

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2024

## Highland businesses *on the move!*

Highland is celebrating the waning weeks of winter by welcoming a trio of new businesses while other local entrepreneurs are scouting the area for their next great location. It is the start to 2024 the Town Council was hoping to see as they work to make Highland even more business friendly. 🐾

### [ AGORA MEDITERRANEAN GRILL ]

Just four months after opening as a take-out location, Agora Mediterranean Grill has thrown open its doors as place to dine in. A new face along the 45th Street restaurant scene, Agora features Greek, Middle Eastern, Italian and other Mediterranean delights, such as lentil saffron soup, kebabs, spanakopita, moussaka, gyros, along with hummus with a modern twist and more.

**Info:** Located at 3309 45th St. | Open daily | Dine in | Carryout | Delivery | (219) 546-3767



### [ PLAZA LANES ]

Plaza Lanes, one of Highland's longest-running businesses, has opened under new ownership. Mary Albanese, who has managed the bowling alley for more than 20 years, said Minnesota-based Triple Shift Entertainment specializes in running bowling alleys across the country. "People should expect what Plaza Lanes is known for — maximum fun for family and friends."

**Info:** Located at 8101 Kennedy | Open daily | (219) 923-3800

### [ ITALIAN STREET FOOD RESTAURANT ]

A new downtown eatery is taking shape on Jewett. Owned by the Belmonte family, they are working with a professional kitchen design team to determine if the location is best suited to become a Guiseppe's franchise concept model or will better serve another use. "We are transforming this building to make it an asset to the downtown," said Antonio Belmonte, who manages the construction arm of the business.

**Info:** Located at 2907 Jewett | Opening in 2024



*Jan 2024 - transformation begins*

**[ HOW TO APPLY ]**

Want to make a difference in our community? The Highland Town Council is looking for residents eager to serve on the Community Events Commission, Highland Main Street and the Plan Commission.

**INTERESTED?** Download an application from [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) and file it with the Clerk- Treasurer's office – either in person or submitted by mail to the Office of the Clerk- Treasurer, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, IN 46322.



**WARD 1**  
**GEORGE GEORGEFF**  
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**NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?**

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## HIGHLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT SEEKING CROSSING GUARDS, VIPS

Highland Police Chief Ralph Potesta is looking for dedicated individuals who want to work alongside Highland police and help keep our community safe. “By all of us working together, the men and women who serve as members of our Volunteers in Policing and as paid School Crossing Guards are invaluable members of our public safety team,” Potesta said. 🐾

**[ VIPS CANDIDATES ]**

It's a volunteer position that comes with perks – training, a uniform and becoming part of the town's public safety network. Being a VIPS member also offers an opportunity to have fun and make new friends.

VIPs assist police officers by providing a variety of tasks, including: vacation home checks, assisting at community events, traffic patrols in residential/business/park districts, funeral escorts, fingerprinting, filing, typing, even answering telephones.

Tasks and assignments vary. All hours and shifts are available.

**To apply:** Download an application at [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) or call Deputy Cmdr. Glenn Cox at (219) 838-3184.

**[ CROSSING GUARDS ]**

Highland Police are seeking individuals at least 18 years old to dedicate about an hour twice a day to provide safe crossing for Highland schoolchildren.

“We need those who would like to fill in at one of the six crossing locations when the regular crossing guards are not available,” Cmdr. John Banasiak said. “We rest easier because our crossing guards are watching out for our kids.”

**To apply:** Interested in becoming a crossing guard or substituting? Starting pay is \$16 per hour. Applications are available at the Highland Police Department, 3315 Ridge Road.



## HIGHLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT EAGERLY AWAITS NEW CLASS OF 2024 RECRUITS

Under the leadership of Chief Mike Pipta, the Highland Fire Department has sent its first class of recruits for 2024 to the academy for six months of training at the Multi-Agency Academic Cooperative in Valparaiso.

“We were impressed with our trainees during interviews and are eager for them to graduate and become part of the department,” Pipta said. “Collin Hatfield, Kevin Martinez, Zachary Myers, Amy Ryan and Nick Steele will be a great asset to our town.”

Having satellite locations for fire/first responder training, which includes

the MAAC site in Northwest Indiana, has been a welcome change for firefighters-in-training.

Highland recruits began five months of online and in-person classes January 4. Training includes state certifications in Hazardous Material Awareness/Operations, Firefighter I/II and all state required curriculum to function as a firefighter in the state of Indiana.

**Interested in joining our team?** Contact Fire Chief Mike Pipta at the Main Fire Station at (219) 923-9876 or email [m.pipta@highland.in.gov](mailto:m.pipta@highland.in.gov).

# Keeping Highland safe

The Highland Town Council, Metropolitan Police Commission and Police Department Administration want to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the men and women – sworn, civilian and volunteer – who make the Highland Police Department a pillar of excellence among its peers in law enforcement.

