NOVEMBER 2026

KEEPING POSTED >

Gurnee News

Department Updates

Events

Seasonal Reminders



MAYOR'S MESSAGE



The holidays have arrived and there are many events throughout the Village that you can attend. On Thanksgiving morning at 8:00 a.m., the Jon Callaghan Memorial Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run & Walk gets underway at Gurnee Fire Station 1 on Old Grand Avenue. This charitable community event honors the memory of Jon Callaghan, an 11 year old local student who passed away in 1997 after a brave battle with neuroblastoma, a rare pediatric cancer. The proceeds from this event are distributed to a variety of local charities.

Just a few hours later Gurnee Community Church (GCC) sponsors a Thanksgiving dinner for community members and sailors from the Great Lakes Naval Base. You can either come for dinner which is served at noon and eat with the sailors, or you can register in advance to volunteer to help. It is an opportunity to reflect with gratitude on the many men and women who have chosen to serve our country and protect the freedoms we enjoy each day. Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza will be Friday, November 20, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Santa will make his first appearance of the season along with horse drawn trolley rides, a carousel, fire pits with smores, craft stations, free pizza and other treats and much more. The Warren Township Food Pantry will be collecting non-perishable food items.

Another favorite holiday time event is the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train. This event is on December 8, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with the train estimated to arrive around 5:00 p.m. It features a fully decorated train with musical performances along Depot Road. The Northern Illinois Food Bank will be collecting non-perishable food items.

I recognize that for many the holidays are a very enjoyable time and yet there are many that find the season incredibly painful. It can feel lonely when family isn't nearby or when you've lost people who were important to you. My hope for you is that you find a sense of comfort and support in knowing that you're understood and not alone in what you're going through. Even when it's hard to make sense of why things happen, I hope you can rest in knowing that God is good and He is for you.

My prayer is that, as a Village, we support and uplift those around us in both moments of celebration and times of difficulty.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me to discuss whatever you have on your mind.

Sincerely,
Mayor Tom Hood

GURNEE NEWS

2026 BEST OF GURNEE AWARD WINNERS

The Village of Gurnee is proud to announce the 2026 Best of Gurnee Award winners!

Brittane's Event Center received the “Pay It Forward” Award for its commitment to supporting veterans, military recruits, families experiencing food insecurity, community organizations, and others in need.

Destino Ristorante_received the “Bringing Me Home” Award for creating a welcoming atmosphere where guests can connect while enjoying authentic Italian flavors and outstanding hospitality.

Portillo's received the “Special Needs Champion” Award for helping students of varying abilities build practical skills, confidence, independence, and valuable workplace experience.



Brittane’s Event Center


Destino Ristorante


Portillo’s

2026 GURNEE QUEENS



Mayor Tom Hood and the Village Board officially recognized our amazing 2026 Gurnee Community Pageant titleholders! We are so incredibly proud to have these inspiring young leaders representing our community this year!

Miss Gurnee - Bella Payton
Junior Miss Gurnee - Maddie Bugner
Little Miss Gurnee - Avery Bell
Tiny Miss Gurnee - Gianna Colunga-Gonzalez

NEW ILLINOIS E-BIKE RULES

New Illinois rules for e-bikes, e-scooters and other electric devices take effect January 1, 2027. Requirements vary by device and may include age, licensing and restrictions on where you can ride. Know the rules before you ride! Visit www.ilsos.gov for more information.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: MEET HEATHER GALAN



Heather Galan joined the Village of Gurnee in 2019 and has served as Director of Public Works since 2021. She previously served the Village as Engineer and Assistant Director of Public Works. She is a licensed professional engineer and honors graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Heather began her civil engineering career in the private consulting sector before transitioning to public service with the Lake County Public Works Department. During her time with Lake County, she advanced through several engineering roles, ultimately serving as Engineering Supervisor.

Heather is also an active member of the American Public Works Association (APWA) Lake Branch and brings extensive engineering, leadership and public service experience to her role with the Village. She is passionate about helping residents of all ages understand the essential role Public Works plays in daily life. Through career fairs, open houses, touch-a-truck events, and field trips, she and her team share the many rewarding career opportunities within the profession.

