

FLOSSMOOR NEWS

Fall 2025
Volume 35 / Number 2



FLOSSMOOR IN THE FALL

OAKtoberfest returns
Saturday, Oct. 4,
bringing a second
year of environmental
learning and community
fun to Flossmoor!

Kegs & Eggs
Join in this post-race celebration,
following the 6th Hidden Gem Half
Marathon on Saturday, Sept. 6.
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Fix It ... Don't Toss It!
Inaugural Repair Cafe on Saturday,
Sept. 13, will help keep fixable
items out of the landfill.
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Shining on Sterling
Two new businesses rise
out of the renovations
downtown.
Pages 8 & 9



village officials

Michelle Nelson, Mayor
mmelson@flossmoor.org

James Mitros, Trustee
jmitros@flossmoor.org

Gary Daggett, Trustee
gdaggett@flossmoor.org

Rosalind Mustafa, Trustee
rmustafa@flossmoor.org

Kevin Dorsey, Trustee
kdorsey@flossmoor.org

Dr. Carolyn Rodgers, Trustee
crodders@flossmoor.org

George Lofton, Trustee
glofton@flossmoor.org

Cecil Porter, Village Clerk
cporter@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 p.m.

Plan Commission Meeting

3rd Thursday of the Month at 6 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals

4th Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 p.m.

Public Art Commission Meeting

2nd Monday of the Month at 6:30 p.m.

Community Relations Commission Meeting

4th Monday of the Month at 6:30 p.m.

Green Commission Meeting

3rd Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 p.m.



#ThisIsFlossmoor

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

Saturday, Sept. 6

Hidden Gem Half Marathon — 7:30 a.m. / Throughout Flossmoor

The 6th Hidden Gem Half Marathon will feature 1,250+ runners traversing the 13.1-mile course through Flossmoor's neighborhoods.

Kegs & Eggs — 10 a.m. / Downtown Flossmoor

After conquering the Gem or after cheering on your friends and family, join us for a post-race celebration for all! Indulge in mouthwatering brunch items from our vendors, sip beverages and dance to music spun by DJ Matt Kuhnen.

Saturday, Sept. 13

NEW! Repair Café — 10 a.m.-Noon / Village Hall

Bring your small appliances, flickering lamps, torn clothing, or anything else in need of a little TLC, even plants & clocks. Our skilled volunteers will help you, sharing their knowledge and skills and keeping perfectly good stuff out of landfills. First come, first served!

Saturday, Sept. 20

National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration — 10 a.m.-Noon / Flossmoor Public Library

The Village and Flossmoor Public Library are partnering for National Hispanic Heritage Month. Explore different stations to learn about Hispanic culture at this all-ages event!

Saturday, Sept. 27

Recyclepalooza — 9 a.m.-Noon / Parker Junior High School Lot

Gather your recyclables and stop by! Visit www.Flossmoor.org for a full list of accepted items.

Saturday, Oct. 4

OAKtoberfest — 10 a.m.-1 p.m. & 4-9 p.m. / Flossmoor Park & South Commuter Lot

Join us for a full day of celebrating nature and community spirit with activities for all ages. During the day, enjoy nature-themed programming and tree walks in Flossmoor Park. As the sun sets, get ready to party at our music festival! Enjoy a live band, delicious fall foods and beverages under the starlit sky.

Saturday, Oct. 18

Fall Tree Planting — 8-11 a.m. / Parker Jr. High Lot

Meet at Village Hall to partner with Public Works to plant baby trees around the Village. Volunteer form at www.Flossmoor.org.

Saturday, Oct. 25

Pet Parade & Costume Contest — 3 p.m. / Flossmoor Park

Dress your four-legged friends in their best Halloween costume, then parade them through Flossmoor Park where judges pick their favorites. Co-sponsored by the Flossmoor Business Association.

Friday, Oct. 31

Halloween Trick-or-Treating — 3-7 p.m. / Flossmoor

Trick-or-treat hours around the Village today are from 3-7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 1

Pumpkin Smash — 10 a.m.-1 p.m. / Coyote Run Golf Course

Green your Halloween by bringing your old pumpkins to be composted. Don't trash it ... smash it! Sponsored by the Southland Green Committee.



