



Welcome to the 2026 State of the Village! Thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak with you tonight. It is a pleasure to be here once again sharing this past years accomplishments and the exciting things planned for the year ahead.

Before we begin, I would like to thank the Village's Parks, Public Works and Administration employees for their help in preparing for the event and to Amy and Denny Norton and their team at the Cullom Knoll Restaurant for preparing our dinner tonight. Amy has always been a great supporter of the Village contributing much through her Johnsburg business, Sunnyside Tavern.



I would also like to extend special thanks to the Johnsburg Community Club for the use of this historic facility and to Club Manager Clark Bierman for his help in preparing for this event. Let's please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance

Some of tonight's presentation is going to reflect on the history of our community, and the Johnsburg Community Club and its members have played a major role in shaping the Johnsburg we know today. My good friend John Huemann always told me that you can't know where your going if you don't know where you came from.

When you think of the Johnsburg Community Club, you likely think of the annual Saufen und Spiel festivities that take place in September each year, but the Club and it's members have been responsible for many important achievements over the years.

The Club was founded in 1922 as a civic organization with service to the community being its main focus. During the Depression, members distributed food baskets to those in need. They also sent small stipends to Johnsburg servicemen during World War II.

The Club was instrumental in getting the first cement road through town and obtaining the first polling place in Johnsburg.



In 1938, Club members lobbied for the funds to replace the old wooden bridge across the Fox River and were successful in getting \$150,000 for the project.

In 1940, they rallied behind a Road Bond issue which successfully passed with overwhelming support. By 1953, the Johnsburg Community Club Memorial Hall that we are sitting in today was constructed. Members raised funds for the project by selling building bonds, which were readily purchased by residents.

Despite previous attempts to incorporate, in 1990 Johnsburg was still unincorporated and members of the Club were concerned about protecting the community's identity, so they again analyzed options and concluded that annexing into neighboring Sunnyside would be the best option. Following a lot of hard work soliciting signatures in support of the initiative, the annexation successfully passed in November of 1991. That achievement would forever change our community.

I thank all of the Johnsburg Community Club and Johnsburg Community Men's Club members, both past and present, for their generous contributions and commitment over the years. Several of you are here tonight. Would the members please stand.

Theme



For those of you that regularly attend this event, you know that my presentations are developed around a specific theme that relates to topics and events significant in our community. When reflecting on this past year, one word kept coming to mind and that word is “Change”

We all know that change is inevitable and initially we may be inclined to resist it, but when we learn to embrace change, we quickly realize the new opportunities that it brings. Over the years we’ve experienced a lot change and how we managed those changes shaped us both individually and as a community.



Despite all of the changes we encounter, one thing remains constant in our community – volunteerism. Johnsbury is blessed with many hardworking men and women who contribute their time serving to make great things possible. They coordinate and sponsor events that raise money to help those in need, and contribute towards improvements in our community. Some of them serve on our committees helping to guide our future.

But volunteerism is nothing new to Johnsbury. It dates back to 1841 when the first settlers came to the area. They worked together to help one another make a home in a new and foreign land. That selfless attitude continues on through the efforts of our local organizations such as the Johnsbury Community Club, Johnsbury Community Men's Club, Johnsbury Lions Club, the Johnsbury Cart Club and the many Village committees through which our citizens serve. People may come and go, but the dedication exhibited by our citizens has not changed.

I'd like to recognize all of our dedicated volunteers. If you volunteer through a local organization or serve on a committee, please stand.



Our dedicated employees and contracted personnel also play a crucial part in how we manage change. We are blessed to have so many driven and innovative people on our team that have served us for many years - but even that changes.

More recently, we began to experience the inevitable retirements that affect every organization. Although we are saddened by those departures, we adapt and move forward, welcoming new members to our team. They have big shoes to fill, but I have confidence in their ability to succeed.

Several of our employees and contracted personnel are here this evening. Could you please stand and be recognized.

