

# April 2017 Regional Status Report

Including Jackson & Channahon Townships

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

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

## Mayor's Message...

Congratulations to the Village of Elwood Finance Department for earning the **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting**. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

This is a significant accomplishment for Elwood's finance department and finance commissioners. We work incredibly hard to maintain stringent standards in our spending policies and financial recording. The GFOA certificate is a recognition of that effort.

I'm proud that Elwood is committed to being fiscally responsible and transparent in its accounting. In addition, we're always working to create the greatest benefit from Elwood's tax dollars.

One wonderful benefit we've been able to maintain in Elwood is the Elwood Children's Garden. We make a significant investment in the garden each year, but we simply can't do it without the help of so many community volunteers. **Sunday, April 2 is the Elwood Children's Garden Clean-Up Day**. Please come out with your family from 1-2:30 p.m. and help prepare the garden for the new season. Children and adults are welcome to help out.

Another event families look forward to is our Elwood Egg Hunt. **This year's Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 8 at Tyler Park**. Once again, we will partner with Elwood Church for breakfast and Easter Bunny photos. The church breakfast will be held from 8-11 a.m., and the Egg Hunt will begin at 10 a.m.

The Egg Hunt event has grown bigger every year since we started it five years ago. It has turned into an incredibly popular time for families to gather and celebrate the Easter holiday. It's also a chance to get out and see our friends and neighbors after a long winter.

I hope to see everyone at the clean-up day and egg hunt and at all the upcoming spring and summer Village of Elwood events.

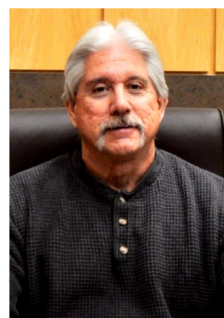
Sincerely,  
William Offerman



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



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



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



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



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



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

## Dates to Remember

April 2	Children's Garden Cleanup Day	1:00 p.m.	May 1	Village Clean - Up Day	
April 4	Voting Day	6 a.m. - 7 p.m.	May 5	Elwood School Spring Musical	6:30 p.m.
April 5	Village Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.	May 5 & 6	Red Carpet Corridor	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
April 8	Egg Hunt	8-11 a.m.	May 6	Bison Shuttle	10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



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

## 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.





## CP donations advance roadway project

Cash and land donation from Centerpoint Properties are supporting the St. Louis Street Realignment project. Last week, the company fulfilled a \$226,000 pledged donation from its 2008 annexation agreement with the Village of Elwood. The original agreement to annex Centerpoint-owned parcels on the east side of Route 53 was adopted by the Elwood Village Board in 2008.

It calls for Centerpoint Properties to “Donate to the Village the sum of \$226,000.00” for the St. Louis Street realignment project. The donation was to be “Paid to the Village at such times as are required by the Village in order to make such project expenditures.”

“The realignment of St. Louis Street will be a significant safety improvement for Elwood area residents. I’m glad we could work with Centerpoint Properties to move this project forward,” said Elwood Mayor William Offerman.

St. Louis Street at Route 53 is notoriously difficult to navigate. The narrow street meets fast-moving cross traffic and misaligned connections to cross or enter Route 53, making the roadway a long-time target for improvement. At the time of Centerpoint’s east parcel annexation, in 2008, the village expected an immediate project at St. Louis. The pledged Centerpoint donation, combined with a Federal Surface Transportation Program grant in the amount of \$735,000 would have covered the roughly \$1 million projected cost.

Unfortunately, the original project plan to widen St. Louis Street and create perpendicular approaches wasn’t approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The agency required added turn lanes on St. Louis Street, a storm water detention pond and the widening of Route 53 for installation of auxiliary lanes. Compounding the added cost of construction, the IDOT directive forced the village to acquire right of way property and comply with even more engineering obligations.

The unanticipated IDOT mandates ballooned the project cost estimate from \$1 million to over \$3.5 million.

In addition to the monetary donation, Centerpoint came through with a solution to the problem of property acquisition: As part of a recently-signed settlement agreement with the village, Centerpoint properties will donate approximately 2.4 acres of land on the east side of Route 53 to accommodate the IDOT property acquisition mandates.

In July, 2016, The Will County Governmental League’s Transportation Board unanimously approved an increase in Federal Transportation Safety funds for the St. Louis Street project. The grant was increased from \$735,000 to \$2,822,400.

The increased federal funding, along with Centerpoint’s monetary and land donations will allow Phase II Engineering and Construction to move forward. The village intends to use Motor Fuel Tax shares for remaining project costs. Construction of the St. Louis Street widening and realignment is slated to begin in 2018.

