

STAY CONNECTED: CITY NEWS IS JUST A CLICK AWAY

If you are like most people, you want to know what’s happening in town as it happens. While quarterly newsletters like this one are an ideal place to profile residents or community groups and feature seasonal tips from our departments, the city’s website, e-newsletter and social media platforms offer more timely news and information.

www.oak-forest.org

The city’s website is easy to navigate with large drop-down menus, an efficient search feature, and the popular “How Do I?” menu with links to commonly accessed pages. Under the government tab, you can find CIC-TV programming, department information and council and commission agendas. From the homepage, residents can read the latest news stories, quickly submit a service request, sign up for online water bill pay, or register to receive the city’s weekly e-Briefs newsletter.

e-Briefs

You can subscribe to e-Briefs through the Notify Me button on the website. Delivered to your inbox every Friday, this e-newsletter provides current information about city services, activities and events. The e-newsletter commonly includes links to press releases, City Council agendas, construction updates, public safety reminders, senior and youth news, and much more. You can unsubscribe at any time; although we don’t think you’ll want to! Also on the Notify Me page, you can request to receive notifications about bid postings, job openings or calendar updates.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

If you haven’t done so already, find us and follow us on social media, including Facebook and Twitter. On a daily basis, we post and share news and information about business openings, construction projects, community events, and more. We also share photos from city events, promotional fliers from local schools and community groups, and pertinent stories from trusted news outlets.

Like the city’s official Facebook page at facebook.com/cityofoakforest and follow us on Twitter @cityofoakforest.

In addition to the city, you can follow Living Oak Forest on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, and Pinterest. These social media pages are extensions of LivingOakForest.com, a vibrant, consumer-friendly website that

offers a real glimpse into what Oak Forest has to offer young families. As a current resident, you are our best ambassador. So share these sites with your friends and family in an effort to tell potential residents why you love living in town and what makes it so special.

Stay Connected

As you can see, there are a lot of options to help you stay connected to the City of Oak Forest. We hope you enjoy following along with us and encourage you to like, share and retweet the information you find useful. We also welcome your feedback and comments, and will make every effort to respond in a timely manner. We look forward to connecting with you!



Q&A with Chief Kristin

Police Chief Tim Kristin has been at the helm of the Oak Forest Police Department for four months, celebrating his 100th day as chief on December 27, 2016. A veteran of the department, it didn't take him long to catch his stride and begin making an impact almost immediately. Let's check in with Chief Kristin to get his perspective on his first 100 days as chief, what's in store for the police department in 2017, and why he became a police officer in the first place.

Any surprises on your first day as chief?

There were no real surprises on my first day. Working as a deputy chief for the past three years gave me an idea of what to expect. Any time you start a new position there is going to be a period of transition, but, for the most part, it was unremarkable.

What are the most rewarding and/or the most challenging aspects of the position?

To date, it has been my pleasure to hire two employees to the department and anticipate the addition of one more in the very near future. There were a few unexpected situations that required immediate attention and problem solving; however, I am lucky to have great men and women around me that help provide insight and ideas to complex problems.

As chief, what are your goals for the police department in 2017?

I'm not in my position to recreate the wheel, but I would like to take a look at different solutions to existing issues. I would like to implement some new policies and initiatives to remain progressive and move the department forward this year. Law enforcement agencies continue to struggle with unfunded mandates by the Illinois legislature that need to be addressed. It is my goal to develop effective solutions to existing problems in the most cost-effective manner.

Why and when did you decide to become a police officer?

I really didn't decide to actively pursue a career in law enforcement until college. Originally, I was a business major and quickly learned that it was not for me. I wanted a job that offered different challenges on a daily basis. I volunteered as a police cadet at a local police department and quickly determined that this was the profession for me. I didn't like the forecast of having to sit behind a desk every day in a



Police Chief Tim Kristin at his desk

business field. Ironically, this is where I find myself at this stage of my career. I still try to go out in the field every day to get out of the office.

