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P&R

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IAPD
Illinois Association of Park Districts

IN THIS ISSUE



19

Chris Olsen of Tate & Lyle accepted the Best Friend of Illinois Parks - Large Business Category award. They were nominated by the Decatur Park District.



19

Stephanie Lehman of the Lake County Journal accepted the Top Journalist Award for her support and coverage of the Round Lake Area Park District.



16



23

FEATURES

- 15** The 2011 Legal Calendar
Prepared by Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO and Jason Anselment, IAPD Legal/Legislative Counsel
- 19** IAPD Once Again Honors the "Best of the Best"

SPECIAL FOCUS

- 16** A Creative Approach to Comprehensive Planning
by Michael Mulvaney, PhD., CPRP, Hollice Clark III, and Kelly LaMore, CPRP
- 23** Seven Steps to Conduct an Effective PR Campaign using Social Media
by Barbara Rozgonyi, principal of CoryWest Media, LLC and Publisher of <http://wiredprworks.com>.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4** From the Editor
- 6** Get on Board
Parks and Recreation are an Essential Service
- 8** Eye on the Profession
Google and Doodle - Help You Exercise Your Noodle
- 10** Statehouse Insider
A Practical Guide to the Open Meetings Act: Has Your Agency Recently Reviewed Its Requirements?
- 24** People and Places
- 25** 2011 IAPD Calendar of Events

FROM THE EDITOR

I am a self-proclaimed avid magazine hound. While my dear wife devours hard-bound books at a rate that astounds our local librarian, my habit frequents the local magazine stand for a large number of diverse titles. I had forgotten that the little seat in the shopping cart was designed for children and purses.



Isn't it there specifically to pile my stack of weekly magazines? Once in awhile, my wife will purchase a new five-inch thick book just to balance our expenditures. Just last week she teased, "While you enjoy light reading, I invest time in large pieces of literature." Taken aback by that comment, I defensively explained that I learn from my magazine articles how to better work with my hands in woodworking, remodeling or in building my next beloved hot rod. I also retorted with my hopes that she is not gaining new skills from that murder mystery novel she just placed in the shopping cart.

Our banter did drive me to pay closer attention to more than just the magazine feature articles. Now I can casually mention to my wife that I just read an interesting column on the latest in electrical wire technology (she wasn't impressed).

In my quest to become better versed in all that is parks and recreation, I also prompted myself to study the "big three" columns within the first 11 pages of each IP&R magazine. In the *Statehouse Insider*, Jason Anselment, IAPD Legal Counsel, has educated me on issues related to Social Security numbers and in this issue, new requirements related to the Open Meetings Act and how these new responsibilities will affect how meetings are notified, conducted and recorded for the public.

The monthly *Eye on the Profession* column by Mike Selep, IPRA Interim CEO, has been a source of interesting attributes of today's world and how they apply to issues within the parks and recreation profession. Mike has touched recently on issues such as time management, strategic planning, and in this issue, the subject of new communication technology and how it affects your progress in this occupation.

The monthly *Get on Board* column by Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO, has enlightened us recently about the growth and nurturing of volunteerism and another column on board membership responsibilities. This month, Peter addresses issues in repositioning the benefits of parks and recreation as a key indicator to the quality of life in communities. Peter sometimes refers to additional literature in his columns. This has given me an opportunity to add those titles to my wife's library list of books that I now want to learn from as well.

If you read many of the lead columns each month, you will find many opportunities for continued learning whether they may or may not apply directly to your immediate job description. I am motivated to learn from *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine, whether it be from monthly or feature articles, and I hope you'll consider all of them as interesting education too.

— TODD SILVEY
Editor

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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Parks and Recreation are an Essential to the Quality of Life in your Community

The recent National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Congress focused on repositioning as a key to the viability of park and recreation agencies across the country. The focus of repositioning is based on research that has been conducted over the past several years, collecting information and quantifying the benefits of parks and recreation as prime indicators to the quality of life in communities. NRPA members can visit their Website at www.NRPA.org to access five different monographs that drill down into the benefits of parks and recreation with science based research. These include: *Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat*; *Air Quality Effects of Urban Trees and Parks*; *Measuring the Economic Impact of Park and Recreation Services*; *The Benefits of Physical Activity Provided by Park and Recreation Services*; and, *The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach*. These monographs, which were released November 1, 2010 do an excellent job in bringing the results of scientific research to some of the things that we have intuitively known about park and recreation services. I would recommend them as essential reading for park and recreation board members throughout the state of Illinois as I think they provide a substantial case for the key role that park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies play within the state. The following are some brief excerpts from each of the monographs.

Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat

According to the United Nations' Population Division, the moment in which *Homo sapiens* officially became an urban species occurred sometime in 2008. By 2030, roughly 70% of humanity will live in urban areas, and if present trends continue, those areas will be less and less green. What are the implications of this change in habitat for our species?

- The question is no longer, "Do people living in greener neighborhoods have better health outcomes?" (They do.) Rather, the question has become, Do people living in greener neighborhoods have better health outcomes even when income and other factors that could explain a natural-health link are taken into account? The answer is yes.

- Access to nature, whether it is in the form of bona fide natural areas or in bits or views of nature, impacts psychological, as well as social functioning. Greater access to green views and green environments yields better cognitive functioning; more proactive, more effective patterns of life functioning; more self-discipline and more impulse control; greater mental health overall; and greater resilience in response to stressful life events.

- The impacts of parks and green environments on human health extend beyond social and psychological health outcomes to include physical health outcomes. Greener environments enhance recovery from surgery, enable and support higher levels of physical activity,

improve immune system functioning, help diabetics achieve healthier blood glucose levels, and improve functional health status and independent living skills among older adults.

- While street trees, parks, and public green spaces are often regarded as mere amenities - ways to beautify our communities and make life a little more pleasant, the science tells us that they play a central role in human health and healthy human functioning.

Air Quality Effects of Urban Trees and Parks

- Parks are significant parts of the urban landscape and comprise about 6% of city and town areas in the conterminous United States. These urban parks are estimated to contain about 370 million trees with a structural value of approximately \$300 billion. The number of park trees varies by region of the country, but they can produce significant air quality effects at the local scale, both within and near parks, related to air temperatures, air pollution, ultraviolet radiation, and carbon dioxide (a dominant greenhouse gas related to global climate change).

Estimated Value of Trees in Parks in Chicago, Illinois:

- Structural value = \$192 million
- Air temperature reduction = unknown
- Air pollution removal = \$344,000 per year
- Reduced ultraviolet radiation = unknown
- Carbon storage (trees) = \$1.1 million
- Annual carbon removal (trees) = \$32,800 per year

- Trees in cities and parks have a significant impact on air quality for local residents. Not only do trees affect the concentration of air pollutants that we breathe, they also affect local air temperatures and the amount of ultraviolet radiation we are exposed to.

- In the 1800's, parks were referred to as the "lungs" of a city in reference to their ability to refresh the atmosphere. In more recent times, science has confirmed the substantial role that trees and parks play in improving air quality and the lives and health of urban populations.

Measuring the Economic Impact of Park and Recreation Services

- The desire to go to another place is stimulated by attractions. In most communities, primary attractions are sports, tournaments, festivals, parks, and major recreation facilities operated by park and recreation departments. However, most stakeholders remain unaware of the park and recreation role in tourism.

- This monograph provides a hands-on guide for professionals so they can do economic impact studies that measure the economic return residents receive on park and recreation investments.

- Finally, the monograph reports the results of more than 100 economic impact analyses undertaken by the author's research team in the past decade at sports tournaments, special events, recreation facilities, and park facilities.

The Benefits of Physical Activity Provided by Park and Recreation Services

- In an era in which health costs have become the biggest single expenditure in U.S. society, the central importance of physical activity in preventing and improving a wide variety of health problems is now well understood. As this has happened, public park and recreation services' central role in promoting and providing physical activity has been increasingly documented by scientific research. Public park and recreation services are becoming a vital part of the healthcare system of the United States.

- Close-to-home park and recreation resources result in more physical activity and better health for citizens.

- While many people experiment with forms of physical activity that are good for them but not pleasurable, they tend to stay with activities that they enjoy, often for decades. Such activities include walking, hiking, jogging, running, bicycling, individual and team sports, and water-based recreational activity.

- A tiny bit of extra spending on parks and recreation services, even \$10 a year per capita has been shown to provide significantly increased amounts of physical activity. When such an amount is compared to the average cost of a personal trainer, or the more than \$8,000 per year spent on healthcare per person in the United States, the health contribution of parks and recreation is a rather amazing bargain.

- A study in 2009 suggests the economic downturn has spurred a sharp increase in public park and playground use among families with kids, especially those with children younger than 6. Among minority groups, park and recreation services have been identified as the most important outlet for physical activity, in spite of inequities of supply and access.

The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach

Since the 1800s, a consistent link has been made between youth's opportunities to participate in recreation programs and the level of crime and delinquency.

When the school bell rings, crimes by and against children soar. Millions of children and teens are turned out on the streets without constructive activities or adult supervision. On school days, the period from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. is the peak time for teens to:

- Commit crimes
- Be victims of crime
- Be in or cause a car crash
- Smoke, drink, or use drugs
- Commit a sexual assault

A 2006 survey of more than 600 California 12- to 17-year-olds found that those left unsupervised three or more days per week were twice as likely to hang out with gang members, three times as likely to be engaged in criminal behavior, and more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs.

A 2007 study reported that every dollar invested in an after-school program conducted by a park and recreation agency resulted in an estimated savings in juvenile crime costs of approximately \$2.50. This is important because youth violence costs the United States more than \$158 billion each year.

About 40% of a young- to middle-adolescent's week comprised of free time. If an adolescent uses this time wisely and is engaged in healthy, positive recreation experiences, he or she is much more likely to become a fully functioning adult.

Clearly, youth spend a great deal of time with social media and computer gaming. For example, the percentage of teens between the ages of 12 to 17 who used the Internet in 2000 was about 75%; in December of 2009, it was 93%. *The Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds* report (Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout, 2005) revealed that youth spend about 6.5 hours per day involved with some type of media. There is evidence that this behavior is related to the obesity epidemic.

- Youth are valuable resources to invest in and not problems to be solved. Adolescents want to develop their capacities, but they need opportunities and appropriate adult involvement and guidance to do so. Adolescents need to be involved in the learning and growing process. They need to have opportunities to "develop themselves," and they need adults to serve as enablers in this process.

- Youth development is the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to (1) meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives.

- Park and recreation agencies can make significant contributions in nine areas: These outcomes occur for participants, families, and the wider community and include:

1. contributing to reducing juvenile delinquency
2. contributing to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors
3. exposing youth to less violence
4. improving children's educational performance and thus impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy
5. helping decrease healthcare costs related to childhood obesity
6. increasing the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults
7. helping youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative
8. increasing civic responsibility and participation
9. helping reduce parental stress and thus impact healthcare costs and lost job productivity

We have all known intuitively that park and recreation services make a difference to the quality of life in communities throughout Illinois. Now, the science-based research that has and will continue to take place supports this intuition unequivocally.

