



The Villager

September 2022

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- Godfrey Fall Festival Schedule
- "Inside Baseball" of Economic Development
- Getting To Know Village Staff — Laura Dixon
- The Great Godfrey "Hemp" Maze?
- Featured Business of the Month: Lauritzen and Ford Country Financial
- Oh, and one more thing...

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**You can see your future from
here.**



Michael J. McCormick

Mayor

A Quick Rundown On Development Projects



The eight pickle ball courts at Glazebrook Park had a soft opening on Saturday, September 3. The courts are open from sun-up to sun-down, on a 'first come - first serve' basis. Currently, the time limit per court is 1 1/2 hours when others are waiting to play. For now, the players are asked to self-monitor their time on the court. Given the popularity of the sport, high usage of the courts is expected over time. When that extended usage develops, formal time management will be implemented.



The construction phase of the new Dollar Tree has been completed by the developer, American Realty. The building has been released from the developer to the Dollar Tree corporation. Efforts are underway to put the final touches on the facility with store opening expected in the next few weeks.



Demolition of the two buildings at the end of Stamper Lane and Godfrey Road is pending the disconnection of gas lines into the structures. The valve is, unfortunately, under Godfrey Road. As disconnecting the utility line will cause traffic disruptions, Ameren and the Illinois Department of Transportation are coordinating the disconnection of the utility.



Glazebrook Park Godfrey Fall Festival Sept. 24, 2022

11:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.

- 11:00 a.m. Maze opens
- 11:00 a.m. Vendors, Bounce House and Petting Zoo (Open all day)
- 12:00 p.m. Corn Cob eating contest
- 1:00 p.m. Corn Shuck Off
- 2:00 p.m. Treasure hunt in the Corn Crib
- 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Godfrey Fire District Fire Truck
- 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Live Music by: Back In The Saddle

Did you know.....?

A survey based on more than 300 interviews with American human resources managers who work at companies with 20 or more employees reveals that 39 percent of managers believe Tuesday is the most productive day of the week.



**If you would like to receive the
monthly issue of "The Villager" by
email, please contact Jim Mager at:
jmager@godfreyil.org**

Some “Inside Baseball” of Economic Development



Attracting retailers to a community is a challenging proposition. It

takes a lot of work and a very proactive stance. Waiting for national retailing brands to show up for business in a community is a strategy, but it will likely result in a rather long wait.

Often times, community leaders think the way to attract and recruit retailers is to have a variety of financial incentives available to lure businesses. On the other hand, business development officers of the national brand retailers see time as the important asset. In other words, they want to have customers and put money in the cash registers as soon as possible.

Community administration tends to move much slower than the private sector. As such, time can often be what kills a development deal. If communities can be proactive and efficient, then they can use the asset of time as a development incentive. Being able to save the developer and the business time may be more effective than financial incentives.

National brands, be they franchises or corporate owned stores, need to attract investors. In the end, what brings about investor confidence are two factors:

1. increasing existing store sales; or,
2. building new locations.

These national brands normally make an annual announcement on how many new locations they will open over the next year. And while they are making an annual announcement, the longer term outlook is typically five years out. As a general rule, opening a new location is typically a 2 to 3-year process. What makes up that process is evaluating multiple potential sights, conducting due diligence, engaging in market evaluation, acquiring a desirable property, construction of facilities; and ultimately, opening the location.

Through the process:

- the retailer drives the decision making,

- only a small percentage of proposed sites equal openings
- it is a long procedure; and
- it is all about PROFIT.

While a community's profile might be a good match for a retailer's market, other things go into the evaluation of a potential location. Those other factors can include;

- local business environment,
- cost of land acquisition,
- construction costs,
- state and local regulation and ordinances,
- how receptive the community is to having the retailer; and,
- the time it takes to get an operation up and running.

Communities work to attract retailers and new businesses by making available various development incentives. Development incentives can be broken down into two basic categories; time and money.

Under the category of time are:

- **Zoning and permitting**

How quickly can a retailer secure all zoning requirements and permits?

- **Control of land**

Who controls the land? The community or private entity. If the land is community-owned, then the community has control of the land.

- **Due diligence studies**

Archeological or environmental? Is there an opportunity for the community to provide such studies in advance of development?

Under the category of money are:

- **Cash**

Financial incentives that may be in the form of grants.

