



JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

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Blight Remediation Efforts in 2023

Learn how the City of Freeport is tackling blighted properties through increased nuisance inspections

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Freeport Fire Department shares critical safety tips for residents

Freeport's Newly Adopted 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Freeport Fire Department Awarded Leary Firefighters Grant



In December, the Freeport Fire Department was awarded a \$22,371 grant through the Leary Firefighters Foundation, which will allow the department to purchase ten thermal cameras. Currently, the department owns four of these cameras, and the additional cameras will allow each firefighter on a 14 firefighter shift to have access to a camera. These cameras aid firefighters in locating victims in low light and smog-like conditions.



From the Desk of Mayor Jodi Miller

Ushering in the new year can help reflect on past accomplishments, as well as set the goals for the coming months. The groundwork laid in 2023 has set the stage for a brighter, more vibrant Freeport in 2024

and beyond. I am immensely proud of our community's passion, dedication, and vision for a thriving future. Together, we are shaping a city that we can all be proud to call home.

In 2023, Freeport made substantial strides in blight remediation through rigorous nuisance inspections, surpassing several years' worth of expectations. The impact of these efforts is resonating beyond Freeport, drawing recognition from neighboring communities. We look forward to keeping up the momentum of demolishing blighted properties, as well as rebuilding to strengthen our city.

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Looking ahead, one of the most significant investments underway is the \$14 million roadwork project on Adams Avenue, Pearl City Road, Bradmar and Towne Drive, spanning a total of 2.3 miles. Furthermore, the collaborative efforts between the City of Freeport and Stephenson County have yielded significant support, with the County contributing \$500,000 towards paving projects. This partnership exemplifies the strength of intergovernmental cooperation to benefit our community.

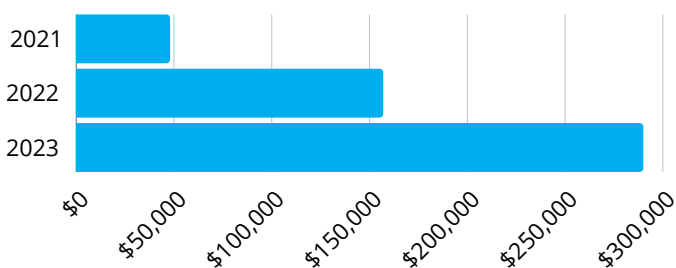
In other infrastructure projects planned for 2024, we are underway with the \$60 million investment in Phase I of the wastewater treatment plant. This phase includes crucial upgrades such as new headworks, chemically enhanced primary treatment, UV disinfection, and the construction of a new lab building.

I wish you all a wonderful year in 2024. Let love and kindness be your motivation in all you do and together we can show the world that Freeport is a great place to live, work and play!

2023 Progress in Blighted Property Remediation

In 2023, the City of Freeport increased its spending in property demolitions compared to 2022 and 2021. Increased nuisance inspections have had a positive correlation to blight remediation.

Annual Spending in Blighted Property Demolitions



The City was also awarded a \$300,000 grant for the demolition of blighted properties through the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IDHA) Strong Communities Program (SCP). This grant award could double the blight remediation efforts accomplished in 2023. In addition to the grant, the City has budgeted \$350,000 for demolitions in 2024.

Ongoing Street Construction and Winter-Related Closures



In a proactive effort to address essential construction needs while prioritizing winter safety, the City of Freeport has issued the following advisories for Bradmar & Towne Drive, as well as Adams Avenue:

Bradmar & Towne Drive Updates

- Motorists should expect traffic lane diversions and restrictions. These lane diversions may be affected by winter weather and plowing operations
- Construction activities during winter months will be limited. The street will remain aggregate/gravel and an asphalt mix that may be harder to traverse than regular roads. Please reduce speeds to prevent motor vehicle accidents

Adams Avenue Updates

- Adams Avenue is closed from Float to Chippewa and will be in effect from December 2023 to April 2024 to facilitate safe construction and infrastructure protection. **Only local traffic for residents residing in this area will be permitted at this time**
- Snow plowing of this area will be difficult to conduct due to installed utilities and the gravel driving surface. Fewer motorists traversing this area will assist in citizen safety and limit accidents during the winter season

City officials acknowledge the inconvenience these restrictions may cause and greatly appreciate resident cooperation during this winter period. Additional updates will be available on the City of Freeport's Facebook page and at cityoffreeport.org.



Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips

Since Thanksgiving 2023, the Freeport Fire Department has responded to 22 calls for gas leaks, unknown odors, or Carbon Monoxide (CO) calls. The Freeport Fire Department would like to share some safety tips provided by the National Fire Protection Association to protect residents from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Some tips to remember:

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level and in other locations where required by state law, codes, and standards
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturers instructions
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If batteries are low, replace them. If it still sounds, call the fire department
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors by an open window or door. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel arrive and declare your home is safe to re-enter
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine/motor indoors, even if garage doors are open
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors, and vent openings
- Gas and charcoal grills can produce CO. Only use them outdoors
- Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before the cold weather sets in. When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation
- Never use your oven to heat your home!

FPD's Civilian Police Academy Graduation



Congratulations to the recent Civilian Police Academy graduates! The Civilian Police Academy is an 8-week program designed to teach the public about the operations of law enforcement and the Freeport Police Department. Citizens graduate from the program by attending weekly classes, completing a patrol shift ride-along, and observing the 9-1-1 dispatch center.



In late 2023, the Freeport City Council came together to align its 2024-2026 goals for the City of Freeport. With City staff input, and strategic plan workshopping, a draft was created and then adopted by Council vote in December. Priority areas outlined in the strategic plan are:

- Reliable, Strong Infrastructure
- Safe and Inclusive Community
- Responsive, Efficient Government
- Connected and Accessible Community
- Strong Public/Private Partnerships
- Quality Communication and Engagement
- Effective Land Use
- Vibrant Arts and Culture Experiences

The City's strategic plan helps administration and the City Council prioritize funding and program development. The 2024-2026 Strategic Plan can be found on the cityoffreeport.org home page or via the search button available on the city website.



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NAME	OFFICE	TERM EXPIRES	PHONE	ADDRESS
FREEPORT OFFICIALS				
Jodi Miller	Mayor	2025	815.235.8200	314 W. Stephenson St.
Rob Boyer	City Manager		815.235.8208	314 W. Stephenson St.
Dovie Anderson	City Clerk	2025	815.235.8203	314 W. Stephenson St.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL				
Joy Sellers	Ald. at Large	2027	815.238.5358	314 W. Stephenson St.
Tom Klemm	Ald. 1st Ward	2027	815.978.0484	314 W. Stephenson St.
James Monroe	Ald. 2nd Ward	2025	801.698.1659	314 W. Stephenson St.
Rachel Simmons	Ald. 3rd Ward	2027	815.768.1299	314 W. Stephenson St.
Don Parker	Ald. 4th Ward	2025	815.275.1372	314 W. Stephenson St.
Cecelia Stacy	Ald. 5th Ward	2027	815.908.9814	314 W. Stephenson St.
Gregory Shadle	Ald. 6th Ward	2025	815.232.6208	314 W. Stephenson St.
Larry Sanders	Ald. 7th Ward	2027	815.908.9268	314 W. Stephenson St.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS				
Wayne Duckmann	Community Dev. Director		815.235.8221	314 W. Stephenson St.
Ashley Huffines	Library Director		815.233.3000	100 E. Douglas St.
Scott Miller	Fire Chief		815.235.8217	1650 S. Walnut St.
Michelle Richter	Finance Director		815.297.1300	314 W. Stephenson St.
Chris Shenberger	Police Chief		815.235.8231	320 W Exchange St.
<i>Vacant</i>	Communications Director		815.801.8008	314 W. Stephenson St.
Curt Suttman	Dir. of Information Tech.		815.801.8003	314 W. Stephenson St.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT NUMBERS		
City Animal Control		815.235.8210
Community & Economic Development		815.235.8202
Police Department (<i>Non-Emergency</i>)		815.235.8222
Public Works-Street Department		815.235.8210
Water & Sewer Billing Office		815.233.0111
Trash Collection- Gills Disposal		815.233.5644

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