



*Discover*  
**FREEPORT &  
STEPHENSON  
COUNTY**





# It's All In Freeport & Stephenson County

Located in the heart of the Midwest, Freeport & Stephenson County, Illinois have a history of: Innovation.

A highly skilled workforce.

Award-winning healthcare.

School systems with a focus on continuous learning.

An outstanding outdoor experience.



# Freeport, Illinois is a vibrant, forward-looking community embracing qualities that make us unique.

In Freeport, we value:

- Art, Design and Culture
- Diversity in All Forms
- Hard Work and Entrepreneurship
- Outdoor Experience
- Giving Back
- Always Learning

But most of all, we value collaboration.

Freeport is home to historic architecture, a beautiful downtown, local craft breweries, a stunning park system, award-winning healthcare facilities, and a strong sense of community. While respectful of its rich, historic past, Freeport embraces its existing

future as the economic engine of northwest Illinois. Freeport is a business-friendly community that embraces the entrepreneurial spirit that has helped to create the city.

Conveniently situated in Northwestern Illinois, Freeport is 25 miles west of Rockford, 45 minutes east of Galena, and easily accessible to major metro areas in every direction including Dubuque, Madison, Milwaukee, Quad Cities and Chicago all within 100 miles.

In addition to being the site of the 1858 Douglas-Lincoln Debate, it also features the longest-running amateur theater in the US, and a grammy award-winning high school.