OAKTOBERFEST RETURNS FOR 2ND YEAR

Dive into the wonders of nature at the 2nd Annual OAKtoberfest on Saturday, Oct. 4! The Village will offer a full day of celebrating nature, trees and community spirit with activities and fun for all ages.

During the day in Flossmoor Park from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., visitors can explore a wide range of engaging booths. Stop by to learn about composting from Urban Canopy, chat with the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District, enjoy a nature-themed story hour with the Flossmoor Public Library, and discover the work of the Flossmoor Green Commission. Bird lovers won't want to miss the Thorn Creek Audubon Society, and local plant enthusiasts will enjoy Wild Plum's native species display. Possibility Place will also host a native plant sale to benefit You Matter 2.

"As a member of the Thorn Creek Audubon Society and a bird enthusiast, I look forward to participating in OAKtoberfest again this year," says Judy Johnson, Flossmoor resident and Green Commissioner. "It will be a great opportunity to share how even small changes such as planting native species or keeping bird feeders clean can make a big difference for our local bird populations."

There will also be activities for kids during the day. They can test their limits on the rock wall, and many more

community organizations and eco-focused vendors will be on hand to round out the fun. The University of Illinois Extension will bring its Insect Petting Zoo, so children can experience the wonders of the insect world. Learn how bugs and insect-relatives function and play an important role in the environment around you. The touch-and-feel zoo will include: blue death feigning beetles, Madagascar hissing cockroaches, American millipedes, bess beetles and a tarantula (for viewing, not holding).

As the sun sets, OAKtoberfest transitions into an evening celebration from 4-9 p.m. packed with food, fun and community connection in the South Commuter Lot. Under a spacious tent, guests can enjoy famous Flossmoor eats from local vendors while taking in the festive atmosphere. Snap a picture at the themed photo op, catch the day's biggest college football games on a big-screen TV, and gather around the bonfire pit to roast s'mores with friends and neighbors. Bid on plein-air paintings of Ballantrae, Leavitt and Flossmoor Parks in a special silent auction benefiting Flossmoor's public art program. Live music from the Ring of Music Band & Orchestra will keep the energy up all night long. It will be a can't-miss evening of small-town charm and big-time fun!



PHOTO BY JOHN KELLY.

YEAR SIX FOR THE HIDDEN GEM, TWO FOR KEGS & EGGS

More than 1,250 runners will embark on a road race throughout the Village on Saturday, Sept. 6, for the 6th Hidden Gem Half Marathon, named the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) Race of the Year for two consecutive years (2022 and 2023).

The race kicks off at 7 a.m. on Flossmoor Road in front of IJP School and will end in downtown Flossmoor, along Sterling Avenue. Following the race, spectators, volunteers and runners are invited to celebrate together with Kegs & Eggs, an annual Village event held downtown from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Indulge in brunch items from vendors, sip refreshing beverages — including the annual exclusive Hidden Gem brew from Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery — and dance to music spun by DJ Matt Kuhnen in the heart of Flossmoor.

Residents should note that there will be a series of rolling road closures on this day (Sept. 6). There will be a period of “soft” closures, then “hard” closures when runners enter each neighborhood. Hard closures will vary by neighborhood and are unlikely to last longer than one hour in most areas.

Designated Detours

- 183rd Street
- Crawford / Pulaski
- Dixie Highway
- Vollmer Road

Main Road Closures

- Kedzie (Flossmoor Road to 193rd St.): 7-9:30 a.m.
- Governors Hwy. (Heather Road to Flossmoor Road): 7-9:45 a.m.
- Flossmoor Road (West of Governors): 7-9:45 a.m.
- Flossmoor Road (East of Governors): 7 a.m.-Noon
- Western Avenue (Vardon Lane to Flossmoor Road): 7-11:15 a.m.