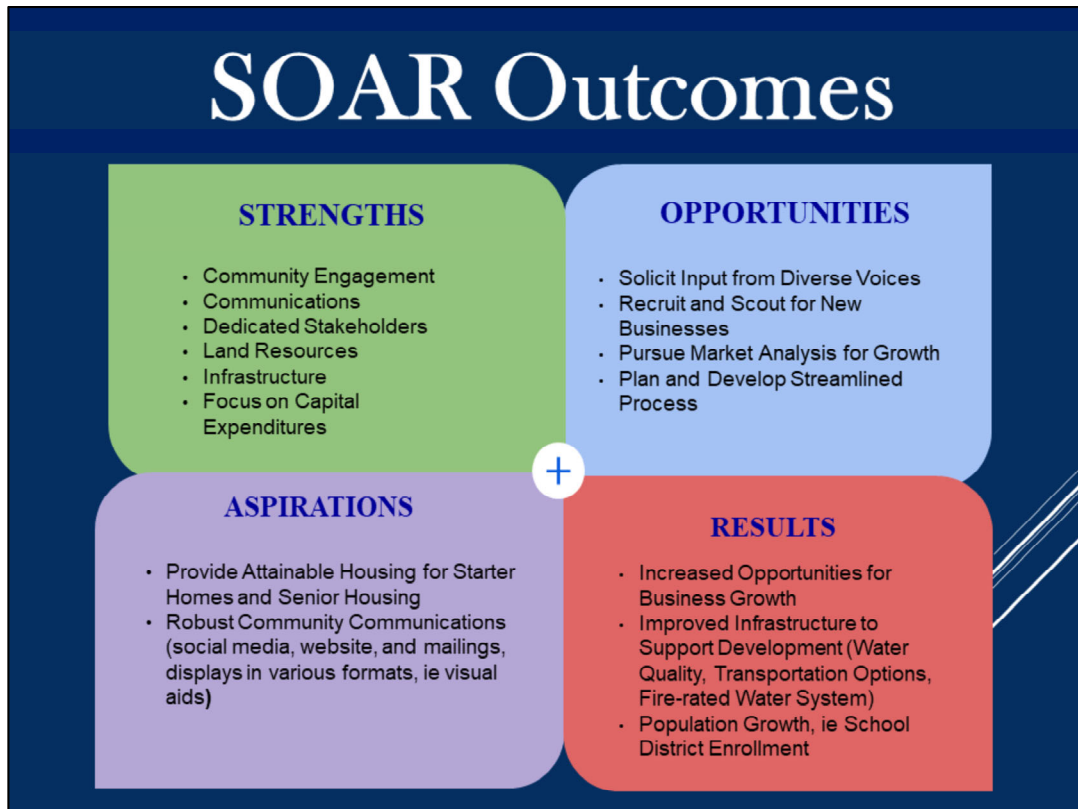
These individuals are members of our A Team. They make exceptional things happen and contribute greatly to our successes. I am grateful to all of our employees.



I would like to take a moment to introduce our Board of Trustees. If you could please stand as I call your name Mike Fouke, Josh Hagen, Scott Letzter, Jamie Morris, James Sylvanus and Keith Von Allmen. As a Board we oftentimes have to make difficult decisions and we don't always agree, but focusing on what's best for our community helps to point us in the right direction.



Planning is the best way to prepare for change. Historically, the Village has made planning a top priority by developing Comprehensive and fiscal plans and policies, and holding Strategic Planning Sessions. This past March we held our 7th Strategic Planning Session here at the Johnsburg Community Club. At that session, we spent some time reviewing key points in history and how they influenced the goals and priorities established at previous Strategic Planning Sessions.



During the Strategic Planning Session held in March this year, a SOAR analysis was performed which focuses on Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results

At the close of the session, attendees prioritized the input provided and this slide reflects the results at the conclusion of the session. The Board will soon meet to develop action items and set funding priorities tied to the outcomes from the session.

Strategic Planning Sessions have been instrumental in how our community has evolved for more than 30 years and they have been instrumental in helping us adapt to change.