Every day, Gurnee’s Public Works team maintains the systems and services that keep the community running, from drinking water, water meters, and sanitary and storm sewer systems to roads, sidewalks, streetlights, signs, trees, landscaping, and Village fleet services. The team also helps showcase community pride by installing Hometown Hero and holiday banners, as well as creating holiday lighting displays at Welton Plaza, the Police Department, and Village Hall.

When severe weather or other emergencies occur, Public Works is a key part of the Village’s response team. Whether responding to windstorms, flooding, or heavy snow, Heather and the entire Public Works team stand ready to keep Gurnee safe, welcoming, and moving throughout every season.

HOMETOWN HERO BANNER PROGRAM

In honor of Veterans Day, Gurnee’s Hometown Heroes banners were displayed along O’Plaine Road, recognizing local veterans and active-duty military members for their service. Know a Hometown Hero? Nominations for the Memorial Day display are due April 23, 2027. Visit the Village website to nominate a hero.

COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



NEW BUSINESSES

Chris' Chicken
1810 N Delany Rd

Ellie Mental Health
1790 Nations Dr

Gurnee Community Bank
7320 Grand Ave

Reencuentro Counseling
501 N Riverside Dr

Sole Seekers
3701 Grand Ave

Sweet Honey Cafe
5101 Washington St

Toys R Us, Rally House, Nali Jewelers, Sophia's Mexican Grill
Gurnee Mills

COMING SOON

Dutch Bros Coffee
7340 Grand Ave

IKEA, SkyZone
Gurnee Mills

Obsidian Stems, Mehfil Coffee House
401 N Route 21

Paintball Explosion
5710 W Des Plaines Ct

QuikTrip
1207 N Route 41

Seasons at Gurnee
1440-1560 Tri-State Pkwy

Sweeties Bake Shop
5101 Washington St

Trio Fuel Station
4885 Grand Ave

Wells Fargo
6577 Grand Ave

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM

The Village of Gurnee's Small Business Capital Grant Program helps eligible local businesses invest in improvements that support their growth and success. Business owners are encouraged to visit the Village website to review program details and apply. Please reach out with any questions about eligibility, the application process, or eligible project expenses.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES



The Play Loft
5101 Washington St



Suzy's Swirl
5101 Washington St



Dearly Quilted
1333 N Delany Rd



7 Eleven
3688 Grand Ave



Abuela's Market
Gurnee Mills - Entry J



BIGGBY Coffee
3430 Grand Ave

Welcome to Gurnee!

SHOP SMALL

CELEBRATE SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY IN GURNEE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2026

SHOP | DINE LOCAL gurnee ILLINOIS SHOP | DINE SMALL

POLICE AND FIRE

FIRE DEPARTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

During Fire Prevention Week, Gurnee firefighters visited Woodland Elementary School, connecting with approximately 1,200 students while teaching important fire safety lessons. Students practiced “Stop, Drop, and Roll” and watched firefighters put on their protective gear, helping them learn what to expect from firefighters during an emergency.

The Department also welcomed its newest member, Firefighter/Paramedic James Hajewski in October.







Recently Public Works, Police and Fire Department staff participated in Navig8 Lake County, an event that connects middle and high school students from across Lake County with a variety of career paths. Staff spoke with students about career opportunities in Public Works, law enforcement and the fire service, providing a firsthand look at the many ways local government employees serve the community.









GURNEE POLICE CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY





The Gurnee Police Department has been busy connecting with the community! In recognition of National Coffee with a Cop Day, officers joined the team at a local Starbucks, donned the signature green aprons, helped serve coffee and spent time visiting with residents.

Students and staff from Warren Township High School’s O’Plaine Campus visited the Police Department for station tours as part of their government and law classes.

The Department also celebrated a special connection between Detective Kelly Hansen and Gurnee’s senior community. Detective Hansen regularly visits local senior living facilities, building friendships and serving as a trusted resource. Recently, one resident presented her with a personally painted piece of artwork in recognition of September 11 and appreciation for law enforcement.



Detective Hansen brought a group of Intermediate School students to the Gurnee Police Department for a behind-the-scenes tour. Students met Public Education Specialist Mr. Smits and comfort dog Mira, visited with the Chief of Police, sat in a squad car and learned more about the many roles officers serve in the community.