Neighborhood Closures

- Baythorne (7:30-8:15 a.m.)
- Ballantrae (7:30-9 a.m.)
- Flossmoor Hills (7:30-9:15 a.m.)
- Heather Hill (7:30-9:30 a.m.)
- Braemar Road (7:45-9:45 a.m.)
- Flossmoor Estates (8-10:45 a.m.)
- Flossmoor Park (8:15-11:15 a.m.)
- Old Flossmoor (8:30-11:30 a.m.)



The Police Department will waive the no-overnight-parking ban on Friday, Sept. 5, allowing residents to leave cars outside of the closure area for easy access in the morning. Visit the Village website (www.Flossmoor.org) for closure information closer to the event date. Good luck to this year’s inspiring runners!

2025 PUBLIC ART ADDITIONS

Flossmoor's public art collection — made possible through donations from local art supporters and residents — includes 15 permanent outdoor sculptures, including Richard Hunt's *Uplifted* in Leavitt Park and Hubert Phipps' *Paradise* in Ballantrae Park. Flossmoor is also proud to display a selection of sculptures, which are typically on display for a three-year period for an artist honorarium, which allows for more exposure for the artists, as well as more art experiences for residents. This year, the Flossmoor Public Art Commission was pleased to bring four new rotational installations to the community:

To Be Set Free

This shining, brushed stainless-steel sculpture by Florida artist Bruce Niemi replaced Jason Verbeek's *Vertical Vegetation* on the existing sculpture pad at the South Commuter Lot. Throughout his career, Niemi has prided himself on making pieces with excellent craftsmanship and structural strength for public safety. *To Be Set Free* will be in the Village until July 2028.

Ten Thousand Ripples

This installation — a set of five emerging Buddha heads made of cast resin and standing 2-x-2 ft. — were originally part of an exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center. Created by Evanston-based artist, Indira Freitas Johnson, this installation is designed to spark community conversations and interactions regarding peace and non-violence. *Ten Thousand Ripples* will be in the northeast corner of Leavitt Park until July 2028. Learn more about this special project at: www.IndiraJohnson.com/ten-thousand-ripples.html.

Cradle & Ristra

Both of these sculptures are made of powder-coated aluminum by Alex Barrett. The bright yellow *Cradle* will replace Sam Spiczka's *Threshold* on the existing sculpture pad on the east side of the Flossmoor Public Library. *Ristra*, its striking red counterpart, will be placed on a new sculpture pad at the southeast corner of Leavitt Park. Barrett is a Sante Fe-based abstract metal sculptor whose work evokes beauty, engagement and wonder; he will be delivering the sculptures for installation in early September.

Learn more about the public art program in Flossmoor — and how you can support it — at www.ArtFlossmoor.com.



***To Be Set Free* by Bruce Niemi**



***Ten Thousand Ripples* by Indira Freitas Johnson**

NEWS TO USE!



Flossmoor's Recyclepalooza Makes Sustainability Simple

Recyclepalooza, one of Flossmoor's most popular green initiatives, is back on the calendar for Saturday, Sept. 27, from 9 a.m. to noon in the Parker Junior High School parking lot! Hosted by the Flossmoor Green Commission, Recyclepalooza makes it easy for residents to dispose of hard-to-recycle and reusable items responsibly. This drive-through event will collect e-waste, Styrofoam, gently used clothing, bicycles and much more. The Green Commission is led by Chair Tristan Shaw and Vice Chair Eric Turnquest. Turnquest says he is proud of the progress Recyclepalooza has made throughout the years.

"It's been exciting to see Recyclepalooza grow each year," he says. "We've worked hard to make sure we're collaborating with eco-conscious vendors, and we have refined our operations to make the biggest environmental impact possible."

Whether you're cleaning out your closets, garage or basement, Recyclepalooza offers a simple and impactful way to reduce landfill waste and give used items a second life. It's also a great opportunity to connect with community partners who share a commitment to protecting the environment. For a complete list of accepted items, visit www.Flossmoor.org.

Public Works Reminders

Free Brush Collection

Free brush collection for single-family residential dwellings will continue through this fall. Residents are invited to place branches out for collection no later than 7 a.m. on Monday of the scheduled week. Collection will take place from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, the following weeks: Sept. 8-12 and Oct. 6-10.

