

JANUARY 2026

# Keeping Posted >

[Mayor's Message](#)

[Frosty Fest, State  
of the Village and More](#)

[New Police Chief  
Jeremy Gaughan](#)

[Senior Services Guide](#)

[Service Announcements  
and Seasonal Reminders](#)



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

Another year has passed providing a good time to take stock of all that has happened in 2025. If there is anything that I have learned in the 65 years that I have been on Earth, it is that every day is a new day with endless possibilities. Take advantage of all that God has given to you and do not waste a moment.

This past year, I have been motivated to look for ways to share the Village's success with those that are in need. I formed the Care Commission, which is looking to do just that. The Village's first round of nonprofit donations will begin this February, supporting organizations that provide food, clothing, housing and other essential services. I'm committed to partnering with the Township and other community groups to help ensure every person within our community has what they need.

On behalf of the Village Board and all of the employees of the Village of Gurnee, I wish you a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. I pray that in this season, no matter your circumstance, you will find peace in Jesus who knows your situation and will meet you where you are at. As always, I would encourage you to reach out to me with your questions and comments.

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Hood



## VILLAGE MEETINGS

### Village Board

January 5  
January 26  
February 2  
February 16  
February 23  
March 2 (5:30pm)  
March 16

### Planning and Zoning Board

January 7  
January 21  
February 4  
February 18  
March 4  
March 18

All Village meetings are held at  
Village Hall (325 N. O'Plaine Rd.)

Village Board meetings begin at 7:00pm on  
Mondays. Planning and Zoning Board  
Meetings begin at 7:00pm on Wednesdays.  
Schedule subject to change.

## MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS



### PIZZA WITH THE MAYOR

Saturday, January 24  
12:00pm to 2:00pm  
Mama K's Pizza  
5250 Grand Ave.



### COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Saturday, March 14  
10:00am to 12:00pm  
Gurnee Mills Starbucks  
6170 Grand Ave., Entry F

## Upcoming Events

### Frosty Fest

Saturday, January 10, 10:30am to 1:00pm

Winter is here, which means it's time to celebrate the annual Frosty Fest event! Bundle up as the Park District transforms Viking Park at 4374 Old Grand Ave. into a winter wonderland, complete with outdoor sleigh rides, games, crafts, and more! Then, warm up with hot cocoa in the Dance Hall, followed by s'mores by the fire. This is a FREE event for all ages.

### State of the Village

Monday, January 26, 5:45pm to 8:00pm

The Village of Gurnee will host the State of the Village event on Monday, January 26th at the Village Hall located at 325 N. O'Plaine Rd. The evening will begin with an open house and will celebrate the Village's collective accomplishments while unveiling plans for the year ahead. During the address, Mayor Hood will highlight the Village's achievements from the past year, ranging from infrastructure improvements and public safety initiatives to strides in economic development and community engagement. As part of the event, a local business will be presented with the Pinnacle Performance Award, recognizing businesses that have excelled as top performers among their peers. Watch it live at [www.youtube.com/@VillageofGurnee](https://www.youtube.com/@VillageofGurnee).

### Coffee with a Cop

Saturday, February 7, 12:00pm to 2:00pm

The Police Department will be hosting Coffee with a Cop at the food court in Gurnee Mills on Saturday, February 7th. Residents can stop by, enjoy a conversation with officers and make Valentines that will be delivered to our local seniors on February 14th!

## GURNEE NEWS

### HOMETOWN HEROES BANNER RECOGNITION CEREMONY

At the November 17th Board Meeting, the Village recognized 30 of Gurnee's Hometown Heroes by presenting them and their families with their distinguished banners. The program was launched to honor and recognize veterans and service members from the Village of Gurnee who have served in the US Armed Forces or are currently serving, protecting our nation, preserving our democracy and defending the ideals we hold dear. The banners serve as living tributes to honor the past and present members of the Armed Forces. The program is expected to run again in May during Military Memorial Month.