2010 IAPD Summer Golf Tour a Huge Success!

Special thanks to the tour sponsor, W-T Engineering, Inc. and the event sponsor, Team REIL, Inc. Thank you to Call One for sponsoring the receptions at the Ravisloe Country Club, the Settler's Hill Golf Course and the Glenview Park Golf Club; Musco Lighting for sponsoring the reception at the Fox Bend Golf Course and to Leopardo for sponsoring the beverage cart at Settler's Hill Golf Course. Thank you to the Tour hole sponsors, prize donors, and of course a big thank you to the hosts of the 2010 Summer Golf Tour: GolfVisions Management, Inc, the staff at the Ravisloe Country Club and Settler's Hill Golf Course, the Oswegoland Park District and the staff at the Fox Bend Golf Course, the Decatur Park District and the staff at the Red Tail Run Golf Club and the Glenview Park District and the staff of the Glenview Park Golf Club - the Summer Golf Tour would not have been possible without your generosity. I encourage the entire IAPD membership to participate in these fun filled events on the 2011 tour. Thanks for a great season!

- Peter Murphy

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

A CLOSER LOOK AT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN THE PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSION



Mike Selep, CPRP
IPRA Interim CEO

Google and Doodle - Help You Exercise Your Noodle

Do you agree with the following statement? The profession of parks and recreation has changed over the course of my career. The vast majority of us would agree. Whether you started last year or last week, there have been significant changes. Some are in technology, equipment, programs, services, laws or regulations. As a result, if you wish to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be successful, what you learned yesterday and today can only help you prepare for what you need to learn tomorrow.

We live in a society where you must learn each and every day in order to keep up with all of the changes that are occurring. In addition to what we need to know, how we learn it is even different than how we learned 10 years ago - even five years ago or last week. In the past couple of days, I have learned through a variety of technological ways that sound made up - as the use of every technology tool has become an action verb.

I e-mailed, texted, googled, doodled, tweeted, blogged, facebooked, linked-in, wikied, yelped and webinarred. These are just a few tools that I used to gain some knowledge. I had some great conversations by picking up the phone and visiting a few others in person. That's right, I used a ton of technology, and I kicked it old school. I actually utilized a blend of technological and physical interpersonal communication methods to assist me in gaining and sharing information. We cannot rely too heavily on one form or the other. We must strike a balance.

We have utilized some blended professional development strategies this year at IPRA that have proved to be successful. At this year's Communication and Marketing Section Boot Camp (C&M Boot Camp), we conducted a full day in-person workshop, blended with four follow-up webinars. It was extremely important to meet in person for networking purposes and to visually see a variety of communication and marketing materials. It was also important to decrease the amount of time out of the office, to provide some follow-up to lessons learned in person, and to keep the learning and sharing going utilizing webinar technology.

According to Allison Niemela, director of marketing & public relations with the Batavia Park District and the chair of this year's C&M Boot Camp, it was imperative to change the format of this year's event.

"The Boot Camp Committee decided to limit the out-of-office time of the Boot Camp to just one day, packed with educational sessions, a luncheon and roundtable discussions," said Niemela. "IPRA members lives are incredibly busy balancing plates full of professional work plan goals and that of maintaining professional certification so it's imperative that we respond proactively to their needs by offering creative solutions."

With a new format and location (Chicago Park District), attendance remained relatively stable despite members expressing that they have less time and fewer dollars to dedicate towards professional development. Attendees were extremely receptive to the content, location and new format.

"We live in a society where you must learn each and every day in order to keep up with all of the changes that are occurring. In addition to what we need to know, how we learn it is even different than how we learned 10 years ago - even five years ago or last week. "



"For years, I've kept an eye on the latest trends in social media. I've been an active user of social media for personal use, but have been eager to learn how to successfully incorporate Facebook, Twitter and blogging into my company's marketing communication mix," said attendee Bill Pearch, marketing and business development coordinator for Engineering Resource Associates, Inc. "The C&M Boot Camp provided an excellent overview of what services are available, why they are effective, and offered unique perspectives on how to use them. The presenters demonstrated how social media can provide cost-effective alternatives to supplement traditional printed materials. The C&M Boot Camp helped clear the confusion surrounding this cutting-edge technology. Having the workshop on one day with follow up webinars helped reduce my time out of the office and provided avenues for utilizing the technology that we learned about in a practical and meaningful way. "

"I actually utilized a blend of technological and physical interpersonal communication methods to assist me in gaining and sharing information. We cannot rely too heavily in one form or the other. We must strike a balance."

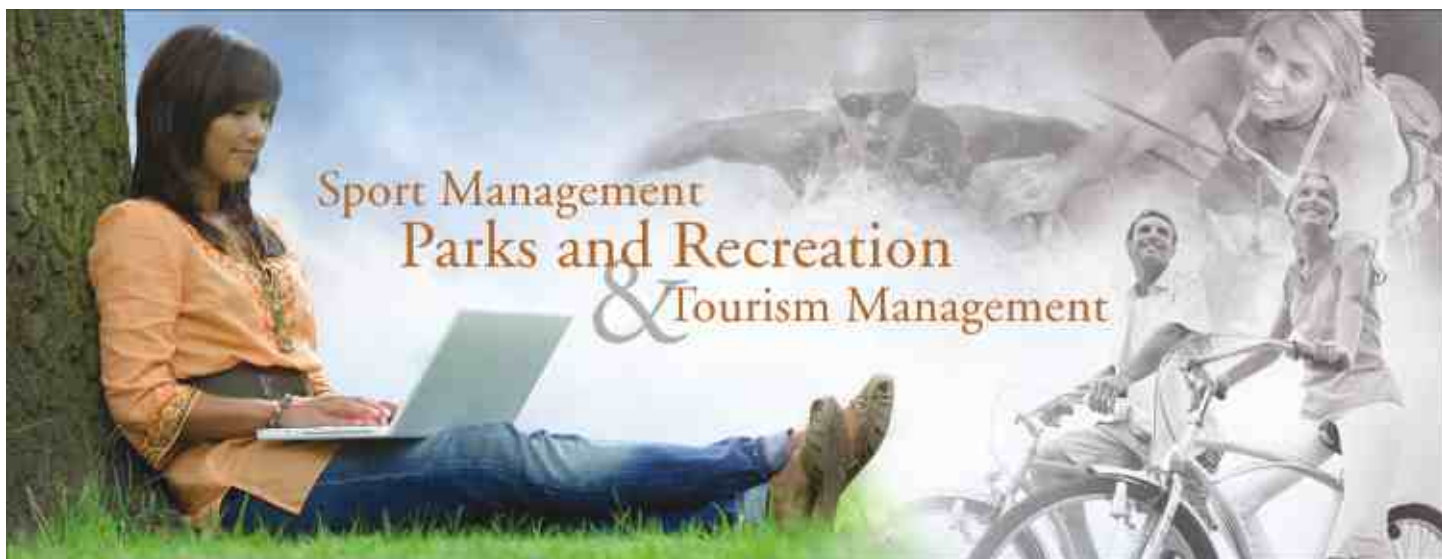
We will be adding value to our Professional Development School (PDS) through the use of blended professional development. Attendees are sorted into year one, two and graduate curriculums based on the number of years that they have attended PDS for a series of workshops throughout the three days. In addition, each PDS attendee is placed into a homeroom where they interact with individuals from each curriculum level to discuss important professional issues that they face at their agencies.

This year, one of the main discussion items in each homeroom will be to determine a project to work on throughout the year that will be interesting to them, the other members of the group and will add value to the members of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association. These projects will either promote education, networking or resource development to help advance the profession. Each group will meet periodically throughout the year via webinars, conference calls and in-person meetings to keep them on track in regard to meeting project goals. Each group will have an assistant to support them by providing needed resources and setting and tracking the project progress.

We are extremely grateful for support from the assistants, the PDS Board of Regents and to our professional development sponsor, Lamp Incorporated. What projects will stem from this year's PDS? It will be up to each group to decide. What will result from each of these projects? That remains to be seen. What is equally as important as the end result of the projects will be the opportunities for professional growth through leadership and skill development by those participating in the process. Members will develop a close network of fellow professionals while gaining increased proficiency in texting, googling, doodling, blogging and countless other skills.

Make sure to visit the IPRA Web site to check out information about the PDS participants and their projects after November 18 (ilipra.org/LampPDSprojects). The profession and learning styles have changed. We must be able to embrace these changes if we are to continue to move the profession forward.

"The small group component of PDS is always a great way to network with other professionals throughout the state, to share new ideas, concerns and to create new friendships," said Mike Toohey, superintendent of recreation at Lisle Park District and chair of this year's PDS. "I am especially excited to add to that this year by working with IPRA to offer our participants a chance to work together beyond PDS on projects and networking opportunities for all members of IPRA to benefit."



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Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

A Practical Guide to the Open Meetings Act: Has Your Agency Recently Reviewed Its Requirements?

Aside from the Park District Code, perhaps no other statute induces more legal questions from our members than the Open Meetings Act (OMA).¹ This may be because districts confront the OMA as often as any statute besides the Park District Code and at least every month. To complicate matters, the OMA is frequently the subject of legislative action, so the rules are constantly changing.

A periodic review of the OMA is highly recommended because the statute contains most answers. Unfortunately, some of those answers are difficult to locate because of the way the OMA is organized. This guide takes a practical approach by first discussing the general rules for regular open meetings and then treating special circumstances such as closed sessions, special meetings, and remote attendance as exceptions.

Purpose of the OMA

It is helpful to remember that the purpose of the OMA is to ensure that public bodies conduct deliberations and take actions openly so the public can be informed. To achieve this goal, advance notice of all board and committee meetings and proper documentation of what occurs at them is required. Meetings must always be held at convenient times and places that are open to the public and not on holidays unless the regular meeting schedule happens to fall on that day.²

Regular Meeting Notice

Having an open meeting would provide citizens little opportunity for information if no one except district staff and the board knew about it. So, at the beginning of each fiscal or calendar year districts must provide public notice of the schedule of dates, times, and places of all regular meetings for that year by posting the notice at the district's principal office.³ This annual notice must also be posted on the district's website and remain there until approval of the next annual notice.⁴ Copies must also be supplied to news media that file an annual request.⁵ Once the regular meeting schedule is fixed, any change to a meeting date must be published in an appropriate newspaper at least 10 days' prior to the meeting in addition to the regular posting.⁶ Anytime the district reschedules a regular meeting it should provide the same notice as for special meetings discussed below, including the 48-hour advance posting of the notice and agenda.⁷

Notice of the time and place of a regular meeting is not enough. At least 48 hours prior to each regular meeting, the district must also post the agenda for the meeting at its principal office, the meeting location, and on its website until the meeting is concluded.⁸

Conducting Business during Open Session at Regular Meetings

Assuming proper meeting notice, the board may take action on agenda items as long as a quorum of the board⁹ is physically present and the meeting is open to the public.¹⁰ Unlike the rules for special meetings discussed below, the board is not precluded from discussing items that are not on a regular meeting agenda, but the board may not take final action on those items.¹¹ For 5-member boards, the OMA now requires at least 3 affirmative votes to adopt any motion, resolution, or ordinance regardless of the number of members present.¹²

As of January 1, 2011, the public will have a limited right to participate at public meetings. Public Act 96-1473 requires districts to permit any

person an opportunity to address public officials at the meeting, but this is not an unlimited right. The district can and should establish rules for public participation such as when the public comment period will take place and reasonable time limits for each individual, e.g. 5 minutes.

