



# UPDATE

## MESSAGE From Mayor André F. Harvey

For each of us, the start of the new year always offers an opportunity to look forward with enthusiasm and a chance to recap the previous year with a sense of accomplishment. Throughout the Bellwood community, we have much to be thankful for and proud of in every aspect of our village.

In the important area of economic development, the new year comes in with real-time progress as the Bellwood Gateway project is moving along on St. Charles Road. We are confident that these two new mixed use buildings on 27th and 28th streets will be transformative for the village. The development is a north star for Bellwood and one of many upcoming economic development projects that will benefit everyone who lives, works and plays in town.

On a solemn note, I want to share my condolences and support, and the same from everyone in the village, to the families, friends and admirers of two respected and impactful community leaders who recently passed away.

On another solemn note, the late Bishop Dr. Claude Porter, founder of Proviso Missionary Baptist Church, was a moving force as he built the Proviso Leyden Council for Community Action Inc., commonly known as PLCCA, into a powerhouse entity that offered more than 30 programs for families, including mentorship for our youth and housing resources for families, among many other efforts. I respected Bishop Porter as a man of faith, compassion and action. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made to PLCCA.

I also send prayers and support to the family,

*(Mayor's Message continued on next page)*

## Children, Families Flock To Breakfast With Santa



Bellwood's annual Breakfast With Santa event on Dec. 6 at the Best Western Plus in Hillside was its usual hit, what with 300 guests of different ages coming together to enjoy the holiday season, greet St. Nick and enjoy all the fun that comes with the season.

Highlighted by a buffet breakfast featuring a variety of options, the festive décor and cheerful music created a warm and welcoming holiday atmosphere. The Grinch made a surprise appearance, playfully causing mischief and adding laughter and excitement. The children were captivated by the magic of a magician.



During the program, Bellwood Mayor André F. Harvey reminded residents of the importance of cherishing time with family, creating lasting memories during the holiday season, and prioritizing safety while celebrating.

### IMPORTANT BELLWOOD NUMBERS

Village Hall  
(708) 547-3500

Police/Fire/Ambulance  
Emergency  
911

Police (non emergency)  
(708) 547-3528

Police Anonymous Hotline  
(708) 547-3500  
Ext 1301

Fire (non emergency)  
(708) 547-3525

Water Bill (Billing  
Questions)  
(708) 547-3520

Building Department  
(708) 547-3545

Public Works Department  
(708) 547-3540

Community Service  
(708) 649-3060

Human Resources  
(708) 547-3500

TDD (hearing impaired)  
(708) 547-0011

## Bellwood Residents: Exercise Your Right To Vote!



The primary election is Tuesday, March 17. Here are several important dates you should know:

**February 5** – First day to vote early or by mail. Check with your election authority for details.

**February 17** – Last day for regular (paper) voter registration.

**February 18** – First day of grace period for in-person voter registration and voting at election authority and early voting sites; continues through Election Day.

**March 1** – Last day for online voter registration. Grace period for in-person voter registration continues at election authority and early voting sites.

**March 12** – Last day for election authority to receive vote by mail applications. **Mail ballots must be postmarked no later than March 15.**

**March 17** – Election Day. Polls open from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m. You must vote at your in-precinct polling place.

*(Mayor's Message continued)*

friends and supporters of the respected Ernie Baumann, and especially to his widow Lois as they built the Maywood Fine Arts into a premier cultural and arts education nonprofit. Ernie was truly a pillar of and partner to the Maywood community.

Through Mr. Ernie's Flip, Flop & Fly and Stairway to the Stars, they taught, inspired and mentored generations of young people as they opened doors to creativity, confidence, and opportunity. Ernie was a tumbling instructor, entrepreneur, and community builder whose five-decade mission helped shape the lives of thousands of children in the western suburbs. Ernie and Lois founded Maywood Fine Arts in 1967, and today it serves thousands of children each week and has produced multiple generations of alumni working across the arts, education, and entertainment industries. We honor Ernie's commitment and compassion.

## Bellwood Hosts Christmas Food Giveaways

Each year it is heartwarming to see the smiles on the faces of seniors in Bellwood as Mayor André F. Harvey and the Bellwood staff delivered turkeys and Christmas trimmings to grateful seniors and residents around town.