Dr. Frannie Glosson facilitated the last 3 strategic planning sessions and she is here tonight. Dr. Glosson, please stand up. Thank you for your help in planning for change



Last week the Board sat for the annual budget presentation during which a review was conducted of the past year's Capital Projects and Accomplishments.

Fiscal year 2026 was a busy year and I would like to share our achievements with you.

Aquatic Restoration



Progress continued on the Dutch Creek Bay Aquatic Restoration Project. Last year, the Village Board approved an agreement with the US Army Corp of Engineers to proceed with the Restoration Study. The study, which will identify the improvements needed to clean up and restore the Bay's ecosystem, will be completed next year.



At the last State of the Village, I reported that the Board had awarded a bid to redesign the Village’s website. Last summer we went live with the new site which is full of information and easy to use. We also implemented Constant Contact as our platform to send out e-blasts and have received many compliments about the new format from our subscribers.

Community Policing



Policing today is about more than crime. This past year the Johnsborg Police Department continued to implement new initiatives and programs to promote safety. In the spring of 2025 the Department launched an Autism Awareness initiative and implemented the Blue Envelop Program. The program intends to aid communications with autistic motorists by reducing the anxiety they may feel when in contact with law enforcement. This summer, the Department will host the first ever Juvenile Citizens Police Academy aimed at educating our community's youth and sparking an interest in other programs.

Last Summer, Chief Greenwald secured a Powering Safe Communities Grant through Com Ed and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. The grant was used to install new state of the art radar units in both of our schools zones providing a reminder to slow down and be watchful of young pedestrians in the area.



Investing in our infrastructure is of great importance and despite the rising costs, we are committed to insuring that our infrastructure will last well into the future by placing a high priority on maintenance and upkeep

In addition to all of the maintenance and replacement work carried out by our small but mighty Public Works Department, last year we experienced an abundance of road projects. It seemed that you could not drive anywhere in Johnsborg without encountering road construction.

Johnsborg Road was resurfaced. The project, which was supported by a \$1.5 million grant, included increased pavement thickness to extend the life of this heavily traveled road.

The Village also embarked on a significant road resurfacing program in 2025 covering 4 neighborhoods and more than 3 miles of road. This year we are again resurfacing more than 3 miles of road and preparing for the resurfacing of Ringwood Road in 2027 which is also supported by a \$1.5 million grant.



Thanks to a generous donation made by the Johnsburg Lions Club, improvements proceeded at Lions Park last year. With the Club's initial \$25,000 donation, we treated the pond and constructed a shelter and parking lot. This year, we will be extending electric service to the site and installing an aerator in the pond.

Thank you to the Johnsburg Lions Club for your generous contribution and consent to donate an additional \$20,000 this year. Would the members of the Johnsburg Lion's Club members here tonight please stand.

Mark your calendar for this year's Annual Fishing Derby event which will take place June 20th at Lion's Park. Additional information about the event is available on the Village's website or by calling the Village Hall.

Sunnyside Park



To accommodate the expansion of our municipal facility, the volleyball courts previously located at Sunnyside Park had to be removed. This year our parks and public works team reestablished the courts and prepared the park for pickleball courts that were donated to the Village. The pickleball courts were installed last year and have been an enormous hit. That same donor provided the funding for the new play ground equipment that opened for play this week.

A half/court basketball court and swings will be installed in the pocket park in Remington Grove Phase I. We are also working with the builder, Lennar Homes, on plans for another park in Phase II of Remington Grove.



In addition to the ongoing tree removal, maintenance and cleanup being performed by our parks and facilities team, new T-markers were installed at the Chapel Hill Golf Course last year, the cost of which is supported by Johnsburg business stakeholders through a sponsorship program

Thanks to favorable weather conditions, GolfVisions reported another successful season last year resulting in shared profits to the Village. Those shared profits are being reinvested in the golf course. This year we will replace the roof on the 19th hole and the entry sign at Chapel Hill Road.

Plans are still underway to construct a shelter at the course to accommodate golf outings and other events and thanks to the courses ongoing success, that goal is rapidly becoming within reach.



