



The Villager

April 2026

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- A Solar Farm Could Be Your New Neighbor
- A Message From Mayor McCormick
- Free Wildflower Viewing
- Young Godfrey Residents Share Their Thoughts About Godfrey
- April Business of the Month Celebrates Ten Year Anniversary — Hamilton Fabrication and Steel, Inc.
- Commercial Property Enhancement Grant
- Oh, and one more thing....

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

**Village of Godfrey
Office of Economic
Development**

6810 Godfrey Road

Phone: 618-466-3325

E-mail: jmager@godfreyil.org

You can see your future from here.



Michael J. McCormick

Mayor

A Solar Farm Could Be Your New Neighbor.....



On January 27, 2023, Governor Pritzker signed a bill that will transform the way counties and municipalities in Illinois locally regulate the development and construction of commercial wind and solar energy generation facilities. The act fully takes effect on June 1, 2026.

The Solar Farm Fairness Act in Illinois mandates that counties must approve special use permits for solar farms that meet state standards, limiting local discretion in zoning decisions. This law ensures that solar energy projects conforming to state requirements are approved, promoting renewable energy expansion. The act mandates that counties cannot enact ordinances that outright ban solar farms in agricultural or industrial zones, ensuring state priorities for renewable energy take precedence over local control.

The Solar Farm Fairness Act in Illinois is a significant piece of legislation aimed at promoting renewable energy by streamlining the approval process for solar energy projects. Counties are required to grant special use permits for solar projects that conform to state standards.

The act establishes a clear directive that applications meeting these standards "shall be approved." Local governments cannot deny permits based on traditional zoning considerations if the projects comply with state requirements. This limits the ability of counties to impose additional restrictions beyond what is outlined in the state law.

The Solar Farm Fairness Act is designed to facilitate the expansion of solar energy in Illinois by ensuring that projects that meet state criteria are not hindered by local zoning disputes. This legislative framework supports the state's commitment to increasing renewable energy sources and reducing barriers for solar developers.

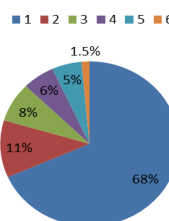
Historically, local governments could use local zoning ordinances to block, limit, or heavily restrict these projects—deciding things like how close turbines or solar panels could be to homes, how much farmland they could cover, or even banning them outright in agricultural zones. Governor Pritzker's law changes that completely for commercial-scale projects (wind facilities, and most utility-scale solar farms).

A message from Mayor McCormick.....



An issue that is emerging is that of property taxes. I agree they are expensive (Illinois is the second highest property tax state). The Trustees and I recognize the burden it places on families and have endeavored to keep Godfrey's portion of property taxes low as possible. Every year I have advocated for lowering property taxes in Godfrey. Last year Godfrey's portion was lowered by a half percent. As you will note, Godfrey's portion is \$.015 on the dollar (less than 2 cents). I am proud to say that Godfrey has one of the lowest property tax rates of any of the surrounding municipalities. However, please be advised that if the Governor should be successful in taking an additional 10% from the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF), maintaining lower property taxes may be challenging.

Property Tax Breakdown for Godfrey



1. School District
2. Fire District
3. LCCC
4. Madison County
5. Hayner Library
6. Village of Godfrey

Sustainability Tip

Free Wildflower Viewing

With warm weather coming, we might start thinking about the traditional family road trip. Let's add one feature to it this year—travel to the Illinois State Parks. **And wildflower viewing time is right now**, through early May, according to <https://stateparks.info/spring-wildflower-guide-for-illinois-state-parks/>

The best wildflower viewing is on the hiking trails in parks along the Illinois River, located in the West Central and Northwestern sectors of the state. We have them here for you, in alphabetical order:

Buffalo Rock State Park (NW)
Illini State Park (NW)
Matthiessen State Park (NW)
Mississippi Palisades State Park (NW)
Nauvoo State Park (WC)
Pere Marquette (WC)
Starved Rock (NW)



Get directions to the park of your choice right here: <https://dnr.illinois.gov/parks/all-parks-by-region.html> Look for the butterfly label on the top left of the screen. Scroll down to find the complete list. The parks farthest north in this list give you a great family adventure without the expense and time investment of longer road trips. Others in the list are perfect for an early Saturday morning departure and a full day of activities, getting the kids back in their own beds by nightfall.