What are the biggest changes in policing from when you were hired until today?

Technology and the public perception of the police are the biggest changes that I have seen in my 25 years of law enforcement. Law enforcement is driven by technology with information readily accessible to help officers do their jobs on a daily basis. With new technology, rising costs for equipment is always a challenge. When I was a detective in the early part of my career, obtaining information from other departments required you to drive there and physically obtain information. Now this can be done with the stroke of a keyboard key. Video and other forms of technology have given the public a different perspective of what officers do on a daily basis. Video cameras are everywhere in society and, in my opinion, help officers in every aspect of their jobs.

As a father, would you encourage your sons to become police officers?

A law enforcement career has certainly been rewarding for me. I enjoy the work that I do and it has provided a stable income for my family. I encourage my sons to work hard at everything they do. It really will not matter to me what they decide as their professions. I only hope that they are happy and healthy in whatever they choose.



from the MAYOR

I would like to take a moment to express to you, residents of Oak Forest, sincere gratitude for the things that have enriched my family's life over the past year.

First and foremost, thank you for the opportunity you have given to my wife, Maureen, and myself to be a part of such a wonderful community — where we have raised our family since 1978. We see Oak Forest as more than just a place where people live, work, play, and pray. Oak Forest is a community fortunate enough to have dedicated volunteers in many areas of activity, such as veterans groups, education, youth sports, scouting, and social services. Volunteers and the activities which they participate in help create an environment conducive to those seeking a well-rounded and welcoming community to raise their families. I strongly believe it is through the efforts of all residents that an environment of helpfulness and joy is cultivated, which allows our city to thrive.

This community spirit is evident in the photos at right, which show our Veterans Commission dedicating our new flag ash repository at City Hall; our police officers delivering more than 4,500 toys to the Marine Corps Reserve as part of this year's Toys for Tots campaign; our firefighters bringing gifts and good cheer to Ryne Ward, a local boy who has been battling cancer; and

our students singing Christmas carols at our tree lighting ceremony.

I have had the privilege to serve this community for nearly 25 years in various capacities and have worked with many fine volunteers during that time. In particular, I have had the honor and the privilege of serving as mayor for the past eight years. I have been able to do so with the cooperation of excellent aldermen, an enthusiastic city clerk, an experienced treasurer and, most importantly, the supportive

members of this fine community. As mayor, it is my duty to provide leadership for this city and to listen to the concerns of all its residents. I would not have been able to do so without the collaboration of the City Council and the trust of the terrific people of Oak Forest — the place we all call home.

I have been privileged to be a part of this wonderful community and to have worked with so many of you in various capacities in the past. On behalf of my family, I send the best of wishes to you and yours as we head into the new year with the hope that it will be even more rewarding and successful than the last.

Henry L. Kuspa, Mayor



COMMUNITY SPIRIT: (clockwise) Veterans Commission Member Paul Selman (left) and Chair Joe Pilch at the flag ash repository dedication ceremony; Oak Forest police officers pack up more than 4,500 toys as part of the 2016 Toys for Tots campaign; Oak Forest firefighters deliver toys to Ryne Ward as part of Operation North Pole; and Fierke Education Center Choir performs Christmas carols at the city's tree lighting ceremony.



Laura Clemons
1st Ward Alderman
708-903-1845

Hashtags. We've all seen them — #livingoakforest, #ourcommunity, #closetohome. But, do we really know what they're all about? I certainly didn't until I had the pleasure of

participating in the Living Oak Forest Instagram Takeover. Followers on social media spent the day with me — catching the train downtown, grabbing a coffee at Starbucks, shopping at Family Dollar, and discussing local government with a girl scout troop. It was a wonderful experience to utilize social media and all of those hashtags to spread the word about our great community. Interested in doing a takeover? Let me know.