Each year recreational travel by golf carts and other non-highway vehicles continues to grow throughout our community. What started in 2014 with 18 registered vehicles has grown to nearly 600.

The program has quickly become self-supporting. Between generous donations received from the golf cart community and revenues derived from registrations, we pursued two major path improvements last year. We placed gravel along the entire path connecting Sunnyside Park to Valmar Center which has greatly improved its aesthetic appeal.

We also improved east/west travel with a path connecting Spring Grove Road to Grandview Avenue. I want to thank the Johnsborg School District Board who authorized use of the District's land for the path and the McHenry County Division of Transportation for their assistance and cooperation in authorizing the necessary permits for the path's crossing of Spring Grove Road. This year we will work to secure additional easements on which we can extend our path network.



The Wednesday night Johnsburg Food Truck event continues to be a great success and has returned again this year. The event, which takes place on the first Wednesday evening of each month, was spearheaded by Village residents Dave and Linda Winiarski with the help of Village staff and the Community Affairs Committee. If you haven't been to the event yet, you are missing a great opportunity to get together with friends and neighbors to enjoy good times, great food and live entertainment. Dave and Linda are here tonight. Can you please stand. Thank you for all of your efforts to make this a successful event.

Farmer's Market



The Markets of Remington Farm Farmer's Market returned again in May for another season. On the first Saturday of each month May through October, local vendors get together next to Prem Magnetics in downtown Johnsburg to share everything from fresh produce and seedlings to honey, jewelry and other locally sourced goods. I would like to thank Trustee Josh Hagen and his wife Sarah for bringing this event back for another successful year. Josh and Sarah please stand.



In the fall of 2023, I had the pleasure of swearing in Jason Greenwald as our new Chief of Police. Since taking on the position, Jason has worked diligently to plan for the department's future. Last year, he recommended implementing an alternative command structure as a succession planning measure for the department. Last fall, the Village swore in Robert Salazar as the department's first Commander. Commander Salazar has been a great addition to our team.

Retirements have affected our police department and we've had a number of new officers join our team over the past couple of years. The most recent of which, Tim Auberts, is pictured on this slide with Chief Greenwald and Commander Salazar attending his graduation ceremony from the academy in April. We are fortunate to have an excellent group of hardworking men and women who serve and protect our community.

I look forward to working with Jason for many year's to come while he leads our growing police department, but I am pleased that we are taking a proactive approach to planning for the department's future.



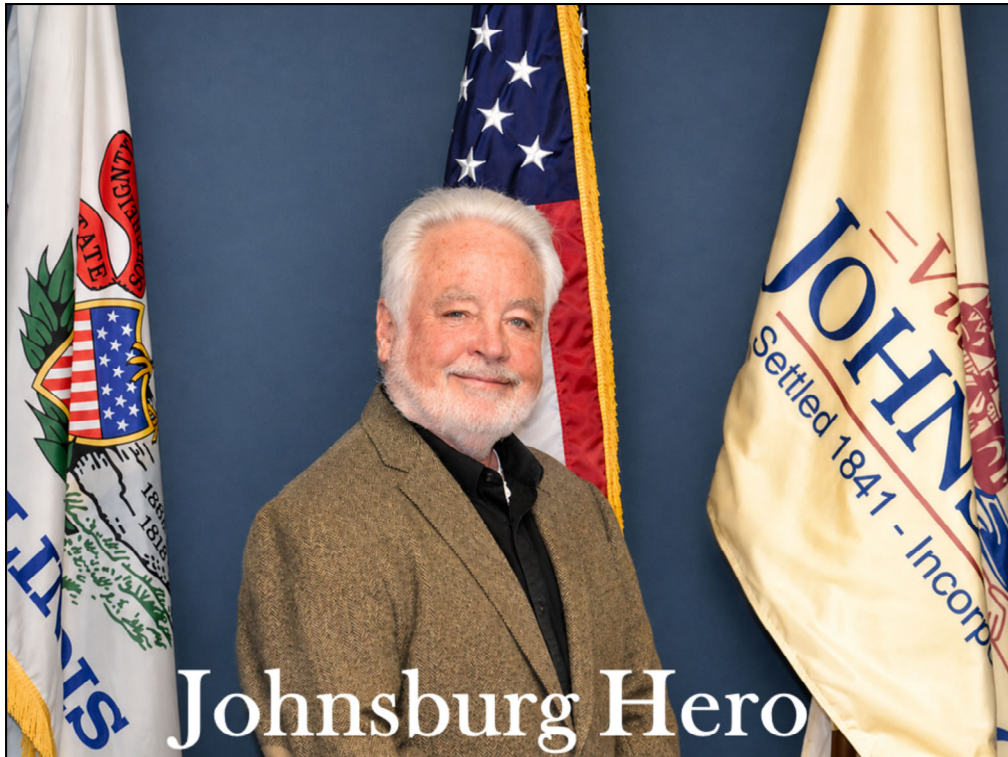
Johnsburg became home to some new restaurants this past year. Jon Brudzinski and his wife Izabela Halat and neighbors Diane Walsh and Mike Bruski opened Bru Crew Bar and Grill in October last year. The restaurant, which is located on Bald Knob Road at the former Backyard Bar and Marina location, has been a huge hit with both the local residents and boaters looking for a great place to stop and grab a bite to eat and a cool beverage. Bru Crew which was opened daily for lunch and dinner, is now offering breakfast on weekends. Stop in and enjoy a great meal on the patio.



