



2025 *River Grove*

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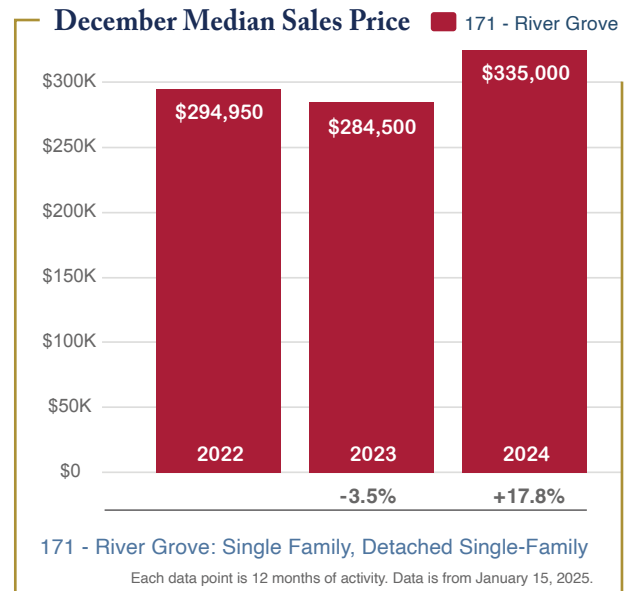
Dear Friendly Neighbors,

2024 has been an exciting year and I am once again presenting to you our annual State of the Village (SOV). While it may seem like a lot to read I can promise you it will be worth your time. In 2017 when I became your Village President, I was committed to being as transparent as possible. The SOV is a great way to share a snapshot of the happenings and many successes in the Village of River Grove. I am always excited to send this document out to our residents and businesses because it encompasses all of the departments within the Village. Additionally, it gives you, the resident/taxpayer a clear picture of the direction of where the Village was and where it is heading.

As a small business owner myself since the age of 20, I know and can relate to the everyday struggles that small business owners face. In 2024 with out of control inflation and rising energy costs, many small businesses across the nation were forced to close. In River Grove we were fortunate to welcome 10 new business to our town and we expect more in 2025.

Looking back on 2024 we had some amazing accomplishments that I am very proud of. We finished the final paving of all the alleys in town. This increases the quality of life for our residents and assists our business owners in the day to day operations. We applied for and were awarded a grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to assist in the planning of the future of our Village. We completed an 18-month project with the CMAP team which resulted in a Comprehensive Plan for the Village of River Grove. We were able to engage many of our residents, businesses and other stakeholders to get their important input to finalize the plan that encompasses the whole village. This study is on our website for all to review.

Thanks to River Grove's great location, residential development is in high demand. We broke ground on residential townhomes on Center St., new condominiums on Grand Ave. and the new gated townhome community at 80th and Belmont. This project will be completed in April of 2025 with unmatched amenities like an Olympic size swimming pool, workout facilities and clubhouse. They are working on the final phase which is a 55-year-old and up community. This development is a big win for the community, putting formerly untaxed land on the tax rolls. By doing this we are easing the tax burden of current home owners. This also brings a whole new demographic in town to support the already bustling Thatcher Woods Shopping Center, boosting our sales tax intake. Thatcher Woods was in a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District which supported new lighting, enhanced facade improvements and helped restore existing hardscape. Thatcher Woods welcomed a Dunkin Donuts face-lift and a new store, Boba Heaven. Lastly, was the construction and dedication of our Veterans Memorial, which stands at Grand Avenue and Indian Boundary. This was a vision that was over 10 years in the making. The hard work by many people including our Veterans Memorial Committee, the Public Works team and the donations of many has made this vision a reality. I was so proud as River Grove's Village President to watch hundreds of residents and Veterans' supporters gather on Veterans Day to dedicate this beautiful memorial. Thank you to all who contributed and God Bless our Veterans. This will be an everlasting tribute to the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces and protected our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. This sends a clear message to the world that the Village of River Grove stands with our Veterans.

