

illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



golf

Growing the Game

PLUS Conference Coverage - The Latest Referenda Results - Organic Turf Care

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Congratulations to these members for their commitment to excellence in risk management. Accreditation is the highest level of achievement earned by a PDRMA member through exceptional performance on our comprehensive Loss Control Review. Our thanks to all employees at these member agencies for their hard work and commitment!



PDRMA
Park District Risk Management Agency

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FROM THE EDITOR



Geek confession: for about a year I've been having a lot of fun trying to be pithy at 140 characters a clip on Twitter.

Now, *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine is on Twitter as ILParksMagazine. If you or your agency has an account, please think about following the magazine at twitter.com/ILParksMagazine. The twitter account will be a fun way to give you a quick preview of upcoming stories and events and link you to bonus materials that augment the print edition of our magazine. I also hope that it will be an informal way for you to make tips or suggestions for future issues.

As you can tell, this issue of the magazine is our biennial golf edition. Along with this issue, we usually post a guide to park agency golf facilities in Illinois. That feature is currently under preparation and will be posted to the Web later this spring. We'll alert you when it is ready for you to download. But, I promise, magazine Twitter followers will know about it first.

— RODD WHELPLEY
Editor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

At the 2010 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference I was honored and humbled to receive the 2009 Robert M. Artz Award for Distinguished Service.

After hearing my name called I began walking to the stage, trying to gather my thoughts to make sure that I would mention all those deserving of recognition. I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to a very important group that I intended to recognize but, in the rush of the moment, overlooked.

One of the true blessings of working in this industry is that our colleagues can, and do, become our lifelong friends. Investing in these relationships not only makes each of us a better professional, but gives us the opportunity to become better people.

To all of you that have touched my professional life, I offer a most sincere and heartfelt thank you. You are very important to me and I want you to know that I cherish the gift of friendship that you have so generously shared.

I am honored to call you my colleague and my friend.

Sincerely,
Steve Scholten

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Illinois Parks and Recreation Association for
Outstanding Facility and Park Award for 2009



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ILLINOIS PARK DISTRICTS

Local Government Meeting People's Needs

Illinois park districts:

- Offer affordable recreational opportunities to their communities
- Protect open space
- Actively promote wellness in their communities
- Partner effectively with businesses and other local governments
- Increase property values
- Serve people with disabilities

Source: Illinois Park Districts: Citizen Perspectives, a report of the University of Illinois Office of Recreation and Park Resources, Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, March 2007.



www.ilparks.org



Participate in the **ILLINOIS SPORTSMAN'S & PARKS RAFFLE**
Assist in our efforts to teach young people to place a new value on the outdoors, on our natural resources and on conservation.

FRIENDS OF ILLINOIS PARKS

Proceeds from this raffle will benefit research, environmental awareness and the PowerPlay! Beyond School Grant Program, a Friends initiative that provides Illinois children with safe, structured beyond school activities focused on health, fitness and nutrition.

ILLINOIS CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Many of the programs supported by the Foundation have consisted of youth hunting, fishing and camping experiences, assisting with creating a prairie area in a school yard to providing funds for school field trips to state parks.

You may purchase your tickets @ \$100 per ticket

BY CREDIT CARD AT TELEPHONE: 217-785-2003 • ONLINE AT: www.isp-affle.com

BY MAIL AT: Illinois Conservation Foundation, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702, or in person at the same address or by contacting any Park District that is a member of the Illinois Association of Park Districts (217-523-4554).

Proceeds from this raffle will benefit the missions of both the Illinois Conservation Foundation and Friends of Illinois Parks



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FIRST PRIZE \$100,000 Grand Prize Drawing

Friday, May 14, 2010 @ 3:00 p.m.

Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL

*(Need not be present to win)
Winners will be publicly acknowledged
after each drawing.*

SECOND PRIZE	\$10,000
THIRD PRIZE	\$ 3,000
FOURTH - 10TH PRIZE	\$ 1,000
11TH - 20TH PRIZE	\$ 500
21ST - 50TH PRIZE	\$ 250
<i>(Only 4,000 tickets sold)</i>	

Early Bird Drawing

FEBRUARY 16	\$ 500
FEBRUARY 26	\$ 500
MARCH 15	\$ 500
MARCH 30	\$ 500
APRIL 15	\$ 500

*(Winning tickets will go back
in for the final drawing)*

Cut-off is 5:00 pm the previous day



Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

How To Build Great Boards – Eight Ideas From Those That Do It Best

Serving on an elected park board is virtually guaranteed to be different than most other board experiences you may have had. While you and your fellow board members were broadly motivated to run for election because you wanted to improve the community, it's likely that you each bring different points of emphasis to your work. Some board members most value recreational programming, others conservation, others capital improvements and some stress budget issues. Board members are certainly not homogenous in the way that they look to the needs of the community as it pertains to park and recreation services. That healthy diversity can make board service fun as well as challenging, as long as you keep in mind that your first and foremost responsibility is to build your board into the very best board it can be. Here are eight tips that will help.

1. Embrace the Bylaws

Read the bylaws. It may seem like the perfect remedy for a sleepless night, but familiarity with them is essential. Bylaws typically cover a statement of organizational purpose and mission; a framework for your role, including legal responsibilities; a description of the agency's elected offices with terms and duties; a description of the role of the chief executive and of how board members relate to staff; and other key information.

As the governing body of the park district, the board must not only make sure the staff and agency are adhering to the bylaws, policies and procedures, but also that the rules themselves are aligned with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Reading through the bylaws may reveal opportunities to improve the agency's operational framework and governance system.

2. Do Your Homework

Whether the board meets monthly or semi-monthly, pre-meeting reading is a must. Being prepared for meetings helps them run smoothly and quickly and is also a sign to fellow board members that you respect them and the process. Exceptional organizations depend on board members who are prepared to share and apply their perspectives and knowledge of trends and best practices to strategy and direction. Being prepared for meetings increases your ability to keep a finger on the pulse of park and recreation services within your community. It also helps your board engage on issues more efficiently.

3. Pay Attention to the Routine Things

Many boards group routine matters into a consent agenda and thereby reduce, or even eliminate, discussion of those items and allow for unanimous consent. A consent agenda can free up meeting time for discussion of those issues most needing conversation, but the success of this approach hinges on board members taking the initiative to individually review materials prior to the meeting. This also enables you to analyze those items that might need more discussion prior to action and speak with the executive director before the meeting for an explanation.

Great boards concentrate on real issues of consequence, not on reports of things that committees have already executed.



4. Understand Your Role

Don't confuse the day-to-day operational issues of your park district with the actual carrying out of the mission. Board members are there to help articulate and implement the mission-based strategic plan of the agency, not deal with the minutia of how many baseballs are provided to teams during the season, or what type of wallpaper should be put in the lobby of the recreation center. In this regard, use the 80/20 rule as it applies to strategy dialogue versus monitoring. (That is, spend 80 percent of the board's time strategizing and 20 percent monitoring.) Great boards concentrate on real issues of consequence, not on reports of things that committees have already executed. Great board members recognize the difference between oversight and micro-management, and they spend their time and talent on issues that really matter. So, focus your energy on a more global perspective.

Work on developing the core competencies for effective boardmanship.

5. Develop Core Competencies

Follow the advice of Yogi Berra: "If you don't know where you're going, chances are you'll end up somewhere else." As a board member, work on developing the core competencies for effective boardmanship. These include:

- Knowledge of the agency and its operations.
- Developing, communicating and sustaining a shared vision for the agency.
- Integrity, responsibility and accountability to your fellow board members and the community.
- The ability to negotiate fairly during times of disagreement among the board.
- Communication with your fellow board members within the tenants of the Open Meetings Act, as well as with the executive director.
- Teamwork and collaboration within and without the agency. Many times great ideas are achieved while working with community groups or other units of local government.
- Leadership and motivating others to deliver the best services possible.
- Innovation. This is what separates your agency from others.
- Judgment and problem-solving skills. Isn't this why you ran for the board?