I would also like to spread the word about two of our awesome residents — Barbie Exline and Lora Korgis. Under Barbie's leadership, the Arbor Park PTO has really stepped up to offer fun programs and innovative fundraisers, such as Bingo Night, which raised more than \$2,000 for the school! Similarly, Lora has worked incredibly hard as a Crime Prevention Commission member on National Night Out, a summer event that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. Currently, Lora is working on the Community Enrichment Candlelight Bowl, which will be held on January 28 to benefit the schools in our district. Both of these women and the organizations they serve deserve a round of applause. In fact, let's hear it for all of our residents who give of their time and talents.

Sign up for my email list to stay informed. Send your email address to lclemmons@oak-forest.org.



Rich Simon
2nd Ward Alderman
708-687-3738

The 2nd Ward Neighborhood Watch Program is moving along. We are fortunate to have some very fine volunteers, some of whom have taken a leadership role in organizing

and structuring our program so that it will be successful in identifying potential criminal activities and help make our ward an even safer place to live and raise our families. Please contact me if you wish to help in our Neighborhood Watch effort.

Another tool to create safer neighborhoods is increased lighting. I am trying to determine where more lighting is needed and what we can do about it. There is a long-standing city program to provide homeowners with \$100 toward the cost of installing a post light in front of their homes. I am proposing to the City Council that we increase this amount so more residents take advantage of the program.

Don't forget about the new businesses that have opened in our ward or in town — Family Dollar at 159th and Long Avenue, Starbucks and ATI Physical Therapy in the Gateway Development at 159th and Cicero Avenue, and Eagle Sports Range at 5900 W. 159th Street. These businesses are open, so please patronize them. A lot of effort went into attracting these businesses to Oak Forest, which leads me to mention the work of Community Development Director Adam Dotson. Adam is stepping down from his position as of January 1. He has done a fine job in attracting these and other businesses and will be missed. We wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.



Diane Wolf
3rd Ward Alderman
708-207-8392

Oak Forest's non-motorized transit plan aims to make our city a bicycle friendly community. The plan highlights the need to offer protected bike lanes and dedicated

paths so that residents have more choices when it comes to running errands, getting to work, accessing the train station, or taking the kids to school and events.

As part of the plan, the Community Development Department is working on a public outreach program to promote bicycling and bicycle safety for both drivers and cyclists. The program's goal is to establish a physical and cultural environment that supports and encourages safe, comfortable and convenient ways for bicyclists to travel throughout the city and into the surrounding communities. The city will utilize social media to increase community awareness and advocate for bicycle use. The department also plans on scheduling bike riding events for residents and students.

Making bicycling safe and convenient are keys to improving health, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality and promoting better lifestyles. Biking helps our city grow healthier, stronger, and more connected. Bicycling is an opportunity to make our community a vibrant destination for residents and visitors.

Visit www.oak-forest.org to learn more about our non-motorized transit plan. If you would like to get involved, I'd love to hear from you. You can call me or email me at dwolf@oak-forest.org.



Jim Emmett
5th Ward Alderman
708-705-6895

Wintertime brings numerous family-friendly ways to get outdoors to enjoy the Forest Preserves of Cook County. There are many fun activities to experience, including sledding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Did you know you can enjoy cross-country skiing in all parts of the forest preserves, including Camp Sullivan, from sunrise to sunset? Cross-country skiing is fast becoming the most popular winter pastime in the forest preserves. In fact, it's a great low-impact exercise – ideal for seniors – that tones every major muscle group and burns tons of calories.

If cross-country skiing isn't your thing, consider snowshoeing. From what I am told, there's no better way to experience the forest preserves in winter than by snowshoe. Throughout the winter months, Camp Sullivan offers free snowshoe trekking as long as there is at least 4 inches of hard snow on the ground. They'll even let you borrow a pair of snowshoes for free. For more information or exact dates, call the campgrounds at 312-636-0041.

