



# LEMONT

*Made up of an integrated patchwork of new and old, this town maintains a balance of growth and historic charm.*



Walking around downtown Lemont, one comes across a series of mosaics — small tiles glued together to create images of the community and its people and places. These colorful bits of artistry, found along a bridge, in sidewalk flowerpots and other locales, reflect the nature of the village and how different

where residents are proud to call home,” says Mayor Brian Reaves. “You will find many fourth-generation families here with roots going back to the late 1800s. It’s a close-knit community where people really care about their neighbors, and when someone is in need, this community really pulls together to help one another.”

It’s also a town in growth mode, with a population that rose from about

for all ages and interests. “This is my 50th year living in Lemont and I can honestly say Lemont is an undiscovered jewel in the southwest suburbs,” he remarks.

## Downtown Lemont

With picturesque hills, graceful church steeples, arching bridges spanning rivers and canals and charming storefronts — including Tom’s Place, with an original



The car show, the farmers market and the pool at the park district are a few of the many outdoor activities enjoyed by the residents of and visitors to Lemont.

pieces come together to make a home and a destination.

Located 27 miles southwest of Chicago, Lemont has many mosaic-like facets. It is one of the oldest communities in the state, dating to its founding in 1836. At various points in its history, Lemont has been a magnet for immigrants looking for work in its industrial and agricultural areas, including groups of people from Ireland, Lithuania and Poland. The village spans parts of Cook, DuPage and Will counties, and its topography is defined by hills, valleys and waterways like the Des Plaines River and Illinois and Michigan (I&M) Canal. While its historic downtown looks just that — like stepping back in history — various developments and new projects are designed with the future in mind.

“Lemont is a village that’s rich in history, strong in traditions and a place

5,600 residents in 1980 to approximately 16,700 today. “In the last decade, the village has rebounded nicely from the recession of 2007 and has seen significant residential growth over these years and continued development coming to Lemont,” reports Village Administrator George Schafer, adding that several local and national developers have invested in Lemont recently for both residential and commercial development. “Lemont is strategically located by the I-55 and 355 highway system, with an interchange added as part of the I-355 expansion in 2007, which makes it an attractive place to live and commute to downtown Chicago or to other employment centers around the region.”

Glenn Pasiewicz, executive director of the Lemont Chamber of Commerce, says that Lemont successfully straddles history and progress, with things to do and see

lit-up “Blatz” beer sign — downtown Lemont has a distinctive look, even when compared to other western suburbs.

Within these historic storefronts, many fashioned from signature Lemont limestone and others built from wood and brick, a variety of businesses cater to residents and visitors. Befitting the look of the downtown, there are several antique stores, such as Mabel’s Market and Smokey Row Antiques, along with Second Chance Thrift Shoppe.

The Inn at Smokey Row is a B&B right in the center of town. (Side note: Smokey Row is a part of the downtown named for its 18th century brothels, taverns and gambling spots, popular with young men who lived and worked in town at the time. Those days are long gone, but the history is intriguing.)

There are a variety of newer stores in downtown Lemont, too, including

Statistical Snapshot

**Population**

- 2014 est - 16,661
- Increase from 2000 - 27.2%
- Median Age - 42.4
- 19 and under - 27.2%
- 20-24 - 5.5%
- 25-34 - 9.4%
- 35-44 - 12.2%
- 45-54 - 17.9%
- 55-64 - 11.9%
- 65 and over - 15.8%
- % Male - 47.3%
- % Female - 52.7%
- % White - 95.1%
- % African-American - 0.9%
- % Asian - 0.9%
- % Hispanic - 7.0%

**Education**

- % High school degree or higher - 93.3%
- % Bachelor's degree or higher - 39.7%



Photo courtesy of the Village of Lemont

- % Graduate or Professional degree - 15.9%
- Owner-occupied units - 4,876
- Renter-occupied units - 798
- Gross median rent - \$861
- % Residents Employed - 94.8%
- % Residents Unemployed - 5.2%
- Avg. Travel Time to work - 32.3 min
- % High school degree or higher - 93.3%
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**Income**

- Median Household Income - \$86,529

**Housing**

- Total households - 5,979
- % Family Households - 72.9%
- Avg. Household Size - 2.8
- Mean Price for Detached Houses - \$289,664

Sources: U.S. Census, City-Data.com and usa.com

boutiques like 1 Happy Girl and Jilley's Boutique, as well as salons such as Belle de Jour and Salon 312.

