



News & Current Events

December 2025

From the Desk of the Mayor

YOU MUST TURN OFF YOUR WATER SOFTENER!

Water softeners are no longer needed and can be harmful to your pipes within your home if you over soften the water. We are currently at 70% and will be increasing over the next month to our target of 75-85%. You do not want to be at 90%+ softened water.

What do you need in your home? We highly recommend a whole house filter to “catch” any sediment coming into your home. Personal choice in taste of the water varies for everyone. If you choose to have an RO system that will be based on that taste and personal concerns. For reference, I don’t have RO but do have a refrigerator filter. I have heard of contractors testing the water and telling residents to keep their softeners because their tests show the water to still need it. It will be your choice to continue using but the Village has provided adequate warning.

The next question has been how much will the water rates increase? The Board of Trustees adopted the new OMR (operations, maintenance & repair), debt service and capital cost rates. These new rates will take be reflected on your January 2026 bill. We do not anticipate needing to raise them again but will consider, like other small towns, an automatic 3-4% rate increase each year. The new rates will be explained later in the newsletter.

Mayor Monday continued this month, but I will suspend them until the Spring.

Downs project updates:

- 1) The new water plant is 100% operational and punch list items are being completed.
- 2) Downs Crossing Tower and watermain extension. Water main to Downs Crossing has been permitted by IEPA. We are finalizing telemetry controls for the new tower, fencing, and completing the final tasks and tests for the water tower IEPA permits. Weather is a factor for bringing the tower online so this might be elongated for now.



Village Of Downs

From the Desk of the Mayor

- 3) Streetscape project is complete except for the punch list. Lights look amazing and provide a nice welcome to Downs. We are putting a limestone cap on the walls and then all the railings can be installed. We hope this project will be completed before Christmas.
- 4) The sidewalk project has been completed from Seminary to Price St on the southside of Main St.
- 5) Due to weather S. Lincoln St Road improvements will be pushed to the Spring or when weather allows.
- 6) The board has authorized me to continue with a new village hall using a municipal program that allows the building to be built and leased back for ownership. We have outgrown our current location and the work environment is less than ideal. The new building will provide room for all hall operations and future expansion needs that we could anticipate. The current building will then be leased out to a business for our downtown.
- 7) The board is also considering solar panels on the Les Fitzwater PW building to reduce the cost of electricity for the new water plant. The options being considered could offset costs by 20-40% depending on the option.

In your service,

Mike James, Mayor

309-830-7374, Mayor@VillageOfDowns.org



Village of Downs Board of Trustees Meeting Overview December 11th, 2025, 7 pm @ Village Hall & via TEAMS

Executive order **2021-9** by the Governor of Illinois allowed this meeting to be held via Zoom, telephone and at the Village Hall.

1. Mayor Mike James called the December 11, 2025, meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Trustees present were Maureen Roach, Diana Reynolds, Stephanie Adkisson, Sarah Gassaway, Brian Warfel and Toby Twyford. There was a quorum present. Also present were Mayor Mike James, Clerk Rachel Eagles, Treasurer Julie Bakewell, and Village Attorney Dawn Wall.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
4. Reports from specific departments can be found in the flyer.
5. The board reviewed rezoning recommendations from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
6. Trustees received updates on zoning and development matters, including annexations, zoning map amendments, and variances that support residential growth and development within and near the Village.
7. Community events were highlighted, including the success of the annual Cookies with Santa event, which welcomed approximately 300 children, and early planning for the Fourth of July celebration this summer.
8. Engineering and infrastructure updates focused on continued progress across several major projects. The new water plant is producing high-quality water as final adjustments and punch list items are completed, with a reminder to residents that in-home water softeners are no longer needed as they could cause possible plumbing damage due to over-softening if continued use ensues.
9. Downtown streetscape improvements are nearing completion, with remaining items expected to be finished in the coming weeks, weather permitting.
10. Updates were also provided on the water main extensions and new water tower project, road project delayed by winter conditions, and overall financial planning, including discussions related to water rates and other financial items were covered.

Please note: Detailed minutes from the Village Board of Trustees meetings are available after they are approved by the trustees at the following month's meeting. If you would like to be added to the email list to receive the approved minutes each month, please visit our website and use the form located at the bottom right corner of the home page. Or you can visit the Board Agenda and Minutes page to view all posted agendas and minutes.



