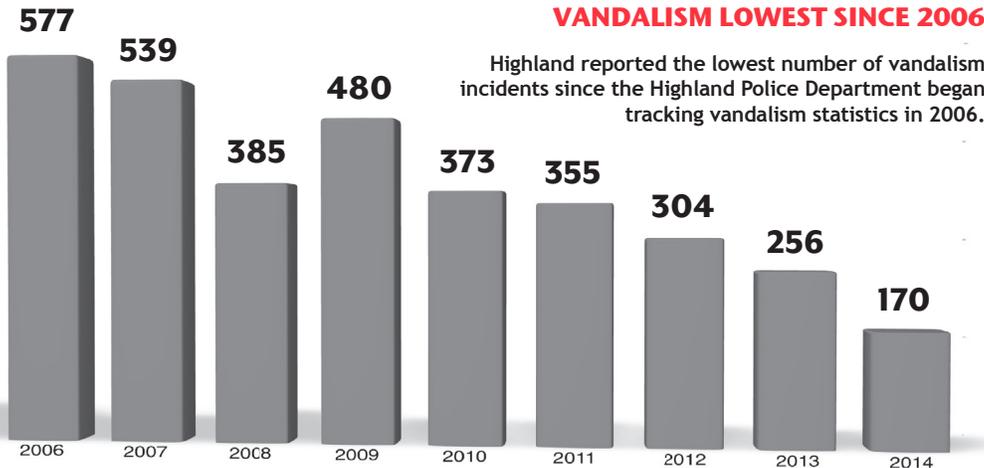


HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY! Did you know 8 billion candy hearts will be produced this year? That's enough candy to stretch from Rome, Italy to Valentine, Arizona - 20 times and back again!



GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2015



CRIME HITS RECORD LOW

A snapshot of 2014 is one for the record books.

With 44 years of statistics to measure against, crime decreased in nearly every category.

“We’ve had peaks and valleys since we began measuring criminal activity in 1970 and it seemed like 2014 was going to be a good year,” Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said. “We had no idea how good it was going to be until we laid the graphs and saw it for ourselves.”

There is no one crime-busting activity that can be credited for the decrease.

Hojnicky said on top of an ongoing commitment to a host of initiatives, there are intangibles in crime that appear to defy logic.

“Trending data shows we are not alone. Other communities in Northwest Indiana and across the country have seen crime decrease,” Hojnicky said. “That said, our guys do an outstanding job. Every officer, civilian employee and Volunteer in Policing takes great pride in his/her job and is proactive in working to reduce the incidence of crime.”

The ancillary effect shows more people are coming back to Highland to live, work, shop and play. 🍷

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Despite significant reductions in crime, Chief Pete Hojnicky asks residents to remain vigilant. “Our 2015 Crime Watch campaign will again focus on awareness and how it keeps our residents from becoming crime victims. Complacency invites criminal activity.”

	Low	High	2014
Homicides	0	3	0
<i>Homicides remain at 0 as compared to 2013.</i>			
Rape	0	6	0
<i>Rape remains at 0 as compared to 2013.</i>			
Robbery	4	35	9
<i>Increase includes purse, bicycle and phone theft.</i>			
Larceny	341	1,008	495
<i>Lowest level since 1973!</i>			
Assaults	11	157	60
<i>Lowest level since 1991!</i>			
Burglary	52	179	81
<i>Matched in 2010 and next lowest year 1991!</i>			
Vehicle Theft	39	185	39
<i>Lowest level since 1970!</i>			
Total UCR	684	1,389	684
<i>Lowest level since 1973!</i>			

MEIJER DEVELOPMENT

Construction is slated for the Meijer property outlot this year. The new multi-tenant retail building will occupy more than 14,000 square feet when complete and include a dentist's office and eateries.

The new building will be constructed east of the Meijer grocery and just west of Indianapolis Boulevard.

