



COLUMBIA QUARTERLY

Your Source for City of Columbia News and Events

Winter/2025



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Spirits were High at Halloween Hi-Jinks

The 2025 Halloween Hi-Jinks in Columbia, Illinois, on Saturday, October 25, was nothing short of magical. A crisp fall morning on Historic Main Street gave way to an afternoon filled with treats, laughter, and community spirit. Families and children visited from 10 a.m. to noon, and enjoying trick-or-treating at local shops and City Hall, which were bustling with candy stations and welcoming smiles.

The costume contest at City Hall added extra excitement, showcasing everything from imaginative homemade creations to elaborate store-bought ensembles. Classic ghosts and ghouls shared the spotlight with pop-culture favorites and clever mash-ups, making judging both fun and challenging.

With record turnout, candy galore, and one-of-a-kind costumes, Halloween Hi-Jinks 2025 delivered "Halloween done right." The event showcased what makes Columbia special: a community that celebrates together, creates lasting memories, and shares in the joy of the season.

Trail Projects on the Horizon

The Creekside Trail Connector Project was originally scheduled for bidding in November 2025. This initiative includes construction of a pedestrian bridge linking the GM&O Trail to the new Creekside Park Trail, extending the trail to Rueck Road, and providing a sidewalk connection from Creekside Subdivision to the park. The project is partially funded through an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program Grant and is expected to be completed by late 2026.

Meanwhile, the Quarry Road Trail Connector Project remains in the design and permitting phase. It will extend the existing trail along Quarry Road to Ghent Road and include construction of a pedestrian bridge over Palmer Creek, connecting to the existing sidewalk network. The project is supported in part by an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Bike Trail Grant and is also anticipated for completion by late 2026.

IDOT recently announced revisions to its upcoming contract letting schedule. As a result, some projects originally planned for the November letting, including local transportation projects such as these, may be delayed until early 2026. These adjustments are intended to ensure continued access to federal transportation funding. Columbia will continue coordinating with IDOT and its project partners to advance the trail connections as soon as the revised bidding schedule is released.

Mayor's Message



Mayor Bob Hill

As winter settles over Columbia, I want to take a moment to reflect on what a wonderful fall we've had. Our community spirit was on full display with record attendance at FestiFall and Witches Night Out, both incredible events that brought friends, families, and visitors together to celebrate the season.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and supported these events. Your enthusiasm and community pride make Columbia such a special place to live, work, and visit.

Our Engineering & Inspections Department has also been hard at work on several important projects around town, including progress at Creekside Park, and anticipates seeking bids for the long-awaited reconstruction of Valmeyer Road within the month. These efforts continue to enhance the quality of life and accessibility in our community.

As we move into the holiday season, there are even more opportunities to come together and support Columbia. Mark your calendars for Small Business Saturday and our festive Bright Night Christmas Parade. These events are wonderful ways to celebrate the season while supporting our local businesses and community spirit.

I am filled with gratitude for our residents, City employees, and volunteers who keep Columbia thriving. Together, we'll continue building a community we can all be proud of.

Wishing you and your family a safe, joyful, and peaceful winter season.

Winter Watch

Winter Driving Safety Tips

As winter weather approaches, we encourage everyone to take extra precautions while driving. Avoid distracted driving and the use of electronic devices; stay focused and aware of your surroundings.



- Reduce speed on icy or snowy roads — speed limits are based on normal conditions.
- Use headlights during snow, sleet and rain.
- Watch for "black ice", which can form overnight and cause sudden loss of traction.
- Practice safe maneuvering techniques for icy conditions.
- Maintain at least three times the normal following distance.
- Stay at least 200 feet back from snowplows.
- Exercise caution on bridges, ramps and overpasses, as they freeze first.
- Ensure tires are in good condition, Remember, they're your only contact with the road!

**Be safe this
winter and enjoy
the season!**



Extra Holiday Trash?

**Thanksgiving - Friday trash pickup will be
Saturday November 29th.**

**Christmas - Tues. December 23rd &
Sat. December 27th - Reliable Sanitation will also
allow 3 additional 30-gallon containers / bags of
trash in addition to the 1 trash tote. No extra \$1.25
stickers required.**

New Year's - Tues. December 30th & Sat. January 3rd

**Live Christmas Tree Recycling - January 10th
Bohm - Schuhkraft Park, 10:00 am - noon.**

Welcome to Columbia's New Businesses!