Tree Planters Needed!

Volunteers are needed from 8 a.m.-Noon to help plant new trees, alongside Public Works crews and Flossmoor Green Commissioners, on Saturday, Oct. 18. To sign up, visit www.Flossmoor.org.

Back-to-School Safety Reminders

Our local schools will be welcoming back teachers, staff and students this month, and as they do, you'll notice an uptick in morning and late afternoon traffic around town. Here are a few safety reminders for the season:

- Slow down! The speed limit drops to 20 MPH in school zones on school days from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. School zones can be found around all Flossmoor SD 161 schools and on all three streets surrounding H-F High School.
- Read the signs! Streets near Flossmoor Hills School, Western Avenue School and Parker Junior High School flip to one-way access during specific hours on school days.
- Cross in the walk! Drivers must come to complete stops when a pedestrian is in a crosswalk. Also, drivers, please use caution and courtesy when you see children near a school-zone crosswalk on school days. Walkers, be sure to look carefully both ways and only cross in designated crosswalks.

Welcome back, students and teachers!

school spotlight

Fix It at the Repair Café, Don't Toss It

A new community event is coming to Flossmoor, and it's all about giving new life to old items. The Southland Green Committee is proud to launch its inaugural Repair Café on Saturday, Sept. 13, from 10 a.m. to noon at Flossmoor Village Hall.

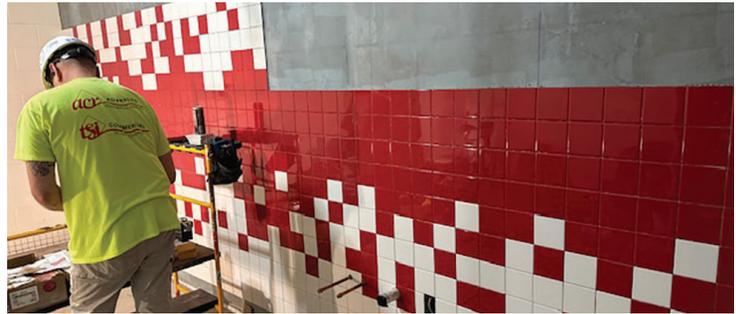
The Repair Café invites Southland residents to bring in broken or worn items for free repairs. Whether it's a small household object that needs a little carpentry work, a bike with a flat tire, a favorite shirt with a torn seam, or even a potted plant in distress, local volunteers and experts will be on hand to help bring these items back to life.

This free, community-centered event is the result of collaboration by the Southland Green Committee, a regional team of sustainability-minded partners that includes representatives from Flossmoor, Homewood, Park Forest and Richton Park, as well as the Flossmoor Green Commission, Flossmoor Public Library, Homewood Public Library, Richton Park Library, Flossmoor School District 161 and Homewood-Flossmoor High School.

The Repair Café is more than just a place to fix things. It is a space for neighbors to connect, learn new skills, and promote sustainability in everyday life. By reducing waste and extending the life of the things we use, the event aims to make a meaningful impact on both the environment and community spirit. Visit www.Flossmoor.org for more information.



Heather Hill and Serena Hills Ready to Welcome Students to Renewed Spaces



This summer brought exciting changes to our school community, especially at Heather Hill and Serena Hills Elementary Schools. These projects reflect our shared commitment to creating welcoming, well-equipped spaces where students can learn and thrive.

At Heather Hill, the new building addition is expected to be completed in August. It is already making a difference. The main office has been relocated to the northwest corner of the school to make it easier for families and visitors to access. This move also opened space for a new conference room and additional offices that will help staff better serve our students. The former office area is being transformed into a flexible classroom for small groups, along with a new teachers' lounge and staff workroom designed for collaboration and comfort.

Inside the building, renovations are giving classrooms and hallways a fresh start. One of the biggest changes was the expansion of Kindergarten Classroom 27, which now includes a bathroom to match the amenities in other Kindergarten rooms across the district. New furniture began arriving in late July, and updates to technology and classroom fixtures are helping create bright, modern spaces for students and staff.

