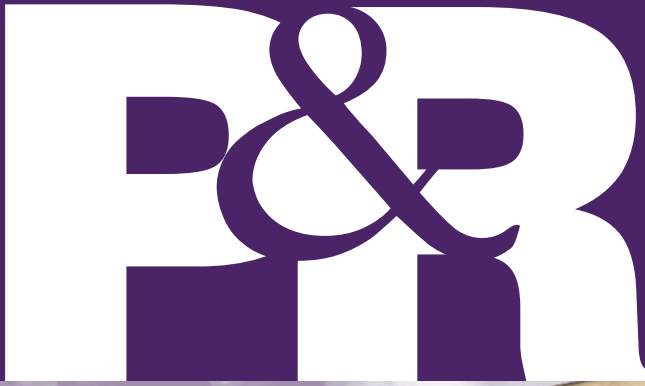


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PARKS AND RECREATION

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



2012 Soaring to New Heights Conference Issue

Conference Guide Inside - Take this Issue to Chicago!



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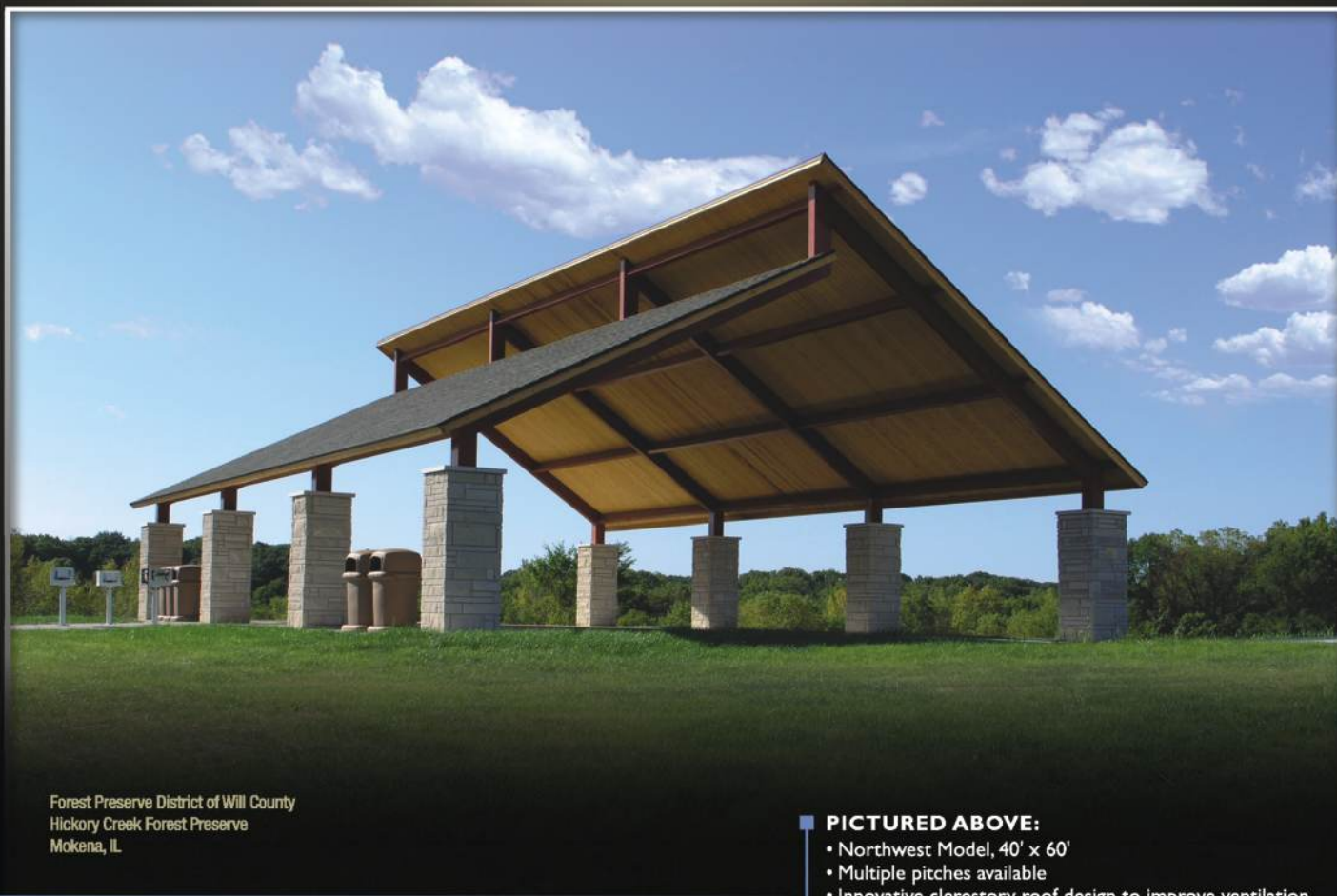
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Take this Issue to Chicago!

FROM THE EDITOR

"The mind, once expanded to the dimensions of larger ideas, never returns to its original size." Oliver Wendell Holmes might not have been referring to conference attendance, but he recognized the importance of learning as a gift that can't be taken away.



Even in lean times, professional development is a worthwhile investment. So seize the opportunity to attend the **2012 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**, and use the following tips to make the experience your best ever.

Do Your Homework

Dr. Stephen Covey says, "Start with the end in mind." Ask yourself a couple of simple questions. What do you hope to learn? In which areas do you need to grow? What challenges does your agency face? With the answers to those questions, review the conference workshop offerings, and plan your time accordingly. A little homework before the event will help you tailor your experience to meet your specific needs.

Divide and Conquer

If several colleagues from your agency or board are attending the conference, split up. It's tempting to hang around with those you know, but you can gather more information and meet more people if you go it alone.

Network. Network. Network.

The Soaring to New Heights Conference offers ample opportunity to socialize with your peers in the industry. Last year, more than 4,500 people attended and 250 companies exhibited – that's a lot of potential packed into one event. Take advantage of this opportunity-rich environment to network.

Leave Work at Work

While technology makes it possible to be connected 24/7, that doesn't mean you should be. One of the benefits of professional development is stepping out of your routine and immersing yourself in a creative, thought-provoking environment. If you're distracted by a barrage of emails and texts from the office, you aren't maximizing your conference potential. Designate a time to check in at the office, and trust your staff to fight fires in your absence.

Follow Up Afterward

The conference is a wonderful opportunity to initiate conversations with intelligent people in similar positions across the state. But networking doesn't end when the conference does. Send an email to follow up on conversations you had at conference, and make an effort to continue building the relationships that developed.

With an amazing line up of speakers, sessions and social events, the **2012 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference** promises to expand your mind. Just remember – it never returns to its original size. Don't blame us if you need a bigger hat.

