

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MARCH-APRIL 2026

## 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 Potesta said.

### [ 2025 HIGHLAND CRIME STATISTICS ]

“Our crime rates remained low in 2025 – a direct result of the hard work, dedication and commitment the Highland Police Department provided throughout the year,” Potesta said.

“When comparing statistical data over the last 56 years, we are at all-time record lows in several of the criminal categories, including homicide, rape, burglary, vehicle theft and vandalism.”

CATEGORY	2025	HIGHEST	LOWEST
Homicide	0	2 (1986/2001)	0 (most years)
Rape	0	6 (2005)	0 (most years)
Robbery	6	35 (2005)	2 (2018/2020)
Assault	98	157 (1976)	10 (1969)
Burglary	10	185 (1980)	10 (2025)
Larceny	267	1,008 (1997)	203 (1971)
Vehicle Theft	10	258 (1991)	10 (2025)
Vandalism	69	577 (2006)	10 (2025)

SOURCE: National Incident-Based Reporting System (formerly UCR-Uniform Crime Report)



### REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Highland has acquired a parcel of land at 8436 Kennedy. They’re asking residents to dream big about what it could become. Ideally situated just north of the U.S. Post Office on Kennedy Avenue at LaPorte, the land that was once the location of a Speedway Gas Station, is also a stone’s throw from the Erie Lackawanna bike path.

**INFO:** Please share your ideas by calling Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra at (219) 972-7598 or email [mbecerra@highland.in.gov](mailto:mbecerra@highland.in.gov)

### DIGITAL OR PRINT?

Which way do you like your Gazebo Express? Is it best served up as a printed newsletter delivered through your water bill or would you prefer to read it digitally? “The Highland Town Council is considering going digital with the Gazebo Express,” Council President George Georgeff said. “However, we’d like to hear from Highland residents and learn how they prefer to read the newsletter. Please let us know what you think!”



We want to hear from you! Simply scan the QR Code and fill out our survey!

**[ DRUG RECYCLING ]**

Turn in your unused or expired medications to the proper authorities instead of flushing or throwing them out. Highland Police will participate in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) drug take-back program from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **APRIL 25** at the police department, 3315 Ridge Road. No needles will be accepted. **INFO:** Please contact Highland Police Department Support Services at (219) 838-3184.

**[ CRIME WATCH MEETING ]**

The next Crime Watch meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. **MARCH 11** in the Community Room at the Highland Police Department, 3315 Ridge Road. We will have a general discussion and review crime statistics.

**WARD 1**

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**WARD 2**

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**CLERK-TREASURER**

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## TREE PLANTING WILL MARK HIGHLAND ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

The Tree Board is inviting residents to join the community **April 25** in a day-long effort to spruce up town parks that will conclude with the planting of a tree in celebration of Arbor Day.

“One of our missions as the Tree Board is to further the shade canopy in Highland and continuing education on the benefit of trees to our community,” Tree Board Chairman Blane Roberts said. “We will welcome a professional arborist to the Park Cleanup Day luncheon, as well as honor Richard Underkofler, who worked to start the Tree Board nearly a decade ago.”

Stay tuned to the Highland Tree Board's Facebook Page for more info on where to gather for the tree planting.

**Did you know?** Highland is a Tree City USA community boasting more than six years of commitment to urban forestry through proactive tree canopy mapping and planting initiatives.

**[ FREE TREES FOR RESIDENTS ]**

Residents interested in a free tree, are invited to email **HighlandTreeBoard@gmail.com** with their name and address.

As the Tree Board applies for grants to strengthen and expand our community's urban forest canopy, we are building a roster of residents who are interested in planting a tree at their home. Once trees become available, the Tree Board will follow up with instructions and next steps.

## COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT REIMBURSES UP TO 30 PERCENT OF INVESTMENT

The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program encourages property/business owners to renovate, restore and improve buildings – both inside and out.

“The goal of the program is to encourage the growth of a vibrant and thriving retail climate within Highland,” Councilman Alex Robertson said.

Grants will be awarded for up to 30 percent of the approved total. Projects over \$15,000 will take priority, however, the Redevelopment Commission will review all projects regardless of the amount requested.

**[ HOW TO APPLY ]**

The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program provides reimbursement for significant improvements to interior and exterior spaces of a business within Highland.

**INFO:** Visit **highland.in.gov** to download an application and review program guidelines.

**Questions?** Please call Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra at (219) 972-7598 or email **mbecerra@highland.in.gov**.