And, if walking is more your style, visit the Oak Forest Heritage Preserve — a 176.3-acre site adjacent to the Oak Forest Health Center. You can take advantage of the 1.7-mile paved trail or enjoy more restful activities like bird and wildlife watching or photography.

One of my resolutions this year is to get outside and take advantage of the great outdoors. There's really no excuse. It's right in our backyard. Hope to see you out there!



James Hortsman
6th Ward Alderman
708-687-5307

As you may have noticed, the city has added some new businesses since the last FYI came your way — Eagle Sports Range, Family Dollar, Starbucks, and ATI Physical Therapy. We continue to

look to add new businesses or assist existing ones to keep their businesses in our town.

During the winter months, Public Works makes every effort to keep the sewers clear of debris, but we could use your help to ensure there are no issues with backups. Any debris stops water from draining, so please keep sewers clear. If you have sewer issues, contact Public Works at 708-535-4090 to see how these issues can be resolved.

Please remember that when there is accumulating snowfall of 2 inches or more you need to move your vehicles off the street to give our plow drivers enough room to clear and salt the streets. If you are like me and have multiple vehicles and a small driveway, it is acceptable to park your car over the sidewalk during a snow event.

As the temperature drops, please keep an eye on your elderly neighbors. Let's hope winter goes quickly and there are few issues this season.

As always, I look forward to assisting you with any issues as they come up, just contact me with your concerns. I wish you and your family a happy and healthy new year!



Denise Danihel
7th Ward Alderman
708-535-0911

Thank you to all of the people who came out for the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 3. It seemed that everyone had a fun time and the weather sure did

cooperate. I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Hopefully, you are enjoying or at least are aware of our new businesses — Family Dollar, Starbucks, ATI, and Eagle Sports Range. It really is exciting and I hope this economic development momentum continues in the new year.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the need to fix up the entrance off Forestview and Oak Park Avenue. I'm happy to report that I have an idea for the area. However, I will need some help putting it together. If you are interested in helping out in anyway, please let me know.

Also, remember to keep your cars off the streets when it is expected to snow or snow is falling so our plow drivers can keep our city streets clean and clear.

Feel free to call or email me at ddanihel@oak-forest.org if you have suggestions, problems or questions.

OAK FOREST ROTARY CLUB
BRING FAMILY & FRIENDS
FREE ADMISSION

**PANCAKE
BREAKFAST &
BLOOD DRIVE**

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12
8 AM TO 1:30 PM

OAK FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
15200 S. CENTRAL AVENUE

SCHEDULE A DONATION TIME, 708-687-7026

Winter Reminders

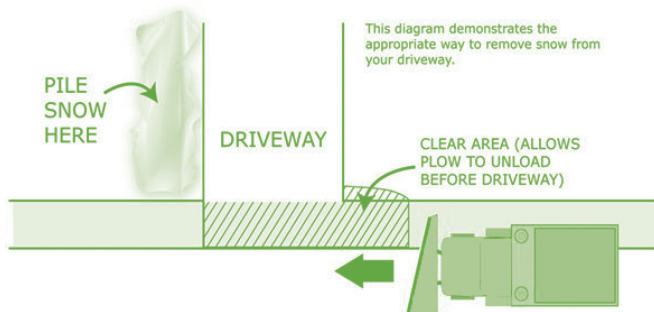
It's that time of year! Please remember that the city prohibits residents from parking vehicles on city streets after 2 inches of snow has fallen so that Public Works crews can clear and salt the streets effectively and efficiently. Also, keep in mind:

Vehicles must remain off streets for 12 hours

Vehicles must remain off city streets for 12 hours after the end of the snowfall or risk being towed. If your vehicle is towed, you could face fines of up to \$260. No warnings will be issued.

Pushing snow into the street is hazardous

Do not shovel or blow snow from driveways into the streets as this can cause a hazard and is against city ordinance. When snow is shoveled into the street, the plow is likely to push it right back in front of the driveway. Although the city's plows may leave some snow across driveway entrances, they try to keep it to a minimum. Regardless, please note, Public Works will not remove snow from driveway entrances. The diagram below demonstrates the appropriate way to remove snow from your driveway so you do not get plowed in.



