

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • OCTOBER 2022



"My husband and I moved to Highland in 1984 because we loved this bustling community and its small-town feel," Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra said. "This town has retained all of that charm and potential for economic growth." [The Idea Factory photo]

NEW REDEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Highland Redevelopment Commission cast a wide net when it began searching for a new redevelopment director.

Commission President Sean Conley said — as it turned out — the ideal candidate was long-time resident Maria Becerra.

"Maria comes to the position with a great deal of experience, having worked in redevelopment in both East Chicago and Hammond," Conley said. "We hired her because she has the experience and knowledge we need. She is absolutely the best fit for Highland."

Becerra sees great opportunity for growth, particularly at the gateways to town at Indianapolis Boulevard and Kennedy Avenue.

"I am excited to be part of discussions with the Redevelopment Commission, Town Council and residents as we move forward to plan the town's future," she said. "Highland is ideally situated to tap into economic opportunities while maintaining its hometown feel."

We're hiring! Highland is looking for a Redevelopment Commission Assistant. Please visit highland.in.gov for details or to apply.

[LEAF COLLECTION]

Leaf collection begins **Monday, October 10** and ends **Friday, December 2**. The insert in this issue contains dates for leaf pickup in your neighborhood.



[FALL CLEANUP DAY]

If getting rid of excess stuff has been on your to-do list, let the purging begin. Republic Waste Services will schedule extra crews **Tuesday, October 11** to collect additional trash and unwanted items as part of fall cleanup day. Construction debris, concrete, household hazardous waste, paint, pool chemicals and leaves are **NOT** included.

[DRUG TAKE BACK]

Turn in unused or expired medications to the authorities instead of flushing or throwing them out. No needles are accepted. Highland Police will be participating with the Drug Enforcement Agency as a drop-off site for medications from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Saturday, October 29**. The Highland Police Department is located at 3315 Ridge Road. Please note: All medications will be incinerated by the DEA, so you do not have to remove labels. **QUESTIONS?** Call Ken Balon at (219) 838-3184.

[NO BURNING LEAVES]

Open burning of leaves, twigs or other yard waste is prohibited within the corporate limits of the Town of Highland. According to Title 12.15.050 of the Highland Municipal Code, “No person shall openly burn or ignite refuse, garbage or rubbish.” The law was created in 2000 to keep residents and structures safe.

INFO: Visit highland.in.gov/MunicipalCode to learn more.



WARD 1

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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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Highland proposes \$19.7 million budget – an increase of \$1.4 million from 2022

The Town Council is on track to adopt a spending plan for 2023 that includes raises for town employees, increases in the cost of health insurance and buffers, ensuring there will be funds to pay for necessities, such as gas, diesel fuel, road salt and utilities.

Highland Town Council President Bernie Zemen said the town experienced the impacts of inflation in 2022 without time to prepare and took care to provide additional funds for those cost centers in 2023.

It is not yet known how much more the town can expect to pay for paving projects, sewer repairs and sidewalk replacements next year.

Clerk-Treasurer Mark Herak is already planning for hefty increases for items, such as employee health insurance,

that are more than double what they have been in recent years.

“We had been averaging increases of 3-4 percent per year for the last several years. In 2023, we will be paying 8.3 percent more for health insurance,” Herak said.

“We continue to benefit from our participation in the AIM trust, a health insurance collective for municipal units of government,” he said.

“Without that, our cost increases would have been 12 percent next year.”

WHAT'S NEXT?

The proposed 2023 civil town budget is \$19.7 million. Of that, a maximum of \$8.7 million will come from property taxes on residents, businesses and industry. The budget is slated for adoption at 7 p.m. **October 10.**

Workshop details how to recover from drought

The Highland Tree Board is hosting a free workshop to help residents revive deciduous trees, evergreens and landscape ornamentals that took a hit from dryer conditions this summer.

“While we tend to think of drought impact in terms of the current year, the actual impact could stretch over several growing seasons,” Tree Board President Jim Colias said. “If keeping your trees and ornamentals healthy is important, you need to attend this class.”