6. Set the Ground Rules

Establishing ground rules is critical to the success of your agency. There should be a list in front of each board member at each meeting, and it should include, among others, the following:

- Be faithful to the mission and goals of the agency. I recommend that the mission statement appear on the agenda of every meeting.
- Start and end on time.
- Be prepared and respectful.
- Actively listen when others are speaking.

I would also include values such as:

- Don't take yourself too seriously; value humor.
- Debate the issue and not the person.
- Identify a purpose and outcome for all discussions.

7. Know Who Speaks for the Board.

If you are not the designated spokesperson for the board, then give the person with whom you are speaking the name and contact information of the board spokesperson, especially if the person asking the question wants "an official statement from the board." More often than not the press thrives on controversy. Remember this and support the action of the board, even if it differs from how you voted.

8. Evaluate Your Success

Finally, successful boards take the opportunity to evaluate the success of their meetings. In that way, they ensure that they stay on track and are faithful of the mission of the agency, and they sharpen the effectiveness of their meeting format and style.

Learning to Trust Each Other's Skills and Commitment

At the end of the day, to do the work that the board needs to, each board member needs to trust one another. And that trust is built up through an awareness of the other board members' personal skills, commitment and involvement in the district.

Despite some of the legalese surrounding the expectations of what makes a good board member and, therefore, a great board, the core values coincide with the childhood lessons that we all have learned.

- Be respectful of others.
- Be smart.
- Be prepared.
- Be committed.

If you work hard enough at it, serving on a park board may be the most satisfying and rewarding experience you have ever had.

April-May
Flying 4 Kids Months
Statewide Kite Fly

April 27
Parks Day at the Capitol
State Capitol, Springfield

April 27
Legislative Reception
Illini Country Club, Springfield

April 28
Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield

May 17
Summer Golf Tour Event #1
Ravisloe Country Club
Homewood

June 21
Summer Golf Tour Event #2
Fox Bend Golf Course
Oswegoland Park District

July 12
Summer Golf Tour Event #3
Red Tail Run Golf Club
Decatur Park District

July 22
Legislative Golf Outing
White Pines Golf Club
Bensenville

August 9
Summer Golf Tour Event #4
Settlers Hill Golf Course
Batavia

August 21
Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair
State Fair Grounds, Springfield

September 20
Summer Golf Tour Event #5
Glenview Park Golf Club
Glenview Park District

October 1
IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala
Traditions at Chevy Chase Country Club
Wheeling Park District

October 25-29
NRPA National Congress and Exposition
Minneapolis, Minnesota

November 4
Legal Symposium
Hamburger University
Oak Brook

January 27-29, 2011
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hilton, Chicago

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



Mike Selep, CPRP
IPRA Interim CEO

Having Vision Does Not Require Perfect Eyesight

The 2010 Winter Olympic Games were a time of tremendous inspiration, a time where people peacefully gathered from all over the world to celebrate the achievements of their athletes. There were great stories of triumph as athletes overcame near career-ending injuries to return to Olympic competition, some winning the gold and others overjoyed with just having had the opportunity to be on the world stage once again.

Members of the United States team captured more gold, silver and bronze medals than the members of any other country. This is a tremendous accomplishment for athletes, coaches and trainers that worked so hard to represent the United States. It was impossible to choke back a sense of pride as the national anthem played, the American flag was displayed and Evan Lysacek from Naperville and Shani Davis from Chicago each smiled wearing their new shiny gold medals. Shaun White, Lindsay Vonn, Apolo Ohno and Bode Miller were among the members of the U.S. team that we will remember for their amazing accomplishments at this year's Olympics.

Seeing Opportunity in the Face of Adversity

Canadian skier Brian McKeever was a source of inspiration for me during these Olympics. At age 19, Brian was diagnosed with Stargardt's Disease, a form of macular degeneration that has left him with less than 10 percent of his vision. Seven gold medals and 11 years later, he can only see fuzzy images in front of him. This year, he became the first man to compete in both the winter Olympics and Paralympics.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't wish that I saw better," Brian told the *Seattle Times*. "And yet, it's made me who I am. It's a part of who I am and I like the person I am. If that's the case, then this can't be all bad."

Brian's healthy attitude extends beyond his ability to overcome his disability. He has a clear understanding of the meaning of Olympic competition.

"The Olympics, at its ideal, is about the athletes of the world coming together and competing on fair and level playing fields," he said. "That's a really beautiful thing. It really is about taking

part. I'm not going to stand up here and say I'm going to win a medal. But one thing I can say is that I certainly am going to go out there in the best shape of my life, and when I hit the finish line I want to be able to say I had the best race I could have had on that particular day.'"

Before McKeever, five athletes competed in both the Summer Paralympics and Olympics. They are Neroli Fairhall of New Zealand, Paola Fantato of Italy, American Marla Runyan, Poland's Natalia Partyka and Natalie du Toit of South Africa. Marla Runyan was also legally blind due to Stargardt's disease. She ran the 1,500 meter and 5,000 meter events in the 2000 Olympics and won gold in the 1992 and 1996 Paralympics.

Brian and Marla prove that vision and not eyesight is what is important if you are to be successful. Vision has been critical to the success of parks and recreation in Illinois. Members of IPRA and IAPD have long expressed vision of the future of parks and recreation in Illinois.

IPRA will be venturing into a six-month strategic planning process this year. IPRA Chairman of the Board Carrie Hauptert has appointed Glenview Park District Executive Director Chuck Balling to chair a Business Model Task Force for IPRA.



Checking Our Own Vision

I was provided many opportunities to see this vision throughout the 2010 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference in January. I was fortunate to meet Betty Irons on Saturday morning of the conference. Betty was the first female President of IAPD in 1971, when she served as a commissioner with the Homewood Flossmoor Park District. She shared her story of becoming the first female President of IAPD. I was speechless,

It takes a team effort of recreation professionals and citizens working together with expanded training opportunities to help meet ever-changing needs.

which does not happen often, just listening to Betty. She described how she was able to help break down the barriers that had previously prevented women from being involved in leadership roles. She spoke with extreme pride about how IAPD and IPRA worked together during challenging times.

I decided to go back and take a look at the *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine from January of 1972 to see how things have changed since Betty served as President of IAPD. Betty presided over a record 1,443 in attendance at the 1971 Illinois Park and Recreation Conference in Granite City. There were great pictures of sharply dressed members standing in line for registration, receiving recognition and visiting the exhibit hall. It is amazing how things remain the same, yet how much the park and recreation movement has grown in Illinois, as there were 4,267 in attendance at the 2010 Conference.

In her monthly column, Betty said that “this process for change has started, and your citizens should be convinced that a separate district for parks and recreation most ably meets their needs. Responsiveness to local citizen needs and thoughtful consideration of new methods of service will be helpful in the period of evolutionary growth that seems likely for the next few years.”

Illinois Park and Recreation Society, IPRS (now known as IPRA), President Ted Kavadas of the Springfield Park District shared this vision with Betty. He added in his column that “the demand for additional facilities and programs will far outstrip our abilities to provide these services unless all agencies concerned with the park and recreation movement work together in a common cause to meet these challenges. Additional professional training institutes and executive development programs must be provided and expanded to meet the ever changing requirements and personnel in the field.”

Betty and Ted understood that it takes a team effort of recreation professionals and citizens working together with expanded training opportunities to help meet the ever-changing needs of the movement. We must follow in the footsteps of Betty Irons and Ted Kavadas and continually find ways to expand opportunities for the residents of Illinois by providing the very best training opportunities and resources to meet the needs of our members.

IPRA Looks Toward its Future

IPRA will be venturing into a six-month strategic planning process this year. IPRA Chairman of the Board, Carrie Hauptert, executive director of the Bloomingdale Park District, has appointed Glenview Park District Executive Director Chuck Balling to chair a Business Model Task Force.

Chuck will be working with a cross-section of the IPRA membership, 23 members from different age brackets, sections and parts of the state, to use the information collected from the two 2009 membership surveys. The goal will be to develop plans for the future of IPRA.