The commercial construction will nearly complete the transformation of extreme south Indianapolis Boulevard from cornfields to a thriving retail corridor that boasts more than 800,000 square feet under roof.

POLICE STATION UPDATE

The vagaries of winter weather has pushed construction of the new public safety building about three weeks behind schedule.

Work has continued on the steel beams above ground, while contractors wait for NIPSCO to install utilities to allow for the pouring of the lower decks.

The building, which has a decidedly erector-set feel to it, is taking shape at the corner of Ridge Road and Cottage Grove Avenue.

Despite the delay, the building is scheduled to be roofed and walled in by the end of March and ready for occupancy in October.

... TOWN TICKER ...

Take advantage of the opportunity to advertise with a **Lincoln Community Center Fieldhouse banner** or a **Sharp Athletic Complex fence sign**. All it takes is a print-ready design. Call (219) 838-0114 for details. ... More than \$5,000 has been raised for the **Town Theatre**. Donations are accepted at Town Hall. ... **More than 14 inches of the white stuff** blanketed Highland during the **Feb. 1 blizzard**, almost exactly four years after the town was buried with 20.2 inches of snow.

RECYCLING CORRECTION

Oops! We made a mistake on the recycling schedule for the second half of the year. Look for a new version in your June Gazebo Express or download the updated version on the town website at www.highland.in.gov/news.



RENEW YOUR PET LICENSE

Get your 2015 pet licenses before Feb. 27. Owners of unlicensed pets can be ticketed and fined. After Feb. 28, there is a \$10 surcharge.

INFO: Call the nonemergency number at (219) 838-3184 or visit the Highland Police Department at 3333 Ridge Road.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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

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COUNCIL APPROVES \$19 MILLION IN SANITARY SEWER UPGRADES

The Town Council has agreed to spend \$19 million on sanitary sewer upgrades to reduce groundwater in the sanitary sewers while working toward zero releases of untreated waste into the Little Calumet River.

The decision followed a series of discussions between the Council and Sanitary Board about upgrading and expanding the Highland sanitary system to comply with a mandate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to improve the Highland system.

The impact to an individual owning a home with an assessed value of \$150,000 is estimated to be \$87.90 per year for the next 20 years.

“We would have preferred to spend money over time to upgrade our system while we continue to negotiate with Hammond to increase the amount of water we can pump to their treatment plant but that isn’t an option,” Town Council President Mark Herak said.

“EPA is requiring that we complete a series of projects now, including construction of a costly temporary storage tank at the north end of Fifth Street at the Little Calumet River.”

An agreement with the Hammond Sanitary District allows Highland to pump 7.5 million gallons of sewage per day for treatment.

The town’s pumps can transport double that amount and routinely pump about 15 million gallons a day to Hammond during rainstorms. During heavy downpours, even that isn’t enough and the excess is released, untreated into the river.

In 2014, there were six such releases. “There is no question we want to be good stewards of the environment,” Herak said.

“The Sanitary Board has worked diligently to continue upgrades on the town system to guarantee we are.”

NIXLE KEEPING RESIDENTS INFORMED, SAFE

When Highland was blanketed by more than 14 inches of snow Feb. 1, the town’s Nixle alerts provided valuable information about travel and weather along with health advisories for snow shovelers.

Every time an emergency has arisen over the last three years, the Nixle system has played a vital role in keeping residents apprised.

So far, 3,000 residents have signed up for the free service that provides notifications either by cell phone text alerts or email.

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky and Fire Chief Bill Timmer hope to see those numbers double and even triple in the months to come.

“We have seen firsthand just how valuable this system is to our town,” Hojnicky said.

Nixle allows the ultimate in customization. Residents receive alerts (only from communities and entities they select.

“We have had great success using Nixle,” Timmer said. “Residents who have it tell me all the

REGISTER TODAY!

Alerts for power outages, severe weather and road closures are all part of the package when you sign up for Nixle Emergency Notifications. The service is free and allows residents to create an account that provides secure messaging by locale. In the event of an emergency, police send out details via text message, email – or both.

