

TOWANDA TIMES

February 2026

MAYOR MINUTE

Community is much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter. — Brian Solis

Towanda may be a small town, but that's exactly what makes us special. Route 66 was never just about big cities — it was about communities like ours where travelers stopped for gas, food, and a friendly face. Towanda reflects the authentic, small-town America that made Route 66 legendary.

Illinois is where Route 66 begins, and Towanda sits right in the middle of that story. Travelers passed through here as they left Chicago behind and experienced true rural America for the first time. Our stretch of the Mother Road represents the transition from city to countryside.

We don't just celebrate Route 66 as pavement — we celebrate it as a way of life. The values of hospitality, hard work, and community pride that defined Route 66 travelers are still alive in Towanda today.

The Route 66 Centennial isn't only a historic milestone — it's an economic opportunity. Visitors looking for authentic experiences are rediscovering towns like Towanda, and we are ready to welcome them, support local businesses, and share our story with the world.

Route 66 has always been about the journey, not just the destination. In Towanda, we invite travelers to slow down, step off the highway, and experience the warmth, history, and community that made this road famous. That's what the next 100 years Route 66 should be about.

Please reach out to help with Cruisin' Through the Century Details for the 100th Festivities:

The Village of Towanda will be a stop during the Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Festival: May 2-3, 2026

- o Cruisin' Through the Century Party: June 6-7, 2026
 - Towanda will host a 1940s-themed party on Saturday, June 6.
- o The Village of Towanda will create a chalkboard display on the Towanda Parkway and Arboretum. Residents and travelers will be encouraged to sign their names, draw art, and commemorate their trip to Towanda during the Centennial. Photos of the display will create a memorial book at the end of the year.
- o Original 1926 pavement near Rapid Rocky's will be appointed as the Village's Centennial Street with photo opportunities, special signage, and opportunities for city programming throughout the year.
- o Towanda will take part in VisitBN's countywide scavenger hunt. Locations to find will include the historic stretch of Route 66 dubbed Deadman's Curve and Kick's Bar and Grill. Players must scan QR codes to log their progress in the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway App. We hope travelers will enjoy getting their kicks at Kick's on 66!

Don Williams
mayor@villageoftowanda.org
309/275-0435

4-H

The Towanda 4-H club will meet Feb 1, 2026 at 2:00pm at the Towanda Community Building. We will be having talks by Sathvik, Lynlee Moran, Holly Moran, Kaitlyn OKraski, and Carter OKraski. Ella Bauchmoyer, Alex Clause, and Rachel Miller will be doing a demonstration about their projects. Rachel Miller will be doing a program on Japan as well. It will be a great afternoon learning about so many incredible 4-H projects. Members are encouraged to get the project enrollments signed up.

For more information contact Jeanie Wager at 309 728-2852 or Carrie Green at 309 846-7888.

4TH OF JULY

Our next meeting is Monday, January 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm at the Community Building. Questions can be directed to: towandajuly4th@gmail.com and Virginia Lowery at vlowery1@hotmail.com or 309-825-6341.

FUNERAL COMMITTEE

The Funeral Committee hosts receptions for our Village residents. Please let us know if we can be of help. Thank you to all those on the call list that continue to support this tradition. Also, we are looking for volunteers for our "call list" for food donations. Contact Tammy Pate call/text (309) 826-8776 or Janet Collins (309) 706-3390 for more information.

HCE

(Towanda Home and Community Education)

The Towanda Home and Community Education group will be meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building. The program "Food Labels and Food Storage" will be presented by Linda Conder. The minor lesson will be on the Caribbean Islands/Dominican Republic, Geography and Climate. Members and guests are welcome to wear red and also bring or talk about their most memorable valentine. Members may bring the February Community Outreach project for the Humane Society of Central Illinois of liquid hand soap in February and bring toilet paper to the March 9 meeting.

February 14 will be the county HCE Membership and Friendship Tea, held on **Saturday, February 14, 1-3 p.m.** at Christ Lutheran Church, 311 Hershey Rd, Normal. Members and guests will be treated to a program, "The Making of Miniatures" presented by Beverly Keller. Tickets: HCE members, \$10 and non-members, \$5. Enjoy tea and cookies and a wonderful program. Non members are cordially welcome. RSVP by January 30, 2026 and tickets are limited to 80 people. Eastsiders HCE Unit is in charge of this event. Tickets are available from Cindy Kelley, 309-824-4797 or Debi Stoppkotte, 309-825-8458.

Other county HCE activities include "Read & Share" the book *The Clover Girls* by Viola Shipman on **Monday, Feb 16, 2-3:30 p.m.** at the Extension Office, [1615 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington](https://www.extension.illinois.edu/1615-commerce-parkway-bloomington). Community Service Day is **Tuesday, February 17, 9 am-2 pm** at the Extension Office, 1615 Commerce Parkway, Blm. **Tuesday, Feb 24, 12:30-1:30 p.m.** will be a class, "[Where to Start: Declutter Your Home and Financial Information](https://www.extension.illinois.edu/where-start-declutter-your-home-and-financial-information)" presented by Sara Attig, Family Life Educator, UI Extension. This will be held at the Farm Bureau. [2242 Westgate Dr, Bloomington](https://www.extension.illinois.edu/2242-westgate-dr-bloomington). More information: Becky Toohill, 309-532-2125.