This year, 60 residents received Christmas trimmings and more than 200 seniors who live in the three senior buildings in Bellwood received turkeys and Christmas trimmings. Residents expressed their appreciation and some dressed up to take a photo with Mayor Harvey. Many shared their gratitude for the village's support during the holiday season, particularly in light of the economic challenges felt nationwide.



## Local Youth Excited To “Shop With A Cop”

The holidays came early for 11 Bellwood families and 16 youth as they selected toys and other goodies on Dec. 13 at the “Shop With A Cop” event

supported by Bellwood Police Chief Jiminez Allen, Mayor André F. Harvey and officers in the Bellwood Police Department.



Bellwood officers were among the police officers from Hillside, Westchester, Maywood and Melrose Park who escorted the excited youth to shop at the Super Target in Hillside. Police personnel from the Northlake Police Department provided a drone to capture footage. Bellwood Mayor André F. Harvey, Maywood Mayor Nathaniel Booker and Westchester Mayor Greg Hribal also showed up to support. Thanks also go to Cement Mason, Richards Graphics, G.J. Nikolas Co., Lions Club, Ferrera Candy, Douglas Press, Miceys and Borg Warner for their support to put smiles on youths’ faces and to support their families.



## Bellwood Police Brighten Holiday With Gifts to Children

During the holiday season, the Bellwood Police Department stepped up to provide gifts to local children that was made possible through generous donations from Bellwood employees.

In addition to the Police Department, many other village employees contributed as they have in the past to help bring joy to children in the community. Special thanks go to Angel Stewart for coordinating the meaningful and heartwarming effort.



### Early Voting Schedule at Bellwood Village Hall

Bellwood residents can vote early at the Village Hall according to the following schedule:

- Monday, March 2 – Friday, March 6; 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Monday, March 9 – Friday, March 13; 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Saturday, March 7 and March 14; 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Sunday, March 8 and March 15; 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

## What You Should Know: New Laws in 2026

There were numerous new laws that came into effect in Illinois at the start of the new year. Here are several that Bellwood residents and business owners should know:

### Public Safety & Crime

- **Gun Storage:** Safe Gun Storage Act updated to require firearms be stored away from anyone under 18 and at-risk individuals (those deemed a danger to themselves or others).
- **Missing Persons:** SB 24 ends waiting periods for filing missing persons reports.
- **Child Protection:** Strengthened background checks for childcare workers and penalties for child sexual abuse materials.
- **K-9 Support:** Medical care support for retired police K-9s established.
- **Squatters:** Easier process for property owners to remove squatters.

### Health & Consumer Rights

- **Grocery Tax:** Statewide 1% grocery tax eliminated, although some municipalities reimposed it.
- **Reproductive Health:** Colleges must provide access to contraception/abortion services.
- **Digital Rights:** Protection against misuse of digital replicas and likenesses.
- **Domestic Violence:** Statewide hotline established, plus transportation vouchers for survivors.

### Employment & Training

- **Law Enforcement:** New training on trauma-informed care and CPR guidance for dispatchers.
- **ODRISA:** Employers must provide 24 hours rest in seven days and meal breaks (effective Aug 1, 2025, but impacts 2026).




**MAYOR ANDRÉ F. HARVEY INVITES YOU!**

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

**SATURDAY  
FEB 28, 2026  
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
Roosevelt Middle School  
2500 Oak St.**

**“A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATIONS”**

Join us as we mark 100 years since the first Black History Week in 1926 and explore the significance of this national observance. We will celebrate the legacy of recognizing Black history and its impact on American culture and beyond.

**SHOPPING NETWORKING ENTERTAINMENT & FOOD**

We invite small businesses and youth entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their merchandise.

Mayor Harvey and the Board of Trustees celebrate small businesses and youth entrepreneurs by providing vendor and pop-up opportunities throughout the year.

Interested in participating as a vendor? Scan the QR code. Questions? Call Debora Jenkins at (708) 547-3500 Ext. 1514.




## JANUARY CALENDAR

- |     |                                   |    |  |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|--|
| 1*  | New Year's Day<br>Kwanzaa Ends    | 21 | Village Board Meeting, 6 p.m.  |
| 12  | Committee of the Whole, 3:30 p.m. | 31 | 2026-27 Vehicle Stickers * & Animal Tags on Sale<br>2026-27 Business License on Sale |
| 19* | Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day    |    | *Village Hall will be closed.  |