Peachy Pilates.
1005 S. Main Street

My Crafting Attic
515b N. Main Street

City Prepares for Winter Weather

With winter upon us, the Department of Public Works asks residents to help ensure safe and efficient snow removal by following these guidelines:

- When snow is forecast, please remove vehicles from streets, if possible.
- Avoid placing basketball goals or other objects in or near the street.
- Do not push or throw snow from driveways and sidewalks in to the street.
- During heavy snowfall, primary streets will be cleared first. Secondary and subdivision streets will follow, with cul-de-sacs cleared last.
- Property owners are responsible for cleaning driveway approaches and mailboxes.

Your cooperation helps our crews keep Columbia's streets safe for everyone.



Fall Leaf & Limb Pickup

As the leaves begin to fall, the Department of Public Works will conduct citywide leaf collection sweeps beginning November 10 and continuing through December 19. Please have piles ready by 6 a.m.

Guidelines:

- No grass clippings, shrubs, branches, gumballs, or limbs.
- Place leaves within four feet of the street, behind the curb and sidewalk, in rows — not piles.
- Do not park vehicles in front of leaf piles.

Welcome to Columbia John Brancaglione

The City of Columbia is pleased to welcome John Brancaglione as our new Land Use and Planning Coordinator. John brings an impressive background in urban planning and economic development, with experience spanning nearly 400 cities, counties, and government agencies — including work in the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia.

A long-time Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning at Washington University in St. Louis, John has also served as a founding board member of both the Missouri Economic Development Financing Association and the Illinois Tax Increment Financing Association. His expertise and leadership have been recognized with two recent honors: the Richard King Award for contributions to economic development in Missouri and the President's Award for Planning from the St. Louis Section of the American Planning Association.

John has already made great strides in updating the City's development codes to reflect modern best practices. We're excited to welcome John to the Columbia team and look forward to his leadership in guiding thoughtful growth and development across our community.



City Hall Holiday Hours

November 27 - Closed - Happy Thanksgiving!
November 28 - Closed all day.
December 24 - Closed at noon.
December 25 - Closed - Merry Christmas!
January 1 - Closed - Happy New Year!



Save the Date!

The City of Columbia invites residents to attend the Annual Public Safety Open House on May 14, 2026.

This family-friendly event offers a behind-the-scenes look at the vital work of our public safety departments. Guests can meet Columbia's dedicated first responders, explore emergency vehicles, and observe live safety demonstrations. Educational activities, safety resources, and fire truck tours will also be available for children and families to enjoy.



City of Columbia
208 S. Rapp Avenue
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Columbia, IL 62236

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Know Columbia



Upcoming Events & Services

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| November 29 | Small Business Saturday
Shop local for the holidays. Participating Main Street Businesses. Discounts, food & drink specials all day long.
<i>Historic Main Street 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.</i> |
| November 29 | City Hall Christmas Tree Lighting
Join us at Fountain Park for Columbia's official tree lighting ceremony, carols, and much more.
<i>Fountain Park in front of City Hall at 6 p.m.</i> |
| December 6 | Bright Night Christmas Parade
Santa Claus makes his grand appearance at this Christmas themed parade of bright lights.
<i>Historic Main Street. Temple St. To Cherry St. At 5 p.m.</i> |
| December 6 | Turner Hall Social
After the Christmas parade, visit with Santa and enjoy food, beverages, and activities. Parade winners announced.
<i>Turner Hall 211 E. Cherry St 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.</i> |
| December 7 | Winter Wonderland
Santa visits with children (bring your own camera), bounce house, hot chocolate bar, children's activities, food & drink.
<i>Main Street Abbey 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.</i> |
| December 20 | Winter Walk
Stroll downtown and neighboring business districts and enjoy local shops' specials and giveaways. Visit restaurants and bars for warm drinks and delicious food. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. |



Details at www.columbiail.gov/calendar or
Call (618) 281-7144



HOURS
Mon - Thurs: 9 am - 8 pm
Fri: 9 am - 5 pm
Sat: 9 am - 4 pm
Phone (618) 281-4237

Winter Sparks Reading Program
December 1, 2025 - March 2, 2026
Registration begins: December 2

Last Minute Christmas Gift Programs
Monday 12/1 4-5 pm (5-7 yrs), 5:30-6:30 (8-12 yrs), 7-8 pm (Teen/Adults)

Visit with Santa
Saturday, December 13; 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Christmas Arrangements (Adults)
Thursday Dec. 4 & Monday Dec. 8, 6:30-8 p.m.

Cram for Exams (12-18 yrs)
December 15 & 16, 4 - 8 p.m.

Babygarten (0-18 mos.)
Tuesdays at 9:15 a.m.

Dungeons & Dragons Meetup (11-17 yrs)
Thursdays at 3:30 p.m.

Novels at Night (Adults)
First Tuesday of Month, 7 pm

Take Your Child to the Library Day (Families)
Saturday, February 7, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

For event details and registration, call or visit
www.columbialibrary.org