If your mailbox is damaged, call Public Works

If a city plow physically strikes and damages your mailbox, Public Works will replace it with a standard mailbox as long as it was located in accordance with post office and city standards. To read the standards, visit www.oak-forest.org. However, if the mailbox is incorrectly located or knocked down from the weight of snow rolling off a plow, the resident is responsible for replacing the mailbox. The department will not be responsible for decorative or brick mailboxes. If a decorative or brick mailbox is struck by a plow, a resident may be eligible for a reimbursement up to \$40 from the city. If your mailbox is damaged, call Public Works at 708-535-4090 to request an inspection.



OAK FOREST GREEN STEPS COMMISSION
ELECTRONICS RECYCLING
SATURDAY, APRIL 22 – 9AM TO 1PM
CITY HALL 15440 S. CENTRAL AVENUE



The Oak Forest Green Steps Commission is teaming up with VetTech.US to recycle electronics and support our veterans!

\$20 PER TV & COMPUTER MONITOR
\$40 PER TV 40" INCHES OR GREATER
\$55 TV HOME PICKUP; CALL 708-533-5464

ITEMS ACCEPTED AT NO CHARGE:

- Computers
- Keyboards
- Cell Phones
- MP3 Players
- Printers
- Stereos
- CD/VCR/DVD Players
- Fax Machines
- PDAs
- Video Game Consoles
- Microwaves
- Computer mice



OAK FOREST

VetTech US, founded by Peter Potus, is a program of the Klasing Family Foundation dedicated to training and preparing veterans for the IT career field while simultaneously collecting and recycling/responsibly E-waste.

Welcome to the Team

The Oak Forest Building Department is excited to welcome Frank Fiore and Dennis Mucha to their team as new code enforcement officers. You might see them driving around town and following up on code violations, or conducting apartment inspections.

Frank and his wife, Martha, have lived in Oak Forest for 47 years and have two children. Frank



Fiore



Mucha

previously worked at AT&T for 29 years in the procurement and supply chain division. In his free time, he enjoys doing electrical work and working on different wiring

projects. He believes that Oak Forest has great schools and is a good community to raise a family.

Dennis and his wife, Sandy, have lived in Oak Forest for 14 years. Dennis is retired from Carpenters Union Local 434 with 44 years of experience. In his free time, he enjoys fishing, doing carpentry work, and building things. He appreciates that Oak Forest is a localized and well-protected community — an ideal place to live when raising a family.

Friends of Animal Control to Lead Parade

The Oak Forest-Crestwood Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Oak Forest are pleased to announce that the Friends of Oak Forest Animal Control will serve as grand marshal of the Oak Forest Fleadh family parade on Saturday, March 4. The parade steps off at 11 a.m. at 157th Street and heads north on Cicero Avenue.



Dress your pets in their Irish best at the Oak Forest Fleadh on March 4.

“The Oak Forest Fleadh celebrates Irish culture and tradition as well as the people and businesses of Oak Forest,” said Chamber Director Kim Malecky-Iles. “This year we’re extending that concept to our four-legged friends in an effort to raise awareness about the importance of responsible pet ownership and care.”

The Friends group works in partnership with the city’s Animal Control facility to provide rescue and re-homing of unclaimed and abandoned local animals, improve facility conditions, and increase the success rate of reuniting lost pets with their owners.