The public or media often want to record open meetings by video or audio tape. Although the district may prescribe reasonable rules, it cannot prohibit this activity.¹³

Documenting Open Session at Regular Meetings

Citizens who choose not to attend board meetings still have the right to know what happened. The OMA guarantees this by requiring districts to keep written minutes, which must minimally include the date, time, and place, the attendance record for each member and whether he or she was physically or remotely present, a discussion summary of all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of all votes taken. To help prepare minutes, many local governments tape every meeting, but verbatim recordings of open meetings are not actually required.

Beginning January 1, 2011, open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later.¹⁴ Once approved, the minutes must be posted on the district's website and made available for public inspection within 10 days¹⁵ and should remain there for at least 60 days.¹⁶ Minutes for special, emergency, and reconvened meetings discussed below should be handled the same as regular meetings.

Closed Sessions

Public bodies confront sensitive matters that are sometimes better discussed in private before taking final action, yet few issues are subject to more public scrutiny than closed sessions. Consequently, districts should strictly follow the procedures for closing meetings and confine discussion to matters for which the open meeting was properly closed.

The OMA currently lists 24 exceptions that boards may discuss in closed session if they follow proper procedures.¹⁷ To hold a closed meeting or "executive session" the board should first convene a properly noticed open meeting with a quorum physically present. A motion to close the meeting must be made in open session and sufficiently cite the specific section of the OMA authorizing closed session. Obviously, the motion must pass, and each member's vote must be recorded.¹⁸ If there is proper meeting notice and these procedures are followed, boards may close regular meetings regardless of whether matters are listed on the agenda as closed session topics.

Once a meeting is closed, the board cannot discuss any topic not specifically covered by the motion closing the meeting.¹⁹ If discussion on another topic becomes necessary, the board should adjourn the closed meeting, return to open session, and properly move to close the meeting for the new purpose. Although informal "straw polls" may be permitted, no final action may be taken at a closed meeting. To take final action, the board must return to open session and publicly recite the nature of the matter being considered and enough information to inform the public of the business being conducted prior to the vote.²⁰

Closed session minutes, which include the same information as open meeting minutes, must be kept.²¹ These minutes can be kept confidential to the extent the need exists. However, the district is required to review closed minutes at least semi-annually and determine whether the need for confidentiality still exists or if minutes or portions thereof can be made

public because confidentiality is no longer needed. Although the board may discuss this review in closed session, it must report its determination in open session.²² Unless and until the board determines to make these closed minutes public, they are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.²³

Unlike open meetings, boards are required to make verbatim audio or video recordings of all closed sessions. Verbatim recordings must be kept for at least 18 months and are designed to ensure that elected officials stick to permissible discussions in closed session. Subsequently, if the minutes have been approved, the district can vote to destroy these tapes.²⁴ Conversely, districts may choose to publicly release confidential closed meeting tapes, but release is not required. In fact, the OMA only requires that confidential verbatim recordings be disclosed in civil or administrative actions brought to enforce the OMA and only then for a determination by a judge or the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor of whether OMA violations occurred. Only if violations are found should such tapes be released and then only portions demonstrating the violation.²⁵

Special Meetings

At least 48 hours in advance of special meetings, the district should post notice at the locations where it provides regular notice. Unlike regular meetings, the special meeting agenda must be included as part of this notice and the district must also notify news media in the same manner as board members if they have provided sufficient information to do so.²⁶

There is another significant difference between regular and special meetings. Whereas boards may discuss (but not vote on) matters excluded from a regular meeting agenda, they should never discuss matters that are not germane to a subject listed on a special meeting agenda. Therefore, because special meetings are typically called to address time sensitive matters, districts should carefully prepare the special meeting agenda to ensure all topics are adequately described.

Emergency Meeting

Emergency meetings are like special meetings, and districts should follow the same notice requirements. However, if the emergency is bona fide, 48 hours advance notice is not required. Instead, notice must be given as soon as practicable and at least prior to the meeting.²⁷ To avoid challenges, districts should only use this process in true emergencies and take the same steps to notify the public and news media of the date, time, location, and subject matter of the emergency meeting as soon as these details are known. Matters that are not germane to the emergency should not be discussed.

Reconvened Meetings

Sometimes a board may conclude before adjourning a meeting that further discussion is needed at a later time but before the next regular meeting. The district could call a special meeting, but the notice requirements would dictate the meeting be held at least 48 hours later. As long as the original meeting is open to the public, the OMA permits the district to reconvene it at a later time and avoid the posting requirements provided the board (1) reconvenes the meeting within 24 hours, or (2) makes an announcement of the time and place of the reconvened meeting at the original meeting and there is no change to the agenda.²⁸ If the meeting is not open or if it will be reconvened more than 24 hours later and the agenda will change, the board should treat a reconvened meeting like a special meeting, including the 48-hour advance posting of the notice and agenda for all matters to be considered.

Remote Attendance

The OMA was amended several years ago to allow commissioners to attend open meetings by video or audio means. However, this right is limited to certain circumstances and boards must adopt rules conforming to the OMA's minimum requirements before allowing remote attendance. Unfortunately, many public bodies wait until a crucial vote is needed to address remote attendance. By then, it is likely too late to use this option for that crucial vote because a majority of the board must be physically present to convene the meeting to adopt the rules. If your board is interested in allowing remote attendance, it should not wait until the need arises. The IAPD has prepared a sample Remote Attendance Policy, which is available to members only by going to our website at www.ILparks.org and clicking on "Legal Assistance" and "Member Resources."

The OMA only allows members to attend remotely under the following circumstances: (1) personal illness; (2) disability; (3) employment purposes; (4) business of the public body; (5) family emergency; or (6) other emergency. Unless it is impractical, a member must notify the park board secretary that he or she wishes to attend the meeting by video or audio means prior to the meeting. Again, members attending remotely do not count towards establishing a quorum, but if a quorum is physically present the remote attendee can participate and vote at open and closed meetings.²⁹

"Meetings" that Violate the OMA

Boards that routinely review the OMA and take a common sense approach to informing the public are unlikely to violate the rules for scheduled meetings. However, trouble sometimes occurs where members may not intend to be "meeting," but they technically are because a sufficient number of members are discussing public business.

The general rule is that a majority of a quorum of a public body cannot contemporaneously discuss public business without informing the public as described in this article. Until recently, this meant that 2 members of a 5-member board could not discuss public business outside of a regular meeting. Several years ago, the OMA was amended to allow an exception for 5-member boards, and now the rule is effectively the same as 7-member boards: three members cannot contemporaneously discuss district business without proper public notice, but two may.³⁰

The OMA can be violated by discussing public business contemporaneously using electronic means. E-mail, chat rooms, and other electronic devices have provided traps for the unwary elected official and fodder for those wishing to debate the OMA. Variations of these examples will probably always be subject to scrutiny and legal challenges. The best advice is to simply avoid contemporaneous interaction, including electronic communication, with more than one other fellow board member. Of course, the safest route is to avoid discussing public business by electronic means altogether. A telephone or face-to-face conversation between two members of a 5 or 7 member board does not violate the letter or spirit of the OMA.

Penalties

Failure to follow the OMA can result in a range of consequences to both board members and the district. For individuals, violations are Class C misdemeanors punishable by up to 30 days in jail and a \$1,500 fine. For districts, courts have the ability to require meetings be open to the public, grant injunctions against future violations, order disclosure of closed meeting minutes not authorized to be kept confidential, declare final actions null and void, and assess attorneys fees and costs in civil cases where a plaintiff substantially prevails.³¹

As of January 1, 2010, citizens who believe the OMA has been violated have an alternative to lawsuits by instead filing requests for review with the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor (PAC) within 60 days of alleged violations. The PAC can investigate the allegations and decide whether to resolve the issue by a binding opinion, mediation, or "other means." According to the OMA, unless the PAC issues a binding opinion the PAC's decision is not reviewable.³² Binding opinions are specifically treated as final decisions of administrative agencies that are subject to administrative review.

Summary

Periodically reviewing the OMA will help agencies avoid violations. Although agencies are now required to designate OMA officers who must complete the Attorney General's training program annually,³³ every elected official should review the OMA's basic requirements periodically to avoid unintended consequences.

When organized in a practical way, the OMA addresses most common questions, but the IAPD is just a phone call way to help guide you.

¹ 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.

² 5 ILCS 120/2.01

³ If the District does not have a principal office, the notice should be posted at the building where the meeting will be held. 5 ILCS 120/2.02, 2.03

⁴ This article assumes the district has a website maintained by a full-time staff person. Otherwise, the requirements for websites would not apply. 5 ILCS 120/2.02

⁵ 5 ILCS 120/2.02.

⁶ 5 ILCS 120/2.03

⁷ 5 ILCS 120/2.02;

see supra.

⁸ 5 ILCS 120/2.02(a)

⁹ For 5-member boards, 3 members

¹⁰ 5 ILCS 120/2.01

¹¹ 5 ILCS 120/2.02; Rice v.

Bd. of Trustees of Adams

County, 236 Ill. App. 3d

1120 (4th Dist. 2002)

¹² 5 ILCS 120/1.02

¹³ 5 ILCS 120/2.05

¹⁴ Public Act 96-1473

¹⁵ Prior to January 1, 2011,

the requirement is 7 days.

¹⁶ 5 ILCS 120/2.06

¹⁷ 5 ILCS 120/2(c)

¹⁸ 5 ILCS 120/2a

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ 5 ILCS 120/2(e)

²¹ 5 ILCS 120/2.06

²² 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21), 2.06

²³ 5 ILCS 140/7(i)

²⁴ Notification to and approval of the State

Archivist under the Local

Records Act is not

required.

²⁵ 5 ILCS 120/2.06

²⁶ 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e), 3.5

(b) & (g)

²⁷ 5 ILCS 120/2.02

²⁸ Id.

²⁹ 5 ILCS 120/2.01, 120/7

³⁰ 5 ILCS 120/1.02

³¹ 5 ILCS 120/3

³² 5 ILCS 120/3.5(e)

³³ 5 ILCS 120/1.05

legal calendar 2011

Prepared by Peter M. Murphy, IAPD President/CEO & Jason Anselment, IAPD Legal/Legislative Counsel

The following park district calendar includes key dates based on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30. For those park districts that have adopted another date for the commencement of the fiscal year (70 ILCS 1205/4-4), this calendar must be adjusted for those duties that must be performed at times related to the fiscal year. The calendar is also established around regular park board meetings held on the third Thursday of each month selected. Selected election dates are based on the consolidated primary election to be held on February 22, 2011, and the consolidated election to take place on April 5, 2011. For additional key election dates, see the IAPD's 2011 Election Calendar published in the September/October issue of Illinois Parks & Recreation or at www.ilparks.org.

