



**PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FIRE:** Did you know that smoke detectors should be replaced every seven years? Fire Chief Bill Timmer urges residents to replace the entire detector if its more than seven years old and change the batteries every year.

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • APRIL 2016

## UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**NIPSCO replacing 3.5 miles of aging gas and electric lines to reduce outages, upgrade services**

For the duration of the 2016 construction season, NIPSCO crews will be upgrading its utility transmission lines.

Part of a seven-year plan to modernize aging gas and electrical infrastructure, NIPSCO Public Affairs Manager Rick Calinski said the Highland/Munster portion of the project is the next step in the plan to replace 3.5 miles of underground natural gas lines.

“Just like roads and water lines, utility infrastructure has a useful life,” he said. “Many of our lines were installed in the ’40s and ’50s. We began this project after reviewing our assets with an eye on upgrading our services.”

In addition to installing new gas lines, NIPSCO will replace old circuits and modernize electrical substations to reduce outages and build in redundancies, which will allow a backup, of sorts, for when certain portions of its service area experience outages.

The Highland portion of the project will begin



— Natural Gas Line Replaced

near Lincoln Street in Brantwood, continue northeast between Walgreens and Ultra Foods to the substation behind the Highland post office on Kennedy Avenue at LaPorte.

Public Works Director John Bach said impacted areas include: the tennis court and playground at Brantwood Park, as well the bike path between Highway and Grand. Bike path traffic should use Kennedy Avenue as a detour.

“Some residential streets will be closed during construction,” he said. “We are working closely with NIPSCO throughout the project, but don’t expect any major closures.” 🍀

## COUNCIL EXPLORES SITES FOR NEW TOWN HALL

Council President Bernie Zemen wants to break ground on a new town hall by year’s end.

A new municipal building will house the Clerk-Treasurer, Redevelopment and Building departments as well as council chambers and meeting rooms. The council is looking at a host of factors when it comes to selecting a location.

Under consideration are three sites:

1. At or near the current town hall
2. Adjacent the Central Fire Station
3. At or near Kennedy and Highway Avenue

All sites under consideration would require acquisition of properties adjacent to land the town already owns.

Dewberry Architects of Elgin, Illinois has been hired to assess the viability of each property.

“The same issues that plagued the old police department are still a problem at the existing town hall. There is no question that a new town hall is necessary. It’s just a matter of where it should be built,” Zemen said. “There are advantages to each of the potential sites and I am eager to hear what Dewberry recommends.” 🍀

## CALLING ALL VETERANS!

Town Council President Bernie Zemen would like a member of the military – Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard or National Guard – to deliver the president’s address during the Memorial Day remembrance.

“These brave individuals risked everything to protect our country – to protect us – and I would love to honor them on Memorial Day.”

**HOW TO APPLY:** If you are a military veteran or enlisted soldier from Highland and would like to deliver the traditional Memorial Day address, please call Council President Bernie Zemen at (219) 781-1056 or email [bzemen@highland.in.gov](mailto:bzemen@highland.in.gov).

## BIG-BOX PROPERTY TAX

Large retail chains, also known as big-box stores, have won a victory in Indiana that will shift a portion of their property tax burden to homeowners and other businesses.

Town Council President Bernie Zemen said he has been assured that the impact to Highland will be marginal.

“We have few big-box stores relative to the size of our property tax base, which means we won’t see the tax shift that other communities will,” Zemen said. “We are still hopeful the next Indiana General Assembly will take up the issue in 2017.”



## ... TOWN TICKER ...

Calling all Highland businesses! **HHS ATHLETICS** is seeking raffle donations and sponsors for its July golf outing. **INFO:** Email Athletic Director Ryan Harrington at [rharrington@highland.k12.in.us](mailto:rharrington@highland.k12.in.us) or call (219) 922-5611. A picture says a thousand words! **PAWS RESALE SHOPPE**, 8149 Kennedy, will be taking pet portraits beginning 9 a.m. April 9. Proceeds from the \$10 sitting fee benefit the **HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE CALUMET AREA**. **RESERVATIONS:** Call (219) 922-3811 to save your spot.