Best regards,
— LORI HARLAN

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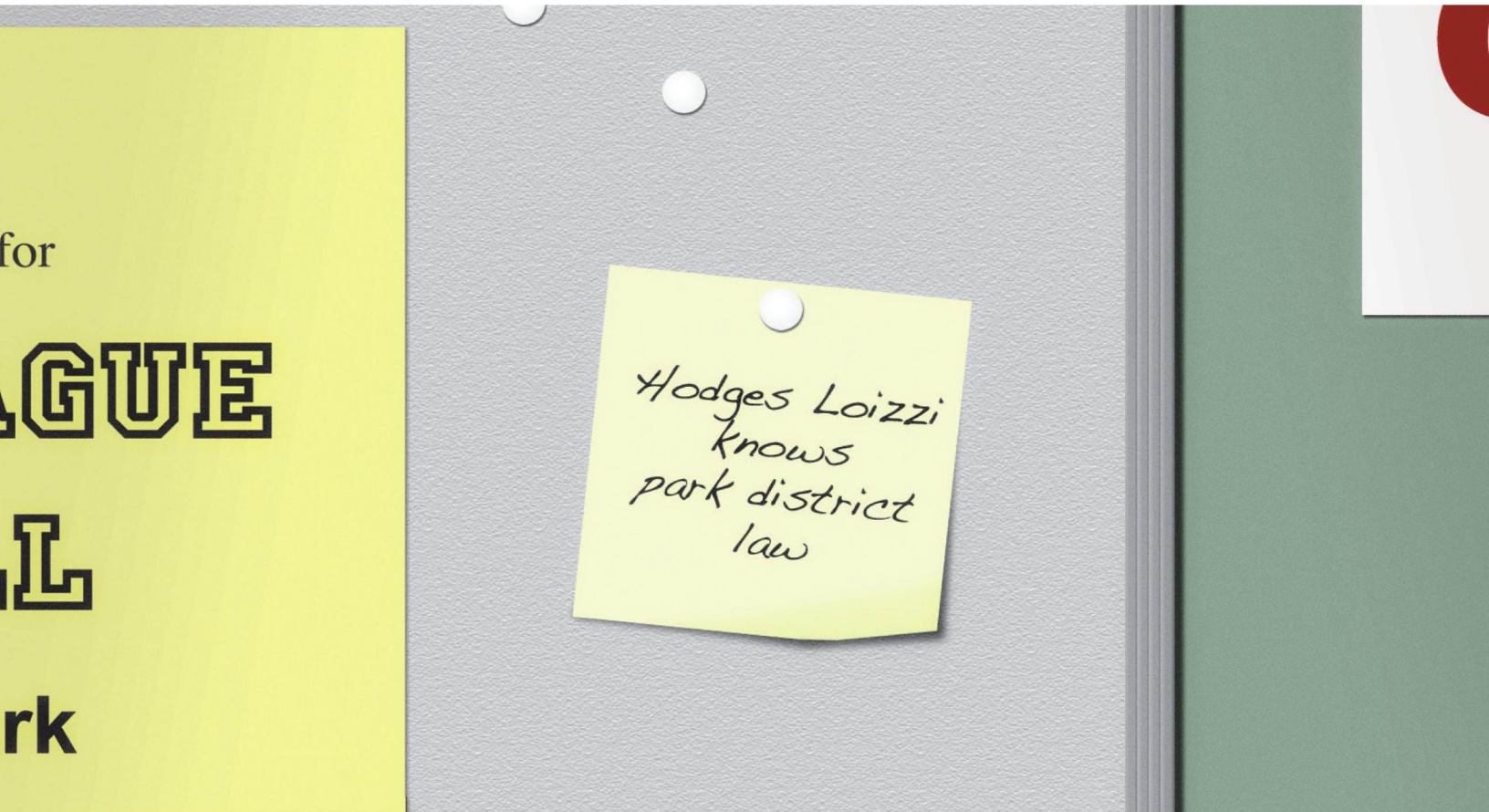
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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

The New Year Brings Opportunity for Resolve

A new year is associated with rejuvenation and the commitment to make changes. Typically, these are in the form of New Year's resolutions, and their lasting value is usually determined by a person's commitment to follow through. I have found that memorializing these to writing helps, but it is not a guarantee of success.

I would suggest that such resolutions should apply to organizations as well as individuals. Let me offer five for your board and agency's consideration.

1. Every decade a new census brings about legislative redistricting throughout Illinois, and for the last three decades (or elections ending in '2'), an average of 44 new faces joined the Illinois General Assembly. The November 6th election this year promises even greater turnover based on either the resignation or retirement of current members as well as the significant number of legislators who will be running in races against each other.

Be resolved this year to nurture your current legislative relationships and prepare to embrace new ones.

Many agencies help their legislators get a sound understanding of the services they offer and the needs they have by:

- Inviting legislators to attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference Awards Luncheon in January of each year and to the Legislative Conference that takes place in Springfield in May.
- Sending state legislators the agency's newsletters and seasonal brochures and putting them on the VIP mailing list.
- Extending invitations to legislators to take part in agency anniversary celebrations, dedications, community festivals, parades, Arbor Day tree plantings and other noteworthy events.
- Writing to congratulate them on their legislative successes.
- Inviting them to make a personal visit to the district's parks and facilities.
- Inviting them to attend an IAPD Legislative Breakfast where issues of importance to park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies are highlighted and discussed.
- Making sure the district is a good advertisement for parks and recreation. If legislators believe that their local parks provide value, I have found that they will be strong supporters of local and statewide park issues and initiatives.

2. Last year, I was privileged to read many of your newsletters, seasonal brochures and annual reports. They were packed full of outstanding accomplishments and reflected the high level of service your agencies provide to the citizens you serve. They spoke of grants received, events planned for the future, new facilities in progress and showcased the important role that park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies play in the fabric of the community relating directly to the quality of life.

Be resolved this year to renew your commitment and explore innovative ways to share with the citizens you serve all you have to offer.

Technology is a powerful communication tool, so continue to explore new ways to exploit its value. Is your website user-friendly and up-to-date? Does your agency use QR Codes or mobile phone apps? What

Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity and responsibility to give something back by becoming more.

— Tony Robbins



about social media channels such as Facebook or Twitter? Do you share photos and videos with the community through flickr and YouTube? Social media is a powerful connector, so continue to explore new ways to exploit its value. Use technology to encourage your public to explore all your parks, participate in all your special events and engage them in your recreational programs. I find that many park and recreation agencies offer great opportunities, but are not getting the word out effectively. Develop metrics to measure your success.

3. Many boards get so caught up in the fast pace of decision-making at the local level, from meeting to meeting and from month to month, that they don't take stock of the agency's impact (commonly referred to as "taking time to smell the roses"). How fast did 2011 go for you and your board?

Be resolved this year to participate in a facilitated board retreat in order to take an outside look at the agency and brainstorm for the future.

A board retreat is an excellent way to accomplish the things you can't do at your regular meetings. It offers an ideal time for board development, problem solving, long-range planning and board building. Developing team spirit, friendships and good relations among board members are some of the intangible, but essential, benefits of giving board members an opportunity to look at the big picture. Retreats can re-motivate and re-ignite board member energy. Retreats also serve as opportunities for boards to understand and/or clarify the agency's mission and clarify staff and board roles. It may also be used to examine finances, determine acquisition and development programs, evaluate legislative activities and assess possible improvements for running board meetings. A successful retreat results in every board member being able to articulate a shared vision for the park district, forest preserve or conservation district.

4. In previous issues of the *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine, I have written about the opportunity that service on your board gives you for lifelong learning. Such opportunities not only improve the performance of an individual as a board member, but it also nurtures a person's natural desire to learn.

During the past year, I have spoken and participated in a number of educational programs. All of them had great content and value. I would like to share two in particular that stand out.

The first was by Australian author and consultant, Peter Sheehan, who discussed creating an idea pipeline in organizations, which occasionally calls for rejecting consensus in the pursuit of progress. I recommend checking out one of his favorite websites, www.trendwatching.com, which provides information that can help shape your agency's vision and suggest new services. His recent books are also good reads: *Flip: How To Turn Everything You Know On Its Head And Succeed Beyond Your Wildest Happiness* and *Making It Happen: Turning Good Ideas Into Great Results*.