At both Heather Hill and Serena Hills, interior updates included bathrooms, interior ceiling tiles, classroom furniture, interior doors, enhanced classroom technology, and new LED lighting throughout both buildings. In addition, classrooms have been repainted, each featuring an accent wall to add visual interest. We look forward to families seeing these improvements because they truly create a new experience for our students and teachers.

Looking ahead, more improvements are planned for Flossmoor Hills, Western Avenue and Parker Junior High. Thank you for supporting these projects and for helping Flossmoor School District 161 build the best possible learning environment for our children. Together, we are shaping the future of our schools and our community.

business spotlight

New AM & PM Opportunities on Sterling

Rising from the construction dust along Sterling Avenue this fall are two, shining new businesses. Meet Beyond Borders Café, owned by Flossmoor residents Christopher & Jennifer Zarozny, and Flossmoor Social, owned by the 7th Floor Hospitality Group, including Flossmoor resident Louis Morgan with Executive Chef Danny Bullock and General Manager Robert Burt. 7th Floor also operates the Embassy Cigar Lounge on Vollmer Road.



Owners Christopher & Jennifer Zarozny (at left) and their friendly staff are ready to serve you coffee, specialty beverages and pastries at Beyond Borders Cafe in downtown Flossmoor.

Beyond Borders Café ... Now Open!

Q: How would you describe your business?

A: Beyond Borders Café is an artisan coffee shop, offering a curated selection of premium coffees, health-focused beverages and light fare, designed to foster community unity.

Q: Who will your business appeal to?

A: Flossmoor's diverse, affluent community, including Metra commuters seeking quick, premium options, health-conscious professionals and residents looking for a social hub. The target audience spans a wide demographic with a focus on those valuing quality, convenience and inclusivity.

Q: What will your menu feature?

A: Single-origin coffees sourced globally (i.e., Ethiopia, Panama, Costa Rica) via Conscious Cup, alongside innovative options, including Gorilla Mind Energy Drinks, FitAid and Perfect Amino add-ons. Options will include nitro cold brews (smooth, nitrogen-infused coffee with a creamy texture) and freshly baked scones in various flavors.

Q: What are your hopes for Beyond Borders?

A: We hope to establish Beyond Borders as a successful investment and as a valuable addition to Flossmoor, fostering community connection and generating economic growth through increased foot traffic and sales tax revenue. We hope to expand the concept with later hours by adding a beer and wine service within a few months.

Q: Why Flossmoor?

A: The decision to open in Flossmoor was driven by the lack of local coffee shops, identified after living here for four years, and the availability of a suitable property. Our location's proximity to the Metra station and its position in the Central Business District offers a strategic opportunity to serve commuters and enhance the downtown area's vibrancy.

*1036 Sterling Ave. | www.BeyondBordersCafe.com
M-F 4:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**



General Manager Robert Burt, Executive Chef Danny Bullock and Owner Louis Morgan meet in front of Flossmoor Social, set to open in September on Sterling Avenue.

Flossmoor Social ... Opening in September!

Q: How would you describe your business?

A: Flossmoor Social is an upscale neighborhood restaurant, designed to bring city-style dining to our local community. The design will be stylish, yet comfortable, drawing inspiration from both classic bistros and contemporary lounges.

Q: Who will your business appeal to?

A: Those who value connection, conversation and quality. With a lively bar, a curated wine and cocktail program, and a menu built for sharing, Flossmoor Social is for all who are looking to celebrate the everyday. Our restaurant will be where great food meets good company.

Q: What will your menu feature?

A: It will blend American cuisine with a warm, social atmosphere, balancing sophistication and approachability. Featured items will include a Bull Young Glazed Seabass, made with Executive Chef Danny Bullock's custom Bull Young Bourbon, and a light, zesty and refreshing Sake Ginger Lemon Drop.

Q: What are your hopes for Flossmoor Social?