INFO: To register, log onto www.nixle.com.

time how much they love getting notifications that keep them safe and that’s the goal.”

Most often, Highland’s public safety departments – police, fire and public works – send alerts for emergency road closures, dangerous weather and criminal activity.

In addition, the town has issued silver alerts for missing elderly residents, amber alerts for missing children and even foiled a robbery-in-progress with the help of residents who contacted police with information on suspicious activity following a Nixle text.

HOOT! HOOT!

Comedy show raising money for Town Theatre

It's time to get your happy on: the Tom Foolery show is coming to town in support of the Town Theatre.

In this case, the proceeds of every ticket sold for the one-night show along with money raised from the evening's silent auction and more than \$4,300 collected in sponsorships will help pay to operate the theatre once it reopens next year.

Organizers are hoping for a sold-out show. By the end of January, about half of the 300 seats to the Feb. 20th performance had been sold and orders were continuing to arrive.

"Every one can use a laugh and this is a wonderful opportunity to have some superb fun," Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. "This is going to be a family show and a night of great entertainment, food and fellowship."



TOM FOOLERY SHOW

This one-of-a-kind variety show features the hilarious antics of comedians Gia Claire, Lucky Luciano and Jay Washington and the Planetary Blues Band. All proceeds go directly to the Town Theatre project.

WHEN: 8 p.m. February 20.
Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Wicker Social Center

TICKETS: \$25 online at tomfooleryfunclub.com or Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road.



Theatre Board meets and sets agenda for 2015

The Town Theatre Board met for the first time in January to begin planning ways to publicize and fund-raise for the historic theatre as well as continue to attract new volunteers to the effort.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said the focus of the board, which applied for 501(c)(3) status, will be to take all of the steps necessary to help guarantee the successful operation of the Town.

The Redevelopment Commission has adequate funds to pay for the bricks-and-mortar restoration/rehabilitation of the vintage building along with the acquisition of nearby properties.

It will be up to the Theatre Board to pay for such necessities as film rental as well as day-to-day expenses, especially during the critical first months when the theatre reopens.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

Calling all parents of school-age children grades K-12! Join the School Town of Highland Guidance Department for informational workshops designed just for you! Learn about study skills, financial aid, 21st Century Scholars, kindergarten readiness and more.

WHEN: 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, **FEB. 25**

WHERE: Highland High School

INFO: Call (219) 922-5613.

BEST OF HIGHLAND

Reserve your seat now for this annual event, which honors the best in Highland leadership, excellence, beautification and achievement.

Don't forget to submit your nominations for this year's winners by Feb. 13. Ballots are in this month's water bill. The Best of Highland Awards night was created to recognize outstanding individuals who live or work in town.

Those who attend the March 12 celebration will also have the opportunity to vote for the Top Taste Award. This year's participating restaurants and businesses are: Cakes By Karen, Dining Solutions, Dickey's Barbecue, Grindhouse Café, Round the Clock, Texas Corral, Theo's, Town Club and Traditions. Sponsorships available.

WHEN: 6 p.m. Thursday, **MARCH 12**

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center

TICKETS: \$40, cash bar

INFO: Visit www.highlandchamber.com or call (219) 923-3666.

INDOOR STREET MARKET

Escape the cold and stop indoors for your favorite breads, cheeses, honey, cupcakes, spices, pet treats and more.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **FEB. 14**. The market continues on the second Saturday of the month through May.

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
VENDOR FEES: \$21.40 per month, \$48.15 for 3 months and \$53.50 for the full season. Full fee must be paid at time of reservation.

NOTE: Tables, chairs and extension cords not provided. A Registered Retail Merchant Certificate is required for vendors. Health permit and insurance required of those selling prepared food. No used or resale items. Space is limited. Spots will not be sold on market days. Vendor setup begins at 7:30 a.m. each market day.