- **Land or assets**

By Illinois statute, any village owned land must be sold at a price at least 80% of the appraised value.

- **Tax abatements**

Within Godfrey's Enterprise Zone, there are certain sales tax abatement on construction materials.

Community leaders often have an aversion to the risk of providing financial incentives. Concurrently, retailers often see uncertainty and long time frames as the greater risk in evaluating a business deal. In putting a

viable deal together, it would be beneficial for both sides to understand those perceived risk factors and work to meet in the middle.

Excerpts from a webinar given by Retail Strategies, "Time Kills Deals, Time as a Retail Development Incentive," August 23, 2022.



Several hundred Canadian geese enjoy the new addition to Glazebrook Park on August 24, 2022.



It is fairly common to receive requests about available properties or sites for business locations.

When these inquiries occur, the lead time for response is usually limited — sometimes a matter of only a few days. Given the importance of a quick reply, it becomes necessary to identify available property and related information ahead of time.

The type of information requested in these inquiries is:

- the availability of the property,
- the size and type of any of structures

Godfrey 311
Electronic 311
Smartphone App

Easily report potholes, broken street lights and other problems.

Call or email local officials, the police department, city offices and others.

Access activity calendars, receive village alerts and more.

Getting To Know Village Staff — Laura Dixon, Director of Building and Zoning



Is the neighbor's yard not mowed? Is there a derelict car down the street? Is the electrical in the room addition wired safely? Who needs to be contacted to get information on property permitting for construction? Meet Laura Dixon, Director of Building and Zoning (B & Z), whose job is making sure these types of issues are addressed.

Ms. Dixon started her work with the Village in 1993, starting in the Supervisors office doing General Assistance. When the Village was incorporated, she transferred to the newly formed Building & Zoning Department as the assistant. In 2013 she became the director. As a requirement for the job, she has received certifications in the International Building Codes and has many hours of continued education to keep the certificates current.

With the help of incredible assistants in the B & Z office, a very dynamic environment is made a little less hectic and much more efficient in assisting people with information about permitting in the different areas of Godfrey. This might include items such as setback lines, what types of business are allowed in the various zoning areas, and what type of structures can be built in various locations.

Much of Laura's time is spent with managing zoning changes, handling requests for variances, final plat development and dealing with zoning ordinance development. In dealing with the above tasks, she works with the Building and Zoning Board to make appropriate recommendations the Godfrey Board of Trustees.

Laura and her staff are responsible for issuing permits and making inspections of new construction, fences, sheds, pools, electrical installations, plumbing, solar panels, and signage. The importance of these inspections is illustrated by a recent inspection that found an

electrical installation could have resulted in serious injury, or death, had the people actually used the new hot tub.

The B & Z department deals with violation complaints on grass, inoperable vehicles, and building violations. Attention to these violations are done on a complaint bases and typically can be done anonymously. If the violation does not get corrected, Laura then issues a citation for the property owner to appear in court, which requires her presence at each hearing.

The challenges of her department are enforcing the ordinances and building codes. "I have learned that there are a lot of differing circumstances when there are violations and we try to work with our residents to resolve the situation," said Ms. Dixon.

Laura says that a favorite part of her job is the relationships that have been built over the years with the residents and builders. Laura says, "I have met many people in my almost 30 years and have made many friendships. I admire the Mayor for all the progress he has made for Godfrey and all the department heads for their assistance in my job and all they do in their departments to make Godfrey a good place to raise a family."

Her personal interest is family. The grandchildren are where she spends most of her spare time going to softball games and soccer; and of course, having them at the house swimming and just spending as much time with them as possible. She jokingly added she likes spending as much time as possible with her husband — when he's not golfing.

Laura can be reached at:

618-466-1206; or,

Buildingandzoning@godfreyil.org

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jmager@godfreyil.org



The Great Godfrey "Hemp" Maze?

After twenty years of the Godfrey 'Corn' Maze, the corn can't grow.

With the soil being completely depleted of the nutrients to allow for corn growth, the Great Godfrey Corn Maze will be replaced by the Great Godfrey Hemp Maze.

There are a number of hemp mazes around the country, but none near by — until this year. Maze opens on September 16 and runs through October 29. Hours of operation are Fridays (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and Saturdays (11 a.m. to 10 p.m.)

