

# March 21, 2017 Regional Status Report

Including Jackson & Channahon Townships

401 E. Mississippi Avenue ■ Elwood, IL 60421 ■ 815-423-5011

[villageofelwood.com](http://villageofelwood.com)

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**Village President**  
**William Offerman**

## Mayor's Message...

*In recent years, the Village of Elwood has proven its willingness to stand up for the community and insist that residents' safety and quality of life are protected when developers and business interests come to town.*

*That is why the Village supported Safe Roads Illinois, which helped reduce truck-related accidents, and why we fought to permanently close the dangerous Walter Strawn railroad crossing.*

*And as you know, we took CenterPoint Properties to court over the development of its intermodal facility. I'm pleased to report that the Village Board has unanimously approved a settlement of that lawsuit after we won significant benefits for Elwood taxpayers and our community.*

*We have always maintained that the Village is not opposed to commerce, especially when it is done the right way. We remain committed to our long-term economic vision for smart and sensible growth that protects our safety and property values, preserves the environment and requires developers to be responsible and accountable to the community.*

*We strongly believe that by working together, we can achieve a balance that maintains the quality of life we all expect in Elwood while ensuring vibrant economic development to help secure our future.*

*Sincerely,*  
*William Offerman*

## Village to receive significant benefit from CenterPoint lawsuit settlement

The recent legal settlement brings many benefits to the Village that will have a positive impact on its long-term financial future its safety goals. As part of the settlement, CenterPoint will:

- Pay \$1.7 million to the Village in special review fees for future development of property it already owns
- Restructure a series of Village general obligation bonds to lower the interest rates, saving taxpayers \$500,000.
- Pay \$500,000 to the Village's general fund, which covers Village expenses
- Ensure that new Brandon/Noel Road project is designed to accommodate heavy trucks, keeping them off local roadways and away from residential areas along Manhattan Road, while keeping Brandon Road open.
- Donate four acres of property near Elwood International Port Road and Walter Strawn Road, which the Vil-

lage can use to expand its wastewater treatment facilities

- Donate approximately 2.4 acres of land, allowing the Village to realign the dangerous intersection at St. Louis Street and Route 53
- Extend water and sewer main lines along Brandon Road north of Noel Road. The extension, at a cost to CenterPoint of \$1 million per mile, will allow the village to create a crucial back-up water system.
- Grant a property easement that will connect the Village's existing bike path west toward the Brown Circle west of the water tower
- Contribute \$50,000 for Village-sponsored community events

In addition, the legal action resulted in the court declaring that the Village was not in default in its obligation to pay off TIF notes. The ruling had a positive impact on the Village's credit rating and improved its financial standing heading into the future.



**Village Trustee**  
**Patrick Cotter**



**Village Trustee**  
**Doug Jenco**



**Village Trustee**  
**Don LaPaglia**



**Village Trustee**  
**Dean Lowrance**



**Village Trustee**  
**Mary Matichak**



**Village Trustee**  
**Jasen Melahn**



**Village Clerk**  
**Julie Friebele**

# **Elwood Egg Hunt & Community Breakfast Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Join us for this well-loved annual tradition.  
The Elwood Egg Hunt and Easter Bunny  
Breakfast are free community events.  
All are welcome!**

**Egg Hunt at Tyler Park  
for children age 2 through 10  
10:00 - 2 & 3 year old egg hunt  
10:15 - 4 to 6 year old egg hunt  
10:30 - 7 to 10 year old egg hunt**

**Easter Bunny Breakfast at Elwood Church  
8:00-11:00**

**Free biscuits and gravy breakfast  
&  
Easter Bunny Photos**

**Elwood Church is located at  
101 N. Chicago Street,  
across from Tyler Park.**

**For more information call 815-424-1093.**



## Village offers clean-up services

*Spring clean up time is on its way. Our village offers residents the opportunity to clear out yard waste and household white goods. There is no additional charge for these services:*

### **Waste Management Spring Cleanup Day Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

All items must be placed at the curb by 6 a.m.

Waste Management will pick up:

White goods (refrigerators, water heaters, washers, dryers, etc.) and up to four (4) automobile tires (no rims).

Waste Management will not pick up:

Electrical items such as TV's, computers, telephones, full paint cans. For disposal of these products please contact Will County Land Use - Resource Recovery & Energy at 815-727-8834.