Not all members of this group will have perfect eyesight. Fortunately, this will not be necessary, as they will all be working towards a common goal, a vision for the future of the association.



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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Proposed Amendments to the Freedom of Information Act and the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law Are Among Many Issues of Concern to Park Agencies

The Illinois General Assembly hit the ground running following the February 2, 2010 Primary Election. New bill introductions for this session totaled 2,098 in the House and 1,423 in the Senate. March 26, 2010 was the deadline for third reading (final action on bills in their house of origin). On March 10, 2010, the Governor's Budget Address set the tone for the rest of the legislative session.

Tremendous push back has resulted from the recent amendments to the Freedom of Information Act that most of you have heard about either at the Legal Symposium or the recent state conference.

Several of those bills that amend the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) have been introduced and are listed below. In addition, the IAPD is working with a coalition of local government associations to bring forth a comprehensive list of changes to the Freedom of Information Act that will bring common sense to its implementation.

Note, too, that the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules has finished a review of the Illinois Department of Public Health's Rule Request applying the Virginia Graeme Baker Act to pools and spas within the state. Specific information on this can also be found on the IAPD Web site under the "2010 Legislative Update Section."

There are a number of very important legislative initiatives that you should be aware of, and these are listed below.

Freedom of Information Act

House Bill 5069 seeks to amend the Freedom of Information Act to make changes with respect to a public body's authority to charge fees when meeting requests for records. It removes the requirement that electronically-maintained records be provided in the format requested; removes the prohibition against charging for the first 50 pages of black and white legal-sized or letter-sized copies; removes the maximum fee permitted for color or other-sized copies and for certification; and permits a fee to exceed the actual cost of reproduction and certification if otherwise provided by state statute.

House Bill 5143 seeks to amend the Freedom of Information Act to exempt specific personal information from public disclosure, including the names, addresses or other personal information of participants and registrants in park district, forest preserve district and conservation district programs. If passed, the law would go into effect on July 1, 2010.

House Bill 5353 will seek to amend the Freedom of Information Act in a comprehensive way. As of press time, this bill is a "shell bill" that could include a list of FOIA changes as recommended by the IAPD and a coalition of local government associations.

Employment

Senate Bill 3566 would create the Abusive Work Environment Act. The measure seeks to curb abusive work environments in state, county, municipal and local governments, including public schools, community colleges and state universities. The measure states that the General Assembly finds that between 37% and 59% of employees directly experience health-endangering workplace bullying, abuse and

harassment, and this mistreatment is approximately four times more prevalent than sexual harassment alone. One of the bill's stated purposes is to provide legal incentive for employers to prevent and respond to abusive mistreatment of employees at work. The measure would legally define such terms as abusive conduct, malice and psychological harm. It describes liabilities for abusive employees and abusive employers, including, but not limited to, reinstatement, removal of the offending party from the complainant's work environment, back pay, front pay, medical expenses, compensation for emotional distress, punitive damages and attorney's fees. Abusive employers could be subject to liability damages for emotional distress of up to \$25,000.

Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)

Senate Bill 2575 is a measure aimed to amend the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law in the Property Tax Code. It would exempt from the definition of "aggregate extension" all contributions to a pension fund created under Article 3, Article 4, or Article 7 of the Illinois Pension Code.

Senate Bill 3139 seeks to amend PTELL by increasing each taxing district's debt service extension base each year beginning with the latter of (i) the 2009 levy year or (ii) the first levy year in which the Law becomes applicable to the taxing district, by the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index during the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year. The measure provides that, if a taxing district's debt service extension base is established or increased by a referendum held after February 2, 2010, the debt service extension base shall be increased if certain authorizing language is included in the referendum.

Senate Bill 3195 seeks to amend PTELL so that the extension limitation may not be less than 1 percent. In the House, **House Bill**

Follow the Action on the Web

There are a number of bills that your agency should be aware of, but with the large number of new bill introductions only a few of the more important ones can appear in this column.

Please check our Web site at www.ilparks.org and click on the Public Policy Section. You may then choose to view the "2010 Priority Bills – House" or the "2010 Priority Bills - Senate." If you would like to review the complete list of new 2010 bill introductions and the last action taken on them click on the following link:
<http://www.ilga.gov/mylegislation/default.asp> and then enter the following information.

Email: IAPD@ILParks.org

Password: IAPD

Once you have logged into the database, choose "View."

5779 is a measure that amends PTELL so that the extension limitation may not be less than 2 percent.

Senate Bill 3265 is a measure to create the Summit Park District Tax Levy Validation (2010) Act that validates levy ordinances and tax extensions to the extent they do not exceed the maximum amount authorized under the PTELL if the district had taken into account the tax increment value from the expiration of the West Summit TIF.

House Bill 5179 seeks to amend PTELL in a way that provides that, beginning in levy year 2011, for the purpose of determining the extension limitation, the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year may not (i) exceed the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for the 12-month calendar year immediately preceding the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year by more than 37.5 percent or (ii) be more than 37.5 percent less than the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for the 12-month calendar year immediately preceding the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year.

Park District/Forest Preserve Property

House Bill 5112 is a measure seeking to amend the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act to provide that a forest preserve located within a county with a population of less than 3,000,000 may sell a parcel of land that is less than three acres in size if it was originally part of a larger parcel but became separated as a result of the construction of a new public road. The bill sets forth other criteria for the sale and provides that the proceeds from the sale must be set aside in the forest preserve district's endowment fund and used for the district's future land acquisitions.

House Bill 5144 seeks to amend the Property Tax Code to render null and void all due or unpaid property taxes and existing liens for unpaid property taxes imposed or pending under any law or ordinance of this state or any of its political subdivisions when a park district acquires property through the foreclosure of a lien, through a judicial deed, through the foreclosure of receivership certificate lien, or by acceptance of a deed of conveyance in lieu of foreclosing any lien against the property.

Employee Leave

House Bill 5425 is a measure to create the Employees Leave to Attend Criminal Proceedings Act, which would require employers who employ six or more people to allow an employee to take unpaid leave to attend a criminal proceeding if the employee was a victim of certain crimes or is in the immediate family of the victim of such crimes. Employers who violate these provisions would be deemed to be engaging in an unlawful employment practice. The measure requires employees to give notice to employers when the employees need to leave work to attend a criminal proceeding, and it permits an employer to limit the amount of leave an employee may take to attend a criminal proceeding, if the leave creates an undue hardship to the employer's business.

House Bill 3665 is a measure to create the Healthy Workplace Act, which would require an employer to provide an employee up to seven sick days with pay during each 12-month period. Under the act, an employee would be able to use the sick days to care for physical or mental illness, injury or medical condition; to obtain a professional medical diagnosis or care; or to attend a medical appointment or that of a family member.

Public Funds

Senate Bill 3696 seeks to amend the Park District Code to allow the Park District of Forest Park to take advantage of the increased limiting rate for levy year 2009 approved by a majority of voters at the general primary election held on February 2, 2010 by empowering the Board of Park Commissioners of that district to adopt an additional or supplemental budget by a vote of a majority of the full membership of the board in order to defray expenses and liabilities of the park district to be incurred for corporate purposes of the district during that fiscal year. The

measure provides that the additional or supplemental budget shall be regarded as an amendment of the annual budget for the fiscal year in which it is adopted.

House Bill 5460 is a measure to amend the Criminal Code of 1961. The bill would create the offense of theft of public funds. It provides that a person commits the offense when he or she embezzles, steals, purloins, obtains by fraud, or knowingly converts to his or her use or the use of another, or without authority sells, conveys, or disposes of, any record, voucher, money, or thing of value of the State of Illinois or any department or agency of the State, or of any unit of local government.

Playground Safety

House Bill 6034 is a measure that would have the Department of Public Health develop a training and education program on public playground safety issues. The measure provides that the program may be presented annually and may be available through the Department's Web site. The department's safety rules would be based on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's standards and would be in place June 30, 2011.

Open Meetings

House Bill 5483 seeks to amend the Open Meetings Act by requiring a public body to make proposed minutes of an open meeting available for public inspection within eight business days after the meeting to which the minutes relate and make approved minutes of an open meeting available for public inspection within five business days after approval. Currently the Open Meetings Act requires minutes to be available within seven business days after approval.

