

SCHOOLS SEEK COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

Funds to operate Highland public schools drastically reduced because of declining enrollment, circuit breaker

There isn't a day that goes by when Highland School Board President Victor Garcia isn't talking to residents about the May 2 referendum proposed to increase funding for the town's six public schools.

"I am proud of our district and the outstanding education our 2,983 students receive each school day," he said.

"Now is the time to invest in our children's education. Not only does it prepare them with the tools they need, that investment helps maintain and grow the values of Highland homes.

"I am appealing to every resident to support our kids and vote 'yes' to the referendum," Garcia said.

There are two important reasons the board took this first-ever step:

- ▶ The School Town has lost \$2.4 million in state support because of declines in enrollment. Indiana districts receive money for every student who attends public school.
- ▶ Highland has lost an additional \$3.2 million as the result of state-mandated changes relative to property taxes, namely the circuit-breaker.

As a result, funds to operate Highland schools have been drastically reduced.

Superintendent Brian Smith said a referendum is one of the only ways to increase funding when state monies fall short.

Locally, 13 of our 16 neighboring districts have sought funding through referenda. There have been 253 attempted in Indiana.

[TAX CALCULATOR]

The School Town of Highland has created a referendum portal on the school website.

It contains an interactive property tax calculator that allows home and business owners to insert their current property tax information to determine how much more an individual will pay beginning in 2024.

To access the calculator:

Visit highland.k12.in.us.

Click on the Referendum tab and then navigate to the Investment Calculator link, which provides directions for accessing your current property tax information.

[COMMUNITY MEETINGS]

Learn more at one of the upcoming school referendum meetings – 6 p.m. **March 22** and 11 a.m. **March 23** – at Lincoln Community Center.

"BEING A POLICE OFFICER ... HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN MY HEART"

In his first days as Highland's new police chief, Ralph Potesta was called on to deal with two injured officers and the shooting of a suspect at Highland Grove.

"It's all part of the job. As police we are called on to react to the moment," said Potesta, who served as Chief of Detectives for Highland for the last 14 years. "I'm happy to report our officers are fine."

Next up is tackling an ongoing issue for

police departments around the country: finding and retaining police candidates who have the temperament to be great officers.

"Born and raised in Highland, being a police officer here has always been in my heart," Potesta said. "I've always wanted to give back to my community."

The Highland Police Department is always looking for qualified candidates. For more information, call the HPD at (219) 838-3184.



[CRIME WATCH]

Join us 6:30 p.m. **March 15** for a Crime Watch meeting in the Community Room at the Highland Police Department, 3315 Ridge Road. Meet our new Police Chief Ralph Potesta. Learn about Highland’s total criminal activity, which is the lowest on record in 54 years.

QUESTIONS? Please email Sgt. Shawn Anderson at sanderson@highland.in.gov or Officer Justin O’Malley at jomalley@highland.in.gov.



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Highland Main Street ramps up activities for community to enjoy around downtown

What began with a Valentine’s Hunt has morphed into a plan to create fun events and new memories downtown centered around seasons and holidays, like Easter and Halloween.

Highland Main Street President Alex Robertson said it’s all about giving the community another reason to explore all downtown has to offer.

“The Restaurant Crawl gave people a wonderful reason to get out for a bit during COVID,” Robertson said. “In our post-COVID world, the crawl remains popular. Our new initiatives are all about engaging our community to get people downtown. The Valentine’s Hunt went well. There were a lot of people who came to Fuzzyline who had never been here before and that’s what we were hoping to achieve – for all of the downtown businesses.”

[MARCH ESSAY CONTEST]

“What Makes Highland Fun to Me?” is the theme students in grades 6-8 have been given along with the opportunity to hone their writing skills and vie for cash prizes! All Highland schools are encouraged to participate. Deadline to submit to your student’s teacher is **March 24**. Essays are limited to four paragraphs/one page.

QUESTIONS? Email Highland Main Street President Alex Robertson at alex@fuzzylinebrewing.com.

[HMS MEETINGS]

Learn more about Highland Main Street at its monthly meetings at 6:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month at Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road.

Community Events Commission welcomes new members, continues to seek volunteers

The commission responsible for hosting Highland’s July 4th Festival, Trunk-or-Treat, Santa March and more has welcomed five new members.

The council unanimously approved the appointments of Jack Rowe, Carol Parker, Maria Armagast, Michelle Coon, Linda Carter and Rachael Carter to the Community Events Commission.