Those looking for a bite to eat can find a mix of longtime eateries, like Nick's Tavern, Canal Street Pub and Sweetwater Deli, as well as hotspots with a contemporary feel like Front Street Cantina, La Dolce Vita of Lemont, StoneHouse Pub, Gelsosomo's Pizzeria & Pub (the first of that franchise to open in Illinois), Pollyanna Brewing Company and the Vault Cafe and Bar (in the site of an old bank), among others.

In keeping with the legacy of fusing people, places and events, Lemont's business owners often team up with other groups in town for the greater good. One example is Pawz & Klawz Pet Salon, which recently worked with Cache Creek TLC to help find homes for homeless cats and dogs. "We partnered with both organizations by holding a Pet Night on June 22 at our car show and were able to find homes for a number of dogs that night," reports Pasiewicz. He cites another example of Simply Yoga Lemont, which offers classes with proceeds donated to Hope & Friendship Foundation and local women's shelters.

Village leaders have strived to maintain

the legacy and look of downtown Lemont while making sure that services and businesses meet the needs of the town's growing population. "The district allows for redevelopment that preserves existing sites and growth that is consistent with the established historic characters," explains Village Planner Heather Valone, who notes that a small part of the downtown historic district was placed on the National Register this past summer. "The placement on the National Register brings with it incentives for redevelopment of the historic downtown area."

Adds Village Trustee Paul Chialdikas, "Revitalizing our historic downtown has been a priority for the village over the last several years." He cites the implementation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district in the late 2000s created to spur economic development in the downtown, which he says led to major investment of infrastructure and private development.

While downtown Lemont boasts a quaint ambiance and array of stores and restaurants, there are other commercial areas that are thriving as the community has grown over the past 20 years. A variety of shops and restaurants have made the area around 127th and State Streets a hub along the southern part of town, with

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longtime businesses like Chipain's Fresh Market and newer ones like the Illinois Bar & Grill. Another growing area is on the east side of town near McCarthy Road, Derby Road and Archer Avenue.

Expansion isn't finished yet, according to Valone. "The village has begun to market its Gateway Site at Route 83 and Main Street to potential developers. It is likely that a portion of the Gateway Site will be developed for commercial uses," she says.

**Lemontster Days and Other Community Events**

Like many western suburbs, Lemont hosts special events throughout the year, sponsored by various organizations in town. Lemontster Days in October is an example of a popular event, stretching three full weeks and involving several different groups.

Lemontster Days kicks off on Saturday, October 8 with a new Witches Wine Walk. "More than 125 costumed witches from Lemont and surrounding communities will be visiting four downtown merchants and ending the night at Gelsosomo's Pizzeria for food and dancing to a live band," says Pasiewicz, adding that proceeds will benefit the Lemont Chamber of Commerce and the Lemont Park Foundation.