The Department’s School Resource Officers have been working closely with students throughout the school year, providing mentorship, promoting safety and helping build positive relationships between youth and law enforcement.

The Woodland community celebrated Red Ribbon Week! This year the theme is: "Make a Difference. Be a Hero. Stay Drug Free." The PBIS Student Leaders at Woodland Intermediate worked with Detective Hanson to create a banner.



PUBLIC WORKS

SNOW & ICE CONTROL

When winter weather arrives, the Gurnee Public Works Department is ready to keep our roads safe and moving. Village crews begin snow and ice control operations as conditions require and are responsible for clearing Village-owned streets. Several major roadways through Gurnee, however, are maintained by the State of Illinois or Lake County.



Residents can help crews work safely and efficiently by moving vehicles off the street when snow begins to accumulate and removing portable basketball hoops, benches, decorations and other items from the street right-of-way. When shoveling or snow blowing, keep snow on your property or the adjacent parkway rather than pushing it into the roadway. Residents are also encouraged to clear approximately three feet around fire hydrants so they remain accessible during an emergency.

Driveway Tip: When facing the street, try piling snow on the right side of your driveway. This can help reduce the amount of snow pushed back across your driveway when a plow passes. While some snow at the end of driveways is unavoidable, this simple step can help minimize it.

WHO PLOWS MY ROAD?

The Village of Gurnee plows municipally owned streets, while several major roadways are maintained by other agencies.

- Lake County DOT maintains Hunt Club, Washington, O'Plaine, Gages Lake, Sunset, Stearns School, Greenleaf (south of Washington), Dilleys (north of Route 132) and Delany (north of Route 41).
- IDOT maintains Routes 132, 120, 45, 41 and 21.

WINTER MAILBOX REMINDER



Before the snow starts to fall, take a few minutes to check your mailbox. Make sure it is secure, in good condition and properly positioned to help prevent damage during snow and ice operations.

Public Works crews review snow routes each fall and will contact residents if they notice a mailbox that may need attention, allowing time to make adjustments before winter weather arrives.



PARKING REMINDER

Keep Streets Clear For Snowplows

When 2 inches or more of snow has fallen, parking is prohibited on all public streets for up to 12 hours after the snowfall or until the snow has been removed, whichever comes first. Keeping vehicles off the street gives snowplows the room they need to clear the entire roadway and helps prevent vehicles from being plowed in.

PUBLIC WORKS IN THE COMMUNITY

Gurnee Public Works has been busy introducing local students to the many careers and services that keep our community running. Staff participated in Training in the Park, welcomed River Trail students to Village Hall to learn about local government operations, and attended the Lake County Tech Campus Career Fair, where students explored how careers in automotive services, welding, construction and other skilled trades connect to opportunities in local government.







On October 22, Gurnee Public Works held its annual Snowplow Rodeo to prepare for the winter season. Staff completed a written exam covering vehicle safety, operations, and snowplow equipment knowledge. Drivers then put their skills to the test on a timed obstacle course featuring simulated parked cars, serpentine turns, narrowing and offset roads, inside and outside curves and backing around a corner. The rodeo provides a valuable skills refresher and encourages staff to improve each year through friendly competition. Fleet services staff have assembled all of the plow trucks and tested their functionality so our drivers are well prepared for what Mother Nature has in store. Plow drivers have received their truck assignments and completed dry runs to familiarize themselves with their routes, ensuring crews are prepared and ready to respond when winter weather arrives.

FINANCE

LOCAL SPENDING BUILDS A STRONGER GURNEE



Real Savings FOR GURNEE RESIDENTS

Because the Village of Gurnee does not levy a municipal property tax, electric or natural gas utility tax, or grocery tax, a typical homeowner saves an estimated:

$1,200
PER YEAR
OR ABOUT $100 PER MONTH

No Municipal Property Tax	-$950 PER YEAR
No Electric or Natural Gas Utility Tax	-$175 PER YEAR
No Municipal Grocery Tax (on all food purchases)	-$156 PER YEAR

Estimates are based on a typical Gurnee household and comparable rates in nearby communities. Assumes all food spending is purchased at grocery stores.