Plan to come by and see something different. It should be a lot of fun!

Below are the prices for this year's maze:

Maze Admission:

Adults (12 and up) \$7

Children (6-11) \$5

Children 5 & Under FREE

Maze and Haunted Maze

(Fridays and Saturdays Oct. 1 thru Oct 29):

Adults (12 and up) \$8

Children (6-11) \$6

Children 5 & Under FREE

Individual Attractions:

Cow Train \$2

Jumping Pillow \$2

Wagon Ride \$2

Vortex Tunnel \$2

All Day Inflatables \$5

Corn Crib FREE with ticket (11 \$ Under)

Combo Pricing:

Adults (12 and up) \$12

Children (6-11) \$10

Unlimited Combo \$20



Jeff Lauritzen

Andy Ford

Two country boys helping those from the city, and the country, secure and insure their financial well being. Meet Jeff Lauritzen and Andy Ford of Country Financial in Godfrey, Illinois.

Both grew up in rural Illinois. Jeff came from a farming community in Carroll County and Andy in Greene County. Jeff obtained a degree in Agricultural Business from Illinois State University and an MBA from Northern Illinois University. Andy holds a degree in Engineering Technology, with an Ag minor and a Management minor, from Western Illinois University.

Jeff started his career in banking. He had worked for banks in the Chicago area and northern Illinois before moving to Godfrey, where he worked at US Bank and Regions Bank. After sixteen plus years in the banking profession, he transitioned into providing personalized financial services through Country Financial. He has been with Country Financial for over eleven years.

Upon graduating from WIU, Andy started his career working in the manufacturing

industry, which lead him to selling industrial machinery for Ellison Technologies. After thirteen years in the industry, he joined Country Financial six years ago.

Both ended up working out of the Country Financial office located at 3001 Godfrey Road. There were five agents and two staff members working out of that rented office. Eventually, Jeff and Andy felt they would like having an office which they owned. They purchased the office of the former McBride Printing Company at 2720 Gerson Avenue in 2019. Renovating the facility from a printing company to a modern office took a significant amount of effort, but in January of 2022, their goal of owning an office became a reality.

Both gentlemen agree the new location is serving them and their customers well. The office at the corner of Gerson and Homer Adams offers much improved visibility from the former location. Customers like the improved ease of accessing the office and has resulted in increased calls and people stopping in.

Although Andy and Jeff share ownership of the office, both gentlemen run their own agency with their individual customers and products. They do have a licensed assistant, Eve Williamson, who takes care of the front office and supports each of their administrative functions.

As a long time resident of Godfrey, Jeff is very active in the community. He is a member of the Riverbend Growth Association, East End Improvement Association, North Alton Godfrey Business Council and St. Ambrose Parish and School. Andy resides in Jersey County and gives his time volunteering to support 4H via University of Illinois Extension Education Building Association Board in Greene County.

Their Country Financial office hours are:

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on M—Th
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday;
or, by appointment

Each can be reached at the following:

Andy 618-466-2014
Jeff 618-466-2128



*Newly open Country Financial office at
2720 Gerson Avenue, Godfrey, Illinois*

Oh, and one more thing.....

I got a call about three weeks ago from a lady who was asking a question about a development project here in town. She started the conversation with, "No one tells us anything." I answered her question and promised to place her on the email list for this newsletter. Anyway, I realize it is difficult trying to keep up with all that's going on here in Godfrey. Heck, it's my job to know what is going on and things get by me. So, I thought I'd take the first page of this publication and do a quick rundown of some projects that are in process. There are a couple of other exciting projects in the works, but they are not far enough along to make public.

Ah, autumn is my favorite time of the year. The cool weather, the turning of the leaves, all the outdoor festivities. With that in mind, take advantage of all the activities that will be happening at Glazebrook Park over the next few weeks. The new hemp maze is really something different and there is no such attraction anywhere close. When I went out to take the picture for this newsletter, I was really impressed as to the beauty of the hemp plants. Their yellow flowers were stunning. Hey, we all know what corn looks like, come on out and see a field of hemp. Park and Rec built it, we are all hoping you will come.....

In closing, I'd like to offer a shout out to Jeff Lauritzen and Andy Ford for their investment in the community.



Jim Mager

Economic Development

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