# Park Cleanup Day

Join Highland Parks and Recreation for its 25<sup>th</sup> annual community park cleanup day from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, **APRIL 25**. Everyone is welcome, especially community groups and families. You will be assigned a park for cleanup. Bring gloves, rakes and energy! Immediately after, meet us at noon at Main Square Park to receive your free T-shirt and lunch. **INFO:** Individuals and groups must register at Lincoln Community Center. For more info, call (219) 838-0114.

## [ LEAVES & BRANCHES ]

Crews will be running daily routes in the beginning of **APRIL** to collect leaves, which should be raked as close to the street as possible. This will be the final time Highland Public Works will go through all the zones. Branch pickup routes will also begin in **APRIL** and continue through October 30. Pile branches in front of the property separate from leaf piles. Please call to schedule a Friday pickup for heavier logs and stumps. Visit [highland.in.gov](http://highland.in.gov) for route maps.

## [ HIGHLAND SHRED DAY ]

Paper piling up at your house? Highland will shred your confidential documents for **FREE** from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, **JUNE 20** at Highland Public Works, 8001 Kennedy Ave.

- ▶ Proof of residency is required.
- ▶ 4 boxes – no larger than 12x18x10 – or 4 brown paper grocery bags per household.
- ▶ No plastic covers, binder clips or spiral notebooks.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Earth Day is an annual event on **APRIL 22** to show support for environmental protection. First held in 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by [earthday.org](http://earthday.org), including 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.

## [ SPRING CLEANUP DAY ]

Republic Services will schedule extra crews Tuesday, **MAY 19** to collect trash and rubbish generated by spring cleaning. **NOT INCLUDED:** Construction debris, concrete, electronics, televisions, household hazardous waste and leaves. Televisions, computers and electronics may be recycled at Public Works, 8001 Kennedy Ave.



## [ HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY IN HIGHLAND ]

Make your environment safer by bringing your batteries, cleaners, oils, solvents, poisons, gasoline, pesticides, antifreeze, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent light bulbs to the town garage from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, **JULY 25**. Items not accepted include: tires, appliances, ammunition, explosives, medical/ radioactive wastes, asbestos, 30-gallon or larger containers. **Please note:** Batteries cannot be dropped off at Highland Public Works in advance of Hazardous Waste Day.

This event also includes on-site paper shredding, with a limit of four paper grocery bags per vehicle. This is a great opportunity to safely destroy sensitive documents while you're already out taking care of household cleanouts.

**[ GARAGE SALE ]**

Find hidden treasures, vintage gems, and one-of-a-kind collectibles from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, **March 14** at Lincoln Community Center.

**FEE:** Vendor fees (includes 7% sales tax) are \$40 for 10' X 10' for an interior space or \$65 for 23' x 6' for a wall space. Table, chairs, extension cords and carts are not provided.

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org)

**[ COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT ]**

Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's free annual spring concert from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, **March 18** at Lincoln Center Banquet Hall.

**INFO:** This band of volunteers is open to anyone from the area high school age or older. To join, contact Greg at [maestroflute@att.net](mailto:maestroflute@att.net).

**[ SPRING FLING MARKET ]**

Formerly known as the Spring Craft & Vendor Show, this event from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, **May 2** at Lincoln Center has blossomed into a vibrant community market featuring artisans with one-of-a-kind creations as well as vendors and small businesses.

**VENDOR FEES:** \$45 for 10' X 10' interior space or \$70 for 23' x 6' wall space.

Not provided: table, chairs and cords.

**INFO:** [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org)

**[ RESTAURANT CRAWL ]**

Join us for our Restaurant Crawls from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **March 31** and **April 28** 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.

# Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Join the Easter Bunny and his furry friends 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, **March 14** at the Griffith High School Fieldhouse for a continental breakfast, raffles and a joint-community Easter Egg Hunt featuring 30,000 Easter eggs!

**TICKETS:** Tickets are \$10 per person. Children under 2 are free. Registration and payment is online only at [hgchamber.org](http://hgchamber.org) for this Highland Griffith Chamber of Commerce event. Seating is limited to 400 guests. **Deadline to register is March 8.**

**INFO:** (219) 923-3666



## Bunny's Trail Adventure

Get ready for a fun-filled Easter experience at Bunny's Trail Adventure from 6-8 p.m. Friday, **March 20** at Lincoln Community Center. This is a free, interactive event where children – ages 10 and under – complete activity stations, collect eggs and turn them in for an egg-citing prize.

**INFO:** (219) 838-0114 or [highlandparks.org](http://highlandparks.org)

**NEW**

## Easter Egg Hunt

Grab your basket and head to Wicker Memorial Park Pavilion from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, **March 28** for the annual North Township Easter Egg Hunt. Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to hunt until the last egg is found! A visit from the Easter Bunny and his mascot friends will be part of the day's activities.

**INFO:** (219) 313-3934