All references are to the Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS).

ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CALENDAR (OR FISCAL) YEAR:

- Post the date, time and place of park district regular meetings for the year. Mail copies to the news media. (5 ILCS 120/2.02)
- Review the requirement that all closed sessions are to be recorded verbatim by audio or video. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review new requirement that beginning January 1, 2011, open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later, and made available for public inspection within 10 days after approval. (Public Act 96-1473; 5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review the requirements that all Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act officers must complete the Attorney General's annual training requirements. Newly appointed officers must complete the training within 30 days after designation or assuming the position. (5 ILCS 120/1.05; 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Review with the park district treasurer the requirement that all funds of the district not immediately needed for disbursement must be invested within two working days at prevailing interest rates or better. (30 ILCS 225/1)
- Review the requirement that every person, other than the treasurer, receiving money for the district must keep a triplicate record of the money, and deliver the money to the treasurer not later than the middle of the month following the month of receipt. (30 ILCS 20/1)

- The American flag must be displayed and flown each day of the week from each City Hall or Village Hall and Village Square and at the principal entrance to all public parks. (5 ILCS 465/3b)
- Contributions to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) must be deducted each pay period from covered employees' pay and remitted to the IMRF along with the contribution from the local government. This requirement is mandatory for municipalities over 5,000 population where Social Security is not provided, and elective for others. (40 ILCS 5/7-132, 7-172, 7-173)
- Districts that have employees under Social Security must send their FICA contributions at such times as may be designated by the Internal Revenue Service. (40 ILCS 5/21-105.2, 21-109)
- Review the requirements that all newly hired employees must be reported to the Illinois Department of Security. (820 ILCS 405/1801.1)
- Review the requirement that while participating in a public works project, each contractor and subcontractor must submit a certified payroll to the public body in charge of the project every month. The public body must maintain these records for at least 3 years. (820 ILCS 130/5)
- For persons or entities required to report under the Lobbyist Registration Act, review new reporting requirements for expenditures made during the 2011 calendar year. (P.A. 96-1358; 25 ILCS 170/6, 170/6.5)

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Unpublished written minutes of all closed meetings are to be reviewed not less than semiannually. Minutes

are to be reviewed to determine if (a) the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes, or (b) if the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection. The results of the review are to be reported in the open session of the board of commissioners. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)

OCTOBER 2010

OCTOBER 25

Last day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

OCTOBER 25

Last day to file petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officers or board for Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: Objections can be filed on or before the date of the hearing with the appropriate circuit court clerk. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 99-92 days before such election (November 15-22, 2010). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

NOTE: The circuit court clerk shall publish the hearing date for a public policy petition filed in his/her office not later than 14 days after the petition is actually filed, but at

least 5 days before actual hearing (final orders within 7 days of hearing). (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOVEMBER 2010

NOVEMBER 1

Last day to file objections to petitions to create a political subdivision in the office of the circuit clerk for Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOVEMBER 4

First day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

NOVEMBER 18

Regular November board meeting.

NOVEMBER 22

Last day for filing of petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for Consolidated Primary Election. [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

DECEMBER 2010

DECEMBER 1

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for Consolidated Primary Election. [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

DECEMBER 6

Last day for local governing boards to adopt a resolution or ordinance to allow a binding public question to appear on the ballot in Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(c))

DECEMBER 6

Last day for county, municipal, township and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for Consolidated Primary Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1105.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30)

DECEMBER 6

Last day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

DECEMBER 6

Last day to file petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officers or board for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: Objections can be filed on or before the date of the hearing with the appropriate circuit court clerk. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election (December 13-20, 2010). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

NOTE: The circuit court clerk shall publish the hearing date for a public policy petition filed in his/her office not later than 14 days after the petition is actually filed, but at least 5 days before actual hearing (final orders within 7 days of hearing). (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: See the specific statute

governing the unit of local government to be established for filing procedures. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

DECEMBER 13

Last day to file objections to petitions to create a political subdivision in the office of the circuit clerk for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

DECEMBER 13

First day for filing in office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates in park districts and forest preserves. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

NOTE: Filing is between 113-106 days prior to the Consolidated Election. December 13, 2010 is the 113th day prior to that election and is the first day of filing in those offices which are open.

DECEMBER 16

Regular December board meeting

DECEMBER 20

Last day for filing in the office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates for township and municipal library boards, road district boards, library district boards, park district boards, school boards, community college boards, regional boards of school trustees, fire protection district boards and forest preserve district boards. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

JANUARY 2011

JANUARY 3

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for Consolidated Election.

[EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

JANUARY 10

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy for Consolidated Election. [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

JANUARY 10

First day for term of office for newly elected statewide executive officers. (Ill. Const. Art. IV, Sec. 2)

JANUARY 12

Newly elected members of the General Assembly shall convene and organize their respective chambers. (Ill. Const., Art. IV Secs. 5(a), 6(b))

JANUARY 18

Last day for local governing boards to adopt a resolution or ordinance to allow a binding public question to appear on the ballot for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(c))

JANUARY 18

Last day for county, municipal, township and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for Consolidated Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30)

JANUARY 18

The last day for person or entities required to report under the Lobbyist Registration Act for expenditures made during the period of July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010.

JANUARY 20

Regular January Board Meeting.

JANUARY 27-29

Attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference, Hilton Chicago.

JANUARY 31

Last day to file with the chief county assessment officer for all tax-exempt real estate an affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been any change in the ownership or use of the exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

NOTE: Copies of leases or agreements related to exempt property that is leased, loaned, or

otherwise available for profit must be filed with the assessment officer. (30 ILCS 200/15-15)

FEBRUARY 2011

FEBRUARY 1

Last day by which the chief administrative officer or his or her designee for a unit of local government with persons described in items (h), (i) and (k) of Section 4A-101 shall certify to the appropriate county clerk a list of names and addresses of those persons described in items (h), (i) and (k) of Section 4A-101 that are required to file statements of economic interest pursuant to the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act. In preparing the lists, each chief administrative officer or his or her designee shall set out the names in alphabetical order. (5 ILCS 420/4A-106)

FEBRUARY 3

Last day for the circuit court clerk and the local election official to certify any binding public question or advisory referenda to the election authority having jurisdiction over the political subdivision for Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-5)

FEBRUARY 3

Last day a person may file a notarized declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate with the proper election authority. (10 ILCS 5/17-16.1)

FEBRUARY 17

Regular February board meeting.

FEBRUARY 22

Consolidated Primary Election

MARCH 2011

MARCH 15-17

Attend NRPA Mid-year Meeting in Washington, D.C.

MARCH 17

Regular March board meeting.

APRIL 2011

APRIL 1

Last day by which the county clerk of each county shall notify all persons whose names have been certified to him, other than candidates for office who have filed their statements with their nominating petitions, of the requirements for filing statements of economic interests. The Illinois

Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A-101, requires the following persons to file verified written statements of economic interests:

(g) Persons who are elected to office in a unit of local government, and candidates for nomination or election to that office; (h) Persons appointed to the governing board of a unit of local government and persons appointed to a board or commission of a unit of local government who have the authority to authorize the expenditure of public funds but not members of boards or commissions who function in an advisory capacity; (i) Persons who are employed by a unit of local government and are compensated for services as employees and not as independent contractors and who:

1. are, or function as, the head of a department, division, bureau, authority or other administrative unit within the unit of local government, or who exercise similar authority within the unit of local government;
2. have direct supervisory authority over, or direct responsibility for the formulation, negotiation, issuance or execution of contracts entered into by the unit of local government in the amount of \$1,000 or greater;
3. have authority to approve licenses and permits by the unit of local government (this item does not include employees who function in a ministerial capacity);
4. adjudicate, arbitrate, or decide any judicial or administrative proceeding, or review the adjudication, arbitration or decision of any judicial or administrative proceeding within the authority of the unit of local government;
5. have authority to issue or promulgate rules and regulations within areas under the authority of the unit of local government; or
6. have supervisory responsibility for 20 or more employees of the unit of local government. (5 ILCS 420/4A-106; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101)

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2011
Consolidated Election

APRIL 7

The suggested date to prepare the budget and appropriation ordinance in tentative form and place on file for public inspection at least 30 days prior to final action. (All park districts are required to adopt a combined budget and appropriation ordinance within or before the first quarter of each fiscal year.) (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

APRIL 21

Regular April board meeting.

MAY 2011

MAY 1

The last date for filing Statements of Economic Interest for persons who have not previously filed during the calendar year. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 1: Failure to file a statement of economic interests within the time prescribed shall not result in a fine or ineligibility for, or forfeiture of, office or position of employment, provided that the failure to file results from not being included for notification by the appropriate agency, clerk, secretary, officer or unit of government, and that a statement is filed within 30 days of actual notice of the failure to file. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 2: All statements of economic interests shall be available for examination and copying by the public at all reasonable times. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 3: Any person required to file a statement of economic interests who willfully files a false or incomplete statement shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Failure to file a statement within the time prescribed shall result in ineligibility for, or forfeiture of, office or position of employment, as the case may be; provided, however, that if the notice of failure to file a statement of economic interests is not given by the county clerk, no forfeiture shall result if a statement is filed within 30 days of actual notice of the failure to file. (5 ILCS 420/4A-107)

NOTE 4: The County Clerk with whom a statement is to be filed may, in his or her discretion, waive the late fees & penalties, and the ineligibility for or forfeiture of office or position for failure to file when the person's late filing of or failure to file is due to (i) serious or catastrophic illness that renders the person temporarily incapable of completing the statement or (ii) military service. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

MAY 1

Suggested date to send notice to the Illinois Department of Labor requesting determination of current prevailing rate of wages for the district's area. (820 ILCS 130/4; 130/9)

MAY 1

(Beginning of new fiscal year.) The date to post the dates, times and places of park district regular meetings for the fiscal year. Mail copies to news media. (As an alternative, this can be done at the beginning of the calendar year.) (5 ILCS 120/2.02; 2.03)

MAY 1

The date to start the annual audit. Every governmental unit is required to make an annual audit to cover the immediately preceding fiscal year. The audit must "be completed and the audit report filed with the Comptroller within six months after the close of the fiscal year." All governmental units are also required to file a copy of the completed report with the county clerk. (50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3)
NOTE: Any governmental unit receiving revenue of less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year is required to file a financial report with the Comptroller in lieu of an audit. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/3)

MAY 1

The date to begin preparation of the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements. (30 ILCS 15/1)

MAY 3-4

Attend the IAPD Legislative Conference in Springfield. The Legislative Reception is held the evening of May 3 with the conference starting the next morning on May 4. May 3 is Parks Day at the Capitol with park district and forest preserve displays lining the Capitol Rotunda.

MAY 6

The suggested date to publish notice of public hearing on the budget and appropriation ordinance (must be done at least one week prior to hearing). (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

MAY 19

Regular May board meeting. This is the suggested date to hold the public hearing on the budget and appropriation ordinance and the date for enacting the ordinance at the board meeting following the hearing. (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

NOTE 1: The budget and appropriation ordinance must be made available in tentative form for public inspection at least 30 days prior to final action thereon.