The other presenter I found of high value was Michael Samuelson, a 40-year health educator who has written five books on health and wellness and lectured extensively on the art and science of initiating and sustaining meaningful lifestyle change. He has a robust website found at mhsamuelson@wordpress.com. It contains his latest essay entitled, *High Personal Wellness: Effectively Balancing Work, Home And Community*. It's a great piece of work and a free download that provides a stimulus for creative thinking and personal and board development. One of his suggestions is to draft a personal mission statement and compare it to your agency's mission to make sure the messages are in sync. An excerpt from his work follows:

Let's start by developing a first draft of a personal mission statement. Don't worry about the fine-tuning. For now, just write what comes to mind. To help you get started, here's an example:

My personal mission is to progressively and consistently achieve measurably higher levels of physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual awareness by living a life of integrity, curiosity, authenticity, compassion and dedication to the collective needs of all beings. And, to assist others in doing likewise.

A bit lofty, perhaps, but a personal mission statement should reflect an ideal that you aspire to, something grand, an oath proudly pledged. It needs to be straightforward enough to always recall, subjectively as well as objectively, measurable and dynamic to the extent that it is continually evolving.

Michael Samuelson's essay goes on to address personal and professional growth in a compelling way that is worthy of investigation. It's a good example of the value of continuing to explore learning and looking at things from the fresh perspective gained through attending conference and educational sessions.

Be resolved this year to seek out all the educational opportunities offered to you through the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

This year's conference is a great way to hit the ground running, and the IAPD will be offering educational programs and webinars throughout the year to assist you in efficiently and effectively carrying out your role as a board member.

In 2012, the Attorney General's office will be developing a curriculum for all elected officials who are now required to take a test on the Open Meetings Act, and the IAPD will provide the educational support necessary for your success.

5. My fifth and final suggestion for a resolution is simple.

Be resolved to have fun as a board.

Each of you has made a tremendous commitment of time and energy in order to run for and serve as an elected park district, forest preserve and conservation district board member. You share dedication and your enthusiasm for making your community a better place to live, and I commend each of you for it. Enjoy what you have given, relish the successes and push hard to provide an increasingly higher level of park and recreation services to the citizens you serve.

Happy New Year!

2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 26-28
IAPD/IPRA Conference
Hyatt Regency Chicago

July 19
Legislative Golf Outing
Bensenville Park District's
White Pines Golf Course

April-May
Flying 4 Kids
Statewide Kite Fly

August 18
Park District
Conservation Day
Illinois State Fairgrounds

May 1
Parks Day at the Capitol
State Capitol, Springfield

September 28
IAPD Best of the Best
Awards Gala

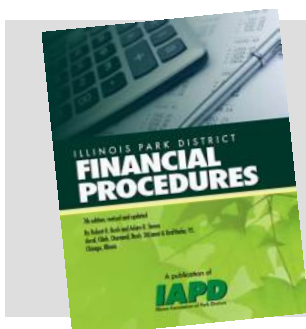
May 1
Legislative Reception
Illini Country Club,
Springfield

October 11
Legal Symposium
Hamburger University,
Oak Brook

May 2
Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza, Springfield

October 16-18
NRPA Congress &
Exposition
Anaheim, California

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IAPD website at www.ilparks.org.



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EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



Jan R. Arnold
Executive Director, IPRA

2012: The Year to Get Re-energized!

When I arrived at IPRA one year ago, I stated that my goal was to build an IPRA that grows future leaders and enhances the skills of current leaders so that you can continue to offer quality programs, run state-of-the-art facilities, offer spectacular parks and provide life-changing experiences to improve the quality of life of all Illinois citizens.

With the ringing in of 2012, each of us is likely to make resolutions for the upcoming year. Each New Year provides us with the opportunity to make new commitments both on a personal and professional level. I ask that one of your professional commitments in 2012 be to take advantage of the educational and networking opportunities that your association provides. **Here are a few of the professional development opportunities that you can experience in the next 12 months:**

IAPD/IPRA State Conference: Many of the conference sessions this year were generated from topics and suggestions that were submitted by professionals from around the state. The emphasis is to provide opportunities to learn new strategies to help address issues within your agency. Additionally, the conference planning committee worked hard to offer a healthy mix of both practitioners to provide first-hand knowledge and professional speakers to provide new perspectives and ideas for tackling issues that you may face in your agency. I urge you to review the conference brochure prior to arriving at conference to map out your desired educational sessions and come prepared to ask questions, learn new approaches and develop new techniques. Lastly, I encourage you to meet two or three new professionals to build your network of brainstorming partners!

Education Institute: IPRA is excited to announce its **1st Annual Members Only** event to be held on **Friday, April 20** at the DoubleTree in Oak Brook. A common theme that was echoed across the state was the need to increase the sense of accountability and ownership by staff. Based on this demand, IPRA is happy to announce that we have engaged Craig Hickman, author of *The Oz Principle*, to be the guest speaker,

and he will focus on “Getting Results Through Individual & Organizational Accountability.” His message will cover the following four key principles: 1) How people and organizations can overcome victim attitudes and behavior and step “Above The Line” to attain superior performance; 2) How to focus on the fundamental cause of poor leadership, low productivity, unacceptable quality, customer dissatisfaction, inadequate innovation, wasted talent, dysfunctional teams or a general lack

Whether you are a seasoned executive director, a supervisor or a young professional, IPRA will strive to provide you with the tools you need to develop your skills for the challenges and opportunities of parks and recreation today and in the future.



of accountability; 3) How to move beyond explaining why you didn't or can't do better to what you can do to make your future brighter; and 4) How to improve performance through accountability. **Mark your calendar, and take advantage of this member event!**

Innovation Renovation Workshops: This series of workshops provides new ways of tackling common problems. This year's topics will include: 1) Customer Service: Internal Corrections; 2) People, Purpose & Passion; 3) Workplace Mentoring; and 4) Marketing Strategies that Get Results. Professional speakers will provide creative techniques and approaches to help you grow as a professional. Each full-day session promises to provide you with tools and concepts to improve your leadership skills and prepare you to make improvements at your agency. Check out the IPRA 2012 Education Calendar to learn more.

Leadership Academy: In October 2012, IPRA will launch its newly created Leadership Academy. The academy is an intensive six month program that can benefit you regardless of what stage you are in your career. There are three levels to the academy, and the curriculum at each level will focus on building great leaders to strengthen parks and recreation agencies. As a young professional, you can benefit from Level 1: Personal Leadership, where you will learn skills such as networking and decision making to help you grow as a leader. As a mid-level professional, you will be able to take advantage of Level 2: Leading Your Team, where the focus will be on developing your team and maximizing results. As a senior-level professional, you will be able to engage in Level 3: Leading Your Agency, with an intense focus on developing a positive work culture where excellence is the norm. The academy will accept applications beginning in April. There will be 30 slots available for each of the three levels. The academy will meet one full day per month for six months (October – March). At the completion of each level, individuals will receive a Certificate of Completion from the University of Illinois. Stay tuned for additional information on how you can get involved in this great professional opportunity.

In addition to the great educational opportunities, IPRA offers its members meaningful networking opportunities, such as section and committee involvement. Speaking of sections, I want to remind each of you that **as an IPRA member you can belong to any and all sections with no additional charge.** Just contact the IPRA office to add a section(s) to your member profile, and start learning more about what is going on with all of the IPRA sections, as well as how you can get involved. Another quick reminder: all section meetings in 2012 will have an educational component to enhance your professional growth and expand your professional network.

I also want to encourage all IPRA members to take the time to read the **e-newsletter IPRA Today** that is emailed to each member on the first and third Thursday of the month. *IPRA Today* highlights: professional development opportunities; grant opportunities; job announcements and other timely information to keep you up-to-date on association happenings. This bi-weekly publication is designed to provide you with highlights to help you to **Learn. Connect. Inspire.**

Lastly, one of the strategic initiatives for the IPRA Strategic Plan is to develop dynamic professionals and future leaders. IPRA is striving to accomplish this goal by providing high-quality leadership development training to all levels of leaders in the parks and recreation profession. Whether you are a seasoned executive director, a supervisor or a young professional, your association will strive to provide you with the tools you need to develop your skills for the challenges and opportunities of parks and recreation today and in the future. These opportunities are being offered to you - now it is up to you to register, to participate and to grow into the professional you aspire to be.