### 2025 HOLIDAY LIGHTS AT WELTON PLAZA

The 5th annual Holiday Lights event at Welton Plaza on Friday, November 21st, successfully kicked off the holiday season with a dazzling light display and community cheer, as the popular Gurnee event drew a large crowd of residents and visitors who filled the plaza with joy. The community celebration featured

a variety of free, family-friendly activities including fire pits with s'mores, pizza courtesy of Jimano's, holiday craft stations, performances by the Gurnee Park District's Above the Barre Dance Team and a special appearance by Santa Claus. In the spirit of giving, the event served as a collection point for non-perishable food donations benefiting the Warren Township Food Pantry. Hosted by the Gurnee Park District, Village of Gurnee, the Village of Gurnee Chamber of Commerce and Gurnee Community Church, the evening brought together neighbors for a memorable night of community and celebration.

GURNEE POLICE & FIRE DEPARTMENTS SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The Gurnee Police Department once again hosted Shop with a Cop, a cherished tradition where officers pair with local children for a special morning of holiday shopping and unforgettable memories. For 10 years, school resource officers and social workers from each Gurnee school have helped identify families experiencing hardship, ensuring that support goes directly to those who need it most. This year, the Police Department was able to help support 80 local children and their families. In addition, the Gurnee Fire Department will be adopting another Gurnee family for its annual Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program. This is the department’s third year participating, and during that time Gurnee Firefighters Local 3598 has helped support multiple families in need. Funds raised through community fundraising events are used to purchase gifts, helping make the holidays a little brighter and a little warmer for local families. This year’s adopted family will receive a personal delivery of those gifts, reflecting the department’s continued commitment to supporting the community during the holiday season.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: MEET THE NEW POLICE CHIEF JEREMY GAUGHAN

After more than two decades of service, Chief Jeremy Gaughan has stepped into the role of leading the Gurnee Police Department. Chief Gaughan began his law enforcement career in 1999 and joined the Gurnee Police Department in 2002. Over the years, he has served in a wide range of assignments, including Deputy Chief of Operations, Investigations Commander, Patrol Sergeant, Major Crime Task Force Investigator and Special Agent with the Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group. His work has earned recognition at the local, state, national and international levels including: IACP “40 Under 40” Award (2017), GPD Community Impact Pillar Award (2013), NAPO Top Cop Award (2004) and GPD Medal of Honor. A US Army veteran, Chief Gaughan served 22 years with two combat deployments in Iraq. He retired in 2019 as a Group Sergeant Major and is the recipient of the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal and Iraq Campaign Medal with two Campaign Stars. Chief Gaughan is an advocate for lifelong learning. He is a graduate of multiple Northwestern University Center for Public Safety programs, holds a bachelor’s degree in administration and management and a Master of Public Administration. Chief Gaughan is married to his wife, Alise, and together they have two children, Isabella and Isaiah. As Chief, he will also serve on executive boards for Lake County COaST, Protect Lake County, the Northwest Police Academy, and the Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Lab.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Bank of America

6340 Grand Ave.
- Gurnee Mills – Primark, Off the Rax

6170 Grand Ave.
- Cote Wright Tax & Accounting Inc.

5455 Grand Ave.
- Market Square - DAA Wellness Spa, S&N Market

6021 Washington St.

COMING SOON:

- Gurnee Hyundai (Expansion)

6251 Grand Ave.
- Haraz Coffee House

5572 Grand Ave.
- Lake Harbor Treatment

3915 Oglesby Ave.
- Haus of Shareese

3563 Grand Ave.
- Liberty Point Apartments

10 Woodlake Blvd.
- Beef-A-Roo

1504 Nations Dr.
- Gurnee Mills - SkyZone

6170 Grand Ave.
- Muller Honda (Expansion)

7000 Grand Ave.
- Eli Lilly & Company

5605 Centerpoint Ct.
- Gurnee Glen Apartments Clubhouse

1 Woodlake Blvd.
- Seasons at Gurnee Apartments

1500 Tri-State Pkwy.

FINANCIAL CORNER: TOURISM PAYS, RESIDENTS SAVE

Tourism helps lighten the load for Gurnee homeowners by funding a larger share of Village services than in most communities. Gurnee’s tourism destinations draw millions of visitors each year and their spending generates local sales, hotel, amusement and food & beverage taxes that help fund Village services. This means a significantly greater share of the cost of police, fire and infrastructure is paid by visitors when compared to other local communities with a similar population. This in combination with internal efficiency, innovation and community partnerships allows Gurnee to operate without a property tax levy, a utility tax or a grocery tax. As shown in the table, the community average tax of other local communities total \$2,277 while the annual total for a Gurnee household’s cost is \$188, ultimately saving each household approx. \$2,089 annually. Gurnee’s tourism economy does more than attract visitors, it helps pay the bills.