Billing

Billing Questions, Issues, and Payments

All questions regarding billing issues including payment arrangements need to be directed to the Village Hall at 309-378-3221 during office hours. Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 12:30pm.

REMINDER: The billing due date is the **15th of the month**. Payments received after the 15th are subject to the late fees. If not paid by the 25th of the month, and the office has to call you regarding payment, there will be an additional fee of \$20. If not paid on the 26th, shut off of water can occur. To reconnect, there is a additional fee of \$30.

The Village is using an **ACH** (automatic withdrawal) program. This program has NO FEE to you! If you sign up for this program, you will continue to receive your monthly bill. On the 15th of the month, the Village will withdraw the entire amount due from the checking or savings account you provided on the authorization form. Authorization forms are on the website and will need to be submitted to the Billing Office by the 1st of the month you wish your first payment withdrawal to be made.

Reminder: If an ACH comes back as NSF it is treated like a check, and cash or money order is needed to cover the \$25 NSF fee + the amount of the bill. A 2nd NSF will result in no longer being eligible for ACH and all payments will need to be in cash or a money order. Please put your service id on your payment.

Billing Rates Increase

January Bill 2026

Several changes have happened to the water billing rates for the January bill. At the end of 2024 we raised the debt service rate to help pay for the new plant loan to the minimum the IEPA would accept at that time. We have now raised it to include the new water tower. The water (OMR) and Capital Improvement rates have not been increased since 2009. Now that the new plant is completed and producing better quality water, we have raised the water rates to cover the actual cost of producing/treating/delivering the water. We have raised the Capital Improvement rates to better cover the actual costs due to inflation. See the chart below to compare the previous rates with the new rates.

VOD Monthly Water Rates			OMR	Cap Imp	Debt Ser
First 3000 Gallons	11/30/2024	40.60	13.80	1.50	25.30
Each additional 1000	11/2/2009	4.60	4.60	0.00	0.00

VOD Monthly Water Rates			OMR	Cap Imp	Debt Ser
First 2000 Gallons	1/1/2026	51.00	18.00	3.00	30.00
Each additional 1000	1/1/2026	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00

Water Sewer report for November 2025.

The average iron concentration for the finished water was **.03** ppm. Monthly bacteriological testing on the raw, finished, and distribution samples were all satisfactory; fluoride concentration was **.5**. The volume of water pumped for the month was **2.696** million gallons, averaging **89,866** gallons per day. The sewer lift station pumped **1.848** million gallons for the month, averaging **61,600** million gallons per day.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 outdated water meters/transmitters replaced with updated units• 1 Drain tile replacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28 JULIE tickets within Village<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ 1 Streets/Water Department□ 15 outside companies• 11 JULIE tickets outside Village (1 was an extended ticket, no need to remark) |
|---|---|

The new water plants' softening level is down to what we believe is an ideal level. Any additional water softening is **not necessary**, but that is the homeowner's decision to make.

Weather permitting, water meters/transmitters replacement changeout will continue. This will be at no cost to the homeowner as it is Village Property.

We said goodbye to the always smiling, Jon Bettisch early November. We wish Jon well and the best of luck in his new chapter.

Please continue to be cautious of our Village workers. We want to make sure the Village is safe for the residents, visitors and ourselves.

As always, your support means a lot. If you have any questions/comments, please contact me.



Jill Kasprzak
Supervisor of Public Works & Maintenance

Village Snow & Ice Removal

Please Help us Make Plowing Easier, Safer, and more Efficient

The Village doesn't have a snow parking ban law, and we prefer not to create one because we know we can rely on YOUR assistance and cooperation to help make our job easier. The following outlines our procedures and will be adjusted as needed:

We will usually precede each storm with salting intersections, hills, curves, and trouble areas. Snow removal will start at ~2" and will focus on getting one pass through all streets and keeping them open, until snow stops. Cars parked along the side of the roads will slow this process down and you may end up with a lot of snow around it. Please help us by parking your car(s) preferably in your own driveway, during storms where we are expecting 4"+ of snow and/or high winds. Once removal is completed and the snow has stopped, we will come back through to widen, cleanup and spread salt.