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

BABE RUTH & TRAVEL LEAGUE

It's time to register for the new Highland Babe Ruth and Travel League for the following divisions: Babe Ruth and Senior League.

BABE RUTH: Ages 13 to 15

SENIOR LEAGUE: Ages 16 to 19

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. **FEB. 21**

WHERE: Lincoln Center

NOTE: Players MUST turn 13 by April 30, 2015 or 19 after December 31, 2014 and reside in Highland. Birth certificate and proof of residency are required at registration.

INFO: Call Babe Ruth League President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945 or e-mail highlandbaberuth@yahoo.com.

HIGHLAND LITTLE LEAGUE

Boys and girls can register now for the following Little League divisions: T-Ball, Rookie, Minor B, Minor A, Majors.

LEAGUE AGES: 4 to 12

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **FEB. 21**

WHERE: Lincoln Center

NOTE: Players MUST turn 4 by December 31, 2015 and reside or go to school in Highland. Birth certificate and proof of residency are required.

REGISTRATION: Forms online at highlandll.com.

INFO: Call HLL President Bob Johnsen at (219) 718-1236 or email info@highlandll.com.

HIGHLAND GIRLS SOFTBALL

Spring and summer sports seasons are just a few short months away and sign-ups are scheduled for the following age divisions: 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U and 18U.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **FEB. 21**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

REGISTRATION FEE: \$70 includes a game jersey, tournament shirt and yard sign. There is a \$20 raffle fee, reimbursable by selling tickets.

NOTE: Shorts, visors, and socks are additional and may be purchased at registration. All equipment is provided by the league except for a required glove. Rubber spikes are recommended, but not required.

INFO: Visit highlandgirlssoftball.com.

ADULT SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Registration begins this month for the summer adult softball season, which will be held from April 13 to Aug. 23. Rosters are limited to 20 players and frozen once the limit is reached.

15-GAME SEASON & SINGLE-ELIM. TOURNEY

TEAM FEE: \$700 due by **MARCH 31**

MEN'S TEAMS: Mondays (12), Tuesdays (18), Wednesdays (18), Thursdays (24), Sunday double-headers (8), Sunday single games (8)

COED TEAMS: Mondays (12), Tuesdays (6), Wednesdays (6), Sunday (8).

14-GAME SEASON

TEAM FEE: \$560 due by **MARCH 31**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

Community Garage Sale

Do you have items you would like to resell, but don't want to invite people into your home to show your products? Rent a booth space at one of Highland Parks & Recreation's garage sales. Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will promote his Card & Comic Show in conjunction with the garage sale.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, **MARCH 14**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: A 10' x 10' interior space is \$26.75. A 23' x 6' wall space is \$42.80. Booth space selection is first come, first served.

RESERVATIONS: Must be made at Park Office, 2450 Lincoln St.

INFO: Call (219) 838-0114.



MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade residents of Highland or students attending a Highland school are invited to participate in the Middle School Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. The first-place team receives champion T-shirts. Teams will be chosen through a player draft with the coaches.

WHEN: Wednesday nights, **MARCH 25 - JUNE 3**

PRACTICE BEGINS: First week in March

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$50 per person

REGISTRATION: Deadline is **FEB. 22**

ONLINE ACTIVITY CODE: 133002

NOTE: There will be a Mandatory Skills Assessment from 6:45 to 8 p.m. Feb. 24 in the Lincoln Community Center Field House.

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Highland students are invited to participate in the High School Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. The first place team will receive champion T-shirts.

NEW THIS YEAR: Participants will sign up as individuals and teams will be chosen through a player draft with the coaches.

WHEN: Wednesday nights, **MARCH 25 - JUNE 3**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$50 per person

REGISTRATION: Deadline is **MARCH 1**

ONLINE ACTIVITY CODE: 133003

NOTE: There will be a Mandatory Skills Assessment from 6:45 to 8 p.m. March 3 in the Lincoln Community Center Field House.

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.