## Proposed Noel Road Improvement Project



Part of CenterPoint Properties’ recent settlement agreement with the Village of Elwood calls for improvements to an existing section of Noel Road, west of Brandon Road (shown above).

The proposal calls for a “Y” at the northeast intersection which would allow trucks to enter a lane with a widened, curved radius, leading to and from Noel Road. The roadway and routing improvements will give truck drivers a better understanding of the correct (and shortest) route to the nearby inland port.

The project is intended to keep commercial trucks from traveling south on Brandon Road past the Army training center and, ultimately, keep them away from Manhattan Road.

Brandon Road will remain open to local traffic, of course, and drivers will simply choose the local lane at the Brandon/Noel Intersection. Brandon Road will be widened North of Noel Road. Brandon Road will remain the same between Noel and Manhattan roads.

**There will be no extension of Noel Road, simply a widening of the section west of Brandon Road (as shown above).**

The proposed Noel Road project will be funded and executed by CenterPoint Properties; however, all permitting and plan review will be under Elwood’s jurisdiction.

## Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Events

**Midewin Bison Shuttle: May 6, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Antique Tractors & Historical Presentation: May 6 & 7, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

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



## Elwood Progress

### Creating Community

*Elwood has a long tradition as a small close-knit community. Since the village's early days, Elwood families have established traditions and organizations that draw people together. In today's busy world, it has become harder and harder to find time for this kind of togetherness, but nothing could be more important for a town's identity. It's hard to remember that just seven years ago, Elwood had only a few village-sponsored events & programs, including the Halloween Cookout. Garage Sale Days, Soccer and one fitness class. We still have all of those, but the village has made a concentrated investment in the idea that people in a community should have shared experiences and shared places to gather. To that end, we have worked toward:*

#### **~ Fostering community events and programs.**

**The list of new things to do in Elwood is long. We have developed new programs for children, adults and seniors.**

Programs Introduced: Open Circuit Training, The Basement Book Exchange, Karate, Craft Class, Children's Story Time, Manhattan Elwood Quilting Group, TUFF Training and Tai Chi. In addition to our regular recurring programs, we organize one-time classes and learning experiences throughout the year.

#### **Our new events are a constant source of free entertainment for Elwood Residents.**

Events Introduced: Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration, The Christmas Light Movie Nights, Car Shows, Bags & Beer Garden Event, Egg Hunt, Army Family Picnic, Army 5K Run, Rail Safety Week, Speed Awareness day, Red Carpet Corridor Event, Shred Day, Community Blood Drive, The Red Carpet Corridor, National Night Out, Trick or Treat Trams and the Bison Calf Viewing Shuttle.

#### **We also continue to sponsor events at Elwood Children's Garden.**

Elwood Children's Garden Events: Music in the Garden, Nature Art in the Garden, Planting Day, Garden Clean Up Day, Fall Fest, Fall Clean Up Day and Pollinator's Day. This year, the garden will introduce Ukulele Lessons, a Children's Concert and Pop-Up events throughout the summer.

**One event we are most proud to have taken on is Elwood Community Days. This beloved annual event is one of our Elwood traditions and an important means for maintaining our close community. When the event folded in 2015, the village stepped in to provide financial assistance and staff support. By 2016, with our assistance, the event was back on its feet. The village will manage the 2017 Elwood Community Days event.**



# Elwood Progress

## Creating Community (Continued)

### ~ Connecting with agencies

**We've established great working relationships with local, state and national agencies. These are newly-developed connections that benefit Elwood residents while assisting important organizations.**

**Established Agency Connections:** U.S. Army Training Center, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Route 66 Association of Illinois, U.S. Department of Justice, National Association of Town Watch, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Trees Forever, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Manhattan-Elwood Library

### ~ Encouraging use of our shared spaces.

**Our village hall offers great space for programs and events, and we've made it our mission to help our residents feel their ownership of this wonderful facility.**

Residents are invited to use the village hall daily for a variety of programs. Additionally, we host as many events at the village hall as we can.

Eight years ago, few Elwood residents had reason to visit their village hall. It was just a nice building they passed by in their cars. Today, our residents are constant familiar faces in our hallways and community spaces.