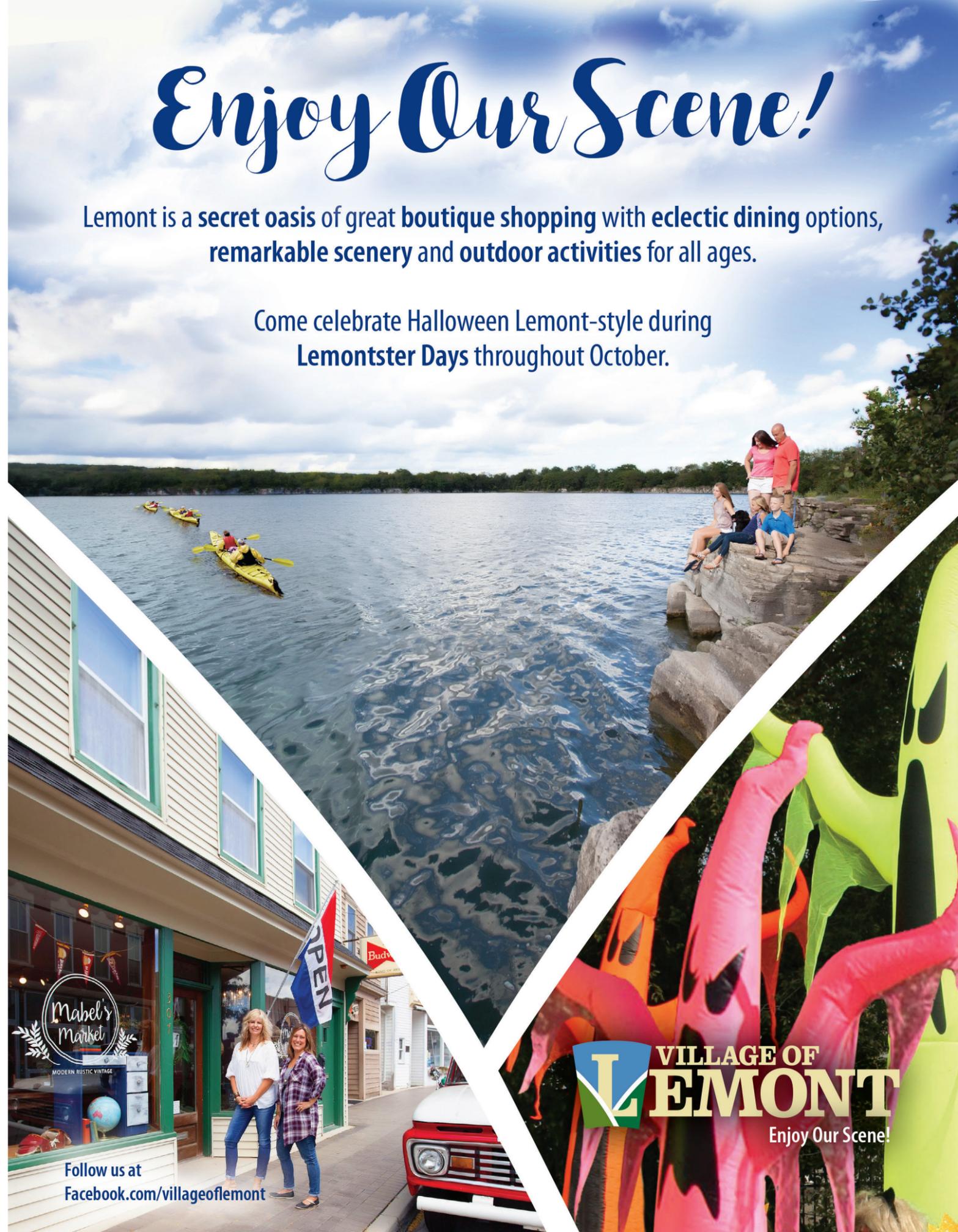
The Rotary Club of Lemont-Homer Glen will focus on another spirit for the season at an Autumn Craft Beer Tasting on Oct. 13 at Gelsosomo's. The event highlights beers from Pollyanna Brewing along with DIY tips from an award-winning home brewer.

Other activities during Lemontster

# Enjoy Our Scene!

Lemont is a secret oasis of great boutique shopping with eclectic dining options, remarkable scenery and outdoor activities for all ages.

Come celebrate Halloween Lemont-style during Lemontster Days throughout October.



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Resources



Waterfall Glen

PHOTO: JEFFREY W. HARRIS

championship golf course, par-72, with dining, banquet rooms, tournaments and more.

