SOUTH HOLLAND Living

Nov | Dec 2026



A Winter Wonderland in the Park

Winter Wonderland

Friday, December 4

NEW TIME! 5:30-8:30pm

Veterans Memorial Park

500 E 160th Place

JOIN US FOR FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES INCLUDING:

- Tree/park lighting
- Photos with Santa*
- Trolley rides
- Family dance party
- Cookies and hot chocolate
- Christmas movie
- Train rides on the South Holland Express

*Photos with Santa are reserved for South Holland residents. Register in advance at the Community Center.

southholland.org

FROM YOUR MAYOR



Mayor De Graff with Village Collector Michelle Liddell, who retired this October after 32 years of service

Dear South Holland Residents and Friends,

Get ready! As we welcome the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, there is no better place to begin our celebration of faith and family than Veterans Memorial Park, without a doubt the Chicago Southland's best family park. As our cover shows, the park will once again sparkle as a "Winter Wonderland," welcoming Santa Claus and a fun-filled winter season.

Looking back, we enjoyed a beautiful, warm fall. Thanks to wonderful weather and outstanding planning by our Village departments, churches, businesses, schools, and neighborhood groups, we enjoyed many opportunities to connect and serve.

Our Town Center continues to blossom. The SoHo Shops at Town Center have been a tremendous success for new entrepreneurs, and in the coming weeks we eagerly anticipate opening our Family Athletic Center, where youth, seniors, and families can enjoy athletics, recreation, and fellowship together.

As 2026 closes, we are thankful South Holland continues to be recognized for the best in public safety. In this issue, read about our new state-of-the-art fire training facility, which will serve our firefighters and those of neighboring communities.

Enjoy this year-end issue of *South Holland Living*! Our Coming Together 2030 Strategic Plan continues to flourish, as these pages show, and we look forward to new ways to serve one another and build a stronger community.

I pray your Thanksgiving will be filled with gratitude and your Christmas season with love, hope, peace, and joy as we remember the Reason for the season.

Don A. De Graff
Mayor

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8th Annual

WINTER SPORTS SHOWCASE

Sunday, December 6
12:30-5:30pm

Learn skills in each of the following sports:

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL • FOOTBALL
CHEER • VOLLEYBALL
BASKETBALL • SOCCER

For boys and girls grades K-6.

$25 PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED AT SOUTHHOLLAND.ORG OR AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER.

SHRS
SOUTH HOLLAND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th Street • South Holland, IL 60473
www.southholland.org • 708 331-2940

The Village of South Holland
Faith, Family, & Future

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND SOUTH HOLLAND



THORN DITCH FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT

This fall, the Village completed Phase 1 of the Thorn Ditch Flood Mitigation Project–a $5.8 million project years in the making to help reduce flooding. Two new stormwater basins at Maicach Park and Pioneer Park can now collect and temporarily hold more than 3.8 million gallons of rainwater during heavy storms. This gives stormwater somewhere to go instead of overwhelming streets and surrounding areas.

The project also included the replacement of culverts and the planting of 50 new trees, which will help absorb rainwater naturally. We're proud to celebrate this milestone and the continued work to make our village safer and more resilient.



YARD WASTE PICKUP

As you clear fall leaves from your yard this season, please remember that the last day for seasonal yard waste pickup is November 30. From December through March, the yard waste carts can be used for regular garbage. Yard waste pickup will resume April 1, 2027.



SNOW ORDINANCE

As winter weather arrives, please keep in mind the Village's snow ordinance. If snowfall exceeds two inches, no parking is allowed on Village streets. This ensures our plow drivers can clear the roads quickly and safely for everyone.

For easier cleanup, shovel snow to the right side of your driveway (when facing the street). This helps prevent the plows from pushing snow back in.

OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

AMERICA 250 FIREWORKS SHOW

After the 4th of July fireworks were canceled due to flooding, the Village rescheduled a fireworks show at South Suburban College in August, to "end our summer with a bang!" Families showed up early to enjoy food trucks, live music, and shopping vendors. Then the fireworks show began with a 250-salute to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.













FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

BLOCK PARTIES

This summer, South Holland streets were alive with block parties. Neighbors gathered for live music, inflatables, and great food, with the Village's Block Party Trailer supplying the games, tables, and gear to keep things running smoothly. Firefighters and police officers made appearances at many parties, and members of the Neighborhood Groups Committee delivered gift bags and welcomed neighbors.









FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

BREAST CANCER WALK/DRIVE

The community came together for the annual Breast Cancer Walk/Drive to raise awareness and show support for women and men affected by the disease. Some walked the path at Veterans Memorial Park, while others joined a caravan of cars down South Park Avenue. The day concluded with a ceremony to recognize survivors, along with a launch of pink balloons representing each survivor.













FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

LUNCH WITH FIREFIGHTERS

The South Holland Fire Department invited the community to the fire station for lunch and tours of the station, fire engines, and the brand-new training tower. Many families attended and learned about the life of a firefighter/EMT while enjoying hot dogs, ice cream, and other treats.









FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

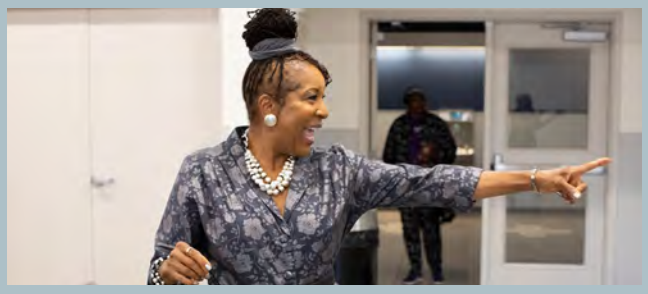
COMING TOGETHER 2030 MEETING

A group of leaders from South Holland churches, schools, businesses, and service organizations gathered to watch a video of what has been accomplished so far in the three years since the Coming Together 2030 plan was launched. They then brainstormed ideas for the next half of the Village's strategic plan, the goal of which is to bring groups together to enhance the quality of life in South Holland.













CALENDAR OF EVENTS


Winter Wonderland

November 1-December 6
SHFD ANNUAL HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE
Fire Station 1, 16230 Wausau Ave
The South Holland Fire department is collecting new, unwrapped toys for families in need. Toys can be dropped off at Fire Station 1 through December 6.

November 29 and December 6
SOUTH HOLLAND MASTER CHORALE CHRISTMAS CONCERTS
Nov 29: 4pm, Christ Our Savior Parish, 880 E 154th St, South Holland
Dec 6: 4pm, St. John Neumann Church, 17951 Dixie Ave, Homewood
The South Holland Master Chorale is hosting two holiday-themed concerts in December. The theme of both concerts is "Holiday Joy & Fanfare," featuring holiday favorites and sing-alongs. The Chicago Classic Brass and organist Mark Sudeith will join the Chorale in this festive Christmas concert.

December 1
MAYOR'S COFFEE
7pm, South Holland Community Center 501 E 170th Street
Residents can hear from and speak with Mayor Don De Graff. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

December 4
WINTER WONDERLAND
5:30-8:30pm, Veterans Memorial Park 500 E 160th Pl
The annual holiday extravaganza features a tree-lighting ceremony, train rides aboard the South Holland Express, refreshments, and new this year—family dance party! Visits with Santa are for South Holland residents only and advance registration is required; register at the Community Center.

December 5
COFFEE WITH FIREFIGHTERS
9am, Fire Station 1, 16230 Wausau Ave
Residents can meet and talk with members of the South Holland Fire Department on the first Saturday of every month.

December 6
WINTER SPORTS SHOWCASE
12:30-5:30pm, South Holland Community Center, 501 E 170th St
Boys and girls in grades K-6 will learn the fundamentals of baseball, softball, basketball, football, soccer, volleyball, and cheer. Registration is required; register at southholland.org or at the Community Center.

December 8

COMMUNITY POLICING MEETING

10am, South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th St

The South Holland Police Department hosts a Community Policing Meeting on the second Tuesday of every month, alternating mornings and evenings. This is an opportunity to address any questions or concerns for the Police Department.

December 11

SHPD CHRISTMAS BINGO

11am-2pm, South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th St

The South Holland Police Department is inviting residents aged 55+ to enjoy a day of Bingo, food and prizes. Visit southholland.org to register.

December 12

BREAKFAST WITH THE ELVES

10am-noon, Heritage House, 443 E 157th St

South Holland residents and their children are invited for breakfast, ornament decorating, and pictures with Santa's elves. Tickets are $5 for residents, $8 for non-residents. Spots are limited so register by December 4 at the Community Center or online at recservices.southholland.org.

AT THE LIBRARY

The following programs are held at the South Holland Public Library, 16250 Wausau Ave, unless otherwise indicated.

November 16

REEL TALK: THE FOUNDER

7pm

Watch the film The Founder and join the conversation! We'll discuss the film's themes, characters, and the true story behind one of the world's most recognizable brands, McDonald's.

