

# Village of Mokena, Illinois Newsletter

*Mokena e-News*

July 2, 2020

## Freedom's Stream

To be clear, planning a celebration of our nation's independence this year has been a challenge.

Nonetheless, as you'll read in the article below, Mokena will not be closed for the holiday, as Village elected officials, staff, and Ozinga Bros., Inc. have together stepped up with a creative way to fill the void.

Thanks to hard work, coordination of local talent, and the wonder of modern technology, you'll be able to enjoy every detail of Saturday evening's fireworks--including a music soundtrack--from the safety of your own home or car. Simply go to [www.mokena.org](http://www.mokena.org) and jump on the live stream.

Happy 4th of July!

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## Let There be Fireworks!

Plans for Mokena's annual 4th of July fireworks have finally come together.

After debating how to best stage the celebration in a manner compliant with the Governor's COVID-19-related executive orders regarding social distancing and public gatherings, your Mokena Village Board last week selected a new location for the 2020 event, with the goal of providing maximum "bang for the buck" while abiding by applicable guidelines.

The site for this year's fireworks display is on Ozinga Bros. property located northeast of the intersection of LaGrange Road and 191st Street. The show will take place this Saturday, July 4, at approximately 9 p.m. The launch location, which has been used in years past for the fireworks, will offer the majority of the residents of Mokena the opportunity to view the display from the safety of their own front porch or back deck.

The Village is additionally making a limited number of nearby "socially distanced" parking spaces at the Hickory Creek Metra lot available to Mokena residents for drive-in viewing. Access to these spaces will be restricted to drivers of vehicles able to present a valid Illinois driver's license validating their status as a Mokena resident.

Gates to the lot will open at 7 p.m., with any remaining available slots opened to non-resident members of the public after 8:30. Other gathering at the display site is strongly discouraged, and the Village will require that all viewers hold to the social distancing guidelines in place on July 4.

For those residents that don't want to miss a single detail of the show, the Village is additionally working with Mokena-based Sound Works Productions to provide a live stream of the event that viewers throughout the community (and beyond) can tune into via their personal laptops, mobile

devices, or other digital media. The link for live stream viewing of the show will be available Saturday on the Village's website, [www.mokena.org](http://www.mokena.org).

As always, conducting a fireworks celebration is dependent on the weather. If a weather event occurs which could cause the show to be canceled or postponed, the Village will provide that information to the public via its "Community Alerts" mass notification system (sign-up for alerts is available at [www.mokena.org](http://www.mokena.org)).

Have questions regarding the 4th of July fireworks? Call the Village Hall at (708) 479-3900.

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## **Board Adopts Budget**

Your Mokena Village Board recently adopted the Village's fiscal year 2021 budget. Action came at the Board's June 22 meeting following a public hearing and in-depth budget presentation by Village Administrator John Tomaszki.

The budget includes overall revenues of \$24.7 million and expenditures of \$33.4 million, with the substantial gap between revenues and expenditures attributable to the anticipated expenditure in fiscal year 2021 of capital outlay monies escrowed in past years for necessary and planned upgrades to the Village's wastewater treatment plant.

The budget further reflects significant adjustments made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it settled in earlier this year. Notably, over \$630K in budgeted expenditures are being delayed until impacts from the pandemic are more clearly known. The budget does contain funding for Board public safety priorities, however, including a police officer position (not previously filled during fiscal year 2020 due to COVID-19) and an automated license plate reader system covering many entrance and exit points into and out of the community.

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## **New Trees Need Patience, Attention**

Much like a young child, that new tree planted in your parkway needs a lot of patience and attention.

Phil Graf of Great Lakes Urban Forestry Management says patience is key when getting newly planted trees established. Shortly after planting, a tree can become partially--or even fully--defoliated due to transplant shock. Graf advises residents to be patient and let the tree attempt to leaf out again on its own. You can help during this transition period by properly watering the tree following the instructions provided in the Village's "Tips for New Trees" publication, which is available via a link at the bottom of this article.

If you have limited time, Graf suggests investing in a slow-release drip irrigation watering bag. Simply fill the bag once a week and let it drip irrigate the tree.