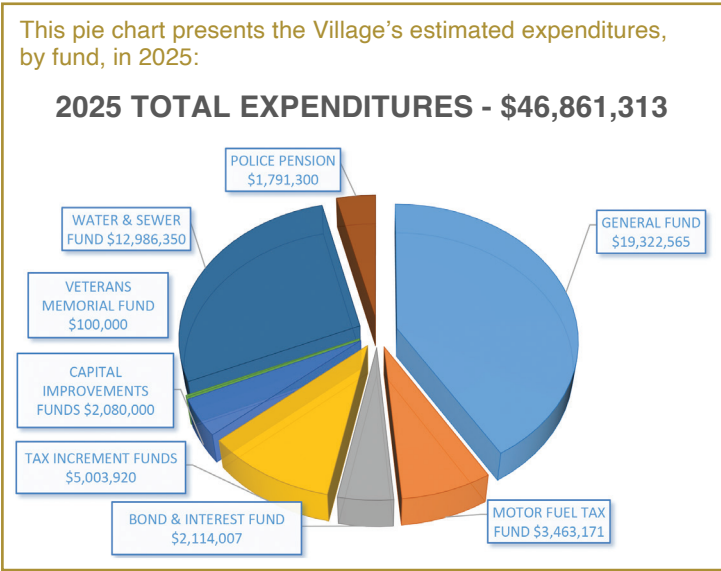
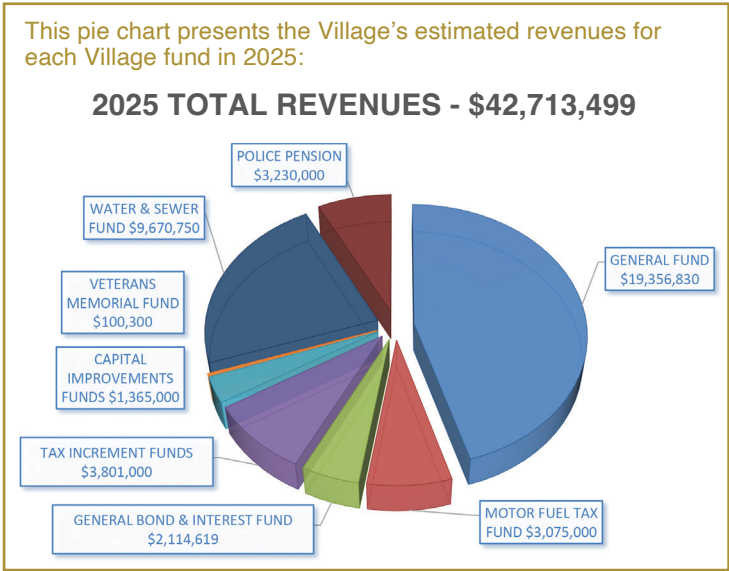


Looking forward to 2025, the sense of community continues to be strong in River Grove. Serving as your Village President would not be possible without the support of my family, friends and the TEAM I have put together. I am grateful for everyone, from the elected officials, department heads and all of our employees for all the hard work and commitment they give to our Village. We all believe in the vision to make River Grove an even better place to live.

Finance All the services, projects and activities that are funded by the Village can only be accomplished by a strong underpinning of its finances. In 2024, the Village continued to experience strong revenue growth in its intergovernmental revenues from sources such as state income taxes and building permits and also continued to receive grant funding to offset several large capital projects that would otherwise require local funding. In 2024, River Grove was the recipient of \$3 million from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the reconstruction and resurfacing of several streets and related water system improvements and in 2025, will also be the recipient of over \$300 thousand in Invest in Cook grant funds, again to offset street and sidewalk resurfacing and replacements.

River Grove continues to maintain a healthy fiscal condition in its main operating fund by prudent fiscal management by your elected officials and appointed department directors. This, in turn, allows it to continue to provide the highest level of services to our residents and businesses for 2025. Going into 2025, the Village has now passed seven consecutive balanced budgets that provided for increased expenditures to capital improvements and for the Village’s fleet. The 2025 budget also included adding two additional police officers and two public works personnel to enhance both our public safety and public works functions. Combined with the Village Board and staff’s financial oversight over expenditures during the year, the ending general fund balance is estimated to end December 31, 2024 with a fund balance increasing \$2.1 million to approximately \$15.03 million dollars. For comparison purposes, the Village’s general operating fund balance on December 31, 2017, was \$4.81 million dollars.

Projected 2025 revenues for the Village for all funds are approximately \$9.95 million dollars larger than projected for 2024 with the Water & Sewer Fund projected to receive \$5 million dollars in IEPA financing for lead line replacements to the Village’s water distribution system.