Bonds

Senate Bill 2603 is a measure to amend the Conservation District Act and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act to provide that bonds issued by a conservation district or a forest preserve district shall be payable no later than 25 years from their respective date of issue. (Currently they are payable in no more than 20 years.)

Swimming Facility Act

Senate Bill 3057 seeks to amend the Swimming Facility Act by changing and adding provisions regarding: licensing of a swimming facility; swimming facility contractor licenses; swimming facility designer certification; permits for construction, development, installation, or major alteration of swimming facilities; license renewal; fees; rules; violations; civil and criminal penalties; hearings and determinations; facility closure; applicability; and other matters.

Prevailing Wage

Senate Bill 3500 would amend the Prevailing Wage Act to provide that the prevailing wage shall be required to be paid only by a public body awarding a contract of over \$25,000.

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund

Senate Bill 2554 is a bill to amend the IMRF Article of the Illinois Pension Code by making changes concerning conditions under which a person may return to employment and continue to receive his or her annuity. The measure provides that the selected rate of payment of earnings as additional contributions for retirement annuity purposes shall be applicable to all earnings paid (rather than earnings beginning on the first day of the second month) following receipt by the pension board of written notice of election to make such contributions.

Personnel Record Review Act

House Bill 5154 is a measure to amend the Personnel Record Review Act to prohibit public disclosure of performance evaluations under the act.

Referenda Results – February 2, 2010

Thirteen questions related to park, recreation and conservation agencies appeared on Illinois ballots in February. In Grundy County, voters turned down an opportunity create a new park district, but a similar measure met with approval in Christian County, where voters approved the formation of the Edinburg Park District. Voters generally rejected bond referenda. Only one bond measure of the six on the ballots met with approval. Our congratulations go to the community of Carol Stream, whose citizens chose bond funding as a way to build and equip a new indoor pool complex and fund improvements to other parks. In a notable turn of events, three of five tax measures met with voter approval. The Milledgeville Unit Park District is now empowered to levy a tax to fund recreational programs and was able to achieve a slight increase in the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL). Voters in Cook County also favored a slight increase the PTELL limiting rate for the Park District of Forest Park.

The following table summarizes the types of initiatives, the amounts requested and vote totals. Data for this report were obtained from county election authorities after all precincts were counted but before votes were made official. If you are aware of an initiative that is not included, please contact me at pmurphy@ILparks.org.

Park and Forest Preserve Referenda Results

DISTRICT	JURISDICTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PASS/FAIL	VOTES YES/NO
Carol Stream Park District	DuPage	Bond	"Shall the Carol Stream Park District, DuPage County, Illinois, build and equip a recreation center with an indoor pool to replace the Aldrin Community Center, build, maintain, improve and protect parks, sports fields, pathways and other facilities of said Park District, purchase and improve land and issue its bonds to the amount of \$37,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?"	Pass	Yes = 3,578 No = 2,694
Coaler Springs Park District	Grundy	Misc.	"Shall the proposed Coaler Springs Park District be organized and established as a General Park District under the provisions of the Park District Code in the Territory described as follows ... For/Against Park District?"	Fail	Yes = 501 No = 1,585
Dekalb Park District	DeKalb	Bond	"Shall the Dekalb Park District, Dekalb, Illinois, build and equip an Aquatics Center at Hopkins Park to replace the existing aquatic center, provide other site improvements to Hopkins Park and issue bonds in the amount of \$15,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?"	Fail	Yes = 1,281 No = 3,968
Edinburg Park District	Christian	Misc.	"Shall a new Park District, called the Edinburg Park District, comprising the following described territory... be formed?"	Pass	Yes = 329 No = 86
Frankfort Park District	Cook, Will	Tax	"Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Frankfort Park District, Will and Cook Counties, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to .03% above the limiting rate for the purpose of paying operating and capital costs for levy year 2008 and be equal to .1507% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2009?"	Fail	Yes = 985 No = 1,822

DISTRICT	JURISDICTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PASS/FAIL	VOTES YES/NO
Hampshire Park District	Kane	Tax	"Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Hampshire Park District, Kane County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.0500% above the limiting rate for park purposes for levy year 2008 and be equal to 0.1397% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2009?"	Fail	Yes = 408 No = 937
Hampshire Park District	Kane	Bond	"Shall bonds of the Hampshire Park District, Kane County, Illinois, to the amount of \$4,900,000 be issued for the purpose of building, maintaining, improving and protecting the Bruce Ream Park and other Park Facilities located within said Park District and paying and retiring its general obligation limited tax bonds and debt certificates issued to finance improvements to existing facilities and new building construction within said Park District?"	Fail	Yes = 488 No = 866
Midlothian Park District	Cook	Bond	"Shall the Midlothian Park District, Cook County, Illinois, build and equip an addition to and alter, renovate, improve and equip the Don Preston Recreation Center, including to provide an indoor lap pool, walking track, playground and fitness center, improve the site thereof and issue its bonds to the amount of \$8,500,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?"	Fail	Yes = 983 No = 1,321
Milledgeville Unit Park District	Carroll, Whiteside	Tax	"Shall the Milledgeville Unit Park District be authorized and empowered to levy and collect a tax of .09375% for the purpose of recreational programs as provided in Section 5-2 of 'The Park District Code'?"	Pass	Yes = 215 No = 141
Milledgeville Unit Park District	Carroll, Whiteside	Tax	"Shall the Milledgeville Unit Park District be authorized to levy and collect an additional tax of not to exceed .25% for all corporate purposes as provided in Section 5-3 of 'The Park District Code'?"	Pass	Yes = 207 No = 161
Park District of Forest Park	Cook	Tax	"Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Park District of Forest Park, Cook County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.120% above the limiting rate for park purposes for levy year 2008 and be equal to 0.521% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2009?"	Pass	Yes = 1,450 No = 967
River Forest Park District	Cook	Bond	"Shall the River Forest Park District, Cook County, Illinois, acquire the former Oilily property located at 103 Forest Avenue, demolish all or a portion thereof, construct and equip a park district recreation center on the site thereof, and issue its bonds to the amount of \$8,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?"	Fail	Yes = 576 No = 2,599
Waterloo Park District	Monroe	Bond	"Shall Waterloo Park District, in the City of Waterloo, Monroe County, Illinois, undertake the rehabilitation and repair of the Park District swimming pool, and related facilities, improvements and costs, and issue its bonds to the amount of \$575,000 for the purpose of paying costs thereof?"	Fail	Yes = 716 No = 868

2010

2010

The IAPD and IPRA honor the 2009 recipients of the associations' major awards at the Soaring to New Heights Conference awards luncheon on January 29 in Chicago.

soaring into a
new
decade

Nate Martin – IAPD Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service Award

Rockford Park District's **Nate Martin** earned this year's Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service award, which recognizes commissioners who have demonstrated the highest example of community service, personal integrity and ingenuity.

Since joining the Rockford Park District board in 1995, Martin has served with care and diligence, including three years as board president. He is currently the district's legislative liaison. In January 2008, he was elected to the IAPD Board of Trustees.

At the local level, he has coordinated three grant-funded partnership programs with the school district. One of them, "Saturday School" provides students with nature-based activities and teaches them to become involved in lifelong sports. Parents get involved, too, so that entire families reconnect with sports and nature. His ability to partner with local governments and community groups was particularly valuable in planning and developing Rockford's new Southwest Community Park. He led four community meetings, listening and encouraging citizens to become actively involved in the planning process.



Nate Martin



Outgoing IAPD Board Chair Colette Kubiesa with IAPD Commissioner of the Year Ann Austin and former IAPD President and CEO Ted Flickinger

Ann Austin – IAPD Commissioner of the Year

The Commissioner of the Year is an award that recognizes a commissioner who shows outstanding qualities to support and promote parks, recreation and conservation in his or her community and throughout the state. The recipient also must be involved in IAPD.