NOTE 2: All taxing districts are also required to file a certified copy of their budget and appropriation ordinances with the county clerk within 30 days of adoption, as well as an estimate, certified by the district's chief fiscal officer, of revenues, by source, anticipated to be received by the taxing district in the following fiscal year. Failure of a district to file the required document will authorize the county clerk to refuse to extend the tax levy imposed by the governing authority until such documents are filed. (35 ILCS 200/18-50)

MAY 31

General Assembly scheduled to adjourn.

JUNE 2011

JUNE 1

Date by which all local government agencies must adopt an Identity-Protection Policy to safeguard Social Security numbers the agency collects. (5 ILCS 179/35)

JUNE 16

Regular June board meeting.

JUNE 17

The last day for filing a copy of the district's budget and appropriation ordinance with the county clerk, as well as a certified estimate of revenue by source anticipated to be received in the following fiscal year (assuming a passage adoption date of May 19).

JUNE 30

The last day to: (a) investigate & ascertain prevailing rate of wages to be paid for work on public works projects, and (b) publicly post or keep available for inspection in the main office of the public body its determination of such prevailing wage rates. The district must promptly file, no later than July 15 of each year, a certified copy of its determination with the Illinois Secretary of State and the office of the Illinois Department of Labor. (820 ILCS 130/9)

NOTE: Pursuant to 820 ILCS 130/4, a park district may request the Illinois Department of Labor to ascertain the prevailing rate of wages.

JULY 2011

JULY 15

Last day to file certified copy of prevailing wage rate determination with Illinois Secretary of State and the office of the Illinois Department of Labor if determination was made by district and not Department of Labor. (820 ILCS 130/9)

JULY 21

Regular July board meeting.

JULY 21

Attend the Legislative Golf Outing at the Bensenville Park District.

AUGUST 2011

AUGUST 1

First date nominations for the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Board are to be made for terms beginning the next January 1. (Between August 1 and September 15.) (40 ILCS 5/7-175)

AUGUST 14

The last date to publish determination of prevailing rate of wages (if determination was made by the district and not the Department of Labor) and mail copies of rates to requesting parties if filed with Secretary of State on the last possible date (July 15). (Publication must be within 30 days of date of filing with Secretary of State.) (820 ILCS 130/9)

AUGUST 18

Regular August board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 2011

A good month to review and update park district policies and ordinances.

SEPTEMBER 15

Regular September board meeting.

OCTOBER 2011

OCTOBER 3

The suggested date to review documents to determine which records can be destroyed. Permission of Local Records Commission required. See 50 ILCS 205/7 for authorization to digitize records. (50 ILCS 205/1)

OCTOBER 20

Regular October board meeting. Review non-referendum bonding needs preparatory to selling bonds before close of calendar year. (70 ILCS 1205/6-4)

NOTE: Before adopting any ordinance selling non-referendum general obligation bonds or limited bonds, the district must hold a public hearing concerning the intent to sell the bonds. Although the hearing may be part of a regular meeting, the ordinance authorizing the bonds may not be adopted for a period of 7 days after the hearing. Notice of the hearing must be published not less than 7 nor more than 30 days before the hearing. (30 ILCS 352/10, 352/15, 352/25)

OCTOBER 20

The suggested date for the board to determine the amount of money estimated to be necessary to be raised by the tax levy ordinance and to determine whether the funds to be raised exceed, by more than 105 percent of the amount, which has been extended or is estimated to be extended, upon the final aggregate levy of the preceding year. (This determination must be made at least 20 days prior to enactment of the levy ordinance.) (35 ILCS 200/18-60; 200/18-65)

NOTE 1: Local governments must file either a certificate of compliance or a certificate indicating the inapplicability of the Truth in Taxation Law with the tax levy ordinance filed with the county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

NOTE 2: 35 ILCS 200/18-185 provides park districts in the tax cap counties the authority to levy a tax for handicapped programs outside the restrictions of the tax cap.

NOTE 3: It is recommended that the park district attorney review all determinations and proceedings relating to this reference, which is the Truth in Taxation Law. (35 ILCS 200/18-55 *et seq.*)

OCTOBER 27

Attend the IAPD Legal Symposium Hamburger University, Oak Brook

OCTOBER 31

The last day to publish annual statement of receipts and disbursements and file a copy with the county clerk for districts on a May 1-April 30 fiscal year. (Must be accomplished within six months after expiration of fiscal year.) (30 ILCS 15/1; 15/2)

OCTOBER 31

The last day to file annual audit report (or financial report if district received revenue of less than \$850,000) with the Comptroller of the State of Illinois and county clerk (within six months of close of fiscal

year) and make a copy open to public inspection. (50 ILCS 310/2; 310/3; 310/6)

NOVEMBER 2011

NOVEMBER 1-4

Attend the NRPA Congress in Atlanta, Georgia.

NOVEMBER 7

The suggested date to publish notice of hearing (Truth in Taxation Law) if the district's proposed levy is greater than 105 percent of last year's extension or estimated extension. Must publish not more than 14 days, nor less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Publication date assumes a hearing date of November 14-18, 2011. (35 ILCS 200/18-70; 200/18-75)

NOTE: The form of the notice is set forth in the Truth in Taxation Law. Be sure to check special publication requirements found in statute. Further, any notice that includes information in excess of that specified and required by the Act shall be considered an invalid notice. (35 ILCS 200/18-80)

NOVEMBER 17

Regular November board meeting and the suggested date to hold a hearing pursuant to the Truth in Taxation Law. (35 ILCS 200/18-55 *et seq.*)

NOVEMBER 18

The suggested date to enact tax levy ordinance at the regular meeting following the Truth in Taxation hearing (if required).

DECEMBER 2011

DECEMBER 1

The suggested date to verify that, for real estate acquired in 2011, appropriate applications have been filed to exempt the real estate from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-5)

DECEMBER 2

(If levy ordinance was enacted on Nov. 17, 2011) The last day to publish Truth in Taxation notice if levy amounts as enacted exceed prior published figures, or if levy exceeds 105 percent of last year's extension and there was not prior publication. (Notice must be given within 15 days of the date the levy ordinance was enacted.) (35 ILCS 200/18-85)

DECEMBER 6

The suggested date to confirm that a certified copy of the levy ordinance was properly filed with the county clerk. (70 ILCS 1205/5-1 and 35 ILCS 200/18-15 require that a certified copy of the levy ordinance be filed with the county clerk not later than the last Tuesday in December.)

DECEMBER 15

The regular December board meeting date and suggested date to enact bond ordinance for non-referendum bonds to be issued prior to the end of calendar year. (70 ILCS 1205/6-4)

DECEMBER 27

The last day to: (a) file certified copy of tax levy ordinance with county clerk (70 ILCS 1205/5-1; 35 ILCS 200/18-15), and (b) file board president's certificate of compliance with county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

NOTE: State statute requires that all local governments file either certificate of compliance or a certificate indicating the inapplicability of the Truth in Taxation Law with the certified copy of the tax levy ordinance filed with the county clerk.

DECEMBER 30

The suggested date to prepare and file with the Supervisor of Assessments the annual affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been a change in the ownership or use of the district's exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (Last day for filing is January 31, 2012.) (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

DECEMBER 30

The suggested day by which bond ordinances should be filed with county clerk in order to receive extensions of taxes for the payment of principal and interest on general obligation bonds or limited bonds for 2011 taxes collected in 2012. The filing must actually take place prior to March 1, 2012. (30 ILCS 350/16)

NOTE: This filing has no relationship to the General Tax Levy filed by park districts.

A Creative APPROACH to Comprehensive Planning

by Michael Mulvaney, PhD., CPRP, Hollice Clark III, and Kelly LaMore, CPRP

Today, the provision of recreation services and facilities is recognized as an essential component of a community's master plan. Residents want opportunities for participation in quality recreation programs, attractive parks, and effective and safe recreation facilities. Only through local government provisions can recreation truly be made available to all residents. Local government provides the major opportunity for many people, and the only opportunity for some of the people, for access to recreational facilities such as parks, recreation centers, tennis courts, softball and baseball diamonds, swimming pools, and other specialized facilities.

In remaining accountable for expenditures and to meet these community needs, public park and recreation agencies are responsible for accurately identifying the park and recreation interests within the community. This task is often achieved by means of a community-wide recreation study. The purpose of the community-wide study is to obtain accurate insight of community attitudes, opinions, and perceptions toward possible park and recreation programming, facilities and services. The data collected from the community-wide study is then used by the park and recreation agency to plan for the provision of programs, resources, and facilities to best meet the interests of their residents.

Despite its importance in an agency's short and long-range planning efforts, many agencies lack some of the resources (human, physical, or financial) to conduct a community-wide recreation study.

In response to this issue, the Department of Recreation Administration at Eastern Illinois University partnered with the Bourbonnais Township Park District to identify the specific purpose, techniques, and procedures of the community-wide study to obtain a clear planning direction for the future recreational services within the Bourbonnais community.

Initial Meetings

The partnership began with a series of meetings among the park district and the university. Specifically, initial contact between the course instructor and staff at the Bourbonnais Township Park District was established three to four months prior to the start of study. The purpose of the initial meeting between the instructor and key representatives of the park district was to discuss the community-wide study and partnership. A few weeks after the initial meeting, another meeting between the course instructor and park district representatives was scheduled. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss, in greater detail, the Bourbonnais Township Park District's interests and identify the specific purpose, techniques, and procedures of the community-wide survey that could be used to make evidence based decisions for future recreational services within the community. An initial formal, written draft of the contract for the project was also developed. The draft of the contract contained information pertaining to the project's objectives, steps/procedures to

be employed by both parties, and a project timeline. Approximately four to six weeks prior to the start of class, another meeting was held between representatives of the Bourbonnais Township Park District and the course instructor for the undergraduate research class. At this time, the contract was signed by both parties.

Once the timeline was finalized, the instructor spent considerable time developing course lectures and discussions. Attention was given to planning the timing of the lectures and discussion to ensure they coincided with the appropriate steps. Classroom discussions and lectures provided a platform for students to raise questions, identify areas of concern, and discuss project issues with the instructor and other students. In addition, the lectures provided the content necessary for implementing the various steps of the project (i.e., interview protocol, sample selection, instrument design, data entry, analysis, report writing, etc.).

Agency Staff and Stakeholder Interviews

Once the students were briefed on the project, interviews were scheduled and conducted with staff from the park and recreation agency and community stakeholders. Subscribing to a purposive sampling strategy, the instructor worked with the park and recreation agency to obtain a list of agency staff and stakeholders within the community. The purpose of the interviews was for each student to collect background information from staff and stakeholders that was relevant to the project's objectives (that were identified in the contract).

Guided by the instructor, each student created a list of staff and stakeholder interview questions. The instructor facilitated classroom

discussions and activities that allowed the entire class to review and discuss each student's list of questions. Based upon these discussions, a finalized list of questions was determined. Once developed, the instructor equally divided the list of staff and stakeholders among each student. The instructor then provided the students with the necessary contact information for each staff member and stakeholder (contact information was obtained via discussions with representatives from the park and recreation agency).