The 2025 expenditure budget for all funds totals \$46,861,313 with the General operating fund totaling \$19,322,565, a \$2,729,025 increase over 2024’s budgeted expenditures. The majority of the increase in 2025 spending is dedicated to both capital improvements including over \$1 million for the reconstruction and refurbishment to the Fire Department that originally housed the old Village Hall and Police Department on Thatcher Avenue, as well as the addition of new Public Safety and Public Works positions.

The positive annual trend of the Village in maintaining its percentage of expenditure to the general fund’s fund balance has also continued. The current projections are that the December 31, 2024 percentage will be 77.8% and the projected December 31, 2025 percentage will be 78%. Rating agencies recommend that general-purpose governments maintain at least 20% or greater. The Village has minimally maintained that measurement at no less than 40% for the past seven (7) fiscal years.

While costs have increased due to personnel and material costs, the Village continues to maintain a lower-than-average tax rate per \$100 of assessed value as compared to other communities in our neighborhood, thus continuing to maintain a lower property tax burden on residents and businesses compared to our peers.

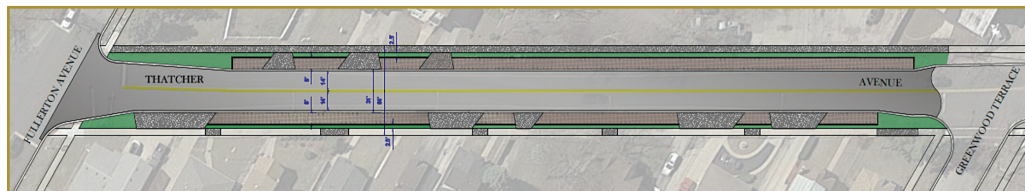
The Village's Comprehensive Financial Report (audit) for its fiscal year ending December 31, 2022, received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) award for outstanding financial reporting of the Village's finances for that year. The report's format needs to meet rigid standards for disclosure and financial transparency and ease of understanding for the reader. The result is a document that anyone with an interest in the Village's financial condition can review and comprehend. Additionally, the report includes a major section that provides various financial trends and comparisons from the past ten (10) years. This award is reviewed annually, and it is the Village's intention to maintain this award status in future annual reports. This report, as well as other financial documents, are available for viewing on the Village's website at: <https://www.rivergroveil.gov/214/Annual-Financial-Reports>

The result of having both the award and the continued improvement of our financial condition, the Standard & Poor's rating agency increased the Village's rating in 2023 from a **BBB+ (Positive Outlook)** to an **A+ (Stable Outlook)**. This is comparable to the Village now having an excellent FICO credit rating of 800 that allows for the Village to receive more favorable interest rates on any future borrowings it may consider but just as importantly, indicates that its financial outlook, rated by an independent outside agency, remains strong and healthy.

Any interested resident or business owner can always reach out the Village's Comptroller at (708) 456-8000 if they have any questions related to the Village's finances.

Looking at Capital Planning for the Future of River Grove 2025

Thatcher Avenue Improvements Project - The Village has received an Invest in Cook grant from Cook County and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant for improving Thatcher Avenue from Fullerton Avenue through Greenwood Terrace to improve the roadway and convert the stone shoulders into a paved parking lane with curb and gutter. This area is an entrance into the Village's residential corridor and the improvement would address one of the last sections of "unimproved" pavement cross sections in the Village.



River Road and Elm Street Water Main Replacement Project - The Village will be replacing a section of deteriorated water main on River Road north of Kennedy Avenue and extending to Belmont Avenue. A new water main will also be constructed on Elm Street from Walnut to Belmont Avenue with these water mains being connected on Belmont Avenue. The improvements will eliminate a dead-end water main that due to deterioration has a reduced capacity to meet the demand for domestic and fire flows in the area.

Water Main Lining - The Village will be lining its water main crossings that pass under the Des Plaines River this year. These three sections of water mains are critical to the infrastructure system as they provide water to the west half of the Village. This work will provide a minimum of a 60-Year extension to the service life of the existing pipes.

Grand Avenue Streetscape - The Village will be completing the streetscape work between Webster and Davisson. The work includes the placement of brick sidewalks, concrete parkways, placement of landscape planters, and pedestrian lights, enhancing the appearance of one of the key entrances into the Village.

Fullerton Avenue Pavement Patching - The Village will be focusing its pavement patching for this year on the concrete pavement of Fullerton Avenue from Finley Street to River Road. The project is being completed in June and July, after school is out for the summer, as the roadway will be down to one-way traffic while the work is completed. The work will maintain the integrity of that pavement for years to come.

