



W E S T C H I C A G O  
**CITY BULLETIN**

SUMMER 2024



## ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE

Dear City of West Chicago staff:

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Tia and I hosted the organization's first "Ask the Administrator" Session at City Hall; being our initial offering, we found it wildly successful. Four employees joined us and we talked about a gamut of concepts, from how the City can improve its new hire onboarding program to ways the City can raise revenues if the State of Illinois followed through on eliminating the 1.0% local government grocery tax that is an important source of funding for cities like West Chicago, which in fact it did.

One of the best parts of this first session was that Tia and I got to know a few of our co-workers better, both professionally and personally, something we don't have the opportunity to do much with our busy schedules. The ideas and concerns that were shared were very helpful to us better understanding what you are thinking and feeling. While there are some matters that were raised that are outside of our control and a few suggestions made that are just not doable politically, financially and/or logistically, the fact that some staff felt comfortable exploring their ideas and asking their questions made it well worth our while. Thank you again to those who participated.

So, let's do it again. Our second "Ask the Administrator" Session will be on August 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:00 a.m. at the Police Station. As with the last time, if you are interested in joining us, please let your Department Head know a few days in advance so that your request can be accommodated, especially if you will be coming from a different location. If this time period is outside of your normal working hours and you would like to come, please talk to your Department Head about flexing your schedule that day.

Reflecting on this month's quote, we are all part of the same team, but sometimes it's difficult to collaborate and connect as we may work in different buildings, on different shifts and in different Departments. What suggestions do you have that make the City of West Chicago more inclusive internally to make us a more cohesive organization and build stronger relationships across the City, despite these obstacles?

Tia and I are looking forward to talking with you on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,  
Michael Guttman



## QUARTERLY QUOTABLES

**"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."**

- African Proverb



## EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

Please extend a warm welcome or offer congratulations to the following employees who have achieved a significant milestone with this City the past season.

### New Employees

- Calogero Palazzolo;  
Community Service  
Officer (04/22/2024)

- Ryan Thompson,  
Maintenance Worker I  
(05/01/2019)

### 1 Year of Service

- Parker Ford;  
Management Fellow  
(06/17/2024)

- Kevin Albert, Water  
Treatment Plant  
Operator in Training  
(06/19/2023)

### Retirements

- Michael Potapczak;  
Police Officer; 29 years  
of service (05/18/2024)

- Craig Lottie,  
Maintenance Worker  
I Streets Division  
(04/17/2023)

### Work Anniversaries

#### 25 Years of Service

- Eugene Samuel,  
Police Commander  
(04/05/1999)

- Matthew McClelland,  
Police Officer  
(04/17/2023)

- Eddie Ramos, Water  
Treatment Plant  
Superintendent  
(05/30/2023)

#### 5 Years of Service

- Sophia Calderon,  
Account Clerk  
(04/17/2019)

- Brandon Taylor,  
Maintenance Worker  
I Streets Division  
(04/17/2023)





## Hit the Olmec Trails in West Chicago

In April, the West Chicago City Council approved a sponsorship agreement with the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, designating the City as the Municipal Hub Sponsor for the art exhibit, *Olmec Trails: Culture and Legacy*. This exhibit spans the region and runs until October.

As part of this agreement, West Chicago installed four of the 33 hand-painted, large-scale sculptures inspired by the colossal stone heads of the Olmec civilization. These installations can be found at prominent locations including the West Chicago Public Library, Reed-Keppler Park, Kline Creek Farm, and the Kruse House Museum.

The colossal stone heads, crafted by the Olmecs between 1400 BCE and 400 BCE, originated in southern Veracruz, Mexico, the cultural heart of this early Mesoamerican civilization. Each multi-ton sculpture, chiseled from a single stone using primitive tools, reflects the Olmecs' artistic prowess and their profound influence

on subsequent Mesoamerican cultures. Today, these iconic heads are celebrated globally as prime examples of pre-Columbian art, gracing museums and public spaces worldwide.

The "Olmec Trails" exhibit pays homage to the indigenous roots of Mexican heritage and highlights the significance of public art, showcasing the talent and creativity of 33 contemporary artists from across North America. Notably, the Olmecs, Mesoamerica's earliest civilization, left enduring legacies, including the early forms of sports like basketball and soccer.