Illegal Dumping

Please do not dump yard waste and ANY other items at the entrances to Kickapoo Park, Village storage yard, and/or along Huff Rd South of Main St. Violators will be caught and fined accordingly!

If you have questions or concerns, please call Brian Warfel at 309-261-0183.

Dumpster Use

Please remember, Dumpsters at residences, businesses, and parks are private and not for public use. If you have a need for a dumpster you can call GFL customer service at 309-688-0760 to order one.

Door-to-Door Sales

Permit Required

Door-to-door solicitation permits are needed PRIOR to doing solicitation door-to-door. No warnings will be granted. Please report anyone that does not have a permit to come to your door. Please try and get their name and car make/model/color. Solicitors without a permit will be fined.

GFL Environmental

Bulk Pickup—First Garbage Day Pickup of the Month

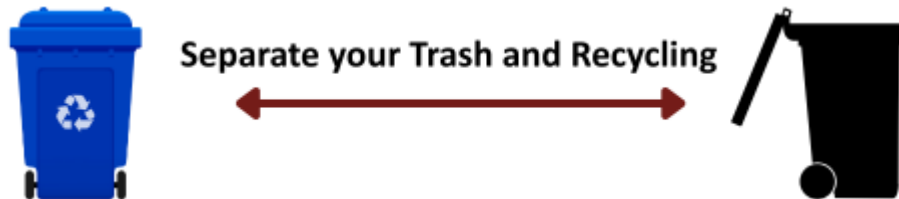
Do not forget that the first garbage pickup of each month is our contracted bulk waste pickup for the Village. If you have a large item or a lot, please call GFL customer service prior to the scheduled pickup. Sample of items not taken - electronics, appliance with a compressor, batteries, landscaping material, bricks, block, construction material. If you have questions call GFL customer service at 309-688-0760.

Recycling Guidelines

Passed down from our Local Pickup Crew:

- Label recycling with the word Recycle or the Recycle Symbol.
- Place recycling well separated from trash. For example: Place your containers on separate sides at the end of your driveway.

Following the above guidelines will help our Recycle and Trash crews pickup the correct items and not leave some behind.



Trash and Recycle Carts Free Offer

For those that ordered the Trash and Recycle Carts, they have begun to be delivered. There are >300 to be delivered so it may take a bit.

BNWRD Annexation Letters

Notary Signed Letters Due January 31st

Letters have been mailed to property owners within the Village of Downs along with a petition of annexation and a signature page. All property owners will need to submit the signed signature page that has to be notarized. You can have the paperwork notarized by a notary of your choice or call the Village Hall at 309-378-3221 to arrange a time.

All Building Permits

All Building and Demolition Permit Applications must be processed, approved, and issued a permit number, BEFORE WORK CAN BEGIN. This includes small projects, renovations, and new builds which could take up to 2 weeks to process. Please leave enough time before working on your project.

Our permits are revised and posted on the website throughout the year. Make sure to print out the latest forms. Permit Forms can be found on our [Forms and Applications page](#) on the Village Website listed under Quick Links.

Let Us Know How We Can Use Your Expertise Volunteer Registration

Often someone wants to help but doesn't know how. Often, I hear, "Let me know if I can help.", but I don't know how. See the dilemma? Our website contains a "[Volunteer Registration Form](#)". This registration will allow you to tell us where you can help and how we can utilize your talents and skills. I hope you will take the time to consider how you can you help.

Keep up to Date with Facebook and Village Website Village of Downs Social Media Sites of Interest

- Events Committee: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DownsEvents/>.
- You know you are from Downs: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/downsil/>
- Downs Citizens In Action (CIA): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/115323465475046/>
- Downs Haunted House:
 - ◇ <https://www.facebook.com/downs.hauntedhouse>
 - ◇ <http://www.downshauntedhouse.org>
- Dooley Park: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/108924229128032/>
- Downs Freedom Run: <https://www.facebook.com/downsfreedomrun/>
- Downs GPS (Grow, Play, Stay): <https://www.facebook.com/DownsGPS>
- Downs Village Market:
 - ◇ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090958995532>
 - ◇ <https://www.instagram.com/downsvillagemarket/?igshid=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ%3D%3D>



Village Of Downs Food Pantry



Our Mission

To serve the people of Tri-Valley School District who need food assistance by providing monthly food boxes and to be on call to assist in any emergency that involves a need for food and emotional support.