HOW GURNEE IS FUNDED

SALES TAX | FOOD & BEVERAGE TAX | HOTEL TAX | AMUSEMENT TAX

63% OF GENERAL FUND REVENUES ARE FUNDED BY THESE TAXES

EVERYDAY SPENDING SUPPORTS:

POLICE | PERMITTING & CODE ENFORCEMENT | PUBLIC WORKS | FIRE | INFRASTRUCTURE & MORE



Every dollar spent at a Gurnee business helps generate the sales, food and beverage, hotel and amusement taxes that keep our community strong and support the services, amenities and quality of life we all enjoy.

SHOP LOCAL. KEEP GURNEE THRIVING.

- Supports local businesses and jobs
- Strengthens our local economy
- Helps maintain high-quality services and amenities
- Keeps Gurnee a vibrant place to live, work and visit

EVENTS

Holiday Lights / Luces Festivas

AT WELTON PLAZA · EN LA WELTON PLAZA

TIS' THE SEASON TO CELEBRATE ALL THAT'S MERRY AND BRIGHT: Speaking of bright…join us to kick-off the holidays with a festive holiday light display at the 6th annual Holiday Lights event at Welton Plaza!

Enjoy a festive horse-drawn trolley ride, a round on the carousel, firepits and s'mores, free pizza, craft stations, photo-ops, and more! Special guests include Gurnee Park District Above the Barre Dance Team, Lakeshore Singers, Gurnee Mayor Tom Hood and everyone's favorite jolly fellow – Santa Claus! Help spread the holiday spirit by bringing non-perishable food donations for the Warren Township Food Pantry during the event.









32ND ANNUAL JON CALLAGHAN MEMORIAL TURKEY TROT

Thursday, November 26 | 8:00 a.m.

The 32nd Annual Jon Callaghan Memorial Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run & Walk returns to Gurnee this holiday season! This longtime community tradition brings residents together in a fun, relaxed atmosphere while raising money for two important causes: The Jon Callaghan Memorial Fund and the Gurnee Community Church Youth Work Camp.

For event information and registration, visit gurneeturkeytrot2026.eventbrite.com



CPKC HOLIDAY TRAIN

Tuesday, December 8 | 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Gather the family and kick off the holiday season with the arrival of the Holiday Train in Gurnee, on Tuesday, December 8, 2026. This FREE event will take place from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) Holiday Train is estimated to arrive at 5:00 p.m., followed by a holiday concert starting at 5:15 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring nonperishable food items or make a monetary donation to support the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

GURNEE
COMMUNITY OF OPPORTUNITY
325 N. O'Plaine Rd.
Gurnee, IL 60031

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325 N. O'Plaine Rd.

Village Hall: 847-599-7500
Utility Billing: 847-599-7525
Community Dev.: 847-599-7550
Police Non-Emergency:
847-599-7000
Public Works: 847-599-6800
www.gurneeil.gov

Like us or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, X and LinkedIn!

This newsletter is published by the Village of Gurnee. To provide feedback, please contact: smichael@gurneeil.gov

UPCOMING VILLAGE MEETINGS

Village Board
November 23 - December 7 - December 21

Planning & Zoning Board
November 18 - December 2 - December 16

Village Board and Planning & Zoning Board meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at Gurnee Village Hall, 325 N. O'Plaine Road.

Village Board meetings are held on Mondays.

Planning & Zoning Board meetings on Wednesdays.

Dates and times are subject to change.

Watch live on the Village YouTube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/@VillageofGurnee

Community Partners

CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP

LRS will collect real Christmas trees throughout January on your regular service day. Place trees at the curb by 6:00 a.m. with all decorations removed and no plastic bags. Trees taller than 6 feet must be cut in half.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CHANGES

Garbage and recycling collection will be delayed one day for residents with service on or after December 25 and January 1.

Village offices will be closed December 24, December 25 and January 1.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

Stay informed when it matters most! Sign up for the Village of Gurnee's Regroup Emergency Notification System to receive important emergency alerts, severe weather notifications, road closures and other public safety updates by phone, text, email or app.

SCAN ME!