■ **Sagawau Canyon & Environmental Learning Center** – 12545 W 111th St., 630 257-2045. Features tours of the only canyon in Cook County, exhibits, programs and more.

■ **Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve** – Along Lemont Rd., 630 933-7248. Forest preserve with 2,492 acres offering 11 miles of hiking trails, fishing, campgrounds and more.

**Events**

■ **Cruise Nights**  
Main, Canal and Lemont Streets in downtown Lemont, 630 257-5997. Annual summer event featuring vintage cars on Wednesday nights.

■ **Halloween Hoedown**  
Downtown Lemont, 630 243-2700. Annual event featuring parade, costume contest, trick-or-treating and more in late October.

■ **Heritage Fest**  
Various locations in downtown Lemont, 630 243-2700. Annual Fall event featuring children’s activities, live music, a zipline and more.

■ **Hometown Holidays**  
Various locations in downtown Lemont, 630 243-2700. Early December event featuring shopping, children’s activities, Santa visits, tree lighting and more.

■ **Lemont Farmers Market**  
Talcott Square Parking Lot, Stephen St. and Talcott St., 630 243-2700. Tuesdays through Oct 25, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

■ **St. Patrick’s Day Parade**  
Various locations in downtown Lemont, 630 243-2700. Annual parade in early March featuring a live Irish band, Irish dancing, and the crowning of the Irish Queen.

**Lemont Public Library**

■ Total Holdings – 81,865  
■ Items Checked Out Per Year – 157,387  
■ Visitors Per Year – 115,000

**Attractions**

■ **Argonne National Laboratory** – 9700 Cass Ave., 630 252-2000. Science and engineering research complex focusing on clean energy and environmental protection.

■ **Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago** – 10915 Lemont Rd., 630 972-0300. Traditional Hindu temple promoting Indian religious and cultural values and offering a spiritual center, classes and more.

■ **L’Arte e’ Vita Studio** – 115 Stephen St., 630 754-7750. Art studio offering classes, open paints, parties and more.

■ **Lemont Center for the Arts**  
1243 State St. #101, 630 243-7375. Center dedicated to exhibitions, performances, classes and more art-related events.

■ **Little Mountain Community Theatre** – 800 Porter St., 630 623-3523. Community theatre founded in 2014 that offers workshops and performances for all ages.

**Museums**

■ **Lemont Area Historical Society** – 306 Lemont St., 630 257-2972. Not-for-profit society operating in a museum containing a

collection of historical artifacts and memorabilia from Lemont.

■ **Lithuanian World Center**  
14911 E 127th St., 630 257-8787. Facilities dedicated to Lithuanian heritage and history including a museum of art, library, gallery and more.

**Recreation**

■ **Centennial Outdoor Aquatic Center** – 16028 W 127th St., 630 257-6787. Features a 6-lane outdoor swimming pool with a diving board, water slide and leisure pool with zero-depth entry.

■ **The CORE Fitness & Aquatic Complex** – 16028 W 127th St., 630 257-6787. Features exercise equipment, a 6-lane indoor swimming pool, an indoor track and more.

■ **Heritage Quarries Recreation Area** – Along the Illinois & Michigan Canal, 630 257-1550. Hiking, biking, fishing and more on nearly 100 acres of trails and several former quarries turned fresh water lakes.

■ **Heritage Woodlands Sanctuary** – 127th St. & Timberland Dr., 630 257-1550. Over 59 acres of restored habitats including prairie, wetlands and more.

■ **Ruffed Feathers Golf Course** – 1 Pete Dye Dr., 630 257-1000. A 6,898-yard

The Lemont Park District is also involved with Lemontster Days. “This fun, fall-themed series of community events will include the Lemont Park District’s Fall Fest on Oct. 15, a free event at Centennial Park featuring entertainment for the whole family including live music, hay rides, free s’mores, scarecrow decorating and much more,” reports Carrie Dellamano, director of communications, sales and development for the park district.