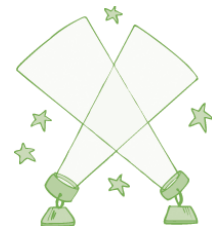
As grand marshals, Friends members will lead more than 60 parade units, including pipe and drum bands, civic and community groups, schools and churches, and local businesses along Cicero Avenue. Before the parade, Friends members will be at the CNB Oak Forest Fleadh 5K accepting donations of pet food and toys; cat litter; and dog leashes, harnesses, and sweaters. Friends members also will sound the horn at the start of the race at 8:30 a.m.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce ourselves to the community and educate people about what we do in the city,” said Alderman Laura Clemons, who was instrumental in forming the commission. “We are so grateful for any and all donations we receive to help us provide food and shelter throughout the year for our animals until they find new, loving homes.”

For Fleadh details, visit www.oak-forest.org or call 708-687-4600. Like the Fleadh and Friends of Animal Control on Facebook. Register for the Fleadh 5K today at www.signmeup.com/116462.

Senior Spotlight

The Senior Commission offers information and assistance to seniors in the community. It also promotes awareness of senior issues and provides policy direction pertaining to the city’s community bus service.



The commission is probably best known for its stellar programming on the fourth Thursday of each month (except July, August and December) at 11 a.m. at the Community Center at 15501 S. Kilpatrick Avenue. Tickets are available at City Hall for only \$4. Ticket price includes entertainment, lunch and cash bingo. Be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming programs:

- Singer Edizon Dayao on January 26: He’ll be making his magic on the keyboard, bringing us the sounds of a tropical luau to help us forget the frigid Chicago winter.
- Steve Cooper on February 23: Mr. Cooper will bring his audio/video show of Big Band memories and vocalists to Oak Forest. Each clip will include “behind the scenes” stories to make them even more enjoyable.
- Phil and Amy on March 23: This dynamic duo will take the music of Andrew Lloyd Weber and other famous composers to the next level. You’re sure to enjoy Phil and Amy as they sing their hearts out.



Pete and Joe perform at the senior lunch last spring.

- Pete and Joe on April 27: This must-see duo brings song and wit to every routine. We promise you won’t be disappointed when they take the stage.

In addition to monthly luncheons, the commission hosts a Senior Health Fair every October at the Oak Forest Park District at 15601 S. Central Avenue. At the fair, seniors can receive free or discounted health screenings, get their flu and/or pneumonia shots, renew their drivers’ licenses, and much more.

For additional information, please call the commission at 708-687-4050, ext. 1607.

PRESRT STD
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit 7
Oak Forest, IL
60452

CAR-RT SORT

Oak Forest Resident or Business
Oak Forest IL 60452

Resident Feedback

Please send your comments, suggestions, compliments, or questions to:
City of Oak Forest, 15440 Central Avenue,
Oak Forest, IL 60452.

City of Oak Forest

- Mayor – Henry L. Kuspa
- City Clerk – David Neuman
- Treasurer – JoAnn Kelly

Aldermen

- 1st Ward – Laura Clemons
- 2nd Ward – Richard Simon
- 3rd Ward – Diane Wolf
- 4th Ward – Larry Schoenfeld
- 5th Ward – Jim Emmett
- 6th Ward – James Hortzman
- 7th Ward – Denise Danihel

City Officials

- City Administrator Troy Ishler
- Finance Director Colleen Julian
- Fire Chief Jack Janozik
- Police Chief Tim Kristin
- Public Works Director Rich Rinchich
- Community Development OPEN
- Building Commissioner Mike Forbes
- Human Resources Dorianne Preer
- EMA Director Robert Small
- Taxpayer Advocate Guy Gattone

City of Oak Forest

15440 Central Avenue
www.oak-forest.org
www.livingoakforest.org


Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Select Saturdays: Visit website

City Phone Numbers

- City Hall 708-687-4050
- Police non-emergency 708-687-1376
- Fire non-emergency 708-687-6050
- Public Works 708-535-4090
- Animal Control 708-705-5690

FYI is published by the City of Oak Forest for residents, business owners and friends of the city. 🌿

 /cityoakforest /livingoakforest

 /cityoakforest /livingoakforest

 /livingoakforest

 oak-forest.org



 Comcast 19, WOW 6, U-Verse 99