Next, phone interviews with staff and stakeholders (i.e., community leaders) were conducted by each student from the class. The instructor coordinated facility and equipment needs (i.e., teleconference phone, room, etc.) to assist students with the interview process. Once the interviews were completed, data was reviewed to identify themes to describe and organize the staff and stakeholders' views, anticipated needs, and future trends impacting the community. To identify the themes from the interview data, coding techniques were conducted by the students and instructor. Specifically, the coding procedures broke down the data into manageable segments, leading to the identification of themes. This process helped contextualize the experience for the students as one student stated, "The stakeholder interviews were a very beneficial part of the assignment. When we started the project, I knew very little about the community. However, after talking to the stakeholders I felt I had a much better idea of the issues and opportunities facing the community."

Survey Development

Based upon the information collected during the interviews and material discussed in class, a questionnaire was developed to collect information that would meet the project's objectives and the needs of the agency and its community. Each student developed a draft of a cover letter and questionnaire. The instructor reviewed the questionnaire drafts and developed a revised draft that was submitted to the park district for review. Based upon the feedback obtained from the agency, a final community-wide questionnaire was developed. Kelly LaMore, Superintendent of Recreation for the Bourbonnais Township Park District stated "Working with Dr. Mulvaney and the students at EIU was a great experience. The entire process was professionally implemented and completed on schedule. We were able to make changes to the draft to meet our specific needs." Finally, the instrument was pilot tested prior to the printing to enhance the questionnaire's face validity and readability.

Data Collection & Analysis

In an effort to allow each household an equal opportunity to share their views, the Bourbonnais Township Park District elected to send a community-wide survey to every household within the district. Working alongside the university, the Bourbonnais Township Park District printed and mailed the questionnaire to each household within the district. Each mailing included a cover letter, the questionnaire, and a pre-paid return envelope. To improve the response rate, a variety of reminder messages were sent out to residents through the local newspaper and the district's marketing materials.

The completed questionnaires were mailed to the university where students entered the data and worked with the instructor to check the data for completeness and accuracy prior to analysis. The instructor assigned each student a different date to notify and update the park district on the current response rate for that given date. This procedure ensured the agency was kept informed of the study's progress while the interactions further connected the "real-life" implications of the study to the students.

Overview of the Partnership

The purpose of the partnership was two-fold. First, the partnership sought to design and implement a community-wide study to assess the public park and recreation community's services. The results of the study provided the Bourbonnais Township Park District with accurate information for the short-term and long-range recreation planning within the community. This service was particularly beneficial to the Bourbonnais Township Park District as they lacked the expertise and staff to conduct the study themselves and the financial resources to hire a private consultant firm. In describing this need, Hollice Clark, Executive Director for the Bourbonnais Township Park District, stated, "As the Bourbonnais Township Park District continued to grow, we felt it was important to understand the pulse of the community and where to invest our limited resources. Our 2008 Strategic Plan called for a community needs assessment and we believed a partnership with EIU could benefit both organizations."

The second purpose of the partnership was to create a research-based, experiential learning opportunity for undergraduate students majoring in recreation. With the guidance of the course instructor, the learning experience provided students with "real life" experience in the (a) design and implementation of a survey, (b) administration (i.e., sampling) and data collection procedures (i.e., coding, data entry, data cleaning, etc.), (c) understanding and use of appropriate data analysis procedures, (d) interpretation and summarization of results, and (e) report writing and oral presentation of the study.

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Report Writing & Oral Presentations

Upon completion of the analysis, the students developed a preliminary report and oral presentation that discussed the study's purpose, background, methods, results, and conclusions. Staff and stakeholders of the Bourbonnais Township Park District were invited to attend the student presentations on campus. A question and answer session with the administrators followed the presentation to allow students the opportunity to network with professionals and obtain feedback. Following the presentations, the instructor debriefed the students on the project while explaining the impact of their work as it related to the community's recreation parks, programs, and facilities. As one student, Lindsay Woods concluded, "This was the most "real-life" project I have done in college. It made my effort and work so much more worth the time knowing that the final product was a key component to the agency's planning process. I really enjoyed working on this project. It has made me really appreciate the role of research and evaluation in the field of recreation."

Following the conclusion of the academic semester, the course instructor finalized the data analyses and worked with the Bourbonnais Township Park District's administrators in the development of a final report that was delivered to the park district. In addition, a presentation of the final results was delivered to the park district during one of their board meetings.

Conclusion

The strategic planning process recognizes and begins with an awareness of need for a better-defined future and a desire to invest in that future. Strategic planning positions the park and recreation agency toward creating a process that takes the agency from its currently existing state to a more desirable and responsive state. Although it is not assumed that strategic planning will address each of the agency's needs, or that it will adequately respond to every demand, the planning process does utilize past history and current knowledge to anticipate a future the agency can embrace for itself and those it serves. The information gathered from the community-wide recreation interests survey is a key piece in the strategic planning process and can assist an agency to more easily identify a desired future and provide the resources to effectively move toward that future.

Despite its importance, many agencies lack the resources to adequately identify and assess their community's current and future recreation needs. Responding to this challenge, the Department of Recreation Administration at Eastern Illinois University partnered with the Bourbonnais Township Park District to conduct a community-wide recreation interests study. This partnership led to the development of a community-specific needs assessment instrument that assessed the current supply and demand, leading to the identification of leisure related issues within the community. Taken collectively, the results of the needs assessment were used in the planning and decision-making processes to fully utilize facilities and park areas, identify programming areas that were lacking, and determine areas of future development for the Bourbonnais Township Park District. According to Hollice Clark, "Through the partnership with EIU we, the Bourbonnais Township Park District, were able to obtain valuable information regarding the thoughts, feelings and ideas of our residents. Now, we are using those ideas to improve the quality of the park district."

Michael A. Mulvaney, PhD., CPRP, is an assistant professor in the Department of Recreation Administration at Eastern Illinois University.

Hollice Clark III, is the Executive Director for the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

Kelly LaMore, CPRP, is the Superintendent of Recreation for the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

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2010
THE BEST OF THE
Best
AWARDS GALA

More than 230 people celebrated the best of Illinois parks, recreation and conservation during the Illinois Association of Park Districts' fourth annual *Best of the Best Awards Gala* at the Wheeling Park District's Chevy Chase Country Club on October 1st.

IAPD Chairman George Longmeyer and IAPD President and CEO Peter Murphy presented more than 50 awards to board members, citizen volunteers, businesses and members of the media in recognition of outstanding contributions to Illinois parks, recreation and conservation.

Park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies were invited to submit nominations for the following awards: Board Member Service Anniversary, Agency Anniversary, Illinois Parks' Top Journalist, Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Business, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Partnership, Arts in the Park, Best Green Practices and Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year.

This year, the Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Business award, was segmented into three subcategories: small business (fewer than 100 employees), mid-sized business (100-500 employees) and large business (more than 500 employees.)

New to this year's awards gala was the "Best of the Best Wall of Wines." This fundraiser for *Friends of Illinois Parks* and the PowerPlay! Beyond School Grant Program invited guests to purchase an opportunity to pull a wrapped bottle of donated wine from the wall. Guests then unveiled their choice to find a bottle of wine valued from \$20 to more than \$100.

"Illinois has one of the best park and recreation systems in the country, and with more than 100 nominations submitted, we truly recognized the best of the best," said Peter Murphy. "It is one of our top priorities to honor those who dedicate an enormous amount of time, talent and resources to advance Illinois parks, recreation and conservation."



Each first place recipient received a beautiful hand-carved Baltimore Oriole sculpture from Illinois artist Nathan Bennett. Tim Larson accepted his award for the Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Small Business Category. Tim raised funds to restore a historic barn within the Rockford Park District.



Chris Riley of the Decatur Park District accepted the Arts in the Park first place award. Arts Alliance Illinois presents these awards in partnership with the IAPD to park agencies that support the arts and artists in their communities.

Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

10-Years

Robert L. Whisler, Arlington Heights Park District
 Jim Eisfeller, Byron Park District
 Thomas Barz, Frankfort Park District
 Lynda Wade, Itasca Park District
 Brent Paxton, Lake County Forest Preserves
 Gary Callahan, Oak Lawn Park District
 George Longmeyer, Schaumburg Park District

15-Years

Christine H. Garry, Barrington Park District
 Bob Schaefer, Beardstown Community Park District
 Scott Jeffrey, Byron Park District
 Rick R. Klinedinst, Canton Park District
 Kevin R. Stephenson, Canton Park District
 Susan L. Walters, Canton Park District
 Mike Renner, Cary Park District
 Mike Krost, Chillicothe Park District
 Don Luy, Decatur Park District
 Patricia Morissette-Moll, Elmhurst Park District
 Robert Wyffels, Geneseo Park District
 Donna Kolar, Gurnee Park District
 Linda Aiani, Itasca Park District
 Dan Kompanowski, Itasca Park District
 James Long, Lan-Oak Park District
 David Perring, Lincoln Park District
 John Bielenda, Lombard Park District
 Michael Kohlstedt, Midlothian Park District
 Kevin Brogan, Mokena Community Park District
 Betty Fergus, Morton Grove Park District
 Ronald R. Ory, Naperville Park District
 Susan Lugo, Oakbrook Terrace Park District
 Bob Pickel, Oregon Park District
 Cathleen McDermott, Park District of Forest Park
 Geraldine Pierce, Peotone Park District
 Robert L. Johnson Sr., Pleasure Driveway and
 Park District of Peoria
 Barbara Daudelin, Round Lake Area Park District
 Mike Daniels, Schaumburg Park District
 Wayne Motley, Waukegan Park District

20-Years

Becky Jones, Beardstown Community Park District
 Mary Ann Bitzer, Collinsville Area Recreation
 District
 Roger G. Kotecki, Forest Preserve District of
 DuPage County
 Robert McConnaughay, Forest Preserve District of
 Kane County
 James Mitchell, Forest Preserve District of Kane
 County
 Sandra Morgan, Hickory Hills Park District
 Robert Dybdal, Kewanee Park District
 John Andrews, Lincoln Park District
 Donald Andersen, Oak Lawn Park District
 Steve Pennock, Oregon Park District
 James P. Crowley, Wilmette Park District
 David G Miller, Wilmette Park District



IAPD President and CEO Peter Murphy and Schaumburg Park District Commissioner and IAPD Board Chairman George Longmeyer were the masters of ceremonies at the 4th annual IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala held in October. George also celebrated 10 years of service to the Schaumburg Park District board.



Round Lake Area Park District Commissioner Barbara Daudelin celebrates 15 years of service to the board with IAPD Board Chairman George Longmeyer and IAPD President and CEO Peter Murphy.

25-Years

Marianne Cordell, Bartlett Park District
 Larry Kight, Beardstown Community
 Park District
 John T. Sigel, Coloma Township Park District
 Paul Shaffer, Frankfort Park District
 Eugene Moran, Glen Ellyn Countryside
 Park District
 Ernest Shymanik, Mundelein Park &
 Recreation District
 James Blackburn, Forest Preserve District of
 Will County
 Dorothy Lange, Wood Dale Park District
 Jerry Stout, Wood Dale Park District



Donald Andersen celebrates 20 years of service to the Oak Lawn Park District board with IAPD Board Chairman George Longmeyer and IAPD President and CEO Peter Murphy.