Sidewalk Replacement Program - The Village has budgeted additional funds toward the replacement of sidewalk trip spots around town. Please contact the Public Works Department to let them know about any sidewalk squares you may be concerned about.

Des Plaines River Trail Improvements - The Village of River Grove has received a grant from Cook County to cover the cost of the design of the Des Plaines River Trail improvements starting at North Avenue and extending north to Fullerton Avenue. The design will follow the preliminary design study concepts that have been developed as part of the overall Des Plaines River Trail system improvements.

2023 Tax Rate Impact Comparisons - Neighboring Municipalities

Municipality	2023 Municipal Tax Rate	Levy Per Capita
Rosemont	2.626	\$ 5,286.17
Hillside	4.571	\$ 1,594.68
Maywood	7.462	\$ 1,156.62
Franklin Park	1.576	\$ 983.55
Bellwood	5.663	\$ 932.37
Schiller Park	2.135	\$ 896.09
River Grove	3.251	\$ 869.29
Elmwood Park	2.865	\$ 750.49
Melrose Park	1.959	\$ 733.14

Levy per Capita is based on a ratio of the government's extended tax levy divided by the official population of the municipality. Communities with a higher percentage of industrial properties generally have a lower tax rate due to their higher assessed valuation.

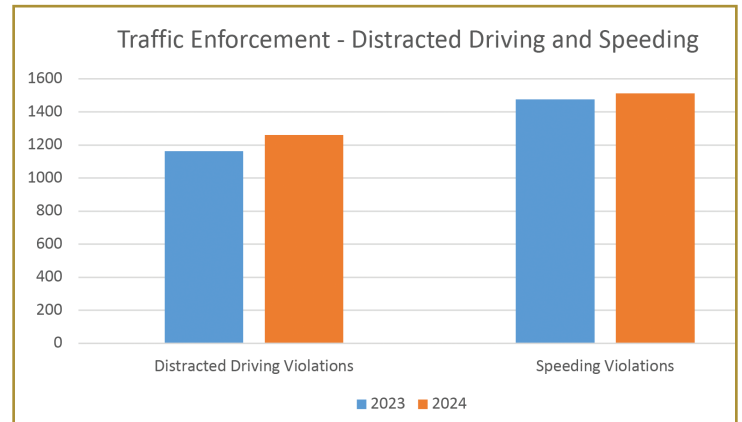
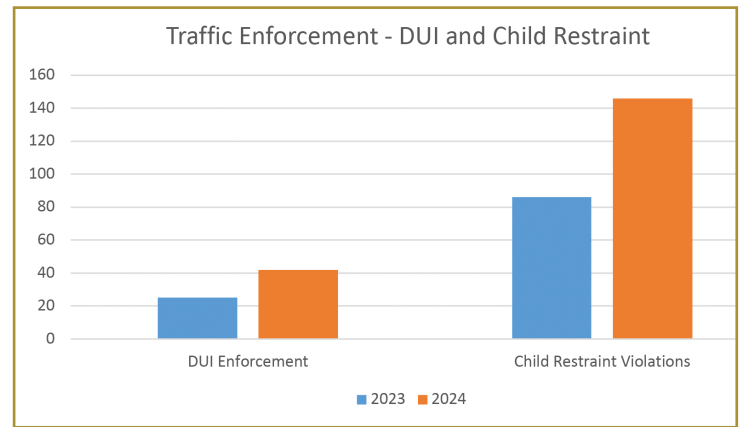
From The River Grove Police Department

Public Safety has always been my highest priority for our town. Throughout 2024, our full-time police staffing levels have been maintained at a high level. In fact, the department increased the staffing level by adding two full time police officers. Moreover, two patrol officers were promoted to sergeant, and two officers were appointed to our auxiliary department which has also maintained a high staffing level. The Village has budgeted for hiring two additional full-time officers by mid-year 2025 to bring our full-time police staff to an all-time high of 32 sworn officers.

In July of 2024, all certified law enforcement officers started using Body Worn Cameras (BWC). River Grove PD rolled out their BWC program five months ahead of the state mandate requiring all Illinois law enforcement agencies to utilize BWCs.