Another new restaurant, Catch 22 Tap and Grill, just opened in February this year and has quickly become a popular dining destination in town. Owners Gary and Melissa Johnson leased the former Mary's Hideaway location in the Valmar Center and undertook extensive renovations to transform the space into their new restaurant. Today, Catch 22 offers a diverse menu featuring a variety of seafood dishes, as well as burgers, salads, wraps, and a fun selection for kids.

Gary and Melissa are out of town and unable to attend tonight, but their manager Kristi Rasmussen, is in attendance. Kristi can you please stand.

Catch 22 did a fantastic job catering lunch for our strategic planning session. The food received rave reviews from everyone. If you haven't checked out Catch 22 yet, make it a priority to stop in—you won't be disappointed.



Each year at this event, I take a moment to recognize people who have gone above and beyond in support of and in service to our community. This year I would like to recognize Kevin McEvoy as our Johnsburg Hero. Sadly Kevin recently passed away and is not here to personally receive the recognition he so richly deserves.

Kevin was born in Quebec Canada and later moved to the United States. After graduating from high school from Christian Academy in Albany New York in 1973, he moved back to the area where he met his wife Jill. Kevin and Jill chose to make Johnsburg their home and raised their two children, Kathrine and Joseph here. They were later blessed with four grandchildren, Maggie, Milo, Toby and Dolly with whom they enjoyed spending time boating on the Chain of Lakes

Kevin retired from Com Ed and Exelon after a long and distinguished career. In addition to his professional career, Kevin was a volunteer firefighter with the McHenry Township Fire Protection District and donated his time to F.I.S.H. He also served the Village as a member of the Public Works Committee for 7 years and went on to serve as Village Trustee and Chairman of the Public Works Committee for 10 more years, retiring in 2021.



I am honored to recognize Kevin as our Johnsburg Hero this year. Kevin was a dear friend to me and will be greatly missed by many.

The McEvoy family is here tonight to accept this honor on behalf of Kevin. Jill, if you and your family could please join me at the podium.



We have many long awaited developments that are about to become reality in the near future. In addition to all of the projects and improvements I discussed tonight, I'm ecstatic to share some exciting news.



At last week's board meeting, the Village Board unanimously approved development plans to accommodate a new Target Store at the Shops at Fox River development. The store will be located in the former JC Penney building which will be expanded to house the 131,000 square foot store scheduled to open in March of 2028. Target will be purchasing the property and is expected to close in November this year and immediately begin construction. This effort has been years in the making and I would like to thank Village Administrator Claudett Sofiakis and Special Projects Coordinator Rick Quinn for helping to make this goal a reality.