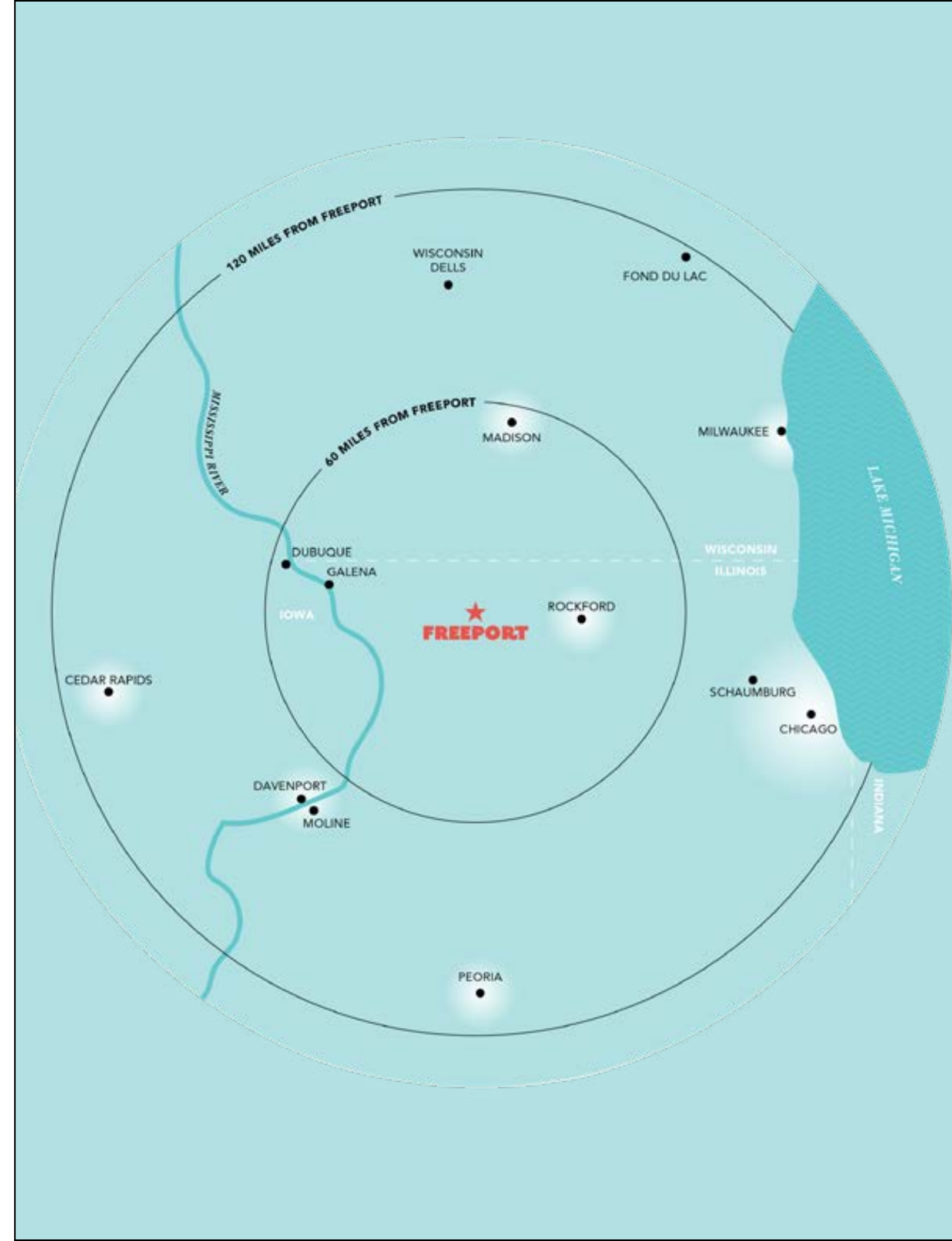
## FREEPORT AT A GLANCE

Population  
23,775

Households  
10,969  
(2.15 people/household)

22% population under 18  
78% of population under 65

Access to Park Land  
Over 800 Acres





# Stephenson County boasts an expanse of rural beauty and diverse industry innovation.



In Stephenson County, there is a time for work and a time for play - and our residents know how to do both well! In one of the most beautiful parts of Illinois, Stephenson County promotes small-town pride and patronage to support businesses of all types and sizes.

Rural life can be as quiet or as active as you make it! Our picturesque spaces are filled with rolling hills, outdoor bicycle and hiking trails, great people and memorable experiences. The Pecatonica River flows through Stephenson County and is a delight for all paddling and fishing enthusiasts. Communities come alive in every season for

festivals, cultural performances and farmers' markets.

Communities are comprised of vibrant, forward-thinking individuals who embrace ingenuity and champion innovative ideas. Working in Stephenson County offers a number of options in established professional settings, trade environments or the ability to nurture your entrepreneurial dreams. Many of our largest employers started in the county as small businesses and have capitalized on the resources and services available in the area to expand and grow to their current capacity.

## STEPHENSON COUNTY

**Population**  
45,433

**Households**  
19,609

21.6% population under 18  
78.6% population under 65

**Commute Time**  
21.8 minutes on average  
73% of people live and  
work in Stephenson Co.

# A History of Hard Work & Entrepreneurship

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

- FHN
- The Helm Group
- Berner Food & Beverage
- Freeport School District
- Honeywell
- Snak King
- Highland Community College
- MetLife Auto & Home
- Wal-Mart
- Titan Tire Corporation
- Stephenson County
- Stewart & Associates
- Newell Rubbermaid
- Danfoss
- Pearl Valley Farms
- City of Freeport
- Liberty Village
- Nationwide Inbound
- Anchor Harvey
- Provena/St. Joseph Campus

*As of May 2020  
Listed by number of employees*



Home to a highly diverse business community, Freeport and Stephenson County provide work and career opportunities in insurance, manufacturing, healthcare and the food production industry, among others.

Stephenson County works diligently with manufacturing and value-added agriculture markets to provide infrastructure and support to these important sectors.

Freeport counts numerous Fortune 500 companies as employers, and some headquartered here, including Newell Rubbermaid, Metlife, Titan Tire, Furst McNess, and Honeywell.

Our region places a significant emphasis on nurturing entrepreneurs and small businesses with services provided by the Greater Freeport Partnership and workforce development with initiatives established with Highland Community College, Freeport School District #145, The Workforce Connection and other job readiness programs.

Several employment agencies in the area pride themselves in matching job skills with a variety of company openings in manufacturing, professional careers, and service work. If you are looking to explore options to start up something new, the Small Business Development Center can provide guidance along the way.

Stephenson County was established by German settlers who were traveling west from Pennsylvania and found their way by stagecoach to a beautiful area they began to call home in 1838. The community grew rapidly with agricultural and industrial ambitions and drew enough attention that it was the site of the second Lincoln-Douglas Debate for the US Senate seat from Illinois.

Fast forward 200 years and Stephenson County maintains its claim for industrious, hardworking people who continue to innovate and change. A wide range of opportunities make Stephenson County an attractive option to continue your career or enter a growing job market.

## INDUSTRY SEGMENTS

Value-Added Agriculture

Manufacturing

Healthcare

Insurance

## WORKFORCE BY INDUSTRY

Manufacturing - 19%

Education and Health Services - 16%

Government - 16%

Trade, Transportation & Utilities - 14%



# Housing & Quality of Life

Living in Stephenson County is affordable and offers the benefits of small-town life with easy access to larger amenities. One of the most picturesque spots in Illinois, the county offers rolling hills and plenty of open landscape. The cost of living in Freeport and Stephenson County is far less than nearby metro areas making it possible to have a larger home, build your assets and live comfortably in less-crowded spaces.