November 24

BeTWEEN THE LINES: GAME ON!

4-4:30pm

Join us for an afternoon of fun, friendly competition, and laughter. Each BeTween the Lines Gaming program features a different game or activity.

December 10

STEAM LAB: CIRCUITS & SYSTEMS

6pm

If you're interested in learning how computers and digital gadgets work, you're invited to do some hands-on activities.

December 14

STITCHING AROUND

7pm

Are you a crafter who creates with yarn, floss, hooks, or needles? If so, this group (which meets every second Monday) is for you! Enjoy working on your projects with others, creating works in crocheting, knitting and needlepoint. The library will not supply materials.

December 17

MAGIC REINDEER FOOD

Available all day

Santa's reindeer need your help finding their way! Swing by the library to grab a bag of Magical Reindeer Food to sprinkle on your lawn Christmas Eve. The sparkle will help light the way for Santa's sleigh! Available while supplies last.

FAITH IN Motion

THE GRACE TO SERVE
CARRYING OUT THE MISSION OF HELPING OTHERS

By Pastor Pete Tassio, The King's Community Church

In just a couple of months we will be starting another new year, and I praise God for all His goodness bestowed upon us this past year. We also know that His grace and blessings were not given to us merely for our own benefit, but for others as well. In 2 Corinthians 6:1, the apostle Paul urges the Corinthian believers as fellow workers not to receive God's grace in vain. Later, he encourages Timothy to stir up the gift of God that is in him and fully accomplish his ministry.

Each of us must pray for ourselves and the church, that our eyes of understanding would be opened to see our heavenly calling and the incomparable great power given to us who believe. Paul understood that he wasn't apprehended for eternal salvation only, but for a quite definite purpose now. God's work today remains the same as it was before the foundation of the world—to sum up all things in Christ! No doubt that has to include the church, His bride.

And it must also include reaching the lost with the gospel to build the church as well. This monumental work can only be accomplished in the power of God Himself.

But how can we cooperate with God to see His purpose accomplished? Only by His grace. His all-sufficient grace! Like Paul, are we willing to spend and be spent for the sake of others, especially the household of saints?



Pastor Pete Tassio

A believer cannot draw near to God without also drawing near to God's people. To think otherwise is to invite deception and error. Paul warned Timothy that the time would come when some in the church would turn away their ears from the truth. Today more than ever, we need to encourage each other with God's Word and through the grace we've been given.

Join us, the local churches and the Village of South Holland Administration as we look to God for the vision, "Coming Together 2030," to be carried out. With God all things are possible!

SHOP LOCAL THIS SEASON
THE SOHO SHOPS

Holiday Gift Guide



South Holland has a wide variety of places to find the perfect holiday gift, and every dollar spent here helps grow our local economy. One great place to start is the SoHo Shops, a business incubator started and facilitated by the Village of South Holland, where new entrepreneurs get their start. Their ten vendors offer everything from handcrafted candles and skincare to red velvet pound cake and custom Christmas bouquets. Here are ten finds to get your list going.

POLLY ANN CAKES { SHOP # 1 }

Product: Red Velvet Cream Cheese Pound Cake
Price: $7 (individual) or $52 (family size)

Polly Ann Cakes is a boutique bakery known for artisan pound cakes and gooey butter cakes. Its gift shop also stocks cake toppers, custom home accessories, and branded merchandise.

Polly Ann's red velvet cake with a cream cheese center is rich enough to serve as the holiday dessert. Grab an individual size for a coworker or a family size for the table.





THAXTON WHITE BOUTIQUE { SHOP # 2 }

Product: Curated treasures
Price: $8 to $300

Thaxton White Boutique carries statement apparel, eyewear, artisan jewelry, handbags, accessories, and original art for shoppers who want something with personality.

Stock is limited, and new pieces arrive every Friday. No matter your budget, there's something distinctive for nearly everyone on your list.

WANNA PICKLE
{ SHOP # 3 }
Product: Pickles
Price: Varies

Wanna Pickle sells more than 250 flavors of pickles—including sweet spicy garlic, peach habanero, and fruity flavors like watermelon. Its profits support the Wanna Help Ministry.

Pickles make a fun swap for the usual candy and cookies, with a flavor for every age and taste.





CRISTALLO
{ SHOP # 4 }
Product: Cristallo Weekender
Price: $165

Cristallo designs vegan leather handbags, travel bags, jewelry, belts, and accessories that look luxe without the luxury price tag.

This roomy, unisex travel bag is sized for weekend getaways and overnight stays. It's a good pick for the frequent flyer or anyone who likes to travel in style.

