

# Community Newsletter

Brought to you by



## MANHATTAN-ELWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT ELWOOD BRANCH

Be a part the Manhattan-Elwood Public Library District Elwood Branch's "Year of Firsts!" The Manhattan-Elwood Public Library District is excited to bring a variety of services, programs, and events to Elwood at our new branch located at 111 E. Mississippi Ave. This new location houses a rotating collection of over 2,600 items, boasts free public computers and Wi-Fi, printing and copying amenities, and 24/7 Smart Locker Service. Your free library card also grants you access to a wide variety of digital services, such as streaming media, eBooks & audiobooks, research databases such as Consumer Reports and World Book Online, just to name a few. Additionally, the Elwood Branch will host regular events and programs for all ages. Registration for these programs typically opens about a month before the event date. Be sure to check our online calendar at [mpld.org](http://mpld.org) frequently, as we continually update our offerings with new and exciting events. As always, all library cardholders are welcome to attend programs at either location. We can't wait to see you at the Elwood Branch!

### ANNUAL READING PROGRAMS:

*Winter Reading Challenge*  
*Summer Reading Fun June 2 – July 25*  
*Stuffed Animal Adoption (Grades K-3)*

### PROGRAMS FOR ELWOOD CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 203:

*Library Cards for All*  
*Walking Field Trips  
to the Elwood Branch*  
*SIP Day School's Out  
Programming Monthly*  
*Slammer's Reading Challenge  
(Grades 2-5)*

### CONTACT DETAILS:

**Manhattan-Elwood  
Public Library District  
Elwood Branch**

111 E. Mississippi Ave.  
Elwood, IL 60421

(815) 478-3987 ext. 215  
[questions@mpld.org](mailto:questions@mpld.org) • [mpld.org](http://mpld.org)

## HOW TO GET A *free* LIBRARY CARD?

Anyone 3 years or older who lives within the Manhattan-Elwood Public Library District can get a library card. Children 14 years or younger must have a parent or guardian present. Live in a different library district? Visit us to set up borrowing privileges at MEPLD.

- Visit either location with a photo ID and proof of current address.
- Apply online at [mpld.org/getacard](http://mpld.org/getacard) or scan the QR Code:





## ELWOOD CCSD 203 *Tax Levy*

I want to take some time this newsletter to talk about the Elwood School Tax Levy. It's a complicated process, and this year, it is even more complicated than usual, so I will try to keep it simple so everyone understands the special circumstances that are in play this year. The **Tax Levy** is where I am given estimates of the total property value in our school district by the county (called **EAV**), and based on that estimate I request an amount of tax money from the county in the form of local property taxes. The tax money we receive is called a Tax Extension. So:  $EAV \times \text{Tax Rate} = \text{Tax Extension}$

The second factor that impacts our Levy is called the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (**PTELL**).

This law says that in any given year, the tax money given to a school from existing property cannot increase by more than the Consumer Price Index (**CPI**) or 5% - whichever is less. So if the school received a \$1,000,000 Tax Extension, the next year they could receive no more than a \$1,050,000 Tax Extension.

*Why this matters this year more than ever:* As many of you already know, we have been in litigation with J Power over the property value of their new Combined Cycle Power Plant built in our school district for several years. We have finally reached a settlement with them. This is good news, but it does come with a one-year problem. That problem is that because of that settlement, this year's EAV has a significant drop from last year to this year. That EAV amount has decreased by almost \$188 million dollars from \$547,046,508 in 2023 to \$359,214,545 in 2024. That's a significant drop. All of that is to tell you this: Given that our **EAV** has fallen so dramatically this year, your Property Tax Rate will be going up to a similar rate that it was 2 years ago. If we don't do this, we will be crippling the amount of property tax the school can receive forever. *(Remember, the amount of tax money a school can receive is limited - based on the amount they received in the previous year.)*

Don't worry – the Elwood Board of Education has planned for this. The Board plans on issuing Property Tax Rebates to all Elwood School District homeowners this coming winter. The amount of those rebates remains to be seen, but it will help significantly with the issue.

## JACKSON TOWNSHIP *Government*

Jackson Township Government is excited to announce its brand new website at [www.jacksontownshipil.com](http://www.jacksontownshipil.com). Here you will find contact information for your elected officials and resources for township residents. Jackson Township Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 at our Township Hall, with the exception of April. On April 8th we will hold our Annual Town Meeting at 6pm with our regular monthly meeting to immediately follow. We will publish the Annual Town meeting agenda in the Herald News prior to the meeting, it will also be posted at the Township Hall. At monthly meetings, we take care of regular business such as approving community support, regular reports from the Supervisor, Assessor and Highway Commissioner, and approving monthly bills. The Township Board is committed to assisting the residents of Jackson Township in many ways. Resources available are listed on our website. We welcome Township residents at all of our meetings. The Jackson Town Hall is also available for rental, see our website for more information. Upcoming events include the General Election on Tuesday April 1st and our Annual Town Meeting at 6pm on Tuesday, April 8th.

