



# Village News



## Mayor's Desk

### Signs of Spring Are Around Us

After a long winter and COVID isolation, spring is especially welcome this year.

The pandemic has shown us how fragile and vulnerable we can be. Many of us realized the incredible value of our family, friends and neighbors and have reordered our priorities to take care of others. Spring is also a reminder of the fragility of the Earth, the planet we live on.

This month we celebrate Earth Day with the theme of Restore Our Earth. In Franklin Park, we believe every day is Earth Day. We have made a steadfast commitment to sustainability, as well as to practices that do not damage our planet but help heal it. There are many ways we can help protect and restore our home planet. Recycling properly, stopping the use of single use plastics and shopping carefully to avoid overpackaging will help to decrease the impact on landfills.

It is also a good time to look at your own energy usage. Nicor Gas is offering free Home Energy Assessments and providing free water-saving and weatherization kits and discounts on other energy-saving products. You can learn more about these programs and other topics on the Village's Sustainability Page at vofp.com.

Spring is also gardening season. Last month we wrote about natural lawn care. This month you will find an article on

pollinator gardens on Page 3. Pollinator gardens are crucial to sustaining our ecosystem and maintaining and enhancing crop yields. More than 70% of the food we eat relies on pollinators. Each month we will offer ideas that will save money, save energy, and promote sustainable practices.

### QUIET ZONE UPDATE

I have received many inquiries regarding why train horns are so loud. Freight trains horns are automatically activated by a Federally mandated Positive Train Control system. Federal law dictates the decibel level of the horn and the length the horn is sounded. The engineer has no discretion under this system. The train horns are automatically activated by a computer system inside each locomotive.

However, when a community qualifies for a Quiet Zone, the Positive Train Control System in every locomotive is programmed to remove the automatic triggering of the mandatory sounding of the horn.

As you know, the Village has been aggressively pursuing a Train Horn Quiet Zone with the Village of River Grove for several years. We secured several grants to help us to complete safety improvements which will allow our community to be designated a Quiet Zone. Construction work on the project began last year and should be concluded

### Branch Removal Schedule for 2021

The Village will begin regular branch removal service the week of April 19. Place reasonably sized branches on the front parkway (not in the alley) by 7 AM on Monday of the pick-up week indicated below. The branches will be removed sometime by the end of the day Friday.

If your branches are put out late (after 7 AM on Monday of the pick-up week), it is possible that you could miss the pick-up. Pick-up begins promptly and if trucks have already driven through your section of town, your branches will not be collected until the next scheduled pick-up week. Please note that if storm clean-up is necessary, the Village may need to delay a scheduled branch pick-up. In this situation, we will resume branch collection where we left off the following week.

If you have any questions, please call (847) 671-8252.

#### Pick up weeks are:

- April 19
- May 3, 17 & 31
- June 14 & 28
- July 12 & 26
- Aug. 9 & 23
- Sept. 6 & 20
- Oct. 4 & 18
- Nov. 1

Please note that the following will not be removed:

- Woody branches under 1/2 inch in diameter
- Leaves, vines, herbaceous plants and weeds
- Large stumps, roots and root balls
- Wooden fencing and construction lumber
- Branches & tree debris generated by contractors

### Yard Waste Pick-up and Street Sweeping

Yard waste pick-up will begin on April 5. Place yard waste in brown biodegradable bags and put out on garbage day with your recycling. Purchase bags at local grocery and hardware stores. Residents can select alternatives to bagging yard waste such as mulching mowers, leaf shredders or backyard compost piles to help you and the Village to save money!

Village street sweeping has begun. Please check posted signs for information on dates, times, and parking restrictions. If you have questions, please call (847) 671-8252.

### Wood Chips Available to Village Residents

Wood chips are available free of charge for pick up only (delivery is not available) at the Village's Street's Division facility located at 9501 W. Belmont Ave. Please go to the rear of the building and help yourself to the wood chips in the concrete bin. Wood chips can be picked up on Monday through Friday after 3:30 PM and anytime on Saturday and Sunday beginning April 1 through Oct 31, or while supplies last. Wood chips are for Franklin Park residents only and not for commercial use.

### Apply for Sidewalk Program by May 1

The Village is accepting applications for the 50/50 Sidewalk Program to replace damaged and cracked concrete on the public sidewalk near your home. Homeowners and the Village will share the cost evenly. Please call (847) 671-8217 to be placed on the list for this summer. The Village will contact you to make an appointment to discuss the details. If you apply after May 1, you will be placed on the list for next year.

### Students Can Apply Now for Summer Job with the Village

The Village is currently hiring students for part-time summer jobs at Village Hall and in the Public Works Department. Applicants must be at least 16 years old, currently enrolled in high school or college and have a "C" average. Salary begins at \$9 per hour. Go to vofp.com to download an application and guidelines for the program.



Barrett F. Pedersen  
Mayor

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Village Clerk

Village Trustees:  
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Gil Hagerstrom  
John Johnson  
Bill Ruhl  
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SPRING

Mayor's Desk Continued on Page 2. ▶



◀ Mayor's Desk Continued from Page 1.

by summer of this year.