IPRA is your association, and together we can build a deeper bench of professionals who are prepared to serve their communities.

- Jan R. Arnold, Executive Director, IPRA

UPCOMING IPRA EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Facility Management Section Meeting & Discussion

Topic: Essentials of Volunteer Management
Date: January 13

Recreation Section Meeting & Discussion

Topic: Taking Precautions to Keep Special Events Safe
Date: January 19

Therapeutic Recreation Section Meeting & Discussion

Topic: Engaging the Aging Population
Date: February 2

WEBINAR: Creating a Successful Business Plan

Date: February 8

Facility Management Section Meeting & Discussion

Topic: Creating and Effective Use of a Preventative Maintenance Plan
Date: February 10

WEBINAR: Green Checklist for Triathlons and Marathons

Date: February 15

WORKSHOP: CPRE Prep Course (NEW)

Date: February 16

WORKSHOP: CPRP Prep Course

Date: February 17

WEBINAR: College and University Relations Committee

Topic: Putting Research into Practice
Date: February 22

WORKSHOP: Establishing Key Performance Measurements for Success

Date: February 23

WORKSHOP: Essentials in Hiring & Training Seasonal Employees

Date: February 28

Communications & Marketing Section Meeting & Discussion

Topic: Vendor Services & Resource Sharing
Date: February 29

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IPRA website at www.ILipra.org.





Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Opportunities abound for Intergovernmental Cooperation

IAPD members will recall that local government consolidation was one of last year's pressing legislative issues. With your help, we were able to defeat Senate Bill 273, which would have forced the consolidation of at least some units of local government. However, House Bill 268 was signed into law establishing a Local Government Consolidation Commission and ensuring that this issue will continue to be studied and debated for at least the near future.

Local government consolidation has been a recurring theme for decades. This is due, in part, to a misperception that consolidating smaller, single purpose agencies into larger, multi-purpose organizations will yield the same level of service at a lower cost. Bigger organizations are not necessarily more efficient. In fact, the opposite is often true. Certainly, when it comes to providing park and recreation services to Illinois communities, no organization, public or private, is better able to deliver these valuable services than park districts, conservation districts and forest preserves.

One of the many reasons IAPD member agencies are so successful is that they already utilize the mechanisms available under Illinois law to save taxpayers money by partnering with other units of government to efficiently deliver services. The partnerships allow special purpose districts to preserve their focus while also taking advantage of intergovernmental efficiencies.

Constitutional Authority for Intergovernmental Cooperation

One needs to look no further than the Illinois Constitution to find legal authority for intergovernmental cooperation. Article VII, Section 10, specifically provides all units of local government with the authority to contract or otherwise associate among themselves to obtain or share services. In fact, they may jointly exercise, combine or transfer any of their powers or functions in any manner that is not prohibited by law. This authority extends to cooperation with the State of Illinois, the United States and with other states and their local governments and allows agencies to utilize their credit, revenues and other resources to pay costs and to service debt related to intergovernmental activities. There is even a constitutional requirement for the State to encourage intergovernmental cooperation and to use its technical and financial resources to assist intergovernmental activities.¹

Intergovernmental Cooperation Act

One way in which the state encourages intergovernmental cooperation is through the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (ICA).² Like the Illinois Constitution, this statute grants Illinois public agencies³ flexibility to combine their powers to provide governmental services and perform activities as long as one of the partnering agencies is legally authorized

to perform the specific service or activity and neither is otherwise prohibited by law.⁴ Agencies exercise this authority by entering into contracts, e.g., intergovernmental agreements, which set forth the purposes, powers, rights, objectives and responsibilities of each of the parties. To carry out the agreement, agencies may form a joint board or other entity and may appropriate funds and supply personnel or services.⁵ In other cases, one or both of the agencies may simply utilize their existing personnel and resources. In either instance, the individual governing bodies of each partnering agency must formally approve the agreement.

Park districts have formed one of the most successful partnerships under the ICA. Special recreation associations (SRA's) are a perfect example of intergovernmental cooperation between park districts (or with a municipality) to create recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities. All of the joint authority to approve budgets, share expenses, authorize expenditures, acquire real estate, hire employees or other workers and provide transportation to participants is derived from the ICA in conjunction with Section 8-10b of the Park District Code.

Another example of intergovernmental cooperation most IAPD members utilize is authorized by the ICA. The ability for units of local governments to form joint self insurance pools like IPARKS and PDRMA is specifically contained within this statute. Because of the success of these programs and the high level of expertise of the professionals retained to administer them, it is sometimes easy to forget that they are merely a partnership between the units of local government that created them. Member agencies are simply pooling their resources to meet their risk management needs. As a result, these agencies reduce their risk for a lower cost than if each individually purchased private insurance.

Governmental Joint Purchasing Act

As readers likely know, government agencies are mandated by law to satisfy competitive bidding requirements when purchasing most supplies and services. For example, when making purchases exceeding \$20,000, park districts are required to follow the bidding procedures set forth in the Park District Code.⁶ Because competitive bidding typically requires the development of specifications, evaluation of bidders and selection procedures, there are administrative costs associated with it.

The Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (Act)⁷ allows governmental agencies to partner with other governmental agencies to make bulk purchases of supplies and services. When utilized correctly, the Act can sometimes save agencies money through bulk purchasing and also in the administrative costs associated with the competitive bidding process. **Note, however, that the Act does not circumvent competitive bidding.** The statute simply permits governmental units⁸ to purchase personal property, supplies and services jointly with other governmental

units by following the competitive bidding procedures set forth in the Act rather than specific statutes like the Park District Code.

Sections 3 and 4 of the Act set forth the bidding procedures required for joint purchases. Readers will recognize the similarities to the procedures required by the Park District Code and similar statutes. Unless the joint purchase is through the State of Illinois' joint purchasing program, one of the governmental units involved in the joint purchase must conduct the bid letting.⁹ Bids must be solicited by publishing a notice at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in one of the counties where the materials are to be used and at least 5 calendar days before the final date of submitting bids. The governmental unit conducting the bid-letting can also solicit sealed bids by sending requests by mail to prospective suppliers and by posting notices on a public bulletin board in its office.¹⁰

As with other statutes, all purchases, orders or contracts must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, taking into consideration the qualities of the articles or services supplied, their conformity with the specifications, their suitability to the requirements of the participating governmental units and the delivery terms. However, bids may be rejected and new bids solicited if one or more of the participating governmental units believe the public interest may be served thereby. A record must be kept of each bid with the successful bid indicated. After the award of the contract, the record must be made available for public inspection and a copy of all contracts must also be filed with the purchasing agent, clerk or secretary of each participating governmental unit.¹¹

Many local government agencies utilize the state's joint purchasing program, which is administered by the Department of Central Management Services (CMS). This program is specifically authorized by the Act. Under the state program, CMS conducts the bid letting in accordance with procedures in the Illinois Procurement Code. Public notice soliciting the bids is published in the Illinois Procurement Bulletin and includes a general description of the personal property, supplies or services to be purchased where all blanks and specifications may be obtained and the time and place of the bid opening.