### **Village Brush Pickup April through October**

Village brush pickup is available to residents at no cost once a month during the months of April through October on the last Wednesday of the month.

Brush pickup includes small bush and tree trimmings or debris from storm damage. No pick up will be made for large tree removal. Please bundle and stack the brush neatly on the parkway.

### **Waste Management Yard Waste Pickup**

Yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, tree branches and brush is collected weekly on your scheduled collection day from April 1 through November 30.

Yard waste must be placed in kraft paper bags, which can be purchased at local retail stores. 96-gallon yard waste carts are available to rent from Waste Management for \$36.00 per year by contacting customer service at 800-796-9696.

Brush and branches MUST be cut into 4-foot lengths and bundled with string or twine. Each bundle must not exceed 50 lbs. Unbundled brush will not be collected. Whole trees and limbs greater than 4 inches in diameter, along with mulch, stumps, sod and dirt, are not included in weekly collection.

All items must be placed by the curb no later than 6 a.m. on Mondays.

## **Elwood Public Works seeks seasonal laborers**

The Village of Elwood is accepting applications for Public Works Seasonal Laborers, and available positions are part-time. Applicants must have a valid Illinois drivers license, be 18 years of age or older and have the ability to lift fifty pounds.

Candidates should be motivated self-starters who take direction well and efficiently complete tasks as instructed. Duties include mowing grass, general landscaping, maintenance of village facilities and other related tasks within the public works department.

The public works department operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Seasonal employment typically runs April through August.

Applications can be picked up Monday through Friday at the Village Hall between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. and can also be found on the village's website. For more information, contact Larry Lohmar at (815) 424-1077.

## **ELWOOD COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE DAYS**

**June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

Elwood Garage Sale Days are advertised in local papers and on local online garage sale sites.

- Participants should post their own signs if desired.
- The village will distribute a list of sales.
- To have your sale included on the list, call 815-424-1093.
- Leave NAME, ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER.





## Elwood Progress

### Financial Security

*Municipal finances are an enormous responsibility. The budget decisions we make today affect the town's future for generations. We have to pay attention to the money we spend now, as well as future needs, such as debt payment, property and equipment maintenance and infrastructure improvements.*

*Sometimes, an administration will take the easy route of passing off project financing or costly maintenance to future taxpayers through debt or neglect. That has never been the case with this administration. We know the hard-working families and retirees who share Elwood's financial obligations can not bear the burden of short-sighted financial management.*

*With this in mind, we have made a strict policy of looking forward as we view our finances. Instead of borrowing money for the many projects we accomplished, we've refinanced costly bonds, worked with partners, maximized grant opportunities, streamlined operations and attracted new revenues.*

*We are very proud to have enacted fundamental financial strategies that will preserve the Elwood community now and in the future through:*

~ **Economic Development.** We have worked with developers and investors to establish substantial new business at our village entrance corridor on Mississippi Avenue. The shops of Elwood, which was an underdeveloped shell, has become the anchor for Elwood's thriving commercial district. In addition, expansion projects at our existing businesses have created substantial new tax and permit revenue.

~ **Improved Agreements.** Our recent settlement agreement with CenterPoint Properties represents a new financial future for Elwood. The importance of this agreement in helping us move forward and avoid financial vulnerabilities can not be overstated. It is a roadmap for beneficial business development.

~ **Smart Expansion.** We annexed Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and the U.S. Army training facility. Both are large-scale users of our water and wastewater treatment plants, sharing operational costs and helping pay the existing bond.

~ **Responsible Restructuring.** By legally clarifying CenterPoint's Tax Increment Financing obligations, we bolstered our credit rating from BBB + to AA. With that, we were able to refinance existing bonds for better payment terms. In addition, by creating an exceptional safety record, we renegotiated our insurance liability expenses.

~ **Efficient Operations.** We took over operations of our water and waste water facility. Effective in-house management has saved Elwood taxpayers thousands of dollars annually. Also, we streamlined our budget process, creating more precise tracking and greater accountability. Likewise, we reorganized personnel in every department for more efficient management of daily obligations.

~ **Capitalizing on corporate projects.** We strive to gain maximum benefit from all business-funded projects within our borders, including taking advantage of recent improvements to the railroad crossing at Manhattan Road to create a **Quiet Zone** application for residents. Also, we turned a private pipeline maintenance plan at Lloyd Erickson Pond into a fully-funded erosion control project for the village.