This year's winner is **Ann Austin**, who has served on the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department Board for 32 years. The whole time, her main focus has been on the health and well-being of her community, but that hasn't been her sole focus.

She has also been actively involved with IAPD. She served on the IAPD Board from 2004 to 2007 and has been on the *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine editorial advisory committee since 2003. During her tenure on the park and recreation board, she has presided over a long list of agency accomplishments.

The secret to Austin's success is not just the knowledge and enthusiasm that she brings to each project, but also the manner in which she brings people together to work for a common goal.



Mike Clark

Mike Clark – IPRA Fellow Award

Batavia Park District Executive Director **Mike Clark** was honored with this year's IPRA fellow award, which is presented to a past or current park and recreation professional who has shown excellence in promoting the parks and recreation movement on a statewide basis.

Clark has served on a number of IPRA committees, including the joint conference committee and the distinguished agency accreditation committee. He has served as a developer of the IPRA Ambassador Committee and Facility Management School. He has authored seven articles for *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine, and he has volunteered at every Western Open and BMW Championship Golf Tournament since its inception.

As executive director, he has led the Batavia Park District to the NRPA Gold Medal Finals two years in a row.



Jean and Jerry Gieraltowski

Jean and Jerry Gieraltowski – IPRA Citizen Volunteers of the Year

Since 2002, **Jean and Jerry Gieraltowski** have donated more than 1,600 hours to save and improve the DuPage County Historical Museum at the Wheaton Park District. As recently as 2006, county budget constraints threatened the existence of the museum. The Gieraltowskis spearheaded efforts to save it. Their efforts paid off. The Wheaton Park District structured a way to keep the museum operating. Now, each Tuesday, they work on long-term projects to help the museum. They are currently cataloging books in the research library to create a database for the museum Web site.



Steve Swanson

Steve Swanson – IPRA Excellence in Environmental Leadership Award

Steve Swanson, the director of The Grove at Glenview Park District is the recipient of the first-ever IPRA Excellence in Environmental Leadership Award. Swanson has shaped his agency's programming for more than 30 years. He has been instrumental in developing the environmental education curriculum for school children. He has planned and overseen the construction of his agency's interpretive center, and he secured OSLAD and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Grants.



Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Marc Miller made a surprise visit to the All Confence Awards Luncheon to Announce the release of \$17 million of Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grants for Illinois park, recreation and conservation agencies.



Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White (right) was on hand to wish IAPD President and CEO Ted Flickinger (left) a happy retirement. Flickinger's 30 years with the IAPD ended on January 31.



Former IAPD President and CEO Ted Flickinger congratulates IAPD Honored Professional Jeff Boubelik.

Jeff Boubelik – IAPD Honored Professional

The Honored Professional award goes to an individual who works closely with citizens and IAPD to improve parks, recreation and conservation at the local and state levels. This year's award goes to Frankfort Park District Director **Jeff Boubelik**.

Boubelik came to the Frankfort Park District in 1998. At that time, tremendous growth was underway. Yet, because of tax caps, the agency was limited in its ability to grow. But he immediately began building partnerships and intergovernmental agreements that helped the district expand its capacity and showed the community that the district is an important and responsible unit of local government. One result was a new playground at Commissioners Park, which, back then, was just an undeveloped parcel of land that has since become a Governor's Award park site. From there, he went on to develop relationships with other community groups that have helped provide the district with landscaping and sculpture garden projects. He was a driving force on an intergovernmental agreement with the village board that earned the very first IAPD Best of the Best Intergovernmental Agreement Award in 2007.

Boubelik is a founding member of the South Suburban Park and Recreation Professionals Association, and is the only individual to be elected twice as its president. He will retire in April.

David Doerhoefer – IAPD Rising Star

The rising star award recognizes a newly elected board member who demonstrates exemplary performance of duties and responsibilities. This year's honoree is **David Doerhoefer**, vice president of the Vernon Hills Park District Board. Former Vernon Hills Commissioner and current State Representative Carol Sente states that Doerhoefer's commitment to improving intergovernmental relations, providing outstanding customer service to residents, and his emphasis on creating a green park district are inspiring. In six years on the board, he has already served a term as president and vice president.



David Doerhoefer



Jason Myers

Jason Myers – IPRA Young Professional of the Year

The Young Professional of the Year is an honor given to an individual with less than ten years of experience, but someone who shows a great deal of promise in becoming a future leader in the field. The award this year goes to Lombard Park District Superintendent of Finance and Personnel **Jason Myers**. He began his career as a recreation supervisor, quickly became his district's athletics program manager, and now is the superintendent of finance and personnel at an NRPA Gold Medal Award-winning agency. His drive and creativity have led to many successes: increases in community sponsorships, cutting-edge programs, a successful referendum and distinguished agency designation. He is a frequent conference presenter and is highly involved with the IPRA Administrative and Finance Section.



Paul Friedrichs

Paul Friedrichs – IPRA Professional Recognition

The IPRA Professional Recognition award goes to an individual with more than 10 years of full-time service, a person who has shown excellence in promoting parks and recreation on local and regional levels, a person who has had a profound impact on the field and the agency for which he or she works. This year's recipient is Lombard Park District Executive Director **Paul Friedrichs**.

For the past 20 years, Friedrichs moved through the ranks, becoming the director of his district two-and-a-half years ago. Within 60 days of being at the helm, he faced burning houses, a failed waterslide, a flooding golf course, and a floating pool liner that led to the permanent closure of the community's 50-year-old – and only – pool.

Two years later, there is a new pool and the 2009 NRPA Gold Medal.

Friedrichs is the first to point out that he didn't win the Gold Medal alone. But no doubt he was a driving force behind a successful 2008 referendum. Under his direction, his agency built a \$9.5 million-dollar, award-winning waterpark, which opened in 2009, on-time and under budget. Along with the day-to-operations of the district, he has worked on intergovernmental agreements, helped prepare OSLAD applications, worked on PDRMA reaccreditations, and fueled the effort to become a distinguished agency.

He served as IPRA Finance Chair in 2009, a critical time for the association. He pulled together a group of professionals whose work resulted in a more sustainable IPRA.

PASSING THE GAVEL



2010 Chairman of the IAPD Board of Trustees George Longmeyer

For IAPD, the Soaring to New Heights Conference marked the end of Colette Kubiesa's term as the 2009 chairman of the Board of Trustees. Kubiesa, a commissioner of the Elmhurst Park District, is succeeded by George Longmeyer, who has been a commissioner for the Schaumburg Park District since 2002. Longmeyer has more than 25 years experience in local government, serving as village manager of both Schaumburg and Hoffman Estates. He is a member of the Airport Advisory Committee, the Village of Schaumburg's TIF board, and the Northwest Special Recreation Association Long Range Finance Committee. He has a B.A. in political science and an M.B.A.



2010 Chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors Carrie Hauptert

The IPRA held a similar changing of the guard at its annual business meeting on January 29. **Carrie Hauptert**, CPRP, executive director of the Bloomingdale Park District succeeds Ron Salski, CPRP, executive director of the Lake Bluff Park District. Prior to her post at Bloomingdale, Hauptert was director of parks and recreation for the Village of Hinsdale. She has also served as the superintendent of special facilities and community adult education/recreation coordinator at the Wheaton Park District, and as the division manager of facilities and as a community recreation center manager at the Schaumburg Park District. She has been a member of numerous professional leadership committees of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association. She received a B.S. in leisure studies (program management) and an M.S. in leisure studies (administration) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Senators Carole Pankau and A.J. Wilhelmi are IAPD Legislators of the Year

The IAPD chose two members of the Illinois Senate as the 2009 Legislators of the Year, Senator Carole Pankau of Roselle and Senator A.J. Wilhelmi of Joliet

Senator Carole Pankau sponsored a successful effort to extend the repayment period for the principal on bonds issued by park districts to 25 years from the date of issue, rather than the previous limit of 20 years. She also made sure that the park agencies in her senate district received \$50,000 each from the 2009 Illinois capital bill for park improvements. She regularly attends the IAPD/IPRA Awards Luncheon, the legislative golf outing and legislative breakfast meetings held in her district.