A word of caution with regard to joint purchasing programs other than CMS's is in order. While other joint purchasing programs are well intentioned, it behooves the district to ensure that the program is administered appropriately in accordance with the Act and satisfies the competitive procedures contained therein. While the competitive bidding procedures set forth in the Act may be used in lieu of other statutory bidding requirements such as those contained in Section 8-1(c) of the Park District Code, they must be strictly followed in order to do so.¹² Otherwise, the Park District Code's requirements are not excused. Consequently, where the purchase exceeds \$20,000, IAPD advises member agencies to work closely with their local counsel to ensure that the program satisfies the Act and that the authority for the purchase is well documented, e.g., in the resolution or ordinance authorizing the purchase.

Is Your Agency Missing a Golden Opportunity?

As those who have participated in the IAPD's Annual Awards Gala well know, there are numerous intergovernmental success stories within our field. This past October, IAPD recognized three exemplary agreements that resulted in savings for taxpayers and benefits for communities.

1. Parks and Libraries

The Dundee Township Park District and the Dundee Township Public Library partnered to open a library branch in the park district's new recreation center. The library did not have enough funds on hand for

new construction, and the park district had budget limitations regarding the square footage of its new facility. As a result of intergovernmental cooperation, park district patrons now get convenient access to library services, and library patrons are exposed to recreation programs and offerings. The shared infrastructure means no duplication of parking, restrooms and common areas and allows both agencies to expand their offerings while maximizing community tax dollars.

2. Parks, Forest Preserves and Cities

The Fox Valley Park District, the City of Aurora and the Forest Preserve District of Kane County joined forces to save 19 acres of green space in a densely populated part of town that was slated to become a trucking distribution center. As a result of intergovernmental cooperation, the area is instead a community park. Through an intergovernmental agreement, the forest preserve and the city contributed \$1 million for the acquisition and development of the project area and the park district invested an additional \$2 million to transform the space into an active, vibrant community centerpiece.

3. Park and Cities

When the Glenview Naval Air Station closed in 1995, the community's master plan called for the creation of a park. The Village of Glenview and the Glenview Park District began working together to plan and design it, but the cost of developing the park required millions more than the park district could afford. Although the village had the financial resources to construct the facility, it was not in the position to maintain such a large-scale community asset long term like the park district. As the result of intergovernmental cooperation, the community now enjoys a 60-acre park that includes a lake, wetland and natural restoration areas, six miles of walking and biking trails, an amphitheater, boardwalk, playgrounds, gardens, tennis courts and athletic fields.

None of these projects would have happened were it not for intergovernmental cooperation, and there are countless other examples IAPD members utilize like police protection services, stormwater management agreements, multi-use path systems, bi-lingual and environmental educational programs, shared facility-use agreements, and the list goes on and on.

Park and Recreation Agencies Are Natural Partners

Because of the breadth of the programs that park and recreation agencies offer and the diversity of their facilities, they are natural partners for other government agencies. IAPD encourages all member agencies to continue to explore ways in which they can partner with others and to track your successes. The IAPD will continue to reach out to members to document these successful programs as a part of our efforts to help make the case that our member agencies are best able to deliver park and recreation services to Illinois communities.

¹ Illinois Constitution, Article VII, Section 10

² 5 ILCS 220/1 et seq.

³ Under the ICA, "public agencies" include counties, municipalities, townships, special districts, and units designated as units of local government by law, and any school district, public community college district, public building commission, the State of Illinois, any agency of the State government or of the United States, or of any other State, as well as any political subdivision of another State.

⁴ 5 ILCS 220/3

⁵ 5 ILCS 220/4

⁶ 70 ILCS 1205/8-1(c)

⁷ 30 ILCS 525/0.01 et seq.

⁸ "Governmental unit" under the Act means the State of Illinois, any public authority which has the power to tax, or any other public entity created by statute.

⁹ 30 ILCS 525/3

¹⁰ 30 ILCS 525/4

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² 30 ILCS 525/2



By Laura L. Payne, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Office of Recreation and Park Resources

Collaborating Toward a Common Goal: Partnership Practices and Effectiveness in Illinois

Community parks and recreation is an important stakeholder in the movement to address our nation's most pressing health issues such as physical inactivity, obesity, and chronic conditions. The large-scale behavioral changes required to improve our society's health are daunting; however, partnerships are one vital strategy to effectively facilitate the behavior change process in communities. Although many definitions exist, Kernaghan (1993) defined partnership as relationships that involve a sharing of power, work, support or information with others for the achievement of joint goals or mutual benefits.

Partnerships are particularly important for park and recreation agencies given current public health issues and the ongoing economic crisis (Mowen & Kerstetter, 2006). Bors and colleagues (2009) emphasized the need for partnerships to address public health issues (e.g., obesity, chronic disease) because a variety of disciplines and groups that collaborate can accomplish more collectively than separately. Indeed, a growing number of model health promotion campaigns, policies and research programs (e.g. Active Living by Design; NRPA's Step up to Health, the CDC's ACHIEVE Initiative) now require the existence of formal partnerships between health organizations and park and recreation agencies in order to achieve their goals. Furthermore, in a recent study of North Carolina park and recreation directors, respondents indicated one of their highest priorities was to develop more inter-agency health partnerships (Bocarro et al., 2009).

One gap acknowledged by NRPA was the lack of baseline information on current health partnership activities within the profession and the need to evaluate how the profession is benefiting from and contributing to health partnerships. Therefore, the National Recreation Foundation funded a project to generate information and insights regarding health partnerships in the United States and how these partnerships are perceived by park and recreation professionals. In this article, we examine the 137 responses from park and recreation professionals in Illinois.

“Partnerships are particularly important for park and recreation agencies given current public health issues and the ongoing economic crisis ...”

Project Methods

This project included both an online survey of park and recreation administrators as well as in-depth interviews with 16 practitioners working in community recreation agencies. Interviews provided insight about many aspects of partnerships such as motivations for and benefits of partnerships, barriers to forming and sustaining partnerships and characteristics of effective partnerships, among other topics. Survey respondents had some organizational and personal experience with health partnerships and were selected to represent the eight NRPA regions nationwide. An effort was also made to ensure that a balance of large and small recreation and park organizations were represented.

In addition to these interviews, the NRPA membership database was used to select a sub-sample of members who identified themselves as a director, lead administrator or senior manager at their agency. These senior managers were then asked to participate in an online survey. From the initial contact list of NRPA members, 1,217 completed the online survey for a response rate of 32%. Although this nationwide sample is reflective of NRPA members who identified themselves as directors or senior managers, there are other park and recreation professionals who either (a) chose not to complete the questionnaire or (b) were not a member of the National Recreation and Park Association.

Key Findings for Illinois: Partnership Prevalence and Practices

Health partnerships were pursued extensively with 84% of agencies (N=137) reporting being involved in health partnerships. Also, agencies are engaged in 4.8 partnerships on average. In terms of partnership types, schools were the most prevalent health partner with 50% of respondents stating they work with schools (i.e., primary and secondary), followed by sports organizations (36%), non-profit health organizations (35.9%; e.g., Arthritis Foundation, American Heart Association), public health organizations (35%; e.g., county, state health departments), hospitals (34.2%), local businesses (33%), senior service agencies (24%) and colleges/universities (20.5%). Transportation agencies (9.4%), planning organizations (11.1%), nursing homes/assisted living centers (12%), health insurance companies (14.5%), and corporations (17%) were mentioned the least by respondents as organizational partners.

We also asked respondents the purpose or type of health partnership(s) in which organizations had participated. Two-thirds (66.7%) stated that physical activity promotion and general wellness were focus areas of their health partnerships. Similarly, 31% stated they were involved in partnerships aimed to reduce obesity, whereas 38% focused on stress reduction/management, 34% partnered on nutrition programs, and 30% worked to promote emotional health.

