

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025



## GOLDEN PUMPKIN PLOD NOVEMBER 27

### HIGHLAND'S THANKSGIVING DAY TRADITION

Highland native John Bobalik is prepped to fire the starter pistol at the 2025 Golden Pumpkin Plod, just as he did at the first race in 1976. That year, the race started at Highland High School with 106 runners and covered 6 miles. Today, the cherished Thanksgiving tradition attracts nearly 1,000 participants who run 6.2 miles or walk 3.1 miles. Carl Allegretti (pictured above right) will be in the pack with family. "One or more of us has been regularly running the plod since 1986. "In the last 40 years, I've missed less than 10 races," the Frankfort, Ill. resident said. "I started running. My brothers joined in with their families. Our kids participated in strollers. It's an important part of our Thanksgiving."



**DID YOU KNOW?** It was a Highland High School Trackette who was the inspiration for fresh-baked pies instead of trophies for the winners. She wanted a Pumpkin Plod T-shirt and offered to bake a pumpkin pie in exchange.

**REGISTRATION:** Online only at [runsignup.com](https://runsignup.com), where you'll also find a course map, race details, divisions, shirts and awards.

### VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

Join American Legion Post 180, Highland Elks and the Daughters of the American Revolution at 11 a.m. Tuesday, **November 11** at the Highway of Flags for a wreath-rifle ceremony honoring veterans.

### SHOP LOCAL THIS NOVEMBER

Council President George Georgeff has proclaimed November Shop Local month. "We have an abundance of unique retail stores throughout Highland," he said. "When you shop local – on Small Business Saturday **November 29** or anytime this holiday season – you are supporting your friends and neighbors. Shopping local strengthens our community."

### NIRPC ROAD SAFETY GRANT

Highland has received a matching grant from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission to complete a Road Safety Audit at the intersection of 45th and Kennedy. The audit will enable the town to apply for future funding to implement recommendations for the intersection to improve safety.

### PARKS & RECREATION SURVEY



The Highland Parks and Recreation Department is updating its five-year Master Plan and would like to hear from you! Simply scan the QR code above and take a survey about park usage, playgrounds, ADA accessibility and future priorities. Your input will guide improvements to parks, programs and facilities.

[ SNOW PARKING BAN ]



All on-street parking is banned when there is two or more inches of new-fallen snow. This allows plows to do their jobs in the first critical hours after snowfall.

[ SNOW REMOVAL ]



The noise ordinance bans the use of snowblowers and snowplows in residential neighborhoods between midnight and 6 a.m.

[ CRIME WATCH MEETING ]

Join us 6:30 p.m. **November 12** for a Crime Watch meeting in the Community Room at the HPD, 3315 Ridge Road. Learn about what's going on in your neighborhood.

**INFO:** Email Officer O'Malley at [jomalley@highland.in.gov](mailto:jomalley@highland.in.gov).



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[ The Idea Factory photos ]

## Residents eagerly share Master Plan ideas

If you haven't yet participated in the process of helping determine a path for Highland's future – either by attending a Comprehensive Master Plan community meeting or completing an online survey – you still have time.

A final draft of the master plan is expected in December, which will be followed by action from the Plan Commission early next year.

Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra said the response has been growing.

Those who have participated in the survey listed infrastructure, public

safety, redevelopment and governance as critical issues that should be addressed as part of the new 20-year Comprehensive Master Plan.

“The responses we have seen are thoughtful with residents concerned about the local economy as well as the livability of our town.” Becerra said.

“We encourage Highland residents to continue to share their ideas.”

**INFO:** Visit [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) for the latest updates, workshops or to share your ideas through our online survey.



[ **HAWK SIGNAL COMPLETE** ] The town's second signal for pedestrians crossing major thoroughfares – this one at Kennedy Avenue and the bike trail – is complete. Public Works Director Mark Knesek, who shepherded the project to completion said, “The project has been worth the wait. It provides greatly enhanced safety at a heavily traveled location where pedestrians are vulnerable.” [ Mark Knesek photos ]



## 4-8 PM | SATURDAY | DECEMBER 13

Highland Parks and Recreation will light up the town with dazzling displays as festival-goers warm up by the fire pits at Main Square Park. Celebrate the season with frosty fun and fiery festivities all while supporting our local community!

**S'MORES STATION ... FOOD ... DRINKS**  
**KIDS' GAMES ... FACE PAINTING**  
**PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES ...**  
**AND MUCH MORE ...**

**DELICIOUS FOOD • BEER • WINE**

Experience the magic of Highland's Main Square holiday lights display! All activities are sponsored by local Highland groups. Proceeds benefit their clubs and causes. Cash only.