Metra is implementing pedestrian safety improvements that have a total cost of \$1,573,715.00. The Village was successful in obtaining grants from several Federal and State sources in the amount of \$1,416,343.50. Completion of the Pedestrian Safety Improvements will allow the two Villages to qualify for the Quiet Zone.

However, the Quiet Zone does not prohibit the engineers from blowing their horns, but it does relieve them of the obligation of sounding them. If the engineer observes a vehicle or pedestrian on the tracks, the engineer will sound the horn.

We are continuing to work with Canadian Pacific Railroad to ensure that once the Quiet Zone is implemented, the Village will experience significantly less train horn noise.

**FRANKLIN PARK FEST & RAILROAD DAYS**

Speaking of trains, this year our beloved Franklin Park Fest will be postponed. We all miss gathering together in person, but we do not anticipate that Illinois will be fully open by June to allow for the hosting of festivals. We hope to reschedule the event for later this year and will offer updates as to when we can safely host the event.

Enjoy Spring—sustainably!

*Barrett F. Pedersen*  
**Barrett F. Pedersen**

**COVID-19 Vaccine Information Update**

The State of Illinois has announced that all individuals aged 16 and older will be eligible to receive the vaccine starting April 12, 2021. Vaccine doses are expected to remain in limited supply as the State works to ensure vulnerable populations get vaccinated. Supplies should be available to those in the expanded phases by late April or early May.

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) is sponsoring community vaccination sites and is continuing to open new sites. Triton College is the closest community vaccination site. Please note that these sites all require an appointment and do not take walk-ins. Appointments can be made at <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov/>. If you do not have internet access or need assistance scheduling, call (833) 308-1988 from 7 AM to 7 PM Monday through Friday.

If you do not have access to the internet and have not yet registered with the County, Leyden Family Services is available to assist you to register to receive a vaccine if you are eligible. Please contact them at (847) 455-3929 on Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and someone will assist you.

Please continue to adhere to the three W's -- Wash your hands, Wear a mask, Watch your distance, and make every effort to get vaccinated when it is your turn.



▲ Officer Don Kaminski (on the left) and Officer Robb Emmett (on the right) congratulate Officer Chris Quiroga (center) on his retirement after 25 years of service with the Police Department.



▲ Thank you Officer Donald Kaminski for 30 years of service to our community!

**Plant Milkweed to Support Monarch Butterflies**

More than beautiful, monarch butterflies contribute to the health of our planet. Our food supplies and ecosystems depend on healthy pollinator populations. Unfortunately, the monarch butterfly populations have declined by 90% in the last 20 years! Changes in climate have resulted in more out-of-season storms, severe temperature drops and excessive rain. The combination of both wet and cold is deadly and has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of millions of butterflies.

But it is not too late to get involved in monarch conservation and help to protect their migration for future generations. Start by creating a habitat for monarchs by planting native milkweed to feed caterpillars. Milkweed is the single most important source of food for the threatened monarch butterfly. By planting a patch or two in your garden, you will contribute to the continued existence of the species. The butterflies use the plants for all stages of their lifecycle, beginning with hatching their eggs into tiny caterpillars, to transforming into butterflies, and for laying new eggs.

Plant as much as milkweed as possible to fuel monarch feeding and breeding. Try to include at least six plants. Provide a nearby water source for your butterflies; a birdbath or a large potting saucer filled with water. Planting other pollinator-friendly plants in a comprehensive butterfly garden is a good idea. Milkweed spreads aggressively and may not be ideal for most mixed border gardens unless you are specifically creating a butterfly garden.

Do not use pesticides in a butterfly garden! Once a garden goes chemical-free, it establishes a good balance of beneficial, predatory insects, as well as providing songbirds with a source of food. Many of the healthiest gardens are those that are entirely free of chemical use. Go to [plantmilkweed.org](http://plantmilkweed.org) to learn more about creating habitat for monarchs.



**Clean-up After Your Pets**

For the safety and enjoyment of everyone, the Village is asking dog owners to please keep your furry friend on a leash and to always clean-up after them, including on your own property. Dog waste is full of more disease-causing bacteria and parasites than most types of waste and can be harmful to humans and spread disease to other dogs. Remember to carry extra waste bags with you wherever you roam with your four-legged pal. Your neighbors thank you for your consideration and for practicing good pet owner etiquette.



▲ Thanks to a grant, the Village was able to establish a butterfly garden west of the gazebo on Belmont Avenue. Trustee Karen Special shared the photo of the milkweed plant in her yard with a caterpillar on it. Residents are encouraged to plant milkweed to support monarch butterflies.

**Apply Now for Senior Grass-Cutting Program**

The Village is currently accepting applications for the Senior Grass Cutting Program, which will run from April until the end of October. Qualified seniors will pay \$13 per cut. Applications have been mailed to past participants. New applicants should call (847) 671-8240 to apply. If you have previously been on the grass or snow program and your health condition has not changed, you will NOT need to send in a new doctor's note but WILL need to complete an application again this year. You must be living on the premises to qualify. Space is limited so please apply early!