Certified Arborist Sharon Anderson will be the featured speaker.

In other tree news: The Street Department has 20 trees available for fall parkway plantings. Species available are low-growing species to avoid overhead utility lines. Please visit highland.in.gov for more information.



[IF YOU GO]

“The Aftermath of the Drought and How to Recover” workshop, sponsored by the Highland Tree Board and Highland Library.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. **October 19**

WHERE: Highland branch of the Lake County Library, 2841 Jewett, Highland.

REGISTRATION: Register online at www.lcpl.in.gov/events or call the library at (219) 838-2394.



HERON ROOKERY

Rarely a day goes by without Madison Owens having an up-close-and-personal interaction with a great blue heron at Highland's Heron Rookery. The magnificent birds along with snowy white egrets, great horned owls, bald eagles, belted kingfishers and all manner of waterfowl have developed a familiarity with the 2016 Highland High grad that has resulted in photos that wow. Attention for her photos have resulted in new fandom for Owens and a growing interest by casual and serious birders at the rookery. "I saw my first Heron about six years ago at Turkey Creek – and I fell in love with the beautiful birds," she said. "I was always riding my bike along the Little Cal, but didn't know about the birds at the Cline Avenue Marsh until the last year or so." When she's not working at the Fitness Center at Lincoln Community Center, friends and family know they can most likely find Owens on the lookout for photo opportunities with her new feathered friends." **INFO:** Visit highland.in.gov to view more of Owen's work. [photos provided]

[COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE]

Do you have stuff you'd like to sell, but don't want people in your home? Join the community garage sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **October 22** and **November 19** at Lincoln Center. Register to sell your items now! Vendor fees are \$34 for 10' X 10' interior or \$56 for 23' x 6' wall space. Table, chairs, cords not provided.
INFO: Highlandparks.org

[YOUTH BASKETBALL]

Children will play a 10-game season while learning the fundamentals of basketball. The league will consist of three divisions: Kindergarten-1st Grade, 2nd-3rd Grade, 4th-5th Grade. Games are on Saturdays and practice on weekdays. Teams determined by a player draft. All players receive a T-shirt. Deadline to register is **October 17**. Fee is \$55 for residents and \$60 for nonresidents. Practice begins the week of **November 7**. Season runs through February 18 at Lincoln Center.
INFO: Highlandparks.org

[COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT]

Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's free fall concert from 7-9 p.m. Thursday, **October 27** in the Banquet Hall at Lincoln Community Center.
INFO: This band of volunteers is open to high school age or older. To join, email maestroflute@att.net.

[MATTRESS SALE FUNDRAISER]

Are you in the market for a new mattress, pillows or sheets? Check out Highland Christian PTO's mattress fundraiser from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **October 15** at the school gym, 3040 Ridge Road. Mention a student's name at purchase and they will get a cash prize. Financing, layaway and delivery are available.
INFO: pto@highlandchristian.org

Halloween



HOME DECORATING CONTEST

DEADLINE TO ENTER: OCTOBER 10

Ghosts and witches and creatures of fright!
Don't miss the call of Halloween night.
Do you love to decorate for Halloween?
We have seen so many creative homes decorated that we are adding a Halloween Home Decorating to our programs — open to Highland homes only!

CATEGORIES: Scariest, Best Effects and Best Overall Theme.

Entry forms are available at Lincoln Community Center.
Have your home fully lit up and decorated **October 11-12**.
Voting **October 13-20**. Winners announced on **October 21**.



TRUNK OR TREAT

10 AM – NOON OCTOBER 22

MAIN SQUARE PARK

The Highland Council of Community Events invites trick-or-treaters to this free event.

Those looking to participate as a decorated trunk or tent/booth, must register at highland.in.gov.
Costumes and decorated vehicles are encouraged.

QUESTIONS? highlandcce@highland.in.gov



TRICK-OR-TREATING HOURS

Trick-or-treating hours are from **5 to 7 p.m. October 31**
for all Highland ghouls and goblins!