Contributions of Park and Recreation Agencies to Health Partnerships

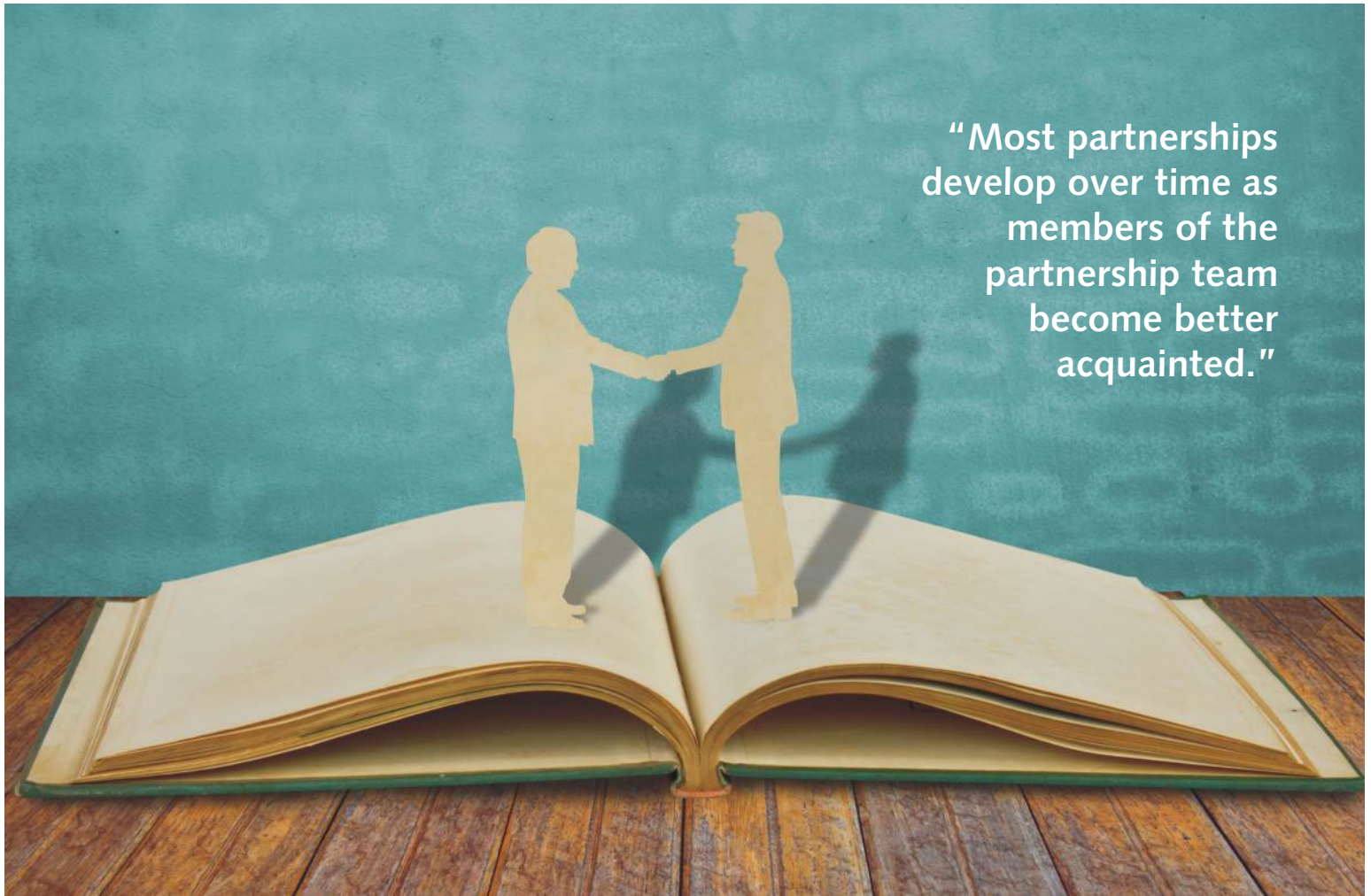
Recreation and park organizations contribute significantly to the promotion of health and wellness. Health-related organizations increasingly recognize assets that parks and recreation offer in partnerships and actively pursue parks and recreation as partners. In this survey, respondents were asked to select the single most important contribution their agency made or contributed to current health partnerships. More than one-third (36%) mentioned that recreation and park facilities were the most important contribution to the partnership and 20% reported that access to the public or target markets was the single largest asset of their health partnership. Twenty percent of respondents said that the positive reputation/image and visibility of their agency was the most important contribution to the health partnership.

Benefits of Health Partnerships

Park and recreation managers/administrators who participated in this study reported a wide variety of benefits of engaging in partnerships with health organizations. The most frequently reported benefit of engaging in health partnerships was *improving visibility*. For example, one respondent stated, "They (health partners) specialize in areas of focus that we don't. We also want to show our community that we are an important part of this initiative." Another respondent emphasized the importance of cross-disciplinary cooperation to affect widespread change at the individual, family and community levels. "We seek partners because with complete community buy-in, your program gets more credibility. This battle toward a healthy lifestyle is not one where you (park and recreation or health agencies) can afford to be exclusive."



"Park and recreation managers/administrators who participated in this study reported a wide variety of benefits of engaging in partnerships with health organizations."



“Most partnerships develop over time as members of the partnership team become better acquainted.”

Meeting the organization's *mission statement, improving the image of parks and recreation and leveraging additional resources (e.g., money, personnel, equipment)* were also frequently mentioned as important benefits of health partnerships. Many parks and recreation managers commented that forming partnerships with health organizations made sense because both organizations recognized that partnerships would enable them to more effectively accomplish mutual goals and objectives related to healthy lifestyles. One interview respondent stated, “There are limited resources within our community. Parks and recreation departments can't meet all demands, and partnerships enable sharing of resources made available to broader segments of the community. Agencies (involved in the partnerships) in general have similar goals, so why not combine efforts to improve quality of life within the community?”

Factors Related to Effective and Satisfying Health Partnerships

Another important goal of this project was to understand factors related to the development of effective and satisfying health partnerships. An important finding was that having *formal agreements* such as memorandums of understanding and *guidelines for conducting the partnerships* were related to higher levels of partnership effectiveness. Also, having more experience with health partnerships was related to partnership effectiveness. That is, organizations that had more experience with partnership development and management also reported that their partnerships were more effective and satisfying.

Moreover, organizations that evaluated their partnerships were also more likely to exhibit characteristics of successful partnerships (e.g., trust, partnership support, recognized need, etc.). Of those partnership characteristics, “there is a lot of trust between our partners” and “the administrative support from our respective partners has been strong” were the key contributors to perceived overall health partnership effectiveness.

Suggested Strategies to Foster Effective and Satisfying Partnerships

Findings from the project and additional feedback from respondents provided direction for fostering effective and satisfying partnerships with health organizations. The following strategies are suggested:

- **Establish a sense of rapport and team:** Most partnerships develop over time as members of the partnership team (e.g., whether project/program driven, facility driven) become better acquainted. Allow time early in the partnership to learn about each other's organizational missions, values, goals and objectives. Allow time during meetings for some social exchange; this helps build rapport among members of the partnership.

- **Clarify shared values/goals:** As an ice breaker or warm up activity, it is helpful to engage in activities that help clarify and convey to all partnership members each participating partner organization's values, goals and objectives. Partnership development and management is likely to go more smoothly if time is allocated during the beginning stages of partnership team building for values clarification and identification of shared goals and objectives.

- **Meeting and partnership management:** The value of written goals, objectives and action plans: Your partnership development process will be more effective if you implement a structure for meetings and communication, whether it be Roberts Rules of Order, meeting minutes, documentation, distribution and management of action plans, etc.