**NIRPC APPOINTMENT**

Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin has been named second-in-command of the board of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. As Vice Chairman of NIRPC, Griffin will work with leaders from other communities throughout the region to determine funding priorities for federal dollars earmarked for transportation needs, the environment and economic development as well as help create comprehensive strategies to remove bottlenecks in the transportation system and increase efficiency.

**HIGHLAND WHEEL TAX?**

The Town Council is learning more about a wheel tax that could be implemented at the municipal level. The Local Option Highway User Tax is in place in nearly half of all Indiana counties. Funds are earmarked for road repairs. Council President Bernie Zemen said there is never enough cash to repair town roads in any given year but the council has no plans to implement a wheel tax.



**WARD 1**

**BERNIE ZEMEN** - president  
bzemen@comcast.net  
(219) 781-1056



**WARD 2**

**MARK HERAK**  
mherak@highland.in.gov  
(219) 838-0126



**WARD 3**

**DAN VASSAR** - vice president  
dvassar@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-1945



**WARD 4**

**STEVEN WAGNER**  
swagner@highland.in.gov  
(219) 718-3199



**WARD 5**

**KONNIE KUIPER**  
kkuiper@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-7820

**NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?**

Send your suggestions to:  
gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com

The Gazebo Express is produced by:

**The Idea Factory • (219) 779-9041**  
www.theideafactory.us.com

Printed by Lithographic Communications  
9701 Indiana Parkway, Munster, IN 46321

**KENNEDY WATER PROJECT MOVES INTO FINAL CONSTRUCTION PHASE**

An extensive water project designed to guarantee long-term safety of the town’s drinking water is expected to be complete by June 1.

The project, which began in July, involves replacing the existing water main, boring deeper to place new pipe in areas where it will be impervious to the freeze-thaw cycle and resurfacing Kennedy Avenue.

“We have had dozens of water main breaks in the past few years,” Public Works Director John Bach said. “This problem began 40 years ago when Kennedy was lowered, making the water line too shallow and vulnerable to ruptures based on changes in the air temperature.”

The complexity of the project was compounded by other underground systems, like the massive stormwater collection system located under the length of Kennedy Avenue.

“Most people don’t know there is a storm sewer you could literally drive a car through underneath the road,” he said. “We know people are frustrated because they have been inconvenienced. We’ve done everything we can to minimize the disruption. The lane closures are necessary for the safety of motorists as well as our workers.”



**ROAD CLOSED**

42nd Street (EB) and Hart Road (WB) will be closed at Kennedy Avenue for the next few weeks for water main construction. Visit the town website - [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) - for updates.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

As soon as the construction portion of the Kennedy Avenue water project is complete, Highland Public Works will:

- ◆ Repave Kennedy Avenue from just north of Highway south to 45th Avenue
- ◆ Replace sidewalks
- ◆ Replant uprooted grass and trees

**HIGHLAND NAMES NEW POET LAUREATE**

Congratulations to Lily Rex, Highland’s first-ever Poet Laureate.

A lover of all things prose, Rex was selected from a field of highly talented finalists by a committee of published poets.

Julie Larson, a member of Highland Main Street and the inspiration behind Highland’s Poet Laureate, is eager to see the program take flight under Rex’s direction.

“Lily is eager, organized, and gets the job done – not to mention, her poetry is spot on,” Larson said. “Those of us in the small press regard her as an up-and-coming poet who is going to be doing great things. I think she will do well working with kids in our schools while creating a buzz with adults.”

The Highland High School and soon-to-be college graduate will be developing literary programs for preschoolers, youth and adults.



As Highland’s Poet Laureate, Rex said she wants to expand the reach of poetry by helping aspiring poets discover their voice and introducing others to the written art form.

“I have an idea to create a “Good Beer, Bad Poetry” series that will be held at local restaurants or bars,” she said. “That type of event exemplifies that poetry is not strictly academic – it can be as lively, gritty and blue collar as Northwest Indiana.”