	Gurnee	Local Community Average
Property Taxes	\$0	\$1,947
Sales Tax	\$188	\$143
Grocery Tax	\$0	\$100
Electric Utility	\$0	\$32
Gas Utility	\$0	\$55
Annual Total	\$188	\$2,277

This is based on \$400k home under the 2024 tax rate as well as the average household spending and energy usage from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Energy Information Administration, and information available from Municipal websites.



# SENIOR SERVICES GUIDE



Warren Township  
Senior Services



## ElderCARE Lake County Services

### Transportation to Medical Appointments

At a typical visit to provide transportation, an ElderCARE volunteer escorts seniors to their vehicle, takes them to their medical appointment and returns them back home. ElderCARE also assists with drop-off and pick-up from lengthy appointments such as dialysis. Please provide at least 10 days' notice when requesting. One ride per week may be scheduled.

### Grocery Shopping

Do you or a senior that you know need assistance getting groceries? Access to healthy food is important. Through ElderCARE grocery shopping service, volunteers take the grocery list and make the trip to the store. Seniors pay for the groceries and the service is free.

### Basic Technology Program

Whether it's a phone, tablet or computer, ElderCARE can help seniors with technology, so they can stay connected to family and doctors.

### Friendly Visits

Living alone can be challenging, especially when it's tough to get out and interact with others. ElderCARE's friendly visits services provide an opportunity for seniors to develop lasting friendships by phone or over a cup of tea or a game.

For more information on these services and to receive an application to sign up, visit <https://www.eldercarelakecounty.org/services> or call 847-406-4683. ElderCARE is a volunteer-driven non-profit. If you are an active senior and have the heart to help others, please call ElderCARE to volunteer!

## Warren Township Senior Services

### Activities: Games, Fitness Classes and Events

The Warren Township Center offers a wide range of activities for seniors, including luncheons, fitness classes, trips, and various games. These programs fill up quickly, so please call the Senior Center at 847-244-1101 ext. 501 for registration dates, class schedules, and additional details.

### Social and Financial Services

The Senior Center's Social Service staff is available to assist residents with applications for federal, state, and local programs. Support includes guidance with Medicare and Social Security. Trained Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) counselors are available by appointment to help seniors navigate Medicare, avoid penalties, and receive one-on-one assistance with Medicare enrollment, Advantage Plans, Supplements/Medigap, Medicare Savings Programs, and Prescription Drug Plans/Part D.

### Utility and Financial Assistance Programs

Staff can provide information, screening, and help with applications for programs such as LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), which offers eligible individuals yearly credits on gas and electric bills and SNAP/Food Assistance.

Additional resources are available on housing, transportation, caregiving, and referrals. A weekly support group is also available for anyone experiencing life changes. This welcoming group meets on Wednesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information on these services, please visit the Warren Township Senior Services website or call 847-244-1101 ext. 501.



# SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SEASONAL REMINDERS

## GURNEE SNOW REMOVAL REMINDERS

As winter is in full swing, help the Gurnee Public Works Department help you by keeping in mind the following snow removal reminders:

- Residents and businesses are encouraged to clear driveway aprons, sidewalks and mailboxes by placing the snow onto your property or the adjacent parkway.
- Right-of-Way Items – Please remove portable basketball hoops, benches and decor from the street right-of-way.
- Hydrants – Clear the snow and ice three feet around all sides of hydrants to provide access. This simple step could save lives.
- Street Parking – After 2 inches of snow, please park your vehicle off the street so plows can effectively and safely remove snow. Note that vehicles may be ticketed or towed if they are parked on the street during snow removal operations.

In addition, shoveling, blowing or plowing snow into the street creates hazardous driving conditions, negates the effort of our snowplowing operations and is prohibited by law.



## CHRISTMAS TREE PICK UP BEGINS FRIDAY, JANUARY 2

Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) will be collecting Christmas trees on your regular service day throughout the month of January. In order for a tree to be collected, it must be placed at the curb or the edge of the street by 6:00am on the pick-up day. All lights and decorations must be removed. Failure to remove decorations or placing the tree in a plastic bag will result in the tree not being collected that week and the resident will have to wait until the following week.