- **Job descriptions/roles for all partnership players:** Early on in developing your partnership, create roles and responsibilities for each member of the partnership. These can be assigned, or better yet, members of the team may want to volunteer for roles/tasks that best fit their a) interests, b) skills/expertise, and c) time they have to allocate to partnership activities.

- **Agreements on resource sharing (whether facilities, staff/volunteers, financial, marketing, programmatic, etc.):** It is best to document details regarding resource sharing using tools such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU clarifies very specifically the expectations and responsibilities of each partner organization. Generally MOUs are authorized by each partner's executive officer and copies are given to all partnership team members. MOUs are a very effective resource that can prevent misunderstandings regarding expectations and responsibilities.

- **Focus on the overall goal and develop a mission for the partnership:** Overall, it may be a useful exercise (after values and goals clarification and sharing) to develop a mission statement that everyone on the partnership team can buy into for the duration of the partnership. This is an effective strategy because it will help all members stay on track and helps the team continue to focus on the "big picture" which generally addresses shared visions and goals for the partnership being developed. It is easy to redirect people in a meeting when someone gets off track with the question, "I wonder, is this strategy consistent with the mission statement we developed for the initiative?"

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Dispelling Myths of **PUBLIC PENSIONS** for Illinois Parks & Recreation Employees

By Louis W. Kosiba, IMRF Executive Director



At a time when retirement hopes for many rise and fall with the volatile markets, Illinois park district employees can take comfort in knowing at least part of their nest egg is secure.

The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) administers a program of disability, death and retirement benefits for 203 park districts throughout the state. IMRF is well-funded, helps attract and retain talented employees, and provides an important safety net for more than 97,000 retirees — including those from park districts. At the end of 2010, it managed \$25 billion in assets and earned 13.6% on its investments.

Despite these important qualities, misconceptions about public pension funds persist. As Mark Twain said, “A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.” As a valued public servant and employee in the IMRF system, you deserve to have these myths debunked.

Myth No. 1: Park district pensions burden taxpayers.

Unlike Social Security's "pay-as-you-go" system, park districts in IMRF prefund their retirement obligations. Those retirement dollars come from three sources:

- 1) regular contributions from you, the employee, over the course of your career;
- 2) regular contributions from your employer (the taxpayer) during your career; and
- 3) returns on IMRF investments.

Most of the money paid to retirees – 60 cents of every dollar – comes from investment returns. Employees contribute just 14 cents and employers just 26 cents – a very solid return on everyone's investment. On average, those employees retired with 22 years of service and receive an annual benefit of \$17,000, or about \$1,417 each month.

Myth No. 2: Park district pensions benefit only the recipients.

Municipal employees are not the only individuals who benefit from IMRF pensions. IMRF supports local businesses. Almost half of IMRF's total investments – \$11.9 billion – are managed by Illinois-based investment firms. Additionally, 85 percent of IMRF retirees live in Illinois after they retire and continue to pump their money back into their communities. In 2010, for example, IMRF paid \$988 million to retirees who live in Illinois. Based on economic studies, this \$988 million created \$1.5 billion in total economic output and 11,200 jobs.

Myth No. 3: Park district retirees take advantage of the pension system.

While a few cases of "salary spiking" and "double dipping" attract media attention, the practice was very rare — and last year's pension reform legislation will effectively eliminate it.

Although IMRF doesn't control local compensation policies, IMRF law prohibits a retired member from working in a position qualifying for IMRF while receiving a pension. If an IMRF retiree chooses to return to work for an IMRF employer, he must notify IMRF regardless of the number of hours the position requires. In some cases—based upon the number of hours worked—he must stop taking a pension and resume paying into his IMRF account.



Myth No. 4: The government isn't working to solve ongoing pension problems.

In 2010, Governor Pat Quinn signed into law Public Act 96-0889, which reformed Illinois' public pensions. This pension reform, often described as Tier 2, will help ensure the long-term sustainability of pensions, reduce employer rates and ease the burden on taxpayers.

Tier 2 legislation affects employees who are first enrolled in IMRF on or after Jan. 1, 2011. By 2021, IMRF expects that more than half of Illinois park district employees will be part of this program. Tier 2 changes include:

- Increasing the earliest age to retire with a full pension from age 60 to age 67.
- Increasing the number of years an employee must work for his employer to receive a pension from eight years to 10 years.
- Capping the salary used to calculate an employee's pension.
- Increasing the number of months used to calculate a final salary from 48 months to 96 months.

Defined benefit plans, such as IMRF, are efficient and cost-effective. The pensions paid to retired employees contribute to the Illinois economy. IMRF's pensions are fully funded when an employee retires.

Defined benefit pensions, if properly funded, can provide retirement security at the lowest long-term cost for the taxpayer. IMRF believes every American – including park employees – deserves a secure retirement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IMRF Executive Director Louis Kosiba has been with the IMRF for more than 23 years and has served in his current position since 2001. Kosiba speaks throughout Illinois and nationally on retirement issues, oversees a staff of 180 and reports directly to the eight-member IMRF board of trustees.



The IMRF Pension Dollar

Pensions are a shared responsibility

Every dollar paid to IMRF retirees comes from three sources:

60¢
IMRF Investment
Earnings

26¢
IMRF
Employers

14¢
IMRF
Members



In 2010, IMRF paid \$988 million in pensions to retirees in Illinois. Those pension payments ripple through the economy, creating income for other households, firms and various levels of government. Each successive “round” of spending creates additional economic impacts. IMRF’s pension payments supported the generation of approximately \$1.5 billion in total economic output and 11,200 jobs in Illinois.*

What you should know about IMRF**

- The average member who retired in 2010 is receiving an annual pension of approximately \$1,417 a month after 22 years of service.
- Average age at retirement is 62
- 87% of all IMRF retirees receive \$24,000 a year or less
- IMRF is approximately 86% funded

*Source: IMRF 2010 Economic Impact Study

**Source: IMRF 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and IMRF Finance Department

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Collinsville Area Recreation District Executive Director Retires

Mark Badasch recently announced plans to retire as executive director from the Collinsville Area Recreation District (CARD) after 35 years of work in parks and recreation. His last day with CARD was January 2, 2012.

Badasch was hired as executive director by the CARD

Board of Commissioners in 1994. Since then, CARD has developed its Activity Center/Administrative Offices, Schnuck Memorial Park, Splash City Family Waterpark, Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve, Arlington Greens Golf Course, and has begun work on Miner's Institute in Uptown Collinsville and Pleasant Ridge Park in Maryville, and has added new programs and special events for children and adults.

Badasch's career in parks and recreation began in 1973 when he was named the superintendent of recreation/arena manager at the Pekin Park District. From there, his titles included youth program director at Neighborhood House Association in Peoria, director of the Clark County Park District in Marshall, director of the Roxana Community Park District, and CARD's executive director.

Badasch is an alumnus of Indiana State University. He and his wife, Ann, live in Collinsville and have three children and four grandchildren.



Schreiber Receives NRPA Award

The Waukegan Park District is proud to announce Susie Schreiber, chair of the Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Council, as the recipient of the National Recreation and Park Association's Barb King Environmental Leadership Award. The award recognizes the parks and recreation professional or citizen who has achieved excellence in leading an agency or community to a more sustainable future.

According to Greg Petry, executive director of the Waukegan Park District and Susie's nominator, she has tirelessly volunteered countless hours to improve the water quality of Lake Michigan and the Illinois waterways that drain into the lake. Susie has worked with the Waukegan Park District and other community groups to clean up ravines and streams. Her leadership resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant money to aid in the efforts. She has also been instrumental in the "No Child Left Inside" initiative, "For Earth's Sake." Youth awareness and involvement are trademarks of Susie's effort.