"Serving the residents of the Tri-Valley School District."

2026 Schedule

Month	Friday	Saturday
January	9th	10th
February	6th	7th
March	6th	7th

Distribution hours

10:00 am until Noon

Location

The Food Pantry is in the Youth Center located at the Washington St. entrance to Dooley Park.

2026 Food Pantry Distribution Schedule

Food boxes are distributed during the first Friday and Saturday after the first Monday of each month barring holidays when the distribution is usually the following week.

Contact the Food Pantry:

Linda Bowman:
309-261-3809
llbowman3@gmail.com

Bill Clark:
309-531-7884
downstwpclerk@aol.com

Parks

Dooley Park Candy Cane Lane

Head to Facebook to vote for your favorite tree.



Voting Ends 12/31

Looking Ahead

Quick Glance at Upcoming Village Events, Activities and Meetings

December:

- 16th – Parks Committee Regular Meeting, 6:30 pm @ Pavilion
- 18th – Garbage Collection
- 25th - Christmas Day - Village Hall is closed
- 26th – Garbage and Recycle Collection

January:

- 1st - New Year's Day - Village Hall is Closed
- 2nd – Garbage Collection – GFL Monthly Bulk pickup
- 6th – Events Committee Regular Meeting, 6 pm, @ Village Hall
- 8th – Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, 7 pm @ Village Hall; Video/Audio via Zoom
- 8th – Garbage and Recycle Collection
- 13th – Parks Committee Regular Meeting, 6:30 pm @ Pavilion
- 15th – Garbage Collection
- 22nd – Garbage and Recycle Collection
- 29th – Garbage Collection
- 31st - Final day for BNWRD Notary Signed Documents

February:

- 5th – Garbage Collection – GFL Monthly Bulk pickup
- 10th – Events Committee Regular Meeting, 6 pm, @ Village Hall
- 12th – Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, 7 pm @ Village Hall; Video/Audio via Zoom
- 12th – Garbage and Recycle Collection
- 16th - Presidents' Day - Village Hall is Closed
- 17th – Parks Committee Regular Meeting, 6:30 pm @ Pavilion
- 19th – Garbage Collection
- 26th – Garbage and Recycle Collection

**** More information and registration forms are available on the Village website or at the Village Hall**

Video/Audio Information for Public Meetings which use TEAMS

Broadcast for Village Board of Trustee Meetings Will Continue

Persons who wish to attend in person are allowed at the meeting location shown on the agenda without special consideration. Both Audio and Video are available using a computer or smartphone using the information below. Please remain muted until called upon for your question or you need to make a follow-up comment during your 5-minute time (See rules for public comment).

You may submit comments or questions via the following methods:

- Online chat during the meeting
- During the "Public Comment" item on the agenda using conference call audio/video
- e-mail the clerk@villageofdowns.org
- Text the Village Clerk 541-390-6709

Video/Audio conference call information:

Join TEAMS Meeting:

Meeting ID: 250 776 149 659 2

Passcode: F2UB9xG2

Looking for Houses to Clean

Also do private
care in seniors
homes



Immediate
openings

call Trisha 309-273-8610

**** More information and registration forms are available on the Village website or at the Village Hall**

FY2026 (May 2025 – April 2026) Village of Downs Event Plan

Current Plan—Subject to Change

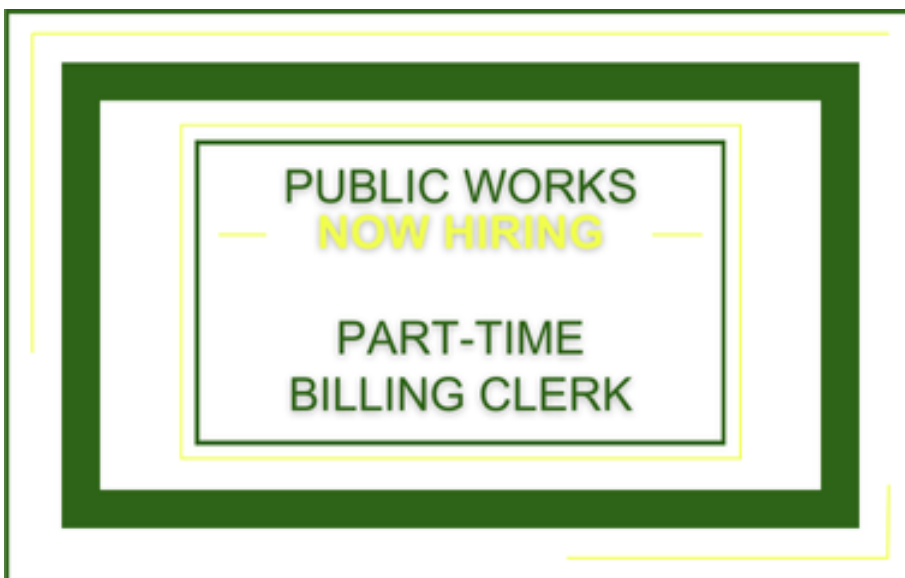
The following describes each planned event at a high level. Further details and changes will occur during final planning by the committee or sub-committee in charge of the event. Budgets have been estimated based on last year's expenditures and revenue. Some events have been eliminated due to lack of participation or they were merged with something else.

Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt – This event will be hosted in Dooley Park on Saturday, March 28, 2026, and will involve the areas Churches for the egg hunt. The host for the family breakfast before the egg hunt in the park is TBD and we are open for any business to volunteer to host.



Hiring Part-Time Billing Clerk

We have a part-time Billing Clerk position open in the Village Hall. The job is 8-12 hours per week plus additional hours available when the demand increases. Check out our Employment page for a brief Job description and an employment application.



Visit our Employment Page located on our website under the Contact Us Tab.

<http://www.villageofdowns.org/village-of-downs-employment.htm>

**** More information and registration forms are available on the Village website or at the Village Hall**



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journey, you'll receive
a warm welcome at
Living Hope.**

608 North Huff Road, PO Box 345, Downs, IL 61736

LivingHopeDowns.com



Downsumc.org

309-378-2651

Up and Coming Events

- Sunday morning Adult Sunday School 8:30am in Youth Room
- *YOUTH WORSHIP during the regular worship service. It is a service geared for the 4th through 8th grade students and they meet in the Youth Room.*
- Sunday evenings at 4pm is in person Bible Study in the Chapel
- Tuesday morning Bible Study 10am in Youth Room and on Zoom.
- Wednesdays 5:30pm Next Gen Ministries (student ministries) K-8th
- Wednesdays 6:00pm Choir practice in Chapel.

December 21st Children's
Ministry presents
"Carol of the Belles"

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24

5:00pm

Worship Service

Sundays 9:30am In Person

Online at www.downsumc.org



SERMON SERIES

"A Thrill of

Hope: Shine On Series"

Studying the book of John



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EMAIL QUESTIONS TO
SWAPROOM@DOWNSUMC.ORG



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Downs, IL 61736

«AddressBlock»



Village Of Downs

Officials & Contacts

Mayor	Mike James	309-830-7374	mayor@Villageofdowns.org
Clerk	Rachel Eagles	541-390-6709	clerk@villageofdowns.org
Public Safety Trustee - Pro Tem	Maureen Roach	309-830-4297	publicsafety@villageofdowns.org
Streets Trustee	Brian Warfel	309-261-0183	streets@villageofdowns.org
Finance Trustee	Sarah Gassaway	309-261-2540	finance@villageofdowns.org
Public Works Trustee	Toby Twyford	309-830-3448	publicworks@villageofdowns.org
Parks Trustee	Stephanie Adkisson	309-212-8345	parks@villageofdowns.org
Building Trustee	Diana Reynolds	309-498-8361	building@villageofdowns.org
Treasurer	Julie Bakewell	309-378-3221	treasurer@villageofdowns.org
Public Works Supervisor	Jill Combs	309-319-1010	pwsuper@villageofdowns.org
Police Chief	Joshua Dingler	309-622-2207	downs.Village.pd@gmail.com
Non-Emergency	MetCom	309-888-5030	
Emergency		911	
GFL Disposal	Customer Service	309-688-0760	
Village Hall		309-378-3221	info@villageofdowns.org
Zoning Enforcement Officer	Lyndall Cuba	309-378-3221	info@villageofdowns.org
Zoning Board of Appeals Chair	Eric Thompson	309-378-3221	info@villageofdowns.org
EMA Director	Travis Misch	309-378-3221	