Please note that only real trees are accepted. If a Christmas tree is greater than 6 ft., it must be cut in half for LRS to pick it up. Trees placed out after your final collection for January will not be picked up.



## SPRING CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

The Police Department is hosting the Spring 2026 Citizen Police Academy running Wednesday evenings from March 11th through May 20th. This interactive program offers community members an inside look at police operations including patrol procedures, investigations, traffic enforcement and hands-on demonstrations led by Gurnee officers. Classes meet once a week in the evening, giving participants the opportunity to learn, ask questions and engage directly with the men and women who serve our community. Registration opens Monday, January 5th at [www.gurnee.il.us](http://www.gurnee.il.us).

## VALENTINES FOR SENIORS RETURNS THIS FEBRUARY

The Gurnee Police Department is once again hosting the annual Valentines for Seniors. This program helps to bring joy to senior residents across Gurnee each Valentine's Day. Thanks to the community's generosity, annually the department collects over 3,000 handmade Valentines and delivers them to local senior living facilities. Beginning January 5th, the Police Department will be collecting handmade Valentines to share with seniors in our community. Drop yours off at the Police Station located at 100 N. O'Plaine Rd. through Friday, February 6th.



## HOLIDAY REMINDER: WASTE COLLECTION AND OFFICE CLOSURE

Due to New Year's Day, if your garbage and recycling falls on or after Thursday, January 1st (New Year's Day) then your collection will be delayed by one day for that week. Also, Village offices will be closed on January 1st (New Year's Day).



Village of Gurnee  
325 N. O'Plaine Road  
Gurnee, IL 60031

PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID Gurnee, IL  
Permit No. 45

## POSTAL PATRON

### MAYOR

Thomas B. Hood

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jeanne Balmes

Greg Garner

Quin O'Brien

Cheryl Ross

Karen Thorstenson

Kevin Woodside

### VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Patrick Muetz

### VILLAGE CLERK

Andy Harris

### VILLAGE OF GURNEE

325 N. O'PLAINE RD.

Village Hall: **847-599-7500**

Utility Billing: **847-599-7525**

Community Dev.: **847-599-7550**

Police Non-Emergency: **847-599-7000**

Public Works: **847-599-6800**

**[www.gurnee.il.us](http://www.gurnee.il.us)**



Like us or follow us on Facebook,  
Nextdoor, X and LinkedIn!

This newsletter is published by the  
Village of Gurnee. To provide  
feedback, please contact:

**[Apollack@village.gurnee.il.us](mailto:Apollack@village.gurnee.il.us)**

## WINTER WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

With the winter weather finally settling in, here are some tips to keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Limit time outdoors and dress warmly
- Take breaks while shoveling
- Listen for emergency alerts

Stay off roads during hazardous weather. If you must travel, keep a flashlight, food and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency. The latest road conditions for Illinois can be found at [www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com).

Additionally, Gurnee's Warming Center is Gurnee Mills located at 6170 W. Grand Ave. The mall is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00am to 8:00pm and Sunday from 11:00am to 7:00pm.

## BUDGET WORKSHOP SET FOR MARCH 2

The Village of Gurnee is committed to transparency and fiscal accountability in managing public resources. The Proposed Annual Budget for the upcoming 2026 - 2027 fiscal year will be available for public viewing at [www.gurnee.il.us/budget](http://www.gurnee.il.us/budget) in late February. Residents are encouraged to view the budget and provide any feedback. A public workshop on the Proposed Annual Budget will take place on March 2nd at 5:30pm at the Gurnee Village Hall located at 325 N. O'Plaine Rd. The Village Board will then consider the budget for formal approval on April 6th.

## NEW GURNEE WEBSITE COMING IN SPRING OF 2026

The Village of Gurnee is excited to announce that a brand-new Village website is coming in the spring of 2026. The redesigned site will feature a modern look, improved navigation and better search tools to help residents, businesses, and visitors quickly find information and complete online services. The updated platform will also enhance mobile accessibility and transparency, making it easier than ever to stay informed and connected with Village news, meetings and programs.

Please note the Village of Gurnee's new website will be [www.gurneeil.gov](http://www.gurneeil.gov). It will also be available through the current web address for a limited time.