Questions about these programs or other information can be directed to Cindy, 309-824-4797. Come visit and explore your world with new ideas and learning about interesting topics.

TOWANDA AMERICAN LEGION

Thank you to those that support us, we greatly appreciate it!
email: towandalegion@gmail.com and find us on facebook

NEW MEMBERS: *We are looking for members!* Are you a Veteran, son of a Veteran, or would like to be in the Auxiliary? Join us for our **monthly meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm** at the Towanda Legion.

RENTALS: The legion is a great place to rent for your events!

Text Sharon Engel 309/531-8898 or Email us: towandalegion@gmail.com

~FEBRUARY DINING @ the Legion~

BREAKFAST: Saturday, 2/7/26 @ 8-10:30 a.m.

sausage, bacon, biscuits & gravy, scrambled eggs, pancakes, hash browns, drink \$14

DINNER: Friday, 2/13/26 @ 5-7:00 p.m.

chili or chili mac, hot dog, dessert & drink \$12

kids: hot dog, chips, dessert & drink \$5

All meals subject to change without notice.

~Carry out available~

Thank you for your continued support!

207 Hely Street, Towanda

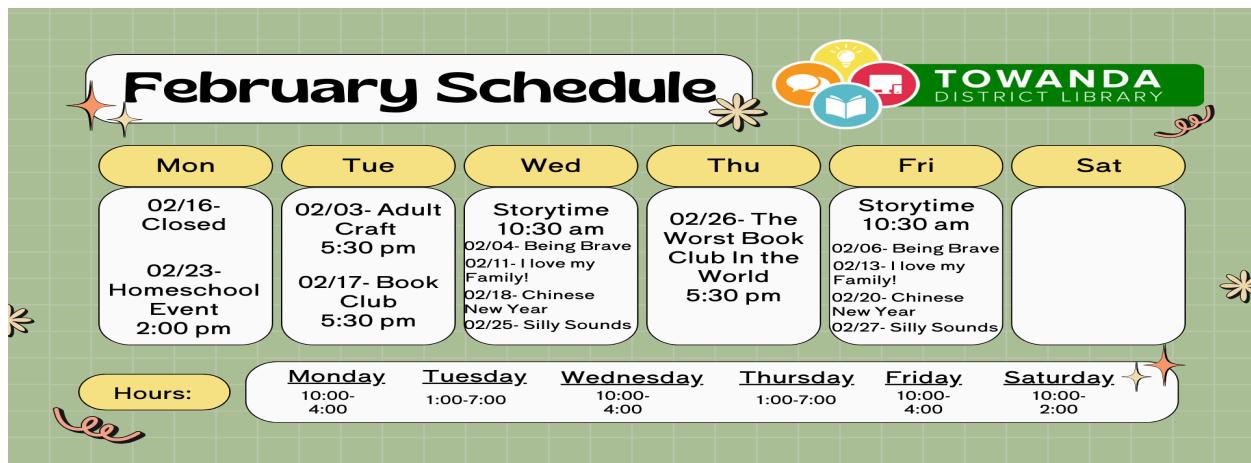
TOWANDA DISTRICT LIBRARY

February is full of adventures at the Towanda District Library! We'll continue our weekly Storytime at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, with themed sessions including Being Brave, I Love My Family!, Chinese New Year, and Silly Sounds.

Adults are invited to join us for an Adult Craft Night on February 3 at 5:30 p.m., and Book Club on February 17 at 5:30 p.m. Homeschool families are welcome to our Homeschool Event on February 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Looking for something a little different? Don't miss The Worst Book Club in the World on February 26 at 5:30 p.m., where we celebrate the joy of reading questionable books together.

Please note that the library will be closed on February 16. As always, we appreciate our wonderful community and look forward to seeing you in the library this month!



TOWANDA FIRE DEPARTMENT (TFD)

Come see us on the 1st (Officers Meeting), 2nd (Regular Meeting), 3rd (EMS Training), or 4th (Regular Meeting), Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. Or join us on the last Monday of the month at 6:30 pm (Work Night/Business Meeting). Members of the Towanda Fire Department would like to thank the citizens of the Fire Protection District for their continued support.

TOWANDA HISTORICAL WALKWAY

If anyone is interested in purchasing a Memorial or Historical brick for their family or friends, please contact Virginia Lowery @ 309 825-6341 or vlowery1@hotmail.com. The bricks are \$50 each with up to three lines of print, 16 spaces per line. This year 2026, is the 100th anniversary of Route 66 ~ It's a good time to leave your "footprint" along old 66! Order your brick today!!! **"Towanda is a great little place to call HOME!"**

TOWANDA LION'S CLUB

We would like to thank all those who have kept the Caring Cupboard stocked during this past year. It is definitely being used and has helped several families this year. You may have noticed that canned goods have been temporarily removed because of the extreme cold. As the temperatures warm up you will see them back in the cupboard. There are still other items in the cupboard that are not temperature sensitive.