A photo opportunity is scheduled for Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, coinciding with City Hall Selfie Day, but staff members are encouraged to take time this summer to visit these unique sculptures in West Chicago and throughout the region, either on a walk during lunch or with family and friends. More information about the Exhibit, including locations, is available at [www.theccma.org/olmectrails](http://www.theccma.org/olmectrails).

## Mayor Envisions a "Bright Horizon Ahead" for the City

Mayor Ruben Pineda shared details about the City's recent achievements and identified several positive developments on the "bright horizon ahead" during his 2024 State of the City Address in May. He discussed West Chicago's current economic health, completed and upcoming infrastructure projects, recent and future development initiatives, and other community highlights.

Key achievements in 2023 included the City's equalized assessed valuation (EAV) more than doubling since 1996, increasing by \$54 million in 2023, completing over \$9.5 million in infrastructure projects, and welcoming 72 new businesses.

In 2024, the City will complete several highly visible projects, including the rehabilitation of the Fremont Street Water Tower, the installation of a new traffic signal at IL-38 and Technology Boulevard, and the environmental remediation of the city-owned property along Washington Street, which is slated to be the location for a new City Hall in the future.

Staff can [view more highlights and a transcript of the full State of the City Address on the City's website](#).

## County Construction Projects May Impact Commutes for Staff

DuPage County has several large-scale road improvement projects that may affect commutes for some staff members in the upcoming months.

Starting in July and continuing into the third quarter of 2025, Geneva Road will be closed to westbound traffic between Winfield Road and just west of the bridge over the West Branch DuPage River. Eastbound traffic will be reduced to one lane. Additionally, from September onwards through the third quarter of 2026, Fabian Parkway west of Roosevelt Road/IL-38 will undergo extensive construction, including road reconstruction and widening to four lanes.

City staff who use these roadways should anticipate potential impacts on their commutes and are advised to plan ahead or consider alternative routes to work.



# Beat the Heat: Staying Safe in the Summer Sun

As July heats up, it's essential to be aware and proactive about safety, especially if you work outdoors or in hot environments. Here are some key heat safety tips and an introduction to the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app—to keep you safe this summer.

Exposure to extreme heat can lead to serious health conditions, including:

**Heat Rash:** Red clusters of pimples and small blisters caused by excessive sweating.

**Heat Cramps:** Painful muscle spasms usually occurring in the legs or abdomen, often due to loss of electrolytes.

**Heat Exhaustion:** Marked by heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea, and headache. Without intervention, it can progress to heat stroke.

**Heat Stroke:** A severe condition where the body loses its ability to regulate temperature. Symptoms include high body temperature, confusion, loss of consciousness, and seizures.

## Best Safety Practices to Beat the Heat

**1. Stay Hydrated:** Drink water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugary drinks as they can contribute to dehydration.

**2. Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Choose lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing. A wide-brimmed hat can also help protect you from direct sun exposure and don't forget to use your job specific PPE.

**3. Take Breaks:** Schedule regular breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.

**4. Use Sunscreen:** Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at

least 30. Reapply every two hours, or more frequently if you're sweating or swimming.

**5. Monitor Your Health:** Pay attention to your body. If you start feeling dizzy, weak, or nauseous, take a break to hydrate immediately and notify your supervisor.

**6. Acclimatize Gradually:** If you're not used to working in hot conditions, gradually increase your exposure over a week or so.

## The OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App

Consider using the free OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app, which helps workers and supervisors recognize and prevent heat-related illnesses in real-time with offerings like:

**Real-Time Heat Index:** Provides the current heat index and associated risk levels at your location.

**Protective Measures:** Recommends preventive measures based on the heat index, including hydration frequency, work/rest schedules, and emergency planning.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Educates on the symptoms of heat-related illnesses and appropriate first aid responses.

**Hourly Forecasts:** Allows users to plan their workday by providing hourly heat index forecasts.

## Stay Safe, Stay Cool

By following these heat safety tips and using resources like the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app, we can all stay safe and healthy during the hot summer months. Remember, your well-being is our top priority. Let's work together to beat the heat and make this summer both productive and safe.