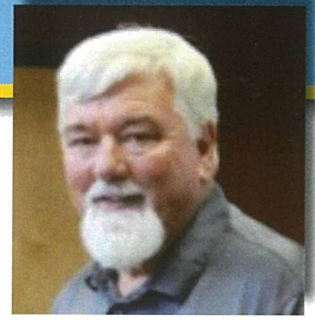
Jackson Township's top priorities are maintaining its residents' safety and quality of life. Excess, unregulated, and wayward truck traffic coming through the township is a nuisance, and it creates major safety hazards. To maintain the township's integrity and support our priorities, the board regularly attends Joliet council meetings and meets with state and local officials to voice our residents' concerns and promote solutions.



### *Jackson Township Elected Officials are:*

Matt Robbins, Supervisor  
Katie Hunt, Clerk  
Jake Fanning, Trustee  
Norm Fanning, Trustee  
Michele Hallihan, Trustee  
Coley O'Connell, Trustee  
Matthew Walsh, Highway Commissioner  
Delilah LeGrett, Township Assessor

# 2024 STATE OF THE VILLAGE *Report*



On behalf of the Village Board of Elected Officials and the Village of Elwood "Team Elwood", I am proud to present the 2024 State of the Village Address as I highlight our many accomplishments over the past year.

In 2019, LB Anderson Land Holdings, Inc., and East Gate Logistics Park which are companies affiliated with the "Northpoint" development in the City of Joliet insisted that the Village of Elwood was required by an Annexation Agreement entered into in the year 2000 to allow a bridge to funnel truck traffic from the Northpoint Joliet Development into the Village of Elwood. A Will County judge agreed with Northpoint and ordered that the Village was required by the terms of the Annexation Agreement to allow the bridge. The Village disagreed with the judge's ruling and appealed the decision to the Illinois Appellate Court. On February 26, 2024, the Appellate Court reversed the Will County judge's ruling and determined Northpoint had no right to impose their bridge and traffic burden upon the Village of Elwood lifting the litigation and burden off our community.

In connection with the issuance of the General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2023 the Village entered into an undertaking to file notice of certain reportable events. Among the reportable required events was a bond rating. In accordance with the Undertaking, S & P Global Ratings assigned the Bonds a credit rating of "A+" (Stable Outlook) on August 1, 2024 and affirmed it "A+" long term rating on the Village's general obligation bonds. Prior to August 1, 2024 the Bonds were not rated.

The Village was awarded GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The certificate of achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

The Village budgeted and had built a cold storage building to hold public works equipment.

Through negotiation discussions CJ Logistics agreed to extend the pedestrian/bike path lying just north of the Elwood Fire Department to Diagonal Road. This will now connect a path from Diagonal Road all the way south and through Archer Park.

Administration Staff provided early voting opportunities for both the primary and general elections.

The multi-use building known as "The Hydrangea House" located in Lloyd Erickson Park is complete, looks fantastic and is ready for use. We are currently working on the rental use agreement.

Great new addition to the Village's website. Sign up on the Village's website and you can get email and or text message alerts about meeting dates, events, emergencies, etc.

Manhattan-Elwood Public Library, Elwood Branch is located at 111 E Mississippi Avenue and opened to the public on November 20th. We are very excited to have a library branch located in the Village of Elwood.

The Harding Development building construction is complete. Mr. Harding and I discussed a ribbon cutting ceremony and he would like to do that in the spring of 2025.

Jackson Township and the Village of Elwood worked together handing out Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas food baskets to help support those less fortunate.

The 2024 Lewis Plane Pull benefiting Special Olympics of Illinois was held at Lewis University. The Plane Pull featured the ultimate tug-of-war competition. The Elwood Police and Public Works team raised funds for the opportunity to test their strength by pulling a United Airlines passenger jet 12 feet as fast as possible. We were proud to announce Team Elwood took third place in the Public Safety Division.

Increased overweight truck enforcement by 78% over 2023.

Partnered with Elwood Fire Protection District in developing a drone program to improve public safety.

D.A.R.E program for the seventh-grade students at Elwood School District 203 and implemented a School Resource Officer.

FLAP Grant \$335,000 The team has been working on the project known as the Elwood Area Bike/Walking Trail Connector since 2022 and received notice on November 21, 2024, IDOT approved Phase 1 Study for the construction of a bike trail connecting the Village of Elwood and City of Wilmington. The project involves Phase 1 Engineering and Environmental Studies for bike and pedestrian accommodations. The project will create a pedestrian and cyclist connectivity between North Island Park in Wilmington and O'Conner Park in Elwood. We have a long way to go before completion, but we are on the right track.

Joliet Arsenal Development Authority awarded the Village of Elwood \$75,000 to assist with updating our Comprehensive Plan.

ComEd provided \$500 to assist with our Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade event.

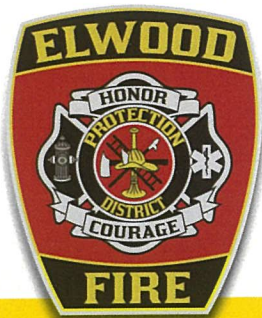
Illinois Public Risk Safety Grant in the amount of \$3,028.00 was awarded to the Public Works Department.

\$50,000 Grant Funds to purchase Starcom 21 police radios.