CEC President Jacqui Herrera hopes another dozen volunteers step forward to help out throughout the year.

“We are an organization that relies on the help of others,” Herrera said. “Growing our numbers will make it less stressful for everyone working to make it all happen.”

[BOARDS & COMMISSIONS]

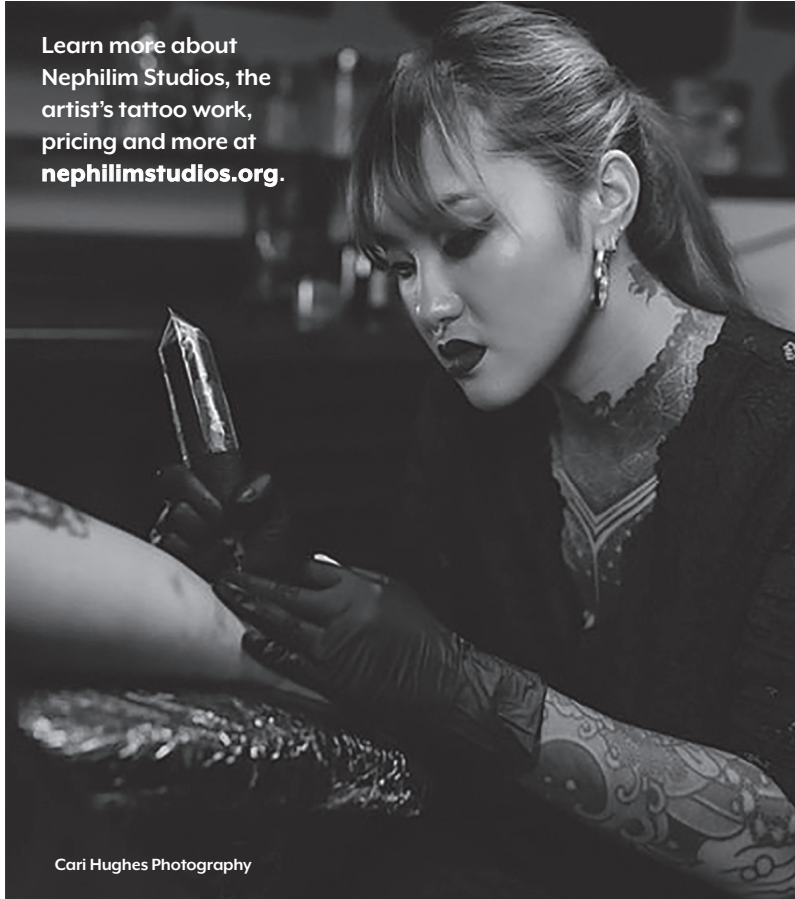
The Highland Town Council is looking for residents eager to serve on a board or commission.

While vacancies occur from time to time, Council President Tom Black said his focus is increasing the number of volunteers on the Community Events Commission.

INTERESTED? Download an application from highland.in.gov and file it with the Clerk- Treasurer’s office – either in person or submitted by mail to the Office of the Clerk- Treasurer, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, IN 46322.



Learn more about Nephilim Studios, the artist's tattoo work, pricing and more at nephilimstudios.org.



Cari Hughes Photography

Tattoo studio opening March 17

A year after purchasing property at 2716 Condit, St. Patrick's Day is the targeted opening of Nephilim Studios, Highland's first tattoo and piercing studio.

For owner Tina Brenda, the business is the realization of a dream.

The lifelong artist and Army veteran, who turned her passion into a career, said the town was invaluable in the process.

"We invested \$500,000 into purchasing and renovating the vintage building," the Griffith resident said. "I can't say enough about everything Highland has done to help us feel welcome. Our neighboring businesses have been great sounding boards as we worked our way through the details of the renovation. We have found in Highland the best place to open this business."

[FOR MORE INFORMATION]

For assistance with available commercial locations in Highland and other business opportunities, call Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra at (219) 972-7598 or email mbecerra@highland.in.gov.

ON THE MENU

[ELKS BLUES & BBQ]

Highland Elks Lodge 981, 3120-45th Street, will host a Blues & BBQ Night **March 10** featuring Funky Mojo Daddy. Menu includes pulled pork, BBQ chicken, coleslaw, mac and cheese as well as beans and bacon. Tickets are \$25. Dinner begins at 6 p.m. Showtime is 7:30 p.m.