Average daily commute time is less than 20 minutes. Spend less time in traffic and more time with the people you love, doing what you love.

Quality of life also means quality health care. FHN Hospital and clinics offers specialized, convenient, local care to residents as well as affiliations with three major hospitals in Rockford and UW Hospital and Clinics in Madison, WI. Additional healthcare options, such as Monroe Clinic, offer urgent care, general and specialized appointments in multiple clinics in Stephenson County.

A wide array of housing options exist in Stephenson County. From tree-line boulevards and historic homes to farmettes and downtown lofts, Stephenson County offers sizes and styles in all price ranges.

Stephenson County is budding into a growth mindset that brings the best of these values to existing and returning residents, creating an environment where anyone can thrive.



**COST OF LIVING**

**Home Ownership Rate**  
68.7%

**Median Gross Rent**  
\$639

**Median Home Value**  
\$97,000

**Median Household Income**  
\$48,016

**Cost of Living Index**  
Stephenson County - 94.4  
Dane County, WI - 99.3  
Cook County - 122.9

*2018 Council for Community and Economic Reserach*

# Outdoor Experiences to Make Memories



If your idea of recharging includes sweat on your brow, fresh air in your lungs and sunshine on your face, Stephenson County has a great selection of outdoor activities to offer the serenity you crave.

With over 50 miles of hiking and biking trails across the county, pick your path and enjoy the views! The Jane Addams Trail, Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Krape Park, Hideaway Park, Taylor Park, Evangeline Forest Walk and Tutty's Crossing are all remarkable spaces to walk, bike and unwind.

Bring your kayak or canoe and put in for a day of beautiful paddling. Pick the shaded scenery of Yellow Creek from Krape Park or the long, winding waters of "Illinois' Friendliest Paddle" on the Pecatonica River from Winslow to Tutty's Crossing for up to 30 miles of water trail.

**OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS**

**Jane Addams Trail**  
17-mile recreational trail with beautiful scenery passing through prairie, wetlands and geologic formations. Bike all the way to Wisconsin!

**Oakdale Nature Preserve**  
133 acres of forests, restored prairies and more than four miles of trails.

**Little Cubs Field**  
A miniature replica of Wrigley Field for baseball fans of all ages.

**Championship Golf**  
Five 18-hole golf courses featuring challenging terrain and remarkable features.

**Krape Park**  
Located on the west edge of Freeport, Krape Park includes a wonderfully restored antique carousel, 18-hole mini golf course, paddle boat rental as well as miles of hiking trails.

**Read Park**  
A quad-plex baseball complex is the center of Read Park along with a skate park, swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts.

# Continuously Learning

Whether you are looking for public or private, mid-sized or small school enrollment, Stephenson County offers excellent educational environments for all ages. Stephenson County embraces six school districts offering comprehensive public or private educational programs for students Pre-K through 12th grade.

Also, Stephenson County is home to Highland Community College's 140-acre campus. The two-year college serves a four-county area of students recently graduated and those looking to return to a degree program after working. The college enrolls 7,000 students annually and offers degrees in 28 majors and certificates in 21 career programs. Highland students

may also complete a four-year degree through Columbia College, located on the same campus. In the last year, Highland has also partnered with Rockford University's Puri School of Business, Phoenix University and Northern Illinois University to offer bachelor-degree classes in the fields of business and nursing. Continue your own education or keep kids close to home with great, affordable educational options.

The Lifelong Learning programs offered at Highland are great opportunities to learn a new skill, explore a hobby or increase knowledge for work-related expertise for all ages.



## EDUCATION SYSTEMS

### Public School Districts with Enrollments

- Dakota - 800
- Freeport - 3,940
- Lena-Winslow - 840
- Orangeville - 330
- Pearl City - 440

### Private School Systems with Grade Levels

- Aquin Jr/Sr High Schools - 139
- St. Joe's Catholic (PreK-5) - 80
- Immanuel Lutheran (PreK-8) - 120
- Tri-County Christian (PreK-8) - 150

### Advanced Education

- Highland Community College
- Columbia College
- HCC Lifelong Learning

**Stephenson Co. Graduation Rate**  
92% of adults over 25 have a high school diploma



## AREA MUSEUMS

Cedarville Historical Museum

Freeport Art Museum

German Valley Historical Museum

McConnell Area Historical Society Museum

Silver Creek Train & Engine Museum

Stephenson County Historical Museum

National Arcade Toy Museum

Winslow Historical Society Museum

# Focusing on Arts & Culture

For a county of 45,000 people, Stephenson County offers wonderful cultural opportunities. From art to theater to festivals and history, it's All In Stephenson County.