As fall gives way to the holidays, Lemont hosts other events and celebrations, including the Women’s Holiday Soiree on Nov. 10 at Crystal Grand Banquets and the annual Hometown Holiday event on Dec. 3 in downtown Lemont, with children’s activities, wagon/sleigh rides, lighting of the town Christmas tree with Santa, music entertainment, drinks, a Kris Kringle Market and more.

Early in the new year, the Chamber of Commerce and Lemont Park District will team up for the annual Community Business Expo on Feb. 25 to spotlight an array of locally owned businesses.

Later in 2017, seasonal events heat up again, including a farmers market on Tuesdays, car shows on Wednesday nights and the village’s annual Heritage Fest in early September.

**Lemont Park District**

Marking its 50th year in 2016, the Lemont Park District doesn’t just scare up a good time at Halloween, according to Dellamano. Headquartered at its Centennial Campus — which boasts a community center and the CORE Fitness and Aquatic Complex — the organization operates more than 500 recreation programs and special events annually.

Park district programs are geared for participants of all ages. Programs include preschool, early childhood development, dance, gymnastics, activities for seniors, racquetball, basketball, soccer, karate, arts and crafts, several athletic sports programs, trips, leagues, fitness programs and more.

In addition to Centennial Campus, which hosts approximately 250,000 visitors per year and covers 1.7 million feet in

space, the Lemont Park District provides and maintains 22 park sites that include various playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts and numerous athletic fields.

**Heritage Quarries Recreation Area**

For those seeking to take advantage of time spent in the great outdoors, the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area (HQRA) spans 100 acres in Lemont. The area is rimmed by an I&M Canal Trail which loops around freshwater lakes that once served as quarries and that now provide recreation, from boating and kayaking to fishing.

Schafer calls the HQRA a hidden gem in Lemont that underscores the authenticity and experiences that the village has to offer. “The community has implemented several forward-thinking initiatives to improve this community asset, most recently leveraging a partnership with one of its corporate partners, CITGO of Lemont, to restore areas of the recreational park with native plantings along with financial assistance for other related improvements in the HQRA,” he says. The partnership has produced several environmental restoration days, involving the science community, hundreds of volunteers from the community and students from Lemont’s high school district. The next restoration day is Oct. 15, according to Schafer.

**Lemont Center for the Arts**

If nature enriches the human experience, so, too, does art. To that end, the village of Lemont fosters art participation, awareness and appreciation in a variety of ways.

One of the most prolific ways is through the Lemont Center for the Arts, headquarters of the village’s official Art & Culture Commission. The Lemont Center for the Arts opened in 2010 and features a gallery showcasing the works of student and professional artists. An on-site boutique offers a variety of artisan-made gifts.

In addition to fostering artists and their works, the Lemont Center for the Arts offers free events. “We’re having our sixth anniversary exhibit during September

and October, called ‘Lemont: Then and Now,’” says Artistic Director Mona Parry.

Exemplifying the mosaic-like feel of the community, the anniversary exhibit was made possible by others. “We are collaborating with the Lemont Area Historical Society for photos of Lemont ‘then.’ We have invited local artists to submit work for the Lemont ‘now’ portion,” explains Parry.

People looking for holiday gifts can also stop by the Lemont Center for the Arts during November and December for the group’s annual Holiday Artists Bazaar.

**Lithuanian Museum of Art and Lithuanian World Center**

The Lithuanian Museum of Art inside the Lithuanian World Center is another place to view and appreciate art. The 10,000-sq-ft exhibit space includes four galleries featuring different art forms, from Lithuanian wood sculpture and folk art, to contemporary works.

The organization that houses the galleries, the Lithuanian World Center, is a signature building in the village of Lemont. Created to preserve the community’s Lithuanian heritage and culture, the non-profit center offers weekly church services and bingo, along with other special events, including an Oktoberfest on Oct. 8 and Holiday Craft Fair on Dec. 3 and 4. To raise funds for the nonprofit organization, its building and programs, an annual Gala will be held on November 5.