30-Years

Donald R. Jessen, Addison Park District
 Sandra Smith, Westmont Park District



Celebrating his 25 year milestone, Ernest Shymanik displays his award from the Illinois Association of Park Districts for his service to the Mundelein Park and Recreation District.

35-Years

Newton H. Dodds, Champaign Park District

45-Years

Anne Safko, Glen Ellyn Countryside Park
 District

Agency Anniversary Awards

45th Anniversary
 Glen Ellyn Countryside Park District

75th Anniversary
 DeKalb Park District

85th Anniversary
 Forest Preserve District
 of Kane County



The Forest Preserve District of Kane County celebrated their 85th anniversary. Accepting the award are Executive Director Monica Myers and Commissioner James C. Mitchell, Jr. James also received a 20 year board member service anniversary award.

Top Journalist Awards

First Place

Stephanie Lehman, *Lake County Journal*, nominated by the Round Lake Area Park District: recognized for her effort to experience events first-hand, resulting in stories described as “creating a strong sense of community.”

First Runner Up

Mike Berry, *Kewanee Star Courier*, nominated by the Kewanee Park District: recognized for his reporting on the park district and how it contributes to the area’s quality of life.

Second Runner Up

Jennifer Ketchmark, *WCIA - TV*, nominated by the Champaign Park District: recognized for above and beyond park advocacy by volunteering her time with several projects.

Best Friend of Illinois Parks Awards - Small Business Category

First Place

Tim Larson, *Skyward Promotions*, nominated by the Rockford Park District: recognized for his dedication to raise more than \$39,000 to restore a historic landmark barn through fundraising events, letter campaigns and other creative promotions.

First Runner Up

Culver’s of Mundelein, Illinois, nominated by the Vernon Hills Park District: recognized as a dedicated supporter who has welcomed every opportunity to participate in park district programs.

Second Runner Up

Evergreen Bank Group, nominated by the Oak Brook Park District: recognized for their constant involvement with the park district through event sponsorships

Best Friend of Illinois Parks Awards - Mid-Sized Business Category

First Place

Call One, nominated by the Chicago Heights Park District: recognized as a loyal supporter with multiple sponsorships and savings through the affinity program.

Best Friend of Illinois Parks Awards - Large Business Category

First Place

Tate & Lyle, nominated by the Decatur Park District: recognized as a major park district contributor with their 20 years of support.

First Runner Up

Central DuPage Hospital, nominated by the Wheaton Park District: recognized for their support of a number of annual events including an expansion into supporting the park’s scholarship program for 2010.



Craig Foster, CEO of Call One accepted the Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Mid-Sized Business Category award. Call One was nominated by the Chicago Heights Park District for their loyal support.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Awards

First Place

Wheeling Park District with the Village of Wheeling and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago: recognized for a three-way water reservoir plan helping communities along the DesPlaines River and contributing \$10 million dollars in recreational improvements for the park district.

First Runner Up

Glenview Park District with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority: recognized for their cooperative effort

to address an increasing noise issue for the Grove Historic Landmark with new noise abatement construction by the tollway.

Second Runner Up

Winnetka Park District with the Village of Winnetka: recognized for a cooperative land agreement utilizing previous landfill acreage that also awarded the park district a \$100,000 clean energy grant for their new parks service center.



The large group of award recipients proudly stand with the “Best of the Best” Intergovernmental Award. The three way recognition goes to the Wheeling Park District, the Village of Wheeling and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for implementation of a 20-year water reservoir plan helping communities along the DesPlaines River.

Partnership Awards

First Place

Round Lake Area Park District with the United Way of Lake County: recognized for a partnership that combined the United Way "Success by 6" program with the park district's "Traveling Summer Camp." This combination enabled free youth activity programs to utilize Illinois early learning standards curriculum.

First Runner Up

Waukegan Park District with the Healthways SilverSneakers Fitness Program: recognized for a cooperative effort to create a certified fitness program for seniors at the park district fitness center with specialized equipment.

Second Runner Up

Lan-Oak Park District with the Schultz Park Neighborhood Group: recognized for a fundraising partnership to replace an unsafe playground through multiple donation drives and park district fund matching support.

Arts in the Park Awards

First Place

Decatur Park District: recognized for the park's arts and recreation center that features innovative offerings, scholarships and outreach through volunteerism to under-served populations.

First Runner Up

Urbana Park District: recognized for their strong programming and partnerships in supporting local artists and robust cultural programs.

Second Runner Up

Addison Park District: recognized for the park district's Readers Theatre that brings together public school students and seniors to learn, connect and have fun.

Best Green Practices Awards

First Place

Wheaton Park District: recognized for the park district's new green practice initiative that implemented more than 50 different environmental accomplishments. The park also implemented a learning program from their efforts which reached more than 18,000 participants in 2010.

First Runner Up

Naperville Park District: recognized for their aggressive effort to implement recycling and waste reduction programs that are also used as environmental education programs park-wide.

Second Runner Up

Glenview Park District: recognized for the green practices incorporated into a maintenance facility by securing grants for such features as a vegetative roof and wind turbine.

Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year Awards

First Place

Charlie Sarver - nominated by the Rockford Park District: Charlie Sarver's devotion to the park district ranges from a donation of 52 acres of his own farm property to his tireless efforts as a 60 hour per/week volunteer. He helps the park's equestrian program by growing and donating hay from his personal land. Charlie also contributes a substantial amount of effort by constructing and donating buildings and loaning machinery to park functions.



Round Lake Area Park District shares the recognition with the United Way of Lake County for a partnership which enabled free youth activity programs to utilize Illinois early learning standards curriculum.



Mike Benard, Executive Director of the Wheaton Park District was on hand to accept the Best Green Practices Award for their extensive green practice initiative and education program.



The delightful acceptance speech by Charlie Sarver, Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year, was only transcended by the long list of dedicated services he provides to the Rockford Park District

First Runner Up

Eric Freyfogle - nominated by the Urbana Park District: Eric Freyfogle is a volunteer who has dedicated 23 years of service to multiple park committees and helped form the new Urbana Parks Foundation. Eric has also made financial donations that created a large nature observation deck.

Second Runner Up

John Mann - nominated by the Deerfield Park District: John Mann has dedicated 18 years of volunteerism that ranged from his beginnings as coach of youth football programs to his election as chairman of the parks foundation.

Remember the Evening, or See What you Missed:

Links to photos and video from the Gala are available on the IAPD's website at www.ILparks.org.

Save the Date – Friday, October 14, 2011

It's never too early to start thinking about your nominations for the fifth annual Best of the Best Awards Gala. The 2011 event is tentatively scheduled for Friday, October 14th at the Wheeling Park District's Traditions at Chevy Chase Country Club. Please watch *Illinois Parks & Recreation* and other IAPD communications for details on nominating and reserving tables for next year's event.

Seven Steps to Conduct an Effective PR Campaign using Social Media

Still sending out traditional news releases? If you're looking for way to raise visibility, generate traffic, grow business and build an online community, consider testing out social media. Follow these seven steps to get started on conducting an effective public relations campaign to reach reporters, and the masses, using social media.

1. Set Campaign Goals

Traditional PR campaign goals often include placements in target publications along with the total number of media impressions. Search and social media news campaigns allow you to be more creative and effective. For example, do you want to reach out to bloggers, grow your community on twitter, build a Facebook group, generate more site traffic, attract more YouTube channel viewers, raise your social media visibility profile or get better search engine rankings? You can do all of these and still reach reporters on social networks. Schedule your releases to go out at least once a month. Higher frequency positions you as a newsmaker and one to watch. And, you'll get more opportunities to fine-tune your message and measure results.

2. Being Newsworthy

Because social media sites are searchable, every action or comment can be public. You don't need a press release to get noticed. You do need to be newsworthy on a consistent basis to sustain interested attention. As you're crafting your campaign, think about whom you want to reach and why, what problems they have that you can solve, where they spend their time online and the sources they go to for news or help. For story ideas, focus on topics that relate to the specific area of expertise or business service you want to grow or highlight. Now think about why and how your stories need to be told. How can you tie into trends or national events? Look at stories in the news now and find connections to what you do.

3. Targeting Media

Who do you want to tell your story? Do you already have a media list that includes newspaper, trade publication, magazine, radio and TV reporters? Great. Now, find the reporters and their media outlets on Facebook, LinkedIn and twitter. Need a media list? Check out <http://mediaontwitter.com>. To expand your coverage, include bloggers and community sites in your niche. To find them, search for niche + blog, niche + community and niche + forum. If you have more than one area of expertise, for example young couples and entrepreneurs, segment your media list by contacts that cover each niche.

4. Make Connections

Check out each reporter, media outlet, blogger and community to make sure that their audience would be interested in covering your stories. Look for reporters that write stories that match your topics. For example, business reporters cover different stories than lifestyle reporters. To connect on social networks, send a personal introduction request with a mention of the reporter's work and let them know you are a resource in the area of your chosen expertise. If you have more than one area of expertise, match your message to the media. Targeting bloggers? Comment on their posts and find out who's who in their community. Get to know each media contact

personally. It's better to have a small intimate group than a large email list with no relationship.

5. Craft Search and Social Releases

A search and social media release differs from a traditional press release in these important ways:

- Keyword search terms help readers find your news faster
- Images and video add dimension to the story
- Key points break up the content and underscore main ideas
- Built-in sharing options allow news to spread easily and quickly online.

To transform a traditional press release with search and social elements, add key search terms, summarize the news in the first paragraph with a call to action, add on links, include images and video and route distribution through share-enabled channels.

6. Distribute to Share

Now that your social media release is ready to go, you can get the word out in a variety of ways. Choose a free or paid distribution service to send your news to search engines, wire services and industry-specific RSS feeds. Two popular paid services are Business Wire and PR Newswire. Others include PRWeb, MarketWire and WebWire. For example, here's PRWeb's pricing. http://www.prweb.com/pr/press-release-price_steps.html. The higher your investment, the more detailed the statistics and reports. Set up an online newsroom to post the releases on your site or blog with an RSS feed option to automatically update subscribers. Reach out to media contacts and send a tweet with a link to your release. Leverage your company's network connections by sharing the release and the link on your company's social profiles sites.

7. Measure Results

Go back to your campaign goals and see how your results measure up. To see how your release performs on search engines, enter your key terms. Type the release headline in the search bar to see what sites picked it up. With social media, set up a search term, called a hashtag, to group results across channels. For twitter results, use <http://tweetreach.com> to track your hashtag's reach by twitter user.

To check out mentions across multiple social media channels, check out <http://ubervu.com>.



Barbara Rozgonyi, who is a principal of CoryWest Media, LLC and Publisher of <http://wiredprworks.com>. Barbara will host a workshop on Saavy Social Media 101 at the upcoming 2011 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference January 27-29.