As always, Illinois State Parks are free. You will not have to drive too far—saving on gas. Collect an album full of memories! Leave only footprints!

Brought to you by the Godfrey Sustainability Commission

Godfrey Seeks To Recognize Good Neighbors In The Community

Do you know an individual who has gone above and beyond as a neighbor in our community? Has the person, through selfless acts of kindness, made Godfrey a better place? If so, you can be the one to help in recognizing them for their deeds.

The nomination form can be found at www.godfreyil.org. The form should be completed, saved as a PDF file and emailed to jmager@godfreyil.org. The undertakings of the nominated individual will be considered. If "Good Neighbor" status is determined, the person will be presented with a certificate of appreciation and featured in the Village of Godfrey newsletter and on the Village's electronic sign.

For more information, contact: Jim Mager,

Economic Development

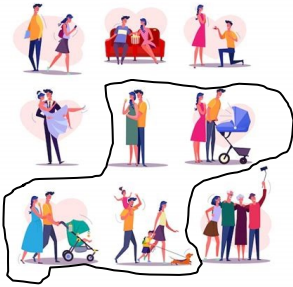
618-466-3325

jmager@godfreyil.org

How "Good Neighbors" are selected:

	Weight
Contributes to the welfare of others	40
Individual's efforts are on a pro bono basis	30
Is an educator, civic leader, non-profit leader, long-time community volunteer	10
Brings community together	5
Exhibits leadership qualities	5
Extended exhibition of active citizenship	5
Nominees should be able to document the results of their individual involvement through published reports and/or testimonials	5
	100

Young Godfrey Residents Share Their Thoughts About Godfrey



A group of fourteen younger adult Godfrey residents gathered at Bakers and Hale on March 30 to share their ideas, thoughts and opinions about Godfrey. The purpose of the “Young Godfrey Residents” focus group was to gain an understanding of how Godfrey can become a more inviting and attractive community for families that are in the family-rearing stages.

During the session the group was asked questions about things they found desirable about Godfrey and things they thought could be improved. Below is a sampling of the questions:

- How satisfied are you with the overall quality of life in Godfrey? What specific factors influence your satisfaction?
- Do you find Godfrey to be a good place to raise a family? What factors make it favorable? What factors make it unfavorable?
- How would you rate the amenities for shopping, dining and recreation on Godfrey?
- What is your vision for the local arts, culture and recreational amenities in the future? What are your thoughts about Godfrey building a sports facility?
- How can we create a more welcoming community for younger residents?
- How can we attract and retain younger skilled professionals and younger new business owners?
- What is your vision for Godfrey’s economy in the next 5 to 10 years?
- What channels of communication do you use most for receiving information about the community?
- What is the single most important change you would like to see in Godfrey in the next year?

advantage of their centers. While a facility that provided accommodations for league play is important, the group felt that a multi-purpose center would be most valuable. High ratings were given to a center that could provide indoor winter options, such as rock climbing, yoga, event space, and accommodations for children’s birthday parties. While cost recovery for a facility was not discussed in detail, the group seemed open to reasonable increase in taxes or fees.

As might be expected, affordability was discussed. The group felt that Godfrey offers reasonably priced homes as compared to other surrounding communities. Although housing may be a bit more costly in Godfrey, the attributes of the community provide corresponding value. It was expressed that efforts should be made to keep the tax base low.

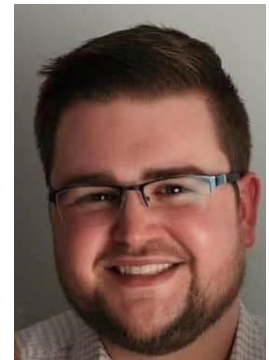
When asked about the best ways to communicate and create awareness with the age group, there were varying opinions. Some rely heavily on Facebook and some more on email. Regardless, digital communication was the most prevalent of all medium.

Plans are to hold an additional focus group of an older demographic segment in the fall of this year. It will be interesting to compare the results from the two groups.