Our police administrators actively research and seek out state, federal, and public grant funding. In 2024, the police department was awarded the following grants: Illinois Law Enforcement Training & Standard Board police camera grant \$31,845.00 (designated for Body Worn Cameras); Illinois Attorney General Organized Retail Crime Prevention grant \$31,300 (designated for a mobile surveillance trailer); and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus - ComEd Powering Safe Communities grant \$10,000.00 (designated for 6 digital radar signs). Additionally, the police department receives a 50/50 protective vest grant through the Department of Justice, and the police department has also been renewed to receive the Illinois Department of Transportation traffic enforcement STEP grant. Grant money is generally awarded to purchase specific items, and most of the time strict guidelines require periodic reporting on how the item(s) purchased are being used.

In 2024, our dispatch center logged in nearly 23,000 events, an increase of approximately 18.8% when compared to 2023. Actual police contacts (request for reports, arrests, etc.) increased by 16.54% in 2024. When compared to 2023, our 2024 IDOT related traffic enforcement also increased in several categories including DUI Enforcement (up by 68%), Child Restraint Violations (up by 69%), Distracted Driving Violations (up by 8.51%), and Speeding Enforcement (up by 2.40%).

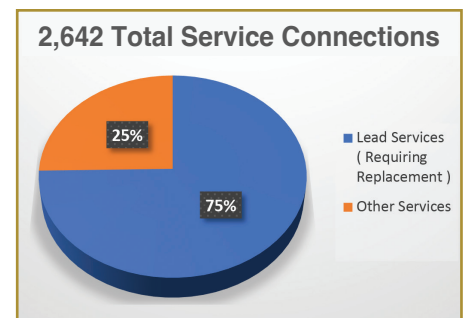
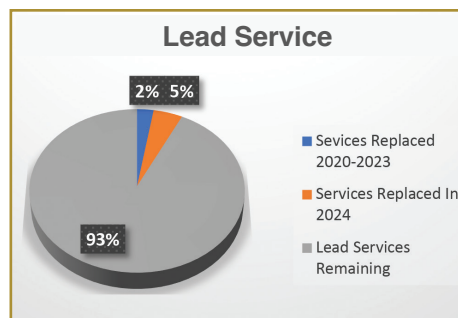


From The Public Works and Water Department

The River Grove Public Works is always there to offer great service. From water main breaks, to trees blocking your street in the middle of the night, they are on call 24/7. In 2024 the River Grove Public Works Department cleaned up the aftermath from multiple summer storms that affected our area. These storms knocked down trees and branches throughout the town, leaving some side streets impassable. Your public works department was quick to respond to clean up the fallen debris. Due to these storms 45 parkway trees had to be taken down; however, in order to keep our Tree City USA status, we planted 56 trees on parkways as well as at our new green spaces and sitting parks located at Erie Street and Grand Avenue, Center Avenue and Marwood Street and at the new Veterans Memorial located at Indian Boundary Road and Grand Avenue. As your Mayor I am so proud of the fact that this year, River Grove will celebrate 30 years of Tree City USA status. We will celebrate this momentous occasion on April 25th, at the Veterans Memorial, where we will honor the men and women who served in the military.

In 2024 River Grove had 18 water main breaks repaired, eight service leaks repaired, and three fire hydrants replaced. Along with these repairs, two blocks of deteriorating water main along West Street was replaced, which included the replacement of 25 lead service lines. Additionally, 64 lead services lines were replaced during the repaving project along Center Street and the surrounding area. Besides these repairs, the Village continues to reduce its non-revenue water with the use of leak detection services to help keep costs down and reduce waste due to unknown leaks within the water system.

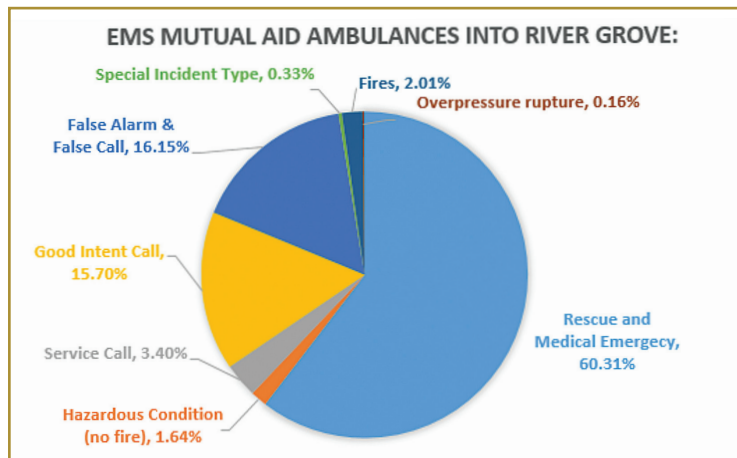
As indicated above, in our efforts to be proactive, River Grove has begun its lead service line replacement program; a program that has been mandated by the State of Illinois with a completion date of 2038. See charts to the right.