“Our officers, detectives, support staff and volunteers (VIPS) deserve all the credit for keeping Highland residents, businesses and visitors safe and secure – day and night,” Highland Police Chief Ralph Postesta said.

“Our staff takes seriously their responsibility to the community by not only building relationships and fostering trust with the people we serve, but showing compassion and empathy towards those who are seeking help during what could be one of the worst moments of their lives,” Postesta said.



## [ 2023 HIGHLAND CRIME STATISTICS ]

“Our crime rates remained low in 2023 – a direct result of the hard work, dedication and commitment the Highland Police Department provided throughout the year,” Highland Police Chief Ralph Postesta said. “When comparing statistical data over the past several years, we are again at or near record lows across the more severe criminal categories.”

CATEGORY	2023	HIGHEST	LOWEST
Homicide	0	2 (1986/2001)	0 (most years)
Rape	1	6 (2005)	0 (most years)
Robbery	6	35 (2005)	2 (2018/2020)
Assault	108	157 (1976)	10 (1969)
Burglary	22	185 (1980)	13 (2022)
Larceny	331	1,008 (1997)	205 (1971)
Vehicle Theft	17	258 (1991)	17 (2019/2023)
Vandalism	110	577 (2006)	91 (2021)
Total NIBRS*	486	1,389 (1975)	422 (1971)

2023 matched previous record lows with 0.



2023 lowest on record in 54 years.

\* National Incident-Based Reporting System (formerly UCR-Uniform Crime Report) is the total criminal activity recorded annually by the FBI from municipalities nationwide. Note: The Total NIBRS is determined by certain categories. Not all are listed here.

**[ BIDDY BOWLING ]**

Escape the snow and head over to Plaza Lanes for a day of family fun! Biddy Bowling with Highland Parks and Recreation is open to children ages 4 to 11.

**WHEN:** Noon-1 p.m. Saturdays,  
**February 10-March 9**

**WHERE:** Plaza Lanes, 8101 Kennedy

**FEE:** \$38 residents | \$41 nonresidents

**REGISTER BY:** February 9 at LCC

**[ MOMMY & ME PAINT NIGHT ]**

Any parent, guardian or special adult in a child's life can enjoy a fun night of painting a 16' x 20' canvas together. Ages 8 and up.

**WHEN:** 6-8 p.m. **February 26**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**FEE:** \$45 R | \$50 NR per couple.

\$22.50 R | \$25 NR additional child.

**REGISTER BY:** February 22

**[ NERF Wars ]**

Players will compete in teams in a capture-the-flag tournament. Prizes awarded to top teams. Please bring one Nerf gun and Nerf N Strike foam darts. Required protective eye wear provided. Foam darts only!

**WHEN:** 6-8 p.m. **February 23** (ages 9-12) | 6-8 p.m. **March 15** (ages 6-8)

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**FEE:** \$17 residents | \$19 nonresidents

**REGISTER BY:** February 16

**[ GREEK DINNER NIGHT ]**

Highland Elks will host a Greek dinner night. Menu includes Pork Shish Kabob, Greek Salad, Greek Rice, Spanakopita, Tiropita and Baklava. Tickets are \$15.

**WHEN:** 5-7:30 p.m. **February 10**

**WHERE:** Highland Elks Lodge # 981,  
3120 45th Street

**INFO:** Call (219) 922-8253 for tickets or more information.



# Cake Decorating

Join us from 6-8 p.m. Fridays in the Lincoln Center Banquet Hall as Jaaleon, from JaaCakes, teaches the fundamentals of decorating cakes using buttercream frosting. Participants – ages 12 and older – will get a step-by-step guide from an award-winning baker/cake decorator. You will leave class with a decorated cake. No experience needed.

<b>February 23</b>		<b>FEE:</b>
<b>St. Patrick's Day</b>		\$45 residents
		\$50 nonresidents
<b>March 29</b>		<b>REGISTER:</b>
<b>Easter</b>		Five days prior
<b>April 26</b>		
<b>Spring</b>		

**[ MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL ]**

Format determined by registration numbers. Teams chosen by player draft with the coaches. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. Grades 6-8.

**ASSESSMENT:** 6 p.m. **March 13**,  
7 p.m. draft

**GAMES:** Wednesday evenings,  
**April 3-June 5**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

**FEE:** \$60 residents | \$66 nonresidents

**REGISTER BY:** March 12

**[ ADULT CO-REC VOLLEYBALL ]**

Teams play a 10-week season. Format dependent on number of teams (5-6 games per week). Rally scoring. Ages 18+ and not participating in HS sports.

**REC-LEVEL:** 6-9 p.m. (start times vary)  
Wednesdays, **March 6-May 8**

**COMPETITIVE:** 6-9 p.m. (start times vary)  
Thursdays, **March 7-May 9**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center

**FEE:** \$330 per team

**REGISTER BY:** One week in advance