~ **Maximizing grant opportunities.** The many grant-funded projects we've completed are great assets to the village. Among those projects, we combined a corporate land and cash donation with a federal OSLAD grant to create Archer and O'Connor parks. Through a DCEO grant, we developed a new recreational facility in the lower level of the village hall. We've secured a \$2,822,400 grant to fund the coming St. Louis Street realignment project.

*Remarkably, our conservative financial policies have allowed us to be more responsive to residents' needs while maintaining and expanding village services and programs. It is crucial for the future of this village that we understand complicated fiscal matters and navigate them to our best interest. Without that ability, leaders can not hope to steer a community toward a secure future.*



**ELWOOD MAYOR WILLIAM OFFERMAN AND TRUSTEE PATRICK COTTER (back, left) join the packed house at Elwood Movie Night on March 11. Before the movie, the Elwood Community Church served hot dogs and nachos, and moviegoers enjoyed popcorn and refreshments during the movie. The March Movie Night & Dinner was another successful village event, filling the village hall community room and board room. Elwood families enjoy a free night out with and get a chance to meet up with neighbors and friends..**

**MANHATTAN ELWOOD  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
STORY TIME  
AT ELWOOD VILLAGE HALL**



**THURSDAYS 9:00 - 9:30 A.M.**

Register at [mpld.org](http://mpld.org)  
Elwood Village Hall is located at  
401 E. Mississippi Ave.  
For more information,  
call the library at 815-478-3987.

**JACKSON TOWNSHIP  
TWILIGHTERS  
NEW MEMBERS WELCOME**

**All residents of Jackson Township age 55 or over are encouraged to participate in the Jackson Township Twilighters.**

**Membership fee is \$15/year and includes year-round community activities.**

**The Twilighters meet on the first Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Elwood Church Fellowship Hall, 101 N. Chicago St.**

**To join, simply attend an upcoming meeting.**

**APRIL 4, 2017 CONSOLIDATED ELECTION EARLY VOTING**

**Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Ave., Elwood, IL 60421**

**Weekdays, March 20 - March 31**

**9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**No Saturday or Sunday hours**

For additional voter & election information, contact Village Clerk Julie Friebele at (815) 424-1079 or visit the Will County Clerk's website.



## **ELWOOD CHILDREN'S GARDEN CLEAN-UP DAY**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 2**

**1:00 - 2:30 P.M.**

**Rain Date is April 9.**

**All are welcome to help**

**Adults may register at the event. Children must preregister.  
Return child's registration form to Elwood Village Hall by March 24.**

**Registration form is available at Elwood Village hall  
or at [villageofelwood.com](http://villageofelwood.com).**

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## **ELWOOD CHILDREN'S GARDEN PLANTING DAY**

**SATURDAY, MAY 20**

**10:00 A.M. - NOON**

**Join us as we prepare the garden for its 20th year!**

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## **TUFF TRAINING AT ELWOOD VILLAGE HALL**



**The Ultimate Fitness Factor (TUFF) is hosting fitness classes at Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Avenue. Classes combine a boot camp style with resistance training, functional movements, and cardiovascular exercises. It's a fun-filled experience that produces results! For more information, find our business page "tuff training Elwood" through "what is happening in Elwood" page on Facebook. You can also inquire about the program and register by sending an email to [tufftraining@icloud.com](mailto:tufftraining@icloud.com).**

**Classes offered 5 days a week! Cost is \$65 per month for unlimited classes. Pay and sign up at the start of any class. Hope to see you there!**

# *Red Carpet* **Corridor**

*Annual Festival on the first Saturday & Sunday in May*

***Elwood, Illinois***  
***May 6 & 7, 2017***



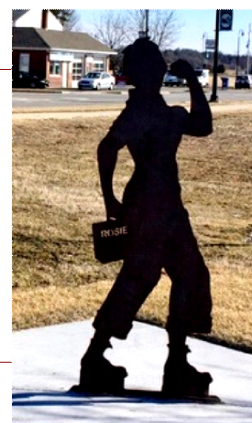
**Antique Tractors on the Route** - Follow the original Route 66 from Mississippi Ave. to Douglas St. See antique tractors. Stop and take photos.

**Historical Presentation** - Visit Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Avenue, to learn about Elwood's unique farming history.