From The River Grove Fire Department

River Grove is very lucky to have such a great Fire Department and 2024 was a busy year for the RGFD. They responded to 2293 calls of which 855 were fire related and 1438 were EMS related. They also had several EMS Mutual Aid Responses. Here is the breakdown: Elmwood Park 223, Melrose Park 48, Franklin Park 15, Norwood Park, Schiller Park and Maywood all had 1. There were 85 EMS Mutual Aid ambulances into River Grove last year.

RGFD also offered public education and community engagement throughout the year. They gave tours of the firehouse to the Cub Scout Wolf Den Pack 4690 and attended their picnic. They organized and facilitated the annual Santa Stop, visiting 165 children in 68 houses to support the River Grove Food Pantry. RGFD had 4 school visits during Fire Prevention Week. They also participated in Operation North Pole gift drop-off and in a Touch a Truck program at the American Legion Post and Rhodes School.



From The River Grove Building Department

The building department makes sure that all contractors are licensed, bonded and insured. They are here to protect our residents from scammers and help them with issues in their home improvement or building efforts. The Village of River Grove has seen impressive growth in 2024 with a record-breaking number of permits being pulled, 885 to be exact! This just proves that River Grove residents are interested in improving where they live and adding value to their homes. It also confirms that they care about their homes and their neighborhood and they are here to stay. The Building Department has been in the process of adopting the 2024 International Building Code. This is in an effort to modernize the department, ensuring up to date standards for future projects.

River Grove Recreation

As your Village President, I recognize how important Parks and Recreation are to a community. We are committed to continuing to enhance our parks. Our Recreation team is doing a great job making sure there are things for all to do in River Grove. We are very proud of the success we have with our Flag Football program. This past year, we partnered with NFL Flag, and it was a great decision. The NFL brand helped guide our players on and off the field and we look forward to continuing that partnership in 2025. The support from families and encouragement from the sidelines made this past season a memorable one. Our competitive baseball and girls' softball programs have already started practicing. We have partnered with the River Grove Baseball league which offers 4-year-old T-Ball through 12u teams. The Rockets, our girls' fast pitch softball program, offers teams for 8 year-olds through 14 year-olds. The Rockets will partner with Triton College for clinics this winter, working with the athletes and coaches from Triton. This year we will join Veterans Park in hosting the Easter Egg Hunt at Trumbull Park on April 12th. We are also proud to announce that we are expanding the schedule of our concerts in the park. Concerts have been slated for Wednesdays, June 18th and July 23rd at the Gazebo. We are once again hosting a popular Back to School concert, featuring the Ultimate Taylor Swift Tribute, Fearless on August 22nd. The Recreation Department will also be providing seasonal craft activities for the community throughout the year.

Mayors Closing Remarks

I want to personally thank you for taking the time to read the State of the Village, as it has always been my goal to share as much information about our great town as possible. If you have made it this far in reading this, it proves that you are a concerned and engaged resident. Your input and issues are important to me, and I am here for you. Feel free to contact me or my staff at any time via email mayor@rivergroveil.gov or by phone at (708) 453-8000 ex. 308. I also invite you to visit our website, social media platforms and app to stay informed about happenings, events and community news. 2025 is going to be another great year for our community.



Dave Guerin Village President



River Grove 2025 Special Events

February 27 - RG Blood Drive

April 12 - Easter Egg Hunt

April 25 - RG Arbor Day

May 17 - Planting Day

May 29-June 1 - River Front Fest

June 8 - RG FOP 5KRun/Walk

June 14 - Shred Day

June 18 - Concert in the Park

July 23 - Concert in the Park

August 2 - Lions Club Steak & Lobster

August 5 - National Night Out

**August 22 - Fearless: Taylor Swift Tribute
Concert in the Park**

October 4 - Fall Flannel Fest

October 25 - Trunk or Treat

**November 23 - Light up the Park
Christmas Makers Market**

December 14 - Santa Stop