A: Our vision is to create a place for Flossmoor residents and the surrounding community to gather, eat, drink and celebrate — a welcoming space where neighbors become friends, milestones are shared and everyday moments are savored.

Q: Why Flossmoor?

A: Because this community is vibrant, engaged and deeply supportive of its local businesses. As residents ourselves, we feel a shared responsibility to invest in and elevate the place we call home. Our goal was to add a fresh layer to the diverse dining options already available, while celebrating and collaborating with the local talent that makes this community special. From serving craft beer from Flossmoor Station and Homewood Brewing Co. to working with local interior designer Jerese Twitty of Duckworth Home, our commitment to community runs deep.

1040 Sterling | www.7thFloorHospitality.com

Instagram: [@flossmoorsocial](https://www.instagram.com/flossmoorsocial)

*M-Th 3-10 p.m.; F 3-11 p.m.; Sat. Noon-11 p.m.; Sun. Noon-9 p.m.**

**As these are new businesses, hours are subject to change.*

flossmoor faces & places



Mayor Michelle Nelson swearing in Cecil Porter.

Porter Appointed as Village's 22nd Clerk

At the June 16 Board of Trustees meeting, Village Clerk Gina LoGalbo announced her resignation from the Board, due to increasing responsibilities in her professional career. Mayor Michelle Nelson and Trustees thanked her for her service to the community in this role and in many others. Residents were invited to apply to fill the vacancy until the next election.

At the July 21 Board of Trustees meeting, Mayor Nelson appointed Cecil Porter to the position; he was unanimously confirmed by the Village Board. Selected from amongst a strong pool of candidates, Porter is an attorney with Litchfield Cavo LLP, a Chicago-based, nationwide litigation law firm. He has more than 20 years of legal experience representing individuals, small businesses and major corporations in defense litigation. He has served on the Flossmoor Green Commission for two years and has volunteered at Village events for several years.

He is a member of the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association. Porter's J.D. degree was earned at Northern Illinois University's College of Law; he received his B.A. in Business & Accounting at Illinois College.

"Cecil's knowledge of law, strategic-thinking abilities and strong communication skills, combined with his passion for the Flossmoor community, makes him the right choice," says Nelson. "He will be an incredible addition to the Board through his continued service and care for the Village of Flossmoor."

New Deputy Police Chief Announced

Deputy Police Chief Douglas Merkle, a sworn officer in Flossmoor since 2010, most recently served the Village as a Police Sergeant. In early July, Police Chief Carl Estelle named him Deputy Chief in a strategic realignment in leadership



Deputy Chief Merkle



Officer Anoribe Nwannewuihe

for the Police Department. DC Merkle holds a bachelor's degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration from Western Illinois University. He recently completed the School of Police Staff and Command at Northwestern University's Center for Public Safety earlier this year. He has also been an active member of the ILEAS Mobile Field Force Mutual Aid Team for the past 12 years as squad leader.

"Deputy Chief Merkle brings a wealth of experience and a forward-thinking approach to public safety," says Chief Estelle. "His appointment reflects our commitment to building a leadership team that can effectively guide the department through a period of renewal and progress."

In Flossmoor, the Deputy Police Chief acts as second-in-command for the Department, assisting the Chief in managing and overseeing all aspects of Department operations.

Officer Nwannewuihe Joins Flossmoor

Police Officer Anoribe Nwannewuihe joined the Flossmoor Police Department this spring after four years with the Olympia Fields Police Department. From Chicago's South Side, he graduated from Lindbloom Math & Science Academy, then continued his studies at Daley College, where he played basketball for one year before transferring to Dominican University. There, he earned his degree in Rhetoric & Communications. After a few years discovering various career paths, Officer Nwannewuihe followed the steps of his uncle, a retired Chicago Police Department veteran, and joined the Olympia Fields Police Department in 2021. He joined Flossmoor in April this year; following his field training, he was introduced to the community at a Board meeting on July 21.