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**Douglas Street Wayside Exhibit** - The Arsenal and Agriculture display features Rosie the Riveter and Arsenal Worker statues. This stretch of the route holds a section of original Route 66 pavement.

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**— Saturday Only —**

**Red Carpet Roundup - Bison Shuttle**  
**9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Board a shuttle bus at Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Ave. to see bison at nearby Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Special showing with educational programs and more. Access to the bison site will be by shuttle only.

**Pick up your Elwood collectible button at Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Ave.**

## Spotlight On... Elwood Village Trustee Patrick Cotter

Patrick Cotter is the newest face on the Elwood Village Board of Trustees, but he has become a familiar face in Elwood. He joined the board on October 5 of last year after serving on the Elwood Planning and Zoning Commission.

Patrick is a project manager for an IT company, and he and his wife Lauren have been residents of Elwood for over 5 years. The couple has shown an immediate love for Elwood, donating their time to local projects and events and immersing themselves and their two daughters in the Elwood community.

Trustee Cotter was part of the planning and zoning commission that marshalled the Dollar General project through the complex planning process. He was a strong advocate for the retail. Trustee Cotter remains committed to local retail business development, for financial benefits and convenience to local residents.

Trustee Cotter has demonstrated his commitment to civic leadership and invests his time to keep Elwood a great place for his young daughters to grow up.

## Elwood lends a hand to tornado victims

Even before the call went out, Elwood Public Works was on its way to help the city of Ottawa clean up the devastation in LaSalle County from February 28 tornadoes.

Early the next morning, Elwood Public Works contacted the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network to find out what help was needed. Officials requested help in removing fallen trees so services could be restored.

Elwood Public Works sent over personnel and equipment immediately, just as they did for the Diamond and Coal City Tornadoes.

"We're always happy to pitch in when our neighbors are in trouble," said Elwood Mayor William Offerman.

Elwood workers spent four days in LaSalle County clearing trees and helping communities get back on their feet.

## State Orders Walter Strawn Closed for Good

The Illinois Commerce Commission recently issued an order to permanently close the Walter Strawn Drive railroad crossing.

Considered the state's most dangerous rail crossing, Walter Strawn was temporarily shut down more than two years ago. The ICC, which governs rail crossings in Illinois, stated the permanent closure was "in the interest of public safety" and ruled the crossing "be permanently closed and abolished."

The ICC announcement marks a victory for Village, Jackson Township and Will County residents who rallied together to urge for the closure.

Closing the crossing has created a safer environment for our families, truckers, and the funeral processions to the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. Meanwhile, commerce is flowing and trucks are using safer routes.

The Safe Roads Illinois campaign sought the action after:

- Numerous near-misses between trains and trucks
- The continuous breakage of railroad crossing gates by trucks (more than 50 in 2013 alone)
- The tragic death of an 8-year-old girl that also left her sister seriously injured
- Countless veteran funeral processions that were getting cut off by trucks failing to abide the rules of the road

The Village will continue to work with Will County, IDOT, Union Pacific Railroad and CenterPoint to create long-term solutions to better ensure safety and planned, sensible development in the area.

## Community safety remains priority No. 1

In addition to the community benefits resulting from the legal settlement with CenterPoint, thanks to you and your support through Safe Roads Illinois, Walter Strawn remains closed and traffic-related deaths and accidents have decreased dramatically.

With reduced congestion and limited truck traffic, our roads are safer and residents and families now have more peace of mind traveling along Route 53 around Elwood.

We've also taken other measures that demonstrate our commitment to the community by improving safety and limiting truck traffic. These include:

- Fighting state legislation calling for an inland port authority that

would have undermined the Village's local control and ability to govern its roads and law enforcement

- Blocking efforts to widen the intersection at Manhattan and Brandon roads that would have accommodated more trucks onto residential streets
- Stepping up police patrols along truck routes and pushing to increase signage to keep trucks out of residential areas

We will continue to work with you, our neighbors and stakeholders to create long-term solutions to better ensure safety and planned, sensible development in the area.

## Dates to Remember

March 22	Park Committee Meeting	7:00 p.m.	April 5	Village Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.	May 1	Village Clean-Up Day	
April 2	Children's Garden Cleanup Day	1:00 p.m.	April 8	Egg Hunt	8-11 a.m.	May 6 & 7	Red Carpet Corridor	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.