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The Lot: 2024 Season Lineup



An exciting third season of special events and festivals returns to The Lot in Downtown Highland Park! 2024's season features time-tested favorites and exciting new themes. Mark your calendar for these fun, family-friendly events. Band lineup coming soon!

Taste of Highland Park

Friday, June 21 & Saturday, June 22, 5 PM - 10 PM both days

Highland Park's premier food and music festival returns with more music, more food, and more fun! Savor the taste of summer with special dishes and select beverages curated from Highland Park restaurants, all while jamming out to internationally-loved headliners.

Vintage Car Show

Sunday, August 11, 12 PM – 4 PM

Peruse a fabulous array of vintage vehicles, right on St. Johns Avenue while enjoying live music, food, and beverages. Afterward, head inside The Lot to check out The French Market, happening simultaneously!

NEW - Decades

Saturday, September 14, 12 PM – 10 PM

Fantastic headlining music from the 70s, 80s, and 90s brings together decades of music fans. Travel back in time to experience the sounds, tastes, and trends from these three decades through a selection of live performances and food and beverage vendors. Stop by participating downtown businesses from 10 AM - 5 PM to complete a "Decades of Music" bingo card, redeemable for discounted food purchases.

Oktoberfest

Saturday, September 28, 12 PM – 10 PM

Start the day with traditional Oktoberfest fun: music, food, beverages, and family-focused activities. At 5 PM, we switch up the vibe with a headline band.

NEW - Scarecrow Fest & Walk

Saturday, October 19, 12 PM – 5 PM

Celebrate Fall with scarecrow-themed family fun, kids' activities, and seasonal decor at The Lot. Take a stroll through downtown Highland Park's "Scarecrow

Walk” to see festive scarecrows decorated by local businesses. Head back to The Lot to vote for best in show.

Stews & Brews (& Booze & Blues)

Saturday, November 2, 5 PM – 9 PM

Combining two Midwestern favorites: comfort foods and beverages. Stay cozy with fire pits, heaters, hearty food, and great live music. The evening culminates with a People's Choice competition for the favorite Stew and Brew. This event is sure to warm the hearts and souls of all who attend!

NEW - French Market

Sundays, June 9 through September 29, 10 AM – 3 PM

Browse an array of artisan and specialty food vendors from around Chicagoland, showcasing a unique tableau of products and wares.

Bitter Jester Music Festival Grand Finale

Saturday, June 29, 2 PM – 10 PM

Second Street Parking Lot Reconstruction Mid-March - May

During the City Council meeting on February 12th, a contract was approved to reconstruct the Second Street surface parking lot between Michael's and Terry's Toffee. The project includes complete pavement reconstruction, permeable brick pavers for parking stalls, a new curb, gutter, and drainage structures, lighting enhancements, and installation of new conduit for future electrical vehicle charging stations. The construction work is expected to begin in mid-March and continue through May, and during this time, the parking lot will not be accessible to customers or employees. The City has already discussed the project timing with the affected businesses and property owners along Second St. and First St. It will provide further details about the project timeline and parking for customers and employees before the start of the construction.

In addition to this, the City Council discussed the broader lighting and streetscape enhancement of Second Street during the Committee of the Whole meeting. The council supported re-situating a planned bump-out slightly north along Second St. (between Gearhead Outfitters and BYG) to facilitate outdoor dining and enhanced lighting. As planning continues for this project, City staff will explore additional lighting elements to enhance the ambiance of the Second Street corridor between Central Ave. and Elm Pl. Information will also be available on the city's [interactive CIP map](#) nearer to the start of construction. If you're interested in receiving updates about the project, you can sign up for the dedicated project email list by emailing cityhp@cityhpil.com.

Infrastructure Maintenance Updates

The early sewer cleaning and televising to inspect sewer conditions in Downtown Highland Park, west of the tracks has been completed. Now the Sewer Section will be moving to the east side, operating beyond their regular schedule from March 5th to March 8th, 2024. During this period, sewer cleaning and televising will start at 4am each day. Unfortunately due to the

locations of the manholes, work cannot be completed during normal hours. [A map of the work area is available.](#)

ComEd's New Electric Vehicle Program



ComEd's new EV programs are live! These new programs are geared toward removing barriers to EVs, charging availability, and furthering the goal of widespread transportation electrification, a key goal outlined in the state's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA).

ComEd launched two new rebate programs for businesses and public sector customers.

- Electric Vehicle Rebates range from \$5,000 to \$180,000 for the purchase of electric light, medium, and heavy-duty fleet vehicles, as well as transit and school buses.
- "Make-Ready" Electrical Infrastructure Rebates of up to \$8,000 per port for installing Level 2 EV chargers and up to \$1,000 per kW for Direct Current Fast Chargers (DCFCs).

To learn more about these programs, visit comed.com/clean.

Exterior Improvement Grant Program



The **Exterior Improvement Grant Program** offered by the City is designed to provide both assistance and encouragement to commercial property owners and sales-tax-generating local businesses citywide to improve their storefronts' appearance and functionality. The program has the following key features:

- The cost of eligible improvements is shared equally between the applicant and the City.
- The maximum Grant amount is \$20,000 per year for up to five consecutive years or a total of \$100,000; however, a grant for the same improvement would not be considered within the same five-year period.
- The eligible improvements must be visible from the right-of-way.