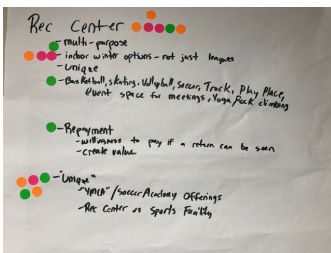
The group was moderated by Mark Cappel, HR Director for the Village of Godfrey and Andrew Ambrose, who is a member of both the Community Advancement Planning and the Rec Center committees.



Mark Cappel



Andrew Ambrose



The group placed a high value on the culture and history of the community. So much so, they felt that increased effort should be given to emphasize history and create a “culture” that could be increasingly developed, and touted, to create an identity for the community. Examples of developing a culture might be themed music festivals, art exhib-

its, and events based upon Godfrey’s history.

While the group expressed a desire for growth in Godfrey, they did not want to lose its small-town feel and charm. Attributes such as green space, quiet/safe neighborhoods and kid-friendly environments were important. Interestingly, they value small locally owned businesses that can provide a “boutique” experience in both dining and shopping as opposed to solely national brands and large retail chains.

The idea of a recreation center fostered a great deal of interest and conversation. Many in the group travel to other communities to take



What is going on in Godfrey? Go to www.visitgodfrey.com to get up-to-date information about all the things the Village of Godfrey has to offer.






www.visitgodfrey.com

April Business of the Month Celebrates Ten Year Anniversary – Hamilton Fabrication and Steel, Inc.



Perhaps when traveling Tolle Lane, you have noticed all the racks of steel and large buildings and wonder what is that place? That place is the home of Hamilton Fabrication and Steel, Inc.

Founded on the premise that an exceptional work ethic combined with a genuine desire to provide a valuable service, Hamilton Fab & Steel Supply is a leading steel company in Madison County. Being the third generation of professional steelworkers, the owners of Hamilton Fab & Steel Supply, John and Jared Hamilton, have the aptitude and fortitude to meet the current demands of steel services.

Since the day the brothers first picked up a hammer or ran a spool of wire through a welder, it was a foregone conclusion they were going to follow the family profession of working with steel. Regardless of having such an in-depth and extensive familiarity with the trade, Hamilton Fab & Steel Supply continually works to keep up with advancements in the steel industry. As a member of the American Welding Society, the company strives to provide the highest level of service standards.



John and Jared Hamilton

Steelwork, and more accurately, fabrication has been in the family trade for generations. That crucial skills are apparent and obvious with every fabrication project completed. Customers have discovered their one-stop, steel shop for all their requirements.

The Hamilton brothers purchased the former Bierbaum Steel. Bierbaum had been a family business for over 36 years providing wholesale steel products to the regional steel industry. Changes in the Bierbaum family brought about a desire to sell the company. Through a series of events, the Hamiltons became aware the firm was for sale. At the time, both brothers were working out of the Boiler Makers Union Hall. Keeping the tradition of their father, both had been working in the industry for about 10 years. Much of that time was at the Wood River and Roxana refineries. Eventually, the brothers purchased the company and Bierbaum Steel became Hamilton Fabrication and Steel, Inc. in March 2016. With the change in company name, the focus changed from being a wholesale steel supplier to one with a business model of customized steel fabrication.

Through the years, the brothers, while working as boiler makers, had made many contacts with industry contractors. With the purchase of their own firm, they began to utilize those relationships to develop customers. As they celebrate their ten year anniversary, they continually secure their reputation as a fabrication company that can meet the needs of the industrial structural steel space. With a strong word-of-mouth and reference marketing, Hamilton Fabrication and Steel enjoys a regional market with customers as far away as five-hundred miles.

Hamilton consists of eight people in the shop and two in the office. All of their fabricators are licensed, bonded, insured, certified, but above all else: experienced. With such experience depth, the company can provide specialized and customized work with the ability to take a concept and help with refining its design.

John and Jared reside, with their families, in the Fosterburg area where they also engage in farming. Jared focuses on crop farming and John concentrates on cattle production.

Hamilton Fabrication and Steel can be found at:

EMAIL : HAMILTONFABANDSTEEL@GMAIL.COM
PHONE : (618) 466.0012
ADDRESS : 311 TOLLE LN.
GODFREY, IL 62035

Arbor Day!

April 25

Glazebrook Park



Big Truck Day!