This Earth Day — April 23 — show your support by planting a tree, walking or riding your bike instead of taking a car, reducing your consumption of non-recyclable goods and recycling where you can.

# LET'S SAVE THE WORLD TOGETHER

## PARK PRIDE DAY ...

Join Highland Parks and Rec for the 15th annual community park clean-up day from 9 a.m. to noon **APRIL 23**. Everyone is welcome, especially community groups and families. You will be assigned a park for clean-up. Bring gloves, rakes, and energy! Immediately after, meet us at Lincoln Community Center to receive your free T-shirt and enjoy a complimentary lunch.

**INFO:** Register at Lincoln Community Center or call (219) 838-0114.

## HAZARDOUS WASTE ...

Highland will collect hazardous waste from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. **AUGUST 27** at Public Works. Recycle batteries, cleaners, oils, paints, solvents, poisons, pesticides, antifreeze, gas, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent bulbs.

**INFO:** Visit [www.lcswmd.com](http://www.lcswmd.com) for additional dates and locations.

## SPRING CLEAN-UP ...

Republic Waste Services will schedule extra crews **MAY 10** to collect trash and rubbish generated by spring cleaning. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of the increased collection crews. **NOT INCLUDED:** Construction debris, concrete, electronics, televisions, household hazardous waste and leaves. Televisions, computers and electronics may be recycled at the Public Works, 8001 Kennedy Ave.

**INFO:** Call (219) 972-5083.

## RECYCLING DRUGS ...

Turn in unused or expired medications to the proper authorities instead of flushing or throwing them out. Highland Police will participate in the drug take-back program from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **APRIL 30** at the police department, 3315 Ridge Road.

**INFO:** Call Officer Ken Balon at (219) 838-3184.

## EXPLORER PROGRAM

The Town Theatre Board is welcoming the founding of a dedicated Explorer post as a vital assist for the project and a learning opportunity for youth.

A coed division of the Boy Scouts, the Explorer program was created to forge a dynamic relationship between youth ages 14-20 and a community organization — in this case the Town Theatre — that helps youth develop career skills that better the organization they serve.

Local Explorer opportunities include learning about: architecture, engineering, volunteer management, public relations, marketing, community engagement, filmmaking, history, archiving and entertainment.

## CAR CRUISE ENTHUSIASTS

If you have a classic car or antique hot rod, mark your calendar **JUNE 4** for the Highland Main Street Car Cruise. The town expects 150 or more vintage vehicles to travel downtown for the event. Register on-site the afternoon of the cruise. Exhibition vehicles will park along Highway and Jewett east of Kennedy Avenue. Visitors should park in the municipal lot west of Kennedy.

**INFO:** Call Cecile Petro (219) 972-7598 or email [cpetro@highland.in.gov](mailto:cpetro@highland.in.gov).

## LEAF & BRANCH PICKUP

### Leaf collection

A crew will be picking up leftover leaves the first two weeks of April. Leaves should be raked into a pile or row in the parkway between the sidewalk and curb as close to the street as possible. Please make sure there are no vehicles blocking leaf piles at, or near, your residence.

### Branch collection

Crews will be running daily routes to collect branches. Place branch piles — free of any other yard debris — in front of the property, not in alleys. Please note: small handfuls of branches can be disposed of in your weekly trash bin. Town equipment is designed for tree branches only. Heavier logs and debris will be picked up every Friday. Crews do not pick up landscaping timbers, railroad ties or fencing. Yard waste can be dumped at the town garage at no charge to residents. Anything other than yard waste must be taken to the town garage where residents must obtain a permit.

**INFO:** Call (219) 972-5083.



## SWIM CLUB REGISTRATION

The Highland Hurricanes Swim Club, a competitive swim team for youth ages 5 through 18 in Highland and surrounding communities, is conducting registration for its 2016 summer season, which begins **APRIL 20**. Birth certificate required for registration. Please bring a swimsuit and towel for an in-water evaluation.