Like Senator Pankau, **Senator A.J. Wilhelmi** supported the measure that extended the repayment period on park district bonds. He was a strong supporter of the initiatives on the IAPD legislative platform, and he supported the capital bill that created the Park and Recreation Construction Act of 2009, which authorizes the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to make new grants for park and recreation projects.



Senator Carole Pankau



Senator A.J. Wilhelmi



Steve Scholten

Steve Scholten – IPRA Robert Artz Distinguished Service Award

The Robert Artz Distinguished Service Award is named in to honor this IAPD executive director who tragically lost his life in a plane crash in 1979. The Artz award goes to a person whose efforts have a lasting value. On January 29, the IPRA presented this honor to Arlington Heights Park District Executive Director **Steve Scholten**.

Scholten has been in the field for more than 33

years. He has served as executive director for four different agencies, supervised more than 64 full-time employees, managed \$155 million in budget money, and been responsible for more than 1,600 acres of land. He is a past IPRA board member, chaired numerous IPRA committees and co-chaired numerous IAPD/IPRA joint committees.

During his 15-year tenure at the Bloomingdale Park District, he developed new parks, renovated a recreation center and waterpark, and improved the district's museum. He made Bloomingdale a distinguished agency twice, and, in 2006, he led the agency to the NRPA Gold Medal. He is now a gold medal awards judge.

Scholten became Arlington Park District's executive director two years ago.

Want More Pictures from Conference?

Pictures from the 2010 IAPD/IPRA *Soaring to New Heights* Conference are now available for viewing and/or purchase!

To view, go to www.soulshine-photography.com and follow the directions below.

1. Enter the Web site
2. Click on "See Your Proofs" at the bottom
3. Enter the password: 2010
4. Click on the gallery that you want to view

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2. When you're ready, click on the shopping cart on the right
3. There, you can select the size and quantity of each photo
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growing the
game
affordably

by Hal Phillips

Dundee Township Park District's new accessible teaching facility was financed with grant monies and low-cost or donated labor. Here's how it can happen for other agencies.

The Links Learning Center at Dundee Township Park District's Randall Oaks Golf Club is set to open this summer. But this universally accessible short course and golf practice facility already tends to impress folks in different ways.

It was built at a seriously reduced cost, using grants secured by an organization called Links Across America and greatly discounted (and sometimes donated) labor and services. The new facility occupies land the district already owned and employed as a golf facility, so the development costs associated with land acquisition were eliminated. And its total accessibility to would-be golfers stands to bring in a whole new group of players (read: customers) to Randall Oaks. Construction is complete and grow-in will continue through the grand opening.

Yet the most impressive aspect might be the universality of both the development and development formula. As a party to dozens of public course development and renovation projects, Todd Quitno, senior project architect at Marengo, Illinois-based Lohmann Golf Designs was struck by the way it all came together, and could come together elsewhere.

"Organizing something like this can be difficult, but Links Across America has proved to be an excellent facilitator, and its formula is not unique to Randall Oaks — there are dozens of public agencies across Illinois who could do the same thing," explained Quitno.

Garnering Outside Funding and Decreased Construction Costs

According to Quitno, Links Across America took the lead on the Randall Oaks project, supplying funding and organizational expertise. His company, Lohmann Golf Designs, donated a portion of its design services and schematic drawings and discounted the construction drawings.

The interest and willingness of golf companies to collaborate on similar projects has been phenomenal, according to Links Across America spokesman Leon McNair. Lohmann Golf Designs is among 10 architects that have offered to donate or significantly discount their services. Nine course builders, including Janesville, Wisconsin-based Bruce Company, which handled construction of the Randall Oaks project, have done the same.

"Lohmann Golf Designs and the Bruce Company understand the need for, and believe in, what we are doing," McNair said. "Companies like John Deere, Club Car, Fore Reservations Systems and Witttek Golf have offered to get involved at very low prices. They all want to help provide affordable playing opportunities for youngsters, families and those with disabilities."

The Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation (WGCF), the philanthropic arm of Wadsworth Golf Construction, funded the development of The Links Learning Center at Randall Oaks, and it is prepared to work with more public agencies on new incarnations, according to McNair. Obviously, the sort of local golf industry cooperation evidenced by the Randall Oaks project is one key to making Links Across America projects happen. Another important facet is the fact that the Dundee Township Park District already had a golf facility with available land under its direction. Without this, potentially insurmountable cost issues would have been introduced into the equation.

"We were happy to be involved because of our long history at Randall Oaks," explained Quitno, whose company drew up a Randall Oaks master plan roughly 25 years ago and has overseen some type of construction project almost annually at the suburban Chicago course ever since. "This is our way, the company's way, to give something back to these long-time clients and the game. If approached, I'm confident other golf industry vendors would contribute as we and The Bruce Company did."



What is the Links Learning Center at Randall Oaks Golf Club?

The Links Learning Center is a short practice course designed to provide the general public with an opportunity to play and practice in a setting that is accessible to anyone, including individuals with personal disabilities. It includes four par-3 holes that range in distance from 40 to 80 yards. It also includes a state-of-the-art short game practice facility that has three separate greens for bunker, chipping, pitching and putting practice. Use of the short game practice facility is free of charge, and the rates for the Links Learning Center four-hole short course start at \$6.00 a round. Monday through Saturday and all day on Sunday, paying adults may bring up to two children to golf with them for free. The center is set to open later this year.

What is Links Across America?

Links Across America is a non-profit, golf-industry initiative formed to help create new and affordable short courses (from three to nine holes) that provide golfing opportunities to young people, families and adult beginners of all ethnic backgrounds, in addition to individuals with disabilities or injuries. Links Across America is administered by The Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation (WGCF), the philanthropic arm of Wadsworth Golf Construction. For more information on Links Across America, contact the Wadsworth Charitable Foundation at 513-424-3701 or visit www.wadsworthgolffoundation.org.

Giving Golf Opportunities to People with Disabilities and Disadvantages

“The Links Across America project will give us four holes plus a short-game practice area that is accessible to people with disabilities, and we are committed to making this a truly accessible facility,” explained Randall Oaks Golf Course Superintendent Mike Sprouse. “We brought people in from disability groups during construction to make sure everything was accessible. We are creating a chance for people who might never get involved with the game to finally have that opportunity.”

Dundee Township is a member of the Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association (NISRA), whose 13 member agencies direct individuals with special needs into recreational programs and other activities, according to Tom Mammoser, executive director of the Dundee Township Park District. Golfers with disabilities are one such special needs group.

Mammoser expects other non-traditional groups to use the new facility. The district has a longstanding relationship with the local Boys’ and Girls’ clubs, which have a combined membership of 1,100. “We see the Links course as a way to tie in with those clubs and expose the kids to golf,” Mammoser said. “The clubs are 60 percent Hispanic and 26 percent African-American.”

NISRA has worked closely with groups like Revelation Golf, a local association that has worked with cancer patients and wounded veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. “Golf is a sport that benefits them physically and emotionally,” Mammoser said. “The golf industry is changing and becoming more focused on non-traditional customers.”



Growing the Game by Teaching New Players

The facility’s design is fancifully nontraditional, but strong on learning opportunities. Quitno and his colleagues created a short-game area that includes an 8,500-square-foot putting green, a bunker complex and chipping areas. “Nothing unique about that, but within those components we did create special areas where you can teach eight to 10 people,” Quitno explained. “The four-hole routing has no tees. It’s all fairway, so they can create the routing any way they want. They can set it up for little kids, so they never have to play over bunkers, or for more advanced players, where all the approaches are forced carries. You can turn it around and play it backwards, and you can play to the chipping green to form a fifth hole. As a practice area, it’s pretty amazing what you can do out there in terms of options. In fact, this area used to be the driving range but we didn’t eliminate its use as a driving range. It’s not full-length but when it’s cleared of kids, it can double as a fine teaching range for young players.”