PEOPLE & PLACES

New Executive Director announced for Ivanhoe Park District of Riverdale

The Illinois Association of Park Districts recently performed a Directors Search Program service for the newly formed Ivanhoe Park District of Riverdale. The park district is a merger of two smaller districts in the same village and Greg Bates was appointed the first executive director. Previously the agencies were served with an all volunteer park board handling the administrative duties.

Greg's experience in parks and recreation includes serving the Village of Matteson as director of recreational services and as director of parks and recreation at Inverness Park District. He began his career in parks and recreation in 1998 as a program coordinator with the Elk Grove Park District. Greg holds a master's degree in park and recreation administration from Aurora University.



Cary Park District Board of Commissioners Appoints New Executive Director

The Cary Park District Board of Commissioners has selected Dan Jones as the executive director of the Cary Park District. Jones has been employed full time as a public administrator in the field of parks and recreation since 1993. He has been with the Cary Park District since 2000 first as director of recreation, then as director of operations, and most recently as deputy director.

Dan brings a great deal of knowledge and experience in areas of revenue creation, program expansion, community based planning, capital project implementation, staff training, leadership, and construction management. Throughout his career with the Cary Park District he has led the agency through a number of projects including Cary-Grove Park development, Foxford Hills Golf Club operations, Lions Park Skate Park development, and the most recent community center renovations plus oversaw the park and recreation operations for the district.

Dan graduated in 1993 from Central Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in recreation and park administration and a minor in business management. In 2005 he graduated with a master's degree in public administration through Northern Illinois University. He is also a certified Park and Recreation Professional and was awarded the Illinois Park and Recreation Association Recreation Section's Al Hattendorf Professional of the Year Award.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Dan's qualifications and experience to lead the Cary Park District and our highly qualified staff," says Bill Harvey, president of the Cary Park District Board of Commissioners.



Dan Schimmel has been promoted to Executive Director of the Buffalo Grove Park District

Although Dan Schimmel might be the new executive director, he's definitely not new to the Buffalo Grove Park District. A native of Des Plaines, Dan Schimmel was first hired in

Buffalo Grove as the superintendent of recreation in 1990. He was promoted to director of recreation and facilities in 2002 and deputy director in 2009.

After completing his bachelor of science degree in recreation and park administration at Western Illinois University in 1976, Dan began his career at the St. Charles Park District. From there, Dan signed on at the Elmhurst Park District as a recreation supervisor from 1979 - 1986. He then became the superintendent of recreation at the Hanover Park Park District in 1986, the same year he completed his masters degree in recreation and park administration at Western Illinois University, and remained there until coming to Buffalo Grove.

As executive director, Dan plans on addressing the district's master plan, which includes park development, paths, stream banks, playground renovation, ball fields and more natural park settings. He also said that he'd like to see a large scale community center, or at least a smaller one on the north side of town.



Two of Buffalo Grove Park District's longest serving leaders retire

It is not often that an organization has to suddenly replace 67 years worth of experience and leadership, but that is exactly the task put upon the Buffalo Grove Park

District this year, as Mike Rylko and Dale "Duke" Ducommun retire.

Dale "Duke" Ducommun actually started doing work for the Buffalo Grove Park District before he was officially hired as the first ever full-time parks department employee on his birthday (June 15) in 1972. Duke became the first superintendent of parks the Buffalo Grove Park District has ever had in 1979. In his 38 year career here, Duke has seen the Buffalo Grove Park District grow from 5 parks to what is now over 50 parks and facilities.

Buffalo Grove Park District's executive director of almost 26 years, Mike Rylko, also retired on April 30. The third executive director in the district's history, Mike initially came to the Buffalo Grove Park District as their first ever intern when he was finishing up his bachelor of science degree in park and recreation administration at Eastern Illinois University. He was hired as the District's first ever Recreation Supervisor in 1973 and promoted to Superintendent in 1974. Mike has seen the staff grow from 10 to their current number of 54 employees. He has also seen the district grow from 150 to over 411 acres.

Under Mike's leadership, the Buffalo Grove Park District has earned Distinguished Agency accreditation since 1996, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for 12 consecutive years, accreditation since 1989 from the Park District Risk Management Institute and recognition as one of 4 finalists for the National Recreation and Park Association's Gold Medal Award in 2009.



Mike Rylko



Dale Ducommun



Steve Messerli retiring as Executive Director at Fox Valley Park District after 40 years in parks and recreation field

After 40 years of “living my life’s dream,” Fox Valley Park District executive director, Steve Messerli, will retire at the end of the year, putting the wraps on an illustrious, award-laden career in the parks, recreation and conservation field.

Capping a memorable journey that began in 1969 as a seasonal employee with the Fairfax County Park Authority in Virginia where he “cleaned every restroom in the system,” Messerli will walk into the sunset having led Fox Valley to prominence as the 2009 National

Gold Medal Award winner. A strong supporter of open house forums, Messerli believes that taking the pulse of the community and folding their visions into futuristic plans develop favorable relationships with voters and the public in general.

Messerli’s work at Fox Valley was reflective of his previous accomplishments as executive director of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, where he led 13 years of progress, highlighted by a National Gold Medal Award in 1999. Serving a population of more than 660,000 citizens, he managed the 25,000-acre regional park and natural resource agency and led efforts to provide public access opportunities and improvements while acquiring over 8,000 acres of land for open space preservation, outdoor recreation and environmental education purposes – making Lake County the second largest forest preserve system in Illinois and one of national acclaim.

In 1995, he became an elected member of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and served on the Academy’s Board of Directors from 1997 to 2000. He chaired the National Gold Medal Awards transition committee and was elected president of the academy and served a one-year term through 2009.

Ryan Risinger promoted to Director of Recreation and Facilities

Ryan Risinger has been named the director of recreation and facilities for Buffalo Grove Park District. Ryan not only has spent his entire career at the Buffalo Grove Park District, he started there before his career even officially began as the district’s intern, after completing his bachelor of science degree at Illinois State University in 1992. Even before he was hired full-time as a recreation supervisor that same year, Ryan worked part-time in their parks department cutting grass. In 1995, Ryan was promoted to division manager, and was again promoted to superintendent of recreation in 2001.

When asked why he has spent his entire career here, Ryan said, “There was never a reason to leave. I enjoy the job and the people, and I feel loyalty to the district.” As for the success of the district, Ryan credits the leadership and staff. He added, “From the board on down, people are creative when needed and responsive to residents’ needs.”



2011 IAPD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan 27-29 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Hilton Chicago
- Mar 16-18 NRPA National Legislative Forum on Parks and Recreation Grand Hyatt, Washington, D.C.
- April/May Flying 4 Kids Statewide Kite Fly
- May 3 Parks Day at the Capitol State Capitol, Springfield
- May 3 Legislative Reception Illini Country Club, Springfield
- May 4 Legislative Conference Hilton Hotel, Springfield
- July 21 Legislative Golf Outing White Pines Golf Club, Bensenville Park District
- Aug 20 Park District Conservation Day Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield
- Sep 20 Summer Golf Tour #5 Hoffman Estates Park District
- Oct 1 Board of Trustees Meeting
- Oct 14 The Best of the Best Awards Gala Traditions at Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling Park District
- Oct 27 Legal Symposium McDonalds Training Center, Hyatt Lodge, Oak Brook
- Nov 1-4 NRPA Congress & Exposition Atlanta, Georgia
- Jan 26-28, 2012 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

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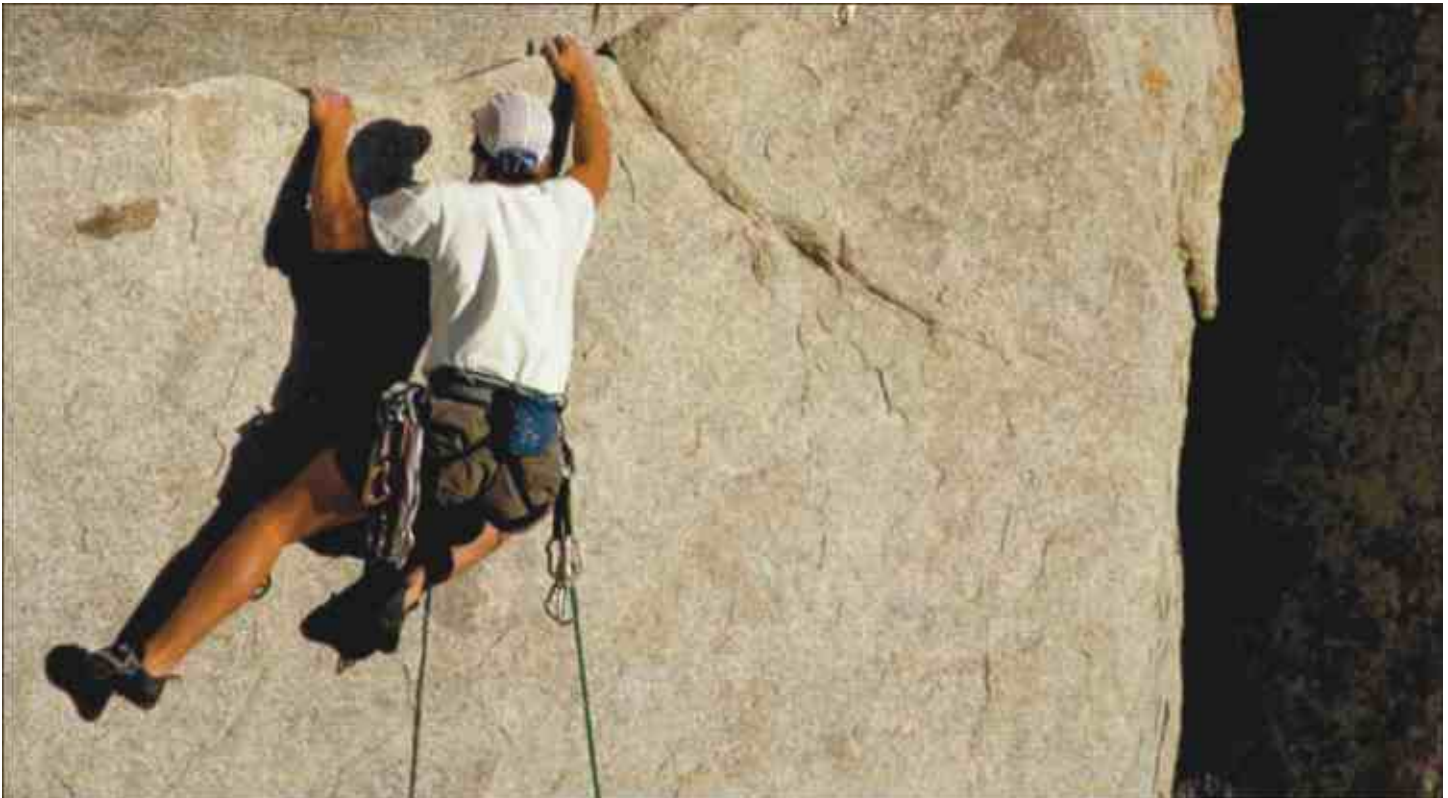
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