DCEO Grant \$100,000 towards the installation of video surveillance cameras at Lloyd Erickson Park. DCEO Grant \$200,000 towards the construction of a public works salt dome building. DCEO Grant \$150,000 grant to upgrade and replacement of outdated water meters, technical hardware, and software replacement.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Village Hall at 815-423-5011.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Doug Jenco



### Contact Information

NON EMERGENCY #: 815-423-5224

Email: [admin@elwoodfpd.com](mailto:admin@elwoodfpd.com)

Address: 309 W. Mississippi St.

Elwood, IL 60421

Website: [www.elwoodfpd.com](http://www.elwoodfpd.com)

Facebook: @ElwoodFPD

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## Exciting News FROM ELWOOD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT!

The Elwood Fire Protection District is excited to **Welcome Ehrin Villalobos** as our new Fire & Life Safety Educator (FLSE)! In this role, Ehrin will coordinate, oversee, and deliver comprehensive Fire and Life Safety Education Programs to the citizens, schools, businesses, and industries of our community. This position is essential for promoting a culture of safety and increasing awareness of fire and life safety practices throughout the District. Ehrin, a proud Elwood resident for over 10 years, brings a strong background in education to this important role.

You'll soon see her out in the community, becoming a familiar face within the District!

*We are thrilled to have Ehrin on board and look forward to enhancing our community's public education initiatives!*

## Senior Luncheon ANNOUNCEMENT

The Elwood Fire Protection District, in partnership with the Village of Elwood and Jackson Township, is pleased to invite seniors aged 60 and above to a:

*Free Senior Luncheon*  
*Silver Dollar Restaurant (in town)*  
*May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025*

*Doors open at 11:00am - Lunch served family-style at 12:00pm.*

To attend, please **preregister by April 17th, 2025**,  
by calling **815-423-5224** or emailing [admin@elwoodfpd.com](mailto:admin@elwoodfpd.com).

*Seating is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot as soon as possible.*

This luncheon is our way of expressing gratitude to our senior residents for their ongoing support and the important role they play in our community. We look forward to gathering with you, sharing a meal, and celebrating the many contributions our seniors make to Elwood. It's a special opportunity to connect, honor our elders, and show how much we appreciate everything they do to help make our community a great place to live.

## APRIL IS AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH!

Autism Acceptance Month aims to shed light on the diverse experiences and perspectives within the Autism community, fostering greater awareness, understanding, and inclusion. Stay tuned for community-wide support initiatives, and we encourage you to get involved! For more information on how you can support and learn about autism, visit [www.autismsociety.org](http://www.autismsociety.org).

## Training Facility Dedication

Later this year, the Elwood Fire Protection District will be dedicating our new Training Facility in honor of Norman "Norm" Fanning. Norm has dedicated 40 years of invaluable service to the Elwood Fire Protection District. Stay tuned for more details about this special event. We look forward to sharing more with you soon!

## 2025 Calendar of Events

### MARCH

- 11th - **Beyond Ancestry (Adults):**  
6:30pm - 7:30pm Library, Elwood Branch
- 13th - **Family Reading Night:** Elwood School
- 17th - 28th - **Consolidated Election Early Voting:**  
Village of Elwood
- 20th - **Elvis Presley: A Tribute to the King of Rock (Adults):**  
5:00pm - 7:00pm - Library, Manhattan Branch

### APRIL

- 1st - **General Election:** Jackson Township
- 4th - **Easter Egg Hunt:** Village of Elwood
- 5th - **Solo and Ensemble Music Contest:**  
Elwood School
- 8th - **Hoppy Bunny Easter Storytime (Family, Kids):**  
4:30pm - 5:30pm - Library, Elwood Branch
- Annual Town Meeting:**  
6:00pm - Jackson Township
- 12th - **Annual Egg Hunt:**  
10:00am - 10:30am - Village of Elwood
- 17th - **Restorative Stretch with Fitness Premier:**  
5:30pm - 6:30pm Library, Manhattan Branch
- 17th - **Jr High Spring Concert:**  
6:30pm - 7:30pm - Elwood School
- 24th & 25th - **Spring Play:** Elwood School

### MAY

- 1st - **Senior Luncheon:**  
Doors Open 11:00am, Lunch Served 12:00pm  
Silver Dollar Restaurant
- 3rd - **Red Carpet Corridor:**  
8:00am - 5:00pm  
Douglas & Mississippi Avenue
- 4th - **Red Carpet Corridor:**  
9:00am - 4:00pm - Douglas & Mississippi Avenue
- 5th - **Waste Management Spring Clean Up Day**  
15th - **Class Night:**  
6:00pm - 8:30pm - Elwood School
- 22nd - **8th Grade Graduation:**  
6:00pm - 7:00pm - Elwood School
- 28th - **DMV Pop-Up (Adults):**  
10:00am - 2:00pm Library, Elwood Branch

### JUNE

- 24th - **Ukulele Moonshiners:**  
Village of Elwood Children's Garden

### JULY

- 15th - **The Magic Sound of Dulcimer:**  
7:00pm - 8:00pm  
Village of Elwood Children's Garden