"Flossmoor is fortunate to welcome an officer who leads with integrity, works with passion and brings a broad, well-rounded skill set to serve our community with excellence," says Police Chief Estelle.

commission corner



Green Commission

The Flossmoor Green Commission has been busy throughout the summer. In July, Commissioners chose to cancel its in-person meeting to work in the community instead. They spent time weeding the pollinator patch in Leavitt Park and in the traffic circle nearest the park. They've also been working with teens on the Homewood-Flossmoor High School Organic Community Garden and teaching them experientially about native plants, vegetables and gardening.



Community Relations Commission

Our community connectors, the Commissioners from the Flossmoor Community Relations Commission, have been meeting and greeting with area residents all summer, helping out at events big and small. Here they are representing Flossmoor at the H-F Pride Fest in June in Homewood's Irwin Park.



Public Art Commission

July ended with a lovely tour of the sculptures in Leavitt Park, led by the Commissioners from the Flossmoor Public Art Commission. Attendees learned more about the seven pieces of art in the park and about the artists behind the work.

Village of Flossmoor

2800 Flossmoor Road
Flossmoor, IL 60422

flossmoor.org | [@FlossmoorIL](https://twitter.com/FlossmoorIL)

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

As summer gives way to my favorite season of all (football!), I'd like to thank you for your patience and care during a very busy construction season that was spent working on landmark projects, which will improve safety and beautify our Village for decades to come. Thank you for using caution around active job sites, as workers put the finishing touches on exciting projects throughout Flossmoor.

Regarding downtown improvements, I'm especially proud to share that we have two new businesses in our



Mayor Nelson with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin

Flossmoor Social is opening this September, featuring sophisticated decor with specialty cocktails and an elevated small-plate menu that's perfect for date night or an evening out with friends. These new openings represent a nearly \$400,000 investment in our community and, in addition to these new shops being a sign of economic growth, they're also a testament to our Village's reputation as a supportive and welcoming place for entrepreneurs. Please show your support for these new businesses and let these new owners know how excited we are to have them. Every purchase you make strengthens our local economy and keeps our neighborhoods thriving.

Our work to secure federal, state and county grants to aid with Flossmoor's long-term infrastructure goals is crucial and ongoing, as these efforts to secure outside funding help

central business district! Beyond Borders Café opened in August. The mood is nostalgic, yet hip, while the coffee and pastries are an aficionado-worthy experience.

reduce your property tax burden. I am extremely proud that we brought in more than \$7 million in grant funding from 2021-24. However, staff and I recently met with our federal representatives and several federal agencies to discuss how national spending cuts may impact our ability to obtain future grants. Although infrastructure projects are non-partisan and needed throughout our country, the outlook for the same amount of success was not optimistic. Even with a less than certain future, we remain committed to pursuing grant opportunities that will improve safety, delivery of services and sustainability throughout our community.

From block parties to community events, it's clear that the spirit of Flossmoor shines brightest when we come together. On Sept. 6, hundreds of volunteers will come together to support and cheer on more than 1,250 runners in the 6th Hidden Gem Half Marathon. Based on feedback from runners, the race is a perennial favorite because of the spirit that literally runs throughout our Village ... from cheerful neighbors in Baythorne, to gems in Ballantrae, to superheroes in Flossmoor Hills, to cheer squads and the H-F Marching Band at the high school, to Joseph the Drummer in Heather Hill, to Broadway themes in the Estates, to rainbows in Flossmoor Park, to Parker Junior High cheer teams and front yard parties in Old Flossmoor, the feeling is electric! Thank you for making the Hidden Gem the CARA Race of the Year in 2022 and 2023. Let's win it again in 2025!

As we celebrate the start of a new school year, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes to all our students, families, teachers, and school staff for a successful year ahead. Whether it's the first day of kindergarten or senior year, this season brings fresh opportunities to learn, grow and connect. Thank you to everyone who plays a role in supporting and uplifting our schools: you are helping shape the future of our Village. Thank you for volunteering, checking in on your neighbors, and sharing kind words. Every gesture, big or small, makes a difference. I am looking forward to seeing you out and about at OAKtoberfest, at a block party, at a local business, or cheering on our student-athletes and student-musicians under the Friday night lights!