The annual program budget is \$100,000 and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The program is an excellent opportunity for local businesses and property owners to revamp their storefronts, enhance their appeal, and lessen the financial burden. Please visit [Exterior Improvement Grant Program](#) to learn more and download the [Application](#).

If you have questions about the program, please contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at 847.926.1027 or via e-mail at chersch@cityhpil.com.

Community Navigator Business Support Program

[Community Navigators](#) is a support program to assist small businesses, particularly minority, women, rural, and veteran-owned businesses. They provide outreach to raise awareness on federal and state programs, and provide 1:1 technical assistance, etc. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

Made in Illinois Manufacturing Grant Program

Governor JB Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center launched \$1 million in funding for the Made in Illinois Grant Program. The Made in Illinois program provides up to \$50,000 in matching grant funding to small and mid-sized Illinois manufacturers.

Applications are open through March 31, 2024, and manufacturers are encouraged to explore the benefits offered by the Made in Illinois Grant Program by visiting www.imec.org/madeinillinois.

Hello Alice Small Business Grant Program



Discover small business grants for every stage of your small business adventure. Grant opportunities are recommended based on your unique profile and delivered to your inbox weekly. The search for free money doesn't get any easier! In partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) and with funding from Etsy and Progressive, [Hello Alice](#) is a free online platform that helps businesses launch and grow through every step of their entrepreneurial journey. The Small Business Growth Fund provides small business owners with knowledge, funding, networking opportunities, and peer-to-peer connections with more than one million small business owners.

[Learn about Hello Alice funding opportunities.](#)

Small Business Development Center: Low and No-Cost Business Services



[Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training, and other free resources for start-ups and existing small businesses. If you need help with a business plan, marketing, financial bookkeeping, finding grants,

starting and growing a business, click [HERE](#). To find a Center near you, click [HERE](#). Please note that many SBDCs do provide Spanish assistance. If you need help finding an SBDC that provides Spanish assistance, please contact Diana Alfaro at diana.alfaro@illinois.gov.

SCORE Mentoring at the Highland Park Public Library & Free Webinars

SCORE offers in-person or virtual sessions using phone, email, or video



All sessions are free and confidential. SCORE mentors are successful business professionals, some retired, some working, from all industries and experiences.

SCORE recently added a new [YouTube channel](#) where all previously recorded webinars can be accessed.

To schedule an in-person or virtual session, visit score.org/northchicago and register to “Find a Mentor”. You will be asked to provide the nature of your business interest. Please include whether you prefer in-person or virtual mentoring (phone, email, video) and note the **Highland Park Public Library** even if you prefer a virtual session.

Upcoming Free Webinar: February 29 6:00-7:00 PM Surge Ahead with AI. Five Strategies for Business Success.

[Click to learn more.](#)

Upcoming Free Webinar: March 6 6:30 PM Unlock the Power of AI for your Business.

[Click to learn more.](#)

Art In Bloom: A Student Art Walk Experience



On behalf of the 112 Education Foundation, the District 112 Art Teachers and the PTO President's Council, your business is invited to participate in the first "Art in Bloom" Student Art Walk Experience. Spring forward with the talented emerging artists in District 112! By displaying students' artwork in your windows, you can help harness senses of creativity and pride for our town's youth. If you would like to participate in this community initiative, please email danajweiss@gmail.com by February 14.

"Take Care Packages" To Support Newly-arrived Migrants

"TAKE CARE"

PACKAGES

Highland Park student volunteers with SaLT (Service and Learning Together) are working to collect donations for ["Take Care" packages](#) for newly-arrived migrants while they await transfer to the Chicago Processing Center. SaLT volunteers are partnering with the City of Highland Park and the Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood to collect donations that will be used to create these thoughtful "Take Care" packages.

Donations may be dropped off at City Hall (1707 St. Johns Ave.) and [other convenient locations](#) throughout Highland Park, including First Bank of Highland Park and Highland Park Bank & Trust.

Contacting the Office of Business Development

This newsletter is produced by the City of Highland Park's Office of Business Development. The City encourages business owners and managers to share information regarding upcoming events, promotions or news for possible inclusion in the City's marketing modalities, including [The Weekender](#), [Enjoy Highland Park](#), and [social media](#). Please send these items to the City via email to: businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com. The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions.

For general business inquiries and assistance, contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at chersch@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1027.

Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[Business Directory](#)

[City of Highland Park Business Development Strategic Plan](#)

[Chamber Of Commerce](#)

[College of Lake County Small Business Development Center](#)

[Hello Alice](#)

[SCORE](#)

[SCORE YouTube Channel](#)

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

[Job Center of Lake County - Business Services](#)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity:](#)

- [Small Business Development Centers of Illinois](#)
- [Community Navigator Business Support Program](#)
- [Grant Opportunities](#)

[Visit Lake County](#)

[Women-in-Business Resources](#)

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