Naperville Park District Earns National Accreditation



Naperville Park District has achieved national accreditation through the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The decision was announced at the NRPA national conference in Atlanta following a formal hearing before the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Naperville is only the second park district in Illinois to earn this distinction. Each year, CAPRA accredits a handful of park agencies that have completed a multi-step process involving a self-review by the agency, a site visit, and an evaluation and formal report by the Commission. As of 2011, only 104 park and recreation agencies have achieved CAPRA accreditation, out of more than 10,000 agencies nationwide.

"We are extremely proud to bring this honor to Naperville," said Park District Executive Director Ray McGury. "It's an affirmation of our high standards and also an encouragement to continue bringing high quality recreation and parks experiences to our community."

In Memoriam



Harris Agnew 1936-2011

The Honorable Harris "Harry" Agnew passed away in December at the age of 75 following a long illness. Agnew served from 1997 to 2009 on the Rockford Park District's Board, serving as president during his first term. He also served from 2004 to 2008 on the Illinois Association of Park District's Board of Trustees and dedicated his time and talents to the association's Board Development and Nominating Committees

and the Joint Legislative Committee.

His enthusiasm and dedication was recognized with the Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service Award in 2003. Harry was also instrumental in the many accomplishments and recognitions earned by the Rockford Park District during his 12 years on the board including the 2007 Distinguished Agency award.

Harry served as a judge for 21 years and pioneered the state's first mandatory arbitration and mediation programs in Winnebago and Boone counties. He also helped to establish a volunteer public service work program for juvenile delinquents. Harry also served in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956.

Memorials in Harry's honor can be made to the Rockford Park District Foundation, 401 S. Main St., Rockford, IL 61101.

Susan Hoster-Suggs 1967-2011

The Bolingbrook Park District has lost a great friend and an incredible leader. The void she leaves will impact many, just as she did during her life. Susan Hoster-Suggs leaves behind a world-class organization she built with her vision and guidance. Her spirit will forever be felt at the Bolingbrook Park District.

Susan accomplished many professional milestones in her short life. She had more than 24 years of public administration



experience, including 14 years' experience in parks and recreation with the Bolingbrook Park District. She served as the Bolingbrook Park District's Director of Finance, Technology and Human Resources prior to assuming her role as the District's Executive Director in January 2010. Before joining the Bolingbrook Park District, Susan served 12 years as Finance Director for the Orland Fire Protection District.

She held a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Lewis University. She was a leader in the field of parks and recreation, and served as the Finance Chair for Park District Risk Management Association (PDRMA). Susan received the prestigious honor of Illinois Park and Recreation Association's (IPRA) Administrative and Finance Professional of the Year. She also served as Chair of IPRA's Technology committee, authored technology-specific articles and served as a presenter at the IAPD/IPRA state conference. She had been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for nine consecutive years. Her most recent accomplishment was serving as a board member for The Management Association of Illinois.

Dave Piekarski 1958-2011

The Bolingbrook Park District also lost a longtime friend and commissioner. Dave Piekarski's passion for providing exceptional facilities and programming to the community of Bolingbrook was felt not only through his work as a Bolingbrook Park District commissioner, but also his work with other service organizations within Bolingbrook. His contributions and service will be greatly missed by the Bolingbrook community.

Dave had served as a Bolingbrook Park District commissioner since 2004. Dave held various positions on the board including treasurer and president. He also was active with Bolingbrook Community Basketball, Bolingbrook Lions Club and other service organizations.





Keep Your Eyes to the Skies in April and May for Flying 4 KIDS Months

The Illinois Association of Park Districts has designated April and May *Flying 4 KIDS Months*. Now in its eighth year, *Flying 4 Kids Months* attracts thousands of families, kite enthusiasts and media at park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies throughout the state. The goal of the kite fly is to raise awareness of our agencies' parks, the sport of kite flying and the **Park District Youth License Plate**, which features a colorful kite.

Park, recreation and conservation agencies host family-oriented kite fly events for the citizens in their communities. IAPD offers a free *Event Planner's Guide* to participating agencies, which offers tips and suggestions to organize a leisurely kite fly event. The guide contains suggestions from the American Kitefliers Association and veteran kite fly organizers from our member agencies. IAPD will also provide Park District Youth License Plate brochures to distribute at the events and will include your agency's kite fly information in a statewide news release. Contact Bobbie Jo Hill at bjhill@ILparks.org or (217) 523-4554 to get your kite fly off the ground today.

IAPD Recognized by the U.S. Commerce Association

The Illinois Association of Park Districts recently received the **Best of Illinois 2011 Award for Association Services** from the U.S. Commerce Association.

Each year, the U.S. Commerce Association identifies organizations that have achieved exceptional marketing success by enhancing the positive image of the agencies they serve through outstanding programs and services.



Want to Read More?

Keep up with the latest milestones, new hires, promotions and award-winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry online. Visit our website, www.ILparks.org, and click on the Publications tab on the left. Select IP&R Magazine and then People and Places.

Want to submit news from your agency for People & Places?

E-mail information and jpegs to editorialdept@ILparks.org. Jpegs should be 300 dpi at about 2 inches tall.



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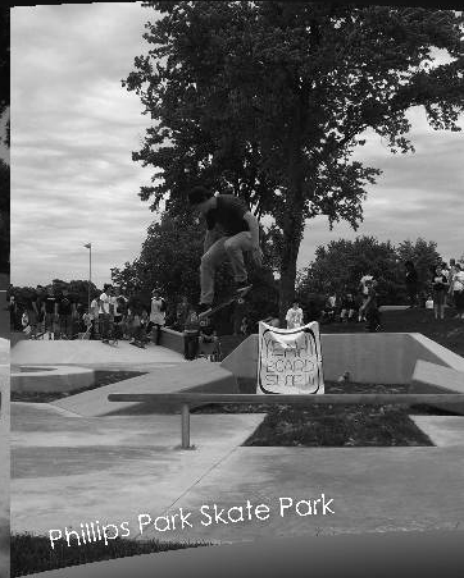
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Lisle Park District
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Lombard Park District
Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation
McCook Park District
Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation
McCook Park District
McHenry County Conservation District

Congratulations to these members for their commitment to excellence in risk management. Accreditation is the highest level of achievement a PDRMA member can attain. It requires earning two consecutive scores of 95 percent on our comprehensive Loss Control Review. Our thanks to all the employees at these member agencies for their hard work and commitment.



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Mokena Park District
Morton Grove Park District
Mundelein Park District
Niles Park District
Norridge Park District
Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association
Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association
Northfield Park District
Northwest Special Recreation Association
Oak Brook Park District
Park District of Forest Park
Park District of Highland Park
Park District of LaGrange
Park Ridge Recreation and Park District
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River Trails Park District
River Valley Special Recreation Association
Rockford Park District
Rolling Meadows Park District
Round Lake Area Park District
Skokie Park District
South East Association for Special Parks And Recreation
South Suburban Special Recreation Association
South West Special Recreation Association
Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County
St. Charles Park District
Streamwood Park District
Sugar Grove Park District
Warren Special Recreation Association
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Waukegan Park District
West Suburban Special Recreation Association
Western DuPage Special Recreation Association
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Wilmette Park District
Winnetka Park District
Wood Dale Park District
Woodridge Park District
York Center Park District
Zion Park District



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Our town is a community of the public projects we create, the partners we build with, and always, the people who use these buildings. It's also a team of inspired architects and project managers who live and breathe their work and believe a disciplined process can lead to transformational design. In the end, our town is built on promises. Like our buildings, these promises are built to last. Visit our town to see our extensive recreation portfolio at SRBLArchitects.com

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