May 6

Glazebrook Park

Join the Village in celebrating the environment and all things trees on **April 25, 2026** with the Godfrey Parks and Recreation Department at Glazebrook Park! The day kicks off at 9:00 am with through 12:00 pm with a youth fishing derby. Free redbud tree seedlings will be given away to the first 150 visitors.

Arbor Day Memorial Dedication

Glazebrook Park Concession Stand Area

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Don't forget..... Commercial Property Enhancement Grant

Businesses located in the Godfrey Business District are eligible to take advantage of the "Commercial Property Enhancement Grant" program.

Funding: First \$30,000 maximum grant is 50% match; and \$30,001 to \$100,000 is 25% grant for eligible expenses; and above \$100,001 is 5% grant up to a total grant amount of \$40,000.

Eligible Expenses: Significant facade renovations, signage, awnings, doors, windows. Landscaping if it follows Godfrey Ordinance No. 15-2007. Parking lots if brought up to ADA compliance and Village codes. All appropriate permits must be secured.

Ineligible Expenses: Regular repairs and maintenance, demolition, design, permit fees; and expenses incurred or contracted prior to grant approval.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions: Owners and tenants of properties within Godfrey's Business District (at time of application). The property's primary use must be for commercial use. Tenants must provide written authorization from the property owner for the contemplated improvements and participation in the program. If the tenant or owner who receives grant funding should close, move, or remove work financed with a grant within five years of grant date, repayment of the grant may be required, pro rata for a period of the remaining three-year term. No additional grant funds are available for similar work at same space for a period of at least three years. Application for the grant does require three bids. *The grant must be approved prior to commencement of work.*

A note of thanks to the following in preparing these newsletters (alphabetical order):

Mayor McCormick, Sharon O'Neal, Judy Peipert and Karen Sinks

Oh, and on more thing.....

So, at the April 7 Trustees meeting, a group of residents from the Levis Lane area showed up to complain about a speed hump that had been placed on Levis to slow down the drivers. The placement goes back to last fall when some residents requested it. Of course the Trustees being concerned about safety and trying to be responsive to residents' concerns, instructed Public Works to install the speed hump. That was after increasing law enforcement patrol had not seemed to stop the speeding.

That is the background. Fast forward to the April 7 meeting. Now, the neighborhood is divided. Some want the speed hump and some don't. I can't be sure of the ratio, but it appears to be about half either way. And both sides seem to have their reasons for their position on the matter. I get it — there are about five speed bumps in my neighborhood and I now drive an extra couple of miles on an alternative route just to avoid them. On the other hand, my neighbors are the victims of people flying past their homes — I understand their positions.

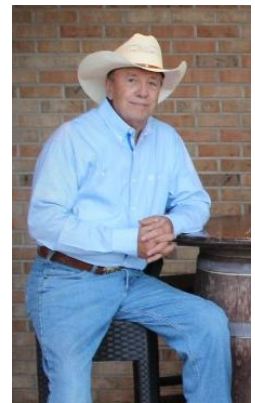
Let's think about this. When speeding through someone's neighborhood, what is really happening? First, and foremost, a safety hazard has been created. There is now a risk of serious injury (or even death) of someone who lives there or damage to someone's property. What gives that driver the right to impose that risk? The answer is "none." And, all that is fairly obvious.

However, something else may be occurring. That speeder has created a situation that has divided a neighborhood. Because of inconsideration, that driver is now pitting neighbor against neighbor. People who should be pulling together and supporting each other are now at odds. At a time when the world is so volatile, all that we really have is our community. Having speeders who are creating division within our neighborhoods ain't helping. In fact, it's just sad.

Probably the biggest complaint we deal with here at Village Hall is people speeding through neighborhoods. I think most of us would agree that when we are a guest in someone's home we have a responsibility to be respectful. Yet for some reason, get in a vehicle and go flying through someone else's neighborhood is okay? Even if it is your own neighborhood that does not justify an excuse. OMG, how are you going to feel if you run over someone's kid!

We have all been in situations where we are crowded for time and we maybe mash the old gas peddle a bit, but if your life is in such a constant rush that you've got to be speeding though places where others live — maybe you need to be looking at your life from a broader perspective.

The weather is getting nice, people are enjoying the outdoors and kids will be out of school for summer. Slow your butt down!



Jim Mager
Economic Development
618-466-3325
jmager@godfreyil.org