**INFO:** Contact Alyce Van Drunen at [avandrunen@highland.in.gov](mailto:avandrunen@highland.in.gov) or call (219) 838-0114.



### [ HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY TIPS ]

As you deck the halls this holiday season, Highland Fire Chief Glenn Schlessler urges Highland residents to be fire smart and decorate wisely.

- Choose decorations that are flame-resistant or flame-retardant.
- Keep decorations at least three feet away from heat sources.
- Inspect lights, cords and bulbs. Discard any with exposed wires, cracked sockets, loose connections.
- Unplug all decorative lights when leaving home or going to bed.

**INFO:** Visit [highland.in.gov/highland-fire-department](http://highland.in.gov/highland-fire-department) for more safety tips.

### [ HOLIDAY FIRETRUCK ]

It's time to get your jingle on! Highland's Holiday Firetruck – decked out in festive lights – will be making the rounds from 5-7 p.m. Saturday, **December 6** and Saturday, **December 13**. “We’ll have designated stops for residents to take pictures,” Deputy Cmdr. Shawn Anderson said. **INFO:** Check out Highland's Police and Fire Facebook pages for the final route and stops.

### [ ZERO-WASTE GIFT WRAPPING ]

Highland Neighbors for Sustainability will host zero-waste gift wrapping demonstrations from 3-4 p.m. **November 22** and from 6:30-7:30 p.m. **December 3** at the Highland branch of the Lake County Public Library.

### [ RESTAURANT CRAWL ]

Join us for our Restaurant Crawls from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **November 25** and **December 30** in downtown Highland. Participating restaurants feature a special for \$7 or less, so that visitors can “eat their way through downtown,” stopping at their usual haunts and discovering new favorites along the way.

## [ TOYS FOR TOTS ]

The Highland Fire and Police departments are collecting gifts as part of the 2025 Toys for Tots campaign. Bring your new, unwrapped gift(s) to these locations through **December 5:**

### **Main Fire Station | 2901 Highway**

Gifts may be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### **HPD | 3315 Ridge Road**

Drop off donations from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.



## [ SHOP WITH A FIREFIGHTER ]

The Highland Fire Association is appealing to the public to help make this Christmas bright for Highland children. Firefighters are asking residents to dig deep to help by donating. "We treat the kids to a day they will always remember," Fire Chief Glenn Schlessler said.

**DONATIONS:** Make checks payable to Highland Fire Association Shop With a Firefighter and drop off or mail to Highland Main Fire Station, 2901 Highway Ave.

**INFO:** Call (219) 923-9876.



## [ CHRISTMAS COPS & KIDS ]

Highland FOP Lodge #122 is seeking donations for its annual Christmas Cops and Kids shopping event in December. Last year, the FOP took dozens of Highland kids shopping at Meijer, where they spent more than \$6,000 on local children.

**DONATIONS:** Make checks payable to Highland FOP #122, P.O. Box 1743, Highland, IN 46322 or drop them off at the police department.

**INFO:** Call FOP President Officer Jim Glidewell at (219) 838-3184.

# Merry Christmas

## Santa's March



Parade with Santa through downtown Highland at 4:45 p.m. Saturday, **November 29** from the downtown Municipal Parking Lot to Main Square Park. Lineup begins at 4 p.m. Hot chocolate will be served. Simply scan the QR code or visit [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) to register.

## Letters from Santa

Receive a personalized letter from Santa Claus, delivered straight from the North Pole! Register your child by **December 12** at [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org) or at the park office. Children will receive a personalized letter and coloring page – along with stickers. Residents \$5 | Non-residents \$7



## Tree Lighting

Helpers will be asked to assist Santa in officially lighting Main Square Park at 5 p.m. Saturday, **November 29** for the holiday season. Santa will have treats for good boys and girls. Bring your letter to drop off in Santa's mailbox!

## Home Decorating Contest

Entry forms will be available at Lincoln Center starting **November 24** and must be submitted by **December 12**. Highland residences only. This year's categories include: Best Inflatables, Best Traditional Theme, Best Overall Griswold Show Stopper and Best Porch/Balcony/Entryway. Cast your vote **December 15-17** at [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org).

## New Year's Eve & Twelfth Night

Ring in the new year with fireworks at midnight **December 31** at Main Square Park. The holiday Festival of Lights will close at 6 p.m. **January 6** with our Twelfth Night Celebration. Residents are encouraged to bring their Christmas trees for the bonfire. Hot chocolate will be served.