INFO: Call (219) 922-8253 for tickets or more information.



[ELKS FISH FRY]

Join Highland Elks Lodge 981 for Lenten Fish Fry Fridays from 4:30-7 p.m. (or when sold out) **March 24** and **April 7** at the lodge, 3120-45th Street. The \$12 dinner includes three fried cod fillets, french fries, coleslaw and hushpuppies. Add six shrimp to your meal for an additional \$5. Beverages and bake sale items will be available for an additional cost.

INFO: Call (219) 922-8253 for more information.



[RESTAURANT CRAWL]

Join us for our popular Restaurant Crawl from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **March 28** in downtown Highland. The concept is simple: 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. Several retail businesses will also be open late so diners can shop in between courses or while waiting for food.

INFO: Visit the Redevelopment Commission on Facebook or highland.in.gov for updates.

[CRAFT SHOW & VENDOR FAIR]

Join us – and the Easter Bunny – for our annual Spring Craft and Vendor Fair. You'll find a variety of items, including: candles, jewelry, clothing, handbags, handmade items, gourmet dips as well as a Bouncy House for the kids.

WHEN: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **March 18**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: Vendor fees are \$43 for 10' X 10' interior space or \$70 for 23' x 6' wall space. Table, chairs and extension cords are not provided.

INFO: highlandparks.org

NEW**[CHALK THE WALK]**

Register with your family or friends to chalk a sidewalk square at Lincoln Community Center. Share your creativity for a chance to win prizes!

WHEN: Drawing starts at 8 a.m.

March 18. Judging begins at 4 p.m.

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$10 per 4'x4' square. Artists encouraged to bring their own chalk.

INFO: highlandparks.org

[MOMMY & SON PAINT]

Moms, grandmas, aunts and their favorite boys – ages 8+ – can enjoy a fun night of painting together.

WHEN: 6-8 p.m. **March 20**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$35 | \$40 per couple and \$17.50 | \$20 each additional son.

INFO: highlandparks.org

[SUPER SMASH BROS]

This tourney – ages 7-12 – consists of round robin pool play, followed by a double-elimination bracket. Only top finishers will be eligible for the bracket. Trophy/prize to winner.

WHEN: 6-9 p.m. **March 31**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$12 residents | \$15 nonresidents

INFO: highlandparks.org

**BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY**

Join the Easter Bunny and his furry friends for a continental breakfast. The event features a bike drawing, basket raffles and photos with the bunny.

WHEN: 8:30-11 a.m. **March 25** – first seating is 8:30-9:30 a.m., second seating is 10-11 a.m.

WHERE: Highland High School cafeteria

TICKETS: Purchase \$5 tickets online at hgchamber.org.

Click on the Upcoming Events tab and navigate to the March calendar. Tickets are first-come, first-served.

INFO: Call (219)923-3666.

EASTER EGG HUNT

Grab your basket and head to Wicker Park for the annual North Township Easter Egg Hunt. Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to hunt for filled eggs until the last egg is found! DJ music and a visit from the Easter Bunny will be part of the day's activities.

WHEN: 10:30 a.m. **April 2**

WHERE: Wicker Park Pavilion

INFO: Call (219) 313-3934.

**[COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT]**

Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's annual spring concert.

WHEN: 7-9 p.m. Thursday, **March 16**

WHERE: Highland High School Monbeck Auditorium

ADMISSION: Free

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.

[MIDWEEK MUSIC & MARKET]

Parks and Recreation is seeking vendors of ready-to-eat food, fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, breads, spices, coffees, soaps and so much more. The Midweek Music & Market – which features live music, local food as well as games and kids crafts – is held on the second Wednesday of the month May through September.

WHEN: 4-8 p.m. **May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9 and September 13.**

WHERE: Main Square Park

VENDOR FEES: Vendor or booth space is \$105 for the season, which is five weeks (Add \$25 for electricity) or \$26 per week (Add \$7 for electricity). Tables, chairs and extension chords are not provided.

INFO: highlandparks.org

[COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE]

Do you have items you would like to resell, but don't want to invite people into your home to show your products? Rent a booth space at one of our garage sales!

WHEN: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **March 11**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: Vendor fees are \$36 for 10' X 10' interior space or \$58 for 23' x 6' wall space. Table, chairs and extension cords are not provided.

INFO: highlandparks.org