Belle Tire



Another new business coming to the Route 31 corridor is Belle Tire. The regional tire and auto service chain is known for providing comprehensive vehicle maintenance services. They will be located at the intersection of Route 31 and Running Brook Farms Boulevard. Watch for more information about their new facility in the near future.



I'm excited to announce that ArrivaDeli & Market will be opening later this month in the former Angelo's Market store. Owners David and Christina DeMarco have been diligently working over the past several months on a major interior renovation as well as an exterior facelift in preparation for the opening. The store, with an Italian inspired deli theme, promises to offer specialty groceries, everyday essentials and handcrafted sandwiches, salads, and soups.

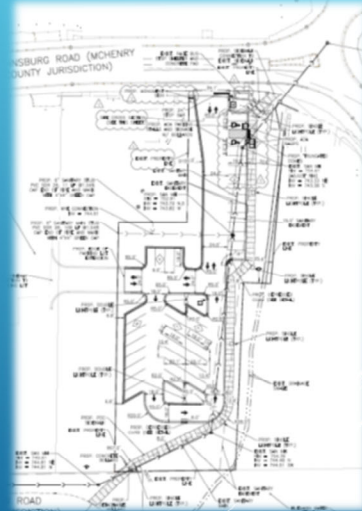
We had an opportunity to experience some of the market's offerings during our strategic planning session at which David and Christina provided breakfast and samplings of their delicious bakery goods. Watch for more information regarding the opening of this unique new venue in Johnsburg and make a point of stopping in. I promise you won't be disappointed.

David and Christina are here tonight. Can you please stand.



A new dining opportunity is about to open in Johnsburg later this summer. We've all been watching the activity taking place by the roundabout over the past couple years at the former Hettermann's Johnsburg Tavern. Chris (Vee-O) purchased the property in June of 2023 and has been steadily working to renovate the facility for his new restaurant, Toph's Bar and Grill. The project came with a lot of challenges but Chris has done a tremendous job overcoming the hurdles and is excited to be nearing completion. Toph's Bar and Grill will offer an exciting menu with modern heritage European meal choices and tasty beverages and desserts. Watch for the restaurant's grand opening in the near future.

Downtown Parking Lot



This summer our public works team will begin excavating and grading for the downtown parking lot. The lot will be constructed on property owned by the Village in the roundabout adjacent to the Pace Bus stop. Although the lot will not be paved until next year, it is expected to be functional by fall. Once complete, the lot will provide 41 much need parking spaces in the downtown area.