MONARCH PAPERIE
{ SHOP # 5 }
Product: The Beautifully Hued Nutcracker Holiday Gift Set
Price: $28.99

Monarch Paperie offers gift cards, box sets, culturally rooted wrapping paper, gift bags, and boxes, all designed with intention and made sustainably.

This handmade set of eight nutcracker holiday cards is a best seller and available only at Monarch Paperie. Gift wrapping is offered for $6 per gift.



SKIN PRIVILEGE
{ SHOP # 6 }

Product:
3-Step Skincare System
Price: $60

Skin Privilege makes handcrafted, small-batch skincare with natural ingredients, including a dual-sided Night & Day Cleansing Bar, Rosewater Toner, Facelift Moisturizer, and 10K Hair Growth Serum.

This gift-ready set pairs the Night & Day Cleansing Bar, Rosewater Toner, and Facelift Moisturizer in one simple routine that cleanses, hydrates, and leaves skin glowing. It's an easy way to give someone an at-home spa treat.





JOHNNY BS BBQ { SHOP # 7 }

Product: Johnny Bs Holiday Gift Sets
Price: $50 to $75

Johnny Bs sells wet sauce and dry rub seasonings, from the rub to the finishing sauce. Find them at SoHo Shop 7 and at local Jewel-Osco and Pete's Fresh stores.

Each gift basket holds Johnny Bs sauce and seasonings, plus an apron and BBQ utensils. It's a ready-made present for the grill master in your life.

I DO PRETTY 365 { SHOP # 8 }

Product: Hibiscus Lavender Hair Mist
Price: $14.99 (4 oz)

I DO PRETTY 365 is a multicultural beauty and wellness brand with natural, plant-based hair, skin, and body care for the whole family.

This lightweight spray, made with hibiscus and lavender, hydrates dry hair and soothes the scalp. It works on all hair types and fits easily in a stocking.





BLACK AMOR HANDCRAFTED CANDLE BOUTIQUE { SHOP # 9 }

Product: Butta Signature Candle
Price: $35

Black Amor makes handcrafted candles, room and body sprays, wax melts, diffusers, and grooming and body care products. The motto: "Handcrafted for him, loved by her."

One of the brand's bestsellers, the Butta signature candle blends tonka, jasmine, and sandalwood. It comes in a black glass vessel with a wooden wick and gold foil accents.



LABELLEFLEURR.2 { SHOP # 10 }

Product: Custom Christmas Bouquets
Price: $55 to $150

Labellefleurr.2 is a flower shop that skips the standard vase arrangement. Each design reflects the personality of the person ordering it.

Every Christmas bouquet is made to order, from a Grinch bouquet to an elf-style one. If you can imagine it, they can make it.



SOHO SHOPS AT TOWN CENTER

16114 South Park Ave
Open every weekend through December 20:

Fri 12pm-8pm
Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 12pm-6pm

The SoHo Shops is a retail incubator program facilitated by the Village of South Holland. We are looking for the next round of vendors for the 2027 season!

Visit southhollandshops.com to learn more.

TAKING TRAINING TO NEW HEIGHTS

SOUTH HOLLAND'S NEW FIRE TRAINING TOWER PREPARES FIREFIGHTERS FOR THE UNEXPECTED

By Kyli Williams

Photos by Lawrence Bickerstaff



If you've been to the South Holland Public Library lately, you may have noticed a tall, bright red building stationed behind the parking lot. That building is a new training tower for the South Holland Fire Department, and it will help crews face realistic, changing scenarios that could save lives.

The new training tower features controlled flames, movable walls and unfamiliar floor plans, giving firefighters a chance to confront dangerous situations before a real emergency. On one day, a crew might advance a hose toward a third-floor fire. The next, they could enter through a second-story window or search a room arranged entirely differently.

The goal is simple: make the unexpected feel familiar.

For more than 20 years, a dedicated training facility was on the department's wish list. Fire Chief Brian Kolosh and Deputy Fire Chief Al Wynsma say the idea became a viable project in recent years after Public Works relocated, opening space for the tower.

The three-story structure goes beyond conventional drills. Firefighters can practice live-fire response, search and rescue, forcible entry, ventilation, ladder deployment and high-angle rescue under controlled conditions. Movable interior walls help create different room and hallway layouts, allowing crews to encounter new problems without leaving the site.


SOUTH HOLLAND
FIRE DEPT.



“You can make different hallways and different rooms,” says firefighter Josh Jurka, who began with the department as an intern.