The Freeport Art Museum engages people through art, offering permanent and changing exhibits, programs, workshops and camps. The heart of the museum is an extensive and expanding art collection that spans 4,000 years of humankind's aesthetic endeavors. The museum began in 1976 when it acquired the collection of Mr. W. T. Rawleigh, a prominent Freeport industrialist who traveled the world in connection with his business and collected art for his personal collection.

Winneshiek Playhouse is the oldest, continuously running amateur theater in Illinois and continues to produce multiple shows each year along

with Mighty Richland Players in Orangeville. The Children's Hands-On Museum found a permanent home in the Lincoln Mall and offers programming and regular hours for families to enjoy displays in sensory development, art, and productive play.

Festivals like Art in the Park and Paint the Port allow local artisans and families to showcase their talents and engage with community in a relaxing, beautiful environment. Live music of varying genres can be found in multiple locations throughout the area on any given weekend.

Enjoying the diversity of all art forms and the availability of events and museums makes Freeport and Stephenson County a growing center for artistic talent.

# Giving Back

Affecting change in areas you are passionate about can be difficult when the population you are influencing is much larger. In Stephenson County, your time and talent will be a value-add to the community! Eager to help the environment or childhood literacy? With non-profits in education, social service, senior services, environmental advocacy, social justice and more, there is no shortage of opportunities to become involved.

In addition to the sense of pride and self-satisfaction, volunteering or working toward change can help you make friends, learn new skills, advance your career and even help your physical health. When you dedicate your time and talents to an organization or worthy cause, you improve the lives of others in the region making your impact even greater in our less-populated region.

## HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Volunteer
- Expand Your Horizons
- Gain & Offer Meaningful Skills
- Support Local Businesses
- Be Passionate About Personal Growth

## MAKE YOUR IMPACT

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Why is it so important to find a cause you love and volunteer your time? Spending time enriching your community is a great way to broaden your perceptions of the world. By immersing yourself in a community and surrounding yourself with people who are dedicated to bettering the world, you can learn so much about how the world works. You gain a unique sense of purpose by serving those around you, one which often manifests in other areas of your life. Giving back to the place you call home helps to unite the community and bridge some of the social, economic and political gaps.

- EF Academy

## KEY ELEMENTS TO REMOTE WORK

Average Monthly Internet Expense  
\$52/3 MB Speed

Average Rent  
\$672

Access to Airports  
Freeport Albertus Airport  
Rockford Int'l - 32 mi.  
Chicago O'Hare - 100 mi.  
Milwaukee Int'l - 112 mi.  
Chicago Midway - 135 mi.

Current Remote Work  
1,125 workers  
5.4% of Stephenson Co. workforce population



# Working Remotely in Stephenson County

The ability to work remotely is an advantage not only for your work-life balance, it could also benefit your financial outlook if you are able to move to a more cost effective community. While your employer may be situated in a metropolitan area, when you work remotely you have the option to take residence in areas that have a decreased cost of living.

If you could choose to work anywhere, why not make it in a scenic area where you can live comfortably and enjoy access to the same business amenities as larger markets? High-speed internet access and easy entry to

Highway 20 make it almost effortless to connect with your corporate headquarters when needed. Freeport and Stephenson County offer the highlights of a small-town lifestyle with the opportunity to connect with the "big city" life just a short drive away.

The Christian Science Monitor recently reported a prairie trend of young people, drawn by family ties and affordable entrepreneurship, returning to rural and small-town homes around college graduation. They're opening restaurants or starting small, unconventional farming operations. And a Gallup poll in 2018 found that while roughly 80 percent of

the population live in urban areas, rural life was the most desired.

The way the world works is changing and it is no longer about commuting to high-rise offices. Create the lifestyle and environment you crave by surrounding yourself with the best of natural beauty and the ability to stay connected and productive.

Freeport and Stephenson County offer a variety of amenities to help you stay engaged with your career in a less-urban setting. Take the time to fantasize about what work could truly look like for you if you aren't required to be in the office - it looks a lot like home!







**GREATERFREEPORT.COM**

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