In all, more than 35 nonprofit Lithuanian organizations take part in the center in one way or another. Examples include the “Dainava” Lithuanian Chorale, “Spinduly” Dance Ensemble, Lithuanian World Center Library, Lituanica Basketball Academy and Chicago Lithuanian Basketball League, among others.

**Houses of Worship**

Given its legacy and population of people hailing from different backgrounds and nations, Lemont is home to a number of houses of worship, some of them notable for their architecture and influence. One of the community’s mottos is “Village of Faith.”

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Days include children’s crafts and activities at Talcott Square, a screening of classic fright films by the Lemont Historical Society Museum, a Haunted House at an old school in town, and

a Halloween Hoedown on Oct. 29, complete with a costume contest and parade. Pets can get in on the fun with a Hoowl-A-Ween pet event on Oct. 30 at the Central Bark Dog Park.



SS. (Saints) Cyril and Methodius, for example, is a cathedral-style church and school built on a hillside in 1884 by its founding Polish parishioners and rebuilt in 1930 after a fire destroyed the original structures. Currently, there are plans for a new parish center to be built after funds are raised through a capital campaign.

Meanwhile, the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago is a visual icon and a draw for members throughout the Chicago area. Set on a hillside along Lemont Road, the complex includes two separate temples, in addition to a spiritual center. An on-site meditation center hosts meditation and yoga activities.

In addition to worship services and programs, the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago sponsors a variety of cultural festivals throughout the year, including several religious festivals and a New Year's Day event.

### Argonne National Laboratory

Created for the University of Chicago-led Manhattan Project during World War II, Argonne National Laboratory is known worldwide for its science and engineering center. Scientists and researchers at Argonne work with experts all over the world on scientific innovations and breakthroughs, including clean energy. Argonne has a staff of nearly 3,300 and includes 15 different research divisions.

Public tours are available at Argonne

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*Through the "Lemont 2030 Comprehensive Plan," village leaders are striving to balance new developments, while maintaining the charming small-town look of Lemont.*

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for people over age 16. Guests must register for two-and-a-half hour tours in advance. Argonne also offers a public lecture series called "Argonne OutLoud," with free presentations that cover a variety of topics.

### A Blend of New and Old

In addition to the many things to do and see in Lemont, the village's fusion of history and growth is evident in other ways.

The Lemont Area Historical Society, housed in the Old Stone Church, offers a variety of exhibits and artifact collections. The group also works to preserve history, including recent efforts to help save Old St. Patrick School in town from the wrecking ball.

The Lemont Area Historical Society sponsors the Lemont Quarrymen, a vintage baseball team that plays baseball the way it was played in 1858. The team competes from May through September in tournaments throughout the region.

New residential developments have

gone up in town including Kettering Estates, located near the intersection of 131st St. and Parker Road; and the Estates of Montefiori, on the site of the former Montefiori Banquet facility near Main Street and Route 83.

Village leaders strive to balance new developments while maintaining the charming small-town look of Lemont through the "Lemont 2030 Comprehensive Plan" aimed at maintaining the character of established neighborhoods, nurturing of the historic district, and preservation of Lemont's natural resources and areas.

Earlier this year, a new service on the Metra Heritage Corridor line was added to the Lemont train station, an occasion marked by a maiden voyage ride and ceremony attended by Mayor Reaves, village administrator Schafer and U.S. Congressman Dan Lipinski.

While technically not in Lemont, Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve is located a half mile away on Lemont Road near the Des Plaines River. It is an attraction for those seeking to connect with nature or to walk, bike or run on its nearly 10 miles of trails.

As Chicago Blackhawks hockey begins, one native son — goalie Scott Darling — is welcoming the 2016-'17 season with a new mask featuring iconic Chicago people and places. Other notable Lemont natives include screenwriter Diablo Cody and ABC7 meteorologist Jerry Taft. ■