**For a town our size, Elwood offers incredible proportion of park space.**

**We've always had enviable parks in Lloyd Erickson and Tyler, but we've managed to significantly improve on what we had. We've created new parks and expanded on existing spaces.**

**Newly-Installed Parks and Amenities:** Created O'Connor Park and Archer Park, Constructed new pavilion and activity area at Lloyd Erickson Park, Expanded Parking and introduced ADA Accessibility at Lloyd Erickson Park, Completed erosion control project at Lloyd Erickson Pond, Installed the ice rink and lighted winter activity area at Lloyd Erickson Park, Created a new tree orchard at the Elwood Children's Garden, Installed the Route 66 Pavement and Wayside Exhibit, Introduced pickleball courts and Founded a community garden.

**In addition to our park improvements, we've expanded our bike paths, and we recently submitted a grant for another bike path extension to connect Elwood with the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie's Brown Circle property, adjacent to Jackson Creek. We're working with Midewin to create a recreational area at Brown Circle.**

### ~ Partnering with our community organizations

**We have sought out Elwood community organizations to create vital partnerships. These partnerships are crucial for our events and programs, and we believe the relationships have been mutually beneficial. Surprisingly, most of the partnerships are new even though these organizations have been here for decades.**

**The commitment to bring in these organizations and create working partnerships is, without a doubt, the most significant and long-lasting progress the village has accomplished in recent years. These partnerships will serve us all for years to come.**

**Community Organization Partnerships:** Jackson Township Twilighters, Elwood Church, Elwood Girls Scouts, Elwood Cub Scouts, Elwood School, Elwood Energy Softball, Elwood/Jackson Township History Club,

*A community's events, programs, partnerships and connections are what give it its strength. We want our residents to love the Elwood Community, feel invested in the well-being of their neighbors and reawaken to the traditions that make us one.*



## **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!**



# **Elwood Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny 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.**



## Spotlight On... Elwood Village President William Offerman

Mayor William Offerman is currently serving his second term as Village President. He's lived in Elwood since he was a young boy and raised his two children here with Lisa Offerman, his wife of 30 years.

Bill has served on the Elwood Fire Department since 1981 and has been Chief of the Elwood Fire Protection District since 1996.

Mayor Offerman became interested in village service when he realized how village policies and finances were being influenced by entities outside the village. He wanted to make residents of Elwood the board's first and only consideration.

Mayor Offerman has been a steadfast advocate for Elwood's independence. This wouldn't seem like difficult job in many communities, but Elwood has been subject to outside agendas from business groups as well as local, county and state leadership. As a strong mayor, he has stood up to every challenge and not allowed any other government or agency to lead Elwood.

As Village President, Offerman has put his financial experience to work for the benefit of residents, significantly improving the village credit rating and creating a manageable bond repayment schedule.

Mayor Offerman's most visible accomplishment is establishing village events and programs. While maintaining a low tax rate, he managed to introduce countless new events and programs while continuing existing beloved annual events. By partnering with Elwood's community organizations, Mayor Offerman's administration was able to bring residents together and reaffirm the community's friendly, small-town identity.

In addition to serving as Fire Chief, Bill Offerman is a board member of several safety organizations, including, The Illinois Firefighters Association, The National Volunteer Fire Council and The South Suburban Arson Task Force.

Bill takes his responsibility as Fire Chief to heart and makes it part of his everyday life. Few people know that whenever there's a snowstorm, Bill spends the night travelling the perimeter of the fire district looking for stranded or distressed motorists. He established the Elwood Village Hall Warming Shelter so he could take these people to a safe place on a harsh winter night.

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## Join the Elwood Community Volunteer Group!



The Elwood Community Volunteer Group will organize one volunteer morning each month throughout the year.

Participants will have the opportunity to take part in as many or few volunteer mornings as they are able.

This is a great way for busy students to fulfill school community volunteer hour requirements and do great things in their own community.

to register for the  
Elwood Community Volunteer Group,  
go to the Parks & Recreation page at  
[villageofelwood.com](http://villageofelwood.com)

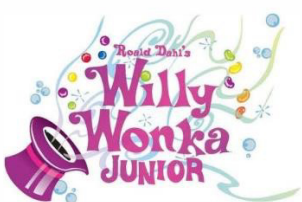
## JACKSON TOWNSHIP TWILIGHTERS NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

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.



The Spring Musical, *Willy Wonka Jr.* will be in the small gym at Elwood School on **May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30p.m.**  
If we sell out of tickets for the **May 5<sup>th</sup>** performance, a second **May 4<sup>th</sup>** performance will be added!  
Ticket sales are currently only for the **May 5<sup>th</sup>** performance!

Advanced ticket sales are available at Elwood School. Ticket prices are \$5.00 for adults,  
\$3 for children age 3 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Seniors and children under age 3 are free.