Mammoser sees tremendous potential for the new Randall Oaks facility to help grow the game in general. For example, about 70 percent of the children in Dundee play soccer and a majority plays basketball and baseball. Only 14 percent play golf. “Our goal is to make golf a more typical activity, like soccer, and get that participation rate up to 25, 30 percent or more,” Mammoser said. “At Randall Oaks, we can help people move along a learning path in golf from the Links Course to the Acorn Course [a three-hole, par-three routing] to the 18-hole championship course. They can do it at their own pace and not be intimidated by existing players on the 18-hole course before they are ready to play alongside them. We have a facility correctly sized for new players that can help them learn a lifetime sport like golf. It will also give the experienced golfer another place to come practice. This was a win-win for everyone. We could not have moved forward with the project without the Wadsworth Charitable Foundation. We were delighted to receive their grant to develop this facility.”

Adding More Links Across America

Links Across America is an ambitious program with national aspirations, but in truth the equation is still being meted out according to geography and variables in terms of funding and land acquisition. In addition to Randall Oaks, the organization has projects in planning or under discussion in Georgia, Arkansas and Wisconsin. “The Links Learning Center at Randall Oaks is the first facility built under Links Across America auspices, but it has even greater value as a learning experience,” said Lohmann’s Quitno. “Many of the things we learn here should help with the construction process at future Links Across America facilities.”

Randall Oaks Golf Course Superintendent Mike Sprouse said he is honored to be part of a project with such positive and potentially long-reaching effects: “It is exciting to be committed to the philosophy of inclusion. We look forward to helping other facilities build similar projects.”

Hal Phillips is the managing director for golf & resorts with Mandarin Media in Portland, Maine. You can reach him at hphillips@mandarinmedia.net.

Organics in our Midst – Myth or Possibility?

by Steve Pincuspy

Turf professionals and homeowners increasingly use an organic approach to lawn care, and though the term can be as slippery as a dewy lawn, it is clear that organics are gaining wider acceptance. Yet this trend has not necessarily worked its way onto community parks and athletic fields. Many obstacles remain, including misperceptions about the costs of organics, questions about their short-term effectiveness and a general lack of knowledge about the principles of an organic turf system.

At its core, organic lawn care focuses on restoring the soil system, rather than the grass, in order to create a more resilient and self-sufficient lawn. In this WebXtra, Steve Pincuspy of the Safer Pest Control Project busts the myths associated with organic turf care and shows how John Howell of the Elk Grove Park District has put organic practices to profitable use at the district's Community Athletic Fields Facility.

Read the Full Story Online

From the IAPD Web Site (www.ILparks.org) ...

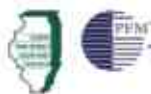
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From the IPRA Web Site (www.IPRAonline.com)

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Park Ridge Director Retires

After nearly 38 years in the park and recreation profession, **Jim Lange**, director of the Park Ridge Park District retired in late 2009. Lange began his career at the Park Ridge Park District in 1971 and worked for Park Ridge for ten years. He spent the next 19 years at the Park District of Highland Park, where he was the director of recreation services. In 2000, he was hired as director of the Park Ridge Park District, returning to his home community.

Under Lange's direction, the district became a leader in green initiatives, forming a citizens' environmental impact task force to address environmental issues and find commonsense solutions. Lange's belief in citizens being a part of the decision-making process resulted in citizen input through citizens affiliate groups and advisory councils. Lange says he will continue to volunteer as a coach for youth athletics, both with the Park Ridge Park District and Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation.

Quincy Hires New Executive Director

Daniel Gibble became executive director of Quincy Park District in September. Most recently, Gibble was superintendent of recreation at Urbana Park District, a position he held for 18 years.

Gibble has more than 25 years experience in the parks and recreation industry. He started his career at the Skokie Park District, and then spent six years at the Wheaton Park District. He has been an undergraduate instructor at the University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, and worked for the National Park Service at Yosemite National Park. He serves on the board of regents of the Park Maintenance Management School.

Gibble earned a bachelor's degree in leisure studies at the University of Illinois and an MBA from Illinois Benedictine University. He has participated in several continuing education programs, including the Park Management Institute at Indiana University; the Park Maintenance Management School and the School of Sports Management at North Carolina State; the National Park and Recreation Association Executive Development School and the National Outdoor Leadership School in Mountaineering. He's a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and a University of Illinois Bronze Tablet recipient.

Gibble is an active member of the NRPA and the IPRA. He's a recipient of the Al Hattendorf Professional of the Year award. He has served on the Department of Leisure Studies Advisory Board at the University of Illinois. He has had articles published in *Mountaineering* magazine, *Messenger* magazine, the *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* and *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine.



New Executive Director for Park Ridge Park District

Ray Ochromowicz has joined the Park Ridge Park District as its new executive director. Ochromowicz has a B.S. in recreation and park administration from Western Illinois University and served as executive director for the Bolingbrook Park District for 22 years before coming to Park Ridge. Ochromowicz brings 32 years of experience as a leader in the profession. He has served in leadership capacities with the NRPA Congress Program Committee, the Park District Risk Management Agency Board of Directors, the Illinois Park and Recreation Association Board of Directors, the North Carolina State University Supervisors Management School Board of Regents and Rotary International. He has been honored with such awards as the NRPA Great Lakes Region Professional of the Year, the IPRA Professional and Meritorious Service Awards and the IPRA Fellow Award.

Big Money Raffle Benefits Illinois Park and Recreation Agencies

Some lucky winner will take home \$100,000 and an Illinois park and recreation agency stands to gain \$5,000 in the **Illinois Sportsman's & Parks Raffle**.

The raffle is being co-produced by the Friends of Illinois Parks and the Illinois Conservation Foundation. Only 4,000 tickets will be sold with \$500 early bird drawings on March 30 and April 15.

Three other early bird drawings were held on February 16 and 26, and March 15. (Early-bird winners go back in for the final drawing.) Prizes are:

- 1st Prize - \$100,000
- 2nd Prize - \$10,000
- 3rd Prize - \$3,000
- 4th - 10th Prizes - \$1,000
- 11th - 20th Prizes - \$500
- 21st - 50th Prizes - \$250

With the early-bird drawings, that's 55 total prizes.

The grand prize drawing will be held Friday, May 14th at 3:00 p.m. at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in Springfield. (Winners need not be present to win.)

The agency that sells the most tickets will win \$5,000, with the second place agency winning \$2,000 and the third place agency winning \$1,000.

Go to www.isp-raffle.com to find out how you can purchase a ticket or learn how your agency can start selling tickets today.

Proceeds from the Illinois Sportsman's & Parks Raffle will benefit the missions of both the Illinois Conservation Foundation and Friends of Illinois Parks.



IAPD Education Comes to Your Computer 24/7

The first Course in **IAPD's Online Board Member Education Series** has gone live at www.iapdboardtraining.com.

The Online Board Member Education Series will help board members become more efficient in their jobs and allows them to read, study, learn and test their knowledge at their own convenience, on their own schedules. This online series will acquaint new board members with expectations and explain procedures they will face; help seasoned board members stay apprised of current trends; and provide video, audio and text links that will serve as valuable resources.

The education series allows board members and executives to obtain education in a cost-effective manner and receive local and statewide recognition for course completion, which can be especially useful for board members facing re-election. The courses also earn credit for the IAPD Board Member Development Program and earn CEUs for park and recreation professionals.



IDNR Grant Administrator Retires

Steve Gonzalez retired from the field of parks and recreation on December 31, 2009, after 35 years with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and its predecessor the Department of Conservation.

During his tenure with the department, Gonzales worked in various capacities, including as the head of the Illinois Conservation Corps. While serving as the supervisor of the Gifts and Grants Management Section, he was responsible for developing and submitting proposals for funding assistance to foundations and corporations and for administering youth and young adult conservation employment programs. Gonzales also created and developed the department's "Helping Our Parks Endeavors" donation program.

For the last 19 years, he worked as a senior grant administrator in the Division of Grants Administration. His duties with the Grants Administration Division included the administration of hundreds of acquisition, development, outdoor recreation and museum projects funded under the OSLAD, Bicycle Path, Boat Access and Public Museum grant programs.