For Mike Bila, who has spent four years in the fire service, the realism is a significant upgrade. At a previous department, training sometimes meant using a chair as a doorway or a cone to represent an obstacle. But an actual house fire presents furniture, winding halls and unexpected challenges.

“We can put thousands of scenarios in there,” Bila says.

Firefighter Brian Newell, approaching a decade in the fire service, sees another advantage: proximity. Before South Holland had its own tower, crews traveled to neighboring municipalities for specialized training. Now they can practice near their station, with response vehicles ready if an emergency call comes in.

“We now have that in the backyard of our station,” Newell says.

For newcomers, hands-on repetition builds confidence. Nehemiah Medina, who joined South Holland less than a week before this story was written, explains that physically practicing a skill helps it become second nature in a real emergency.

The benefits extend beyond firefighters. Department leaders envision opportunities for South Holland police to practice searches and forcible entry, Public Works crews to train for confined-space emergencies and, eventually, neighboring fire departments to conduct joint exercises. Those partnerships matter: major fires often require crews from multiple communities working side by side.

Though most of South Holland’s emergency calls are medical, structure fires are especially hazardous. Controlled live-fire training helps crews rehearse the skills they cannot afford to learn for the first time when lives are at stake.

As department leadership says, “The better we train, the more we train, the safer we make it for the public.”

For residents, the tower represents more than a new building. It is preparation, repeated again and again, for the moment help is needed most.

A FRESH SPIN ON *Winter Fun*

SOUTH HOLLAND'S POPULAR SKATING RINK MOVES DOWNTOWN

By Julia Huisman



One of South Holland's favorite winter attractions is getting a new name, a new location, and new ways for families to enjoy the outdoors this season.

In 2022, the Village opened an iceless skating rink, after noting its popularity at Winter Wonderland in the years prior. The rink is constructed using panels of synthetic ice. It's a slick surface that mimics the feel of actual ice, but its synthetic surface is easier to maintain and isn't subject to the whims of rainy or warmer weather.

The rink has changed locations a couple of times, most recently located at Veterans Park. This year, because of the burgeoning development happening in Town Center, the rink is moving to the brand-new parking lot behind SoHo Shops (16114 South Park Ave), where there will be more activity and foot traffic.

It's also getting an official name to reflect its new home: SoHo Skate.



On weekends beginning December 4, families can do some shopping at the SoHo Shops (open through December 20), grab a cup of hot cocoa at Shawn Michelle's Ice Cream, and stop by SoHo Skate for some physical activity and family fun. The rink will be brightly lit, with string lights, festive music, and an overall fun and safe atmosphere.

SoHo Skate will host theme nights throughout the season, such as Glow Skate, School Spirit nights, and holiday-themed events. These dates will be posted at southholland.org and on Village social media outlets.

Skates are required and can be rented on site for a nominal fee, or you can bring your own (hockey skates are best on the synthetic iceless material).

"As Town Center grows—with SoHo Shops, Shawn Michelle's, and the upcoming opening of the Family Athletic Center and art gallery—it is only natural that we move one of our town's favorite winter attractions to that area," says South Holland Mayor Don De Graff. "We look forward to seeing families enjoy SoHo Skate together and create fond memories, right in the heart of our growing downtown district."

SOHO SKATE DETAILS

ADDRESS:
16114 South Park Avenue, South Holland
(Located just behind SoHo Shops)

2026-27 SEASON:
December 4-February 15

REGULAR HOURS OF OPERATION:
Fri 3-8pm
Sat Noon-8pm
Hours are subject to change due to weather or holidays. Visit southholland.org for up-to-date hours and information.

SKATE RENTAL:
$3 adults
$2 kids (under 18)
Cash and credit are accepted. Skates can be rented at the small white cottage located next to the rink.

SOHO SHOPS
AT TOWN CENTER

Ready to take your home business to the next level?



Join the SoHo Shops at Town Center!

More than a place to sell your products, this opportunity connects you with customers, fellow entrepreneurs, and resources to help your business grow. Vendors gain hands-on experience, valuable exposure, and the chance to test ideas in a supportive environment.



2027 SoHo Shops Applications are OPEN!

Due by 11:59pm on January 4, 2027

Learn More and Apply





16114 South Park Ave, South Holland, IL | SouthHollandShops.com | @SouthHollandShops

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Mayor's Coffee



Tuesday, December 1
7:00pm

South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th Street

Meet Mayor Don De Graff and enjoy coffee and refreshments!

The Village of South Holland
Faith, Family, & Future

southholland.org