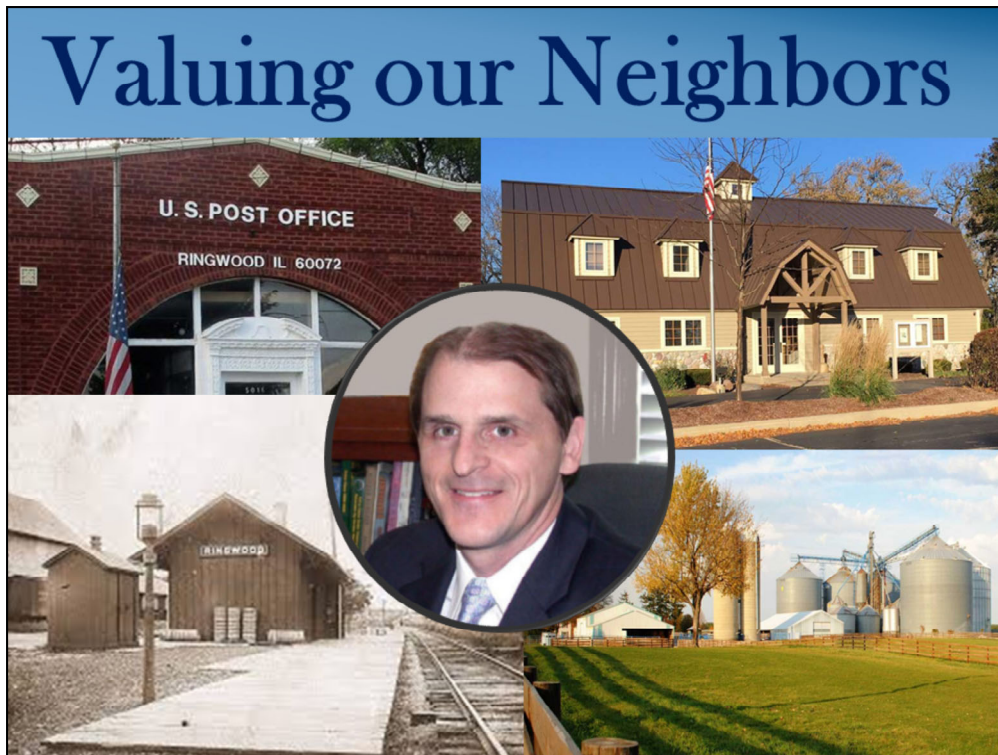


Several milestones are taking place around our community this year. Fire Chief Rudy Horist of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District, will be retiring later this month following 43 years in fire service, 16 of which he served with the McHenry Township Fire Protection District that serves our community. Rudy was hired by the District in 2010 as Deputy Chief and was promoted to Fire Chief in 2021. I value the relationship we've developed working with Rudy over the years and he will be greatly missed. Rudy, I wish you all the best in this next chapter of your life. Can you please come up to the podium



This year marks 50 years since Oak Park Lounge first acquired a liquor license in McHenry County under the current ownership of Mr. Tom Fuchs. Mr. Fuchs has the distinction of being the oldest continuous liquor license holder in McHenry County and longest tavern owner on the Chain Of Lakes. Congratulations to the Fuchs family for the long standing success of their business. Members of the Fuchs family are in attendance tonight. Please come up to the podium.

I also want to take a moment to thank the Fuchs family and their generous patrons and contributors for making the annual Pistakee Bay Fireworks show possible. This year marks the 22nd anniversary of the show, which get's better each year. This show has been recognized on television by a Chicago news station as one of the State's best firework's shows.



I'd like to take a moment to recognize Ringwood President Rick Mack who is attendance tonight. Rick has been the President of Ringwood since its incorporation in 1994. Under Rick's leadership, we've enjoyed a remarkable working relationship with the Village of Ringwood and have worked together for our mutual benefit. Not only do we share corporate boundaries, both our communities are served by Johnsburg School District 12. We also have an intergovernmental agreement for code enforcement services which has worked out well for both communities.

In addition to his position as Ringwood's Village President, Rick has served for many years as the President of the McHenry County Council of Governments and Chairman of the McHenry County Counsel of Mayors. He serves on the Executive Board of the Mayors Caucus and recently retired from Metra in 2024 following a career spanning decades managing Metra's community relations. I'm pleased that Rick has joined us tonight and look forward to continuing to work with him for the betterment of both of our communities. Rick please stand.

Embracing Change



We have been fortunate to have a staff of dedicated employees who have been with the Village for many years, but as we know change is inevitable. Last September, Village Administrator Claudett Sofiakis announced her plans to retire this year after 35 years of service to the Village. Fortunately we have been proactive in our succession planning efforts and she has been working with Assistant Administrator Vinny Lamontagna over the past couple years to prepare for the transition.

Claudett will be leaving us in September and Vinny will take her place as the new Village Administrator.

In preparation for the change, last winter we began our search for a new Assistant Administrator to fill Vinny's role. In February, we hired Ethan Hoffman who will be working with Vinny helping to manage daily operations. Ethan comes to us from the Village of Algonquin where he worked as a management analyst in the Public Works Department.



In closing, despite the many changes we've experienced over the years we've endured and overcame the challenges they brought. As I stated at the beginning of the presentation, change is inevitable but when we embrace change, we can realize new opportunities.



We don't know for certain what lies ahead but diligent planning and a shared vision helps to insure that we will be prepared to take on any change that comes our way - that's the Johnsborg spirit.

I thank you for sharing your time and presence here this evening and thank all of our residents and business owners who have given me the honor of representing you as your Village President.