**WHEN:** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, **APRIL 6** and **APRIL 13** and again during the first week of practice from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. **APRIL 18-22**.

**WHERE:** Highland High School Natatorium classroom, 41st and 5th streets. Enter through door "P" across from the softball field.

**FEES:** Fees vary according to group skill level. Payment plans and family discounts available.

**INFO:** Call (219) 595-9357 or visit [www.highlandhurricanes.net](http://www.highlandhurricanes.net).

## GARAGE & BAKE SALE

Hunt for gently-used gems and enjoy homemade treats at the annual spring garage and bake sale, hosted by the St. James Women's Guild. Clothes are \$2 a bag on Saturday!

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, **APRIL 29** and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 30**

**WHERE:** St. James Hall, 9640 Kennedy Ave.

**DONATION DROP-OFF:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday, **APRIL 27** and Thursday, **APRIL 28**.

**INFO:** Please call Diane at (219) 718-1778.

## ACRYLIC PAINTING

Beginners as well as advanced artists learn the various techniques of acrylic painting and how to achieve the best results through still life and landscape paintings. Students required to purchase supplies on their own.

**WHEN:** 2-4 p.m. Fridays, **APRIL 22-MAY 27**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**FEES:** \$43 residents/ \$48 nonresidents.

**ONLINE CODE:** 349005

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org) or (219) 838-0114.

## CRAFT SHOW & VENDOR FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at the 33rd annual spring show, featuring candles, jewelry, hand bags, home décor, health/wellness products/services, homemade items, gourmet dips and more.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 9**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**INFO:** [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or (219) 838-0114.

## YOUTH TRACK & FIELD

Registration begins **APRIL 20** for the Highland Parks & Recreation Track Team, Boys and girls of all talents and experiences are welcome. Volunteer assistants are needed, too!

**AGES:** 4-12

**WHEN:** 6 p.m. Wednesdays, **JUNE 8-AUG 10**

**WHERE:** Highland High School track

**FEES:** \$50 residents/ \$55 nonresidents

**ONLINE CODE:** 348033

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org) or (219) 838-0114.



# APRIL 22 - APRIL 23

### FRIDAY FESTIVITIES ...

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Trojan's 1991 Final Four team with an appearance before the 4:30 game. Each player will get their jersey and a scrapbook created by Coach Miller. Mark Spain, of Traditions Restaurant, will host an Alumni Social Hour at 8 p.m. The evening includes free apps, cash bar, discounted entrees and Highland baseball merchandise.

### SATURDAY DERBY ...

Can you still hit the long ball? Saturday's festivities feature an All-Alumni Home Run Derby at 2 p.m. at Highland High. The first 30 players to make the \$30 donation will compete for gift certificates and receive a Dri-Fit baseball shirt.

**INFO:** Email John Bogner at [jbogner@highland.k12.in.us](mailto:jbogner@highland.k12.in.us).

### HIGH-LOW AEROBICS

This unique cardiovascular dance-style aerobics builds energy while shaping your body, increasing flexibility and toning muscles with hand weights and various exercises.

**AGES:** 14 and older

**WHEN:** 6:10-6:55 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays,

**APRIL 12-MAY 19**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**2X/WEEK:** \$44 residents/ \$48 nonresidents

**1X/WEEK:** \$24 residents/ \$26 nonresidents

**DROP-IN TRIAL:** \$8 residents/ \$9 nonresidents

**ONLINE CODE:** 300005

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org) or (219) 838-0114.

### FITNESS 101

Work on strength, cardio, balance and flexibility. All equipment is provided. Join a group of like-minded people who want to get stronger and improve their health together.

**AGES:** 14 and older

**WHEN:** 8-8:55 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

**SESSION 1: MAY 3-26**

**SESSION 2: MAY 31-JUNE 30** (off June 14, 16)

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**FEES:** \$39 residents/ \$43 nonresidents

**DROP-IN TRIAL:** \$9 residents/ \$10 nonresidents

**ONLINE CODE:** 300016

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org) or (219) 838-0114.