Prior to his employment with IDNR, Gonzalez worked for the Oak Park Recreation Department and the Champaign, Urbana and Dundee Township Park Districts.

His professional involvement began in 1970 and has included serving on the board and committees of the IPRA and a term as director of the Parks and Natural Resource Management Section.

He has authored a number of articles for state and national publications and has made numerous presentations at workshops and the IAPD/IPRA annual conference.

Gonzalez received a bachelor's degree in physical education and American history from the University of Illinois at the Chicago Circle Campus and his master's degree in recreation and park administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Peoria Park Board President Named Top Volunteer

Timothy J. Cassidy, president of the Peoria Park District Board of Trustees, received the **2009 Tom Connor Award for Volunteer Community Service** at his community's annual Thanksgiving Community Luncheon this past November. Named for a former television broadcaster known for his volunteerism, this award is presented to an individual who has shown outstanding long-term commitment to the community.

Cassidy has been a member of the park board for 22 years, becoming president in 1992. He was cited for his work in the expansion of the Peoria Zoo and for his roles in the development of the Heart of Illinois Special Recreation Association, the RiverPlex Recreation and Wellness Center and the Peoria RiverFront and for many other civic endeavors.

Cassidy served on the IAPD Board of Trustees from 1992 to 1998; and as joint chairman of the IAPD/IPRA Joint Legislative Committee from 1993 to 1994. In 1994, Cassidy was recognized for his outstanding service as a co-chair of this committee. And in 2006, Cassidy was honored as IAPD Commissioner of the Year. Cassidy also served four years on the board of directors of the Great Lakes Association of the Great Lakes Regional Council for NRPA. The Peoria Park District has won the National Gold Medal Award twice (in 1994 and in 2001) under Cassidy's leadership.

Elmhurst Park District Hires New Ambassador

The Elmhurst Park District recently named **Jonelle Bailey** as its park ambassador. The park ambassador monitors and promotes parks and park facilities while maintaining a relationship between park users and the district. Bailey's previous experience includes serving as assistant park manager for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and Teen Program and as center director for the St. Charles Park District.



Naperville Park District Employee Appointed to Downers Grove Board

In December, **Fred Gusel**, superintendent of recreation at the Naperville Park District and a Downers Grove resident, took the oath of office as a Downers Grove Park Board Commissioner. Gusel was nominated to fill the seat vacated by Commissioner Kathryn Engel-Acctetura.

Gusel has been a member of the Recreation Department at the Naperville Park District since April 2008. Prior to his tenure in Naperville, he worked at the Bolingbrook, Prospect Heights and Lisle Park Districts and at Triton College.

Gusel has a B.A. from Northeastern Illinois University. He is active in IPRA and served as the Facility Section director from 2005 to 2007.



Champaign Park District Hires New Special Events Manager

Tony Oligney-Estill has been selected as the new special events manager for the Champaign Park District. In his new role, Oligney-Estill is responsible for developing and overseeing the variety of special events the Champaign Park District puts on throughout the year. Oligney-Estill has been with the Champaign Park District for 11 years, previously holding the positions of sports manager and director of Champaign-Urbana special recreation.



IAPD President and CEO Peter M. Murphy (right) thanks Edwin D. Wood of the Burnham & Flower Group for that company's support of Friends of Illinois Parks.

Friends of Illinois Parks Recognizes Donors at Conference

Many of the vital programs offered by the IAPD could not occur without assistance from many corporations and businesses. The following companies recently were recognized for their generosity towards the IAPD through support of Friends of Illinois Parks:

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Through the support of these companies, Friends of Illinois Parks funds research, PowerPlay! beyond-school grants and the Bresnan Commissioner Scholarship programs. For membership information on Friends of Illinois Parks, check the IAPD Web site at www.ILparks.org.



Urbana Names new Superintendent of Rec

Corky Emberson is now Urbana Park District's superintendent of recreation. Prior to being named to his new position, he held a variety of other positions within the district: athletics manager; athletics and community program manager; and athletics, aquatics and fitness manager.

Prior to working for the Urbana Park District, Emberson was executive director of the Paxton Park District for six years. He has worked for park districts in some capacity since he was 16, including an internship at the Urbana Park District in 1993. Emberson holds a B.S. in recreation administration from Eastern Illinois University. In his new position, he is responsible for the overall operation of the recreation facilities and programs at the Urbana Park District.



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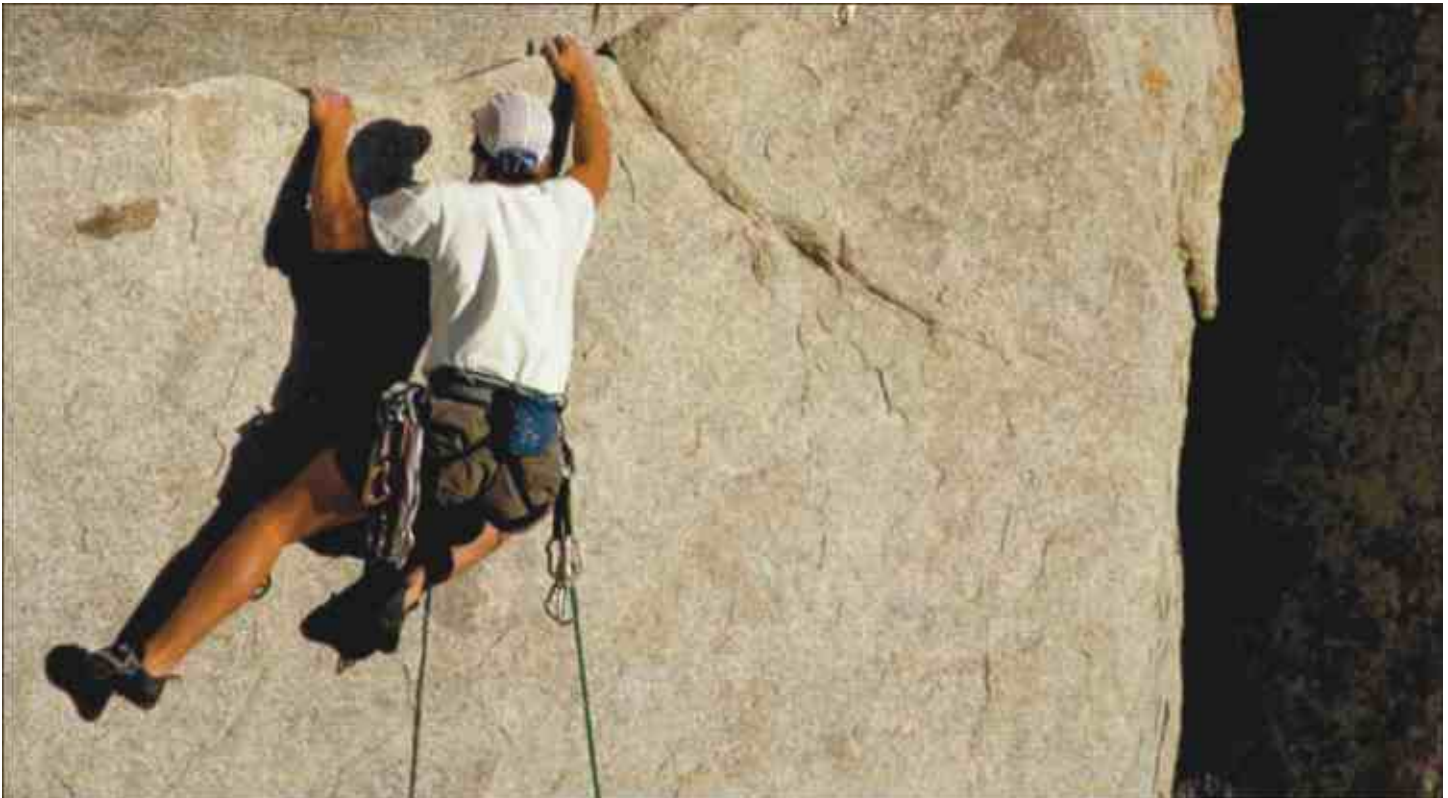
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