# Keeping Pets Safe in the Summer Heat

Let's not forget to keep our pets safe and comfortable during the hot summer months. Here are some essential tips to keep your furry friends cool and protected:

**1. Hydration:** Always provide fresh, clean water. Add ice cubes to keep it cool.

**2. Shade:** Ensure outdoor pets have access to shaded areas, trees, tarps and awnings to protect pets from direct sunlight.

**3. Avoid Peak Heat:** Walk pets early in the morning or late in the evening.

**4. Never Leave Pets in Cars:** Temperatures inside cars rise to dangerous levels quickly.

**5. Protect Paws:** Walk pets on grass or dirt, not hot asphalt or concrete.

**6. Cooling Aids:** Use cooling mats, vests, and bandanas to help keep pets cool.

**7. Watch for Overheating:** Symptoms include excessive panting, drooling, weakness, vomiting, and collapse. Contact a vet immediately if these occur.

**8. Grooming:** Regular grooming helps, but avoid shaving fur too short, as it protects against sunburn.

If your pet shows signs of heatstroke, move them to a cool area and apply cool (not cold) water. Then offer them small amounts of water to drink and contact your veterinarian immediately.

For [more pet safety information](https://www.humanesociety.org) visit the [HumanSociety.org](https://www.humanesociety.org).



w e s t c h i c a g o  
**FIT4FALL5K**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT  
REED KEPPLER PARK & ILLINOIS  
PRAIRIE PATH**

**Free waffle at the post-run  
event, t-shirt, custom medal,  
raffle entry, and more!**



Use promo code **WCSTAFF**  
for **\$10 off!!!**

\*promo code expires 8/22



**Healthy**  
West Chicago



# FSAs = More \$ in Your Pocket

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a type of savings account, subject to IRS rules, that allows you to put aside money from your paycheck for eligible out of pocket expenses. FSAs are funded through pretax deductions from your paycheck meaning you don't pay taxes on these dollars which results in a reduction in taxable income.

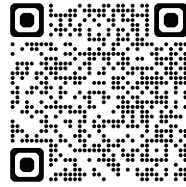
The amount you choose to put aside for an FSA may vary year to year based on the out of pocket expenses you anticipate.

If you are already enrolled and using one or more FSAs, please be sure to log in to your WEX account periodically so that you know your available balance throughout the year. A Carryover Feature is permitted by the medical

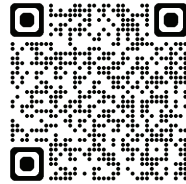
FSA rules, so if you happen to use less medical FSA money in a given year than planned, you can "carry over" a portion of your remaining balance, up to the IRS maximum of \$640.00 into the new year.

Your next opportunity to enroll or change your annual FSA election will be during our annual open enrollment in November. You can choose to participate in a Medical FSA, a Dependent Care FSA or a Transit FSA.

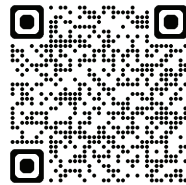
Learn how an FSA may benefit your family and you by using the QR codes to view the videos and by accessing the benefits folder materials in the employee shared drive (Reminder: The shared drive can only be accessed from a PC or through a VPN connection).



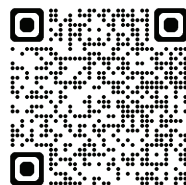
Medical FSA



FSA for Braces



Dependent Care FSA



Transit FSA



## Join Us for City Hall Selfie Day at the Kruse House on August 15<sup>th</sup>

Join fellow staff members for a special photo opportunity next to one of the Olmec Trails sculptures at the Kruse House Museum near City Hall in celebration of City Hall Selfie Day. Staff interested in participating should seek permission from their supervisors to gather at the sculpture at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. The photo session will be brief, lasting no more than 15 minutes, and will be shared on the City's LinkedIn account afterward.

**Chill Out**  
WITH  
A COOL  
TREAT

## FRIDAY, JULY 26

Take a break and enjoy a cool treat on Friday, July 26, as Italian ice will be provided during lunch-time at City Hall, the Police Station and the Water Treatment Plant for all staff to enjoy.