The Towanda Lions Club is offering two \$750 scholarships for current high school seniors and to students already pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree. The scholarships are for applicants who live within the 61776 Towanda zip code area and/or live within the Towanda township.

1. The Steve Liebenow Memorial Scholarship for any college field of study
2. The Towanda Lions Memorial Scholarship for training/education in a trades field

Further details and applications for each of these scholarships are available on the Towanda, Illinois Lions website: e-clubhouse.org/sites/towandail

On the Home page, click on Scholarships listed in the upper-left of the screen.

Scholarship Committee co-chairmen:

Jerry Bersche – phone: 309-838-1695

Steve Shipley – phone: 309-830-1751

Also, please consider joining our club. We meet the second Thursday of each month @ 6:30 at the Towanda Fire Department. Contact Bob Hancock at (309) 282-1801 or email oldcars@frontiernet.net

TOWANDA ROUTE 66 PARKWAY

Please consider purchasing a t-shirt or sweatshirt to support our Route 66 Parkway. Short and long sleeve t-shirts and sweatshirts are available in an assortment of colors and sizes. They can be viewed and purchased at the McLean County Museum of History in downtown Bloomington throughout the year and at Ryburn Place located at 305 Pine Street in Normal located along Old Route 66 from March-December. All proceeds go towards the maintenance of our beautiful Parkway. Contact Fred Walk at fwalk@frontiernet.net for additional information about the shirts and for donating to the Parkway.

VILLAGE OF TOWANDA WATER CONFIDENCE REPORT

The annual water report is posted on the Village Bulletin Board.

WEDNESDAY WEEDERS ~ Route 66 Parkway

This is a group of volunteers who maintain the gardens on Route 66 Parkway. WE ARE IN NEED OF MORE HELP! The time commitment is one hour or less per Wednesday morning during the growing season. No green thumbs required! Contact Carol Myers (309) 533-0412.

FEBRUARY 2026

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|---|--|---|
| 1 -4-H @ 2:00pm CB | 2 -Towanda Board Meet 7:00pm CB | 3 -Garbage | 4 -Recycle -TFD Officer Meeting 6:30pm | 5 | 6 | 7 -Legion Breakfast 8-10:30am |
| 8 -Meat Sales Due | 9 -Towanda HCE 6:30pm CB | 10 -Garbage | 11 -TFD Regular Meeting 6:30pm | 12 -Lion's Club @ Fire Dept 6:30pm | 13 -Legion Chili Dinner 5-7pm | 14 Valentine's Day |
| 15 -Water Bills Due | 16 President's Day | 17 -Garbage | 18 -Recycle -TFD EMS Train 6:30pm | 19 -Legion Meet 7:00pm | 20 | 21 -Meat Pickup 10am-2pm |
| 22 | 23 -TFD Work Night 6:30pm -4th July Meet 6:30pm @ CB | 24 -Garbage | 25 -TFD Regular Meeting @ 6:30pm | 26 | 27 | 28 |
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All information for the MARCH 2026 Newsletter is due FEBRUARY 20, please send to:
news@villageoftowanda.org

Village Contact Information

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|--|---|---|
| Mayor: Don Williams mayor@villageoftowanda.org 309/275-0435 | Village Clerk: Lula Zimmerman clerk@villageoftowanda.org 309/728-2811 | Village Treasurer: Bonnie Smith treasurer@villageoftowanda.org 309/728-2811 |
| Community Building: Deb Kinsella calendar@villageoftowanda.org 309/275-9857 | Water: Scott Flack water@villageoftowanda.org 309/750-0486 | Zoning: Evan Thomas zoning@villageoftowanda.org 309/275-0717 |
| Safety/Ordinance: Tammy Pate safety@villageoftowanda.org 309/826-8776 | Parks: Janet Collins parks@villageoftowanda.org 309/706-3390 | Streets: Gary Smith streets@villageoftowanda.org 309/275-7123 |

The Clerk's Office is open Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

70th Annual Towanda Scout/Legion Meat Sale

(formally known as Towanda Scouts)



ORDER NOW! Deadline: February 8, 2026

Pick up: Saturday, February 21, 2026 ~ 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

@ Towanda Community Building, 103 S. Jefferson

The Towanda American Legion is once again taking over the Scout meat sales tradition. We are still hoping to have breakfast again, searching for volunteers for 2027.

Options to order:

- Online Store at this link: my-site-104547.square.site or scan the QR Code below.
- Mail order form AND payment:
Sharon Engel
412 E. Washington St.
Towanda, IL 61776
- Email form to: towandalegion@gmail.com
- Call or text: Sharon Engel 309/531-8898

Online Store QR Code:



Towanda IL Troop 956

**Village of Towanda
P.O. Box 213
Towanda, IL 61776**

**First Class
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 4**

**PO Box Customer
Towanda, IL 61776**