with the Village, Flossmoor Library, Flossmoor School District 161 and Homewood-Flossmoor High School District 233, along with other community leaders during the New Resident Event to showcase what the community has to offer.

During the virtual event, the CRC hosted trivia, gave away prizes and delivered swag bags to nearly 30 new residents who signed up for the event. If you're new to the community and you didn't sign up for April's New Resident Event, be sure to get connected to the Village of Flossmoor online at www.flossmoor.org for bi-weekly e-newsletters, periodic email messages and alerts from the Flossmoor Police Department, or follow the Village on Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor.

Village of Flossmoor

2800 Flossmoor Road
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RETURN OF THE GEM

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 11 for the return of the Hidden Gem Half Marathon, sponsored by UChicago Medicine.

The inaugural race in September 2019 welcomed more than 600 runners, hundreds of volunteers and thousands of spectators to Flossmoor. Runners traveled through Flossmoor's beautiful neighborhoods and tree-lined streets, past schools, parks and churches, and witnessed the inclusive community spirit that makes Flossmoor unique. From the Homewood-Flossmoor High School marching band and cheer teams, to enthusiastic neighbors around every turn, to the post-race celebration downtown at Flossmoor Fest, race participants were in awe of the quality of the race and the sense of pride in the community.

The inaugural Hidden Gem Half Marathon was an incredibly proud day for the Village of Flossmoor and its residents — I'm so excited we are able to bring the Hidden Gem back in 2021 as we continue to shine a bright light on our amazing community! — Michelle Nelson, Mayor of Flossmoor

The Hidden Gem Half Marathon race is certified by the Chicago Area Runner's Association (CARA) which thought so highly of the inaugural Hidden Gem Half Marathon that this year's Hidden Gem was placed on the prestigious CARA runner's circuit, recognizing it as one of "... Chicagoland's most well organized and well-appreciated races." If you are interested in running in this year's race, registration is now open. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hidden Gem planning committee is thoughtfully considering how best to create a safe, healthy race for runners and fans alike.

Not a runner, but want to help support the race? There are plenty of volunteer and sponsorship opportunities available as well. You can register to run, volunteer, sponsor or simply learn more about this year's race at www.hiddengemhalf.com.



Important Road Closures

The Hidden Gem race will wind through nearly every neighborhood of Flossmoor, which will necessitate road closures throughout the Village, including the major streets of Flossmoor Road, Governors Highway, Kedzie and Western Avenue. The race is expected to start at 7:30 a.m. on Flossmoor Road near Village Hall. Generally consistent with the 2019 route, the course travels west on Flossmoor Road and through the Baythorne, Ballantrae and Flossmoor Hills and Highlands neighborhoods before turning back east. The latter half of the race will wind through the campus of HF High School then through Heather Hill, the Brassie/Braeburn area, Flossmoor Park and Old Flossmoor. Access into and out of those neighborhoods will be limited throughout the race. The major thoroughfares (Flossmoor Road, Kedzie and Governors) will be closed from approximately 7 to 10 a.m. to ensure the safety of the runners. Portions of the route, including major streets, will be reopened as soon as all runners pass through. Some neighborhood closures and specific route details are subject to minor changes, but all major thoroughfares will be closed from 7 to 10 a.m.

The Hidden Gem planning committee will be distributing door hangers and map details to all residents who will be affected by closures later this summer. There will also be additional details shared at www.hiddengemhalf.com, www.flossmoor.org and via e-news and social media. For the safety of runners, volunteers, emergency responders, and our neighbors, please avoid unnecessary travel during the race, and/or park your vehicle outside of the race route. Please schedule appointments, meetings or gatherings, where possible, after Noon on Saturday, September 11, 2021.