# TIPS & TRICKS

## for Microsoft Office



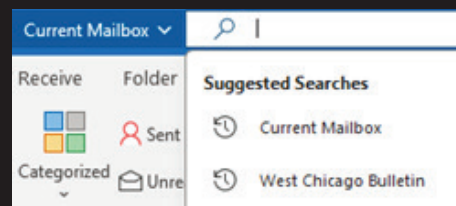
## Outlook Desktop Search Quick Tips

Mastering the search tool in the Desktop Office 365 Outlook application can save you valuable time and frustration. When possible, it's generally better to search in the Outlook Desktop Application than on Office.com. Desktop searches are typically faster, offer more filters, and work offline.

### Search Bar Quick Tips

**1. Control Search Scope:** Click the drop-down that appears to the left of the Search Bar, once the Search is clicked. Choose between "All Outlook Items", "Current Mailbox", or "Subfolders."

**2. Search by Sender:** Type an email or name in the Search Bar to search only emails from that contact. This feature also works for recipients in your sent mailbox. After selecting a sender, you can add more filters like keywords.



**3. Use Built-in Filters:** Below the search bar, use filters like "Has Attachments," "Flagged," and "Unread." (Note: The "Categorized" option is useful if you color

categorize your emails.)

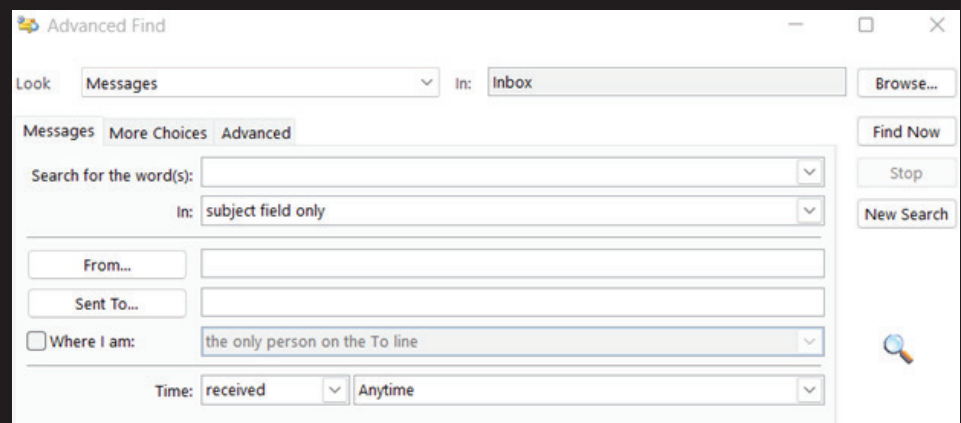
**4. Search Bar Formulas:** Use simple formulas directly in the Search Bar with operators like AND, OR, NOT; quotation marks, and symbols like <>=. Combine your formulas with spaces:

- a. From:tmessino@westchicago.org HasAttachments:yes
- b. To:tmessino@westchicago.org Subject:meeting
- c. Received:today or try Received:12/12/22
- d. Report AND Annual vs. "Annual Report" vs. Annual OR Yearly
- e. Messagesize:>5 MB

### Other Advanced Search Options

**1. Search Tools:** Click the Search Bar to reveal the "Search Tools" button on the right, which includes a drop-down menu with "Advanced Find."

**2. Advanced Find:** This feature allows you to search calendar items, contacts, tasks, and notes, in addition to messages. Narrow down results by sender, recipient, and timeframe in the "Messages" tab. Use the "More Choices" tab for additional filters like categories, read/unread status, attachments, flags, and size.



Give these tips a try to streamline your email experience, and if you're looking for [more details on how to search in Outlook](#), make sure to check out Microsoft's website.



WE ARE PARTNERING WITH  
**WeGo Together for Kids'**  
**Back to School Event**

which distributes 1200 backpacks with supplies  
to West Chicago students each August.

**We are collecting new:**

- ☐ plastic, solid-colored  
folders with two  
pockets
- ☐ spiral notebooks

Please drop your donations off by  
**Wednesday, August 7**  
in the City Hall Mailroom.

Email [vperez@westchicago.org](mailto:vperez@westchicago.org) or [dpeck@westchicago.org](mailto:dpeck@westchicago.org) with questions.



Learn more about WGTK and the Back to School event at:  
**[wegotogetherforkids.com](http://wegotogetherforkids.com)**