If it ultimately becomes apparent that a newly planted tree is not going to survive, Graf cautions that now is not the time to replace it. The hot and dry conditions typically encountered in July and August--and sometimes in early September as well--are not conducive to a successful replacement planting. Moreover, good available nursery stock for replacements is often lacking during this period of time. Graf advises that the best available window for the tree to be replaced

is during the cooler, more favorable months of October or November, and in some cases, next spring.

You can report any dead trees to the Village by calling (708) 479-3900. Upon documentation by Village staff, these trees will be replaced later this year or next spring, depending on demand and availability of quality nursery stock.

### [Tips for New Trees](#)

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## **Slight Rise in Water Rate**

Your Mokena Village Board approved an ordinance June 22 amending the Village's water rate for the 2021 fiscal year.

The rate is made up of a City of Chicago rate for treating and delivering water to Oak Lawn, an Oak Lawn rate for delivering water to Mokena and four other "downstream" communities, a Tinley Park rate for delivering water to Mokena and New Lenox, and a local community rate for delivering water directly to Mokena residents and businesses.

An \$0.11/1,000 gallons adjustment in the 2021 fiscal year was agreed to by the Board. As a result, the Village's water rate increased yesterday from \$7.62/1,000 gallons to \$7.73/1,000 gallons (billable in August, 2020).

None of the fee adjustment is attributable to the local Mokena community rate portion of your monthly bill, which remains the same.

For budgeting purposes, the \$0.11/1,000 gallons adjustment will increase monthly water bills by approximately 88 cents for the average Mokena household using 8,000 gallons a month.

Sewer utility rates remain unchanged.

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## **Mayor Appoints Management Staff, Commission Members**

At the Village of Mokena Board of Trustees' June 22 meeting, Mayor Frank Fleischer formally appointed key Village management staff and commission members for fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021). All appointments were unanimously ratified by the Village Board.

A limited number of membership slots remain open on various Village commissions and committees. Interested in applying to become a member of one? Simply click on the link below for access to a "Volunteer Opportunities" form.

### [Volunteer Opportunities Form](#)

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## **DCEO Offering Business Interruption Grants (BIG)**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) recently announced it is offering \$60 million in grants to businesses experiencing losses or business interruption as a result of COVID-19 related closures.

The BIG Program is available for up to 3,500 businesses, and DCEO will begin distributing funds to qualifying businesses in mid-July. Specifically, the program includes support for the following:

- **Bars and restaurants.** \$20 million in funding has been allocated for bars and restaurants unable to offer outside (al fresco) service. At least 1,000 grants of up to \$20,000 each will be made. Grants are for businesses with \$80,000 to \$3 million in annual revenue.
- **Barbershops and salons.** 1,000 grants of \$10,000 each will be made to barbershops and salons (total of \$10 million). Grants are for businesses with \$80,000 to \$500,000 in annual revenue.
- **Gyms and fitness centers.** \$10 million has been earmarked for gyms and fitness centers that have lost significant revenue due to COVID-19. 500 grants of \$20,000 each are being offered. Grants are for businesses with \$80,000 to \$2 million in annual revenue.
- **Businesses in disproportionate impacted areas (DIAs).** Although not applicable to Mokena businesses, an additional \$20 million is available for businesses that have recently experienced significant property damage.

Applications for the above grants will be accepted through Tuesday, July 7, at 5 p.m. To get in the game, simply [click here](#) to access an application.

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## Home Fireworks: A Reminder

As we near the 4th of July, please be reminded that the sale, possession, or use of home fireworks is prohibited by State statute and by Village ordinance. Residents found to be in violation by the Mokena Police Department may be subject to citation and a fine of \$150 for the first offense, or to a Class A Misdemeanor arrest carrying a penalty which includes a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or incarceration for up to one year.

As in past years, we encourage you to celebrate our great nation's freedom, but to do so in a smart and safe manner.

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## Village Hall Closed Friday, July 3

The Mokena Village Hall, 11004 Carpenter, will be closed Friday, July 3, for the Independence Day holiday.

Normal operating hours will resume Monday, July 6.